

SKYLINES



Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for January, 2024

RESPECT THE RUDDER

Bill Burner

Many of you have probably heard this old tow pilot's "There I was" crazy story... but there is a message in it for all glider drivers, if you care to hear me out.

I was flying a 2-33 out of Moriarity at the Albuquerque Soaring Club about 50 years ago. I had a girlfriend in the front seat and her sister in the back seat of a Super Cub tow plane. Incidentally, the tow plane was being flown by a retired Air Force test pilot - a good stick! We were at about 1,500 feet AGL, established on a straight ground track. I was remarking to my girlfriend how cool it was to see another airplane in flight, so close. And I got to thinking how nice it would be if her sister could share that pleasantry, by looking back at us. But we had just got a new tow plane, a 180 hp Super Cub, which did not have a glass roof (like the last one), and so the only way

she would be able to see us would be out a side window. So I started feeding in a lot of right rudder and right aileron - more and more, getting further and further out of position to the right. The tow pilot just motored on, holding course. We had no radio. I got to max aileron and max rudder and was really straining on the 2-33 controls, but I just could not quite get far enough out to see her in the Super Cub's side window.

Suddenly the Super Cub twitched and then did what looked like a quarter snap roll to the left. Its wings went well past the vertical and then it rolled back, stable in level flight. But that little maneuver had cost it altitude and airspeed. There we were, basically wing tip to wing tip, but him about 50 feet below me and well off to the left side. The tow rope was making a long arc, downward and back from the 2-33 nose and then forward to the tail to the tow plane. I did not release because there was no chance of the rope fouling and we were both at control speed and stable. I held the nose of the 2-33 up until most of

the slack was out, then dived down to decrease the shock when the rope went tight. We had a good flight. When we landed the tow pilot had left and I never saw him again.

The point being... well a couple of points. First, I am a Dumb A—, but a lucky one. Second, the rudder is an airfoil just like the ailerons and elevators. It can be stalled, just as they can. And when that happens violence ensues with the pilot being temporarily out of control. Most of us will probably never experience a rudder stall. I managed to make it happen by being in pretty much the worst case scenario - a big, heavy, old glider being towed by a small, light weight tow plane - it was not a fair fight.

Something to think about: There is more than one way we glider pilots can kill a tow pilot. In my about 3,500 tows I never once had to release a glider because it was kiting. (A tribute to all the glider pilots I have towed - Thank You!) But there have been a few times when I made a turn and the glider got out of position, too wide behind me in the turn - like a water skier getting on the outside of a turn in order to build up speed. Sitting in the tow plane I could feel my tail being pulled to the outside, but that only made the situation worse, a positive feedback, convergent forces situation. You can feel the turn tightening up, even though you are not feeding in more rudder. And feeding in opposite rudder does not work - you have lost control in the lateral axis. The few times when I have been in that situation, the glider pilot saved my bacon by leveling out. I have seen this happen on the departure turn, when there is not enough altitude for the tow plane to recover. And I do not know how well the tow release mechanism works when under a real heavy side load.

Moral of the story: Respect the tow plane's rudder.



SKYLINE 32 YEARS AGO!

Skyline Soaring Club is now operating with the Pawnee and the ASK-21. After working out a few small details, we had our first flight on Saturday, November 23rd 1991.

It was a beautiful day for flying, and I suspect there might be a few more days like that ahead of us yet. Members wanting to fly should contact Leo Meacher at 703-364-2799. Leo is working up a towpilot and instructor schedule.

Current fees are as follows:

1) Flight less than 1/2 hour: \$25 dollar flat fee (\$16 tow, \$9 glider).

2) Flight longer than 1/2 hour: \$30/hour + \$16 dollar tow fee

Time to be computed by the minute from take-off.

3) Just a tow:

\$16 dollars to 3000 feet.



ANOTHER BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Curmudgeon

Most members are aware of the fact that our beloved club sprang from the ashes of a commercial soaring operation, the Warrenton Soaring Center, in 1991. Our club operates very differently from WSC, and in most ways VERY much better. But there is one aspect that The Curmudgeon misses - - the post-flying camaraderie! Every Saturday the gang would gather to grill dinner, drink, and generally brag about what great pilots we were. In fact, often



folks would drive to the field late afternoon just to participate in the socialization!!

Oh, and who knew that our very own towpilot and CFI, Shane Neitzey, was an airline pilot? Shown here with his lifetime co-pilot, Valerie.



Ah, those were the days, my friends!!

achievement by awarding you with an SSA "A" badge? Did you have an extended flight (45 minutes or more from a 3k tow)? Did you earn an SSA "B" badge? If not, then contact your instructor and tell them you want to be recognized for your achievements.

MUSINGS

Ralph Vawter

Cross Country Camp - In the December issue of Soaring Magazine, the Chair's Thoughts on page three talks about the SSA setting up a program for Cross Country camps. Look at that article and let's make some noise about doing that at Skyline.

Badges – Did you have your first solo flight in 2023? Did your instructor reward your



Skyline Soaring Club, Inc.

is a private, 501(c7) non-profit organization, dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of the sport of soaring. SSC is based at the Front Royal-Warren County, Va. Airport and is an affiliate club of the Soaring Society of America. For information about the club go to www.skylinesoaring.org

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