

Off Tow Newsletter

Puget Sound Soaring Association, Inc.

Editor: Dave Kremers

June, 2005

Seattle, WA

Upcoming Events:

We're looking forward to some coming breaks weather wise which should give us a chance to get high again and stay there. Our next big opportunity looks to be the planned excursion to Montague from July 2-10. Our last two trips there have been very exciting and with some warming in the weather patterns we could hope to see another great experience. We hope to have the L-13 there for those who want an introduction to the area and are planning to have up to a half dozen private ships there as well.

We are sorry we missed the chance to have a Table Top Soaring event at the end of last month but we are all set up for one this month, June 28, 7:00 pm. This time we've found a place where we will be able to hold a session separated from the rabble, where we can present and discuss undisturbed. The place is Round Table Pizza at 4002 A St. SE, tel. (253) 735-4000. This time we'll feature a presentation on the basic aspects of planning a cross country flight by Dave Kremers. Following that, we'll have a chance to share with those more experienced pilots. We hope you newly christened types can plan on that.

Recent Events:

New pilots:

Although the chances for extended flying recently have been patchy, what with the inability to launch an operation with Evergreen at Concrete, we do have two notable events to report. First we congratulate three PSSA pilots who recently did their check rides at Arlington and now have their tickets in hand. **Glenn Chouinard**, **Branislav Mikulik**, and **Dean Gittleman** are now ready to soar.



Memorial Day trip:

As for some of the more experienced of our group, there was a terrific experience to report from the Memorial Day getaway trip. As you might know, we had to cancel our plan to soar again at Wenatchee and went instead to Ephrata. As it turned out, it was a very fortuitous decision. Not only did we get some exceptional weather conditions which promised good cross country possibilities, we were able to join in on a Cross Country Seminar being presented by members of SGC over that weekend. This experience was unique in that, not only did we get some refresher pointers on flying the Ephrata area, but we got the experience to fly with “mentor” pilots. This meant the chance to fly as a “wingman” to someone who was thoroughly familiar with the terrain and could offer advice and encouragement as we worked to accomplish our tasks. An account of this experience follows later in this newsletter.

Board News:

Tow plane news:

The Super Cub engine has been removed from the aircraft, disassembled and inspected per Lycoming's Service Bulletin. All of the major (real expensive) components checked out fine and are in serviceable condition. However, due to the amount of time on the engine since the last major overhaul (approx. 1200 hours), and the fact that the engine has two prop strikes, we are considering doing a major overhaul at this time. There are many compelling reasons why this makes sense at this point rather than simply reassembling the engine as is. A decision on the major overhaul will be made this weekend. Unfortunately, in either case it will still be several weeks until the Super Cub is back on line at Bergseth. In the mean time I would encourage everyone to get up to Arlington and do some flying.

Tim Heneghan
PSSA President
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Special request:

It's spring and the grass at Bergseth is growing at a good rate, and that, by the way, includes the new runway, you'll be happy to know. Walt has been keeping up with the general mowing but we need to offer some help in that category. Anyone who has the extra time should contact Walt to see what can be done to help out. This is part of our responsibility under our contract, so let's be good neighbors.

Membership:

Reports From Members:

Dave Kremers reports on the Memorial Day outing at Ephrata:

Although all PSSA pilots registered some impressive gains in distance, and one pilot in particular gained some important ground in the race for the coveted “Landout Pilot Of The Year” award, I'll relate the accomplishment of two pilots who had heretofore not completed a significant cross country flight in the area. Both I and Charlie Long had the opportunity to fly with BESC pilot Mike Neugaard, an experienced pilot with many years of flying challenging tasks at Ephrata.

He began by thoroughly preparing us with a preflight briefing on possible objectives, terrain features, weather expectations, etc. and then joined up with us after release from tow. It was the first of two “blue thermal” days with good high temperatures and the prospect for thermals reaching to 7,000 feet. With his guidance on the first day we accomplished a modest objective of about 25 miles away, but with a good deal of time spent getting to know the area and

important practice in identifying and using sources of lift.

With the encouragement of this first day's effort, we launched on the second day with a more serious objective. Both of us wanted to make it to Mansfield which would take us across a good 30 mile stretch of dry farmland and one notable coulee. Armed with the confidence of the previous day's flight and the patient shepherding of our mentor, we found our confidence growing with each thermal, keeping our altitude at a comfortable 7-8,000 feet. Since things were going so well, after reaching Mansfield we set off for Waterville, just north of Badger Mountain. On the way we met up with some other pilots who were working a thermal across the Columbia opposite Chelan and soon found ourselves in a gaggle of six gliders, a tense first, at least for me. With 9,000 feet in hand we made Waterville with ease and decide then to strike off home toward Ephrata. This stretch looked especially daunting especially with the gaping maw of the Moses Coolee looming ahead and no airport for 30 miles. With Mike's encouragement and keen eye for just-forming CUs and dust devils we found again that our growing ability to find lift was comforting and we were soon well on our way with plenty of altitude. In fact, when we finally arrived over Ephrata we decided to take an extra little excursion over to Wilson Creek and back 20 miles east of Ephrata.

All in all it was a very satisfying experience, one that left us with a sense of real accomplishment and a new level of confidence to tackle more challenging tasks in the future. Rest assured, we both benefited greatly from the patient help given us by our mentor who remained with us the whole trip giving advice and encouragement. It's a great way to learn and to bridge that confidence gap which might be the only thing holding any of us back.

As for the others, I'm sure each of them will be glad to share their experiences with you at a coming Table Top Soaring session. (Ask Tim about the time it takes to get to Davenport and back.)

Dave Kremers

PSSA tow pilot, Joe Salz, sent along this little tantalizer a friend sent from Air Sailing near Reno:

“My flight of four hours to 12,000' was a combination of ridge and thermal lift effected by some wave influence. Cloud base was only about 11,000' all day but there was some ups and downs around 1400' per minute. Also some long lines of lift parallel to the Dogskins.”

Poor guy, cloud bases only at 11,000'; flight lasted only 4 hours!

We live in the wrong place.

Joe

(Ed. note - We've had conditions better than that at Montague and could have them there again July 3-10. Y'all come on down!)

Training:

Thanks to Jim Conley for holding the recent BFR ground school session.

Flight training continues at Arlington. Check the ops number for instructor availability or contact

instructors Jim Conley and Grant Smith directly to arrange a time. Otherwise, get out and fly to build skills and keep up your currency. That's what keeps us safe in the air.

Operations:

Operations continue at Arlington with both the 2-33 and L-13 in service and towing being provided by BSEC and Evergreen Soaring. Just be sure that when you sign the tow card that you note that you are a PSSA pilot so you won't be billed for any membership charges from the other clubs. And, a reminder - be sure all our equipment is secure and batteries are set to charge in the BESC shack.

Field Manager schedule:

Sat. June 18 Stefan Perrin
Sun. June 19 Dean Gittleman/Kim Sears
Sat. June 25 Volunteer needed
Sun. June 26 Curt Bryan
Sat. July 2 Dave Kremers
Sun. July 3 Curt Chenoweth
Mon. July 4 Volunteer needed
Sat. July 9 Glenn Chouinard
Sun. July 10 John Ennes
Sat. July 16 Wayne Ginther
Sun. July 17 Tim Heneghan
Sat. July 23 Van Chaney
Sun. July 24 Charlie Long
Sat. July 30 Justin Long
Sun. July 31 Mark McIntyre

Note: If for any reason you should be unable to complete your assignment or need to exchange with another member, be sure to advise Stefan Perrin of the change at stefanp@nventure.com.

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).