

PSSA Newsletter

May, 2004

Upcoming Events:

It's springtime and that's the beginning of triptime. If you've been keeping up with recent announcements, you know that this coming weekend signals the first in numerous efforts to get up and away. This time it will be a first for PSSA. At the invitation of the Evergreen Soaring club we will join them at a spot, Concrete, WA, which offers a new and stimulating soaring experience. The field itself is said to be ideal for a soaring operation and the surrounding area promises some excellent opportunities to stay up and go places.

Right on the heels of the Concrete trip will be our third annual outing to Wenatchee (Pangborn Field) to join up with the Cascade Soaring club. We have had great times there in the last two years, finding it a beautiful environment with good cross country flying and wonderful hospitality offered us by the members of the club members there. As always, PSSA members without private single seaters will have the chance to fly our L-13 there, so if you haven't signed up yet, Wayne would like to hear from you.

Following closely after Wenatchee will be a very important new type of operation to be held away from Bergseth, on Sunday, June 6th. Originally scheduled for this last Sunday, our outreach operation at Thun Field was rescheduled to allow for more complete planning. This will be a chance to reach out to another segment of the flying community to gain some exposure for our club as well as to recruit new friends to the sport of soaring. More info comes later in this newsletter.

Recent Events:

Our second annual Fun Fly was held on Saturday, May 1st. It was a great success with a day jam packed with flights for old members, new members, and Introductory Members alike. The idea was to get into the air to shake off those winter cobwebs and Wayne Ginther did just that, amassing enough points in his two flights to bring home the bacon - a handsome silver (colored) trophy. Perhaps it was only just as he and wife, Judith, contributed mightily to the enjoyment of all with barbecue and munchables.

I suppose this as good a place as any to be giving big Thank You's to members who have been taking special pains to support their club. Without these efforts we certainly would not be able to carry on or to build our club into a better organization.

Jim Conley - Thanks for your great paint job on the "club house". The Bergseths have already thanked you, but we have noticed the improvement too. I'm sure Jim would want to officially thank George Mollison for bringing out his pressure washer for the task. Jim also is the one who came up with the idea for and the actual boards we are using at the highway intersections to announce our operations to passersby. That's been working really well.

Terry Crippen - Thanks for all the time you put into the SuperCub to get it back in the air. We know there were challenges presented by that task on top of your work responsibilities and we appreciate your sacrifices.

Joe Salz - Thanks for your willingness to carry the ball when needed on the SuperCub. If Terry was Top Dog, you were Big Dog. All of us mere maintenance dogs salute you. Your efforts, along with Terry, in tow plane replacement have been noted and appreciated. Oh, and the Bergseths along with us thank you for the help you have given in field maintenance chores.

Stefan Perrin - Thanks for all the extras you provide for us: You're our webmaster, no simple matter which we tend to take for granted; you maintain the membership/billing database that supports Mark's work as Financial Officer; and you're always ready to help in any way when asked. And all this without an official title. How about All Around Great PSSA Guy.

Wayne Ginther - Thanks to the Grand Trip Master for taking on this valuable responsibility. He wasn't pushed into doing this, he just thought it was necessary. Without his energies we couldn't look forward to the added opportunities to seek and explore the "hotter spots" to stretch our wings. (And the way Wayne flies you'd suspect he had stretched his from 13 to 15 meters).

Well, there are the standouts. There are many of you who have done that little extra bit to either help

your clubmates get through an operation or to make this a more viable club. Let's all pitch in and do the same and we can all benefit from the efforts. As someone has said - "Many hands make light work". And , as Woody Guthrie used to sing -"This club is your club...". (Or something like that.)

Membership:

A note to all present members. As part of our increasing efforts to attract new members, we have available now an adequate supply of the great new promotional brochure that Tim Heneghan has put together for us. If you haven't seen it yet, there should be copies at the field to see. The point is, if you think you will have the opportunity to spread the word among the general or aviation minded public, let Tim know so he can supply you with enough to get the word out.

We welcome Kim Sears, Steve Hill and Gary Rutledge as full members to PSSA. Kim works with Boeing and has been making steady progress on his glider rating. Steve you've perhaps met overhead in his DG-400. Pity that he won't be taking tows from us as he is self-sufficient in that area but he definitely adds a new dimension to our club. We'll learn more about Gary later.

