



# The Flyer



April 2010 Issue, Vol. Eighteen, No. 4  
**High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force**  
**On the Web at HighSkyWing.org**  
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 432-561-5581

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## Next Wing Meeting, Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Hangar

### From the Lead

by Col Randy Wilson

Once again, I'm late with the newsletter but here goes my best attempt to get everyone up to date on HSW events and activities.

Our next Wing meeting is Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup> in the hangar with the usual social hour at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. Our speaker will be Charlie West, a B-24 bombardier in WWII, who had to cancel last month but should be here for this meeting. As always, please remember to bring a covered dish or favorite deli item to share for dinner. At this month's meeting we will also be signing up members for specific jobs on Memorial Day, May 31<sup>st</sup>. Be sure and see how you can help out.

As noted elsewhere, we continue to work to get all five of our assigned planes back in the air. The SNJ got a new battery Monday and now starts! The Stinson, which suffered a prop strike a few Saturdays ago, is almost back together.

Col Chris Aycock, shown below with the newly overhauled prop at the March Wing meeting, ran into some gusty winds on takeoff and aborted his flight in the Stinson. These are the sort of minor issues that go with gaining experience, especially in light tailwheel aircraft out here in West Texas. Chris is returning the



Stinson to fully serviceable condition at no cost to the Wing, and, with a bit of additional instruction, he will be back on flight status very soon.

We have some good news on the J2K "Tar-Baby", in that we have been able to get one of the six-bolt prop hubs certified to go with the newly overhauled wood prop. Both should be shipping back soon. We had temporarily mounted the very similar prop from the PT-19 on the J2K, since the PT-19 is down waiting on some new cylinders. For other details on Wing aircraft maintenance, please see Col Bill Coombes' column starting on page 2 of this issue.

The local air show and fly-in season has started and I am trying to keep our online calendar updated, so please check that at <http://highskywing.org/events.htm> regularly. As always, if you have any questions, please give me a call or drop me an email.

### Our Newest Members

Please welcome new High Sky Wing members who have joined in the last few months including Cols Nelson Schott, Bill & Margaret Billingsley, Barbara Graff, Alwana Mellick, Barbara "Babs" Hilliard, Jim "Woody" Woodford, Jim Murphy, Cowden Ward Jr., Richard Gensheimer, Chris Rutter, Stuart Beal, Janet Rine, Keith Wood, David Baker, Charles Hutchins, Steve Byrd and Martha Crabb.

If you haven't yet received a welcome letter, I hope to catch up on those this week. Don't forget that you can visit our website at <http://highskywing.org> to get copies of the current and past newsletters, plus check our online calendar of events, to see when and where the next meeting, work party of flying event is planned.

As always, I'm sure I must have missed somebody, so if you know of another new HSW member that isn't listed, please give me a call or drop me an email so I can correct any oversights.

## Turn and Bank

by Col Steve Bolin

Through the middle of April now, and the High Sky Wing is rolling in dough. Thanks to Robin Donnelly and Bill Coombes for their donations toward the L-17 Navion, and to new member Stuart Beal for his donation to the Wing. Our monthly meetings continue to generate about \$250 per month in donations to put on our pot luck dinners, and Bingo was able to make that \$6,000 donation to the Wing this month.

The expense side of the equation includes \$3,400 in repairs to our aircraft this month. As well as \$5,057 in aircraft insurance. The good news is we will be requesting some of those repair monies back from the aircraft accounts. That is what it's there for, to maintain the aircraft. The best way to spread the expense is to increase our membership. Let's tell all of our friends about the important job we're doing, and Keep 'Em Flying.

As always, detailed monthly reports are available in the Ready Room. Or if you prefer, just ask me to email you a report. I'll be happy to send any member any report I can generate.

## From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Well, gang, the bulk of what follows is from LAST MONTH! Thanks to some electronic "lostness," my column never made its appearance in the newsletter. I thought it might be fun to include the old one, but add UPDATES in big letters so you will know the latest from the maintenance front. There have been changes.....

