

# President's Page

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## 2003

## Let's make it a year to remember!

It's hard to believe the New Year is upon us, and I hope you had an enjoyable holiday with family. Let's start this year off with a twofold challenge for IAC members. The first is to assess where you are with your flying and make a pledge to learn something new with the help of an experienced IAC member. The second is to seek out at least one individual, help him or her join the IAC, and mentor that person on how he or she can start learning about aerobatics. Let me be absolutely clear that I'm not talking about pressuring people into being aerobatic competitors, although I expect a few will migrate to competition on their own, and that's fine. What I am talking about is simply helping fellow pilots learn something new about the flying, no matter what their level of experience. My challenge is meant to be fun and enjoyable for all!

This past summer I had the distinct pleasure in meeting Jim Porter, a Warbirds of America member who purchased a Sukhoi SU-29 with his partner Dick Hansen. Jim gave me a call to ask for help with learning the machine, and I was in a position to give something back to a sport that has given me a lifetime of enjoyment. Jim brought a lot to the table in terms of experience and soaked up information like a sponge. It brought us mutual enjoyment to experience the transfer of knowledge that can only be passed down from pilot to pilot, and it's especially fun doing it in a machine as fine as the Sukhoi.

I spent 11 good years training to win at sport aerobatics. The happiest I ever was during those 11 years of training was learning new things about something I loved so much and doing it with friends who felt the same way. It was very addictive! My sincere desire is to make sure that all members have an idea of how to create that same type of

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opportunity to learn and improve your skills in the art of flying in its purest sense. When you do learn it, I want you to pass it on to somebody else.

There's a number of ways that we have been working to accomplish this task at the IAC front office. The Aerobatic Rally is one way, more articles to the entire spectrum of membership is another, and protecting the integrity of our category system is still another. But the most effective way will always be one pilot to another at a flight school, between Chapter members, or simply between friends. Each pilot has a duty to educate himself and then to pass it on once mastered for the enjoyment of our new generation of pilots.

I would like to comment on our U.S. Aerobatic Teams. It had been pointed out in the past that supporting the upper end of our sport takes away from our grass-roots effort. I couldn't disagree more with this line of thought for a number of reasons. Our U.S. teams represent the cutting edge of aerobatics. They are our professors in a field of study we all have an interest in. They represent the maximum knowledge asset we have within our club. Not to support them in every way possible would be like burning the library of our school. They should be viewed as the research and development department of our club. I can tell you firsthand that nobody works harder at learning new things, and everyone can benefit from their hard work.

To support our R&D investment, we are hosting the 2003 World Aerobatic Championships in Lakeland, Florida. This directly benefits our team because they won't have to go overseas to participate, giving them more time and resources to prepare in their home country. Hopefully

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this will result in an exceptionally prepared U.S. team. At the same time, I am asking every Advanced and Unlimited pilot, including our U.S. team members, to reach out and mentor to the entry categories of aerobatic activity. I'm asking you to be available as much as you can to be a resource for both competitors and non-competitors alike.

I'm asking the Chapters to be aggressive too in sensing the needs of your membership by matching up new members with core people to make sure new members are benefiting from the system. New members who want to get more active, here is my challenge to you. Seek out your regional director and identify yourself as a new member that wants to get more involved. He or she will hand pick your contact at the Chapter level and get you started on the right track. If for some reason this doesn't meet your satisfaction, contact me directly. You can be involved and benefit greatly from your membership if you want to.

Lastly, I would like to invite all of our members to come down to Lakeland, Florida, for the World Aerobatic Championships. Nothing is more special than an international event, and I think you will cherish your new friendships with our counterparts from around the world. So please take a couple of days, come down to Lakeland, and be a part of history. Let's make 2003 something special for our club and our country. ✈