We also have seen some new Introductory Members come on board and wish them an enjoyable time flying with us with the encouragement that they join us soon permanently and complete a rating with us. Most recently, they are: Ray Ballantine, Toussaint Myricks, Dean Ronhaar , Paul Marquardt, Tom McGeorge, Branislav Mikulik, Rogelio Lugos, Dean Gittleman, and Randall Juracek,. Say hello to them and introduce yourself when you see them at the field.

Reports From Members:

We benefit twice this month with articles from our Safety/Training Officer, J.C. Hauchecorne. You will hear from him again under that heading, but here are a couple of thought provoking items which offer challenges to us.

Soaring Forecasting

I love to forecast things. I like the thrill of predicting something based on my research, experience and gut feel, and see if my prediction comes through.

I have been trying to predict weather conditions ever since I was an early teenager. How is my batting average with weather forecasting? Just a little bit worse than the weather forecast on TV.

Trying to predict soaring conditions for the day is even more difficult than trying to predict if it's sunny or rainy a few days out. I have been skunked so many times, even when I thought soaring would be possible with a piece of plywood strapped to my back. And conversely I have had some extraordinary XC flights when most of my fellow pilots did not bother unpacking the equipment, the weather looked that bad.

I use my forecast to give me indications on where to fly, what kind of task, out and return, triangle etc. For example: what is the expected weather trend. In an improving trend I will set a big task, will launch as soon as it becomes soarable, and head slowly down the ridge, knowing conditions will improve. If the weather is expected to degenerate, the task becomes much smaller. I will get an early start and keep a close look on weather changes, such as increasing wind, high overcast that will cut-off the heating etc. Knowing that the weather is getting worse, I head back much earlier than I normally would. In other words, the soaring forecast will help me set my task.

My soaring forecast is based on 4 general observations: general weather trend; yesterday's

condition; today's observation and atmospheric soundings and their interpretation.

The general weather trend comes from any commercial weather forecast on radio or TV, supplemented with satellite shots and some aviation prognostic charts. Yesterday's observation is simply just that. Was it windy, calm, stratus overcast, cumies etc? Today's observation; is it a clear morning, with the first white wifs of clouds appearing around 10 am, or is it a hazy, inversion layer etc. Analyzing the atmospheric soundings has become much easier by following certain web sites, such as Dr. Jack or RAOB.

As I mentioned before, the soaring forecast only helps me deciding on setting a task. I love to experience a day when the weather behaves exactly as predicted. Unfortunately this is seldom the case. If my forecast is substantially different from the actually observed weather during the flight, I try to find out what has changed, what observation I missed or misinterpreted.

If there is anyone out there who would like to share soaring predictions, weather related information, or would like to see my forecast for the day, let me know. I'll be more than happy to e-mail my forecast and analysis to anyone and discuss it, and see if we can improve our batting average. Don't get me wrong. I am not proposing to do a fancy forecast. It will be more along the line like: "Sunday's soaring forecast calls for light winds, cloud base at 5,000 feet, thermal strength average, good day to go XC." In addition to the general statement, I will perhaps include a reference or two to why that forecast, and some reference to what data I used to come up with the prediction. Here again the data would most likely be from Dr. Jack's or the RAOB web page, plus whatever else I come across. Your reply could be based on what you experienced the previous day, that you think the thermal activity will be weak, or that you doubt that we will see any clouds at all. Then we would go fly and see what the actual weather would bring, and learn from that experience.

So, if you are interested in such a program, send me an e-mail and let me know. I doubt that we can ever precisely predict soaring for the coming day(s), but we can have fun trying.

My e-mail is: jean-claude@direcway.com

It's Only Money!

The more things change the more they remain the same. Take the latest development in our sport of soaring, more specifically racing. For years pilots who were racing gliders and setting new records had to struggle with old fashion technology, a technology that just about dates back to the stone tablets, in order to prove their achievement.

Two sets of proofs were required. One was a photograph of one or more of the turn points, and the other was proof that there was a continuous flight, which was established by the barograph.

