

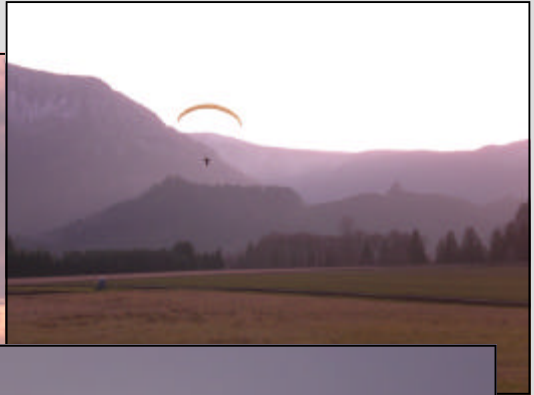
The Rainier Paragliding Club Newsletter

Serving the Paragliding Community of Western Washington, USA

WWW.RainierParaglidingClub.org

November 2007

Steve Messman and Kim Smith enjoy their first flights from the new East Dog launch. Sunny Jim flew his HG earlier, when the wind was stronger, and was waiting for us in the LZ with his camera. Photo's were taken by Sunny Jim.



Inside this Issue

The Wild Ride of Captain McFly	Bruce Burris	Page 2
Back to Basics	Chris King	Page 4
The View From My Window	Jim Baldo	Page 5
The RPC Social Scene	Steve Messman	Page 7
Calendar		Page 8
Membership Application		Page 8

The Thermal Column

The Short Ride of Wild Captain McFly

Since I had business in the Bellingham area, I thought I just might get lucky with the conditions and take a hop off Mt. Blanchard. With my wife to chauffeur, I looked over the LZ and then proceeded to the launch. At the top, the winds were 8-15 and I saw one gust that registered 27. I decided against anything more than checking out the fantastic view. We planned a 2 night stay in the area, so I thought I might still be able to fly the site another day.



The next day was overcast, but looked good enough to check the site out again. This time I took along my friend, Rich, who is a retired postal worker. I showed him the LZ and again proceeded to the launch. It had been sprinkling earlier, but was calm and dry at the time. I decided to launch for a "sledder" and proceeded to set up. I checked harness and reserve as I pulled them out of the truck, and all looked normal. I laid out the wing and checked the risers and brake lines, and again, everything looked normal. I hooked in, and proceeded with my pre-flight check-list. I learned the R-1-2-3-4-R-S-T checklist at the "Ranch" in Cashmere run by Doug Stroop and Denise Reed. For those who might not use this check-list, the first R is for reserve chute checked, 1 is for the helmet strap checked secure, 2 is to insure the wing risers are

attached to the harness carabineers, 3 is to insure the harness leg and chest straps (normally 3) are secure, 4 is to insure the risers are in the right orientation with "A's" up and brakes down, the second R is for radio checked, the S is for the stirrup checked and between legs, and the T is for the "turn" checking the risers are crossed properly for your direction of turn if doing a reverse launch.

I had decided to make a forward launch due to light to no wind conditions, and I got into position ready to launch. I went through the checklist and everything appeared normal to this point. When I got to the S point in the checklist, I looked down at my stirrup and it looked normal to me. I had decided to leave the stirrup behind both legs as I felt it might make the no-wind forward launch easier. I wish I could say at this point that this was my first mistake, but I don't think it was.

The launch went exactly as I wanted, and I was airborne with very little effort. I looked overhead, and the canopy was perfectly formed and filled out. This was to be the "Lucky # 7" flight for my new Ozone Buzz Z. And now for a nice sled ride.

At this point in the story, I will tell you that this flight was very short... I estimate approximately 20 to 30 seconds. And the launch went so well!

The problem occurred as I went to get my feet on the stirrup bar. I reached down with my left hand to assist in getting my left foot on the bar. Once I had the left foot on, I stepped down with the right foot, and the stirrup went way beyond

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

where it normally stopped... usually right next to my left foot. At about this same time, I had a nagging feeling, but I couldn't quite digest why. I think I might have barely noticed a bump or something, but I was more concerned at the time about the stirrup bar. About this time, I discerned a slight flapping noise behind me and I'm sure I thought at the time that "this can't be a good thing"! About that time, the wing overhead started a gentle surge forward and I knew what had happened. I was beginning a "Ride on the Reserve".

