

free flight • vol libre

5/05
Oct/Nov





Changed for survival — CHANGING to survive

EVERY ASPECT OF SOARING requires constant assessment to detect risk in all its forms. SAC pilots of the past sixty years identified the risks facing them and took action so that we would survive to this point. Now it's our turn to act! An upcoming association-wide safety initiative will soon address many organizational and flight-related issues. Here are my thoughts on survival tactics in some other areas.

The focus of our volunteer-based clubs has served them well in the past but it is now restricting their growth and development. Volunteers have reduced the cost for members and that has been a major priority to date. However, we must accept the situation that most prospective members today have cash but lack the time required to support club volunteer activities.

Many others have observed this (*see the international comment beginning on page 4*) but I think it's time for clubs to acknowledge the situation, debate options, and take action to reduce the risk presented by the declining acceptability of our present cash-saving but time-consuming approach to membership and training.

I see the relationship between the Invermere Soaring Centre and the Canadian Rockies Gliding Club as a focus for discussion. The time-strapped prospect is able to arrange instruction at his convenience through the Invermere Soaring Centre. The club is then more available to provide common ownership, encouragement and camaraderie. It is also able to focus the skills of its best pilots in the direction of cross-country flying rather than tying them up at the field as instructors and administrators. This structure does not preclude a new member choosing the traditional club approach for training but it does provide an option that many find especially attractive for the early stages of instruction. I believe we need to explore the reasons why this arrangement is working and apply the lessons to our own clubs.

A quick look back to the early days of soaring shows that launch method selection was largely based on availability of equipment. In North America this led to a bias toward aerotow, and surplus aircraft supported that approach. In addition, while winch development in Europe continued due to the lack of tow aircraft and high fuel costs, North American winches haven't changed much in forty years. Now, with rising insurance, maintenance, manpower, aircraft replacement and fuel costs, many clubs are facing a significant cash crunch in the operation of their towplanes. An alternative is needed.

Over the past year a number of Roundtable discussions have dealt with the benefits and detriments of winch launching aircraft. A detailed defense of winching can be found there. The European experience over millions of launches leads me to the conclusion that properly implemented winch operations are safe, cost-effective, and enjoyable. With these attributes it is clear that winch launching warrants our attention. While a number of smaller Canadian clubs are launching their aircraft with winches, ⇒ p17

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A minute into the first launch of Day 1
at the Ontario Provincial contest gives a
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photo: Roberto Centazzo

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Where are club members really coming from?

John Roake
from *Gliding Kiwi*

THE RECENT AGM of GLIDING NEW ZEALAND spent some time reviewing membership issues. The principal speaker was Terry Cubley from Australia who presented a fresh approach to the subject and showed some of the new motivational forms they were using with some success.

John Roake introduced Terry, relating his own experience as chairman of the IGC membership committee. His address follows:

For more than ten years, I have been doing the research for the International Gliding Commission on world gliding membership. In simple terms, worldwide membership has dropped 9.8% in the last ten years, which is less than 1% per annum. However, the loss has accelerated to 1.9% in the last twelve months. New Zealand is down 3.7% in the past year and is currently at its lowest since Gliding New Zealand started keeping membership records. As a result of my involvement with IGC, I receive a flood of correspondence every year, every week really, from gliding administrators who want to share their concerns with me. I thought as an introduction to this seminar, I would select some of the more pertinent statements that relate to membership. While the following statements might give you some ideas, please note that the statements are not mine, but a shared collection of how others view the concerning decline.

No. 1 "We cannot see the wood for the trees", writes an English correspondent.

We should be promoting the sport to *50 year olds plus*. Why? Because what we are doing now is not working quickly enough, if at all.

- a. Older people remember aviation as adventure, not transport.
- b. Older people have the time and the money.
- c. Older people often have kids and grandkids. They are easy to find; every bowling club, golf club, and retirement village is loaded to the brim. They get bussed around in packs to much less entertaining activities than a day at the airfield. They often have enough time and money to pursue their dreams, some of them still unfulfilled.
- d. Those who take up gliding will invariably introduce it to their families — more new blood. I look forward to the day when I join them, and hopefully a gliding program will already be in place.

Let's concentrate on youth when they have reached 35 years of age.

No. 2 in the same vein — this from an Auckland club member.

The median age for the New Zealand soaring pilot is about 53. I see two 'sweet spot' groups of new members: those before marriage, mortgage and children, and those after.

The those-after group are the baby boomers ... like me they are 50–55 years old, now with time and money to pursue a new hobby. We don't have a problem selling the concept of soaring to this group — a parade of them is there each week taking trial flights.

But we do have a problem delivering them a 'product' they want to buy. These people are not the traditional 'club member' approaching gliding as a family activity. That's over. They're less interested in the social aspects of belonging to a club and just want the shortest and most action packed route to experiencing soaring, training at a highly compressed rate, and — if their enthusiasm is undiminished, then buying a self-launching or turbo glider in which they can have long flights with minimal requirement for support from others — except a quick chat on the launch point and a quick beer at the end of the day. This group is not price sensitive.

⇒ next page



The SOARING ASSOCIATION of CANADA

is a non-profit organization of enthusiasts who seek to foster and promote all phases of gliding and soaring on a national and international basis. The association is a member of the Aero Club of Canada (ACC), the Canadian national aero club representing Canada in the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the world sport aviation governing body composed of national aero clubs. The ACC delegates to SAC the supervision of FAI related soaring activities such as competition sanctions, processing FAI badge and record claims, and the selection of Canadian team pilots for world soaring championships.

free flight is the official journal of SAC.

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Images may be sent as photo prints or as hi-resolution greyscale/colour .jpg or .tif files. Prints returned on request.

free flight also serves as a forum for opinion on soaring matters and will publish letters to the editor as space permits. Publication of ideas and opinion in *free flight* does not imply endorsement by SAC. Correspondents who wish formal action on their concerns should contact their Zone Director.

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est une organisation à but non lucratif formée d'enthousiastes et vouée à l'essor de cette activité sous toutes ses formes, sur le plan national et international. L'association est membre de l'Aéro-Club du Canada (ACC), qui représente le Canada au sein de la Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), laquelle est responsable des sports aériens à l'échelle mondiale et formée des aéroclubs nationaux. L'ACC a confié à l'ACVV la supervision des activités vélivoles aux normes de la FAI, telles les tentatives de record, la sanction des compétitions, la délivrance des insignes, et la sélection des membres de l'équipe nationale aux compétitions mondiales.

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Des photos, des fichiers .jpg ou .tif haute définition et niveaux de gris peuvent servir d'illustrations. Les photos vous seront retournées sur demande.

vol libre sert aussi de forum et on y publiera les lettres des lecteurs selon l'espace disponible. Leur contenu ne saurait engager la responsabilité du magazine, ni celle de l'association. Toute personne qui désire faire des représentations sur un sujet précis auprès de l'ACVV devra s'adresser au directeur régional.

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The those-before group are interesting. They'll put up with a lot more crap in order to go flying — but they are constrained by lack of money and will only be members for a few years before succumbing to marriage, children and mortgage. But some of them will come back when they reach the those-after stage.