Providing photographic evidence that a turn point was reached was a cumbersome task. First the camera had to be loaded with new film and installed in the already crammed cockpit. More importantly, a witness i.e., an official observer, had to be present in the loading and sealing of the camera. After the official observer was satisfied that the camera was secure and sealed, the challenge was to take the pictures in the air. It's not that bad in a glider, but taking a shot of a turn point had to be practiced, and there were always some surprises, such as being too close or too

far from the turn point, not in the sector, etc. Now try this from a Hang Glider and you know what I am talking about. Once on the ground, an official observer had to be present again to remove the film from the camera in order to ensure the seal of the camera case was not broken. Now we simply have to develop the film right? Yes and no. Developing the film was not that simple. If the negative was cut, like it's normally done in the photo lab, the film was not valid. You had to make sure that the negative was a continuous strip, in order to establish the proper sequence of the turn point's pictures as per declaration. The sequence had to be: picture of the task declaration on the ground, the start, one or more turn points in sequence as declared in the task, and of course the finish. The additional challenge of turn points was that a turn point had to be a physical landmark on the ground. Unfortunately, what looked like a perfect turn point marker through the eyes of a pilot seldom looked that clear on a picture. Questions and arguments over being in or out of the turn point sector led to many heated debates.

Similar steps had to be taken in order to prove a continuous flight with the barograph. The barograph had to be loaded with tracing paper, sealed and installed and witnessed by an official observer. Back from the flight, the observer had to witness the removal of the barograph from the plane, and ensure the seal was not broken. Simple enough if you had a barograph with tracing paper. Some older barograph had no tracing paper. One had to "smoke" the drum and somehow magically transform that trace scratched onto the blackened drum onto paper. Fortunately I never had to deal with that.

As you can see, proving the validity of a flight was not that easy. Here comes the new GPS age. Welcome data logger, good-bye camera and barograph. In its simplest form, a data logger is a black box recording GPS fixes every second or so. The logger is turned on at the beginning of the flight, and turned off at the end of the flight. Now you simply download the data into a computer, save the file on a disk and submit it with the record application, done. Granted, this is an oversimplified accounting of the process, but it is basically the way it works. In addition, you can open the file in a program such as SeeYou and instantly replay the entire flight. Magic! Those data loggers are so superior in tracing a flight over the old fashion way, and so simple to run that I always have my data logger running when I fly. Back on the ground I can download the file to my laptop and analyze the flight all week long. The statistics on the SeeYou program are great. How many right turns, how many left turns, how many circling attempts, percentage of glide versus climb, what L/D and the list goes on.

Many racing and competing pilots embraced the technology and spent, in most cases, several thousand dollars for an approved GPS data logger plus accessories, I did. But guess what: a great number of those data loggers will become obsolete at the end of the 2004 soaring season. Somebody somewhere in the bureaucracy of soaring and record setting decided that the present data logger is not secure enough. The new generation of data loggers are more secure. The decision was made, out with the "old", in with the new. What was that whooshing sound you just heard? Hard earned dollars evaporating!

There are three issues that are hard to swallow. First: who decided that the "old" data recorder were not secure enough, and why. I have not heard of any great scandal about some fantastic record being broken by manipulating a data logger.

Second, what are the chances that no one can break the new security protocol and in some way manipulate a flight.

Third, what is the impact in the soaring community of the change? Yes, there is an impact and that is pilots saying: "I give up. I am not spending another \$1000 to upgrade to a new, more secure system. I am not going to bother with new record attempts." Everyone knows very well that any security can be breached, just look at the ongoing problems with hackers, viruses, worms etc.

Let's face it. If someone really wants to cheat, it can be done, regardless of the security systems in place. But who really cares? The soaring community is too small for a potential cheater to get away with it. The individual will get caught cheating sooner or later, and then what. A good pilot is not coming onto the scene from nowhere. A good racing pilot has developed his or her skills over years of practice, and when he/she finally breaks a record, no one is really surprised. Does any one really think such a pilot is willing to put his reputation on the line by cheating?

Maybe I am naive, but I do believe that people in general are honest, and no one sets out to break a record by cheating.

