

The Rainier Paragliding Club Newsletter

**Promoting Paragliding Fun, Safety,
and Education**

First Quarter 2009
www.rainierparaglidingclub.com



Photo by: Mike McIntyre. Can you guess who the pilot is? Let us know your guess for the next newsletter.

The Ambassadorial Paraglider Pilot

By Mike McIntyre

As one of the pilots in our RPC group who goes to other flying sites regularly, and sometimes in the company of some of our pilots who have done this for years, I often see the advantages and necessity of being ambassadors, not only to the general public, but also to the pilots who graciously extend their friendship and guidance to use their local sites. Equally often, I come across the effects of previous visits from members of our club or others, and there is a whole lot of difference depending on how well the previous visitors did or didn't practice good ambassadorship.

Now that I'm lucky enough to be down in southern California again, it's a subject that rises to the forefront of my thinking, so without claiming to be any of these things I'm about to promote, I believe it helps us all to be better ambassadors if from time to time we consciously think about it, discuss it, and practice it.

The first thing to consider is going as far out of your way as needed to get in actual touch with the local pilots to let them know you're there, request an orientation, and perhaps offer a ride up the hill. If the local pilots feel that you've listened to them and in so doing won't cause problems foolishly, then you've come most of the way to being a good ambassador within the paragliding community. Just today here in Santa Barbara, many of the local leaders and instructors are discussing a visitor from Canada who, while taking advantage of the local group for a ride up the hill, failed to listen....twice, and ended up in the bush for no good reason. He thereby delayed the launches of the last couple of pilots and used up a good hours worth of one of the friendliest instructors here to get his glider out of the Manzanita. This pilot who obviously isn't a good ambassador, besides getting himself banned from the hill (no more rides up), has put up one small doubt about any unknown Canadian pilot who comes here in the future. (Continued on page 2)

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The second thing is to be especially focused on staying within your ability level. All of us have a variety of skills in differing amounts etc., but the most important one is knowing our abilities and then flying within them. When in doubt, take the safer route. The USHPA rating system tries to help us with this assessment, and imperfect as it might be, it can provide some guidance to where and when you can fly safely. While listening to your local hosts, only you can make this decision, so it behooves us to make it well. One pilot's "too strong a wind," or "too constricted a launch or lz" is another pilot's "easy day." The main thing is to have listened and then fly within your own abilities. Besides good ambassadorship, it's healthier too.

very small contribution can go a long way.

A fourth thing is that when flying these other sites, the conversation most often comes politely around to asking about our own sites. It's in the nature of our sport that most of us travel to wherever the conditions are right on the day, and we are most all visitors at some point. So I reciprocate their hospitality by telling them about our own sites and inviting them to call me when in the area, and I'll take 'em up to fly the best we can. It seems only fair that in sharing their sites we should share ours too.

This is by no means a comprehensive list, but the last thing I would recommend is that a good ambassador overcomes any shyness or



Photo by Steve Messman. 180 degrees of The Alternator. Santa Barbara. CA

It seems obvious to me but can't be left out that we should always pay our own way. We can offer rides up in our own rigs, or pay some gas money when riding with somebody else. On the day, our pilots have also offered to support the site development. For instance, the group that went to Goat last year bought the Goat group a wind-sock and, when leaving, we were told that we and our friends were welcome any time. Another time at Wayne's additional suggestion we paid a nominal landing fee at Ellsinore to help offset the cost of a bulldozer, and were rewarded with a smile that said you boys are welcome here anytime. This is never forgotten, and even token participation can keep these "foreign" sites open to us and the entire community for years. So if you've had an epic flight and opportunity presents, a

reluctance to participate in general discussions (but keep it positive). I make a point of talking to lots of pilots everywhere I go, even though it's not my natural style. As a result I'm recognized and welcomed in lots of places, almost as though I've become a local myself. And when I get back to town I've got some numbers to call, so I don't have to start over.

