

Off Tow Newsletter

Puget Sound Soaring Association, Inc.

Editor: Dave Kremers

February, 2007

Seattle, WA

Bergseth dreamin' with PSSA...



Upcoming Events:

Another season is just around the corner, can you feel it? March 3 is the long awaited day for kicking off our 2007 season and if you have been dreaming like I have, watch out sky! As excited as we all are, there still is quite a bit to do to be ready.

If you've been keeping track of recent news, we will be involved again at the **Northwest Aviation Conference and Trade Show in Puyallup on the 24th and 25th of February**. You also know that we will be needing quite a bit of help in setup, breakdown, and manning the booth. If you haven't already contacted Charlie with your available time, do so now. This is a great chance again for us to rub elbows with the flying community and open their eyes to soaring and PSSA. An important goal for our club this season is expanding our membership and this could give us a valuable "kickstart".

Next, we are planning a couple of exciting events to start off the year right. We're scheduling a **"kickoff party" on the 3rd** where we will have a chance to spruce up our field and get in our first flights for the year. To make it a bit more fun and to your advantage, if you are there early, there will be rewards which will get you into the air faster and cheaper (details to follow at the field).

Also, expect a new aircraft on the flight line this year. The club has finalized the purchase of a PW-5 single seat glider and very soon we will have a **special clinic** offered by J.C. Hauchecorne, ace PW-5 pilot, where he will give us the skinny on flying and caring for this beauty. Plan to be there or be square.

And, when we have our new bird in the air, we're planning to kick off our **cross country program** in earnest. Look for a concerted effort early in the season to get people used to pushing the envelope around Bergseth. Our new Training Officer, Kenji Ominato, is intent on planning events which will get more of our pilots out and about in our local Western Washington environs.

In addition to familiarizing us with the new glider, J.C. has also offered us a presentation of the essential skill (or art) of centering a thermal. We want to schedule a special **TTS (Table Top Soaring)**

session for this early in March and are hoping to set a date and place very soon, so keep alert for that announcement.

Each year we look forward to welcoming more new pilots to the wonders of soaring and to make that happen we want to give as many intro rides as possible. However, we can't do that unless we have enough qualified club pilots on the field to provide these flights. To encourage more of our members to gain the needed added 'commercial' rating to their pilot's license, PSSA, with the help of instructor Grant Smith will be offering a **Commercial Ground School** to prepare pilots for their required tests. You need to contact Kenji or Grant to indicate your interest if you haven't already done so. At present the dates set are **Feb. 22, Mar. 1 and Mar. 8**. Look for more particulars from Kenji.

Recent Events:

Winter Party

It was another great Winter Party, thanks to Wayne and Judith's fine hospitality. If you were able to make it, besides the fine company and dining, you got a briefing on plans the outgoing board had in the works and were introduced to this year's board who were ready to pick up the ball and go forward. In fact, during the general membership meeting held that evening enough members indicated a willingness in making loans to the club that the decision to purchase a single seat glider was set in motion. In addition new board positions were filled as follows: **Charlie Long**, president; **Peter Dodd**, vice president; **Dave Kremers**, secretary; **Kim Sears**, finance; **Curt Chenoweth**, operations and safety; **Brano Mikulik**, maintenance; and **Kenji Ominato**, training.

Extra curricular activities

Now, to switch the subject briefly, but still speaking of winter, while the soaring on wings was in hiatus, several of us took the opportunity to fly about among the snowflakes. We'd hoped to get more of our skiing members involved in some social activity over the winter months and maybe we still can in the future.



PSSA Ski Team '06-'07

Board News:

Now back to that more important glider stuff. This is where we hope to keep members up to speed on the plans and decisions that your board of directors has developed to guide this club toward growth and viability in the future. The new board for 2007 has met and has begun the work necessary to

make our coming season the best possible for all members, present and future. To start thing off, President, Charlie Long has a few words of greeting:

View From the Left Seat
Charlie Long, President

It is with no little trepidation that I find myself at the helm of PSSA for the coming year. Having been resurrected as a pilot in June of 2004 after a 32-year hiatus, I am very aware of being surrounded by folks who've logged a lot more hours than I have and, perhaps more importantly, have a long history with this club. I can only say that I will do my best to be worthy of those who have preceded me. I know I have a great group of board members to assist me.

There's no question that I'm getting my baptism of fire. After hearing it talked about ever since I joined the club, I find myself in the left seat just as the long-awaited purchase of a third ship actually happens. It's a milestone for the club, one that became possible only through the diligent efforts of past-president Tim Heneghan and the strong support of our members. To date, eleven people have stepped forward to loan the club the funds needed to purchase this aircraft. To me, the most significant thing is the fact that, of those eleven, four already own their own ships and thus are unlikely to fly the new one very much. Another four may soon join the ranks of private ownership as well. But they all stepped up and made a significant commitment to the club regardless of any personal benefit they might receive. That's pretty cool.