The serious racing pilot will grumble, but he or she will shell out an additional 1000 bucks to stay in the game. But the sad fact remains, because of the action of some over zealous bureaucrat, the soaring community will lose some racing pilots, and our soaring community will be shrinking again. And we wonder why the sport is dying.

But there is something we can do. We can voice our discontent. If we don't voice our opinion now, the FAI will keep on changing their requirements, and regardless of what you buy today, there is a good chance it will become obsolete tomorrow. Write to the Soaring Association of America, write to the FAI and let them know that the constant changes in the requirements for record documentation is just not acceptable.

J.C. Hauchecorne

Aircraft for Sale:

John Ennes and Mike Thomas still have their Libelle up for sale. It's a Standard Libelle (11JN). Sale price is \$15,000. Contact John directly for further particulars.

Safety and Training:

Safety:

From J. C. Hauchecorne

Emergency Landing Field:

A few weekends ago, Joe Salz, Mark McIntyre, Dave Kremers and I went down to the emergency landing field. What an eye opener. In case of a rope failure in the critical phase there will be no room to hesitate in choosing a field. The critical phase is the phase where the glider is just high enough off the ground where the takeoff can't be aborted, and the glider just clears the end of the runway. In such an instance the pilot must know where the emergency field is, and know exactly what to expect.

It is foolish for any pilot to assume that he or she will do the right thing in case of a rope failure without planning and training. As a competent pilot we can expect from you that you will

do the right thing and take the time to inspect the emergency landing field, ideally once a month. It is also worth your while to walk down to the end of the runway, and see where you would be heading to, and what target you would be aiming for. The challenge is that you really don't see the landing field if you just sort of clear the end of the runway. You must know where you are heading to; there is just no room for any hesitation. Also, it makes takeoff so much more relaxing if you know what to do in case of an emergency.

Radio Communication:

Recently I noticed another safety related concern. Radio work, or the lack thereof. Let's get used to using the radios, and making the appropriate traffic calls. It does get busy at the Bergseth field at times, and proper radio work does improve safety. Using the radio and transmitting into the blind is a matter of habit. Please make all required radio calls from takeoff all the way up to "cleared the active runway".

J.C.

Training:

Instruction continues to be available, but be sure to make a call to the on-duty instructor to verify and make a firm date. Check the web site if you're unsure of who's on duty. We encourage all to get out there when the getting is good to keep those valuable skills in tune.

Here's an important note from instructors George Strohsahl and Jim Conley to all of you who need a biennial flight review or would like to get a ground school refresher this spring. They are willing to hold a special ground school session for anyone interested. They just need to be contacted, so, if this fits you, give either one a call ASAP.

We also hear from our instructor staff that we have some pilots nearing time for, not just solo flights, but checkout rides. The second part of that good news is that we have word that we can get a pilot examiner up from Oregon to do the honors when that time comes. This is welcome news as its been a problem in the past to do checkout rides in our area. Keep tuned on this one, otherwise, keep on truck'n.

And, yet another announcement and challenge from instructor George Strohsahl:

:

"I have been certified by the SSA as an SSA Flight Instructor and am now authorized to award SSA flying achievement badges; A, B, C, and Bronze. To qualify for an A badge, a student pilot must complete all the FAA required presolo training and solo. For a B badge the student pilot must achieve a 30 minute solo flight from a 2000 ft tow. The C badge is a little more complicated but a student recommended for a private pilot check ride would basically qualify. Among other things it requires a 60 minute solo flight from a 2000 ft tow. The bronze badge is aimed at cross-country readiness and requires knowledge of cross country procedures, accuracy landings with the altimeter covered, at least two solo flights of 2 hours or more, 30 solo flights (and 10 solo in a single place ship, if available). The actual prerequisites for each badge (except B) are a little more complex than above but I have hit the highlights.

□

I have all the materials needed to implement the soaring badge program immediately. Although neither Jim nor Grant are currently designated as SSA instructors we will work together to ensure qualified students (and licensed pilots for the Bronze badge) receive their badges from me. After I submit the paperwork to the SSA, their names will also be listed in the badge section of SOARING."