My friend, Rich, had observed the launch, and said the reserve dropped down below the harness approximately 15 feet before starting to fill. It was a very gentle, if somewhat swift, descent to the trees. I would estimate that approximately 5 - 10 seconds elapsed between the time I realized the reserve was deployed and I came to rest about 20 - 25 feet in the air between two fir trees. The glider was in the taller, down-hill fir, and the reserve was in the shorter, uphill fir. I was closer to the shorter, uphill tree, and could reach a large branch. I pulled myself toward that tree along that branch until I could hug the tree and I then released the glider from the harness. I then climbed the tree and dislodged the reserve and harness and let them fall to the ground. I climbed down that tree and then climbed the larger tree to get to the glider (I actually climbed both trees twice because of snags). At about 60 feet or so I decided I couldn't get any higher due to a fat belly and branches too far apart to allow my short little legs access. If I had had a saw

with me, I could have cut the top out of the tree, and had both chutes out the same day. It was almost 2:30 PM and it would be dark in not too long. I would have to return for the glider another day.

While hanging around in the trees, I communicated to Rich that I was OK, and to meet me at the bottom of the hill. The hillside was very steep, and I decided that since I was now very tired, it would be easier to head downhill than up. Another mistake. I spent the next hour + slipping and sliding and yes, falling down the hill. When I got to the bottom, I was wet, muddy, and even more tired. Rich thought this paragliding looked like fun!

The next morning Rich and I went to the hardware store and bought two saws. One was a 2' bow saw, and the other was a pruning saw with a 14" folding blade. In tree country, I will be carrying this in my harness on future flights. We arrived at the launch at 11 AM, and started down the hill. Soon we spotted the glider and arrived and started work. After we had the glider rolled up and in the backpack, we started up the hill. We arrived at the launch about 20 minutes later, for a total of 1 hour and 20 minutes from truck to truck. I could have saved myself a miserable hike the previous day by climbing back up to the launch.

I believe I've gained a lot of experience from this flight, short as it was! Cause of deployment? I believe the stirrup strap got tangled with the reserve chute handle, and when moved, the reserve deployed! I'm not positive of this, but can think of no other explanation.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

I can think of a few mistakes and errors on my part leading up to this incident. When I swung on the harness, I might have snagged the stirrup bar at that point. I don't know because I never checked the reserve handle after that point. I will in the future. Additionally, I plan on only launching with the stirrup between my legs from now on, regardless of the type of launch. During my training I was reminded often to not be in a hurry to get back into the harness. While I don't believe I was hasty on this launch, I will really take my time getting back into the harness on future flights. I might even consider the terrain I'm over prior to stepping on the stirrup. Then again, complacency has a tendency to return.

One thing I've learned in 45 years of aviation... you must learn from others mistakes, as you will not survive making them all yourself! I certainly hope to make fewer mistakes in the future.

Equipment:

Glider	Ozone Buzz Z - DHV 1-2
Harness	Woody Valley Peak II
Reserve	metamorfoosi Conar PG20

Back to Basics

Pre-Flight Inspection

Recent board discussion concerning unhooked leg straps just sends icy spears of cold running down my spine. A hollow pit feeling deep in my stomach is quickly re-



4

placed by thoughts of relief that I was not the one who had this happen to me. I was not the one who discovered my leg straps unhooked after I had launched and was left dangling several hundred feet above the ground. I could not imagine, and choose to chase away the horror that attempts to form imagery as my mind wonders, "what if this happened to me." The only peace I can think of to remedy this is to constantly remind myself to do a pre-flight inspection. Just getting back to basic safety practices.

So back to class.

"R is for reserve, Look at it and see the handle, Is it hooked in, snagged or dangling freely" Doug grinned and held back his comments behind the last remark. "Reserve is the first R. Know where it is and that it is hooked up correctly and operational before each flight. R,1,2,3,4,R stirrup."

