



The Flyer

November 2001
Vol. Nine, No. 11

On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

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

Midland — We have a problem!

As many of you now know, we have run into a major problem trying to negotiate a new lease for our hangar. The airport administration wants to charge the CAF, and thus the High Sky Wing, a commercial rate for the hangar, despite the CAF being a recognized nonprofit aviation museum.

As Blake points out below, as things stand now, it looks like we are going to have to depend on a favorable ruling by the Midland city council to get a realistic lease agreement for the hangar.

When the city council meets in December, we would like to present them with as many letters and signatures as possible in support of an affordable lease of the hangar to the CAF for the use of the High Sky Wing. We need the support of all our members and their friends in this action.

At the November Wing meeting, we will have letters and petitions that you can use to help inform the city council of our problem and explain why the High Sky Wing is a benefit to Midland and its airport.

From the Back Office

by Col Blake Cowart

On Thursday, November 8th, Randy Wilson, Bill Coombes and I met with Harry Spannaus, Chairman of the Airport Board and Marv Easterly, the Airport Manager. Neils Agather of the General Staff, Bob Rice and Keith Lawrence of Headquarters were also in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the renewal of the High Sky Wing hangar lease.

After a long discussion in which little was gained, it is obvious that our position must be argued at the City Council meeting to be held later in the month. In short, the Manager and Chairman are not in positions to make exceptions to the policy. The hangar is being leased by a nonprofit entity and does not fall under a category that they normally handle. Any exceptions to business as usual must be made at the Council level.

The help of **all members** will be needed in this effort as we are dealing with our home and the likely continuance of the Wing. We will be using many forms of support in our endeavor through letter writing to the Council Members, signatures on petitions and personal contacts of friends of the Wing. We will discuss this further at the next membership meeting. The Staff and I will be glad to answer any questions, or help in pursuing any ideas you may have. This matter is of

utmost importance...I can't stress this strongly enough in this message.

Another area that I wish to bring to attention is the need to create new sources of revenue. We have put our bingo project on hold for now as it has not made any money in the past 12 months. Player participation has been waning and the loss of revenue was beginning to be more the rule rather than the exception. We hope that this is simply a temporary pause as the economy is dynamic; but we should plan for additional sources of income.

We will need to create additional projects and increase our emphasis on current ones. Possibly bring back into play other projects that we have not done for a few years. I have an idea or two which I am reviewing and I believe that Professor Coombes may hold a seminar BBQ next spring. In short, we need to work diligently to make up for the shortfall from bingo and bring in revenue to complete the restoration of the UC-61 Fairchild. We will discuss this area at the next few meetings as well.

Finally, don't forget that **Wing elections will be held at this month's meeting**. See you all there next Thursday evening.

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Oncet upon a time...(with sincere apologies to Joel Chandler Harris), dere wuz da Tarbaby, an' he live in da land o' milk an' honey called California. Fo' bery special men, what belong to da Confeberate Air Corps, took a trip to dis land, lookin fo' to buy a aireyplane fo da benefit and da joy o the whole Confeberate Air Corps, most especially da fine folks o de High Sky Wing. Da Tarbaby hear tell of these special men and he slicks hissself up real purty, and da men are sore impressed, and da money jes fly out o der wallets, and soon da Tarbaby belong to the Confeberates and da High Sky Wing.

When he done arrive at his new home, in da briarpatch acrost da street from da Headquarters of da CAF, my, how happy da folk wuz to see him. How some ever, da Tarbaby be's alittle sickly with oyl drippin frum da engyne and no poop in tree of his cylinders. Not be a problem, proclaim da fine folk of da High Sky Wing, we jes pitch right in and fix up da Tarbaby's sickly engine...and his scrapply ole' interior...and his stoppy brakes what don' let da wheels roll 'cuz dey be 'tuck...and his frayed and broke wires what run here and dere...and da tailyfeathers what gots a wiggle and a crack in dem where dey shouldn't...and den his tail-rolley-wheel done be broke, too, and den his overall covering on dem wings and da tail, why, dey be rotten too!! Purty soon da Tarbaby be need'n a whole overhaul so he can oncet more fly like da little byrddy dat God intended, and da whole High Sky Wing be stuck tight to da Tarbaby so dey cain't give him back to nobody!

And so is the story of the Fairchild UC-61, at least as Uncle Remus might have told it. Sadly, much of what is continued in the humorous account above is true. The latest discovery, made as we were making arrangements to have the vertical fin and rudder repaired, was that the fabric on the entire tail assembly and on at least one wing panel is no good, necessitating removal and recovering. Harold Davis, Dennis Givens and I have discussed the next steps to take, and with the consent of the HSW Staff, we are pressing ahead with the necessary repairs. With our current financial picture (read no bingo income), we will be stretched to get the Tarbaby flying, but WE WILL PREVAIL, and it will be one of the nicest Fairchilds anywhere...it just cost much more than we ever could have imagined. Please consider becoming a donor to

the Tarbaby's fund: we need you!

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about our on-going hangar lease situation. After meeting with Harry Spannus, chairman of the Airport Board, and Marv Easterly, the airport manager, it is clear that we MUST win this fight at the City Council level. This will require ALL HSW members to write letters, contact people to support us, have them sign petitions (available at the next meeting), and lastly, APPEAR IN MASS at the City Council meeting when this item is addressed. We are faced with losing our home: how badly do we want it will be clear by what we do to save it. Randy, Blake, Bob Stein, Mary Alice, Ralph, all of the HSW staff would be glad to fill you in on all the details anytime.