Classic marketing is about identifying the needs of market segments through research, and then satisfying those needs by delivering the product the consumer wants. If you can do that better and with better margins than your competitors — you have a successful product. With gliding, we have a pretty good handle on these two major market segments and what they need. The problem is that the amateur, voluntary, not-for-profit structure of a gliding club does not provide the commercial structure and disciplines to enable the desired product to be delivered to the target market segments. I have a very strong gut feeling that if one were to run a gliding club on commercial lines, then you would indeed be able to deliver the right product to our identified market segments, but the cost to do so would be high, and this would limit the numbers to a point where possibly the margins would not be sufficient to sustain the business.

I don't think there is a 'silver bullet' solution to the problem. I do know that at the Auckland Gliding Club we do not have a marketing problem in the sense that there is not a market for our gliding product. *We have a sales problem.* As a voluntary organization we cannot consistently provide the level of service required to convert the high number of potential buyers (who take trial flights) into customers (who join the club and become long-term flying members). It's a conundrum.

On the plus side, new technology is making high quality soaring experiences much more accessible. Much of the infrastructure of a gliding club is getting people launched via winch or towplane, and retrieving from landouts. How long will it be before a reliable and relatively low cost self-launching capability (jet or battery) reduces that overhead? Already, virtually all of the regular cross-country crew of private owners at Drury have turbo gliders. So as the number of people prepared to volunteer time continues to decline, the amount of volunteer time needed also reduces. The crisis point will come when volunteer numbers dwindle to the point where the training infrastructure begins to break down.

In summary, I think Soaring as a movement owes its historical membership levels to the postwar boom when returned servicemen threw themselves into an explosion of bowling clubs, amateur dramatics — voluntary clubs and organizations of all types. The postwar club joiner bubble has not perpetuated itself. Entertainment today is more in the home than out in the community. The most likely scenario for the future is that soaring numbers will decline strongly and will not reach equilibrium until the postwar bubble have retired from the sport. During that time traditional clubs — particularly those close to major cities — will survive if they own their own field, plant, and equipment. Increasingly, operations dependent on volunteers will be replaced by commercial operations. Is this a dismal view ... or is it just realistic?

No. 3 – this from the USA

Competition pilots represent less than 4% of the total membership. Yet there is no denying it — competition pilots rule the International Gliding Commission (IGC) and almost invariably every club. They certainly have not endeared themselves to junior pilots ("junior" regardless of age). They are seldom seen on a club day and I can't recall for many years having seen them do some club work around the gliderport.

My club reminds me of a few lawyer organizations to which I have belonged, and to a cattle breeders group, as well. My observation in the latter context is that the organizations seem to exist for the actual benefit of two constituencies: first, the big dogs in the field, be they Brahman breeders, rich (therefore, brilliant) trial lawyers, or competition stud pilots; and second, the paid professionals who staff and run the organization. The mass of members are needed only to help defray the expenses of the organization. And let's face it, the competition pilot is a major benefactor from the airfield, the towplane and the club engineer, but invariably disappear when there is any work to do.

I joined after my first glider lesson — when I was a burnt-out 80 hour power student. I have belonged to my gliding club for 13 years. But on reflection, I can't say I derive any benefit from either the club or my National Association membership. So back to the problem you posed — how to deal with apathy — a lack of interest, indifference — about making the sport grow? I doubt the competition pilots can be motivated to worry about attracting new, younger members. They are busy winning contests. The bored and disinterested low-time pilots like myself seem to find no reason to stick with the sport ➡ **p17**

Blanik *panic* (a rookie's tale)

Julietta Sorensen, Cu Nim



AS A YOUNG GIRL I HAD OFTEN MARVELLED at the intriguing stories of soaring alongside the birds and performing aerobatics. My grandfather (Cecil Sorensen) and father (Ted Sorensen) had always been more than willing to delight me with stories and tales of their own experiences though they were not the only ones; for it seemed that nearly every pilot I met had some tale or another, whether it be of cleverness and cunning or bravery and valour. I never grew tired of their amazing (and sometimes exaggerated) tales, but what I really wanted was to tell one of my own. I wanted to experience the thrills first hand.

For years this was just a fantasy kept at the back of my mind. For although I'd handled the controls once before with my grandfather — a quick glance at the life of flying — I had never been gliding. To top that off, the closest I'd ever been to flying a high speed, high thriller aircraft had been sitting in a warplane at the Calgary airshow! So I continued to dream while I stared at my Snowbird collector's cards. Then my father joined the Cu Nim Gliding Club; a place he had begun to visit more and more often.

I'll never forget the moment my dad asked the "big question". Finally after thirteen years, he asked me if I wanted to learn how to fly. He offered to teach me all that he knew. That day he presented me with an invitation to the sky. I wasn't as enthusiastic as I am now because I half sarcastically replied, "Well, yeah. But, I don't want to die." I still regret my mouth being so big, and my father missing the sarcasm completely. Thankfully my daddy didn't quit on me, and before I knew it we were off to the gliding club for the very first time.

My first glider flight was a storm of emotions, both good and bad. I felt a strong sense of anticipation and curiosity. I was so excited to learn, to feel and discover what the storytellers experienced. Naturally, I also found myself a tad bit hesitant (note the *major* understatement), not because I didn't trust my father, but simply because I hated not knowing what was going to happen. I also had an old habit of thinking up every worst-case scenario possible, but I was determined to hide my fear from dad. I trusted my father with my life, but found it absurd to place that same amount of trust in a large piece of metal. Of course it's only human nature to take those sort of things personally, so I swallowed my fear and let them (the gliding club) show me a new world.

This new world was brilliant. I remember looking down at the Sheep River's twists and turns. I remember the exhilarating feeling of smoothly rushing through the air, the limitless freedom. I can recall looking down and seeing tiny toy cars and two little busses, like the ones my brother and I used to play with. Now, although I was simply viewing the nearby junkyard, I couldn't help but want

to reach down and just pluck one of the "toys" right off the ground. The fields raced beneath us as we silently soared through the air; newfound wonders below. I felt as if I'd been transformed into a hawk, suddenly bearing wings. It was so soothing yet powerful, and I savoured every moment. The most amazing feelings swept over me as my father and I headed towards the ground. We barely skimmed over top of the grass, like a hawk over water. But, as we landed on the bumpy turf, I was nearly overcome by that phenomenon of flying; the airsickness I had suffered during the flight turned out to be the more dominant feeling of the others.

My first flight had only lasted five minutes, but it was enough to get me on my way. I found myself gaining a sense of fulfilment as I learned to move the aircraft up and down. With pride I learned to steady the nose on the horizon. I was meant to fly. Of course this was after only about three flights, so I really wasn't as skilled as I fantasized.

As I went up more and more often, my fear lessened considerably. Though I had begun to enjoy flying, there were two little things that kept me scared. First of all, I had major airsickness difficulties; and second, I had a misconception about gliders after misunderstanding the aerodynamics unit in Grade 6 Science.

