



The Flyer



February 2010 Issue, Vol. Eighteen, No. 2
High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force
On the Web at HighSkyWing.org
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 432-561-5581

Next Wing Meeting, Thursday February 25th at 7:00 p.m. in the Hangar

From the Lead

by Col Randy Wilson

FLASH! Just as I was about to put this edition of the newsletter to bed, I received word that the judge has ruled in favor of the CAF in the matter of the makeup of the museum board of directors. In short, a receiver will be appointed to hold a meeting to elect a properly constituted board of directors with a majority of currently serving CAF General Staff members and elect officers. You can read a bit more on the CAF web site in Steve Brown's CEO blog, and the final ruling will be posted there for all to see and read as soon as it is available. Now on to the rest of the news.

Our next High Sky Wing meeting will be Thursday, February 25th in the ComCtr hangar. As usual, social hour will begin at 6:00 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m. Please remember to bring a covered dish or favorite deli item to share for dinner. The program will be a discussion of various Wing projects that need to be done, with hopes that some will step forward to see them through. Many of these projects can be finished in a short time, so don't be afraid of stepping up and contributing your time.

At the last HSW staff meeting, we voted to accept assignment of the North American L-17A, which aside from a fuel leak, seems to be in very good condition. A plan has been made by our maintenance team to order refurbished fuel tanks and once they are on hand, to demate the fuselage and wings to replace the tanks and make any other repairs needed. Once started, we hope to have the plane flying in 6-8 weeks. There is a small negative balance in the L-17's account for a fuel leak repair and other expenses getting the plane to Midland from Florida.

At the staff meeting, we also voted to adjust the prices of rides for hire in our planes to \$175 in the PT-19 and \$295 in the SNJ. We will also post some of the upcoming fly-ins and air shows on our events calendar

online on our website as soon as possible. Our new Operations Officer (and legal beagle) Chris Aycock has had a few other items on his plate recently!

We are also working to send several HSW planes to attend the Oshkosh show this year. Several pilots have expressed interest in going and riders are being sought to help share the work and expenses. Again, we will have more information at the next Wing meeting.

There is still interest in trying to acquire the T-28A which we looked at earlier but found to require a substantial amount of funds for a new engine and other costs. A committee was authorized to try to raise the required funds to make the T-28A airworthy again, without significant direct cost to the Wing. See the Operations column for more details.

This Saturday, February 20th, will be a work day for the Wing, and we will be cooking lunch for all our workers, plus the members of the newly formed Invader Squadron that will be starting to annual the A-26 *Spirit of Waco*, in the main CAF hangar. Come out and help and enjoy lunch provided by Col Gena and David Linebarger and crew.

March 18th - 21st is the CAF Wing Staff Conference, with all meetings and events to be held on the CAF grounds, including the Commemorative Center. We are looking for volunteers to provide lunch for our visiting Colonels on Friday, and this will be a fund raiser for the HSW as well. If you can help, please contact me. We also plan to have our Ready Room open for guests on Thursday evening only, as after that, there will be an O' Club operating in the Gunfighter Pub through the weekend.

Thanks to all who have paid their 2010 HSW dues and just a reminder to those who haven't yet! I hope to see you Saturday or at the next Wing meeting. Fly safe, y'all.

Don't Forget!
Your 2010 Wing Dues Are Now Due

Membership News

by Col Lauri Skinner

I want to thank all of you who have paid your 2010 wing dues. If you have not yet done so, the February general meeting will be a great time to do this. Either Steve Bolin or I will be glad to take those.

Think of all that you get by belonging to the High Sky Wing. For \$50.00 you get the relaxation of the Ready Room, opportunities to fly and support the various aircraft assigned to us, hearing a variety of speakers, and meeting other people who have the same interests in history, aircraft and preserving these for future generations.

Join us for the February meeting to hear other ways you can help in a variety of areas that will continue to move our wing forward.

Safety's Edge

by Col Bobby Meroney

Webster defines Safety as, "Any device for preventing an accident". We all can prevent an accident from happening. From air hoses and electrical cords lying on the floor, fluid spills and items just being stacked around. Never assume the next person will pick it up, move it or clean it up. By taking a few minutes we all can prevent a lifetime of regret due to someone getting injured. Its not just you, me, him or her, it's US. By taking this action we all can be safe not only around the hanger but at home and work.