We have a mission in support of our HSW member Dave Crowder from Big Lake on Saturday morning, and our SNJ is running great, so we are looking forward to showing the flag for the Wing and the CAF at this Veteran's Day event. See you there?

In the meantime, rightie-tightie, lefty-loosey.



The Good News — the Tar-Baby's engine and nose is all back together. Check out the snappy copilot.



The Bad News — the Tar-Baby's tail is missing while repairs to the woodwork and fabric are being done. Note the larger than normal holes from the fabric test!

As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

A couple of Saturdays ago, I flew the SNJ on a short flight to exercise both the plane and the pilot, and everything ran great. Then, early last Saturday, Bill Coombes and I departed in the pair of SNJs headed for Big Lake, to fly over and participate in their Veteran's Day Parade and festivities.

The weather was cool but clear in Midland, but off to the southeast, in the direction of Big Lake, it looked like there might be some lower ceilings and visibility. A call to the weather guessers promised nothing lower than about a 4000 foot ceiling and visibilities of at least 6 miles. So, off we roared and arrived at the Reagan County airport about a half-hour later. As we neared Big Lake the weather was not as good as forecast but still not too bad.

We landed on the 50-foot wide north-south runway and taxied to the ramp to brief the fly over and refuel. However, as I taxied in, the SNJ's left brake pedal was suddenly low and the left brake very weak. After discussing the problem with Bill and our hosts, we explained that with the weak brake, it would be unwise to land back on the narrow runway at Big Lake, but we fueled and took off to fly over the parade.

Shortly after we took off, it was obvious that local in spots the ceiling and visibility had dropped a bit further, however, conditions were good enough to let us orbit the parade until it had reached the courthouse. At that point, we turned westward and started home, into better weather.

The trip back to Midland was uneventful, with a good lead as always by Bill. After being told by the tower that the winds were "calm", we overflew the field and checked the wind socks for ourselves. Sure enough, the "calm" wind was from the south, so we broke for a landing on 16R, the longest and widest runway.

Fortunately, my touchdown resulted in no need to use the failing left brake and with only a bit of hassle, we taxied back to the High Sky Wing ramp. At that point, the left brake pedal was basically on the floor, so I passed on the fancy parking and just shut the engine down after arriving safely back home.

We will be tackling the brake problem in the next few days and don't expect it to be anything too major but will let you know next month. Y'all fly safe!

Executive Views

by Col Ralph Gillette

The High Sky Wing was invited to participate in the Big Lake Veterans Day parade on Saturday, November 10th. Dave Crowder, a CAF and High Sky Wing member was the organizer. Dave told me there are 3500 people in Reagan County and I think at least 3000 were in the parade. There were forty units, mostly cars or other vehicles, but a few decorated flat beds. The one with Lady Liberty won first prize. The Grand Marshall of the parade was Blackie Blackburn, another CAF and High Sky Wing member.

Our intrepid SNJ drivers, Bill and Randy found highway 349 south to Rankin and then turned left on 67 to Big Lake. Unfortunately, 101X developed some brake problems and Randy wisely decided not to try another landing on the Big Lake narrow runway. They did do several passes over the parade route, lending the sounds of veteran aircraft to the festivities.

After the usual speeches by everybody from the Mayor of Big Lake to the Executive Officer of the High Sky Wing, everybody adjourned to the airport where the Blastards did a strafing run and a walking bomb blast. Very short, but well received.

The ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary and the Big Lake Museum fed those of us who could stay. Dave Crowder's wife did a great job on the beef for the BBQ. A really great day, and the sun did come out and warm things up a bit about parade time.

Our November speaker will be Courtney Clark. Vick Brockman will be our speaker in December and William S. Vanderland, Supervisory Senior Resident Agent, Midland Resident Agency; Federal Bureau of Investigation will be our February speaker.

This is Your Newsletter

by Col Randy Wilson

When I took on the job of editor of *The Flyer*, I knew what I was in for, but I do want to encourage any and all High Sky Wing members to submit stories, articles or ideas for articles, too. Also, if you have any interesting photos of Wing members or events, please let me know so we can share them here.

To help save postage, if you can get your copy from our website at <http://highskywing.org>, please send an e-mail to info@highskywing.org, so I can get your name and e-mail address and we can take you off the list to send a copy by USPS. Thank you.

Dollars and Cents

by Col Bob Stine

Bob did not have a report for the newsletter but the following information is from his financial statement at the November staff meeting.

For this year through the end of October, the Wing's income from all sources was \$58,407.14 and expenses were \$58,387.84, which gives a year-to-date net income of \$19.30.

Our major sources of income are Wing dues, the Golf Tournament, events at Airsho and general donations. Unfortunately, our participation in the bingo project and the income from that have now ended.

Major expenses are the insurance and upkeep of the CAF aircraft assigned to the Wing, the cost to put on the various fund raising projects, and of course, the cost of the hangar lease and utilities.

Bob will have details of our finances available at the Wing meeting, but it is pretty clear from the figures that we can not afford a major increase in the cost of our hangar lease.

High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Blake Cowart - 528-1344 cell

Executive Officer: Ralph Gillette

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

Nov 15 - Wing meeting

Dec 1 - Staff meeting

Dec 20 - Wing meeting

Jan 5 - Staff meeting

Jan 17 - Wing meeting

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, November 15th at 7:00pm in the Hangar

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