

- BASA BUGLE -

June Meeting.

The next BASA meeting will be Wednesday June 25, 2008. Membership issues will be up for discussion, in particular the subject of instituting a "family membership".

The meeting will be at the IHOP, 5403 Stevens Creek Boulevard in Santa Clara (just off Hwy 280). We have the room reserved from 6PM, and the meeting will start around 7PM.



Marco Flagg thermaling in the Junior over Air Sailing (see story below).

Membership Chairman (Wolf Weber)

Joining/Leaving. This month we have two new associate members. **Yosef Meshulam** just got his private glider rating at Hollister. He's already completed his Grob check-out. **Ron Hess** is rejoining while he is looking for his next glider. He's been a BASA member in the past, so many of you probably recognize his name. **Patrick Healy** has resigned his associate membership. The membership count is now at 70, with two sponsor memberships and three associate memberships available.

Sponsor Memberships For Sale. If you have been in the club for a while and plan to stay, consider making the longer-term commitment to become a sponsor member. Buying a sponsor membership saves you \$40/month in dues. Recent sales have been in the \$2000 range.

Looking to sell their sponsor membership:

Ricardo Mestre

Looking to buy a sponsor membership:

Lisa Corsetti

Treasurer (Charles Hanes)

Checking: \$7,955

Ins. fund: \$50,617

5KM loan: \$66,482

Members late on dues: **Chris de Roulet, Ricardo Mestre, John Murayama, Terry Byers, Clyde Cotterell, Eric Hicks, and Ali Rastegar.**

This list is getting longer, please check your balances and get your payments in ASAP.

Due to recent high maintenance expenses, plus some prior year property tax bills from San Benito Co., the payments on the 5KM loan at the end of the month will not be as high as last quarter. I expect the total payments to be about \$5K. We should be back to normal (more like \$10K) by next quarter.

Flight Committee Chairman (Jim Britton)

Complacency: What Me Worry?

One of BASA's aims is "...encouraging all forms of safe soaring.." So how do we make sure that this happens? The process starts with a well trained membership.

New members are typically either freshly minted students from Hollister Gliding Club, or more experienced pilots that relocate to the area. The newly licensed tend to be crisp and careful, but inexperienced - so we have a progression of ships that we allow them to fly as their experience and skill levels build. The more experienced pilots generally have the required skills to safely pilot our more complex ships, but we sometimes notice that they have got into some bad habits. Through a combination of flight committee checkouts and CFIG checkouts we can try to correct these.

The process continues by ensuring that we have a fleet of rigorously maintained and safe sailplanes, thanks in no small part to the tireless work of Matt and his ship captains.

The final link in the chain is the on-going diligence of the pilots. This is where we are in danger of slipping up if we are not all careful.

I have two items for you to ponder this month. The first one relates to tow-signals.

Tehachapi lost a K21 last month when the pilot mistook the rudder-waggle for a "release now" command. The signal was given as the towplane was not able to climb. You know what happens next because it has happened too often. Insufficient height for a circuit - the stressed pilot doesn't realize spoilers are out (or he wouldn't have got off tow to start with) and gravity wins big time. Another avoidable accident. Another hull lost. Insurance rates increase for everybody. Please take the time to refresh yourselves on the standard tow signals. The soaring safety foundation has a good illustration here:

<http://www.soaringsafety.org/prevention/signals.html>

And if you ever end up flying with me in 2-seater know that you may be tested on this (at a safe height of course!)

The second item relates to complacency. Martin Hellman presented a splendid article on this for PASCO last year. I have his permission to reproduce parts of it here.

He writes much better than I can - and its worth the read. Here is an extract to get you thinking:

We all know that complacency is our enemy. But probably none of us think of ourselves as complacent because once we recognize our complacency, we do something to change it. So, in a sense, the real enemy is complacency about complacency.

None of us think of ourselves as resembling Alfred E. Newman, the "What me worry?" Mad Magazine character – until after an accident, when we rigorously review what we could have done differently and often see ourselves looking just like him: stupidly happy and oblivious to danger. But that only seems to occur in hindsight. The goal of this session is to try and help us see complacency before it causes an accident, when it can make a difference.

