

## From 3,200 to 10,500 feet in 21 minutes

By Christina Cvitanich

The OCSA Coyote Dry lake trip started for me by hurrying from my work in Riverside at 5 PM, packing all my junk, including tent, food, warm clothes, sleeping bag, etc. into my old Ford Festiva, hurrying to avoid the dark time at Coyote. This was my first time driving out there, and my trip to the Mother Lodge Road went so good, I was happy, I found the place without any problem ... well, until I turned the wrong way into one of the other dirt side roads, driving, driving, no dry lake, it didn't look right! Driving back, trying another side road, there I was, alone in my Ford Festiva in front of an abandoned mobile home, didn't look right!, after driving one time around this mobile home, no sight of the dry lake, it's best to drive back, but.... which of all these dirt roads did I come from?? I got near stuck in the sand, but managed to drive on, and after trying two wrong roads, I found the one I came from, such a relief!!! Yes, but I still need to find the campout and the dry lake. I drove all the way back to Fort Irwin Road and counted the miles very carefully. I found the appropriate side road and finally I ended in the dry lake. Very nice road, driving, driving, driving.... NO CAMPOUT, where are they? Dim lights were visible far away at several spots. Could they be from the OCSA campout? Which ones are them? How can I get there without getting into problems with my small car? I crossed the lake to find out; well they were not by the road I chose, so I better go back and try to find another road. On my way back, I saw somebody driving, Yahoo!!!! At first I couldn't see if it was a truck or a camper, but I decided, no matter who it was, I will follow it until it stops! ... accelerating my little car, dust, dust and more dust around me, but I reach the camper, with a glider trailer on the back!!! Yippee, a glider. Following Keith through the lake, finally around 10 pm, I

arrived at the campout. I assembled my tent and joined the group by the fire. As it got late the group was getting smaller and smaller, 12:30 sleeping time!

By 7 am, the morning-fresh club members started coming up and talking about assembling the Blanik. Well, my tent is not much of a sound barrier, so it was time to come up and try to give a hand, or be in the way!



*Morning-fresh club members started coming up and talking about assembling the Blanik*

9 am morning briefing, instructions about the day's events were given and Bill was the assigned instructor. First auto start, a complete gallery of club members and families watching, everybody expecting a rope brake, but it didn't, a good disappointment, no rope brake, and the Blanik didn't come back for one hour, yes GOOD THERMALS AT 10 AM!!! Next flight, one hour, and the next again, the instructor started limiting the time to 45 min so everybody could get a flight. Then, around 3 pm it was my turn, a good auto start, a thermal gave us a hand, 1400 feet from a 1700 feet cable, directly into a thermal!! 21 minutes after, there I am at 10,500 feet and short time after



*9 am morning briefing*



*First auto start*

See the face of Bill Laningham, the view of the dry lake from 10,000 feet, and the number in the altitude indicator. Bill decided to put the spoilers out, and so the other members could get their flight. A great experience, I got the flight of the day.

By 7 pm, the decision to stop for the day was made, all the members that wanted to fly got one (shorter or longer) start.

Barbeques were starting all over and families were eating and sharing food with each other, I got to try great dishes and cookies to supplement the boring food I had in my cooler. When the time was passing, the wind was blowing and more and more people started assembling around the fires. Such a great group! Happy after the good weather of the day. 11:30 pm bed time!

My plan was to pack my tent Sunday morning and drive home early, without the need of waking up early to be in our briefing.

Sunday 7 am, what is going on??



*Bill Laningham*



*View of the dry lake from 10,000 feet*



*Altitude indicator*

Such a noise, people talking about balloon rides, hurry, hurry, and time to come up, it could be that I could get a ride! 5-10 min later, there I was, following the balloon with a couple of other people. By 8 am my position was at 5,000 feet looking down at our campsite, such a great feeling, my first time in a balloon!

After talking to people and giving a hand with a couple of gliders, my morning departure was delayed to 4 pm. But I had a GREAT experience. Thanks to everybody that make it possible! I would like to mention in particular Jim, Keith, Jason, Bill, and Ralph for their great work, and Marc for the wonderful balloon ride!



*Baloon Ride*