



Southwest Soaring

Quarterly Newsletter of the U.S. Southwest Soaring Museum

A 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization

An affiliate of the Soaring Society of America, Inc.

Summer 2008



The Ross R6 (See story on page 5)

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For Museum Hours

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Cover: Ross Harlan completed the two-place R-6 in 1956 with the same wing designed for the RJ-5, giving it one of the heaviest wing loadings in the world at that time. The span was subsequently increased by five feet to 60 ft. (The R6 donated to the museum has a 5 ft shorter span). The R-6 has a metal fuselage and is equipped with dive brakes. The original skid and takeoff dolly was subsequently replaced with a retractable gear. The passenger sits aft of the spar under a removable bubble. In 1958 Ross used it to set world multi-place records in the 100 km, 300 km and 500 km triangle speed categories and a national out-and -return record of 377.6 km/234.66 miles, all set in a four-day period.

Join us for the Annual USSSM Benefit Barbeque Dinner Saturday August 23rd at 6 PM at the Museum

Dick Johnson will be our speaker.

Tickets \$50.00 each. For more info read below.

Dick Johnson Headlines the Museum's Benefit Dinner by Kathy Taylor

Plan now to be in Moriarty on Saturday, August 23, 2008. That is the date reserved for the Southwest Soaring Museum Benefit Dinner. The Dukes of Albuquerque will provide music for the evenings' entertainment. Shorty's barbeque will cater the event. Featured speaker at the dinner will be Richard H. Johnson, well-known US contest pilot and aeronautical engineer. Dick was featured in the December 2006 issue of the museum newsletter, *Southwest Soaring*. The catered dinner will be held in the Museum display building on Route 66 in Moriarty, NM, starting at 6 PM, with Dick's talk, "History of US National Contests from 1940- 1970" beginning at 7 PM . He will use an overhead projector to display photos of historic sailplanes and events as depicted in back issues of *Soaring*. Reserve your \$50 ticket by sending a check to: Southwest Soaring Museum, PO Box 3626, Moriarty, NM 87035. Questions should be addressed to Bob Alkov (505 281-7264) or George Applebay (505 328-2019).

A Tribute to Lynn Buckingham by Kathy Taylor

Lynn Buckingham tendered her resignation from the Board as of the first of May. She will be available to help as needed, but has decided she wants more time to work on the Make a Wish Foundation. Lynn has been a stalwart member of the Board for sixteen years, serving many of those years as Treasurer and Membership Director. She has also edited the Newsletter, built the small glider for the kids to sit in, built and painted the sign on the front of the building, and created various posters for the interior as well as the exhibit signs. She was a frequent representative of the Museum at the SSA Conventions, "manning" the booth in the Exhibit Hall and greeting members. She assisted on the transporting of many sailplanes that had been donated for exhibits from all over the U.S. Lynn will be sorely missed.

Southwest Soaring Foundation News

by
Allene Lindstrom

During the past quarter the Southwest Soaring Museum Foundation and an anonymous sponsor provided classes for youth education in aviation at the Museum. Four lessons were presented with one hour of basic aerodynamics and another hour of hands-on glider disassembly and re-assembly, along with instruction in control manipulation.

The sponsor stipulated that the classes were to be held in the Museum to include four different schools in each class, hopefully from areas beyond the Estancia Valley. The purpose was to expand the territory of awareness for the Museum and to bring young people to the world of aviation and soaring. What better location to start than in the Museum!



Allene Lindstrom teaching Basic Aerodynamics to Boy Scout Class
(Photos by Robert Talarczyk)

The Museum class on March 15, proved to be successful and enjoyed by the participants. There were 12 Boy Scouts ranging in age from 10 to 17. Also attending the class were 4 adults, two scout leaders, one parent and one student pilot. George Applebay provided a glider for the hands-on demonstration/instruction. George Taylor provided ground training for the glider. He also coordinated the facilities for the class as well as backup on the glider. Allene Lindstrom provided, in the gift shop, instruction on basic aerodynamics. Deor Jensen did the basic work of locating the Scouts to attend. The Scouts were from four different schools within the Estancia Valley.

