

# *Towline Times*

## *Tampa Bay Soaring Society Newsletter*

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*August 2007*

### **A Cause for Celebration... Ten Years at Z-hills !**

*by Jim Watts*

In spring of 1997, the general membership and board of directors of the club were experiencing some difficulties at our then base of operation, South Lakeland Airpark. It was felt that the airpark residents only begrudgingly tolerated us, and several mechanics mentioned that the amount of sand kicked up by the towplane upon taking off from the grass strip was eventually going to damage the club's aircraft.

After surveying all local options, the board approached the Zephyrhills Airport Authority about leasing some property adjoining runway 18-36. The board conducted several meetings in April and May with the airport manager, City Planning Committee, and eventually the City Council. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1997, the City Council approved a twenty year lease with the club. In a newsletter article at the time, Club President Don Thomasson mentioned "They did not hand us over the keys to Disneyland, but have given us a great place to make this club into what a lot of us have wanted. There is much work to be done, and as a club we are going to have to come together and get the area cleaned up and the clubhouse in shape to be ready to go August 1<sup>st</sup>."

And apparently there was a lot of effort involved -- not just in moving the aircraft, but in making the area presentable. At the time, there were only dirt driveways leading to the site, and the property had been left vacant for some time. On Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1997, there was a general membership meeting and work day at the new location. In a newsletter article in the August issue, Don Kursinsky wrote "It was much more of a work day than meeting. As asked, they showed up with mowers, weed whackers, buckets and brushes, and completely transformed the area. Also, a special thank you to Art Taylor and Walt Pleasants who have done so much at the site on non-flying days."

Those of you who were members in the mid-1990's must remember the club's assets were limited to the airplanes and that was it ! I personally remember having to bring a folding chair to the club with me when I went out -- we didn't even have chairs to sit on -- much less the amenities we now enjoy. In the September newsletter, Don Kursinsky wrote: "The move is pretty much complete. On Sunday, August 17, Art "Slavedriver" Taylor broke out shovels and put almost everyone to work. If you thought Frank Marsalek could only fly and fix airplanes, you should see him with a shovel -- he is good! That afternoon saw three parking pads put in place. Art drove to South Lakeland, dug up the pads, and transported them to Zephyrhills."

Don Kursinsky was on vacation for the October newsletter, and Walt Pleasants filled in by writing: "We know that the portable toilet located next to the shed is a temporary measure. Walt Pleasants repaired the floor, Art Taylor performed a complete sanitization and Don Kursinsky has kept the unit clean and vermin free. This past Wednesday, Art performed another complete scrub down to make it nice for our members."

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At year's end, Club President Don Thomasson wrote summarizing the club's accomplishments. "Last year when I reported to you at the end of the year there were goals we wanted to accomplish. But what has transpired since then has far exceeded anything we had planned to do. In the span of this year I feel we as a club have moved to a new level, and are on the verge of becoming a club that will be the best in the state, and our membership will continue to grow. We owe a lot to a very few. From finding about Z-hills, to going to all the meetings, making the move, getting the area in order, to painting the aircraft, and getting the system to run as well as it is now, thank you all!"

Actually, it wasn't until February 1999 that the newsletter again mentioned rest room facilities: "Other Projects: The bathroom is plumbed, walls are up (thanks to Art & Walt and a 12-hour day) doors hung and the drywall is ready for paint, or whatever."

As for myself, I believe I can speak for all the old time club members upon looking back at 1997 and the years that followed and know the move to ZPH was truly a transformational event for the club. The operational environment is light years ahead of what came before – believe me. We are more professional, safer, and profitable now than ever, and with another ten years to go on the lease... only good things will come our way.

See you at cloud base (minus 500 feet!)

### **Octoberfest 2007 at Chilhowee**

The real Octoberfest is at CHILHOWEE on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, October 5, 6 and 7. If you would like to attend and fly the club's sailplane(s) you will be expected to help with disassembly, assembly, disassembly and assembly of the sailplane(s). You will also be expected to share the expense of transportation to and from Chilhowee.

If you are interested in attending Octoberfest 2007 please email or speak to Bruce Patton or Bud Vacey ASAP.