Hot on the heels of the purchase of the new ship comes the Northwest Aviation Conference and Trade Show at the Puyallup Fairgrounds. An event like this is a president's nightmare—frantically trying to get folks to volunteer to help set up our ships and man the booth. Please, if you haven't already done so, shoot me an email and volunteer for a shift or two. Those who did it last year will tell you that it's really a lot of fun.

The final part of the trifecta that kicks off my year as president is the prospect of coming up with a new fee structure for the club. At the Winter Party, those in attendance expressed strong support for some sort of "tiered structure" in which flight time was pre-paid. Certainly this would help our budgeting process, but it's not an easy process to work out. The board has its work cut out for it.

But the most important thing is that flying season begins again on March 3. That, after all, is what all this is about. See you at Bergseth!

Charlie

Reports From Members:

Now for a pair of contributions from members Mark Allen and Dariush Zand.

(A reminder - we are always interested in any soaring related articles you might wish to contribute that will enhance our knowledge and enjoyment of the sport.)

First, this reassuring bit of analysis offered by our head tow pilot:

Used Tow Ropes For Sale – Incredibly Cheap

Three or four years ago I published the pulling strengths of our towropes and links for our membership’s amusement. Since that time I have been keeping all subsequent ropes that we have taken out of service, with the intent of destroying all evidence, literally breaking them apart. These included both the main towropes and tow links. Well, I finally got around to loading them until they screamed uncle or snapped, whichever came last. Most of these had “pulled” a full year of duty, which are more than 500 launches. The attached figure shows the results from these tests. It’s not so much the yanks and banks from the gliders that defile the rope; it’s more the romps through the hay and dirt during landings.

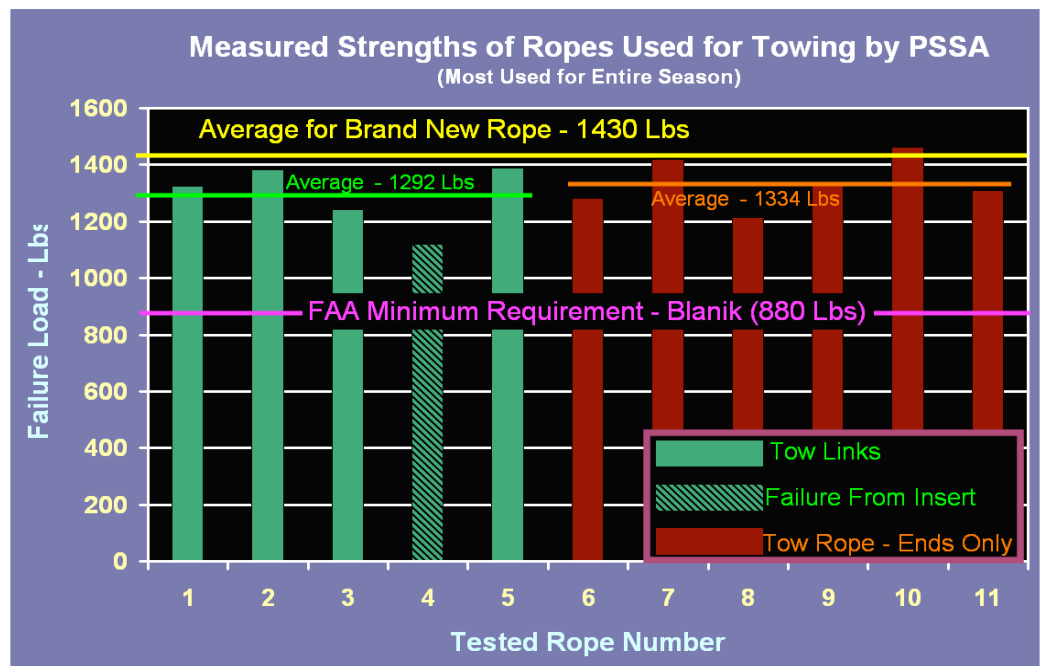
Over the years I have tried to experiment with rope wear enrichment, but the ideas have proven to be impoverished. I tried by inserting the main rope inside plastic tubes to see if they would perform better. Not only was no improvement found, but they tended to cause additional fraying.

The looped ends of the ropes have also had plastic coverings. It is unclear if they help since they usually don’t fail in this region. However, in one instance, the end of the tube had actually frayed (cut) the rope significantly enough to cause the rope to fail markedly lower than the others. This can be seen in the figure with the green and black cross-hatched bar labeled tested rope number 4.

A significant disadvantage of the plastic coverings is that they prevent inspection of the rope for broken fibers. For these reasons, I will no longer use sheaths for protection. Abstinence is not an answer either.