My first big setback was at the gliding field down in Cowley. It was a half hour tow into mountain wave and my stomach was flipped and twisted and shook like you wouldn't believe. Our towpilot had taken special care to go as smoothly as possible (it was fairly well known that I had a weak stomach), but it wasn't enough to keep my wimpy stomach in check. The view was phenomenal as my dad continued to point out, but I could hardly stand to look. He told me to look outside and kept tabs on me to see how I was doing. I tried and I tried but I forgot the number one rule with motion sickness — ALWAYS LOOK OUTSIDE! I held in there and enjoyed the mountains as best I could (they're absolutely majestic from a glider — you've really gotta see them some time) and even attempted the old "mind over matter" strategy.

It didn't work. Finally I knew that I was going to be sick. I grabbed the bag, pulled the sides — and couldn't get it open! In a frenzy I began flipping it over and over looking for the opening.

I never did get the bag open. It just so happened that the brand of airsickness bags available on board re-

quired the user to tear the top tab open before pulling on the sides — NOW YOU TELL ME!! We ended up landing about eight minutes after the release. I sat in the front seat absolutely humiliated, then my father lifted me out of the cockpit by holding the back of my parachute (it looked like he was picking me up by the scruff of my neck like a kitten). Now as horrible as I felt, I won't deny the fact that the manner in which I was removed from the aircraft must have looked amusing for onlookers. I wasn't at all angry though; I would have laughed too! As I was being lifted out the glider, my foot hit the canopy cord and closed on my hand leaving a painful dent; I still have the scar. It was actually quite funny though. We often refer to the scar as a "Blanik bite" for it seemed as though the plane was getting back at me for getting it messy!

That other drawback was one of ignorance that I just recently overcame. I had taken a giant leap into an unknown land, and had carried some misconceptions along with me. I was convinced that unless I balanced the aircraft just right, it would be unable to stay in the air. I had confused the angle of bank with the angle of attack, thereby creating a relatively realistic horror. I had learned what a delicate art this was, and was holding steadfast to the idea that turning too steeply would send me hurtling towards the earth and my doom. Do I need to elaborate on how scary that thought is?

Thanks to my dad this fear was soon obliterated. He, being a practised instructor, had come to the conclusion that I needed a remedy for my fear. He of course was unaware of my misconception and of my level of paranoia, but what he *did* know was that my fear of turning was holding me back.

On my fourth glider trip he chose to take action. I had been delicately drifting in the directions he was indicating, but was hardly fulfilling the definition of "turn". I remember him simply stating, "I have control". I knew my place and without the slightest hesitation replied, "you have control". I remember nearly every detail of the next minute, except whether or not I was breathing.

All of a sudden the horizon swung out of place and flew up to the top left hand part of the canopy. Dark green ground darted up towards me. The sky and ground switched sides. My chest seized up. My hands flew up to brake the fall. My mind raced and as I realized what exactly was going on, the stress of confusion was replaced by the panic of actually knowing what was happening. My train of thought was mundane yet amazingly absurd:

- 1) We're going to do a flip ...
- 2) I'm going to die ...
- 3) Awesome!

After we were straight and level and I was once again capable of breathing, my dad cautiously asked, "Are you alright?" Without thinking I cried out "That was so cool!" Truly it was. We had just performed a classic "Poppa Cec" (a family term used to describe an extremely steep turn. My grandfather whom the term refers to is a CFI and an experienced aerobatics performer. When Cecil Sorensen wants to turn, he really turns!) My horrific delusion of falling was eliminated right then and there. In fact, turn-

ing became an absolute joy. In utter delight I became teary-eyed from laughing when I was in control of the aircraft. I felt amazing; I had been rid of that burden of ignorance. From then on I remembered that being the most marvellous flight I've ever experienced.

The entire club had helped me to overcome my fear of flight, and I'm so grateful that my father kept me going and even helped rid me of my fear of stalling — to be more specific, he tricked me into stalling the glider. Gliding is a difficult thing to start; not physically, but emotionally. You have to learn how to overcome your greatest fears, learn to trust, learn to open up and see the world differently. Believe me, looking down from a commercial aircraft is neat, but looking down from a glider is astonishing. Even though I've only been flying for a short while I've learned so much and have even gained my own piloting characteristics — like my passion for skimming along the grass and flying on perfectly calm days. (Most soaring pilots like thermals, I'm definitely a glider pilot.) Flying has brought out a lot in me and has become something much more than I imagined possible.

I've learned two life lessons that I cherish and consider to be the rules for success. First, don't quit. It took me a long time to actually enjoy flying; at first it was simply interesting. Never let pride and ignorance stand in your way. If you're scared at first, welcome to the club! Which brings me to my second and final lesson: "When you're way up there, you've got nothing to hit." So why be afraid.

I've learned a lot about my father and his soaring comrades, but especially about myself. Now I can finally tell my own stories in which I get to be the hero. ■

The Rest of the Story! (according to Dad)

Part of the purpose of easing Julietta into the student's seat was to help Dad practise his "SAC Instructor Patter". Asking her to help me learn to teach might not have been the best way to instil confidence. I believe the term, "crash test dummy" was employed in this case; not by me though.

The unannounced steep turn demonstration was perhaps not the best way to overcome Julietta's concerns, mainly because her prior misconceptions were not analyzed or really explored. Since she felt she understood the situation, she didn't seek correction or explanation, and felt a bit of pressure to not let Dad down by being afraid. I, the instructor, didn't understand the root source of her unease, and put it down to a general feeling of inadequacy combined with a fear of her recurring airsickness, and a nervousness of being at height. Once she had explained her misconception, a demo of a gentle stall was done and she saw how little excitement a stall actually caused.

With most instructor/student relationships there is not the same level of "expectation" of understanding, in this case because I was her dad, she felt I would know what she knew. In the average situation the student and a good instructor would and should be less reticent about misunderstandings or behaviours and the instructor could therefore engage in appropriate discussions before scaring the \$@#! out of the student.*

Soaring Hope

Ken Armstrong, VSA

A WEEK AGO, my Diamond Xtreme motorglider brought me from Victoria to sample a week of Hope's soaring offerings. Approaching a likely soaring area south of Hope provided a wake-up call as I tumbled through some extremely turbulent air. Flying through the notch north of Isoullock Peak, its subsiding air caused cranium and canopy to become congruent. It was a reminder that mountains with moderate winds can produce significant shears and that reduced speed was prudent near the ridges. With heart beating faster and harnesses cinched to the edge of discomfort I proceeded to the westerly slope of Hope Mountain where lift was anticipated from the surface wind bearing 290 degrees and blowing 15 knots and more. I was strongly rewarded as slightly turbulent lift in the 2–10 knot range persisted for four hours along the ridge running south to Wells Peak and Mt. Eaton.