To do that, I will focus on three areas. The first I'll call the 99.9% safe maneuver. This is one that you can execute safely 999 times out of a thousand. But one time in a thousand, there will be an accident, possibly fatal. If we execute such a maneuver only once in our flying careers, there's a small risk. But, if we execute it a hundred times, there's a good chance we'll get bitten. Worse, the fear level that we felt the first few times evaporates as we become comfortable with the maneuver. But that's just complacency masquerading as confidence in our skill level.

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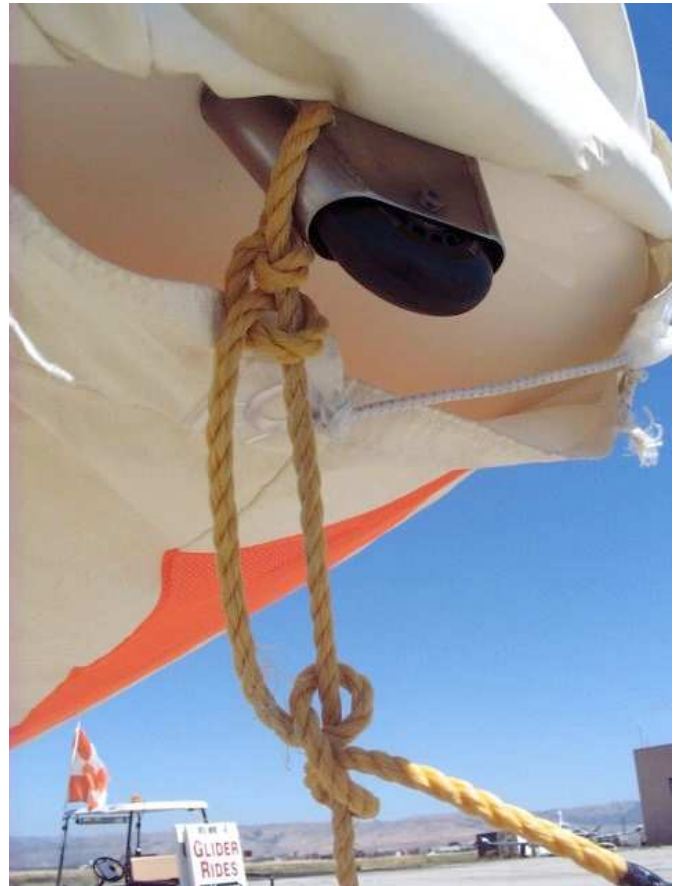
The full article can be found at http://ee.stanford.edu/~hellman/soaring/PASCO_2007_talk.html

Please read it.

All of the above links can be accessed directly from a new 'safety' link that will be added soon on the main BASA web site. I will be this expanding this page over time. Let me know of anything you would like added here.

Tie-Down Knots (Haven Rich)

See below for an example of some poorly-tied knots:



If it were a windy day, these loose half-hitches could easily have come completely undone and this expensive glider could have gone off flying by itself.

If you are not sure how to tie a secure "trucker's hitch" in the tie-down ropes, please see me (**Haven Rich**) for some instruction. Even if you are sure, please see me anyway so we can check whether your confidence is justified! If I'm not around, ask a Flight Committee Member or other experienced BASA member.

When to Pull the Tow Release? (Harry Fox)

As Jim Britton mentioned above, many gliders have been destroyed or damaged because of pilots pulling the tow release knob when they should have closed the spoilers instead. But there can be other incidents where the tow release is pulled too soon. I recently witnessed a glider damaged after the pilot pulled the tow release at low level because of a perceived problem with a slack rope.

This occurred at Air Sailing on a windy, turbulent day. The pilot got some slack rope on the early part of the tow, and pulled the release at about 300 feet AGL. He turned back towards the runway, but had some problems with speed control (nose up, nose down, etc.) and did not turn steeply, apparently because of fear that a stall might occur in a steep turn at low altitude. The glider turned back downwind but by now was well off to the side of the runway, and being pushed along by a strong tailwind. The pilot aimed for a clear area near the end of the runway, but ended up going into the sagebrush for a bounce and a ground loop.

When he did touch down it was at the lowest energy he could (considering the tailwind). No one was injured, but the glider did sustain a crack in the tailboom and a crushed wheel fairing.