The opening photo is of one of several of our most effective ambassadors just after launch at Skyport, Santa Barbara, with the channel islands in the background. His motto is "Fly high, fly safe".

The End.



Photo by Steve Messman. Riffe Lake at the Base of Dog Mountain near Morton, WA

Newsletter Changes and Needs!

By Chris King, Newsletter Editor

Hello everyone, and welcome to the new year. Welcome, also to a new year for the RPC Newsletter. It has been decided to publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis. However, if there is a need for other publication dates, somewhere in the middle, we will certainly do our best to meet those needs. I am interested in stories, experiences, fiction articles, photo essays and the like. Send them to me and I will surely find a place for them.

I'd like to thank Jim Baldo for the awesome job that he did on the newsletter up to this point. I hope to cause this one evolve so that it earns a place on the pedestal that he has set for us.

Winter Time Blues

Notes from all over

Isn't this great news?! After searching for other pilots in our area, and finding they've all flown the coop, we were forced to expand our interests in order to keep the club alive. If you are reading about it for the first time, we're sorry you missed the meeting this week. I think there are only 2 club officers, and maybe 3 other club members still in the northwest. Let's look at some specifics:

Wayne: Gone
Steve T: Gone
Steve M: Gone
Mike: Gone
Griz: Gone
Pete: Gone
Ken: Gone
Paul: way Gone

And it's not just that these guys are all gone. They leave and then report back about great experiences, camaraderie, meals, flights, yadayadayada. Well I'm fed up, I tell you. Fair weather fliers! If you aren't willing to hump your gear up Tiger, in the mud, only to freeze on launch for 2 hours, then hoof it back down, then we don't need you in our club. Post your logs somewhere else.

To the new members of the Rainier Paragliding, Knitting, and Book Club I say Welcome. We'll be scheduling some lovely lunches, maybe a lesson on knitting tea cozies out of old dyneema lines (Chris, I'll need your help on that.), and I look forward to a rousing discussion on this month's book, The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. Once every month or two we'll try to fly, but no pressure. If any of you old club members left spouses behind, please forward this message to them.

Send me an email if and when you all come back to your senses, and back to your homes in the Pacific Northwest. Meanwhile, we'll rustle up some new members who are willing to keep our club thriving. Mary thinks she can knit a really lightweight reserve bridle for me!

Valle de Bravo has been a blast. I got here Sunday in time to see all the pilots leave town for launch on the first day of the competition, then I found Pete and we hung around the LZ to see them all come in at the end of the race, it was really neat to see 110 competition

pilots landing in a fairly small LZ in about 30 mins. That evening a group of us went up to La Torre launch, which is just above the city, and had a nice 45 min soaring flight, landing as the sun was setting behind the mountains across the lake. Then we were off to taco alley for dinner, they make the best tacos

It was pretty good at Elsinore today, with 5 RPC pilots attending. Steve M. & I were 1st up the hill by about an hour, & we started on our own. 4 RPC's flew in the strong launch conditions, that even scared a few locals. We flew as long as we wanted, roughly 2 to 3 hours each & another flight wasn't needed.

Warm, sunny, clear blue sky. Coming in 6 to 8 cross right. Bob goes first and gets an extended sledder of 15 minutes. I'm next and get only a couple of minutes more, plus a touch and go.

The trip has been wonderful so far. 80 ish degrees. Not a cloud in the sky.....

Yesterday, we (Mike and I) flew near Santa Barbara at a place called The Alternator. For those that knew the site, it was a wonderful day. I did not, yet was able to keep up with a gaggle of other pilots that remained just under the top of the inversion, but could not break through it. Mike had about an hour. I had about an hour and a half or more in nice thermals that were pretty consistent in the places I looked.

Meanwhile Back at Home

By Chris King

We dealt with a spectacular fall, filled with unimaginable spectrum of beauty carved out

in little unexpected niches, valleys and hillsides.

We also have been treated to a winter that dumped a lot of snow on us. A thick carpet, a thick, white, cold comforter draped over all our landscape.