The pressing arrival of my wife with the motorhome suggested it was time to land. I was approaching mid-field when I discovered a glut of gliders enjoying the up-wind slopes of Dog Mountain. I had not been aware of them as they switch to 123.4 after clearing the immediate Hope Airport area. I saw them launching from time to time but concluded they weren't as lucky finding lift (how naïve). Since all of my previous soaring had been unaccompanied by other aircraft, I decided to join them for a while to enjoy their presence. It was surprising to find 2–4 knots of steady lift over a couple of miles of ridge in very smooth air. This was a pleasant break from the light to moderate turbulence I had been experiencing over the previous hours in the stronger convection/ridge.

During my time around Hope Mountain, I figured I was the only one able to enjoy the lift as none of the launched gliders were making it up to my altitude – or so I thought. Little did I know that some were thousands of feet above me on Mt. Ogilvie to the east. I had looked towards that mountain from my maximum gained altitude of 7000 feet but my conservatism precluded me from venturing over there lest there was considerable lee sink between us. My policy is to assume the engine will not start and that I will need to remain a glider until accomplishing my landing on a suitable surface. Years ago, I would have considered this cowardly; however the aging process has provided me with a new maxim — safety first. I later learned (on my next day's flight) that there was no significant sink between the two mountains under those conditions, and club gliders typically make the flight between mounts from 3000 feet asl.

Still, in retrospect, that first day at Hope was one of the best soaring days I have enjoyed in my three years of gliding. Joe Gegenbauer was the instructor for the day and during the morning briefing he welcomed me and introduced me to the members and suggested mutual glider flights whereby we exchanged flights in each others' two place aircraft. That morning, veteran soaring pilot Frank Pilz joined me in the



Xtreme's cockpit to indoctrinate me into the area's assets and found the lift marginal for the Xtreme — he being used to much better performance in his ASW-20. We used the "house" ridge thermals and a few engine starts to remain airborne for three hours, 60% of which was silent flight. Then the dependable afternoon Hope phenomenon kicked in. This is the dissipation of the cool marine cloud layer which gets burned off and the heating of the inland air mass which rises. As air rushes in to create equilibrium through the narrowing valley approaching Hope, the wind speed picks up significantly creating ridge lift initially and by mid-afternoon (with airmass stability meeting the criteria) a wave will form downwind of Dog Mountain which sits directly in the path of the wind. If all that isn't enough, one can always use the thermals off the flat valley floor.

We landed for a lunch break and then Frank launched in his machine for Mt. Jarvis and Mathieu Catillon, a student member on a lengthy visit from France, came with me in the Xtreme. We joined the parade on Hope Mountain for a spell to gain the first few thousand feet and then headed northeast towards Mt. Ogilvie as a possible stepping stone to other ridges. Mathieu proved to be a smooth pilot and adept at finding lift. We traded control many times; this seems a good learning method as each pilot chooses different routes and lift capturing techniques and by watching the actions of others, one can extend one's knowledge and soaring skills.

After a couple of hours it seemed about time to land and I mentally set a minimum altitude for Mathieu of 2500 feet before engine start and a return to the airfield. However, each time he approached this altitude, he discovered a new thermal and was able to continue some time. Then, he saw others head over to the east side of Dog Mountain where the afternoon wave often perched. That was our downfall as we quickly found the sink portion of the rotor and my minimum safety altitude was encroached. After landing, a number of us pot-lucked our resources for a light supper and enjoyed rehashing our daily wins and losses.

Interesting folks Many Easterners (I was one) think that BC inhabitants are a little “off the wall.” This may be so, but I reckon this classification could fit any of us who might venture aloft without engines. So it shouldn’t be surprising that some of the Vancouver Soaring Association folks do not fit the category of “average individuals”. For instance, 84 year old Harald Schnetzler and his 92 year old girlfriend stay in a VW camper beside the well-appointed clubhouse on a regular basis. They rig their own glider and Harald flies virtually every day.

There are at least two Transport Canada personnel living the soaring life at Hope, Gerry Binnema of Safety Systems and Roberta Dight, who is working towards her glider instructor’s licence. She trained in the Air Cadets and runs a Vancouver-based squadron. I’m impressed with the Air Cadet organization because it contributes so many well-trained pilots and quality citizens to our ranks. It may be the most successful organization for infusing new, young pilots into the membership void many of us aging folks continually create. Roberta has toured the province to all of the hot soaring sites and while she loves Hope, she admits her most impressive soaring experience to date has occurred at Valemont. Roberta considers Valemont a prime contender for best soaring spot in western Canada as the convective lift typically pegs out her vario; and flights over the pristine high mountain wilderness around Mt. Robson are inspiring.

Ray Ochitwa, a long-haired, barefoot, hippyish ASW-15 owner proves you can’t judge a book by its cover. He’s a most entertaining gentleman with his very detailed knowledge of the various glider types. I particularly enjoyed aerodynamic discussions with him after ops ceased for the day — quite late in the evening in fact, as Ray stayed behind the longest to secure the clubhouse and facilities. If his flying matches his knowledge, competition types might have a future contender.

Fionna Bayley worked like a Trojan on the flightline during my weekend visit, and although we promised each other rides in our mutual soaring machines, the weather conspired against us by the end of the weekend.

Frank Pilz and wife Laurie brought along their “chickens.” I think they were cockatoos really; their congenial personalities made them favourites with many of the members. Frank runs the now annual soaring camp in Valemont and his natural instructional skills allowed him to provide many suggestions and information for my visit. It was also Frank who extended the first offer of club courtesy from 11,000 feet on 123.4, and this was most welcome as the first contact with some of the members on the ground was rather negative as they seemed very turf protective. (Now that I am a member that issue is eliminated.) Many thanks to Frank for that initial welcome as we might have proceeded to the next venue otherwise.

This brings me to an observation about the soaring community. I have read a great deal in *free flight* and have attended conferences at the SSA convention in the USA where speakers talk about declining numbers in soaring (this is a universal problem in the aviation community). Furthermore, discussions with locals suggest the glider folks are rather cliquish and could be friendlier. We aviators: rotary or fixed wing, power or gliders, need to respect each other’s choices — better still — embrace all

aspects of flight by working with each other and enjoying each other’s offerings.

As we circulated amongst the members we met another modest but very skilled soaring pilot in Jim Snow — winner of the contest for the day. He typically flies the Janus — a glider that some of the others admit is a handful of a machine. Three other members came over to greet me at my motorglider shortly after my arrival: Bill Dowdy, a retired Air Canada doctor; Bill Green, retired Air Canada captain, and Bob Ayotte, retired from Canadian Airlines — and serving that day as tow-pilot. Perhaps more than any other active flying group, it seems gliders attract the largest per capita collection of high time pilots. Is it the challenges of soaring that go beyond other aviation endeavours that demands the attention of the highly skilled pilots?

Hope’s offerings Almost forty years ago, I was a tow-pilot at the Winnipeg club, and other than a few years of towing for the Air Cadets, have only observed the late Port Alberni operation. The VSA operation at Hope is not only a most professional operation, offering a broad selection of gliders and facilities, but is also located in a prime soaring location. Frank Pilz puts it this way: “Hope doesn’t offer the strongest lift, but it has the most dependable soaring with a mix of convective, ridge and wave soaring. You can almost count on every afternoon being soarable as the westerly winds pick up.” Hope is far enough inland to escape the cooling effects of the marine air layer and the real estate is very vertical, offering many mountain slopes to challenge virtually any wind direction and convert it into lift.

