

Off Tow Newsletter

Puget Sound Soaring Association, Inc.

Editor: Dave Kremers

April, 2007

Seattle, WA

Upcoming Events:

Good flying is in the offing. In fact, if it's as good as a couple of recent days, it will be outstanding, especially as these weather fronts move through. Make a special effort to get out and join in the fun.

Recent Events:

Although the weather started off with the usual low ceiling overcast, it is starting to present some very good soaring. In spite of the fits and starts, quite a bit has been happening for the pilots who have been taking advantage of the opportunities provided. Just a short list follows:

- **First Flight Initiative** - a group of club pilots have made their "first of the year" refresher flights with an instructor to get their season started on the right foot.

Our Puget Sound Soaring Association (PSSA) is committed to the Soaring Safety Foundation (SSF) First Flight initiative, where members are urged to take their first flight of the season with a CFG. So far, the following members have accomplished their First Flight. We have submitted the names to SSF for the record and to show our support of safety initiatives.

4/1/07 - Kenji Ominato, Branislav Mikulik, Kim Sears, Charlie Long, Mark Allen, Curt Bryan

4/7/07 - Travis Edwards, Dave Kremers. Ronnie Rogers

We thank Grant Smith for making himself available for this important start to our year



What's soaring without a glider?

- **New aircraft tie-downs** are now in place on the north side of the field near the training center for mid-summer convenience,
- **Museum of Flight Glider Expo** over the Easter weekend gave PSSA a chance to talk up soaring and our club. We made contact with a good number of people who now know about us and will be invited to visit us in the future. Thanks to Curt, Marlene, Mark, Ronnie, Charlie, and Brano for their help in making our booth a success.

- **The new PW-5** is in service with at least half a dozen pilots having already had their chance to check out and make flights. Kenji has already been down to Buckley and beyond in it and others have reported some very enjoyable extended flights. If you haven't been able to check out in this fun bird yet, do so when Grant returns, it's a great little plane.
- **Instruction** is underway for pilots striving for their next rating. Several club pilots working toward their commercial rating have completed their preparation with Grant to take their check ride as soon as their knowledge tests are out or the way. Kudos to Pres Charles who has just passed his check ride for his full commercial rating.



Kenji and Grant's ground school for commercial rating



Our first graduate. Congrats Charlie!

Also, congratulations to student pilot Travis Edwards for soloing just last week. He's already set his sights on the L-13 and, who knows, then his ticket and the single seater?



Board News:

A new maintenance procedure

Maintaining and keeping our gliders in top-notch condition is paramount to safety and our pride in PSSA equipment. We all want and expect this, but it all depends on every member taking notice and helping

This year we are expanding our past practice by taking notice of glider condition, and **logging any abnormal condition in the aircraft daily preflight log book after noticing it** and before the end of the day. This is followed by notifying the Maintenance Officer, Brano Mikulik, of any action required.

From that point on, problems will be recorded for pilots to review before the next preflight and for the Field Manager to be aware of as s/he decides to put an aircraft into service. This means that the Field Manager will check each glider logbook before leaving the field (This has been added to the checklist that is on the backside of the Daily Flight Log). Any pertinent information can then be passed on to the next day's field manager and to the maintenance officer.

Safety:

Safety Focus, by Curt Chenoweth, PSSA Operations & Safety Officer

Safety is a culture, and we need to blend it into everything we do. We need to instill constant safety awareness as a way of life. All members involved with our flying activities need to be alert to any safety issues during the daily activity. We all play an important safety role during everyday glider operations, and we need to monitor flying activities and serve as critics to any situation that is potentially unsafe. Do not hesitate to speak up if anything does not seem to be right. It's your responsibility and duty. It's better to be safe than sorry. And, if something does not seem to be a good idea, it most likely is not. Don't let accidents happen.

As our 2007 soaring season is starting, there are important safety related operations procedures to recall and understand. Some of those that stand out to me are presented below in no specific order. They are all important... and there are others. It's up to each of us, individually and collectively, to be the champions of safety for our flight operations.

- **Use “right of way” rules for sailplanes flying along the ridge.**

These are established in the Soaring Flight Manual (Ref 15-5). Everyone needs to review, understand, and follow. Simply stated, they are: when approaching head-on, give way to the right and when overtaking, pass on inside toward ridge.

- **Runway grass mowing**

Mowing runways and within 50 ft of the runways is prohibited during glider operations. The risk is too high for an unsafe situation when the mower is being operated in the same space that the gliders and towplane use.

- **“E” for emergency**

All pilots need to focus and give full attention when performing the final checklist item of “Emergency”. Do not forget it, e.g., what to do if: towplane falters during takeoff and whether to abort or fly, animals, people, or vehicles on runway, rope breaks below or above 200 ft, etc.

- **Checklists**

There are at least 4 checklists essential in the flight process: (1) after assembly, (2) preflight, (3) takeoff, and (4) landing. A written checklist should be used for the first three. It is reliable and you have the time to focus. We have three club gliders and the assembly and preflight checklists are contained in the flight manuals of each of these gliders. Use them. Also, in each of the club ships, there are takeoff checklists to use. Use them. As far as the landing check is concerned, the checklist is simple and should be memorized without need for any written checklist. After all, in this situation you are busy aviating, navigating, and communicating. The most relevant items are... is “gear down and locked”, and “do the spoilers work”. Everything else should flow from a normal landing.

