

Off Tow Newsletter

Puget Sound Soaring Association, Inc.

Editor: Dave Kremers

January, 2006

Seattle, WA

The editor apologizes for the fact that you haven't received a newsletter over the past two months, however, life has been rather full over that time with holiday and family events and there was a distinct lull in soaring activities anyway. And, it didn't help that we've had a rather spectacular early ski season this year. I hope you'll understand.

Upcoming Events:

Party, Party, Party! If you didn't do enough celebrating over the past couple of months, this is your chance to catch up. Each winter at about this time we gather to celebrate the past and look forward to the future. This year it will be at the home of Wayne and Judith Ginther in Bonney Lake. If you didn't receive a map mailed to you directly, look on our website, www.pugetsoundsoaring.org. All members, of course, and anyone else who shares our interests, especially those who want to find out what we're up to, are invited. We only ask that you RSVP to Wayne at (253) 863-64969, or by e-mail at novheart@gte.net, so there'll be enough of the good stuff for everyone. Of course, as in years past, the plan is to bring some dish, be it casserole, appetizer, salad or desert, to share with the throng. And, if you have a favorite beverage, bring that too.

This a good place to add a reminder to all about the upcoming CFIG Refresher Clinic being offered February 11&12 at the Alaska Airlines training center at 2651 S. 192n St. Seattle, WA 98188 at a cost of \$150. Everyone, whether instructor, rated glider pilot. or student, is encouraged to take in this Bob Wander clinic. Your editor has attended and found it to be worth every penny. Also, both George Strohsahl and Mark McIntyre have written urging members to try to make this event.

And let's not forget Table Top Soaring. We want to invite all out to the next session scheduled for the 31st of this month. It's a great opportunity to talk shop over beer and burgers. Look for a future announcement with the details on the location. We are looking for another more centrally located site, possibly in the Bellevue/Factoria vicinity. Your ideas are welcome.

Recent Events:

We had a very good turnout for the general membership meeting held on December 3rd in Bellevue. The minutes of that meeting were disseminated to all members shortly thereafter. If you weren't able to attend the minutes are available at the Yahoo users group, see message #82 of 12/9/05.

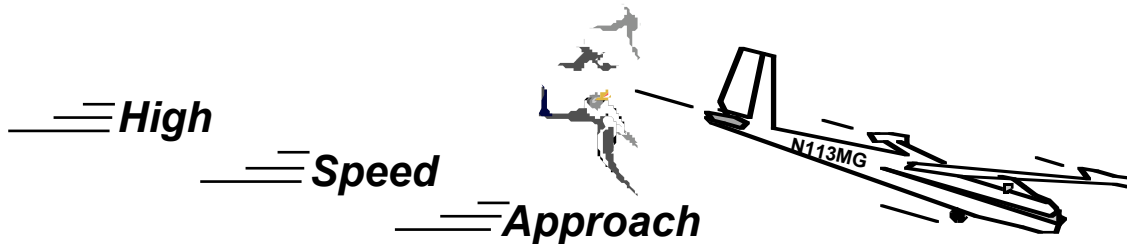
It was generally felt that there was a very constructive dialog about matters that both the board and individual members felt were important to the future of the club. One significant outcome was the formation of two committees, one to look into the acquisition of a suitable and affordable single seat glider, the other to look into the feasibility of construction of a new club house. A key point made by members of the board and echoed by others present was that we all need to commit to active involvement in the matters that will make the club more successful. This was a good start.

Board News:

The big item for the old board is the new board. That is, the selection thereof. **All voting must be in by Friday, January 13.** Thanks to Curt Chenoweth and Marlene Nelson for their help in organizing this important function. Get those votes in. The results of the election will be announced at the Winter Party.

Reports From Members:

Since our last issue we have had time to accumulate a collection of articles from members and others for your reading enjoyment. We start with a follow up on the wave of critical comment elicited by the ever provocative writings of our very own Captain Courageous, Mark Allen:



Or Low Energy Comment Dodging at Mach 0.02

by Mark Allen

In the last newsletter I described my unconventional technique for landing approaches. I received some engaging comments, for which I am grateful, errrrrrr grateful. This autopsy without the benefit of death was gut wrenching but informative. I had the distinct feeling that if the commenters had not bridled themselves to just their charitable thoughts, they would have suggested that I get a wardrobe makeover (straitjacket and matching hog ties) or maybe, as a minimum, psychiatric help with a court restraining order preventing me from approaching an airplane within 200 feet.

Several people have unwittingly been with me while I flew this approach. I don't recall any of them actually screaming at the time, although my hearing isn't what it once was. One of these unfortunate wayfarers did offer their earnest comments to this approach. Although they did mention something about being impressed, I took that to mean that I'm still alive.

