

Powerless flight

Silence attracts pilot to sailplane flying

By BOB HANNAN
UD Editor

Imagine being 4,000 feet above the ground, traveling at 60 miles per hour, with only a Plexiglas bubble between you and the bright blue Texas sky. There's no roaring engine to leave your ears buzzing. The only sound is the smooth hiss of air rushing over your aircraft.

powered flight, the silence might be frightening. But to a sailplane pilot, the quiet may be why he's up there.

Ed O'Connor likes sailplane flying because, "I'm more at ease. It's more relaxing than power flying. You don't have to shout at the other person in the airplane."

O'Connor, who has flown planes since 1938, operates South Plains Soaring, located

at Town and Country Airport. O'CONNOR opened his school in April, and is the only person in the Lubbock area offering sailplane instruction.

O'Connor started flying in 1938. As he puts it, he "skipped across the border" during WWII to fly with the Royal Air Force. After the war, he flew with the United States military.

"I came out here with the idea it would be a good area for sailplaning," O'Connor said. He made the move from Pennsylvania after his wife Carol joined the Tech faculty as an assistant professor in microbiology.

O'CONNOR'S AIRCRAFT is a 1970 model Schweizer 2-33A. The two-place airplane is yellow, with black trim. Its glide ratio is 22 to 1 — twenty-two feet of horizontal movement for every one foot of sink.

Instrumentation is austere, but then a sailplane doesn't need a panel-full of exotic instruments. Four instruments suffice — altimeter, turn-and-slip, airspeed and a variometer (indicating rate of climb or descent).

Obviously, with no powerplant, the sailplane requires a tow aircraft to get it off the ground. The towplane, connected to the sailplane by a 250-foot towline, takes the

glider to about 3,000 feet and then the sailplane pilot releases the towline.

THE SAILPLANE pilot then starts hunting for thermals, ascending currents of hot air which take his craft higher and lengthen the amount of time he can stay in the air.

O'Connor says he looks for the patch of ground lightest in color — say a dry cottonfield. Such area is likely to be giving off the best thermals.

"You have to feel the lift in the seat of your pants," O'Connor said. When one of the wings lift, O'Connor knows he's reached a thermal. He turns in the direction of the lifted wing, and either widens or tightens his turn so he can stay inside the thermal.

IT IS quiet. "You can hear yourself think," says O'Connor. And think is what the sailplane pilot has to do. He must not only fly the airplane, but be ready to pick out a likely place to catch another thermal when

the one he is riding in dies out. "You try to stay with the bubble of air until it becomes the same temperature as the air surrounding it," he says.

A TYPICAL orientation flight last 30 minutes to an hour, and covers over 10 miles.

The sailplane is sensitive to the controls. Most pilots used to powered aircraft tend to

overcontrol, O'Connor said. All it takes on the controls is a thumb and forefinger, he said.

Its sensitivity doesn't mean the aircraft is delicate, however. The maximum safe airspeed for O'Connor's craft is 96 mph, and that allows enough airspeed to perform aerobatic maneuvers such as loops and lazy eights, more

commonly associated with powered aircraft.

"It gives me a sense of inner peace," O'Connor says of sailplane flying. "The flight depends on you and your ability to determine the local situation (to figure out where the lift is). If you can't do it, you're on the ground in a short time."



Silence

Silence may be the aspect of sailplane flying which its disciples find most attracting. There's no engine noises to distract the pilot on board, as he hunts for the rising currents

of hot air which take him higher. For a report on sailplane activities on the South Plains, see story above. (Photo by Mike Quattrini)

Only male member not bothered by 32 to one Mortar Board ratio

By RHONDA JOHNSON
UD Staff

The ratio of one guy to 32 girls does not bother Ron Hutchison at Tech's Mortar Board meetings. Hutchison is the first male to be initiated into the Mortar Board chapter at Tech.

Hutchison said he and some friends became interested in Mortar Board and decided they would apply.

