

# Las Vegas Valley Soaring Association

P.O. Box 19902, Jean, NV 89019-1902 Phone (702) 874-1420 www.LVVSA.org

**Volume 9, Issue No. 3**  
**2004**

**March**

## Weekend Reports:

**7-8 February:** Wind blow out on Saturday with extreme crosswinds. Sunday proved much better with a record number of flights to make up for Saturday.

*Page one photos by Robin  
After*

*Before*

**John Cagle Solo**



**14-15 February:** Saturday Meeting Day, excellent weather, some training flights. **Sunday**, was **SOLO SUNDAY** with bright skies and calm winds. Congratulations to two new solo students, Matt Brewer and John Cagle. New member Paul Gerner also takes up the 2-33 for his first solo flight as an “add-on” pilot and new pilot Miguel Romero gets checked out in the Grob. A very busy day.

**Matt’s solo landing**

**Instructor Jack, Matt and Proud Poppa Mike**



**21-22 February:** Saturday, early morning rain, clearing by 11am leaving low clouds on the hills with a blue sky over head, if you ever wanted to look down on the clouds, this was the day. A great training day, where were you?

**28-29 February:** Another blow out Saturday, direct crosswind at 20G28knots. Sunday was the day, long thermal flights, even *Uncle Fuzzy* (N16UF) reported reaching the McCullochs,

Primm and Good Springs. Paul Gerner gets introduced to Tweety.. now where is that 1-26 Association application. *“There most certainly WERE some thermals. Not great big strong Charles Atlas spring-through-fall boomers, not nice round well organized thermals, but certainly some organizationally challenged, slightly misshapen, 99 pound weakling thermals. Hey! They were doing the best they could!”* (UF)

# We Need Volunteers!! (Contact Jay)

(Sat Tow schedule has changed since we added Lex)

Updated: 2/28/04

Day	Date	Tow	FOO	Notes
Sat	Mar 6	Tis for Holden	McDaniel, R	
Sun	Mar 7	Ratzin	Volunteer	
Sat	Mar 13	Thistlethwaite	Volunteer	<b>Spring Banquet (No monthly Business Meeting) Orleans Casino, Social at 6pm, Dinner at 7pm.</b>
Sun	Mar 14	Madson	Brewer	
Sat	Mar 20	Dvorchak	Brooksbank	<b>CAP Orientation rides 8-12:00</b>
Sun	Mar 21	Gough	Cagle	
Sat	Mar 27	Holden	Burns	<b>CAP Orientation rides 8-12:00</b>
Sun	Mar 28	Felgar	Wynhoff	
Sat	Apr 3	Thistlethwaite	McDaniel, R	
Sun	Apr 4	Ratzin	Volunteer	
Sat	Apr 10	Tisdale	Volunteer	<b>Monthly Business Meeting 10am</b>
Sun	Apr 11	Madson	Bewer	
<p><b>We request Tow Pilots scheduled on CAP flight dates contact CAP Coordinator, Paul Gunderson, if unable to support an 8am to Sunset tow day. This will allow us to plan a second tow pilot for the early morning show.</b></p>				
<p><b>CAP Orientation Rides are scheduled the 3rd and 4th Saturday of the month, 8-12am. Club members have priority for use of club equipment at all times.</b></p>				

## *A Winter/Summer Soaring Vacation*

Winter here, but Summer in Australia. Tuesday, January 27, I leave Las Vegas for the thirty-hour trip to Lake Keepit, a gliderport in a recreation area northwest of Sydney, Australia,

<http://www.users.bigpond.com/keepitsoaring/> A flight from Bakersfield (don't ask) to San Francisco to Sydney to Tamworth then a car to Lake Keepit. With all the flight gear, camelbak, land-out bag, rain-gear, all take up too much room, and the backpack and suitcase together weigh over eighty pounds. By the way, this includes no hair dryer, no cosmetics, and no girl stuff.

Thursday, January 28, What happened to Wednesday??? After dinner on the 747, a semi-sleep through rocking turbulence, and skipping a day over the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian, the sun comes up over the Pacific, a faint memory of waking during the night and seeing the Big Dipper in a place it didn't belong. Sydney is in sight, beautiful from the air; sun-washed, ocean-kissed and clean. Several hours later, I'm at the Tamworth air terminal for the 45-minute drive, on the wrong side of the road, to Lake Keepit. Our cabin is comfortable and clean. I'll unpack later; but first it's time to fly. Jim and I take the Twin Astir up for a look around, but I'm so jet-lagged I can't tell 9 o'clock from 3 as he points out the landmarks. I'm surprised we can stay up until well after 6pm, and even then, the lift is still good.