On March 18th - 21st, the CAF Wing Staff Conference will take place. I encourage everyone who wants to see and learn how the CAF works and functions to attend. The event though it is centered around unit elected staff it is opened to all and there is a lot of information that is pasted on for all members of the CAF and gives members a chance to ask questions. So mark your calendars and I hope to see you there.

Operationally Speaking

by Col Chris Aycock

If you have not had a chance to do so, please come by the Commemorative Center soon to see the newest member of our family. She is very bright, shiny, makes a mess on the floor, and even has blue eyes (well the nose art does anyway). On Saturday, February 6th, the Wing Staff unanimously voted to accept assignment of the 1948 L-17 Navion. She needs a little work but we expect our crack maintenance team will have her in the air by the time flying season is in full swing.

Perhaps as exciting as our new addition is the Wing Staff's formation of a committee for the purpose of raising at least \$100,000 so that the wing can again pursue assignment of the T-28A. Committee members are Lance Sommers, Brad Bond, Sam Strahan, Bill Coombes, and CAF President, Steve Brown. Although \$100,000 is, without any context, a large sum of money, with a group of our size hitting that target is very realistic. Imagine, we have nearly 200 members in our wing. If each member committed to raising only \$100, we would have completed nearly 20% of our goal. I have no doubt that we can do better than that and we have already heard word of interest and excitement in the community about this endeavor. When you see any of these gentlemen, please offer your assistance in raising these funds. The T-28 offers our wing many opportunities and will be a great asset to our HSW.

Your Flight Evaluation Board, or FEB, has been busy. The FEB approved Lance Sommers to transition to the CAF Instructor Rating in the T-6/SNJ. Lance already holds a CAF Instructor Rating in PT-19, the Stinson 105, and Tarbaby. The FEB also approved Sam Strahan and Chris Aycock to transition into Tarbaby. James Martin, Steve Bolin, Sam Strahan, and Chris Aycock were authorized to begin transition training into the T-6/SNJ. Bob Keating and Brad Bond will soon be taking check rides in the PT-19 and the Stinson 105. Both of these gentlemen are professional pilots and adding them to the Wing's pilot roster are great additions.

Air show and fly-in season is fast approaching. Be sure and check the Wing's event calendar which can be accessed from the HSW web page for events and dates. We expect to have a busy flying season this year. If you have not already done so, please be sure and update your hold harmless agreement so that you will be ready to fly. There should be lots of upcoming opportunities to commit aviation.

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Yep, it is me, EX-Chief of Staff Bill Coombes, back in the saddle as the High Sky Wing Maintenance Officer. It is good to be involved again with the Wing's fleet of aircraft, particularly since I have so many outstanding "real mechanics" (in James Martin, Bob Keating, and Lance Sommers among others) to call on to do the "real work." My time of

serious wrench-twisting ended when I sold my SNJ to H.D. Butler, and I consented to take on the job of Maintenance Officer on the condition that others who are much more skilled and talented be there to do the work necessary to keep our fleet airborne. So, I'm going to function more as an organizer/cheerleader (why does that sound like a Strahan job description??) to assist the real maintenance people. I hope many others in the Wing will want to get involved with the on-going work necessary to "keep 'em flying."

The big project we are taking on is the L-17 Navion, which the Wing staff just voted to accept as the newest Wing airplane. It has a leak in the fuel tank, fixable only by de-mating the wing and fuselage. This is a major undertaking but Bob Keating, James Martin, Lance Sommers, Mark Baxter, and David Linebarger have already put forward a plan to accomplish this. We hope to begin ASAP (David has already made some cradles for the wings: thanks!). We are also going to be looking at work nights of Mondays and Wednesdays beginning at 6:30 to get some more time for our airplanes. Silver Eagles, stand tall again!! Saturdays when the weather is good becomes "fly days" and not "fix days" so we are going to see what kind of response we can get from those of you interested in working on the airplanes. I will provide some pizza for our first few evenings so come on out.