The Museum's Board of Directors handled the four classes. The project would benefit greatly with the help of a small committee of volunteers who aren't Members of the Board. Their responsibility would be to take on the job of locating CFI instructors, handling publicity, and talking to schools, Scout groups and youth organizations as sources for the next group of students. Along with a small amount of documentation this would only take, at most, 2 hours a month. Would you be willing to share your expertise and time to promote soaring? Please let us know if you would be willing to volunteer for this most worthy task.

These classes make an ideal basis for additional education grants for the Museum. These grants would be coordinated with local area schools. George Applebay and Deor Jensen have been consulting with the Principle and shop instructor of Moriarty High School to start classes in the reconstruction shop of the Museum where they would have hands-on experience with working on sailplanes. These monies would have to flow through the New Mexico State Department of Education. Another idea for grants comes from the US Department of Agriculture for small community development projects. We are aggressively pursuing working with them on grants for alternative energy projects that would enable us to heat the building in winter and cool it in summer.



George Taylor provides hands-on training

The Foundation Board agreed that our first priority toward our goal of an endowment fund is to work up a plan to present ourselves to the aviation community and related organizations. We have completed our "Vision and Mission" statements and will be progressing toward designing various media presentations. We are

considering the use of the Santa Fe Community Foundation which is available to help small non-profits manage their legal and investment decisions. They have on board experts to assist in all areas. The Foundation needs \$5000.00 in order to use their services.

The Foundation has some very talented Board members who are fun and interesting. There are always openings on our Board for “G and G” (give and get) people who are talented in these areas. Are you willing to join our adventure? If so contact me at soaringfoundation@mac.com.

The Museum still has some excess glider trailers for sale. Very good for hauling long items, storage, etc. Call George Applebay for availability. The Foundation still has Sundance Glider Ride gift certificates available as fund raisers. For gift certificates contact soaringfoundation@mac.com. Have a great summer enjoying soaring.

Allene

Who was Helen Montgomery? by Kathy Taylor

At the SSA Convention in Memphis, there was a photo on each banquet table of some historical figure or event. As chance would have it, my table had a photo of a young woman in a glider, half standing and waving, with ‘Helen Montgomery’ printed on the side. This was intriguing. Having spent a few years researching women soaring pilots for the Museum exhibit, I had never heard of this woman. Early issues of Soaring Magazine provided some background information, but not a complete story. The Texas Woman’s University provided pages from “New Wings for Women,” by Sally Knapp that added a few details. The following synopsis relates what information has surfaced. If any of our readers knows more about Helen, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Helen Montgomery was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, ca 1912, and graduated from high school at 16 with high honors. There was no money for college, but an aunt provided some financial assistance so that Helen was able to graduate from the University of Michigan School of Nursing. While there, she met and married Lawrence D. (LD) Montgomery, a graduate physicist

at the university. They soon moved to Cleveland, where Helen watched other women compete in the Cleveland Air Races and became determined that someday she would learn to fly. They returned to Ann Arbor where LD worked toward a PhD in physics. Soon LD was taking gliding lessons and Helen began power flying lessons in an Aeronca. Then Helen took up gliding and LD learned to fly power. The Montgomerys eventually bought the Aeronca and used it for cross country flights.

Helen’s third glider flight was of 70 minutes duration, sufficient to gain her the “C” license in 1937. This flight was in a Franklin PS-2 utility glider on Sleeping Bear Sand Dune at Empire, near Traverse City, Michigan.

On Sept 4, 1938, at the American Open Soaring Contest at Frankfort (Crystal Downs Beach), Michigan, Helen set a new American women’s endurance record of 7 h 28 minutes, breaking Allaire Dupont’s 3-year old record. (Albuquerque Soaring Club’s own Al Santilli flew 5 hr 38 minutes for the duration leg of his Silver C during this same contest.)

LD and Helen, with Elmer Zook, started the XYZ Glider Club in October 1937. LD became President and Helen was Secretary. The club soon had three gliders and a dozen members. In the winter they flew off the ice on Lake St. Clair. In the summer they flew in local meets and prepared for the annual trip to Elmira, NY, where they competed as a team in the national soaring contests every year until the beginning of World War II. Helen was the club’s correspondent to Soaring Magazine, reporting news of club events. During this period they lived at 861 Lathrop Street, Detroit, MI.