Moreover, the airport is only a couple of miles from town and there are good eateries in walking distance. Hope boasts a full-sized indoor swimming pool, large library and many tourist attractions and outdoor recreational activities. The very wide grass airfield is near sea level permitting side by side power and glider operations. Its east-west orientation takes advantage of the predominant wind direction in and out of the valley to minimize crosswinds.

Hope, like some other clubs, has a five flight package of instruction to entice potential students into soaring. By then, they will have an idea of what the gliding/soaring business is about. VSA offers a half-year membership starting in August. They have also arranged a course through the school board which provides two hours of ground school and one instructional flight for \$150 (the school board gets \$75 of the fee). While not a money-maker, it does introduce young people and potential members to soaring.

Five years ago a Hope camp had about 25 students. This year the camp will be like a flying school for the week with two gliders and two instructional teams. Student progress will be tabulated providing a competition between the students as they undergo their course training. It seems the club is on the right track to increasing/sustaining membership, and their many offerings and capabilities make them attractive for membership. I can say that because after sampling some other clubs and considering VSA’s location, I became their latest member.

For more VSA information, visit <www.vsa.ca>. ■

The Ontario



two years in the making

Doug Scott

Ontario Zone Director

LAST YEAR, in *free flight* 5/04, you read an article called *The Contest That Wasn't*. Jim Fryett and I worked very hard, along with others, to organize the first contest to be held at York Soaring in many years. The article says, in part: "Day One, the viz was poor and the day was scrubbed, Days Two and Three were also scrubbed, but we had a great time, and we look forward to hosting the Provincials again next year at York, and we, like all of Southern Ontario, hope for better weather."

Well, now it's 2005, next year already, and we *did* get the better weather. Held over the Labour Day weekend, the contest and its attendees were blessed with three excellent soaring days. Eddie Hollestelle Jr. was the winner. Walter Weir, edged out by a mere 3 points, turned in a spectacular flight on Sunday with a task speed in excess of 100 km/h to finish second overall. Here is Walter's summary of the great weather:

We had three days of crystal clear air and generally lots of cu but with a ground elevation of 1550, the 5000 foot bases didn't give a lot of working room.

- Day 1 Saturday we had NW winds at 15 knots and bases that rose slowly from 3000 agl before the gate opened to 4000/4500 agl by day's end. The wind broke up the thermals – my average rate of climb was only 2.7 knots.
- Day 2 Sunday we had wind from the north at 3–5 knots with bases generally 1000 feet higher than Day 1.
My average rate of climb was 4.3 knots – the best was often over 5. It was a strong day for southwest Ontario.
- Day 3 Monday we started out with cu but it dried out in many areas of the task and we used a lot of blue thermals. Wind was SE at 3–5 knots, bases just a little lower than Day 2. Much weaker than Day 2, my average climb rate was 2.5 knots.

If you look back on <www.sac.ca> to see the 2004 article, you will see most of the story of our 2005 contest.

There are a few differences and additions. One, "Patches" Hildesheim and family from Gatineau were apparently too tired from their trip to the Nationals to attend and, two, we actually flew. All three days. That's a recent record for the Ontario Provincials. What was the same as last year is that we all had a terrific time.

Contests are fun for various people, for various reasons, whether you are a serious competitor, a flightline worker, sorting out the food for a lot of guests, or simply an observer. The atmosphere is charged with excitement, there is lots to do, lots to see, and lots of friends to greet.

Some of the contestants posted their thanks on the SAC Roundtable: "Thanks to the York Soaring Association for their great hospitality, to Jim and Doug for organizing the contest, to Ed senior for staying on the ground and being our expert CD, to Eddy and Kate for getting the scores up in record time, to Walter Weir for the weather wisdom (he was dead-on Monday when he said the cu would dry up), to Paul and the line crew, to the towpilots for getting the field launched every day in less than 45 minutes, to Richard Sawyer and the other expert cooks (David and Eilleen Mackenzie, Steve Bond, Estelle and Denis Forget) for delicious breakfasts and burgers, and to all the club members who pitched in and made us feel welcome. Great Show!"

A lot of effort goes into something like this, and all who were named last year, plus some others, deserve our collective thanks. The task setting and scoring systems, written about in the last issue of *free flight* with respect to the 2005 Nationals and tried at the SOSA Mudbowl, were refined even further. Ed Hollestelle, Contest Director, working wonderfully well with weatherman Walter Weir, has got a system which allows for task setting that adjusts to changing conditions and to varying pilot skill and glider performance. Everyone gets to fly at their own level of comfort and still be able to score.

The Novice Class experiment

As always, the hard core regulars show up at contests, and I am delighted to see them. In last year's article, we spoke of the Novice class that we had invented in order

Provincials



to attract newcomers, who will eventually replace the retiring regulars. This year, it actually worked, since we got to fly. Seven took part. Two of last year's novices, Jeremy Sawyer and Chris Razl, flew in the actual contest this time. Chris, you did well, but take a hint — you will eventually need a better strategy than, "Just flying around watching the vario pegged."

Last year, Great Lakes brought over their entire club, including a towplane, a couple of singles, and two two-seaters each with an instructor and a budding cross-country pilot. This year, they sort of stayed home. Sort of, because two of them flew their Silver distance flights during the contest, one to York and one to neighbouring Toronto Soaring. I'd like to think that we inspired them. The guy landing at Toronto must have wondered what was going on, because much of the club was away, flying at York in the contest, as novices.

Richard Jones was the only novice to actually get away from the field last year. He upgraded to an HP-18 this year, and demonstrated his keenness to practise by add-

ing over fifty hours to his previous total of about a hundred. He brought along David Mulders, flying a rare Elfe S4, and Randy Neilson, who overcame the usual club obstacles in order to compete in Toronto Soaring's SZD Junior. They all flew well and claimed to have had an inspirational time being with the serious folks. Thanks to Toronto Soaring and all the other clubs who allow their ships to be taken to contests, and thanks to Marian Nowak at Toronto for encouraging them.

They were joined by Kevin Moore and his teammate Keith, from Erin, and Diana Birrell and her teammate Stuart McNair from York. Kevin has about 800 hours instructing Air Cadets how to get up and back down as quickly as they can without losing sight of the mess hall. He had a huge smile on his face after overcoming a few obstacles and flying the Novice task at a very high speed.

Stuart and Diana, like Chief Dan George said, made my heart soar like an eagle. Stuart's story appears here. I had met them only one week before the contest. They had been working on their Bronze badges with York CFI Richard Sawyer, who has been instrumental in getting permission for club ships to go cross-country. The downside is he spends a lot of time retrieving his son, Jeremy. Stuart and Diana are poster kids for what we are trying to do: they are at the right stage, with the right skills and attitude, and they eagerly jumped at the chance to join the novices. The heart-soaring part came when they gave each other a "high five". Now, I realize that my role in this is small, and others are involved, but my contribution here is a lot like having your pee bag malfunction while wearing dark blue trousers. It doesn't show much, but it sure gives you that nice warm feeling all over.

