



The Flyer



ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

Four Positions Filled

The annual High Sky Wing (HSW) staff election was held at the monthly meeting on Thursday, December 8. Unopposed candidates **Steve Clinton** (Maintenance Officer), **Drew Diggins** (Operations Officer) and **Paul Cooper** (Safety Officer) were selected by acclamation. **Greg Gutting** and **Lauri Skinner** ran for Executive Officer. Greg was elected.

Many thanks to the Nominating Committee made up of **Chris Aycock**, **Gena Linebarger** and **John Echols** for their work.

The new officers bring a lot of expertise to their new positions and we look forward to their input to help the High Sky Wing achieve its mission. They will appreciate the continued support and hard work of all of the members. They represent you, the member, and as such they need your comments and suggestions to do a better job.

See the outside cover page for contact information for all Staff Officers.

WING LEADER REPORT BY MIKE HEDRICK



What's going on? It's a new year. 2012. At the High Sky Wing fortune has bestowed great things.

We have concluded our third year of "Occupying Commemorative Center",

and tonight, following the Monthly Staff Meeting (and three weeks away from the Wing for the holidays), I walked out of the Ready Room and into the gleaming museum that our hangar has become. The polished metal and brightly colored skins of our aircraft lifted me from the drudgery of administration and reminded me of why we're here.

While I was absent, our hard working maintenance group hung the new engine on the T-28. That shining hunk of radial engine up there at eye level makes it look like a real airplane again. Over the holidays the *Feasler Storch* was taken out of mothballs and reassembled for static display...now it's lurking in the corner like a giant prehistoric moth waiting for the sunlight and an open door. There's the

reassuringly familiar...the SNJ 101X, in its red, yellow and silver Navy training colors waits patiently to rock and roll another aspiring fighter pilot...the L-17 Navion reflecting every photon with its polished skin...the Fairchild J2K ready for winter operations with its enclosed cabin, and the open cockpit PT-19 waiting to be re-activated once warm weather returns...the always ready Stinson 105 that has trained so many of our tail-dragger pilots...and just like an animated Disney movie from the past, **James Martin's** Beech 18/SNB is the glamour queen (with Oshkosh honors to prove it) contrasted against **Don Hoffman's** sinister looking Japanese Kate Replica, complete with torpedo suspended from its belly. And don't leave out **Bill Coombes'** little red Swift, that rounds out our fast-mover formations and shouts YIPPEE beneath its wings.

What's going on in the New Year? High tech applications to support these heroes from the past. The Wing has purchased a new server that has been put into service by **James Martin**, with help from **Randy Wilson**, that is operational

Newsletter Information

This is a new year and as the new Executive Officer I will be overseeing the writing, publication and distribution of your newsletter, with the able assistance of



H.A. Tuck and **Jay Burns**. *The Flyer* is always a work in progress, so if you have suggestions, please let one of us know.

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and showing the HSW colors as never before. Visit our website at <http://highskywing.org> and prepare to be amazed. Our mission with this new piece of equipment is to get information out quickly and efficiently to our members. There will be continuous up-dates on available activities and photos of past exploits. Our calendar will be maintained by the staff and will inform you of everything that the Wing does, from work nights at the hangar to parties and fly-ins. As we realize the huge potential of this tool, new features will be added, so check it out now...and come back often to see what's new and happening at the High Sky Wing. --Mike

OPERATIONS REPORT BY DREW DIGGINS

Photo courtesy of Drew Diggins

Here is a great picture of our L-17 and the two best looking CAF Pilots that get to fly her. When I joined the wing three years ago I thought I was going to fly really cool airplanes. What has surprised me is how many wonderful people I have met that are non-pilot Cols and how we share the same love of planes. I remember during the fall of last year I was working on the L-17 with **Greg Gutting**. **James Martin** came over and asked us if we wanted to go to the Texas Ranger World Series game in Arlington that started in 4 hours. Greg and I went on-line and had tickets 30 minutes later. Flying to Arlington in an SNB and watching the only game the Rangers won in the 2010 series, "Priceless".