In 1938 Helen was instrumental in moving the XYZ club from the Pontiac Airport to the Triangle Airport, approximately 20 miles west of Detroit. Triangle Airport soon became the home of glider clubs from the University of Detroit, Lawrence Institute of Technology, and the Detroit Glider Council which furnished tows to all. Larry Edgar received his initial glider instruction from Elmer Zook at this field in 1939.

Helen established a US feminine glider altitude record of 4,183 feet and a distance record of 15 miles. In 1940 she reported a flight of 26.4 miles made in a Wolf glider from Triangle Airport. Helen flew aerobatic routines at

air shows throughout the country. A crowd of twenty thousand at Pontiac, Michigan, witnessed her 6th place finish in the competition – the only woman in a field of 63 contestants.

Helen also attended the June 2-16, 1940, Southwest Soaring Contest in Wichita Falls, TX. She was one of four club members who attended the contest and flew the same sailplane on alternate days. XYZ was the most active gliding club in the country at the time.



The 1940 Wichita Falls, TX Soaring Contest

With the coming of the World War II, the 3 club gliders were sold to the government and many of the club members became instructors in army contract programs. The Montgomerys moved to Lamesa, TX, where LD was head of the army ground school and Helen instructed army glider pilots and sometimes towed other instructors and their students. When the program ended in 1943, Helen became a flight instructor for the WASPs at Sweetwater, TX, using BT-13 airplanes. She taught both primary and instrument students.

Lawrence D. (Monty) Montgomery (silver “C” badge number 50) died in a glider accident 5/18/46. He had been getting a new club underway at Cleveland.

“New Wings for Women” has a photo of Helen in a Yankee Doodle II, obviously taken prior to the 1946 publishing date of the book. The caption says only that it was taken at Auburn Airport with no mention of which state. The web lists four current airports with that name in Alabama, California, Maine and Washington.

The last mention of Helen is in the August 1948 issue of *Soaring*. An ad for a Yankee Doodle II states that it had only 6 hours flying time and was only flown



HELEN MONTGOMERY

previously by Randy Chapman and the former Helen Montgomery. Randy Chapman, a member of XYZ Glider Club, was the Chief Engineer for Laister-Kaufmann during World War II and became the mainstay behind the development of the CG-10A Trojan Horse. Randy was one of the few civilian recipients of a pair of Army “wings” for his test flying of the CG-10. He was killed on August 12, 1945, while performing an aerobatic display at Starling Airport, St. Louis, Missouri.)

The story ends there. What happened to Helen after the war? Did she give up flying after her husband L. D. and good friend Randy had been killed in glider accidents? We’d like to know.

The Ross R-6 Returns to the Southwest

by
George Applebay

I met Harland Ross in Wichita shortly after he moved from California. In 1949 I was operating a small airport in Healdton, OK. A customer drove in one day and introduced himself as Dr. Dempsey Moore, who had just started a practice in a nearby community. He was interested in my helping him find a Luscombe. As we became better acquainted I learned he had moved to Southern Oklahoma from Tonapah, Nevada to be close to his old hometown of Wichita Falls, TX. Dr. Moore had attended school there and had many long time friends including the Ross brothers, Vernon and Harland. As he realized that my primary interest in aircraft was rebuilding them, Dr. Moore told me of his good friend, Harland who had operated a flying service at Bishop, CA not far from Tonapah and was building a high performance glider, the R-5. I had read of Harland in model magazines that featured stories on gliders.

As the small aircraft business was gradually going very bad in the late 1940's, Wichita, KS was the place to be if one wanted to make a living in aviation. Boeing picked me up in 1950 as the youngest preflight line inspector on the new B-47A aircraft. After I had four interesting years with Boeing, Cessna hired me. They had advertised in the Sunday newspaper for two A & P mechanics to work on the T-37 development program. Ray Ballenger and I got the jobs on Monday.