You've heard of the saying "Cheer up, things could be worse." Well, I cheered up and presented a rosy report regarding the maintenance status of the High Sky Wing fleet and, sure enough, things got worse! First, we found the Stinson with a dead battery (minor annoyance), but then, in getting ready to annual the PT-19, we found it has a cracked cylinder, plus another cylinder with low compression. That was followed by the never-ending saga of the Tarbaby and the prop hub. Our seemingly simple overhaul of the Tarbaby's prop led to an inspection of her prop hub assembly, which of course did not pass inspection and is of course made of "unobtainium." Plus we had to replace the starter in the SNJ....

UPDATES: THE STINSON HAD A MUCH WORSE PROBLEM, WHICH I'M SURE IS MEN-

TIONED ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE. OFF-SHOOT, WE HAD TO DO A PARTIAL TEAR-DOWN OF THE STINSON ENGINE, AND WE FOUND A PROBLEM (not related to Chris' event) WHICH MEANS THE STINSON IS "DOWN" UNTIL WE COLLECT THE NECESSARY PARTS.

And you just thought the Navion would be the only major project this spring???

On a more positive side, the starter on the SNJ was a simple (?) replacement, and thanks to Lance Sommers, Garrett Donnelly, and Doug Gihvan, the old one was removed, and thanks to John Meyer (welcome back!) and another new volunteer whose name escapes me, the new one was installed. So, the SNJ is doing fine and Lance was able to give some rides, and have Mike Burke check him out as a "CAF instructor pilot." I even flew the airplane again....

UPDATE NUMBER TWO: THE SNJ HAD ITS ANNUAL, AND IT IS IN GOOD HEALTH. THANK YOU'S GO TO COL. BOB KEATING AND COL. LANCE SOMMERS FOR BEING THE LEAD DOGS IN THAT TEAM.

The PT-19 engine will have to be repaired, so we sent off cylinders and, later in the summer, we will begin an extensive rebuild of the engine, just as we did with Tarbaby. Hopefully, James Martin, Lance and Eric Van Hoff can do their magic once again on a Ranger engine. I would hope that all who enjoy flying that airplane or riding in it will help monetarily in fixing it (translation: we need some bucks!).

NO UPDATE ON THE PT-19.

Thanks to James and Paul Cooper and Phillip Goforth and H.A. Tuck and Wing Leader Randy and, well, quite a few folks, work is well underway on the Navion. Currently, if you've ever wanted to see an "exploded view" of an airplane you can check out the Navion hanging in the hangar. The new tanks are in, and, after a thorough cleaning, the reinstall will begin. The structure of the airplane is remarkably clean and free of corrosion, so that is a big positive. James Martin deserves a big hand for diving in head-first, and actually shedding blood on the airplane: that is commitment! Oh, and Drew Diggins has become a flying sponsor on the Navion, joining John Echols, me, and Blake Cowart. Bob Wray is another who made a verbal commitment, and I even think CAF President Steve Brown made noises about a sponsorship. Once finished, I think the Navion will provide new opportunities for potential Wing pilots, and it will look good

next to the rest of the High Sky Wing fleet.

**BIG UPDATE! WITHOUT ANY SOFT MUSIC, WINE, OR WHISPERS OF SWEET NOTHINGS, WE MATED THE WINGS WITH THE REST OF THE NAVION. ALL WENT WELL, AND WE SEE A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE A FEW MINOR HURDLES TO OVERCOME, BUT THE NAVION SHOULD FLY BY SUMMER. AND, THANK YOU TO ROBIN DONNELLY FOR BECOMING ANOTHER FLYING SPONSOR ON THE AIRPLANE.**

All for now, but (changing hats to General Staff) THANK YOU ALL for your efforts that resulted in the High Sky Wing leading the way in 2009 with an impressive 87% retention rate, which led ALL CAF units! That tells me we are a happy group and that we are growing in lots of ways. Keep up what you do and tell your neighbors to come on out!

