



Editor: Dave Kremers

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Seattle, WA

### Recent Events:



We had a great day for our annual picnic, graced with some fine weather and plenty of good food. We hope you were one of those who made it out to Bergseth for the fun. With all club aircraft ready to fly and the new runway freshly mowed, the day's flying was devoted to sharpening those accuracy landing skills and some haphazard flower-sack bombing (apparently not for accuracy).

As the day developed into more of a social event with less competitive spirit than usual, there was no declared winner, but that didn't seem to affect the great time people were having. Thanks again to Stefan for planning and to Wayne for the grilling.

### A Special Message:

Here we are, approaching the end of our operating season and, although there is still work to be done, we are thinking of winding down. However, while we're saying goodbye to our days of glider flying for this year, there is a great deal to plan on for the next soaring season. President, Tim

Heneghan, who has been giving so much of himself over the past year along with your board to keep PSSA afloat, has some thoughts to share with us.

The end of another soaring season is upon us with next Saturday, October 29th being the last day of flying at Bergseth. Sunday has been set aside as a day to wash, disassemble and lube the aircraft prior to putting them in storage. The gliders will be stored in a new building not far from Bergseth. The Super Cub will be residing in Curt Bryan's hanger for the winter. Thanks to Curt for arranging for glider storage and making room in his hanger for the Cub.

I've been thinking that 2005 was somewhat of a disaster for PSSA, but, considering all of the "real disasters" that have recently taken place in this world, PSSA's problems seem pretty insignificant. Thus, I think it best to look at the bright side. The loss of the towplane was certainly a setback but there were still plenty opportunities to fly for those that were willing to make a little extra effort. While the gliders were located at Arlington Branoislav Mikulik, Glenn Chouinard and Dean Gittleman obtained their Private Glider licenses. Mark McIntyre upgraded his certificate to include Commercial Glider and shortly thereafter CFGI at another location. The Blanik made the trip to Montague, CA and then to Ephrata where it was available for several weeks. Several private ship owners took the opportunity to attend a cross country camp at Ephrata and subsequently fly farther than they have ever flown before (without a motor). PSSA has a new runway that has proven to be a great addition to the operation even with the limited flying at Bergseth. For the most part our gliders are in better condition than they have been in for some time. The Super Cub has a fresh Major Overhaul that significantly increases its value and should serve PSSA for several years to come. The events of this year bring home just how fragile PSSA's operation is and how lucky we are to have such a beautiful and convenient place to fly. So, here we are at the end of the season, what does the future hold for PSSA?

This is exactly the question on the minds your Board of Directors in their recent meetings. Our club is in crisis, no doubt. We have striven to identify areas in which we see a need for action in order to return our club to full health. Some are obvious, others perhaps less so. To discuss these matters a General Membership meeting was called for October 15th. Unfortunately the date picked didn't allow enough members to attend, thus the meeting has been postponed. I would still like to see a general membership meeting in the near future, but in the meantime outlined below are a few items that have been on the board's agenda and will be topics of discussion at a General Membership meeting.

First on the list is PSSA's financial health. Frankly, it's not real good at the moment. Several factors, some old, some new, have had a significant impact on the organization's finances. At the top of the list is a continued decline in membership. It's been frustrating for all of us to see new members come in the front door only to turn around and have longtime members head out the back. This is of course a normal, ongoing occurrence with an organization such as PSSA, but for sometime it seems as though the backdoor has been left wide open. I have no doubt there are plenty of potential members out there, but PSSA needs

to develop a better solution for converting them from simply having an interest in flying gliders to becoming Certified Glider Pilots. This is true regardless of whether they are starting from scratch, or they are an airline pilot looking to fly something other than heavy metal. It does us little good to recruit potential members if we don't have a way to accommodate their needs

This year's lack of a regular, income producing operation has left PSSA far short in the cash department. A lot of work went into developing a budget, adjusting rates and changing some business practices to see PSSA begin to grow. The plan and the potential is still there, it's just a matter of getting it executed. Turns out, this was not the year. When not flying, PSSA's direct operating costs certainly go down, however, there are major fixed expenses that do not. The field lease (\$5200.00), and aircraft and general liability insurance (\$6000) in particular, are items that are due during the off season. Aircraft annual inspections will also be due prior to beginning operations next year.