Operations:

Thun Field Outreach :

This will be our first effort to get out, away from Bergseth, to meet and greet the aviation public in a

proactive effort to stir up interest in soaring and PSSA. Most importantly it's part of our PSSA membership promotion. This is why we will need all members to step forward to help in whatever capacity they can. It will take us all to make this work so we are taking some additional time to plan and prepare for success.

Here's the latest about this great new idea from creator and head honcho, J. C. Hauchecorne :

Thun Field "Off Field" Operation:

We finally cleared all the hurdles, and we will have a mobile field operation at the Thun - Pierce County airport on Sunday, June 6. As discussed in the last newsletter, the off field operation is designed to help us promote our club. In order to have a successful operation, we need volunteers. We need two instructors, 1 tow pilot, 4 ground crew for moving gliders on to and off the runway, and 4 PR persons signing people up for glider rides and answering general questions.

Call me, e-mail me, send me a note and pledge your support.

(253) 846-1033

jean-claude@direcway.com

For Field Managers:

With the frequency of operations picking up, it's important to cover some key procedural items relating to Field Manager duties:

Re: Introductory Memberships

- Be sure to give the new introductory member the bottom half of the Introductory Membership Application form. It will be their permission to come back to fly with us during their introductory membership period of 30 days. Without it we cannot identify them properly and may refuse allowing them to fly. The top half of the form is sent to Stefan Perrin along with the day's flight log.

- Each new introductory member should be entered in the Introductory Member Roster which is in the plastic document box at the field - be sure to enter date. This way, each field manager will have an additional record of who has signed up as an Introductory Member. Be very careful that this is done or we will be having some real problems keeping track of people as the only other record is in Stefan's hands.

- And, be sure to remind each new intro member that they need to bring cash or check to pay for their tows and rentals subsequent to the \$40 intro ride. This is a good time to remind them that they can put the \$40 toward their initiation fee if they choose to join as a full member before their 30 days is up.

- Also, in order to correctly charge intro members for their rental and tow charges, Stefan has kindly put together a matrix worksheet which should be used to calculate exact fees for those subsequent tows. Thanks, Stefan.

Re: general field management

- We have received a suggestion from one member that we could use some standardization of our launch procedures as it relates to wingmen. With that in mind, look for further clarification of this point in coming weeks. Standardization can add a valuable safety margin to our operations.

- As noted above, we can improve on our radio work at Bergseth. This not only keeps our field safer, it will keep us safer at the more active airports we visit.

- Also noted above, we all need to be individually more aware of our land-out options. It wouldn't hurt to broach this subject with each pilot, especially the newer ones.

Thursday operations:

As the better weather arrives, we will be looking for the chance to fit in Thursday operations as tow pilot availability and interest dictate, so listen to the ops message for the word when the weather looks

good. We tried it last week (5/13) with an instructor ready to go, but no one responded. It would help immensely if anyone who knows that they might have a Thursday afternoon option e-mail us (Dave Kremers or Jim Conley) so we can send out a query a few days in advance as to who will be able to make it before we spend on a tow plane flight for naught.

Field Manager schedule:

Sat. , May 22 - Robert Rackl
Sun., May 23 - Dariush Zand
Sat. , May 29 - Van Chaney
Sun., May 30 - Curt Chenoweth
Sat. , June 5 - Terry Crippen
Sun., June 6 - John Ennes
Sat. , June 12 - Wayne Ginther
Sun , June 13 - Tim Heneghan
Sat. , June 19 - Dave Kremers
Sun., June 20 - Joe Leysath
Sat. , June 26 - George Mollison
Sun., June 27 - Marlene Nelson
Sat. , July 3 - George Mollison
Sun., July 4 - Robert Payne
Sat. , July 10 - Stefan Perrin
Sun., July 11 - Robert Rackl
Sat. , July 17 - Dariush Zand
Sun., July 18 - Van Chaney
Sat. , July 24 - Curt Chenoweth
Sun., July 25 - Terry Crippen
Sat. , July 31 - John Ennes

Note: Remember, it is your responsibility to cover your assignment and to contact Van Chaney (206 937-4218) with any changes you have made with others to your original assignment.

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) or Robert Rackl (robertrackl@rad129.net).