



The Flyer

February 2003
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High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 915-563-5112

On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

More Progress on the *Tar-Baby*

As noted in this month's maintenance column, the Fairchild 24, a.k.a. *Tar-Baby* is now wearing its new paint and is back in the High Sky Wing hangar. The next step is to apply the final markings to make her a pre-World War II U. S. Coast Guard J2K-1.

Work also continues on the interior of the plane and we hope that it won't be too much longer before we can roll her out and test run the engine.

Why not make it a point to attend the next Wing meeting, Thursday February 20th at 7:00pm and see the *Tar-Baby's* new clothes. That would also be a great time to pay your 2003 Wing dues, as this type of work doesn't come cheap! See you there.



Don't Forget!
Your 2003
Wing Dues



From the Back Office

by Col Ralph Gillette

Greetings from the "Back Office". January brought many changes to the High Sky Wing. Our newly elected staff took the reins of the Wing, Tar-Baby went to the beauty parlor for new makeup and we had a great awards banquet.

The awards banquet was held at La Bodega instead of the hanger or the Hilton. Our two major Wing awards were given to **Colonel Jim Moore** as **High Sky Wing Colonel of the Year** for 2002 and **Spirit of the Eagle** went to **Colonel Bob Stine**. Both Colonels have spent many hours on wing business, Jim being stuck to Tar-Baby and Bob with the calculator trying to keep the wing financially sound. Everybody agreed both awards were well deserved and long overdue.

Your staff is committed to getting the involvement of the wing members going again. We had a Super Bowl party that was great. You can usually find a group sitting around the hanger discussing the problems of the world on Friday evenings. Our activities coordinator, Lauri Skinner, is hard at work on several great ideas for future specials and would welcome any ideas you might have. Watch her column elsewhere in this newsletter.

The wing needs your help. Randy Wilson is looking for help on the newsletter. We are looking for someone with a good computer that has an interest in publishing or writing. Randy says it doesn't take too long to get things formatted, once the articles are in his hands. I would appreciate any help you can offer us on this.

The winter Wing Staff Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites in Midland on February 22nd and 23rd. Every one is invited. There is always something new and different to learn at the Staff Conference.

See you at the Wing Meeting on Thursday night, February 20th. See the Exec's column for details.



Executive Views

by Col Gena Linebarger

Here we are, already well on our way into 2003. I look forward to the year as Executive Officer, fulfilling the term for Ralph Gillette, who has now bumped up the ladder to Wing Leader. Please join me in supporting Ralph in all of his endeavors as he leads the HSW through the next two years.

The February 20th Wing meeting will feature two guests from Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene. They will share with us their experiences flying missions in the B-1B Lancer. Invite your friends and families to enjoy a night at the HSW. As always, bring your favorite dish for the feast.

Be sure to check your Newsletter each month for many new and exciting events and fund-raisers planned for the HSW.

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

PROGRESS! It is so gratifying when visible progress on the Tarbaby is being made. We were able to get the airplane into the paint shop earlier than I anticipated, and so I hope that all of you will be in attendance at our February meeting as we roll out the Tarbaby in her new US Coast Guard paint scheme. I believe that all of our money and effort will result in a truly spectacular airplane, one that will be a showpiece in the CAF fleet. We will have some minor radio work to complete, and we haven't run the engine yet, but the Tarbaby will soon see air underneath her wings for the first time since December of 2000!

On the SNJ front, the annual inspection of 101X is going slowly. The airframe has been inspected by Harold Davis and his brother and received a clean bill of health. We swung the landing gear and John Meyer was kind enough to come over to watch that procedure for us. A new tailwheel shock strut has been installed, by Randy, Norm, Rudy and Jim, and that will help the ground handling of the airplane. We had to sent off some instruments to be overhauled, and they haven't made it back yet, but we hope that will happen soon. Rodney has been over checking the timing and doing some engine "looking" to try to find out why we have an ongoing plug fouling problem. So far, that remains a mystery, but I am confident that Rodney will find the answers. We hope to do the compression check Saturday and then button her back up for another year.

When you come into the hangar, please note that the blue and white airplane sitting in the corner is not the Tarbaby in her new paint scheme. Wing member Wayne Bissett's dad owns a Bellanca Scout, and Wayne asked if it would be OK for him to put the airplane in our hangar while Rudy does some work to it. The staff voted that that was an excellent use of our hangar space, and Wayne made a lovely donation to the Tarbaby fund as a show of support for the mission of the HSW. Wayne tells me that he wants to finish up getting his ticket in the airplane. Also, I believe he wants to make it available for interested folks to build some tailwheel time, to ease the transition into the Tarbaby, or the PT-19, or even the SNJ. Please give Wayne a big thanks when you see him.

