

GLIDING NEW ZEALAND NEWS

This column is intended to give readers an ongoing insight into the activities of the GNZ Executive and its Committees. Rather than a detailed report on matters currently under consideration, here are some recent items of significance.

2009 AGM This year's AGM weekend will be at the James Cook in Wellington on 13-14 June, so book now for those cheap fares. We'll have the usual Saturday programme with meetings of engineers and contest pilots, interesting presentations, a cocktail party with guest speaker and of course the presentation of GNZ awards. Accommodation at the James Cook will be available at the same price as last year. Formal notice with registration forms will be sent to clubs in mid April.

Meanwhile, get your thinking caps on about nominating worthy recipients for the Angus Rosebowl and the Friendship Cup. Just to remind you, last year's worthies by popular acclaim were Trev Atkins (posthumously) and Sue Wild.

NATIONAL PUBLICITY COORDINATOR While on the subject of hard working volunteers in our sport, I'm very sorry to have to say that after seven years of highly productive toil as our National Publicity Coordinator, Steve Tollestrup has decided he is getting too busy in his day job to carry on. To put things in perspective, Steve told me of a humorous little incident recently – "The penny dropped in the middle of the night at a Palestinian refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. Half asleep I awoke to my mobile going off and a cheery voice introducing himself as a member of Wellington Gliding Club with a promotional opportunity through the Kapiti local news. That was the moment I thought my world was just a bit too stretched!"

So we're now looking for a volunteer to fill Steve's big shoes after the AGM. Steve says he is very willing to help the new Coordinator with media contacts and answers to any questions as they take on the role. Nominations please, to an Executive member near you!

MEMBERSHIP REGISTER In similar vein, John Roake has advised that it is time for him to hand over guardianship of the membership register. John has been doing this job very tenaciously for as long as I can remember, so we all owe him a huge debt of gratitude for that. It is not just a matter of managing the never ending comings and goings of the membership register, John has also been the official repository of GNZ's pilot qualification and other records for the annual CAA audits.

From 1 April 2009, clubs should use the following address membership@gliding.co.nz If using snail mail instead, post to GNZ Central Register Manager, PO Box 3031, Christchurch 8013.

ACTIVITY & MEMBERSHIP STATS Club returns for the last half of the calendar year 2008 show that we collectively did 8,474 launches, 73% of which were aero tows. Although this sounds a lot, it is 10% down on the same period in 2007 and 20% down on 2006. For the whole calendar year, 2008 was down 15% on 2007.

The drop in launch activity may be partly explained by the weather, but it is also a reflection of the membership numbers. At the time of the October 2008 billing of affiliation fees, total club membership had dropped from 860 to 804 (-7%), with the break-down being a loss of 67 members in North Island clubs (-12%) and a gain of 11 members in South Island clubs (+4%). 19 clubs grew, 14 lost members and 5 stayed the same.

0800 GLIDING Talking about downturns, unfortunately the use of our 0800 number has dropped so dramatically over the last two years that the fixed costs mean each call is now averaging about \$5. We would like to think that this is because the punters are increasingly turning to the web for gliding contacts. Whatever, the Executive has decided to cancel the 0800 GLIDING number. Please note that the 0800 number will stop working in the next month or two – so if your club is using it in its publicity efforts, now is the time to change that.

REVISED GNZ ADVISORY CIRCULARS I am pleased to say that Executive Member, Mike Dekker, has been putting a huge effort into the overhaul of our Advisory Circulars. The first of these should be appearing on our web site by the time you read this (AC 2-3 Pilot Examinations and AC 3-1 Glider Daily Inspection). Many more AC revisions will follow over the coming months. If you are holding hard copies of these ACs, please ensure that you check the GNZ web site from time to time to ensure you have the latest version.

CHERISH YOUR PAWNEE DRIVERS The CAA has recently published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM 08-02) that could negatively affect our ability to attract tow pilots in future if it becomes

a rule in its current form. The new proposal effectively removes from appropriately qualified flight instructors their ability to act independently of a certificated organisation when doing aircraft type ratings. GNZ has made a submission to CAA on the lines that this is unnecessary in cases where the rating is merely for a simple single engine light aeroplane when the applicant for the rating has a minimum of say 100 hours as pilot-in-command. We reckon Category D instructors should be able to carry on doing these simple type ratings as they've always done.

We told CAA that we were concerned because 14 of our 25 clubs use tail-wheel aircraft for glider towing (predominantly the PA-25 Pawnee), and all of these clubs already experience difficulty from time to time in recruiting tow pilots. This is a result of the fact that tail-wheel aircraft are steadily disappearing from aeroplane training fleets, so that pilots and instructors with the relevant tail-wheel experience are falling in number. Under the CAA proposal, this situation could be expected to deteriorate dramatically, with tail-wheel rated instructors dropping out of the system despite high levels of experience in some cases. Part 141 certificated organisations able to provide type ratings on a tail-wheel aircraft, such as the PA-18 or PA-25, would probably be very few in number and overall costs for such ratings would rise significantly as a consequence. Let's hope CAA listens.

Max Stevens GNZ Executive Officer