The next major expense we will face is the \$5200 lease payment due on January 1st, 2006. Present cash flow will leave us short of the funds required. The Board of Directors has come up with what I believe to be a good solution. You'll be glad to hear it is NOT a membership assessment. However, it is a change to the way you pay your dues. Rather than paying dues on a monthly basis, 2006 dues will be payable in two, \$240 installments. The first is due by January 1, 2006, the second due no later than March 1, 2006. New members will pay dues in full, prorated to the beginning of the month they join. This will address the immediate need for cash and will reduce the amount PSSA typically carries in accounts receivable. Insurance payments and aircraft annuals come due not long after the first of the year. With dues paid in full by March 1st, PSSA should be in good shape to start the flying season. This dues paying schedule has been discussed at length and approved by the BOD.

And now for another matter of great importance to our club. PSSA as a whole and each of us individually need to take a hard look at safety. There is no doubt that each of us has the expectation that when we come out to fly, we will have good, clean, safe fun and we will be able to keep repeating that experience week after week. And that is a very reasonable expectation. However we can only expect that if we are all contributing to make ours the safest operation we can. Let's face it PSSA's safety record has not been stellar. We must take a serious look at how we can improve safety and our reputation in the aviation community. I'm sure we all consider ourselves safe pilots and we do everything we can personally to fly safely. However, the policies we adopt and practice should be internally scrutinized on an ongoing basis for areas in which we can continue to improve. This has been and will continue to be a subject of regular discussion at Board meetings. I encourage everyone to give this some thought as it should also be a topic of regular discussion at General Membership meetings.

One last thing I would like to mention. Glenn Chouinard has taken the initiative, and time

to set up a Yahoo Users Group for PSSA. I encourage everyone to become familiar with and join this group. It is an excellent way for a organization of this type to easily communicate, distribute information and let your thoughts be known (please, not all of them). If you are not familiar with Yahoo Groups feel free to contact Glenn or myself to learn more.

See you all on Sunday to help PSSA get ready for winter. Please bring along rags, buckets, and soft brushes that can be used for cleaning aircraft.

Tim Heneghan  
President – Puget Sound Soaring Association

### **Upcoming Events:**

Now you know we need all hands on deck for October 30th at Bergseth. Once we get our aircraft into their respective storage areas, there will be important maintenance to be undertaken under the direction of Curt Bryan, Maintenance Officer. He will appreciate hearing from any who will have time to devote to the various tasks needing doing in preparation for the new season opening March 1, 2006.

And speaking of 2006, let's get our thoughts focused on the selection of the PSSA Board of Directors for next year. Several of last year's officers have indicated an interest in continuing their services for 2006 but those wishing to express their interest in joining the leadership of PSSA need to make their voices heard as we approach the end of the calendar year.

### **Reports From Members:**

We hear from J.C. Hauchecorne first and then from Mark Allen.

### **The Aha Moments**

I recently read an article in *AOPA* magazine written by Thomas B Haines. Let me recite part of that article to you. Thomas was pointing out that it is not difficult to get cynical about general aviation. Thomas writes: "We have to live with the reality of avgas topping \$4 a gallon, aging airplanes, limited utility, and a public and general media who seem at times hellbent on wiping general aviation off the face of the Earth as if it were some deadly virus. Smallpox we're not, but there are days when I feel like I live in a Petri dish."

He goes on to say "When I'm sitting with the aircraft insurance bill in one hand and the annual inspection bill in the other, it's easy to go down a path of thinking that begins with the question: "So why is it that I do this?" At that point one might be tempted to actually figure out what it costs per hour to fly. Trust me on this, you don't want to go there, and you certainly don't want to show your spouse the result."

I was reading this article whilst sitting in a Alaska Airlines MD-80 which was more than one hour late departing. I pondered the plight of general aviation while sharing my seat with a 350+ pound male. Besides not having a place to rest my arm from San Jose to Seattle, I had to take off my shoes twice, have some stranger go through my bags, look for transportation from the airport to the meeting, and then hustle it back to the airport an hour prior to

departure. I arrived just in time to find out that the plane was delayed by more than one hour. So why do I endure the humility of all of this? Because the ticket to San Jose and back is only \$230! No way can I fly for that price to San Jose and back!

But so what? I think it's time we stop justifying general aviation. We can't. Either I must saddle up my own pony and fly to San Jose as the PIC or put up with the hassles of commercial aviation with a big smile (next time I will saddle up my pony, never look at the price tag, and Rock n' Roll down the airways).

