

# HIGH FLIGHT

LAKEWAY AIRPARK

FEBRUARY 2008



## MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Well so far winter has not been so bad, but I am really tired of the Cedar pollen. Every time the wind gets more than 10kts, my eyes get really fussy. A little rain and this stuff will wash away, and maybe my taxiway grass will finally start growing.

Things have been running smoothly. All our insurance renewals have been completed. Thanks to Joe Bain for coordinating the work and dealing with the paper work. Robert White took charge of getting the airport data and diagrams updated for the FAA and TxDOT. We have been getting a slow trickle of new members, a couple per month. Looking ahead, I will be reserving the date for the annual meeting and establishing a nominating committee for the election.

The revised Rules and Regulations were approved at last month's board meeting. There were a couple of minor edits made at the meeting. I will get them posted on the web site and email the final copy to the list. The new fee structure will boost our income. The goal was to get revenues in line with the long term expense needs. We maintain a lot of asphalt, much of which needs work. The runway markings are getting quite faded.

As mentioned last month, the changes to the Bylaws will take more time.

Thanks to Joe Bain, Clint Beacham, Chip Freitag, and Terry Priestap for ramp checking last month.

My calendar says the next workday/meeting is February 9th. See you there.

Jeff



Jeff Klaas  
Airpark President

## JENNA DURIO SOLOS

Our daughter Jenna soloed on her 18th birthday last Thursday, January 17th! She's been training since Sept with Paul Lena at Pilots Choice. She went out to fly the Saturday before thinking she'd get to solo, but winds were too strong. Her next lesson was scheduled for the 17th, but again got to Georgetown and winds were gusting above Pilots Choice solo limits.

Over the course of the lesson, the winds died down and she got to solo after all. From the tower, Paul watched her make what he said later were three flawless landings. When she came to a full stop, the tower told her 'congratulations, and happy birthday!'

Definitely a great birthday present for her (and also her proud parents.) Pictured is Jenna with her flight instructor Paul Lena having her T-shirt cut to go on the Wall of Fame.



**AIRPORT WORKDAY**  
**SAT—FEB 9 -8:30 AM**  
**Board Meeting Afterwards**

**AIRPARK DINNER**  
**THURSDAY—FEB 7—6:30**  
**BOAT HOUSE GRILL**

**MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**  
Please have articles in by February 22nd  
Yakjim@aol.com or 261-3313

## MEET MIKE TORBITT

I had an early exposure to airplanes as my father flew in the Air Force in World War 2. My father was one of the first to travel to Canada because of issues with the military. But unlike later folks of a later era who went there to avoid the draft, he headed to Canada from his home in Texas to join the Canadian Air Force. You see his parents would not give him permission to join the US Air Force as he was under age. I guess his folks figured he was serious when he struck out for Canada so they relented and alerted the border guards who informed him his parents had changed their mind and would now sign for him!

As a youngster I read all the books I could find about flying. However, good paying jobs were hard to come by in central Texas and I couldn't afford lessons until I got out of college. I left UT in May 1977 and rather than start a real job, I decide to spend the summer at home and got a job as a lifeguard. It paid enough to afford the \$15 per hour rental fee for a Cessna 150. On August 31<sup>st</sup> I was scheduled to take my private pilot exam. I remember the date for a couple of reasons. The first was that I had to leave home for Houston that evening as I had a real job with Gulf Oil Company starting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. The second reason I remember the date is had to do with my flight exam. A heat wave had descended upon central Texas and at 4:00 PM in the afternoon it was 108 degrees in Waco. It was brutally hot and I was sweating profusely as I preflighted the tired little Cessna parked one the Waco Municipal Airport ramp. The heat seemed to have more effect on the FAA examiner that it did on me. Perhaps it was because he carrying a few extra pounds. Quite a few actually. Norm Seward claimed to be a svelte 280 pounds but I believe he would have weighed in well over 300. I remember him saying, "I checked the gas – looks like each tank is ¼ full. That will be plenty for today". Funny I thought, the gauges indicated ¾ full when I had looked. But I knew better that to correct the examiner. When both of us got snuggled up in the 150 cockpit, I noticed another problem. I couldn't reach the throttle because Norm's stomach was in the way. I finally figured out I could rotate my arm such that my elbow was in front of my stomach and then contort my hand and arm enough to reach the throttle from the side. Then came the taxi. Normally it took about 1800 RPM to get the 150 moving to taxi. With all of this weight in the plane I remember being shocked as it took 2300 RPM before we would budge. In any case, I am not sure how much over gross we were when we took off but I was thankful for every one of the 6596 feet of runway 19. We did manage to get of the ground but I do not think we had more than 50 feet of altitude by the time we hit the end of the runway. The good news was I ended up passing my test and got my license.