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### *July Tow-Pilot & Line-Chief Schedules*

*by George McKenna & John Ellis*

| <b>Day</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Tow-Pilot</b> | <b>Line-Chief</b> |
|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Wed.       | 1           | Bill Brewis      |                   |
| Sat.       | 4           | Don Thomasson    | Carl Buehler      |
| Sun.       | 5           | Bruce Patton     | Dan Loveday       |
| Wed.       | 8           | Don Thomasson    |                   |
| Sat.       | 11          | George McKenna   | Joe Burley        |
| Sun.       | 12          | George McKenna   | Michael Major     |
| Wed.       | 15          | Don Thomasson    |                   |
| Sat.       | 18          | Don Thomasson    | Roger Francis     |
| Sun.       | 19          | Bill Brewis      | Al Pernel         |
| Wed.       | 22          | Bill Brewis      |                   |
| Sat.       | 25          | Don Thomasson    | Matt Dion         |
| Sun.       | 26          | Bruce Patton     | Lee Ellis         |
| Wed.       | 29          | Don Thomasson    |                   |

### **May 19, 2007, TBSS Draft BOD Meeting Minutes** **May 19, 2007**

1. Feb. 18, 2007 BOD meeting minutes approved as submitted.
2. Chief Tow Pilot Report – approximately 300 hours of use per year on the Pawnee, with 1600+ hours on the engine to date. A Total engine overhaul will be required at

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- the 2000 the hour mark. There are currently only five tow pilots in the summer months, making Sunday towing difficult.
3. Fire Marshall Report – need no smoking signs; approved spray booth, if painting inside the building; fire suppression system for the stove in the kitchen area; flammable liquids need to be secured in the fire proof cabinet; and, shop debris needs to be cleaned out.
  4. Radios – Don Thomasson motioned and George McKenna seconded the motion to authorize Bruce Patton to purchase five handheld Vertex aviation transceivers. Howard Chipman’s motion to purchase and install a transceiver in a Blanik died for lack of a second to the motion.
  5. Line Duty Chief – Don Thomasson volunteered to develop a protocol to assist club members in their interface with site visitors, guests on introduction rides, and prospective members. The Line Chief manual is to be posted on the TBSS web site. Also, a news article about ground handling was to be published in the *Towline Times*.
  6. Flight Instruction – Each student is to be allowed a maximum of 1 hour flight time or up to 3 pattern tows per training session. On busy operation days, instructional pattern flights are eligible to take every other (alternating) tows in the queue.
  7. Site Safety Review Update – The Pawnee’s squawk frequency is 1200 only. Also, a fuel management computer was to be acquired for about \$500.
  8. Dennis Dix volunteered to dust off and update the club bylaws. Jim Watts was requested to develop an emergency response plan. Concerning standard operating procedure, positive control checks are to be conducted on all aircraft prior to first launch of the day. Also, the line crew must ask the PIC of a glider if the airbrakes are closed and locked prior to initiating any launch. Progress was reported on the completion of an emergency kit for the golf cart. Also, the keyed master switches in the golf carts are to be turned to the off position prior to exiting the vehicle.
  9. Chief Tow Pilot Report – George McKenna indicated that there was a shortage of available tow pilots. There was discussion about purchasing a two-place tail dragger tow plane, however, the board decided to make no change this time. To alleviate the higher demand in the fall and winter it was decided that an extra flying day should be implemented, probably Friday’s.
  10. Bruce Patton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 AM

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### **Safety Corner**

*by Jim Watts & Dennis Dix*

This month we review some recent pre-flight and flight line and procedure changes that have been recently instituted at TBSS.

1. How many times does someone get a glider towed out to the centerline and only then do people say "Hey, you know, that tire looks low"? Then, others join in to check it out and agree, some scratching their chins and nodding their heads and say "well you might as well launch since you're already out here". Or even worse -- like recently -- this command decision was uttered "hey wait here and I'll go and get the tank and put some air in for you" all the while leaving the glider and tug out on the runway. Unfortunately, variations of these scenarios have occurred far too often.

A visual pre-flight inspection of a glider's main wheel often does not indicate the tire's inflation. Why? An empty glider in the grass doesn't look the same as a loaded glider perched on hard pavement. The simple fix for this situation is a new club policy requiring a tire pressure check as a part of the first pre-flight each day. This new procedure augments the recently instituted positive control check on all club and privately owned gliders flying at TBSS.

Jim Watts has been authorized to acquire and place tire gauges in the little plastic bags containing the logbooks and pens in each glider. Recommended tire pressures are as follows: Blanik and Grob (37 lbs.), SGS 2-32 (33 lbs.) and for the Lark (30 lbs.).

2. To off-set the high demand on the club's Blaniks, all members with private or commercial glider ratings who have not already done so, must obtain an instructor sign-off to fly the Grob 103 and the Schweizer SGS 2-32 (for those meeting the minimum flight time requirements of that aircraft). Also, non student pilots are **strongly** urged to get checked-out in and fly the Lark IS-29D and the Schweizer SGS 1-26 when going solo. To maintain the bottom line, we need more efficient and equitable use of club's flying assets.
3. Mentioned previously but worth repeating is another new procedure requiring ground crew to have the PIC of a glider verbally verify that his spoilers are closed and locked prior to launch.
4. Due to the recent unrelenting student training load on the club's instructors, a temporary restriction has been placed on the acceptance of new TBSS members not having prior flight experience. This temporary action is also in the best interest of the club's general membership, given the high peak demand on our L-13s.