



# The Flyer

March 2007  
Vol. Fifteen, No. 3

High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force  
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 432-563-5112

On the Web at  
HighSkyWing.org

## Wing Meeting March 22<sup>nd</sup>

Just a quick reminder that our next Wing meeting is this Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. in our hangar. Please don't forget to bring a covered dish to share.

Starting this month, we would like to offer all our guests, speakers and any new members a chance to go through the dinner buffet line first, as a kind of "thank you" for coming out to talk or visit with us. We hope you will all help with this basic show of hospitality.

## Executive Views

by Col Ted Claussen

I want to THANK ALL who help with the work on the B-24. It is a job well done! [Photos below. Ed]

At our March 22<sup>nd</sup> Wing Meeting, H.A. Tuck will be the narrator for Jean How's story about working with the B-36. I think everyone will have an enjoyable evening hearing about her many experiences. Be sure to join us for dinner and our speaker. Don't forget the seminar program on March 31<sup>th</sup> and, of course, the April 7<sup>th</sup> cookout for Open Cockpit Day.

## From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

'Tis the ides of March, but we have no Caesar to worry with, only the prospect of air shows and fly-outs to fill our springtime. Fortunately, thanks to the efforts of many, all of the airplanes in the High Sky Wing fleet will be flying. It is easy to be the Mainte-

nance Officer when we have talented people like ASMO Lance Sommers and VP of Maintenance for the whole CAF Eric Van Hoff helping us "less skilled workers" on these old airplanes.

We are deep into the annual on the SNJ, and so far we've replaced all the tires and tubes, done gear swing, cleaned and re-greased everything, and done an inspection of her "bare bones." We are in the process of replacing the front windscreen glass, as the old piece was pretty sad, and, of course, we'll have to run the airplane, do a compression check and change the oil. I believe we can have it done by Open Cockpit weekend, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to Eric, Lance, Bobby Meroney, Lyle Thornton, H.A. Tuck, Tom Kingon, Jim Moore, Ted Claussen, Randy Wilson, and others for taking the lead on getting the annual done.

The weather has finally cooperated, and the other three airplanes will have flown by the time you read this, with all the pilots getting recurrent. Elsewhere in the newsletter Randy will be mentioning the Burnet Airsho on April 14<sup>th</sup>. We will be taking all four of the Wing airplanes and I know we'll have the usual cast of characters over in the pyro field blowing stuff up. We shall figure out who is going with whom at the Wing meeting so don't miss it. Ditto for the show in Temple and the big EAA fly-in in Hondo on June 1-2<sup>nd</sup>. I have reserved the last 5 rooms in Hondo for that event, so

Continued on page 2



Stripping is no easy job! Just ask any of the High Sky Wing strippers! A big "AttaBoy" to all who showed up day after day to help strip the paint, glue and old fabric off the B-24A's rudders and elevators, getting them ready to recover.

Continued from page 1

we can take all the airplanes there and have rooms for the pilots and crew.

I'd like to don my General Staff hat for a second and tell you how much the High Sky Wing's efforts to help Gary Austin and the B-24 project are appreciated and admired. We are a unique outfit in that we TOOK THE LEAD in helping out, both with money and with manpower. So many of you have been out for the "stripping parties" (some maybe came expecting it to be something else???)....some names that come to mind are Sam Strahan, Blake Cowart, Bobby Meroney, Jim Moore, "Jet Boy" Steve Bolin, Ralph Gillette, Wayne Bissett, Robert Holton (new member), Randy Wilson, Tom Kingon, H.A. Tuck, Ted Claussen, Lyle Thornton, David Linebarger, Allen Mundell (sp?), Sue Bowen, Kay Nehring, Lance Sommers, and more. When May 12<sup>th</sup> comes and that airplane rolls out of the hangar, we can all take a great deal of pride in what our Wing has done.

## Being Safe!

by Col Lyle Thornton

Well it is March again and our West Texas weather is at its unpredictable best. We usually see everything from dust storms to heavy thunderstorms and sometimes at the same time. Please be alert to any changes that might put you in a dangerous situation. This includes working in the hangar during the day or night. We don't want to risk someone getting hurt or one of our aircraft getting damaged.

Right now we have a couple of projects that are ongoing. The SNJ is having its annual inspection. Also we are in the process of helping the B-29/B-24 Squadron by recovering the tail control surfaces for the B-24A. Both of these projects involve parts, chemicals, and tools that should be avoided if you are not directly involved in the project. If you are involved with these projects, please make sure that you have all the necessary personal protection that is needed to keep you safe.

Currently, the Safety Committee and I are involved in conforming to the standards that have been set up by the CAF's Ground Safety Coordinator. This will be an ongoing project that we would like to get more of our members to assist us in this endeavor. If you would like to help, please contact me at 432-770-2867 or see me at the Wing meeting.