I'm of the opinion that many of these contrary responses were sparked by my ending remark, "try this at home". That was a dreadful mistake given as a tongue-in-cheek, flippant remark to play off of a statement I had made earlier in the article. I expected no one to actually try this approach and I certainly would never suggest that a student or inexperienced pilot try this as I had well implied in the article. I had specifically mentioned that students are incompetent and cannot deal with demanding circumstances, such as this approach. Nevertheless, all commenters seemed to think that I was suggesting that this technique was for everyone. Not true, only for deviants who enjoy autopsies.

I had two reasons only for writing the article. The primary was to explain why and to give justification for this approach, in hopes of suppressing the constant remarks I get on landings. My fairy book says that I was remarkably successful. The second was to spur interest in people to think about alternate ways of flying. There truly is more than one way to fittingly do anything. Multiple techniques to a single task render more options and better prepare us to deal with the unexpected, such as adverse comments.

My intent was NOT to explain how to fly this maneuver, because I didn't think anyone would. I am also indifferent as to whether anyone should. I left out many details which some of the comments were addressing, which made it clear that the procedure is not well understood. For example, I do not land at high speed - high descent, maybe. I touch down at or near the stall and I can do that at any spot I choose (usually). When I fly at Ephrata, I touch down within the first two hundred feet of the runway, like everyone else, in a stall. I make the necessary adjustments depending on what is needed. I remain

flexible, depending on the situation. Surprisingly, it is not that difficult, and I think in many respects easier, but it does take an initiative to develop. For those of you who argue for consistence and stability on every landing, are you certain that you're the safer pilot? Regularity does have medical advantages, I will admit.

I've been using this approach, in various forms, for decades in power aircraft and it works well and so far I have found it to work even better in gliders, but it's been atrocious at table top soaring. Regardless of the airplane I fly, I always experiment with them to see what works best for me. I am rarely satisfied with customary methods since they are accommodating to the inexperienced. I expect better of myself and once you shift from the norm, you never feel comfortable going back. Have you ever seen Bob Hoover fly an airplane normally? And no, I'm not a Bob Hoover.

I was most interested in knowing if a risk could be cited that I had not thought about. What-ifs are always a concern and proceeding without an escape strategy is rash, if "airplane rash" is to be avoided. But you have to know the risks before you can worry about them. In this case, nothing new was brought forward, which is pleasing.

I very much appreciate the responses that I received and more importantly I hope the general membership benefited from these discussions. I thank all for your viewpoints and various slants, even if some were sunny side down. And by the way, the next time you see me landing, check out those wild shoe laces on the person next to you.

A taunted, haunted aeronaut.

(Those who missed Mark's original article in the October issue of the newsletter will find it still available on our website - www.pugetsoundsoaring.org)

And there's more. The following articles were received prior to Mark's original article.
The first comes to us from the frozen North, from Alaskan, Jeff Banks.

Here are my comment on Mark's approach.

If you can fly a glider trading airspeed for altitude and altitude for airspeed that is fine. The conventional approach has altitude in reserve where you have chosen airspeed. The math generally works out the same.

If I joined the pattern at the same time and not knowing you I might be perplexed as this is a bit unusual except for contest finishes, however I would figure out how to space myself and land accordingly. A solo student might be tasked with dealing with a surprising situation. This is not nice for the CFG on the ground or the student that is developing new flying skills.

I practice landing in an off field situation as often as I can and I have found the conventional pattern at the home field a very useful tool for setting up in an unfamiliar field. I do not think arriving flat with high speed is going to allow me the best view of my landing area as I would rather approach steeply to avoid the wires and nail the landing area between the barbed wire fences.

Like you I prefer to arrive home with extra altitude. I often will make an entry on the upwind leg 1,500 agl and make all four 90 degree turns. I can blend myself into the pattern and then make a nice approach. Final is at about 12 to 1 steep and just closing my dive-brakes gives me the option to land in any area on the gliderport.

Your approach works fine, however it presents surprise to others in the playground and the safety you desire is built into a steep approach of the conventional stable pattern most pilots fly.

My Sincere Humble Thoughts.

Jeff Banks
Alaska Mountain Soaring Association
AC5M, SGS 1-35, SGS 1-23, Jantar 41
AK CAP CFIG
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/akmtnssoaring/>

And now on the same subject from another of our own, George Strohsahl:

Regarding Mark Allen's excellent defense of his Air Force style fighter pilot approach technique in gliders, I would offer just a couple points in rebuttal. For experienced pilots with time in many models of aircraft and gliders and with a well thought out rationale for deviating from a generally accepted "standard" procedure, modification to the standard procedure can be both acceptable and perhaps desirable. If I am on the field when Mark thrills us with his low fast approach, as long as I know it is Mark at the controls, I just observe and enjoy. If, however, it should be one of our low time pilots I get very motivated to discuss the issue with that pilot following landing. From my perspective, the technique recommended by Mark is fine as long as you have the experience and skills necessary to pull it off safely and consistently. If you don't, the "standard" approach technique recommended by the SSA and incorporated in the standards for the FAA practical test is an easier, less rushed manner of flying the approach. It is a standard that is repeatable under a full range of conditions normally experienced in glider flying.