- **Soaring safety signals**

There are standardized ground and in-flight safety signals. These should be memorized and reviewed periodically so they become second nature. Included are ground signals between the glider pilot, the wingman, and the towpilot, as well as, in-flight signals between the towpilot and glider pilot.

- **Check pattern traffic**

Everyone at the field should maintain situational awareness of pattern traffic, particularly of aircraft in the pattern about to land. During glider takeoff operation the wingman has specific traffic pattern checking duties for the glider pilot.

- **Towrope hookup**

Check for rope and ring condition, check for knots, hook up properly, (particularly the Schweizer tow hook release lever arm position), check hookup by applying strong force to rope.

Reports From Members and Friends:

Another safety consideration (from good friend J.C. Hauchecorne)

Yes, I am still here to talk about safety. I just came across two very cool items that I think every pilot should consider buying. This first product is for power heads, or pilots like me that fly different airplanes, in my case, tow planes.

The other day I was flying the ESI tug, the Pawnee. I got a briefing about the do's and don'ts, and one of the things that I have been told - don't use the heater no matter how cold it gets. Obviously, the concern is that the heater box, which is mounted around the exhaust pipe, may pipe deadly carbon monoxide into the cockpit. Let's think about that for just a minute. The only thing that stops warm air from flowing into the cockpit is a manually operated butterfly valve. This valve is not known to be air tight, even closed. If there is a CO leak, it is very likely that the CO will get into the cockpit, and that is not a good thing. Since CO cannot be smelled, it can kill you.

As most of you most likely know, there are several products on the market that should warn you about CO in the cockpit. There is a product that essentially is a 2" by 2" square plaque with a dot in the center. The theory is, if the dot in the center turns black it indicates there is carbon monoxide in the air. Unfortunately by the time the dot turns black you may be already feeling the effects of CO poisoning, i.e. sleeping. There are other more reliable products on the market, but I came across this little beauty:



This little thing is worth about \$129, and it may last up to 3 years, depending on the frequency of use.

Is it worth the money? I think it is. It is small, can be attached to your flight bag and can accompany you on every flight in every plane you fly. You never know, it may even save you when using that old airport car. The cost, 50 flight hours a year, over three years, it will add about 1 buck per hour to your flight cost.

It is worth mentioning; Aviation Consumer tested the Pocket CO, and recommended it for its small size and accuracy.

www.aeromedix.com

The other topic is Emergency Locator Transmitter, ELT.

Yes, ELT's are coming into our glider cockpit, along with the transponder. More and more competitions and organized events require that ELT's are part of the equipment list. If you recently looked into the ELT market, you very quickly learn, ELT's have changed. The old 121.5 is a box of the past. Welcome the new 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacon.



A very short description of the device is as follows:

"The Fastfind Plus is a revolutionary hand-held Personal Location Beacon and is currently the only one that features a **built-in GPS receiver** combined with a 406 MHz transmitter and 121.5 MHz homing signal. In the event of an emergency, an alert signal is transmitted to COSPAS-SARSAT satellites and forwarded to a rescue coordination center within typically

3 minutes. The built-in GPS receiver will provide latitude and longitude coordinates to give a position to within typically 100 feet, anywhere in the world!"

I like the "anywhere in the world" part. Imagine, just in case I run into that fast moving cold front that crosses the US, all I need to do the get a retrieve is a activate the PLB. Kidding aside, this thing is really cool. What I like about it, it travels with you. In gliding just in case you have to abandon ship, this PLB will travel with you on your body, assuming you attached it to your parachute. Here again, it will travel with you in your flight bag, so if you are changing your hardware, it will be with you. If you are an outdoorsman or woman, skiing, hiking, biking whatever, it's with you and may save your ass.



For more information check out www.aeromedix.com.

Well, that's for now, fly safe.

JC

Operations:

Supreme Trip Commander, Wayne Ginther has done some research on our behalf and it would be great if we could get involved in some of these:

Consider these trips,

- The date is set for the 2007 PSSA Montague Soaring Experience. July 21 thru the 29th +/- the weekends. The fee as posted on the web site is \$45 for towing to top of Craggy. Usually only one tow is necessary per day. The PW-5 would be the ship of choice from PSSA for flying at Montague and/or Alvord. Someone needs to tow it down.
- The sport-15m-open contest at Ephrata is July 1st to the 7th.
- The Alvord trip per Don Crawford is July 15th thru the 20th +/- the weekends. (One possibility for going to both the Alvord and Montague is to have spouses travel by train or bus to Yreka and thus not put up with the rigors of the Alvord.)
- Other possible trips. Hope, BC- Probably 3 or more pilots would be fine
Wenatchee -Usually 2-3 day trip
Ephrata - X-country camp May, Memorial Day weekend

Let me know your wishes and dates for any of the above.

Wayne

Field Manager duties

A reminder of upcoming Field Manager assignments follows:

Sat. Apr. 21 - Dariush Zand
Sun. Apr. 22 - Dave Kremers
Sat. Apr. 28 - Curt Chenoweth
Sun. Apr. 29 - John Ennes
Sat. May 5 - Van Chaney
Sun. May 6 - Dean Gittleman
Sat. May 12 - Tim Heneghan
Sun. May 13 - Wayne Ginther
Sat. May 19 - Charlie Long
Sun. May 20 - Branislav Mikulik
Sat. May 26 - Marlene Nelson
Sun. May 27 - Kenji Ominato

Note: As always, let Curt Chenoweth know right away of any problems in keeping your assignment, even if you have already made arrangements for exchanges with other members.

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)