"Count, Reserve, one, two, three, four, radio check, stirrup! Don't ever forget this! Don't ever not do this. If I ever see you not do this I will rip the wing and harness right off of your backs and you can sit out for the day. I want to see you do this pre-flight every time you set up your wing to launch. Every time you set up. Even if you have to pull your wing out of the way for someone else to launch and you have to re-set it up. Every time you lay this wing out you do a pre-flight. This is for flying and kiting practice as well. Every time! No exception! Is that clear?" Doug was serious and pounded this into us really hard."

"One, is the chin strap of your hel-

(Continued on page 6)

The View from My Window

It's hard to believe that the summer is already gone and we're just a month away from a brand new year. It seems like just yesterday I was anxiously looking forward to the springtime and summer flying adventures. Now, fall is firmly entrenched and winter is only a step away.



Looking back at the previous year and for that fact, all my paragliding experiences, I can't help notice the similarities between paragliding and life in general. They are both fraught with challenges, opportunities, pitfalls, decisions, and concessions. In both endeavours, one can easily be blinded by the now and diverted from the then.

Most obvious in paragliding is object fixation. This issue is most evident when we land, especially as we are first learning and coming to grips with this new experience and skill. After many experiences, the mind is more free to observe and analyze the most relevant inputs it's receiving and put those inputs to good use. But those early experiences are necessary to create habits - hopefully good ones. The more conscious effort we expend understanding the complexities of landing at this early stage, the better we'll be prepared to handle the many unknowns that we will encounter later in our flying/landing careers.

During flight, there are many obstacles - most unseen. Again, as we gain experience, we are better equipped to anticipate many of these and are more pre-

pared to handle them. This leads to more relaxation in flight, freeing the mind to gather more information and understanding, which can lead to better decision making.

Life is not so different but much more complex. We are faced with challenges and unknowns at all steps. The human mind does a spectacular job of storing and remembering these challenges, our reactions to them, and the resultant outcomes. Depending on our personal interpretation of the joy or pain of those outcomes, our subconscious molds us into the people and personalities we become - just fascinating. As with object fixation, experience coupled with understanding is the key to altering the outcome to provide more joy and less pain. Without understanding, there is no easy way to gain control of the situation and achieve the outcome (joy) we desire.

The coming year may hold many challenges in life and paragliding. We need to face those challenges head on and strive to understand their whys and wherefores. Understanding is a valuable key without which we will be put in the passenger seat of life and won't be able to drive the outcomes to maximize our joy and minimize our pain.

During the previous year I've tried to write this 'view from my window' article to present some of my paragliding experiences from a non flight report perspective. It is my sincere hope that I have succeeded in this endeavor and have been able to stimulate thought by the reader. This article marks the last of this series. In the coming years, I hope all

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

club members take the time and initiative to share the views from their window by contributions to this newsletter.

jimyb

(Continued from page 4)

met. One strap, one helmet. Are you wearing one and is it strapped on good?"

"Two, is for the carabineers. You have two of them. Two. Are they hooked in or is the strap caught in the fastener? Do the risers look right or are they twisted? Are they set into the harness straps properly? Give them a hard tug. Does it look right? Are the lines looking funny or twisted? Make a clear conscious check. Think it out, don't just "look" at it."

"Three is for your leg straps and belly strap One, two, three, straps in this part of the check. Two on your legs and one across your belly. Look at them, adjust them, give them a hard tug. Are they locked in? Twisted? Frayed or torn from your last flight? Better to know now than when you are in the air. Again a deliberate conscious search! Remember, don't just look at it."

"Four, is four corners on your wing. Are all the lines clear? Inflate your wing and form a wall. On light wind days back up a few step to inflate and clear your lines. Check for knots, tangles, debris? Are all the lines in their place or are they over the wing fabric? Are the risers twisted? Pick up each section of lines. A's, B's, C's and D lines. Be sure they are all free and not crossing over the other

lines. If they are they can cut through each other during launch. Next, get your layout into a nice horseshoe and check your turn so that you are not twisting your risers when you turn during launch. Are your lines being pinned down by a stick, rock or root or tuft of grass protruding from the ground?"

