



## *Mississippi Valley Soaring Association*

**The Gateway Soaring Open**

**Is Here!**

**HLG – Friday, 6/11    GSO – Sat. & Sun., 6/12-13**

Prez Sez – Glauco Lago

Well, in Glauco's defense, he did send the editor a column for June but a computer glitch/operator error on my end seems to have taken that e-mail, and others, and made them "Lost in Space". And since he is out of the country, and I am in a rush to complete the newsletter, we'll have to forego his own words this month. Sorry Glauco, not your fault and something I take full responsibility for.

One of Glauco's points in his column, as I remember it, was the fact that the Gateway Soaring Open (GSO for short) is upon us and we need to have as many club members as possible step up and assist in making the event a success. So folks, **Please** step up and help out this weekend so that the work load is spread out over many and not done by just a few.

Mike Johnson has the CD HLG duties for Friday. If you plan on flying HLG, let him know please. As is usual, there will be a fair amount of practice flying Friday afternoon and evening so keep that in mind when you come out the field. For the weekend, registration opens at 8am with pilot's meetings each day at 9am. Try and be out to the field around 7-7:30am to help with set up and get the day rolling. More details at the club website -

[http://www.mvsaclub.com/mvsa/Gateway\\_Open.html](http://www.mvsaclub.com/mvsa/Gateway_Open.html)

Glauco is handling CD duties on Saturday and Mark Nankivil has the CD duties on Sunday – be sure to help them out as you can.

The weather is forecast to be HOT – come prepared and be safe!

Thanks in advance!

Mark Nankivil, humbled newsletter editor...

## ScoutQuest 100 – a Success!

This past weekend saw the Boy Scouts of America hold their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary event here in the St. Louis area at Forest Park. MVSA was invited some time back to be one of the participants in the event demonstrating R/C flying up on the upper ballpark fields east of the Muni Opera where a number of club members have flown over the past few years. Friday was set up day and Dave McQuire, Mike Johnson and Mark Nankivil met up at the field in the afternoon to help set up the



perimeter fencing for the club's working area. Dave had already been out earlier in the morning and gotten the process started (thanks Dave!) and the final set up went well.

Saturday was crunch day and the club really stepped up to the plate and made the day a real success. With 10,000 plus Scouts and leaders in attendance throughout the Park, MVSA had plenty of visitors throughout the day. The AMA provided the club 800 balsa chuck gliders to hand out to the Scouts - they lasted barely 90 minutes

before they were all gone. Thanks go to Chris, Mike, Ken, Robert, Nelson and Brendan for being there and interacting with the Scouts.

Sunday was definitely the wind down day for the event as the number of Scouts and leaders who stopped by were way down but those that did were every bit as interested in what we were doing as those stopping by on Saturday. Mike, Mark N., Nelson and Robert were there to cover things for the club and both fly and answer the questions being asked. The weather was much cooler and the skies clear and both Mike and Mark N. flew their Radians while Robert "wow"ed them with his DLG launches. Thanks to everyone too for pitching in to clean up our site, collect the re-bar posts, scoop up the plastic tape, etc. Thanks to Alberici Construction (Glauco's employer) for providing the materials we used to fence in our piece of turf for the event.

As a follow up, Jim Crook sent out an e-mail that a couple of the guys he works with made mention when back at work Monday about what they had seen over the weekend. When you think about it, that is the positive impact the weekend had!



Thanks everyone!

## Vultures, Pelicans, and Hawks... Oh My! Wayne Wimbish

When I was in grade school, it would seem like we always had to write an essay about our summer vacation. Wish I'd had one like this to use back then...

My wife Beverly and I just spent the week of Memorial Day on vacation at Daytona Beach in Florida. We drove our small Chevy Cavalier down, stuffed pretty full, and with no room left over for anything that might fly. I was in withdrawal all week and drank in every word of the Mid South reports from Chris, Mark, and Brendan. Great job guys! And I think about how close I was as I drove from Nashville to Knoxville on our way down last week. So close and yet so far!