Some of the things I learned from this are: (i) A glider landing in sagebrush shaves off the branches as it comes in, leaving a very graphic display of its glide angle just before touchdown (not a terribly useful observation, but very cool to look at). (ii) A Grob 103 is a remarkably rugged aircraft. (iii) Pulling the tow release at low altitude should be a very last resort.

I wasn't in the glider and I got a lot of my information second hand, so obviously I'm second-guessing what the pilot did based on incomplete information. It may be that his decision to pull the tow release was the right one at the time, but it is certainly a high-risk option to pull the release at only 300 feet AGL.

When should you pull the tow release early?

If you are above pattern altitude and you get so far out position that a smooth recovery seems unlikely, there should be no risk in releasing early. This seems to happen to me most often in strong lift at Truckee or other mountain sites, so I just pull the tow release and climb away.

If ever you lose sight of the towplane below you, or you are pulling up on the towplane's tail with the rope, or you could get the rope tangled around the glider or towplane, then certainly you must pull the release whatever the altitude. I encountered this situation once at Truckee where we towed right into a strong thermal just as towplane and glider left the runway surface (the towplane may have triggered the thermal as it passed). I got knocked well out of position three times and everything in the cockpit side pocket flew out and landed in my lap. A moment of inattention while I tried to put radio, camera, etc. back in the pocket resulted in the glider climbing over the towplane, and I had no choice but to pull the release. Fortunately the thermal had buoyed me up to 400 feet AGL by this time, and I was able to return for a safe landing on runway 28.

But should you pull the tow release below pattern altitude when those dangers are not present? My advice is to hang on for the ride as long as you can. Its harder to break a rope than you might think, so even on a rough tow with lots of slack rope, try to stay attached and gain more altitude.

Glider Locations

As of June 15, glider locations are:

DG-1000 1CH	In service at Truckee.
DG-505 5KM	In service at Hollister. Will go on Parowan safari from July 4 to July 13.
Grob 36L	In service at Hollister.
Pegasus 9JH	In service at Hollister.
Pegasus 1LV	In service at Truckee.
Junior 6DS	In service at Truckee.

Thermaling Camp Report (Marco Flagg)

As I was the only BASA participant this year at the Air Sailing thermaling camp, I figured I should take a few minutes to provide a report. You can also find some pictures here:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/marco_flagg/sets/72157605312048328/show/

First of all thanks to Clark Mason and Harry Fox who drove out to Hollister on Saturday morning before camp, to teach me and help me disassemble 6DS. For those of you who haven't done that, both disassembly and re-assembly are fairly simple (not many steps involved), although aligning and securing the wings on assembly can be a bit tricky.



I towed the glider to Air Sailing with my Subaru Baja, a fairly small pickup with just a 4-cylinder engine although turbo charged, and it didn't even seem to affect the gas mileage much. I arrived there in the middle of the night on Saturday and it was good to have a GPS fix for the facility which is down some dirt roads.

If you are an outdoors guy/gal like me, Air Sailing is great as it is a desert camping trip wrapped up with the glider flying. I pitched my little dome tent, and slept great there for the next seven nights. The first surprise came the next morning, when I found a memorial for departed glider pilots right next to my tent. Some 30+ names on there, and although that's over a substantial period of time it still seemed like quite a count for a single glider port. Well, it turned out their demise was mostly not related to practicing the sport.

There were eight of us students in the camp, and most would qualify as 'intermediate' like me. One student also had some 30,000 hours as an airline pilot, another hundreds or perhaps thousands of hours as a power plane private pilot.

Do you know how sometimes instructors insist on one specific way to fly, even though that may not be the only way? Well, Thermaling Camp specifically wasn't like that and lead instructor Rolf Peterson from Livermore repeatedly made the point that any one way isn't necessarily the best way for you. For example, for thermaling techniques we were taught Rolf's method first (tighten your turn as you lose lift, then gradually reduce bank as lift is increasing) - and that was immediately followed up by second instructor Mark Montague's (another airline pilot) technique of making sharp, 3-second straight flights 90 degrees after minimum lift or 270 degrees after max. lift.

Each morning of theory was followed by an afternoon of flying, and here the choice of techniques offered left you more to explore and experiment with. I found I can center a thermal quite well using Rolf's technique, for example.