"The second R is for Radio. Do a radio check. Squawk that thing. Make sure you always have one and that it is broadcasting properly to someone else. A radio can only help you if the others can successfully hear you."

"Stirrup. Make sure your leg is through that thing. Not as important for life or death but it keeps your hands off the lines when your getting seated in your harness after launch. Lets get started and learn to fly!"

Do you remember your instructors voice regarding a pre flight? If you run a pre-flight inspection every time it will not matter if you unhook your leg straps to walk up the hill.

I hope I never take it for granted and that we remember to never be in such a hurry to get off the ground that we overlook this very important step of saving our own lives. Let's be sure the news of an unhooked pilot isn't about one of us.

Happy flying!

THE RPC SOCIAL SCENE

by Steve Messman

Last month, I began this article by saying that it was raining. Well, it still is; however, in the next day or so the winds are supposed to be good for some sites, anyway, and it is supposed to stop raining!! Yeehaaw! Maybe, the flying gods be with us, someone will get to fly in the coming week or two.



I have been all over the internet, trying to find some calendar with some flying organization with something going on. Guess what! There are none. Nothing is going on for as far into the future as I care to look, like April or May of next year. So now what? We make our own fun!

Saddle Soar was a bust, but then it's that time of year. Let's just get in the trucks and go someday when the sun is out and the winds are north.

The RPC Winter Feast, or December Bash, or Winter Fest, or whatever you want to call it: This takes place on December 1st. Doug is heading up the location. We plan on meeting at 4:00, with food and eating at 5:00. There will be a lot more to follow on this one. It is a potluck, so start your plans now. I have begun the list. It is out there as we speak on the normal Google list.

Parachute Repack: Still thinking about this one? This one is not scheduled yet, but we need to think about it. Last year, I got our school gym to do this. It was nice because it was so large. However this year, I am not teaching so I am not

sure about getting the gym. Other possibilities? Time to schedule? Seems like we usually do this about Feb or March.

Ebey Camping Trip: Usually we do this during Spring Break so the kids and families can go along. It is obviously not scheduled yet, but if we do it as normal, we will do it in April. I would suggest, in fact, that we do it this year a little earlier. That would be the 28-30 March. For me, that is the weekend that opens up Carol's spring break. A second option would be the weekend that closes that spring break, 4-6 April. A third option would be to go around some other school's spring break, but I don't know when those are. Think about it. You who have school schedules might even begin posting your spring breaks so we can discuss the timing of this very fun and very annual event.

RPC Chelan Outing: This is certainly not scheduled, and never has been. It has been suggested, though, that we try to put one together. Anyone got any ideas? Anyone have any contacts? I love flying at Chelan. It's always fun. But, I personally don't know that much about it. How about if I just throw this out. How about a trip in early June? That should be a month or so before the weather and the heat gets too drastic.

As always, if anyone has any other ideas, comments, suggestions, criticisms, you know how to reach me. I, and I am sure the rest of the club, would welcome anything constructive.

Application to join the Rainier Paragliding Club

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email: _____

USHPA #: _____ Rating: _____ Exp. Date _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____

By signing this you acknowledge that you have read, understand and will abide by the clubs by-laws. (By-laws are available on the club web site at www.rainierparaglidingclub.org) (Applications to join will be returned if not signed) Annual dues are payable in July each year and are for a one year period from July 1 to June 30 of the next year.

\$24 for individuals \$36 for families living at the same address

Send completed application and payment to the club Treasurer:

Kathy Smith

P.O. Box 13

Cinebar, WA 98533

Payment method:

_____ Check (payable to Rainier Paragliding Club)

_____ Cash (Please do not mail cash)

Amount paid: \$ _____

2008 Club Officers

President Kim Smith

Vice President Mike McIntyre

Secretary Kathy Smith

Treasurer Kathy Smith

Director Steve Messman

Director Doug Etter

Newsletter Jim Baldo

Calendar 2007

Dec 1st *Year End Awards Banquet

Dec 25th Christmas Day

(* denotes RPC sponsored activity)