Thinking that I would not get to see a single 'flying thing' all week, I was so pleased to discover just how wrong I was. There was plenty of 'Soaring' going on all around me all week. All I had to do was just look out my window.

The first thing I saw as I drove down were all the Vultures. It seemed that the further I drove south, the more of them there were. Circling in large flocks, it was easy to see where the lift was and to wish once again for something to take out and fly. Barely two meters in wing span, we all know how they can work the weakest gopher belch of lift and then fold in their wings and cruise off faster than we know what happened, usually leaving us with our mouths hanging open and our planes, thought to be in safe air, now hopelessly sucked into a black hole of sink. Sometimes I actually think I can see them laughing as they cruise off into the distance.

The next thing I saw when I got there were the Pelicans. These are birds that one usually thinks of as standing on a dock piling with a big pouch of a bill. We don't usually think of them in flight, and yet Pelicans in flight are the most graceful of soaring birds that one might want to see. Depending on species, adult Pelicans can have wingspans of 2-3 meters! They can seemingly glide on forever.

As I was watching them this week there were three main things that I would see them doing. Firstly, in single file formation, groups of two to six of them would glide up and down the beach in the early morning and evening when the breeze was coming onshore. They would glide at rooftop height from one high-rise to the next. They had a very high L/D and could span the gaps between buildings with ease, with whatever altitude loss between buildings being made up by the slope lift off of the next high-rise. They would seemingly go on at will with hardly ever a flap.

Of course, they were not just doing this for fun, but scavengers that they are, they were always on the lookout along the beach for a free meal. Guard your picnic baskets well. They love sandwiches and hot dogs more than fish and more than Yogi Bear!

The second place that I saw them soaring this way was right along the surf line about a foot or two above the water. They would glide along and 'slope' the back side of the wave using dynamic soaring techniques as good as any albatross ever thought of. Here of course, they were not looking for hot dogs but instead were looking for fish.

The third fascinating thing they did came when a hot area of fish was located. The formation would rise to about 50 feet and break up into individuals. They would then circle over the area until their prey was located, at which time they would fold up their wings entirely and plunge into the sea. The unsuspecting fish stood no chance and was quickly scooped up into that enormous pouch of a bill. It was common to watch a flock fish this way for 15-30 minutes at a time until they moved on.

Speaking of fishing, the neatest thing that I saw this week was performed by what I took to be some type of hawks. It is possible that they were ospreys, falcons, or maybe even eagles, though a hawk is what is the most likely I think.

Anyway, I first observed one hovering into the wind, directly over the breaking surf, eyeing the water closely. It reminded me of the small falcons we see in Missouri, hovering into the wind along the highways, looking for field mice in the grass below. Over the course of several minutes, the hawk would fold its wings and dive towards the water. If the fish that was to be the prey was not in just the right place, they would break the dive before the water and resume the hover until things were just right. When that happened, the hawk would pull out just at water level, and with talons extended, scoop up the fish just like in the pictures. I saw this happen several times. Fascinating...

The best part of the whole deal though was what happened as soon as the fish was caught. The hawk, with fish in tow was now a little heavier, enough to make climbing by flapping a chore. So what to do? Well they would flap up until they were up about 20 feet over the water and then they would turn and glide towards the beach like they were on landing approach. In fact, at first I thought the hawk was going to land on the beach for a quick bite of sushi. Instead, as the hawk approached the beach, it pulled up into the lift zone in front of the high-rise next door. Then it circled up effortlessly until it was about 100' above the roof-line. About 150-175' total. At this time it ss'd back and forth a couple of times and then headed off with wings tucked back in max L/D, presumably for home. Sure wished I'd had my camera near when this happened. Sure would have made a good video.

Well, that's how I spent my summer vacation, sans planes. How about yours?! Next year we at least take a DLG!