I was an Air Force brat but started flying in college. There was an old crop duster who owned an ancient Stearman biplane and an even older Schweitzer 2-22 sailplane near the college. I started trading flying

lessons for filling his Stearman with gas and rinsing the hopper. I started in the sailplane. Since it did not use gas, it gave me more flying time. I now own a Beech A-36 and am flying 120 to 150 hrs per year. I added my commercial, multi-engine, instrument license last year and have close to 1400 hours total flight time, which seems like a lot until you compare that to someone like Col **Bob Keating**.

Last year the wing took planes to the Burnet Airshow. I needed to get permission from the FAA to have Bob fly with me during the air show to get my "senior" CAF air show rating. The FAA scrutinized every piece of paperwork for both me and the plane to find a good reason to deny the request. This amounts to an interrogation of my flying background. After 30 minutes of "Why?" and "How come?" they asked to see Bob's pilot license since he would ultimately be responsible for my performance during the air show. It took the FAA five minutes to read all of Bob's ratings which span 30+ years of active duty Air force and 20+ more years of civil aviation, totally covering the back of his license. More than once the FAA asked him to identify some obscure military aircraft and Bob would describe it. The FAA's final comment to Bob was "Well..., I guess you'll do".

My goal this year, as your Op Officer, is to get more pilots, that are qualified, into the pilot "pool" so we can cover the increasing requests for flyovers and airshows (and move me up in the "pecking" order). (See *Diggins, pg 4*)



Photo by Greg Gutting

PT-19 BACK IN THE SKY Thanks to all those who spent many hours working on one of our best aircraft, to get it back in the air. It is a favorite in our ride program and it will be great to see it generating some revenue for us. Spread the word and let's see if we can get some more people interested in HSW, the Commorative Air Force (CAF) and our mission.

(L to R) **James Martin, Paul Cooper, Bob Keating** and **Jerry Perales** work on installing the PT-19 engine, August 30, 2011.

No wing meeting this month. Come to the awards banquet instead, on Jan 21st.



Photo by Greg Gutting

KATE GETS A GOOD WASH DOWN

Bill Coombes, and others, spent part of a recent Saturday morning getting a layer of dust and dirt off of Kate. Feel free to come out just about any Saturday and help out. Lunch is usually at Clear Springs Cafe. If you can't be there the whole day, just come for a little while. All help is welcomed.

THE KNUCKLEBUSTERS CORNER BY STEVE CLINTON



Photo by Michael Clinton

As I begin my tenure as maintenance officer, I have been made well aware of the many challenges the Wing has in front of it this year. The first order of business is to thank Bill

Coombes for his effort and leadership of the maintenance crew over the past few years. One thing Bill has instilled in the group is that being dedicated to the task can still be done with a lot of laughs and fun. That is something that should never change.

A lot of you may not be too familiar with me as I have only been a member for a year. I am a native West Texan being born and raised in Pecos, TX. My Dad took me to the local airport in 1962 for a penny-a-pound airplane ride and I have been hooked ever since. I was your proverbial airport rat all through my school years and actually grew up helping clean and maintain a P-51D owned by Bill Hubbs, so warbirds, got into my blood. I finally found the means to start my flight training in 2004 and received my license in 2006. I did my flight training at Skywest Airport just south of Midland where I became reacquainted with Joe Greenhill, who by the way gave me that first airplane ride in '62 and Mark Haskin who both have taken me under their wing to teach me more about the mechanical side of flying. Joe has unfortunately moved to Giddings, TX, but Mark has

become a very valued member of the wing after joining just before Airsho 2011. I was also the President of EAA Chapter 123 for Midland/Odessa for the last five years.

I am about to celebrate my thirty-fifth wedding anniversary to my high school sweetie, Bambi. We have two sons Michael and David. David, our youngest son lives in Missouri and Michael, our oldest, lives in Midland and has also become a key member of the HSW mechanical crew. I have been with Cameron Compression in Odessa, TX for sixteen years and I am currently the service manager for the Permian Basin. I have twenty-four years experience in industrial reciprocating engine and compressor analysis.

As stated in my opening comments, the High Sky Wing has accepted a major responsibility for the number of aircraft we currently have. We not only have a major financial responsibility to maintain these aircraft in safe operating status, but a lot of tender, loving care and sweat equity is required. Currently we have several dedicated wing members who devote a great deal of time every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. I would like to invite anyone who is interested in our mission of keeping 'um flying come on out to the hangar. Mechanical skills are not a requisite. (See Clinton, below)



Storch is pronounced Stork...those Germans!!