Soaring is no different. Soaring is a very expensive and selfish sport. It is also a very frustrating sport, because you are dependent on the weather. The return on invested time, as measured by great soaring hours is very low. But once you get into the "groove" there is nothing like it! It does not matter what level of soaring you're at. Are you now soaring effortlessly above Bergeseth field, chasing hawks, following meandering streams, or are you cruising down a cloud street which appears to have no end in sight? Or have you just topped out on the very last thermal of the day and are now gliding the 50k back home? Or perhaps you just got clearance from center and are now climbing on a wave to the stars.

Nothing beats soaring! Those are the Aha Moments. But there is a catch! It takes years and years of experience to get to do any of the above. It takes training, staying current, a personal commitment and money! Yes money, and a ton of it. Even if you do it with club ships, it takes money and commitment.

As you know, our club is going through some tough times. Money is really tight and it will require everyone's help and support to pull us through. Now is the time to stick together and really help the club. Time to pay up! Pay up financially and with volunteer work. You are in this club because of your love of soaring. The club needs more members. You, the existing member are the best advertisement for new members!

Let's go out and promote our sport. Go through your index cards; I am sure you will find one or two truly qualified prospect. Let's drum em' all up, have a free beer night in a pub, just like a timeshare promotion party, show some pictures, and I am sure we will be able to sign up 20 new members.

Who is with me on this one?

J.C. Hauchecorne

### **High Speed Approaches** **(Blarik and 2-33)** by Mark Allen

Ever been at Bergseth and noticed a landing approach where the glider disappears behind the trees on base before reemerging just in time to make the field? Well, you weren't the only one to notice. I can't say how many comments that I have received on my approaches to landing. All have been astounded that I would fly in such a manner. "Don't try this at home," is a remark I often hear. In fact, before we took off on my last BFR, the instructor told me NOT to make that approach or I would bust the ride. Convention won again.

Convention is based on what works best for most. The problem with convention is that it is often tailored to the student since they are incompetent and can only deal with non-

demanding circumstances. As a result, the stable, constant glide angle and airspeed, straight-in approach is the norm. Can we advance beyond how we were taught as students? Must everything that we do always be at the most elementary form?

My seemingly unsavory approach goes like this. I generally start my downwind leg between 1,600 and 1,700 feet MSL approximately 1,500 feet offset from the runway and at a nominal airspeed (~ 50 kts). Depending on my altitude and distance from the runway I check my spoilers and then push over to accelerate to approximately 85 kts while making my base turn abeam the approach end of the runway. I fly my approach so that I maintain approximately a constant descent angle and bank angle so my final rollout is over the approach end of the runway at approximately 30 - 40 feet of altitude while maintaining 80 to 85 kts. From there it is just a matter of slowing down until I reach approximately mid-field where I plan my touchdown.

What are the hazards?

Let me first tell you what they aren't, which are the reasons why I do it. I stay very close to the field because I have found that the farther I get from the field the harder it becomes for me to judge how much altitude I need to make it back (without cheating and looking at the altimeter). As winds pick up this guessing becomes even harder. I choose not to put myself at this risk by keeping myself on a short leash.

The higher airspeeds make stalls and spin-ins nearly impossible, a very common accident scenario in the traffic pattern. This speed also assures responsive flight controls when you need them. Aileron control on the 2-33 at conventional approach speeds is what I consider on the edge of poor. I have on several occasions had to take my foot off of the rudder pedal so I could lift my leg high enough to allow the stick to be moved to its stop to counter wind-gust upsets and avoid being blown into the hill side. Even doing this, the roll rate is far from comfortable. However, at 80 kts, roll rates are very pronounced and I never have to lift my leg. Control is far superior at this speed. Loss of control is another often cited cause for accidents near the ground.

When conditions are just right, a very significant hazard exists at Bergseth. It is the potential for a high downdraft on the approach end of the runway because of the steep drop-off. Anytime winds from the east, or their components, flow across the runway you will have a downdraft. Downdrafts are death to gliders, particularly on approach. If you have doubts, talk to Stefan Perrin or Robert Rackl. In a previous article I addressed how significant this can be. By avoiding, actually eliminating, the final approach this hazard vanishes. Winds play no significant role on this approach since they have no time to adversely affect the glider's performance on any particular leg. If I were, however, to find myself a little long on final with high headwinds or a downdraft, I would have tremendous penetration capability. And after all, my primary goal is to reach the field with the highest chance for success, and this approach does that splendidly.