While I had done some flying in Truckee with Hans van Weersch last year, this was my first opportunity of solo mountain flying in the Junior. And it was great! Air Sailing has wide and long runways, which is of course a good way to start in this new environment. The first flight was an area intro with a local pilot, Mark Montague using his ASK21. That was on Sunday, and the weather was still quite rainy.

Monday I only made it out to the flightline before inclement weather moved in, but after that conditions improved and I flew every day through Saturday. After a couple of short flights on Tuesday, Wednesday offered the first good thermaling opportunity! A 3000' tow, and I was off. Thermals were well marked by cumulus and I had all the time in the world to experiment with thermaling techniques.

After that got a bit old, I started venturing out, flying here and there across the wide valley just to see what would work. Often, I came back to a spot called 'red rocks' which turned out to be a good 'gas station' to reliably refuel your altitude. And so, I gradually grew more comfortable and the length of the trips through the valley grew. That first good day, I nosed up to the impressive Tule Peak, but by the next day I was well over it and beyond it. I'd follow the coast of Pyramid Lake for a while, or gain enough altitude to fly over the sink area on the eastern side of the Dogskin mountains, to safely reach the western side and predictably find great thermals there to follow the ridge line south.

Evenings was a time to 'talk gliders' with the other pilots, watch glider videos and listen to Ed Kilbourne's glider songs. Of course, cabin fever got us a couple of times, and so a few of us headed for town for a pizza or beer or burger.

My flights grew in length, and the last one covered some 220 nautical miles and just shy of four hours per my GPS, all while staying in glide of Air Sailing. In those flights, I'd not run out of lift, but rather eventually burn my altitude on purpose by practicing some slips, or doing a little speed run, and in most cases making plentiful use of the spoilers to finally descend from the clouds. Heck, there is after all such a thing as too much lift!

On Friday, I joined with Ed Lord to fly 1CH on an x/c to Silver Springs, Dayton and Virginia City.



It was a nice change of pace from the solo Junior flying, and also of course more good x/c experience. However, embarrassingly for an ocean technology guy who spends much time at sea, the flight did make me nauseated to the point of reverse digestion. It's bizarre, as I've done some 150 flights so far, and the only two I got nauseated on were two out of my three flights in the front seat of 1CH. Any of you have a similar experience? It might be difference of motion in that ship: 1CH is fast, but it kind of responds slow like an ocean liner it seems to me, not a quick responsive motion like the Junior (I noticed I could thermal with MUCH tighter turns in the Junior than some of the other gliders - in one case gagging was me flying an inner loop while another glider flew an outer loop at about the same altitude).

Anyway, most guys left town Saturday morning, but conditions were still excellent and I used the opportunity for a nice, long 'goodbye' flight in the Junior in now much less crowded skies!

Overall, I can enthusiastically recommend thermaling camp for any of you other intermediate pilots out there - and really anybody else, as it truly is a lot of fun!

Upcoming Events

Truckee Soaring Camp. June 23-27. Contact Richard Pearl. (925) 933-4558.

Parowan Safari. July 5 to July 13.

<http://www.flybasa.org>

Gerlach Dash. August 9-10, starting and finishing from Air Sailing. Contact: Bob Spielman, 775-345-0410, thudpilot1@msn.com. Rooms are available at Bruno's Country Club in Gerlach, call "Bruno" or "Skeeke" at 775-557-2220 to reserve, no deposit required; or camp out on the playa with your Camper, RV or Tent.

Vacation Reservations for 2008

Every BASA member may reserve a glider for up to five days midweek (Monday through Friday), once per calendar year. Up to three of these five days may be for a two-place glider, with the rest in a single-place glider. This "vacation reservation" is in addition to the normal reservations allowed under BASA rules. Reservations may be allowed for weekend events or for extended periods to accommodate camps and safaris, with the permission of the Executive Committee.

If you want to make a vacation reservation, contact **Harry Fox**.

Glider and Dates	Pilot
DG-1000, June 30 to July 2	Steve Ascher (at Truckee)
DG-505; July 5-13	Parowan Safari (vacation reservation days will be charged to BASA pilots using this glider)
DG-1000, August 8-10	Clark Mason (Gerlach Dash)

Executive Committee execs@flybasa.org

President – **Harry Fox**
 Vice President – **Jeremy Zawodny**
 Treasurer – **Charles Hanes**
 Flight Committee Chairman – **Jim Britton**