SAFETY REPORT BY PAUL COOPER



Well 2012 is here. My goal as your new

Safety Officer is to have a SAFE year. Please feel free to contact me for any safety related problems we might

encounter around the hangar, the maintenance shop, or whenever you see something that needs to be checked into or needs attention to keep the CAF, High Sky Wing, & the Fire Marshal happy. Pilots & crew members let's



The L-17 flies high over the Tall City.
Photo by Paul Cooper

also have a safe flying year too. --"Buffy"

(Clinton, from above) There are all sorts of tasks that can be performed and you will be offered an excellent forum to learn a great deal about the inner workings of these fantastic pieces of history.

I wish everyone a happy and successful 2012 and with everyone's efforts the High Sky Wing "will keep 'um flyin". --Steve

Check out our new web page, <http://highskywing.org> for information about our latest reacquisition, The Storch.



Photo by Greg Gutting

T-28 ENGINE INSTALLED

On Thursday evening, Dec 15, the T-28 received it's new engine, thanks to the efforts of many of our members. Without fail one of the most dedicated workers on the T-28 has been **John Meyer**. Whenever I'm out at the hanger I see him working on that aircraft. Thank you John for all your hard work.

ADJUTANT REPORT BY PATTI COLLINS



I cannot believe that 2011 has come and gone. So much has happened. We have new members! Renewed members! New planes! And MORE! In my opinion, the High

Sky Wing is without a doubt, the BEST! With our growing fleet of planes and ground transportation, we anticipate a hefty price tag for getting them up and running and keeping them in tip top SAFE shape.

The HSW has been at the same dues amount for many years. HSW dues have been set at \$50 for a very long time, with no increase. The Wing Staff decided to increase the annual dues by \$25, which brings the dues to \$75. We know that this may not sit well with some members, and we do apologize. The Staff felt this was necessary because of the financial needs of our fleet. One person can't do everything, but together we can ALL make a difference. Please expect to see your Dues

Notice soon. If you have already paid your 2012 Dues, disregard the notice.

We had a great turnout for our Toys for Tots breakfast and collected numerous toys for those children that are in need of a little help. Thank you to all of our members that came out to help. There are always things to do around the Wing and we would love to see you all out to help. The T-28 now has the engine mounted and there is still a lot to do. I had the privilege to get to help on a recent Saturday workday and learned quite a bit. Come join us sometime! The best way to enjoy your membership is to get involved! As always, stay safe!

--Patti

We're always looking for new members. Bring a friend to the next HSW meeting, out to the hanger on Saturday mornings, or during the work nights on Tuesday's and Thursday's.

XO REPORT BY GREG GUTTING



As Executive Officer for the HSW my primary duty will be to publish and distribute *The Flyer* newsletter.

Additionally, I am tasked with filling in for the wing leader in his absence.

The newsletter goals include regular monthly publication and distribution, inclusion of reports by all officers, articles and photos submitted by (and about) members, and information from other warbird organizations and the general aviation community.

We hope that your input will help us produce a quality product that will, in turn, help in some small way to recruit and retain new members. That, of course, should be a goal of all members.

I joined the CAF/HSW in July, 2010, almost immediately after my first ride in the SNJ with **Lance Sommers**. While I can't say that my body was too wild about the acrobatics I experienced, I was hooked! Since then I have had opportunities to fly to a World Series game in the Twin Beech with **James Martin** and **Drew Diggins**, take the controls of *Tar Baby* with

supervision by **Steve Bolin**, spend a great week at Oshkosh, and enjoy the camaraderie of new friends. I couldn't ask for more.

I welcome this new opportunity to be of service to the wing. If there is anything you need help with, to further the mission of the wing, please let me know.

--Greg

The Storch on the cover of *Dispatch*,[®] Summer 1995



(Diggins, from pg 2) We've added three new planes in the

last year, the L-17, T-28 and the Kate. Keeping pilots current in all our aircraft, and gas in them to train, will be adding expense to the wing. We are looking at ways for pilots to equitably share the cost of fuel for the necessary training that must be done to keep these planes flying safely. For the new pilots coming in this will be understood at the invitation to "transition" to the wing aircraft. --Drew



Photo by Paul Cooper

The SNJ and the Swift in formation, preparing for a fly-over at the funeral of US Navy veteran Mark Wilson, **John Echols'** father-in-law, on December 14.

