

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.

Firstly I would like to acknowledge the recent loss of some long serving members, Brian Chesterman (Tauranga), John Curtis (Taupo) and Tom Orr (Taupo). It is always sad to see the long term operations people, tow pilots and instructors pass away.

Even sadder in many ways is the very recent fatal accident to Murray Philpott, one of our newer members. The death of another gliding mate while taking part in our sport is tragic. Condolences to Murray's family. This loss is also hard on his fellow club members, operations team, searchers, officials and those of us who have to deal with the media and CAA. Although loss of life is not a common part of the sport, we must acknowledge that these accidents occur in most years. It may be several months before we have a clear picture of what happened to Murray.

However, there are two things I want to say about accidents in general. Our ops team would say other things, these are just my observations. Please do not underestimate the risks of what you are doing by gliding, you need to manage the risks and be careful. Keep an eye on the activities of your fellow members too. It is not just up to our instructors and CFIs to watch out, as any knowledgeable member should make prompt comment if they see something risky or thoughtless. If the comment is made to you, please do not brush it off or get angry; think hard about why someone has raised this with you. Lastly, if you don't fly often, or you are not 'current', or you may be ageing (as we all are), think about how you want to end your time flying solo or instructing in the sport. Stop flying before your skills get too rusty, or have more regular check flights, or get into a decent two seater with someone more current. Don't add to our accident toll.

Some accidents might seem be out of the blue, but other times things creep up, with a series of mini events. May I stress how important it is that all incidents and accidents are reported correctly and promptly? A very long term member expressed to me a couple of weeks ago that it is pointless completing forms as they never see any results. On the contrary, they do not just disappear into our files! We use them to track the various ways that you our members find to damage or potentially damage your aircraft or yourselves. Sometimes there seems to be a series of one type of thing, but without the reports we can make no analysis nor make any improvements in training or procedures to reduce the likelihood of others having similar problems. This is important, so please help us here.

Training is part of the ways that we can reduce risks. I acknowledge here the fine quality of the training provided to our younger members through the Omarama Youth Glide Camp held in December, and their mini events. I wish that you could all experience this type of camp. It is fun, but safety is always emphasised. Please note that the accident rate among our younger members is exceptionally low. The camp saw 360 hours of flying by 24 Juniors, and they achieved 6 First Solos, 4 A Certs, 2 B Certs, 2 QGPs, 3 Silver Badges, 3 Gold Badges, 3 Diamond Distances, 4 Diamond Heights, 17 new type conversions, many new Official Observer ratings and oxygen ratings. Outside of camps, if you are training very young juniors in your club, please make yourself very familiar with the extra criteria in Appendix 2-B of the MOAP on the GNZ website (it's about 20 years old so may have been forgotten).

Staying with Juniors, Alex McCaw and Nick Oakley represented New Zealand at the FAI Junior World Gliding Championships in Narromine, Australia, and our Executive Officer Max Stevens was also there as President of the FAI Jury. All three did us proud, well done gentlemen. The pilots were assisted by Dane Dickinson as the mentor/coach/team manager, Mike Strathern was kept busy with unexpected engineering, they were lucky to have very capable crew members, and Lynette Tillman took care of everyone.

The GNZ selectors have made initial choices for the team to fly the World Champs in Benalla next January. We will be represented by John Coutts, Brett Hunter, Tim Bromhead and Steve Wallace, with up to another two taking part yet to be confirmed. We may also have a small team in Lithuania flying the Club Class this July.

Several of us met with our Australian colleagues in January, and one change that we are pleased about is that Tasman Trophy pilots will be able to fly the challenge in both Australia and New Zealand. Steve Foreman capably flew to win the Trophy against Steve McMahan in Taupo in February, and he has the right to defend his win at the Australian nationals in the spring.

The Sailplane Racing Committee commissioned new trophies to mark the beginning of the new two-class format this summer. The trophies are named in honour of two great South Island contributors to gliding. The Open Class trophy is shaped as an albatross and is named for David Speight. A gannet is used for the Racing Class trophy, and Bill Walker is remembered on this. I was pleased to be in Taupo recently to present the trophies to the racing community and in particular to the inaugural winners David Jensen (Tauranga) and Pat Driessen (Auckland).

Take a look at the latest version of the MOAP on the GNZ website. A new coaching section has been introduced. This is part of Steve Wallace's efforts to improve the way we proceed from being students to being

cross country pilots, by building in another level of training and oversight in the form of club and regional coaches. A coaching manual is being adapted from the Australian manual, and should be out this winter.

We put a huge amount of work into our application to SportNZ last year. We currently receive \$15,000 which we have treated as a core part of our operational funding for years. SportNZ have changed all their criteria and all funding is contestable, so now we have to compete against all other sports. We had to put up a list of projects, a wish list in effect, and provide indicators and budgets for them all. At the end of the day, so many other sports did the same that they must have been overwhelmed – and we ended up with exactly the same amount as before, guaranteed for only four years. Sadly if we were to go ahead and do the various projects, it would cost about \$40 per member per year. We would like to start some of this work, but we will have to pace ourselves!

Word may be sneaking out to you that there is something happening in Greytown, in the Wairarapa. The Greytown Soaring Centre has been formed, and the Wellington Gliding Club will be joining Gliding Wairarapa on their site later this year. There is a new hangar and a lot of development under way, and personally I am looking forward to flying in the Wairarapa wave again.

GNZ is pleased to advise that new 'volunteers' have been found to give existing office holders a rest, or in some cases, a change of job. Mike Tucker is taking over as Central ROO, and Peter Thorpe is the new northern ROO. Graham Erikson became the new Southern ROO last year. Tom Davies is the new NZAF Councillor, and Terry Jones is now Quality Manager. Thanks to the retiring or redeployed people, Ross Anderson, Steve Care (remaining as NOO though), Jerry O'Neill, George Rogers and Peter Thorpe. If someone asks you to do a job, please be like these guys, and say yes!

In particular, we are looking for one or two people to take charge of the content of the webpage and facebook page. Our webmaster Tim Bromhead is looking after the IT side of things and has some great innovations underway, but he can't do that and find the content as well. If you are tech savvy or get out gliding a lot, please contact Tim at info@gliding.co.nz to find out about the jobs.

That's an exhaustive report, but it is summer and there has been a lot going on. Please make an effort to come to the annual AGM weekend this year, no disrespect to my old friends but there is room for new faces around the tables.

Karen Morgan
GNZ President