

Towlines

The Newsletter of the Albuquerque Soaring Club

April 2010

President's Notes

By Bob Hudson

Well our annual Safety Day has come and gone and by the feed back that has reached me, it was well received. For those that attended, I trust you learned some valuable info, and for those who “blew it off” you missed out on some good stuff. After the normal introductions and announcements, Diana Roberts touched on some Operations issues that included launch area procedures as well as how to properly fill out an Ops sheet.

Next, Bob Wright talked about tow procedures followed by Stan Roeske reminding us about the dangers of dehydration and how to properly shield you from its effects. Following this, JD Huss talked about the FAA Safety programs and then taught us the right way to perform a ramp check. (JD brought several handout items that complimented his presentation.) After JD, I gave a ten year history of recent glider fatal accidents. The meeting closed with Robert Mudd teaching us the proper way to check/validate our altimeters with the field elevation versus the actual AWOS reading.

After the meeting we split up into two groups. One group, of over thirteen individuals, received initial and recurring parachute training from Larry Richardson. The second group took part in a “class” dealing with taking apart the Grob and placing it in its new trailer. We then put it back together again (reassembled it).

The folks who took the parachutes training have indicated that they want to do it again later in the year, so watch for announcements. The folks who took part in the Grob work all commented on how really nice the new trailer is and how it will greatly enhance our cross country training options.

Now, about a little housekeeping. It has come to my attention that the operations area has become our local trash dump. One item in particular that should never be left in the grass near our site...the catheter sheath. Now I know it is convenient to remove the sheath upon landing and just toss it in the weeds, but this leads to an unsanitary and visibly displeasing environment. So what do you do with your mini waste-disposal raincoat? When you apply the sheath, place the wrapper in your pocket and when the flight is over put the used sheath back into the wrapper and then toss it properly in the trash (or the bed of Mocho's truck). Let's do this in consideration for our female members and guests that frequent our operations. If you fail to comply I have been told that the end result is a two word procedure...Lorena Bobbitt.

Additionally, I received this e-mail from Club Member, Markus Graeber...enjoy.

“I have been busy getting the Grob 103 Twin II and Grob 102 Club Astir IIIb I got in Germany for my club here in Bogota into the air and I finally managed to set up a national soaring organization for Colombia to get us properly onto the FAI map and into international

competitions. I hope to find some time over the next few weeks for an article or some info for Towlines, we are also finalizing bringing over a couple of instructors from Argentina to train up a couple of professional instructors for our club's school and to offer some advanced XC training for our members. The winch is still working beautifully and has done well over 1000 launches, the test flights we just did with the new Grobs were the first aerotows we have done in more than 2 years ;-). Anyway, I hope everything is well, greetings for everyone and all the best from Bogota, Colombia.”

Here is a calendar of events for upcoming Club activities, please put them on your personal calendar:

31 MAY-CLUB BAR-B-QUE

11-13 JUNE-TAOS FLY-IN

19 JUNE-PANCAKE BREAKFAST

3 JULY-CLUB BAR-B-QUE

17 JULY-ISOTOPE BASEBALL

14 AUGUST-PANCAKE BREAKFAST

6 SEPTEMBER-PANCAKE BREAKFAST

25 SEPTEMBER-OKTOBERFEST

23 OCTOBER-OLC CELEBRATION

13 NOVEMBER -PANCAKE BREAKFAST

11 DECEMBER-ANNUAL MEETING; LOOKING FORWARD

1 JANUARY-PANCAKE BREAKFAST

5 FEBRUARY-OLC CONFERENCE AND ASC GALA

Lastly, after a dismal start in the OLC our cadre of intrepid aviators are slowly nipping at the heels of those above us. We all need to contribute, so go forth and fly, but fly safely. Your Prez

Breaking the Chain

By W.G. Hill

Let me say at this point the intent of this article is not to find fault with anyone but to point out what went wrong and what could have been done to prevent the incident.

No one else was flying cross country that day so I kept my radio on the Moriarty MULTICOM frequency. At the time of the incident I was about thirty-five miles to the north and then it happened. Over the airwaves came the broadcast, “I can’t release,” this is a bit chilling to say the least. Not too hard to guess that the incident was taking place at Moriarty.

An incident or worse yet and accident occurs because a chain of events is created which, if not recognized as such will not be broken thus averting the incident/accident.

Sounds simple and in fact it really is. The complexity of the situation is that in order to break the chain certain things are required; sound judgment, experience and perhaps a modicum of common sense in recognizing the potential for an incident/accident.

Sometimes the links in the chain are easy to recognize because we, as pilots, have developed or been taught good habits from the beginning. When that is the case, an incident/accident is averted.