Through friends, I learned of Ross's efforts to build the R-6 and went to his home on a Saturday and found him profiling the wings in his back yard workshop. Shortly after this, a group I was working with at Cessna decided to start a glider club. The Wichita Soaring Association resulted in 1955.

Harland finished the R-6 in 1956 and test flew it at our glider club based at Strother Field near Winfield, KS. It was sleek and beautiful in the air as well as on the ground. In the summer of 1958 Harlan earned many multiplace soaring records in various categories, flying out of Odessa, TX. See any Soaring Sailplane Directory for details. Ross continued to fly his big ship at every opportunity at the same time instructing in the Beech Aircraft Company Flying Club.

While attending the 1960 SSA National Soaring Contest at Odessa's Ector County Airport, I introduced my young glider pilot friend, 16 year old Bob Storck, to Harland and his wife Betty. With their son, Kenny, they had just flown a club Bonanza in for a few days to visit with the competition pilots.

As the years passed, Harland's work load at Beech, instructing in the club and sharing with Betty the care of their invalid son Kenny became too much. After 20 years at Beech and the loss of their son, prospects of retirement became welcome.

Harland and Betty moved to New Mexico, near Santa Fe in 1973. By 1975 they had settled on the east side of the Sandia Mountains, building a trailer park on 5 acres. By this time Harland had begun towing in the club PA-18 for the Albuquerque Soaring Club at Moriarty. Harland kept current by flying the latest new glass ships. He also brought the R-6 out of retirement, assembling it in the club hangar and installing a retractable dual wheel main landing gear. He also worked with me part time

on finishing the Mescalero and getting it ready for a first flight. Later he began spending more time at home, resting and putting his life in order. After his 4th heart attack, life finally left Harland in the spring of 1981.

Harland's wife, Betty, with help of many friends brought the R-6 home in its trailer. Now the story returns to Bob Storck. Bob aged along with the rest of us from 16 in 1960, finishing high school and college and becoming a successful magazine writer. As a sideline he managed Bungee Cord, the publication of the Vintage Soaring Society during its formative years as Editor/Archivist. In early 1982 Bob met with Betty Ross to offer to purchase the R-6, which Betty accepted. Bob towed the great ship in its trailer back east to his home in Waldorf, MD. Later Bob loaned the aircraft to the National Soaring Museum. However it was never displayed for lack of space. In recent years the US Southwest Soaring Museum has petitioned the NSM Directors to return the ship back to its last home in Moriarty, NM. The directors approved this move, Peter Smith, NSM Managing Director approved as did owner Bob Storck.

On May 1st- 2008, my friend, Tryggvi Helgason and I arrived at NSM. With help from Peter Smith we loaded the famous R-6 sailplane in our big USSSM trailer and returned it to its rightful home in Moriarty, New Mexico. It is being restored to like new condition before being displayed.

For a good read on the early life of Harland Ross see Al Santilli's report, "The Man I Knew" in the May 1982 issue of Soaring shortly after Harland's passing.



Note: The radio-controlled Soaring Electric Powered Model Contest will be held at the Museum the weekend of 22-24 August 2008. The models will be flown from the East and South of the Main Building at 918 E. Route 66, Moriarty. Trophies and Awards will be given in various categories.

Membership numbers and expiration dates are on your mailing labels.

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DIRECTIONS TO THE MUSEUM

We are located at 918 East Old Route 66 in Moriarty, New Mexico. Traveling East from Albuquerque on Interstate 40 take exit 197 (about 35 miles from the city). Exit right onto Highway 66 traveling West. We are the big building on your left.

Traveling West on Interstate 40 exit right at exit 197, continue heading West on Old route 66. We are the big building on your left as you enter 66.
Note: Deadline for Copy for the Fall Issue is August 15th

USSSM Membership Application

Benefits of memberships include:

1. Free admission to museum facilities.
2. 10% discount on gift shop purchases.
3. Receive all USSSM mailings.
4. The satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to build a first-class museum.

Life members and major contributors and their minor children receive these benefits for life. Other members receive them for one year. Family, Supporting and Sustaining include minor children. Supporting and Sustaining accrue toward a Life membership.

Send check to: U.S. Southwest Soaring Museum
P.O. Box 3626
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