Photo by: Chris King



Photo by: Chris King



Photo by: Carol Messman. Shelton, WA Post Office



Photo by: Chris King



Photo by: Chris King

Clues to a web-site. Can you guess?



Comments about Wings

from the paragliding forum

Editor note: This is not a recommendation for Sky wings, just overall information and food for thought as you shop for lighter wings. Three of our pilots own Sky wings.

Weight is not a very good judge of build quality. Sky levels of finish on wings are excellent, the company has just ISO 9001 certified its manufacturing process, and one of the reasons for using lighter cloth is that it gives better handling and faster collapse recovery.

To see if a wing is well built, look at stitching detail and riser finish.

Wing weight can be light from cloth used or careful use of lighter internal construction, or so many other things.

Advance uses a lot of the 45gm cloth with the highest level of finish. Sky uses the lighter cloth, but also with high level of finish.

A member of this forum and of the SHGC is a serious abuser of Sky wings and even with no care of his wing what so ever he seems to get well over 450 hours from a wing.

Sky produces very well finished wings. You'd have to look to Advance (and that's the only firm I can think of) to get anything noticeably better.

Sky Antea, very nice. Sky factory, very nice, new and excellent working environment.

There are only three mistakes: Not living life for fear of things, Having no fear, Not knowing what to fear.

Fort Flagler Update

By Chris King, Newsletter Editor

Fort Flagler is going under some major renovations. The upper area buildings are getting new roofs and the campground area looks like water and sewer lines are going in. The beach areas are still accessible by foot for hiking and playing in the fields. According to the plan, this should all be completed in April.

As far as flying goes, the time is getting close--or so they keep telling us. Looks like early spring is the target. It appears that they are working to open Ebey's landing at the same time as Flagler. Should have more details soon.

Jim Harmon Update on Flagler:

The Rainier Paragliding Club has been working on this for over two years. We've worked with the State Parks' staff to identify launch and landing sites, we've written flight rules for the park, and on Oct. 17 we submitted our formal request to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. The park held a meeting for public comment on Oct. 29, 2008. Since then, it's been in the hands of state parks staff to submit their recommendation and supporting info. We've been told twice now to expect approval in the next 60-90 days. The Resource Stewardship Manager for the State Parks asks us to be patient. He is a

one-man show, and he is writing additional background needed to make his recommendation to the director as completely as possible. He has been great to work with so far, and says "I am still confident we will have you in the air by Spring of 2009." Stay tuned.

Chris's Leg Update

Hi Everyone. The leg is doing very well. Just feels like a sprain in recovery now. I can bear some light running weight. I've been able to do some kiting. Also been taking some stuff that has eliminated the joint pain. Things are really looking up! Should be flying sometime this summer!

Upcoming Events

Rainier Paragliding Club Reserve Repack
Saturday, February 28, 2009.

Another Repack is also scheduled by the NWPC. The following information was passed on to the club.

March 1: Annual NWPC/CBCC Parachute Deployment and Repack Party

When: Sunday March 1, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. If it looks like a flyable day, plan to come early to deploy, then go fly with a freshly-packed reserve.

Where: Magnolia Community Center, 2550 34th Ave. W., Seattle 98199 (same place as last year)

How much: \$40 if you're a NWPC/CBCC member, \$45 for non-members. Part goes to pay the packing assistants, part to pay for the facility (\$440), part to cover miscellaneous event-related expenses, and the rest will go to cover the costs of leasing and insuring our

sites. (If you're a biwingual or a tandem pilot with more than one parachute, you get to huck and pack the second one for \$20.) Everyone is welcome, club member or not, high-altitude soaring pilot or brand new student. Even if you have no reserve to deploy, you can learn a lot by watching and assisting with simulators and packing. See you there!



Pete Hardy Kiting at Torrey Pines

It's all Griz's Fault . . .