Hutchison never thought only one male would be selected and said he was a

little nervous when he first was told he was the only male chosen, but the girls seem to go out of their way to make him feel comfortable at meetings.

HUTCHISON said several other campus organizations of which he is a member have recognized him for being chosen for Mortar Board.

Hutchison said he felt uncomfortable at times when wearing his black collar. (Black collars are worn by all newly-tapped Mortar Board

members before being initiated.)

Hutchison said he sometimes wore a coat to class over his black collar. Friends would ask him what he was going to do once the weather turned warmer. "I'll continue wearing my coat and probably get somewhat warm," Hutchison replied.

GUYS HAVE indicated they are a little envious of his membership in Mortar Board, Hutchison said.

American Issues to present discussion

"Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" is the topic of the American Issues Forum Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Lubbock City-County Library, according to Marlen Harp, adult services director at the library.

The May forum is the last in a nine-month series co-sponsored by the Lubbock City-County Library and the Lubbock Jaycees.

SPEAKERS FOR the discussion and their topics include Dr. Warren S. Walker, Horn Professor of English, speaking on "The Rugged

Individualist;" Dr. Lewis Davies, associate professor of sociology, will talk on "The Pursuit of Pleasure;" Dr. Mary Louise Brewer, associate professor of English, emeritus, will present the topic "The Fruits of Wisdom."

According to Harp, the forum series is a national program for the Bicentennial and is made available by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Texas Committee for the Humanities and Public Policy.

MOMENT'S NOTICE

COMMERCIAL BEEF CLUB
The Commercial Beef Club will meet today at 7:30 p.m. in room 7 of the Business Administration Building.

AG COMMUNICATION
Ag Communication will meet today at 7:30 p.m. in room 315 of the Agriculture Building to elect officers.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
Applications for the University of Texas Medical School System are available in room 112 of the Chemistry Building between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

BOOK EXCHANGE
Today is the last day to submit suggestions on running of the student book exchange. Organizations interested in participating should call 742-6151.

SAILING CLUB
The Tech Sailing Club will meet today at 5:30 p.m. in room 81 of the Business Administration Building.

EDUCATION STUDENT COUNCIL
The Student Council for the College of Education will meet today at 6:30 p.m. in room 102 of the Home Economics Building.

RECITALS
Nancy Young will be featured in a graduate chamber music recital for the piano today at 7 p.m. in the UC Coronado Room. Tony Thomas will give his junior trombone recital today at 7 p.m. in room 1 of the Music Building. Edward Quillin, tenor, and Mary Dirks Quillin, mezzo-soprano, will give their graduate recital in room 1 of the Music Building today at 8:30 p.m.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ORGANIZATION
The Christian Science Organization will meet today at 8:15 p.m. in room 208 of the UC.



'Los Desarraigados'

The Los Pobres Bilingual Theatre Company will present "Los Desarraigados," Wednesday in the University Center Ballroom. The play is based on the Pacheco family, played by L-R, top, Arturo Hernandez, Jose

Luis Torres, Belen Lopez, and, seated, Pedro Luz Taboada, Elisa Martinez, and Pedro Cruz) a Mexican-American family faced with the problem of retaining their heritage and adjusting to American standards.

Theater group to present bilingual drama

Los Pobres Biligual Theatre Company will perform a three-act drama called "Los Desarraigados" Wednesday, in the University Center Ballroom. No admission price will be charged.

"Los Desarraigados," translated as "the up-rooted," is a drama dealing with a middle-class Mexican-American family in El Paso. The family is faced with the confusion of Mexican heritage and American dreams and standards. The play, written by J. Humberto Robles, exposes the difficulty of many Mexican-Americans in trying to identify with either Hispanic or Anglo culture.

Los Pobres, currently performing for its fifth season, is under the direction of Hector Serrano. Jose Luis Torres and Elisa Martinez portray the parents, and Arturo Hernandez, Luz Taboada and Pedro Cruz play the three children of the family.

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