Years ago while instructing at a commercial glider operation back East, I gave occasional aerobic demo rides in an ASK-21. Pattern traffic permitting, I typically ended the ride with a very low pass at a speed near Vne, followed by a pitch up to a tight final approach and landing. Needless to say, the customer who was paying the extra bucks for the ride was generally thrilled -- or in some cases petrified. I thought all this was pretty neat and one of those rides would make my whole day. That is until one day, one of my young solo students, all on his own in the SGS 2-33, attempted the same maneuver. Fortunately there was a landable field under the downwind which is where he planted the glider without damage. The post flight discussion revealed, of course, that he was simply trying to duplicate my aerobic maneuver he had observed on several occasions. I was horrified that this inexperienced pilot put himself into such a dangerous position, due to my behavior. After discussion with the owners of the operation it was decided to discontinue that part of the aerobic demo ride.

Mark's observation that a similar low flat high speed approach is common at Ephrata may be valid. However consider the ship being flown and experience level among those pilots who practice that technique. By the time a pilot graduates to serious cross country and perhaps competition flying he/she should be ready to handle nonstandard conditions and accommodate to the realities of where the landing is being made -- on or off field. By the way, while not personally experienced at Ephrata I do have some time at Minden and a lot of time at Tehachapi. The owners of Soar Minden and Skylark North wouldn't accept the Allen technique among staff, rental or student pilots. You do not see it practiced very often at those primo soaring sites.

Now Mark is not trying in any way to show off or be unsafe, but it is my opinion that his technique, for at least low time pilots, could be dangerous without sufficient instruction in all aspects of it. Next summer, if there is any interest in trying this approach technique among experienced pilot club members, I will be happy to provide instruction along those lines (after a couple flights with Mark in the Blanik to ensure I fully understand all aspects of his technique).

George Strohsahl

And from PSSA friend, Steve Hill:

I am compelled to respond regarding the arguments offered b-y Mark Allen. Of all the things I've offered as advice in the soaring world, high speed low approaches have never escaped my lips. The single largest area where soaring pilots end up in accidents is LANDING. While the argument that kinetic energy in excess of that required for landing, might help in the situation of a tailwind and associated gusts...the logical place to pay attention to that issue is on the turn from base to final, where the wind gradient actually shifts, with regard to the relative wind the wing is moving through...that's the time for the energy increase...to offer that there's a substantial benefit to the gliding community or club members, in retaining in excess of DOUBLE the kinetic energy, in the form of airspeed, than that required to sustain flight is a very bad idea indeed.

The math is simple and straightforward. the weight of the craft times the speed with appropriate conversions, results in a number of foot pounds of energy that is both available...and which also must be attenuated. I for one, think that the standard of half the wind speed, plus the normal approach speed leaves an appropriate amount of excess energy in reserve, but not so much as to cause problems in its dissipation rate, once you are on the ground. The standard "Low Energy Landing" has proven it's benefit over time, in several factors...First, if you lose control of the craft, your odds of surviving an impact at 40mph for example are grossly different than surviving the same impact at 80mph...I know he knows this...as do we all...Don't consider only one side of the equation. The key in the equation should be towards maximizing survival rates....WHEN THINGS GO WRONG!

The whole argument is pretty straightforward...Mark's plan works fine for him, but I would assert that if he tried that behavior in a higher performing sailplane that the requisite energy difference would eat his lunch....one day...like when a brake line failed and he had to try bleeding off the remaining energy without the use of the brake....which by the way...if the brake fails, it's not nearly so easy to "throw the glider up on it's nose". If Mark's argument was completely sound, I'd evaluate it against the approved procedures the FAA warrants upon all pilots as imposed by the Practical Test Standards....anytime someone makes an assertion of this nature, my question is simply...will this work for all of us...?? Or only YOU?

In this case, I hope that NOONE will try this procedure, in anything higher performing than a Blanik...if at all.

You asked for input and there's my two cents worth...with around a thousand hours in the DG-400, which is considerably higher wing loading and much more relative energy to manage, my gut tells me this is an ill thought out course of action. I think everyone should carefully consider the argument...Next month, I am heading to pick up the Stemme I have purchased and bring it home...I can assure you, that at 50:1 L/D and almost a ton cruising in on final....that one would pay dearly if this procedure was mis-judged

I would assert, that this procedure will not benefit all of us...and in fact doesn't benefit Mark himself directly...If He has trouble deterring correct altitudes while in the pattern, then it would be far better to seek remedial help in that regard. I also believe in flying a tight pattern...but the key to doing so, is being "on speed" so that the landing can proceed to a low energy state touchdown and safe termination of a flight.