By Peter Hardy

It's all Dave Griswold's fault. He and Kim visited us in Arizona early in the spring of 2006. He pulled out a few hang glider magazines and said, "I think I'm going to learn to paraglide", so I said, "Okay, me too". That summer Dave earned his P2 at the Ranch in Eastern Washington while I worked my summer away driving boats in and around the San Juan Islands – I was in catch-up mode.

When winter arrived, Nancy and I went back Arizona and our RV. I was unable to arrange a satisfactory schedule with a local paraglide instructor so I turned to the internet where I learned that Torrey Pines, a world famous soaring site in La Jolla, California, offered instruction seven days a week. I signed up.

David Jebb, Torrey's Fight Director at the time, allowed us to park the RV in the Gliderport parking lot while I was taking instruction. Torrey is a Southern California coastal site north of San Diego. It is dependent on steady on-shore breezes for incredible soaring along the 350-foot high bluffs above famous Black's Beach, famous for a good surf break and as a nudist beach. We spent three weeks "camping" at the Gliderport and ridge soaring the bluffs as well as visiting several inland mountain sites. I happily departed Torrey as a P-2 pilot.

Fast forward a year to January - February, 2008. We were back in Southern California. While working during the summer months, I regularly received flight reports from Griz. I was back in catch-up mode so we returned to Torrey Pines, a P3 site, as a "continuing student". This time Nancy and I had arranged a two-month camp-host position at a California state beach campground several miles north of the Gliderport. While I continued my pilot training, Nancy had decided to take up surfing. We were busy.

January and February are not the best months for soaring or surfing in Southern California so there is a fair amount of "waiting" for both sports. Several days each week, I would get to Torrey (usually via bus) by noon or 1 PM. Often there was not enough wind for soaring, leaving a sled ride to the "naked" beach as one option. Those no-fly days offered a great opportunity to sit around the grassy site, drinking coffee from the on-site café, talking with instructors and other pilots, watching the weather, the sea, the clouds, the birds, looking for whales and dolphins on the water and watching the ripples for some indication that a breeze was inbound. I often took the bus home after a flightless day, happy none-the-less, for having spent the afternoon in such a great setting and with such interesting company.

However, when Torrey is "on", it was

fantastic. It is such an easy place to launch and land, probably much like flying Ft. Ebey on a good day (I have “waited” at Ebey but still look forward to actually flying there). Local pilots keep their work computers set to monitor the Torrey winds web site and as soon as it is “on”, they are on their way. It is not unusual to be boating around in the company of numerous paragliders, hang gliders, RC sailplanes and, occasionally, full size sailplanes.



David “Griz” Griswold flying at Torrey Pines.

Griz came to visit last February. One day while kiting in cross conditions the wind swung around to straight in. We both had a fantastic flight, shared with red tail hawks and a peregrine falcon, as we looked down on the players at the Torrey Pines Golf Course. It was really the first time we had the opportunity to fly and soar together – it was great. The beer tasted especially good that night. Later that week we were flying again, this time at Marshall in San Bernardino with Wayne Maxwell.

Yes, hanging out at Torrey Pines is on the schedule for 2009. We are back in California. After spending a couple of days with Wayne and Barb at Marshall, capped by a wonderful day of flying on New Years Eve, we returned to our state park volunteer gig, north of La Jolla. Griz (and Kim) will be joining us later in January. It is only fair, after all, it’s his fault.

Closing Thoughts:

The clouds may dim my view
The rain may dampen my dreams
The sky may not remain a sapphire blue
The winds may ravage the scene

But patience will remain
Better days are bound to come
A warm sip of coffee
a sometimes twiddle of my thumbs

For now my axe is splitting wood
and I’m caring for things less fun
Spring and summer will soon be here
Then off to the hills that I call home

Aboard B747:

The pilot: "ladies and gentleman, we are on a landing approach to ... oohhhh noo... shhhhoott... My apology, ladies and gentleman, I just spilled a cup of coffee in my lap. You should see the front of my pants..."

A voice from the economy class: "And you should see the back of mine!"

2009 Club Officers

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