The good news is that regardless of the specific arrangement of any rope, they all performed well, even though they can’t sing, dance or act. As the figure shows, the average strength for the links and the towropes was approximately 1,300 pounds (two hanging PW-5’s). This is only a reduction of about 130 pounds from a new rope and more than 400 pounds above the FAA minimum requirement for the Blanik (80% of max takeoff weight), our heaviest glider.

The ropes sometimes look grungy but unless they have a large number of failed fibers (1/3rd of all strands), they will do their job. This rope is incredibly durable and can take the pressure, just like our members. Our current policy is to replace all ropes (not members) once a year, regardless of their condition. Our years of experience and performance of these ropes supports this policy.



However, nothing prevents anyone from demanding a replacement anytime if they are uncomfortable with its condition. We always have a spare available. Check with the tow pilot.

Mark Allen

And from perhaps our longest standing member, a bit of history on gliders of our past:

Hi Guys,

The B-4 was picked up from a club in California (lake Ellsinore) in early 1978. It was a leased back arrangement. The owner was Greg Thompson.

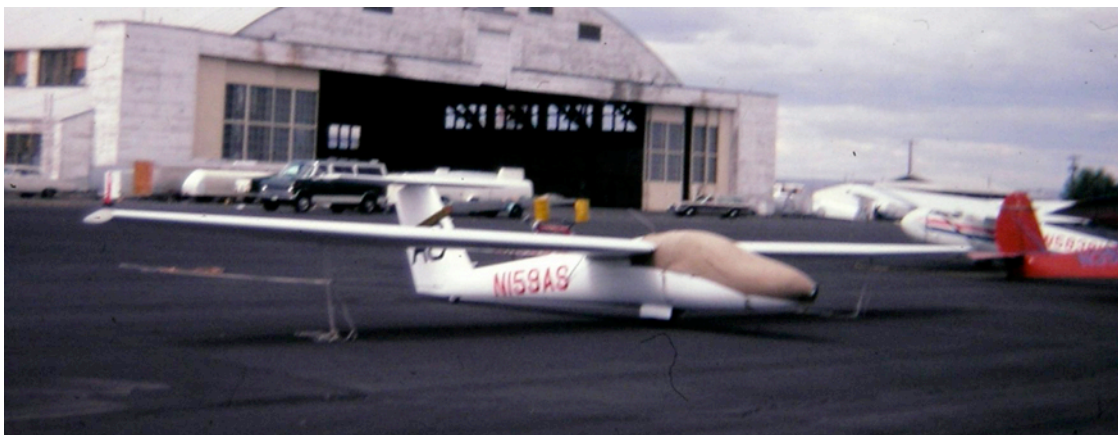
PSSA used to take at least 2 gliders to Ephrata every summer (the 2-33 stayed at Bergseth all year). So the B-4 went straight to Ephrata upon its arrival. My log book shows my first flight in N159AS on 5/20/1978. Shortly after the B-4s arrival at the club, Jerry Nelson and Don Crawford built a trailer for it. I can't remember how it was brought up from California. maybe it was transported on a borrowed trailer.

The club would always take the B-4 to Wenatchee every March for Wave Camp. After the wave camp it would go to Ephrata (usually on a short cross country flight) for the rest of the summer, and then back to Bergseth in September. In 1981 I convinced the club to let me fly it in the region 8 soaring contest. I flew it in sports class category.

Here is some more info extracted from my log book,..... the clubs first glider was a 2-33 tail number N5728S, a year later we added an L-13 on a lease back arrangement (Klaus Arbach was the owner) this glider's tail number was N9241Z, it had a one man assembly trailer ! Recently I saw this trailer in Arlington. I guess Boeing club owns it now. We used a leased back super cub N2LB which we also kept at Crest.

I am including some photos. One is the B-4 in Ephrata, and the other one is a Lark landing at the old Issaquah airfield (where the Costco is now).

Take care
Dariush.



Good Ole' 59AS on the line at EPH



Lark on final at Issaquah (back in the day)

Operations:

This is where we normally publish the upcoming Field Manager Schedule, but due to the temporary absence of our Operations and Safety Officer, Curt Chenoweth, that information will be forthcoming in a separate announcement, so stay tuned for your coming assignments.

Here is a good place to remind members that your current board of directors, is taking up a recommendation of last year's board and is strongly encouraging members flying club ships to plan on a "season's first" flight with an instructor just to get the cobwebs out. We want to stress safety first at our field, which can be enhanced by currency of flight skills, especially after a long time out of the air in a glider

Newsletter contributions:

As always, your input to this newsletter is very important. Please let us know if you have new information, valuable experiences, constructive comments, even gripes which will help to make this a better club offering the safest and most cost effective soaring opportunity in the area. Send items to Dave Kremers (dkremers@earthlink.net)