Friday, January 30, Up early. The pilot briefing starts at 9:30 a.m., and clubs paperwork to fill out first. I show my logbook and my license to the duty CFIG, and create a lot of confusion over the fact that I've logged only my pre-certificate time as solo, without including my PIC time. The club is very organized, and far more structured than what I'm used to. With 140 members and 9 sailplanes, it has to be. Every morning there is a weather briefing and a short talk on flight techniques. This morning it's thermalling theory.

Afterward, the aircraft are "Dee-Eyed" by the Daily Inspector, who has the responsibility to log any squawks and to ground a plane that isn't airworthy. It takes special training and a certificate to be a DI. After checking out the LS-4, I trek up the hill through the tall

grass to the launch site. The wind is gusting, perhaps to 20, and many of the pilots opt not to fly. Gerhard, a CFIG, agrees to fly with me in the Puchatek (aka puke-attack). I've never flown low-tow before, but it's a non-event, so long as I ignore the trees coming at me under the tow-plane. But I'm not used to spotting grass strips, and the entire landscape seems backwards. The sun is too far north, and east feels like west. I pass the check ride anyway.



*Puchatek, also know as a Krosno KR-03A*

Saturday, January 31, Pilot briefing today is on ridge flying. The CU's are already popping; it's going to be a great flying day. The FOO and CFIGs are incredibly busy with the weekend flyers, and it reminds me of our own sitting-around-club. At 5pm I finally corner another CFIG, who takes pity on me. After a check of my logbook and about 15 minutes of flying, Vic tells me I'm good to go. We make the radio call "All stations Lake Keepit....", I have to concentrate to plan the pattern and approach over the trees to the grass strip, as the normal desert distance cues aren't present. After dinner, a hot shower is welcome. I never knew you could get so dirty in one day, and I'm grateful I cut my hair tom-boy short before we left.

After dinner, dodging the man-eating mosquitos, we watch the dozens of kangaroos feed on the runway. I'm amazed we're able to come so close to them. As the sun sets, the musical tones of the kookaburras fade away, and there is no sound but the wind



*Roos on the runway at Sunset.*

through the trees and the insects chirping. No city lights; no traffic noise, no airplanes overhead. Jim points out Orion, who is upside down; the Southern Cross, and Alpha Centauri, our closest neighbor. I'm struck that I've lived 50+ years on this planet and never seen half of the night sky.

Tuesday, February 3. I get up early and put on the same pair of grass-stained, grease-covered, ant-tracked pants for the 3<sup>rd</sup> day in a row. But the sky is clearing and there's blue to the west. No one is in a hurry to fly, and I brave the wasps to do laundry now that the rain has stopped. By noon, I'm ready to launch, except the DI wants to make a quick check that no-one put the tail weights back in. Murphy strikes: when putting the horizontal stabilizer back on, Robin drops a coin into the tail. I take off my parachute and spend the next 3-1/2 hours are spent in the heat, humidity, grass and dirt, trying to fish it out. No luck. We take off the canopy and the wings; turn the poor thing on its back; stand it on its nose, seesaw it to and fro. About 5:30, we give up and trailer it for the night. I look up to see Jim celebrating his flight with a wing-over and a spin above the field. Later, he tells me that when he saw the commotion below, he thought I had landed gear-up. A pox on him!

Wednesday, February 4, Again, the day starts early, as we're hoping to get the LS-4 flyable by noon. John, the tug-pilot, asks for the "indulgence" of the others. Seven pilots who could be flying pitch in to assist. They turn the LS-4 on its back and shake it like a piggy bank. No luck. We use a sawhorse and a steep bank for leverage, rock it to and fro. Still nothing. After lunch, the clouds are beckoning, and Jim and a few other pilots launch. Several others stay behind to help remove the rudder, and finally the offending 10-cent

piece is recovered. (Can we make a pilot joke out of this?) John replaces the rudder. By now it's 3:30pm, and the tail-plane won't fit into place. Frustration is high as John re-removes the rudder; fits it back on, and finally the LS-4 is airworthy; all it needs is a bath and some taping. But it's already late, so Robin and I preflight the Twin Astir, and launch into a brisk southwest wind. The clouds have OD'd, but the lift is still good on the sunny side.