To heighten excitement for the Navion project, all those who come to work on it will have a say in the "replacement nose art" to adorn "MacArthur's Taxi" (as it was used in the Korean conflict). Right now "Misty Blue" is a rather modern-ish "sticker" and I believe we can do better, with a different name and a more...hmmmm...appealing form.

James has taken the lead on getting the prop on the Tarbaby overhauled, but, as in all things Tarbaby, that simple project has taken on more epic proportions. We were going to send off the PT-19 prop as well but I think we shall hold off on that for another flying season. We do have annuals coming up for the SNJ and the PT, so be watching your emails for alerts on those projects. As they are in the rides program, actual work on those two planes is limited, but there are things that can be done to help expedite the process. We hope to have all of our airplanes (with luck including the Navion) up and flying in May for the start of air show season.

In another column I wanted to share my thoughts with you about my time as Chief of Staff and of the

current "conflict de jour" that most of you are aware of. It is so good to be able to share all of that drama with Wing Leader Randy Wilson, a new GS member for 2010, and to have Chris Aycock, lawyer extraordinaire, as my consigliere.

Until next month, remember, lefty-loosey, and righty-tighty.

Turn and Bank

by Col Steve Bolin

Let's look back at 2009 from a financial point of view. We received over \$12,800 in donations, everything from helping pay for our potluck dinner supplies to Aircraft acquisition donations. Our special projects made the most income for us. (Bingo \$38,000, Cantina \$2,865, Airsho Volunteer dinner \$1,350, Bill Stella collecting cans \$325) and others for a total of special projects of \$45,432.78. Our aircraft rides program sold \$4,145. Your Wing dues paid in 2009 were \$8,215. This gave us a total income of \$69,197.46 for 2009.

Expenses for 2009 included \$12,000 in rent, and another \$6425 spent in improving or repairing the Commemorative Center. The Aircraft required \$9,355 in maintenance expenses this year, \$12,384 in insurance, and \$4,303 in fuel expenses. ANUAC remained at \$6,127 for 2009. Special projects expenses(Airsho Mixer \$1,050, Cantina \$1,113, Airsho Volunteer dinner \$519, and our inaugural Fly-in in the fog \$1,242) I did not take any special project trips to Las Vegas. Throw in the Misc. expenses and our total cash outlay for 2009 was \$68,834.57.

We netted a positive \$362.89 during the worst economic year in a long time. Thanks to all our members for their support both with cash and your time. If anyone is interested in more details please contact me. QuickBooks can generate more reports and graphs than I need. Also, if anyone is interested in learning about the Finance Officer position, let me know. I'm not trying to abdicate this throne you elected me to. I just might need some help in the future fending off the accusations of trips to Vegas on the company dime.

All joking aside, let's have another great year.

Super Bowl 2010 Party a Success!

I'm sorry I don't have any photos yet, but the Super Bowl party was a success with what seemed like lots of food and plenty of fun. Thanks to all who make this a fun event. Hope to see you all next year.

To the High Sky Wing

by Col Bill Coombes

I wanted to take a moment to write to you all, who have been so supportive of me and my roles as Airsho Chairman, Seminar Series guru, and Chief of Staff of the whole CAF, about the state of the CAF today and what you can do to help us accomplish our goals as an organization. I personally could not have done ANY of the things I've been credited with doing without the help of all of you, and serving on the General Staff and as Chief has been the high point of my involvement with the CAF.

As I said in a previous article in our newsletter, the High Sky Wing is the most important Wing in the whole CAF. We are the face of the organization, because of our proximity to Headquarters, because of our prominent role in Airsho, and because we "live" in the beautiful Commemorative Center. So, we have to be doing things right, we have to take the lead, and we have to grow. I was always pleased, when presiding over the GS meetings, to know that "my" unit was indeed doing it right. If the CAF is going to continue with its mission, there must be a successful High Sky Wing. That is why I've tried to push acquiring more aircraft for assignment, put more emphasis on recruiting and retaining members, and urged more visibility of our members at all events held at HQ.

