

Off Tow Newsletter

Puget Sound Soaring Association, Inc.

Editor: Dave Kremers

Nov. – Dec. 2007

Seattle, WA

A Word from On High:

View from the Left Seat

Charlie Long, PSSA President

As the year comes to an end, I wanted to give you all a sort of “state of the club” message.

The year began with the purchase of the first new addition to our fleet in many years. A friend and I had the joy of driving to Twin Falls, Idaho, in February to pick up our new PW-5 and bring it “home.” (The snowstorm in the Blue Mountains was great fun.)

We then started the flying season on March 3, with all the ships ready to fly. That, naturally, was the signal for the weather to turn foul. Though we did get a few flights off the ground, the month was pretty much a washout. However, things improved dramatically in April, with many pilots getting refresher flights with Grant and several club members completing their commercial ratings. From that point on, flight operations were reasonably consistent and on pace with previous years.

Then August rolled around and we were faced with a significant mechanical problem involving our tow plane that forced its temporary removal from service. A month that should have been one of our most active turned out to be a disaster. It was some small consolation that the weather was unseasonably miserable so, as it turned out, we’d have lost a couple of weekends even if the tow plane hadn’t been grounded. In any case, the result was a loss of revenue.

Despite these difficulties, we logged a total of 482 flights for the season, not including tows of members’ private ships. Demo flights were down significantly over last year, due in large part to losing the month of August. In the end, with revenue down and expenses up, we had a negative variance of about \$4000 versus our budget projections. This DOESN’T mean the club lost money. It just means we weren’t able to put as much into our reserves as we’d hoped. Overall, the club’s financial situation remains strong.

Treasurer Kim Sears has put together a brief snapshot of our numbers:

Checking account balance @ beginning of year: \$13,294.11

Total in savings @ beginning of year: \$7172.64

Checking account balance as of 11/25/07: \$13,424.23

Total in savings as of 11/25/07: \$7352.61

In addition, we have just under \$10,000 in “accounts receivable” from flight operations (Look for a statement in lieu of a Christmas card coming soon!) and anticipate approximately \$12,800 in dues income in the first quarter of 2008.

Moreover, one of the most important tasks the board has faced this year is beginning the repayment of members’ loans that made possible the purchase of the PW-5. At its last meeting, the board voted to allocate a total of \$6300 to this purpose. All those who loaned the club money will receive interest payments of \$50 per thousand and then, in addition, \$5000 of the total principal will be repaid in \$500 blocks as determined by lottery at the Winter Party. (Good reason to attend, right?)

And finally, speaking of the Winter Party, keep Saturday, January 12 open! Wayne and Judith Ginther have graciously offered their home again this year. Details appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Diane and I will be off on a 2+ month cruise around South America so we’ll miss seeing everyone at the party. May I say that it has been an honor to serve as PSSA President this year. See you all at the field come spring!

Charlie

Upcoming Events:

2008 PSSA Board of Directors nominations

It's that time again, gang. We need to start the planning for another successful season by selecting those members who can devote some of their time to the leadership of our club. It's a big job, but one that is essential to the furtherance of our goals as pilots and as a club supporting the sport of soaring. Stefan Perrin has volunteered to head up the nomination quest and has already sent members a ballot with the list of members available for service. If you are one of the **seven who haven't responded**, do that immediately, if not before the deadline of Friday, the 15th.

Thanks to Stefan for taking on this task, and we look forward to the enthusiastic participation of all members in this most important expression of support of PSSA. Remember, we are only as strong as our commitment to serve our club and our sport.

Annual Washington State Aviation Trade Show (2/23/08 –2/24/08)

We will be needing volunteers to help in setting up and meeting the aviation public over this important opportunity for PSSA to show its wares. There will be setting up on Friday, the 22nd, of February and then booth duty over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th. Again, Stefan is point man on this event so please contact him with your availability if you haven't already. We count on this show to make our existence known to the local aviation community.

Annual Winter Party

We've always enjoyed the opportunity to join together between seasons to both celebrate the past season and anticipate the next. Here's the official invitation:

PSSA Winter Party!