We make our way west to the Carroll range, about 12 kilometers out; sometimes in 8+ knots of turbulent lift. Bases are close to 7000 and lowering. If I turn east, I risk heading directly into the clouds, so I continue southwest; remembering a certain CFG's advice to always leave myself a back door, even though I'm thinking we'll be eating dinner in a paddock tonight. The sink is hellacious and it's almost 6pm. We're at less than 3000' and more than two thermals out. I'm aware that if I don't find something soon, we'll land in five minutes. I listen to Robin's experienced advice, and push hard through the sink, keeping my intended landing spot in glide. He's right — we're sucked up under a huge cloud, and turn for home with plenty of altitude. As usual, all the gliders are coming in at once, but I'm the lowest, so I reach to pull spoilers to come down fast, when Robin reminds me you don't use spoilers in turns here.

Jim meets me with the quad and a tow bar. After hangingar the glider, we head over to the chalet across the lake, where the hosts have prepared a sumptuous farewell dinner. Appetizers of bruschette and prosciutto with olives, then "mains" of roast lamb, beet roots, dilled carrots, potatoes, followed by a dessert of several cheeses with fruit and liters of good Australian wine. We watch the moonlight play on the lake as the Southern Cross rises one more time. I'm going to miss these people.

Friday, February 6, After a quick breakfast, we're off to the Civil Aeronautical Services Administration (CASA) office at Tamworth airport to pick up Jim's Australian power license and make an application for mine. Back at the club, no one is flying yet, as the air is stable, hot and humid. I watch a goanna, a meter-long

lizard, climb the tree outside the clubhouse to get to the bird eggs. The birds angrily abandon their nests, defenseless against the dastardly creature.

About 2pm, Jim launches first, then a few after him. Within two hours, most have returned. The heat and humidity are suffocating, but I don't want to stay grounded on my last day. It takes a bit of coaxing to recruit some help in pulling the LS-4 from the hangar and up to the line. The launch takes forever as the student in the Puchatek is being coached prior to take-off. I'm slow-baking in the sun, and my hand is already starting to fester from the thorns embedded from a morning mishap. Jim radios from above and says he'll wait for me above the field. At 4:30, I'm finally on take-off roll; anxious for the relief the airflow and altitude will bring. Jim has headed for the hills; I can hear him but can't see his LS-6.

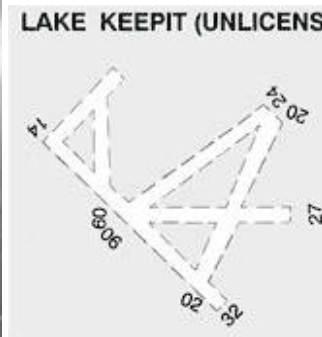
After banging my head on the canopy enough times that it will feel good to stop, I'm ready to give up. But farther south there is a sweet reward of convergence at the inversion layer. Jim catches up to me and circles to take photos, then heads for home. I fly a while longer. I

am the luckiest woman in the world to be doing this.

At 6pm, I know dinner is cooking. I lower the gear and start a slow descent, deciding whether to land uphill and short, downhill and long, or take the grass somewhere else. I call downwind for 14 and come in over the shoreline and the treetops to land near the hangars. After social hour back at the clubhouse, we head into Gunnedah to a local pub for fish and chips. Back at the cabin, there's time for one last look at the full moon and the Southern Cross, and a lingering goodbye to the kangaroos feeding on the runway.

Sunday, February 8, Today we walked and walked and walked. We took the entire tour of the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Sydney Opera House, and Darling Harbor. Then to Woolloomooloo Plaza for lunch of a meat pie with peas and mash at Harry's Café on Wheels, then back for dinner at a Malaysian restaurant. It's Chinese New Year here, and the town is booked. A lovely end to a Cinderella trip. Tomorrow we fly home. Next year, New Zealand?

*Article by Misti*



### **Lake Keepit from the South**

The glider airport just right of the lake.



*Photo by: Uncle Fuzzy*

*Spring Banquet, 13 March, Orleans Casino and Hotel, 6pm*



P.O. Box 19902, Jean, NV 89019-1902  
**Las Vegas Valley Soaring Association**