

The Rainier Paragliding Club Newsletter

Serving the Paragliding Community of Western Washington

www.rainierparaglidingclub.org

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The Thermal Column

FortEbey Cam pout

photos by Jim and Gail Baldo



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Flying Strong Winds at Ft. Ebey

by Wayne Maxwell

A question was recently posted about flying at Fort Ebey when the winds are on the stronger side. Here are some items to consider not only there, but at other sites.

- Before committing to launch, you should have a good idea about the speed of your glider and your personal skill level.
- A specific mph number can not be used as you need to take into consideration the density altitude of the site.
- Be sure your speed system is in top shape, and you can access/use it easily. I highly recommend the cable system that makes the first step hang out in front a little bit. For me, it was the greatest equipment improvement I've ever made.



- In general at Fort Ebey, you can fly in anything you can controllably launch in but you need to ask yourself "Will it be fun?" At other sites this does not hold true as you must take the terrain into consideration.
- It's extremely important to know that the wind will be a bit stronger, having a more horizontal component, a little higher up. The higher you go the greater the possibility of being blown back.
- If ridge soaring in very strong winds, **DO NOT LET YOURSELF GET MUCH HIGHER THAN LAUNCH!!** Move out front, or use big ears and try to find the location out front where you don't go up or down, then just work in and out of that. That location changes as the wind direction and velocity changes, and it's a very fine line. Beware that sinking out is also fairly easy when playing this game.
- If you need to use your speed bar very much, it's probably best to land. It's best to save it for a sudden, unexpected wind increase.
- ALWAYS, watch the water out front, as you can usually see stronger winds coming.
- When landing, do not get much behind your target, as your penetration may be very little or even nil.
- If you have speed instruments, find out if your particular glider loses or gains speed in big ears.
- If your speed system is difficult to get at, a quick application of big ears immediately after launch may be a wise decision.
- At Whidby Island, if you've let yourself get too high and are being blown back, you probably still have one chance left. Since the wind is seldom straight in, you can turn and crab downwind around the corner for a beach landing. A long walk is much better than a tree landing.

Winding Up

by Jerry DeVin

On April first (this is not a joke), I headed off to Dog Mountain and was able to catch a ride to launch with a couple of hanglider pilots that were setting up for the frostbite weekend. The frostbite fly-in provides an opportunity to buy a key to fly Dog Mt for \$60. The hangs set up and launched leaving me to follow. The set up area was covered in snow and was sloppy so I set up over the lip straightening my lines while moving down the steep slope.



I tickled my A's to inflate the glider. The wing easily came overhead while at the same time I slipped and was briefly lifted 3 or 4 feet off the ground. As I momentarily touched back down, I stumbled 3 or 4 steps backward and was lifted again still facing backward - "Not Good!" To



add to my problems, when I stumbled I also spun so now my risers had 2 twists and was heading uncontrollably toward some firs. Luckily I crashed through them and continued flying. Unluckily, I was spun around again and now had 4 riser twists.

I managed to undo one twist but as I was working on the second, I crashed into a 50 ft. alder this time ending my flight. Quickly taking stock of the situation, I was uninjured (except for my ego) and the wing appeared fine. I unbuckled my harness and shimmied down the tree. My saw made quick work of the alder but I ran out of fuel before a second alder could be downed to free the rest of my wing. The next morning, I returned to finish the job and retrieved my wing.

And So It Begins!

by Jim Baldo

In last month's newsletter, Doug Etter wrote a very nice article about staying safe as springtime approaches. Please take heed. Maybe it's because I've been out to the flying sites more this year than others but it seems to me that there are many more accidents this year than in recent years past. I thought I'd share with you the ones I've heard about so far this year.



- * See the article to the left.
- * A pilot at Oceanside flew into a tree after he questioned the wind direction he observed while on launch. No injuries.
- * A pilot at cliffside dislocated his finger while top landing.
- * 2 pilots at cliffside received minor cuts while launching in strong winds.
- * A pilot at cliffside received a cut (down to the knee cap) requiring 15 stitches while landing at the lower parking area LZ.
- * A pilot at Petterson's Butte broke an ankle and received a serious cut on the other one while trying to complete a 360 to stay in a thermal but ran out of room and flew into the hill
- * 3 pilots at Oceanside were blown back after launching in higher wind conditions.
- * A pilot at Oceanside launched without his leg straps buckled. He was not following his normal routine and did not do a preflight check. He landed right after launching and was not injured.

Please be careful out there. Try to curb your enthusiasm for flight and let your brain do its job. Observe, contemplate, and then fly or fly not. In Wayne's article this month, he asks the question, "Will it be fun?" Always ask yourself that question before flight. And above all, strive to do your best and to improve your skills.



Doug Paeth Soars Bainbridge Island!

photo by Jim Harmon

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Please contribute your stories and photos to the newsletter. Without your contributions, this newsletter can not exist.

The submission deadline for the next newsletter is May. 27th.

**Please Share your Stories
and PHOTOS!**

This month's photos submitted by:
Gail & Jim Baldo, Jim Harmon