**If it can't be done safely — Don't Do It!**



Col Tom Kingon was presented with the Wing's Colonel of the Year award for 2006 by Wing Leader Gena Linebarger at the February Wing meeting.



## As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

As the weather warms up, several of our pilots have had a chance to exercise their wings and get recurrent in our Wing aircraft. Also, we can start to give rides to members again. as Col Sue Bowen gets a ride in the PT-19 "convertable" in the photo above.

A couple of weeks ago, Steve Bolin and myself flew the PT-19 and Stinson 105, and this last weekend Bill Coombes flew those same planes plus the J2K (*Tar-Baby*), and I too, scared myself with three landings in the *Tar-Baby*. Lance Sommers also flew the PT-19. All of this is to get us current and legal to fly passengers after not flying much since mid-December.

Our next outing with the planes is to the Burnet air show, with the planes departing Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> (I certainly hope no one is superstitious!) for the show on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. We hope to be able to fly back home after the show on Saturday.

Current plans are for Lance Sommers to fly the SNJ, James Martin the PT-19, Bill Coombes the J2K



and Steve Bolin the Stinson 105. I will be going along as a spare/check pilot and to possibly help qualify one or more pilots as Senior Pilots in the air show.

We hope to sort out who wants to ride along at the Wing meeting this week, so if you want to go along and help with the planes at the show, speak up or catch me at the meeting. We could also use some folks to drive to Burnet and provide some extra transportation and act as ground crews. Again, let's visit at the meeting next Thursday.

I'd personally like to thank all the High Sky Wing pilots and pilot candidates for their very mature and heads-up attitudes towards flying our assigned aircraft. All of you clearly understand that it is a privilege to get to fly these planes, and that we are not only their custodians but also responsible for using them to teach the history of military aviation to young and old alike. I enjoy working and flying with all of you. Keep 'em flying and fly safe!

## New Members!

Please be sure to say hello to two of our newest members, Cols Robert Holton (top) and Kay Nehring. Thanks, as always to Col H. A. Tuck for the photos.



## Turn & Bank

by Col Steve Bolin

The Wing's finances are in very good shape. There, that's about all there is. I really don't pay that much attention to the fine detail. Just what you want to hear from the Finance Officer, isn't it? The truth is, I do pay attention to a lot of details about the Wing's books, and I'll be glad to share with anyone who has an interest. Most of the details are quite boring though, so I won't push them on everybody.

Highlights for the month so far include a \$1000 donation from the Virginia Ross Family, for a memorial fly-over we did last year, plus donations to the I Paid the Rent Club from Randy Wilson and David Linebarger. Our aluminum can sales continue to bring in money thanks to the hard work of Bill "Can-Can" Stella

Bingo continues to be outstanding, netting \$9000 this month. All of the aircraft funds have several thousand dollar balances. Other expenses were the normal utilities and hangar rent (about \$1200 per month), and a couple of supplies for the Stinson (primer pump) and SNJ (Tires and Tubes).

I'd like to make a special notice to Jim Adams for remembering us with his corporate matching funds. Many companies will match donations to your favorite charity, our Wing for instance, if they are asked. Ask if your company has matching gifts program. Thanks Jim.

This month's bottom line is the High Sky Wing has over \$60,000 in the bank to "Keep 'Em Flying." Till next month, I will keep the needle in the doghouse.

## A Mystery L-Bird

By Col Randy Wilson

We haven't had a mystery plane in a while, so I thought I'd try a mystery L-bird on for size. As always, there is no prize for correctly identifying it and the correct answer will be revealed, if I remember to, at the next Wing meeting. Please remind me!



**Don't Forget!**  
**Your 2007 Wing Dues Are Now Due**

HIGH SKY WING - CAF  
 Post Office Box 61064  
 Midland, Texas 79711-1064



On Sept. 1, 1952, a tornado struck Carswell AFB in Ft. Worth and the results were B-36 bombers scattered and damaged all over the ramps. Photo from ***B-36 Photo Scrapbook*** available from [www.specialtypress.com](http://www.specialtypress.com). Be sure to ask Col Lyn Fite why this photo is part of his family history, next time you see him.

### High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Gena Linebarger - 528-0997 cell

Executive Officer: Ted Claussen

Adjutant: Lauri Skinner - 553-2316 cell

Finance: Steve Bolin

Operations: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell

Maintenance: Bill Coombes - 689-8359 home

Safety - Lyle Thornton

Hangar Phone: (432) 563-5112

all numbers are Area Code 432 unless indicated

### What's Happening & When

Mar 22 - Wing meeting (7pm)

Mar 31 - Seminar program

Apr 5 - Wing staff meeting (7pm)

Apr 7 - Open Cockpit Day - **HSW Cooks**

Apr 14 - Burnet air show

Apr 21 - Seminar program

Apr 26 - Wing meeting (7pm)

**Next Wing Meeting is Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 7:00 pm at the Hangar**