In the search for new ways to make some money for the Wing, I spoke to Eric about washing some CAF airplanes in our hangar for some bucks. Assuming we get the SNJ's put back together soon, I'd like to see us take over the "clean up detail" of airplanes on display in the main hangar. We can pocket \$100 for each SNJ sized airplane we wash. This would give us something to do on Saturdays (maybe one Saturday a month) besides eat donuts and chat. Let me know what you think of that plan.

Finally, as other members of the staff have mentioned in their columns, we simply must increase our membership AND raise some money. Watch the newsletter for more information about what YOU can do to help out. Until the meeting on the 20th....

Righty tighty, lefty loosey.



With the able help of Harold Davis, Bill Coombes and Ralph Gillette examine the SNJ's spark plugs as part of the plane's annual maintenance and inspection.

As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

If you haven't seen much of me these last couple of months, it has been due to my having to be out in California a great deal to help with Pat's father who was diagnosed with an advanced cancer just before Thanksgiving. The good news is he is doing better now and we hope all will continue to go well but we will have to spend more time out there over the next few weeks and months.

As Ralph mentioned in his column, I could use some help from someone in the Wing to help edit and publish the newsletter when I am tied up or not in town. Right now, the newsletter is put together using Adobe PageMaker, from which we print a black and white copy for mailing, and then Adobe Acrobat is used to create the color copy that you can download, view and print from our web site.

If anyone has experience with PageMaker or has Microsoft Publisher or any other page layout software that they could use, I'd be happy to have help so we could get the newsletter out sooner. Using a publishing program just makes it easier to layout and format the newsletter and give it a professional look. If you are interested, please drop me an e-mail or give me a call.

As for flying, we haven't done any of that for a while, as the SNJ is still undergoing its annual maintenance and inspection. As Bill noted, we did replace the old tailwheel strut with a rebuilt one, which should make it a lot easier to handle on the ground. I'd like to again thank Col Rusty Hall, who donated to the repair of the strut after having to fight with the old one on a check ride last year.

As shown in the photo on this page, we are currently chasing down a gremlin that is causing some plug fouling and rough running. After rechecking the timing on the mags, it looks like some of the plugs may be the problem but I'm sure that we will get to the bottom of the problem shortly.

As the J2K (that's the Navy designation for the Fairchild Model 24, a.k.a. *Tar-Baby*) gets closer to flying, we are still looking for pilots with tailwheel experience to fly both the it and the SNJ. If you know of any candidates, please invite them to join us at a Wing meeting or out at the hangar some Friday evening or Saturday morning. Why not try and bring a guest to the next Wing meeting and see if we can interest them in becoming a Wing member. See you there. Fly safe.

HIGH SKY WING - CAF
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What's Happening

by Col Lauri Skinner

As I have foolishly agreed to help out as the Wing's Activity Director, I thought I'd report on our Super Bowl Sunday gathering, compete with big screen TV coverage of the game. About 35 members and guests showed up and enjoyed good food, friendship and an interesting game.

We are now planning a **Mardi Gras party** at the hangar on **Saturday, March 1st starting at 6:00pm**. For a \$5.00 donation you will enjoy catfish with all the fixin's, plus Cajun music and a chance to show off your own talents at the karaoke machine. We will also have a prize for the best Mardi Gras mask, hat or costume. Be sure to come out and join your friends for a little fun.

Don't forget that on most Friday evenings you will find the hangar and lounge open, and you and your guests are invited to join us for an informal get-together to wind down from the week. See you there!

High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Ralph Gillette - 570-8093 ofc
Executive Officer: Gena Linebarger
Adjutant: Mary Alice Tidwell
Finance: Bob Stine
Operations: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell
Maintenance: Bill Coombes - 689-8359 home
Safety - David Linebarger

Hangar Phone: (915) 563-5112

all numbers are Area Code 915 unless indicated

What's Happening & When

Feb 20 - Wing meeting
Feb 22-23 - Winter Staff Conference
Mar 1 - Staff meeting
Mar 1 - Mardi Gras party
Mar 20 - Wing meeting
Apr 5 - Staff meeting
Apr 17 - Wing meeting

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, February 20th at 7:00pm in the Hangar