Back to the incident at hand. What could cause a failure to release?

The European Tost mechanism is not prone to fail in this manner. The Schweizer release finger on the other hand is certainly subject to jamming if the wrong weak link is used. Such was the case during the course of this incident. Well how could such a thing happen?

In the immortal words of Pogo, “we have found the enemy and he is us.” We are all collectively responsible for the welfare of our fellow club members when we are performing OPS duty or for that matter in the general OPS area observing the club operations and Sundance as well. If we see something that looks amiss we have a fiduciary responsibility to step in and correct the situation or bring it to the attention of the individuals running the show.

When performing hook up duties, we must make sure the proper weak link is installed at the glider end of the tow rope. For this reason, it’s a good idea to carry a pair of pliers around in one’s pocket when acting as the rope-hooker-upper.

Once the weak link is attached, it should be held up in full view of the pilot being towed until such time as he or she gives a nod of approval regarding the correct linkage and overall condition.

If you as the rope-hooker-upper are unsure of the structural condition of the weak link, that is to say it looks too weak, you should consider replacing it or as a minimum make sure the pilot about to be towed is aware of its condition.

By now you are getting the picture as to what happened. Correct glider, wrong weak link or perhaps correct weak link, wrong glider. Either way the Tost ring jammed in the Schweizer release mechanism.

This begs the next question and the final point at which the “Chain of Events” can be broken. Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the correct weak link is attached to the tow rope. All together class.....The Pilot-in Command!

The irony of this incident is that the PIC in this case is the same one who hooked my Discus up about an hour earlier. He is also the same guy who made a point of showing me the weak link thus ensuring I knew what my Discus was attached to.

This was the last opportunity to break a link in the chain of events. The PIC should have insisted on viewing the weak link before allowing it to be hooked up. Again, I’m not finding fault with what happened, but merely pointing out what at this point should be obvious (all-in-all this is an excellent lesson for all of us and its cost was virtually nothing because all ended well.)

Once the tow pilot was aware of the problem he towed the 2-33 back over the airport and released the tow plane end of the rope. Lacking tension, the rope also released from the glider end as well.

A lesson here is that if you are unable to release under tension as we are all trained to do, then put some slack in the tow rope while pulling the release knob and see if that does the job.

As it turned out Mitch Hudson put his former sergeant skills to work, organized a FOD walk (very similar to a perp walk only with more people), and found not only the dropped rope but one previously lost a few years ago.

The point of this screed is to remind all of us at the ultimate responsibility for a safe flight is with the Pilot-in-Command, but as club members we need to maintain a situational awareness for potential problems.

So, borrow a page from Ronald Regan's play book; "Trust but Verify."

Seen at Safety Down Day



The crowd gathers – with Mr Hill in his customary front-row seat



Bill Lemon presents the club with a conflict resolution kit. The new launch rules will likely make it a necessary part of duty officers' equipment

ASC Operations Schedule

Date	OPS 1	OPS 2	Instructor	Tow Pilot
May 8 Saturday	HARMONY D	McKNIGHT P	COLLINS A	Bryan T/
May 9 Sunday	BROTHERS L	MARTINEZ J		BUSS P/
May 15 Saturday	EKDAHL C	CUMIFORD Jr. J	ROESKE S	HAWKINS T/
May 16 Sunday	HUDSON R	STOLL F		HILL W/
May 22 Saturday	PHILLIPS C	Pierce K	DAFFER J	STOGNER M/
May 23 Sunday	BANKS H	BIELEK K		TICHY T/
May 29 Saturday	STEWART W	Szadkowski W	MORRISON B	WADSWORTH H/
May 30 Sunday	RESOR B	BOYCE J		WRIGHT R/
Jun 5 Saturday	Waldron D	BLOCH J		Bryan T/
Jun 6 Sunday	Roberts D	Talarczyk R	TAYLOR K	BUSS P/
Jun 12 Saturday	HUSS J	OKANDAN M	DAFFER J	HAWKINS T/
Jun 13 Sunday	HAWKINS Mk	KOENIG C		HILL W/
Jun 19 Saturday	BROTHERS L	REED R	WIER J	STOGNER M/
Jun 20 Sunday	BUENAFE C	Sapp J		TICHY T/
Jun 26 Saturday	PHILLIPS C	Roten C	MORRISON B	/
Jun 27 Sunday	CUMIFORD Jr. J	KAWAL D		/
Jul 3 Saturday	HARMONY D	MARTINEZ J	ROESKE S	/
Jul 4 Sunday	HUDSON R	Pierce K		/
Jul 10 Saturday	BIELEK K	STOLL F		/
Jul 11 Sunday	BANKS H	HAWKINS M		/