**UPDATE ON THE HAPPINESS FRONT. I AM PRETTY MUCH TIRED OF ALL THE DRAMA ASSOCIATED WITH THE CAF (ON THE GENERAL STAFF LEVEL) AND SURELY DON'T LIKE TO DEAL WITH SIMILAR THINGS WITH THE HIGH SKY WING. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ALL THE GRUESOME DETAILS OF THE PAST TWO YEARS OF CONFLICT, I WILL SIT DOWN WITH YOU ONE ON ONE. BUT, FOR THE SAKE OF THE WING, LET'S NOT LET THOSE EVENTS GET IN THE WAY OF THE ENJOYMENT WE ALL SHARE WITH HSW ACTIVITIES.**

Until next month, work parties are Mondays and Wednesdays beginning around 6, so come on out. And, remember, lefty-loosey, righty-tighty.

## **Operationally Speaking**

by Col Chris Aycock

You may recall that last year the CAF's North American T-28A came up for assignment. The plane had not been properly maintained by its prior "owners" and had incurred significant debt (more than \$30,000) owed to the CAF and was in need of an air-worthy engine. The HSW made a proposal to take assignment of the aircraft and to make the plane flyable again if HQ could forgive the debt and if the Wing could raise the needed funds. At that time, HQ could not agree to those terms but I am very excited to report that HQ is now offering the HSW the opportunity to take assignment of the T-28A debt-free!

This airplane would make a great addition to our

family. It will fly well with the SNJ and expand our mission capability. Also, as a nose wheel airplane, it will give pilots with significant high-performance experience but with little tail wheel time the opportunity to participate as a CAF pilot thereby giving us more recruiting opportunities.

The plane will still require a replacement engine along with some other needed maintenance so it would be irresponsible for the HSW to accept assignment unless we can ensure that we can afford it. The best way to ensure that we can both maintain and operate the aircraft is to raise dedicated funds for the T-28A. In addition to the overwhelming support from the General Staff (as evidenced by its forgiveness of the debt), we already have commitments for full aircraft sponsorships from several wing members, including CAF President, Steve Brown, and General Staff Member and the P-51 "Red Nose" pilot, Keith Wood. We have received designated donations from other members of the General Staff and from several Wing members.

We are well on our way to being able to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity. I would like to invite you to join this effort to get the T-28A flying. Whether you would like to help by donating a few dollars or by participating in a full sponsorship, any level of donation will make a great difference. Also, let us not be limited by only asking of ourselves in this effort. Imagine what would happen if each member would commit to raise \$100, \$200, or even \$500 in support of this mission. We can do this and I can't wait! If you are interested in participating in keeping the T-28A alive or if you have any questions about sponsorship or donations, please get with me, Steve Bolin, or Randy Wilson.

With the addition of the Navion, the many new wing members, and now this opportunity to obtain an amazing aircraft, this is truly an exciting time to be a member of the HSW.



# *Lest We Forget*

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## Safety's Edge

by Col Bobby Meroney

Hangar Safety? Looking around the hangar there is a lot going on. From the work being done on the L-17 to the inspection just finished on the SNJ and the engine inspection on the Stinson. Now we can throw in air show season and the operation of these aircraft from and to our hangar.

Beware of turning props, moving aircraft, fuel trucks and tugs. Is a fire extinguisher needed for engine start ups? Where are the fire extinguishers located? How about the first aid kit or emergency numbers — do we all know where they are located? If not, please ask myself or one of the other Wing officers.

Lifting and supporting or even suspending may be safe but always check that the jacks are in the right place, that the cable wrapped around the beam over your head is not cutting into the cable or that the jig has not shifted. What I am trying to get across is to please be aware of your surroundings and help us look out for each other.

## High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell

Executive Officer: Rick Peterson

Adjutant: Lauri Skinner - 553-2316 cell

Finance: Steve Bolin

Operations: Chris Aycock

Maintenance: Bill Coombes

Safety - Bobby Meroney

**New Hangar Phone: (432) 561-5581**

all numbers are Area Code 432 unless indicated

## What's Happening & When

May 6 - Wing Staff meeting (6pm)

May 8 - Big Spring Fly-In

May 27 - Wing meeting (7 pm)

May 29 - WASP Museum Fly-In

**Work Parties every Monday and Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. until done**

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**Next Wing Meeting, Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Hangar**

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