After moving to Houston I continued flying and after a while when down to Hobby airport to get some aerobatic instruction in a Super Decathlon. I got about 5 hours of instruction which was just enough to get used to unusual attitudes and set the hook. I knew someday I would like to have an aerobatic airplane.

In the early 1990s I bought my first airplane, a 1946 J3 Cub. It wasn't much to look at with the faded and patched fabric and the rusty looking struts that were also patched, but I loved it. I flew it for a few years and then did a frame up restoration on it. I flew it for a couple of more years and then sold it. The sweat equity from the restoration enabled me to by my first aerobatic airplane in 1998. A 2 seat 1974 Pitts Special biplane. I got it for a good price because it had the ugliest paint job ever devised for a Pitts. It was mostly brown and yellow but had a few other colors thrown in for good measure. I started practicing aerobatics with the Houston aerobatic folks and typically 1 day a week I would find myself over at David Mafridge's grass strip where Dan Clark, Debby Rhin-Harvey and Janet Fitzke show up and we would practice. I started doing competitive aerobatics in 1999 with Dan Clark regularly coaching and critiquing me. By the end of 2000 the fabric and paint were starting to come off the airplane so I decided to refurbish it. I had found out during the cub restoration I really enjoyed restoring airplanes. Upon completing the restoration, I flew the Pitts until 2005 when I decided I wanted a more capable aerobatic airplane that could compete at the advanced and unlimited levels. That led me to acquire my current airplane – a



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**LAKEWAY AIRPARK  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



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**Scenes From The Airpark On A  
Warm Sunday Afternoon In January**

**Bob & Nellie Abresch**



**Steve Bangs Memorial Table**



**Meet Mike Torbitt  
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Panzl built Staudacher S-330 which is just wonderful to fly. Very light on the controls and with a roll rate twice that of the Pitts. I am hopeful that this year my work schedule will allow me to return to flying some aerobatic competitions.

My wife Judy and I moved to Lakeway in July of last year from Kingwood, Tx. We had owned a lot on the runway for several years and had planned to build a house here but ended up buying the old Gardner/ Friedrich residence instead. Judy and I have 2 children both UT grads I am proud to say! Our son Jon was accepted into the Navy flight officer program and is scheduled to graduate from OCS on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Our daughter Leslie is mightily smitten by wanderlust, having moved to Thailand for a year and a half, then returning to Austin. Her latest news is that she has obtained a work visa for New Zealand and is soon to be headed south.

Well, looking out the window it looks like the weather has finally cleared up – time to head out. See you on the ramp!  
Mike Torbitt

**Hangar Hotel USO Dance**

*By Rick Mays*

January 19, Cindy and I attended the USO dance at the Fredericksburg Hanger Hotel located on the airport (T82). If you have never stayed at the hotel, it is like taking a step back in time. The hotel has a very tasteful décor that is quite comfortable. The dance was at the Pacific Ballroom just across the tarmac from the hotel. The Pacific room is the smaller of the two large ballrooms but it still has a capacity of over 350. The Island décor fit perfectly with the theme of the USO party. We were surprised that at least 50% of the partygoers dressed in 1940's attire. Most of the men wore military uniforms and the ladies were very fashionable in their period outfits including amazing dresses, hats and hairstyles.

Surprising too was that most of the crowd got up and danced every song. The big band had the dance floor swinging all night long. It was so much fun that Cindy now wants to take dance lessons. This is a great aviation related event we look forward to supporting in the future. Cindy and I hope you will join us for the next dance April 19th

**LAKEWAY AIRPARK NEW FEES**

The board approved the new rules & regulations and listed below are the new fees

Class 1.....	\$200
Class 2 & 3.....	\$100
Class 4.....	\$ 50
Ramp—per year.....	\$900
Grass—per year.....	\$600
Hangar ground lease.....	\$810
Over night for all.....	\$ 10
Single Turbine.....	\$25
Twin Turbine.....	\$50