Jim Fryett, David MacKenzie and I laid out a course of about 75 kilometres, centred on York, with two other clubs, three private strips, and two landmarks as turnpoints. The novices were asked to treat each leg as a final glide exercise, not leaving the launch point unless they had sufficient altitude to make the first leg, to turn back if they were uncomfortable, and so on. The idea was to reach a landable field as a turnpoint, then make a decision as to land there or to carry on. Once again, turn

pilot	glider	Day 1 pos. pts	Day 2 pos. pts	Day 3 pos. pts	total
1 Eddy Hollestelle	HP-18A	1 1000	2 960	5 961	2921
2 Walter Weir	ASW-27	4 918	1 1000	1 1000	2918
3 Jerzy Szemplinski	SZD-55	2 957	8 860	2 970	2787
4 Jörg Stieber	LS-8	6 900	3 947	7 931	2778
5 Dave Springford	LS-8	3 949	10 841	2 970	2760
6 Ulli Werneburg	ASW-24	7 863	4 930	6 960	2753
7 Willem Langelaan	DG-800	11 800	5 905	4 968	2673
8 Wilf Krueger	DG-800B	5 914	12 824	8 890	2628
9 Udo Rumpf	ASW-24	8 845	9 850	11 839	2534
10 Jim Fryett	Libelle 301	12 742	7 877	12 830	2449
11 Stan Martin	Mini-Nimbus	9 820	15 719	13 807	2346
12 Chris Razl	1-34	10 801	11 837	16 246	1884
13 Jim Carpenter	PW-5	15 0	6 882	10 865	1747
14 Serge Morozov	Hornet	15 0	13 795	9 882	1677
15 Jeremy Sawyer	G-102	13 218	14 741	14 660	1619
16 Ernie Prack	LS-4	14 205	16 239	15 500	944

back if not comfortable. Properly done, and with luck, they would never be out of gliding distance of an airport.

Given the various levels of experience and comfort, the novices ranged from flying to one turnpoint and back, to doing the whole course, to expanding the task even further. We used the honour system, and the prize was your own personal growth and satisfaction. We had no scoring and asked for no loggers. I borrowed a line from one of my mentors, André Pepin, who ran a contest at Champlain when we were transitioning from cameras to loggers. (See the article by "Hotel Tango", *free flight* 6/98.) André directed the pilots: "When you reach a turnpoint, if you have a camera, take a photo; if you have a flight recorder, submit a file; if you have neither, make a sketch."

Two commented on their experiences: "Having never been to a contest before, I found the whole weekend great. I congratulate all involved in a job well done. I especially thank Paul Moggach for the use of the inner tube that got me out of the Twin Lark and into our club Jantar. Also special thanks to Barry, Peter, Gary and Stan, all fellow members of Erin Soaring who did yeomen service to keep me at it when I needed some prodding."

"I'll chime in from the Novice camp. (They) were instrumental in getting us York novices into the air for personal bests during the contest. Without their encouragement I, for one, would probably have stayed out of the way and missed a great experience. Thanks to them and to everyone else, Jim Fryett, etc. who made it all work."

It was very gratifying to hear folks say, "I'm glad I came." See you all next year. ■



With the cu developing nicely, Jerzy Szemplinski (left) studies the task.

Roberto Centazzo

leaving the nest

Stuart McNair, York

"Come to the edge," He said. They said, "We are afraid."

"Come to the edge," He said.

They came. He pushed them... and they flew.

Guillaume Apollinaire

CAN YOU REMEMBER back to being a kid and not being allowed off the block? There was something good about that. You got to know every house, many of the neighbours, all the kids, and every shortcut there was. The downside? You just couldn't get anywhere. Same old, same old. Then came the day when, armed with a fresh set of do's and don'ts you were finally allowed, just this once, to venture further afield. Too far back in the recesses of your memory? Okay, then how about your first cross-country soaring flight, do you remember that?

I remember completing my twentieth solo flight. Ready for licensing. Without further ado I was marched into the office at York Soaring by Charles Petersen. He handed me a Bronze badge card and said, "Get started." Well, it was a while before everything on that card got signed off, but this summer a small group of us were coached by our CFI, Richard Sawyer, and several others who made a point of getting us ready to leave the nest. We even did a short safari to our neighbouring Air Sailing field on an otherwise dismal day to practise approaching an unfamiliar airfield.

As luck would have it, the Ontario Provincials were fast approaching and Doug Scott and the rest of the organizers included a Novice class with self-declared tasks. Not only did they include the class, they actively worked with us to ensure that they knew what our capabilities were and that we were adequately prepared. That meant that three of us spent the first contest day derigging and rigging a 1-23, complete with an extended search for a misplaced trailer component. It might not have been exciting, but it provided me with my final check mark on my Bronze badge card and an approving nod from the CFI to fly a task the next day. Gulp.

The pilot's briefing was encouraging. Good lift. A bit of high cloud that might slip to the south. Light winds. Couldn't be better. We launched all the competitors, then pulled the 1-23 to the line and off I went. I had planned a triangle that would take me about 15 km east and southwest of Arthur, then 20 km north to Toronto Soaring and back. For the first time ever I found myself circling under a cu looking for lift while I kept an eye on an airfield I'd never landed at before, knowing that that would be my destination if I couldn't climb. I needed 5000 feet over Luther Lake to make it to Toronto Soaring, so I dawdled a bit there, sniffing under clouds until I hit the numbers. Did I make it to Toronto Soaring. Well, yes, arriving overhead at 5300 feet. Amateur!

The return was basically a 20 km final glide. Sweet! Back to the nest with a real sense of accomplishment and a whole new world to look forward to. The OLC scored the flight at 99 km. The silly grin? It'll wear off, I guess.

Zen pilots and tribal elders

the “Bald Eagle”

WELL, THERE I WAS, attending yet another Ontario Provincial Contest. In the past, I have competed, towed, parked cars, run ropes, done retrieves, and so on. This year the hard work was done by others, so I could just relax and enjoy the sun, marvel at the professionalism of the old-timers, and the enthusiasm of the new folk. Most especially, I got to renew old acquaintances. There's a bunch of great people who I only get to see at such festivities, and I look forward to meeting them again.

Some of the folk who fly contests are like those guys who show up at stag parties just because they like to play poker. They don't care about the location or who the host is, they crave the action. They come from far away, they make sacrifices and deal with vexatious issues just to be involved, to compete, and to perhaps have a few flights with a purpose, a task, directed by others, instead of taking the regular week-end easy route of just heading off where they think there might be lift.

I like to watch and listen to the contest pilots, hear the tales of yesterday's fun and follies, of today's challenges, and to learn from them. This year, I have been flying vicariously through others. A famous movie critic suggests that movies will always have an attraction, separate from their artistic merit or box office appeal, because they offer a young man an opportunity to sit in the balcony and put his arm around the girl beside him. Well, folks, this is why I show up at contests. I may not fly this year, I'll never be 'Dirty Harry'; but I still get a huge thrill from putting my arm around the old guys and the new guys. They are my heroes, my role models.