The high speed approach also offers one other distinct advantage that you don't have with the conventional approach. I have considerably greater margins for extending or shortening my flight path. I typically use airspeed for energy management on approach, a technique I use for all airplanes that I fly, glider or power (this technique, admittedly rubs instructors the wrong way). If I'm too high I will normally accelerate to a higher speed; If too

low, the converse. However, if airspeeds get too high, I have full use of the spoilers, which are exceedingly more effective than at conventional speeds Whereas you, on the conventional approach, will only have half spoilers remaining if you pace your approach on half spoilers and, besides, they are much less effective for your slower speeds. If I need to extend my flight path, I can zoom up to approximately 150 feet of additional altitude before my speed drops to the best L/D speed (46 kts). From there I can glide an additional 3000 feet (assuming  $L/D = 20$ ). Since I'm never more than 2,500 feet of ground track distance from the field during my pattern, I'm assured of reaching the field no matter what happens. On a conventional approach all you can do is climb maybe 30 feet to reach best L/D speed. Who has the clear advantage?

Let me say this in a different way. My L/D at 85 kts is approximately 11 or 12:1 without spoilers. If I zoom to best L/D speed it approximately doubles plus I gain additional altitude to play with. That's a tremendous margin. If I need to lose altitude faster, full spoilers at 85 kts will drop me to an L/D of 5 or 6 and I can increase my speed even further for a lower L/D, if need be. This is a phenomenal spread and I haven't even included slipping!

So what are the risks?

I think from a ground observer's point of view, it appears that I am flying a shallow approach. That's because the ground observer has a better perspective on my position relative to the runway than a person who flies a straight-in approach. That pilot is head-on to the observer and at some distance away. My descent angle, due to my low L/D, is actually steeper than most. So I am clearly not flying a shallow approach, per se. It only looks that way since I am still on base when others would be on a straight-in at the same distance and altitude from the runway. That is, of course, if most were planning on landing at the beginning of the runway at Bergseth, which they are not. As I observe most, they approach the runway at a relatively high altitude (150 or more feet), to be conservative. Once reaching the runway is assured, they deploy full spoilers and make a steep dive for the field for a mid-field landing. So, does my lower approach over the end of the runway make it more hazardous? Read on.

Since few people ever plan on touching down at the beginning of the runway at Bergseth, my approach, in comparison, looks ridiculously low. But you will see this as common practice at Ephrata. Virtually every glider approach at Ephrata is done with the intent to land as close as possible to the beginning of the runway, which means they have very low and flat approaches. Since Bergseth sits above most of the surrounding terrain, terrain clearance is less an issue than at Ephrata. So why would Bergseth be considered more dangerous to do this than at Ephrata? I have no answer.

So is there a real issue here? Well, I can think of possibly two more that people might point to. This approach does require modest bank angles (approximately 35 - 40 degrees). Supposedly you have demonstrated your ability to perform such turns in obtaining your rating. These turns are also sometimes required while thermaling out in the hills at slower more stall critical speeds. So is this an issue? Not for me since my comfort level is very high, and this is usually the best measure of ones capabilities.

Another concern that I have heard is the high energy state (80 kts) that I have over the

approach end of the runway. What happens if my spoilers won't deploy? Will I become one with nature's trees at the other end of the runway? First, worrying about such remote possibilities never drives my actions. Why don't you equally worry about the stick locking up on you in-flight or your wing falling off? These things do happen and you have no backup for that (except those with parachutes).

I check my spoilers before I begin this maneuver. If that one in a billion chance happens later, I can still cope. Second, I'll ask you the same question. Most people make a high approach to Bergseth. They then rely on the spoilers to get them down. Therefore, most people have roughly the same energy that I have near the approach end of the runway. The only difference is, is that mine is in speed while theirs is in altitude. It's still the same issue.

Everyone that I am aware of who has landed at Bergseth and was unable to deploy the spoilers, usually a result of mental lapses and not mechanical failure, has ended up in the trees. Do I think that will happen to me? Absolutely not, because, unlike what the actions of others have shown, I will immediately put the airplane on the ground, at 80 kts if necessary, slipping before it touches down, and then putting the plane on its nose with full forward stick while using the brakes until I stop. But in any case, my problem is no different than yours. Actually, my situation would be somewhat better because I would have less altitude to lose to get to the ground.

I have given the rationale for my deviant approach. As yet, I have heard no meaningful reason against it. I am genuinely soliciting for comments that will identify what I have overlooked.

Until I hear otherwise, may I suggest – “try this at home”.

### **Operations:**

Our last day of operation will be Saturday, October 19 with Kim Sears as field manager, weather permitting.

### **Newsletter contributions:**

Thanks to everyone who have been sending me your articles for all to share over the past year. Please keep them coming over the winter months. We want to keep people's minds on soaring and the coming season.

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).