



# President's Page

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## Situational Awareness

### The big picture

I'm pleased to announce that Anheuser-Busch will be the presenting sponsor of the World Aerobatic Championships (WAC). Since assuming the office of IAC president last summer, I have been struggling to close the gap in the WAC's budget, and I'm very happy to say that my very good friends at Anheuser-Busch have helped me to make sure this will be a first-class international event.

Steven Busch, truly one of the best all-around pilots I know, took a special interest in getting this done for us on a shorter than normal timeline. With his help, we will have a spectacular opening ceremony, a full slate of flight programs, ancillary events, and closing ceremonies at SeaWorld. Come join us June 25 through July 4 for the Bud Light World Aerobatic Championships in Lakeland and see world-class flying at its best. Of course, we'll have a beer garden with a variety of Anheuser-Busch brews right on the Y-axis.

As you can imagine, the pace has been hectic at the IAC national office getting ready for the WAC, but at this time of year we all need to take some time out and reflect on the big picture with regard to safety. We all share a dynamic activity that exposes us to some inherent risks. Well managed, the risks are minimal and are on par with any other motor sport.

Being active with an IAC Chapter helps pilots to avoid mistakenly wandering into certain areas of the flight envelope prematurely. It's not what you know that hurts you; it's what you don't know. One of the most im-

portant facts behind Chapter membership value is that people are watching out for you, checking your "six" so to speak. The national office tries to help people learn and experience aerobatics safely by supporting Chapter activities where grass-roots learning takes place, by upholding strict rules for competition events, by initiating the new Aerobatic Rally Program, and by dedicating countless *Sport Aerobatics* magazine articles to safety.

In this month's column, I would like to touch on something the airlines and military call situational awareness, or SA for short. Good SA can be something as simple as being aware that you have definitely locked your canopy to something as complex as knowing the instant you're getting behind in energy within a sequence. Awareness of what is going on allows a pilot to process the flight's true priorities better.

Pilots who fly on a regular basis can definitely notice when situational awareness is not up to the usual "ace of the base" standard. People can have exceptional days and, sometimes, not so exceptional days while still maintaining a better than average performance. Once a deficiency is diagnosed, it's easy to transition to a more conservative posture, which may entail shifting tasks to other assets. In aerobatics, it may mean practicing at a higher altitude, or maintaining more energy, or maybe not flying at all. If you train regularly, you will notice when it's taking more effort to get things done the way you would like, signaling you're not quite on your game that particular day. It

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JUNE 25 TO JULY 4, 2003  
LAKELAND LINDER REGIONAL AIRPORT  
WWW.WAC2003.ORG

The Championships begin on Wednesday, June 25, with opening ceremonies and a nighttime airshow. Competition will begin on Thursday, June 26, and last through Friday, July 4, ending with the spectacular 4-minute Freestyle competition. Award presentation

and closing ceremonies to be held July 4 in conjunction with a 4th of July celebration. Special events are being planned throughout the week. For contest information, contact the IAC at [iac@eaa.org](mailto:iac@eaa.org) or 920-426-6881.



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happens, and sometimes you have to take a step back to see the bigger picture.

Especially with aerobatics, a good way to keep situational awareness high is to have a plan and stick with it. Don't ad lib when operating near the ground. More acquaintances than I care to admit have bit it by doing an impromptu move that didn't work out the way they had expected. Everybody loses when this happens. Have a plan, execute the plan, and monitor the progress of the plan. We cannot stress enough how important this is when you operate near the ground. Our contest flying has a great safety record because everybody is flying a very detailed plan every time. Veteran air show performers are veteran air show performers because of the same.

Remember that safety is 90 percent attitude. We try to nurture a safe attitude culture here at the IAC, leaving plenty of room for fun. Enjoy this month's magazine, which is dedicated to aerobatic safety. Fly safely and enjoy yourself! ✈