TURN AND BANK BY STEVE BOLIN

This past year had many financial transactions for the High Sky Wing. I will try to highlight the income and expenses. Over \$32,000 was raised in new money for the T28; most of that has already been spent. We received almost \$16,000 in general donations. This ranges from coffee donations to some substantial donations from several individuals for funeral flyovers. We also sent \$655 to Amanda and Kyle Franklin's medical fund. All in all over \$48,000 was sent to the High Sky Wing as a donation.

The Cantina netted (in our pocket!) \$2369, Memorial Day \$2345, the Volunteer dinner \$1245, and the Wing Staff Conference lunch \$672. Bingo was of course our largest special project, bringing in just under \$61,000 for the High Sky Wing.

Other notable special project expenses included the HSW Memorial plinth, \$5,150, aircraft fuel this year was \$7553, and our ANUAC expense with HQ was \$7,897. The bottom line for the year was an increase in our account of \$6,594.

So why do we need to raise the HSW dues? The staff is trying to stay ahead of the curve, and prevent us from getting in the hole. We have increased

our fleet, and the maintenance, fuel, and ANUAC expenses will also rise in the future. This is the first increase of Wing Dues since the formation of the HSW 21 years ago. What has remained the same since 1991? Our dues brought in around \$10,000 last year; we are improving our Website, and other areas of the Wing to make it more useable and visible for even the casual member. I always talk about our members being our most valuable resource, and that remains true. If this is a burden to any member that would cause them to think about not remaining with us this year, please talk to Mike or me. We want to keep all of our members with us, and we will find a way to fund a membership if necessary. Remember those donation numbers from earlier. We will continue to cultivate the Bingo revenue stream to offset any more increases, but we hope that \$75 a year is worth your continued support of the wing.

--Steve

Beech wins Best Transport at AirVenture, Oshkosh; (L to R) Perales, Keating, Coombes, Martin, Baxter, Cooper, Gutting

**MISCELLANEOUS MISCHIEF**

The Awards Banquet this year will be held on Friday, Jan 21 at the Commemorative Center. Help honor our volunteers with the Colonel of the Year, Spirit of the Eagle and the Gary Austin Memorial Awards, and our outgoing staff members.

Our annual Super Bowl Party is scheduled for February 5 in the O'Club and Ready Room. Lots of fun...bring a friend.

Staff meetings are held the first Thursday of each month in the Ready Room. All members are invited to attend. Show up and stay

current on decisions and events affecting you.

The general HSW meeting will continue to be on the fourth Thursday of each month, unless otherwise notified. We meet either in the hanger, or upstairs in the Commemorative Center. Please bring a dish to share. Cost for the Pot Luck Dinner remains \$5.00. This is a great opportunity to bring a friend/potential member to show off our organization.

Speaking of dues...Did you know that if you purchased an item in 1991 (the last time dues were raised) for \$50.00, that same item

would cost \$83.05 today! So a raise in dues to \$75.00 is still not keeping up with inflation!

<http://www.usinflationcalculator.com>

If you read **Steve Bolin's** column (above) he explains that if the new dues are a burden, an arrangement can be made to help you out. This includes automatic monthly withdrawals from your checking account to spread your dues over the entire year.

If you have something you'd like to see in your Newsletter, please let us know. Send us photos and stories.



Photo from Google Images

DID YOU KNOW?

The RAF Avro 683 Lancaster (at left) had Rolls-Royce Merlin engines which gave it a better bombload-to-range ratio than either the B-24 or the B-17. It could carry almost twice the bomb load of a B-24, with a seven man crew, but fewer guns.

[From [Flight, The Complete History](#), by R.G. Grant, pg 240]



High Sky Wing Newsletter

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 21
HSW Awards Dinner
February 23-25
Wing Staff Conference
February 5
Super Bowl Party

March 27-April 1:
Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, FL



Check out the new wing web page at <http://highskywing.org> and thank James Martin for all his hard work as our webmaster to bring us up to date.



If you would prefer to receive The Flyer newsletter by e-mail instead of snail mail, just drop a line to Greg Gutting and he'll take care of it. You'll be doing your part to help save the wing a little money.

THANKS

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