Currently, there is internal conflict within blanket organization known as the CAF. In January the General Staff was forced into a position where removal of two members of the GS was necessary. This was followed by legal action taken to force the museum board to come into compliance with its own bylaws. Many of you are dismayed to see our "dirty laundry" aired in the local newspapers and are wondering just what in the hell those idiots on the GS are doing. A few of you blame all of this on Steve Brown.

Blaming Steve is totally unfair, and the GS is not made up of a bunch of idiots: I stake whatever reputation I've built up with you on both of those statements.

I would like to explain in as much detail as I possibly can the history of all of this conflict, and will ask to do so at our meeting this month. I want you all to understand, clearly and simply, what is going on. I can promise you that there are people in our organization who are now actively plotting to regain "control" come Airsho time via the General Staff elections, and who will be using the Winter Staff conference in March as a sounding board for their version of this dif-

ficult episode in the history of the CAF. I want to tell you the whole story, from me, as the eye of the storm, so you can counter the half-truths and exaggerations you have heard and will hear. I hope all of you can attend.

Being Chief of Staff was exhausting, frustrating, rewarding, and always entertaining. I feel privileged to have served.

Awards Dinner

We had about 80 folks attend the HSW Awards Dinner last month despite some cold and blustery weather, and all seemed to enjoy themselves. As usual, we thanked the outgoing Wing staff and welcomed the new staff onboard. We also presented our two special Wing awards, the Spirit of the Eagle award to Col James Martin and the Colonel of the Year award to Col Mike Hedrick. Their names will be added to other very deserving HSW members on the plaques in the Ready Room.

Thanks again to Col H. A. Tuck for his photographic help and skills of the event. I think I'll just let the photos tell the rest of the story, with a few captions, of course!



Col James Martin receives the Spirit of the Eagle award for his dedication to the High Sky Wing in 2009. Below, he and Bob Keating get comfortable under the new L-17A.





Adjutant Lauri Skinner presents Col Mike Hedrick with the Colonel of the Year award for his dedicated work not only as the HSW Membership Liaison officer but also for his help to the CAF with the local community in general.



One of the hardest working members of the HSW, Col David Linebarger is thanked for his services as Safety Officer but as we all know, David still does a great deal for the Wing. Please thank him for his service.



The awards dinner was a great success, with dinner catered by Outback, despite the strong winds, dinner was served! Anyone for cheesecake?



Your High Sky Wing staff for 2010. Left to right, Randy Wilson (Wing Leader), Bill Coombes (Maintenance Officer), Chris Aycock (Operations Officer), Bobby Meroney (Safety Officer), Rick Peterson (Executive Officer), Lauri Skinner (Adjutant) and Steve Bolin (Finance Officer). We all look forward to a great 2010 for the High Sky Wing.



And we can't forget some of the ladies of the HSW (and Blastards) including, from left to right, Cols Lauri Skinner, Susie Day, Gena Linebarger, Mary Ann Drennan and Rhonda Burke.



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Memorial Day Plans

by Col Randy Wilson

Memorial Day 2010 will be a great American outing, not only at the CAF but also with the Midland Rockhounds, who have partnered with the CAF to help promote a fun family Memorial Day set of events. You should be seeing some ads promoting all these activities as the date nears.

The High Sky Wing will help host a fly-in, plus serve lunch for all who fly or drive in to attend the Memorial Day activities. The formal ceremonies will start at or about 11:30 a.m. and will feature a fly over at noon, followed by lunch in the Commemorative Center. There will also be an Open Cockpit day in the ComCtr hangar and on the ramp for all to enjoy. As always, volunteers are welcome to come out and help make this a great event. When festivities end at the CAF, visitors will be heading to the Rockhounds game at 4:00 p.m. where admission is only \$2.00. Talk about a great American day out! We hope to see you all there to help with the festivities.

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

Feb 20 - Hangar work day & lunch

Feb 25 - Wing meeting (7 pm)

Mar 6 - Wing Staff meeting (10 am)

Mar 18-21 - CAF Wing Staff Conference

Mar 25 - Wing meeting (7 pm)

Next Wing Meeting, Thursday February 25th at 7:00 p.m. in the Hangar