Ulli Werneburg from Gatineau claimed the Award for the Longest Distance. Not during the contest, of course; the driving to get there. Ernie Prack from SOSA ran neck-and-neck with Kevin Moore of Erin for the Marian Nowak Award for Perseverance. (A couple of years ago, Marian was plagued by parts falling off his glider everywhere he went). Ernie had a dead battery, got up early, drove hundreds of kilometres to get yet another dead battery, and was saved by a loaner from Ed Hollestelle. Moral of the story: save trouble by buying quality batteries from Solaire in the first place. Knowing that he would not place in the standings, and desirous of a trophy, Ernie faked yet another electrical problem and went to the back of the grid.

Kevin? — he somehow managed to get three main wheel flat tires in two days (reminiscent of Richard Longhurst's five landouts in four contest days). Kevin, too, was saved by the efforts of his clubmates and the loan of an inner tube from York's Paul Moggach. What a great, helpful, close-knit community. I also depended upon the kindness of others. It was a full year since I had flown last, and Kevin was kind enough to take me up in BEK, Peter Rawes' venerable Twin Lark, in which Peter gave me my licence exam many years ago.

Speaking of Ernie again, the classic Volvo he has owned since new, for 18 years, doesn't have a trailer hitch. When he

radioed on the last contest day that he would not, for a change, be landing out, his hitch-equipped crew went home! Would I go 100 km out of my way to tow his glider back to SOSA? I assumed that this was simply a ploy to wrest the already-awarded “Hardship” trophy from Kevin, so, to avoid the hassle of me having to change the scoring, I trailered it home for him.

Perhaps the best example of helping others was York's David MacKenzie loaning his PW-5 to Jim Carpenter, so that Jim could join us. Jim did not insure his glider this year. He keeps current flying intros at SOSA. Now, Jim has been around a long while. He and Wilf Krueger compete for the “Second-oldest-in-the-Contest” trophy next to Walter Weir. Jim flew the very first glider into SOSA's current location, has a wealth of stories about flying in the fifties, and has done well in contests in Canada and around the world. Can you imagine getting your first intro ride from him? Would he take you away for 500 kilometres? Would he discuss his fourteen references in *free flight*, ranging from “Jim Carpenter does beer commercial in Libelle”, and “new contest won by Carpenter”, to answering probing questions about fake photos that he had submitted to *free flight*?

I'm not certain of David's flying history, other than all of his clothing says “Omarama” and he claims to have once been on the same frequency as Chuck Yeager, but at York he is a cross between a curmudgeon and a tribal elder. Tall, distinguished, with a long, white beard, Dave is the person you go to to get advice and solve problems, and he smokes a pipe. He smokes a pipe for two reasons: first to irritate his wife Eilean, and to use it to punctuate his paternal pontifications. He waves the pipe around to illustrate stories and, since it frequently goes out, you desperately and eagerly wait while he gets a relight before continuing the story. He's got you hooked and mesmerized.

Anyway, Jim and I go way back; I always enjoy his stories. He and I were waiting in line for the barbecued burgers being prepared by the aforementioned David, and the pipe and BBQ smoke intermingled. Jim was explaining to me how to be successful in cross-country flight. He spoke of actually being able to see the thermals develop, and of feeling the lift in your soul, and of really being a part of the glider, flying by feel and by instinct. The instruments were secondary, the primary requirement was to actually BE the glider. Here was the culmination of fifty years of soaring experience. I hung on every word, trying desperately to follow, veering in and out of understanding, just as you might try to core an important thermal. Jim figures that to succeed, you need to be at peace with yourself and in harmony with your surroundings.

As we came next in line, Jim turned to the magisterial David, looked at the burgers, looked up at David, and said, “Make Me One With Everything” ■

Accident report

A fatal accident occurred on 10 September when a Puchacz crashed at the Great Lakes club in Ontario. Both occupants were killed. Our commiserations are extended to the families of the two pilots.

It was reported that the glider appeared to pull up into a thermal at an estimated height above ground of 800–1000 feet. During this thermal entry, one wing dropped and entered what was reported as a spin. After two or three rotations, it disappeared behind trees, but may still have been at 300–500 feet. It was still rotating at that time. From the appearance of the wreckage, it appeared to have impacted in a steep nose-down (60° estimated) attitude.

An investigation by the TSB is ongoing. The SAC Flight Training & Safety committee is also investigating and will be reporting. At this time we do not think anything unusual would explain the accident. All lessons learned from the accident will be reported to all clubs as soon as possible.

Ian Oldaker, chairman FT&S committee

Spins

Much discussion has taken place about the Puchacz and its spinning characteristics as a result of the tragic accident at the Great Lakes club. The Puchacz gives the usual signs when slowly approaching the stall with wings level, but does not display these signs when in an over-ruddered shallow turn, for example. Almost all stall/spin accidents begin with such a turn.

More often than not, accidents are caused by systematic problems. To fly a readily-spun glider safely you need to know how the stall and spin happen, and you need practical training in spin recognition, avoidance, and recovery. It's not sufficient to have the instructor enter the spin, for you to then take over and recover. Relying on waiting for the "usual" signs of an impending stall will not save you while you are turning slowly in a thermal, slow on your final turn, or when recovering from a failed launch low down.

We should all be required to experience these situations. Without this training and knowledge it's dangerous to fly these gliders, the Puchacz included. The Twin Astir can be flown safely without this knowledge and training for example. But this is not the solution as long as we have single-seaters also that will spin. And remember that competition pilots routinely ballast their gliders to have a rear cg position, good for thermaling – and spinning!

The systematic approach is to put the basic theoretical and practical stall/spin training in place if not already done. On top of that training, you must be adequately prepared on

any new type during conversion training. Pilots should not be allowed to fly solo in a spinnable glider before they can repeatedly demonstrate spin recovery the correct way:

Ailerons neutral,
Full rudder against the rotation,
Stick steadily forward until rotation stops,
Centre all controls,
Smooth pull out of the dive.

I can mention a club that sold their spin trainer, but immediately arranged to add tail weights to their ASK-21 and the DG-500 (a 16 kg weight goes in the tail fin) that they had at that time.

In conclusion, the Puchacz is safe if the pilots have the proper training; without the training it is dangerous and that goes for all other gliders that spin readily.

Ian Oldaker

Hard landing incident

The incident was a hard landing in one of our Blaniks, hard on tail wheel and also hard on main gear. I mean *really* hard, the hardest I have had the misfortune to be involved in.

The CFI and I checked over the glider and did not find obvious new damage, but there could be weakening of the bulkhead near the tail wheel. It looked like the tail wheel spring had momentarily bent up enough to touch and bend the bottom of the tail cone, the part that has the pin through it. We straightened this area of the tail cone out so that the pin goes in nicely. The bulkhead that you can see by lifting the tail cone is okay, but the one

behind that may be damaged. The rivets on the inner bulkhead are all looking okay. Also looked at the main gear attach area under the rear seat, did not see anything obvious.