Respectfully,

Steve Hill

Changing the subject, from member J.C. Hauchecorne:

Online Contest (OLC)

Review of 2005:

There were a total of 680 pilots participating in the North American competition. Worldwide, there were 8,920 participants.

The overall winner was Mr. Klaus Ohlmann of Germany, with a total of 10,478.48 points, flying a Stemme S10. In second place was Manfred Albrecht, also from Germany, with 9,747.20 points, flying a ASH 25M. Third position was Jean-Marc Perrin, 9,037.25 points flying a DG400. Gordon Boettger from the Minden Soaring Club, ranked 5th, and was the first North American in the overall standing with an accumulation of 7,806.61 points flying a Kestrel 17m. The next American participant, Ralph Woodward, came in 33rd with 4,731.70 points flying a Nimbus 3DM. An awe-inspiring achievement was Doug Levy with a total of 4,493.18 points in 55th position flying a 1-26. Wow!

But back to the North American score; out of the 680 participants, there were three notable participants from Ephrata: David Shemvell who placed 27th, with a total of 3,784.05 points flying a Ventus 2. Tom Kreyche was 39th, flying a Nimbus 4, and Nelson Funston came in 44th position flying a Nimbus 4M.

After looking at the individual scores, you can also check out the club scoring. In the North American theater, the Albuquerque Soaring Club accumulated the most distance, with a total of 170,314.90 km in 519 flights, and a total of 35 pilot participants. The Arizona Soaring Association came in second with a total of 139,927.69 km, in 414 flights and 24 pilots. SGC (Seattle Glider Council) placed 3rd with 128,643.31 km, 349 flights and 27 pilots. PSSA came in 81, with a grand total of 2,002.69 km in 11 flights, one pilot participating, average distance per flight, just shy of 200 k's.

Thought-provoking:

The 1-26 association came in 4th, (US only) with 88,584 km flown in 341 flights and 42 pilots participating. This is a cool 259 km on average!

The average flight for the Seattle Glider Council was 368 km, vs. 328 km by the Albuquerque Soaring Club. From a statistical point of view, Ephrata is the place to be!

Just as a comparison, the Alpenflugzentrum Unterwossen in Austria accumulated 213,553.42 km with 48 pilots and 503 flights. Statistically that means, each pilot flew 4,449 km in 2005. The average flight was 424 km. Go check out their flights, it's really inspiring!

I encourage you to have a look at the OLC page (<http://www2.onlinecontest.org>). It is really interesting to see how other pilots are flying in their perspective regions. You can also download any flight, and play it back on your *See You* program. A great pilot to watch is Doug Levy who flies a 1-26. Note how many times he has required a retrieve, but more notably are the many great "out and returns" he has flown. He spends a lot of time flying in the Owens Valley, one of my favorite soaring areas.

Following the OLC will help in understanding how other pilots fly. It's also a great source of information to help you plan your next vacation! It's easy to figure out where they are logging in the longest flights at any given time of the year. By the way, I just noticed that they are experiencing some real long flights at the Bitterwasser farm in Namibia. Apparently the weather has been so great that there were more than 60, 1,000 km flights flown in the last few days. I know, Africa is a bit out of our reach, but as Walt Disney said, if you can dream it, you can achieve it!

What I recommend to any soaring pilot is to get the *See You* program. Also, become familiar with the OLC Web page and monitor it frequently. Download flights you are interested in, either in a glider

similar to yours, or flights that were flown in an area you currently fly. Play it back on your *See You* program (this is a cool thing to do on those rainy and cold days when you can only dream about soaring). Incorporate that with the new *Thermal Finder* software from Win Pilot and you will become the number 1 XC pilot!

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to send me an e-mail or call at any time.

J.C

Maintenance:

As we know this is the time for all good men to answer the call. We have a list of all maintenance items which have been identified and the work has begun. Curt Bryan has graciously made space available in his hanger to work on our aircraft as each project is identified. He has already been working on the PA-18 and this weekend the Blanik is on the stands with a crew of a half dozen on hand. Those of you who have been keeping up with postings on the Yahoo site are aware of the work to be done and we hope you are ready to answer the call when each project is addressed.

New service available :

We have received notice that there is a new fiberglass repair service, Northwest Fiberglass, available in the Tri-Cities area at the Prosser airport. It is run by Gareth Nisbett who has his had A&P license for 19years and has about 25years in composite repair and refinishing. He can be reached at www.NorthwestFiberglass.com.

Note:

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).