Saturday, January 12, 2008

at the home of
Wayne & Judith Ginther

6797 183rd Avenue E
Bonney Lake, WA 98390
(see attached map)

Happy Hour at 5:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Plates and utensils provided.

Please bring a potluck dish and your own beverage
(unless, according to Wayne, you want to drink his box wine!)

Among other exciting events, the first “Loan Payback Lottery” will be held!

We use this occasion to gather for fellowship, good food, but also to hold an important general membership meeting. This last function is vital to sharing plans and concerns for the coming year and to passing the execution of those plans to the new board of directors which will carry forward for PSSA. We hope everyone can plan to attend, as this is an important opportunity for each member to have a say in the way our club is run.

Recent Events:

Reflections on a good season:

Did you get a chance to check out in the new PW-5 this season? If not, make it a goal for 2008. A good number of our experienced pilots have been enjoying it at Bergseth, Ephrata and Montague. Ask Kenji and Curt what they think of it. It's a sweet little ship and will give you a real taste of what soaring is all about.



Marlene checks out



Curt takes it up over Bergseth's ridges

Winter Wrap-Up

A hardy crew of PSSA's most reliable members showed up on our last day of operation to break down our fleet for winter storage and maintenance. The following week they were given a final washing and tucked away where maintenance tasks can be performed over the winter. Look for the chance to answer the call to help in some of those tasks. Brano Mikulik will have a list that will allow you to choose your time and task



Mark takes charge!



Say what?



...and, it's a wrap

PSSA Maintenance Plans:

From Maintenance Officer, Brano Mikulik:

The focus of maintenance during our winter break is to get our fleet ready and have gliders' and tow plane's annuals done.

I have a checklist for SGS 2-33A annual/100 hour maintenance as prescribed in the maintenance manual and I'll get checklists for the L-13 Blanik and PW-5. This involves checking parts, cleaning and lubricating but there are several items which require removal of a component and for those we need to have sufficient helping hands around.

I have also noticed couple of things on our trailers when taking our gliders apart which should be fixed so there will be a list of those items to be accomplished.

I'll try to find a way to put this all online as a spreadsheet with items we need to do before annuals and let members sign up for whatever work is needed. It seems that, in that way, we can manage to take care of glider' maintenance in a couple of weekends. Your help in this will make it possible.

Brano

We are also making repairs to the PA-18 tow plane and are thankful to Curt Bryan and Mark Allen for their taking on the supervision of that task. This work has begun in a timely fashion and should insure that we have "Three Tango Mike" on line for our next season's opening.

(a **really big** picture that wouldn't fit in this space follows)



Many hands making light work

Table Top Soaring Session

Kenji Ominato, or Training Officer, invited members to a special TTS session held recently at the Auburn Round Table Pizza where many had a chance to share some of their season's experiences, both highlights and lowlights. The emphasis was on cross-country exploits, at Ephrata and at Montague. Old member J.C. Hauchecorne shared some mountain flying exploits in the western Cascades, Tim told about his first Sport Class competition experience, Kenji shared his triumphs as a neophyte at Ephrata and Dave and Wayne told about the most recent trip to Montague.

Dave and Kenji have plans to hold TTS sessions over the winter months to give members a chance to join in some discussions about cross country flying in our Bergseth area among other things.

These meetings have always been held at a location such as Red Robin restaurant (in Federal Way), where the eating is good and offers variety, or Round Table Pizza (in Auburn), where there is a separate meeting room available for media presentations and discussions. In either case, we hope to keep the soaring flame alive over the slack winter maintenance period. It's also a chance to and drink beer tell stories. So, keep an eye on your e-mail and plan to join us.

Word From Members and Friends:

Special Deal on Soaring Handbooks: (from Kenji Ominato)

I found three brand-new copies of the FAA Glider Flying Handbook at Half Price Books and bought them all for the club. This is a must-have book for every soaring pilot and I am making them available for \$9.98 each.

Kenji

Editor's note:

This will be my last Off Tow issue as PSSA Secretary as I will be giving up the board position after this year to some younger and more nimble mind. Please give whoever assumes this important position the same great support you have given me over these past seven years. It's been a pleasure.

And thanks,

Dave Kremers