The root cause was failure of the instructor (me) to intervene and take control at an early enough time to be able to recover the situation. The student needed to do a slip because of being too high, and the slip was not going well. I tried words, but the appropriate action would have been to take over when I saw that the slip was going badly.

During the slipped approach we moved sideways, across half the width of the runway and also that the nose was not low enough during the slip so that air speed was declining. On straightening out there was not enough air speed or altitude to do a decent flare to reduce the descent rate.

Conditions were about a 12 knot wind speed from the northwest with a crosswind component of (I said this aloud before take-off) 9 knots. I did the take-off, with care for the crosswind but with no difficulty. Wind seemed the same on landing.

I do not mention the student because I do not blame him — it was up to me to take over, and I did not do so in a timely manner. Of course we discussed what had gone wrong to get maximum learning benefit from this.

Al Hoar, Cu Nim

Comment: *In most accidents involving an instructor, world-wide data shows that failure to take over control in time is the main cause. Al's "fessing up" is laudable, and is one of the important actions that all of us can take in trying to learn from our mistakes so that we can improve our safety record.*

Looking at his report suggests that the situation began to deteriorate quite early and the instructor could/should have been more alert to the possibility that the student was not or could not handle the aircraft adequately.

We have to remain extra vigilant when doing this sort of exercise, remembering that turbulence low down can and does make things worse for us. It also appears a little inconsistent that the instructor did not permit the student to do the take-off and yet allowed him to fly the approach.

We have to be careful in assessing the conditions and not letting our judgement be influenced by a short period of good flying by the student in allowing him or her to try and fly say the approach and landing as in this case. Thanks Al for the opportunity to learn from this.

Ian Oldaker

2006 SAC AGM

**Vancouver, BC
March 24-26**

Plans call for a reception and meet & greet Friday evening, seminars/workshops and Awards Banquet on Saturday (guest speaker is being lined up), and AGM on Sunday morning. Planning ongoing as you read - more complete information will be in the next issue. Please contact Dave Baker <dandmbaker@shaw.ca> early if you're planning to attend as an individual. Location not decided as yet.

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Miscellany

... other than that, it was a great flight

Here's a challenge to the SAC Safety Officer: try and fit this story into the "Swiss cheese" model of accident/incident analysis.

For some reason I was the only one flying in the Columbia Valley on Saturday. As I was scraping low along the Steeples I passed a large Golden Eagle sitting on the top of one of those ridges. He was watching me because he turned his head and I swear I heard him say, "this guy is nuts". Being low on the Steeples is just what I had told others never to do.

The lift, such as it was, was quite turbulent close to the rocks so I had to fly fast, and with over a 10 lb/ft² wing loading [of my PIK-20E] this was not a fun time. I was too involved with staying up to eat my lunch. Later I made a desperate move to get on top of some lower ridges in order to get to the bubbles off the top of them and that seemed to work.

After leaving the Steeples and while making a run for the Elko Ridge, I thought I had time to grab a bite of my chicken salad sandwich. These sandwiches are from Extra Foods in Fernie and they have over an inch thick of slimy filling and this squirted out and a big lump fell onto my external catheter (condom). This was a retread (second use) and the adhesive was not too good. I reached down to grab this lump of filling so it wouldn't get

all over the place and partially pushed the condom off and it started to leak.

Things were not going well. I decided to land because of the condom dilemma.

Normally I switch hands when I put the gear down but this time because my left hand was busy trying to stem the leak I reached over quickly with my left hand and unlocked the gear handle. My bum little finger on the left hand hangs down and it got caught as the gear handle slid forward. I must have severed a small artery as blood was pouring out and getting on everything. It looked like an axe

God's country

It's fall wave camp time east and west. A lovely shot of the Porcupine Hills in southern Alberta looking west from the east side. A couple of the tops of the Livingstone Range that is producing the lennie are just visible over the ridgeline.

photo: Phil Stade

murder had taken place. I had to lock the gear with my right hand anyway. Then I wrapped the plastic bag that the sandwich had been in around the finger to contain the bleeding. Other than that it was a great flight.

Dick Mamini



Keeping your cool. Pre-launch at the Nationals. photo ©: Maria Szemplinska

most clubs have not explored this technique in more than twenty years. This lack of experience with modern winches means that investigating and reintroducing winch systems and procedures will require determination, research, and careful planning. Most of all, moving in this direction will require clubs that are willing and able to change to survive.

The SOAR acronym has provided a framework for glider pilots to establish the most appropriate action when facing a given situation. Now is an ideal time to put it to use.

The present **S**ituation clearly indicates yesterday's solutions are not the answer for today's concerns. The **O**ptions to be considered need to include approaches that are dramatically different if we are to see an increase in the number of new glider pilots in Canada. **A**ction needs to be taken quickly in view of the number of risks our sport is facing. It is my hope that by this time next year we will be able to **R**epeat this process and look back on the changes we've dared to make with a sense of pride and accomplishment, and be ready for more. ■

membership

from page 5

What is there to do, after all? Participation in contests is limited to the already successful, closing off that opportunity for learning. No entry level games exist that I've seen. And as for the club routine of hanging around the field each weekend, working several hours to fly one, etc, well – who's got the time for that?

I did, however, have one exceptional experience with a club based at Pleasant Valley (Phoenix). They flew hard all day Saturday, then were joined by wives and kids for a pot-luck supper at their modest clubhouse on the field. I was a guest of a member, a fellow Stemme owner, and I was treated like a member of the gang. It was a delightful social occasion which takes place every weekend during the season. That experience was a complete contrast from the typical experience with the commercial operator who is interested only in extracting your cash and moving you on out. But the club social was a delight. Never encountered another like that.

The only organization I can relate any of this to is Rotary International. It has a structure, regular meetings, visits to each club by the district governors, etc. It actively recruits members and each club has its projects. It is not a particularly fun club to be in, and most of the people in the clubs I've known are not particularly interesting to me. They make some business contacts, have some social contact, and pat themselves on the back for doing some good. But Rotary endures and grows because the local members make the effort to make it grow.

But back to gliding. Viewed from an economic perspective, it is the commercial operators and the manufacturers who should be worrying about negative growth, not the club members. What does it matter to a 70+ year old member that the club may shrivel up and die in a few years? Hell, he knows that's what's gonna happen to him. So why worry? But for all the glider manufacturing guys, the Stemme's and DG's and others, they should worry. And they should do something for their own sakes. Will they? I very much doubt it. Look what happened to the LS factory.

Finally, consider the obvious success of the EAA in the USA. I only know what I see at Oshkosh each year and at the local airport. They have meetings, they do things, they build things, they have barbecues for anyone on the field to attend. And they grow. What do they have that soaring lacks? Answer that and we might be nearer to a solution, if there is one to be found. ■

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DIAMOND GOAL (300 km goal flight)

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SOARING — the monthly journal of the Soaring Society of America. Subscriptions, US\$43 price includes postage. Credit cards accepted. Box 2100, Hobbs, NM 88241-2100. <info@ssa.org>. (505) 392-1177.

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GRANDE PRAIRIE SOARING SOCIETY
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