

WARM AIR 8 October 2022

Aviation Sports Club Gliding Newsletter

THIS WEEKEND: www.ascgliding.org [ASC Gliding | Facebook](#) Bank Acct 38-9014-0625483-000

Saturday	Instructing:	P Thorpe
	Towing:	P Eichler
	Duty Pilot	T O'Rourke
Sunday	Instructing:	L Page
	Towing:	R Carswell
	Duty Pilot	M Moran

MEMBERS NEWS

In Warm Air this Week;

- *Club News*
- *Weekend Reports*
- *Article – The Mental Game of Soaring*
- *Roster*

Thank you for the pictures, stories and contributions from members.

Club News

Labour Weekend Matamata Camp – The club will be making its annual pilgrimage to Matamata for the long weekend. So, if you wish to do some magnificent soaring, run the Kaimai ridge, experience different scenery and share good company, come on down for the weekend or even a day.

Now could you please let Club Captain know your intentions and can you take a glider trailer (to or from Matamata), will you be there for the weekend? And former ASC member Genny has offered and mentioned a dinner at the Piako club should we be interested and have enough members. Please contact Kishan ASAP via email kishan@bhashyam.co.nz and let him know. This will help greatly with logistics and planning.

Annual General Meeting 15th October 9:30Am – Club Rooms

The Annual General Meeting shall take place on the 15th of October. All members are invited and encouraged to attend the AGM. This is an important opportunity to hear and ask questions from the club committee on the achievements, the direction, the financials and fleet status of your club. We would also encourage members to join the committee. If you are interested in looking at last year's minutes, which will need to be approved at this year's meeting, they can be found on our website [Aviation Sports Club - Gliding](#) Under the 'Members' tab, click on 'Member Information', and in there go to the 'committee minutes' folder, then 'AGM' and look in the 2021 folder for "Draft AGM Dec 12 2021 minutes.pdf. Otherwise email our Secretary Ivor Woodfield and he will assist.

Season Soaring Safety Briefing – In conjunction and following the AGM, the Season Soaring Safety Briefing will also take place. This is an important safety briefing for all. So, if you are intending to go soaring this season, please be there for both these important fixtures.

Weekend Club Reports

Well, the weather ruined any chance of flying. Great for rally cars, but that was it. Maybe this weekend.

Join here:

<https://wingsandwheels.com/newsletter>

The Mental Game of Soaring

By Roy Bourgeois



Ours is a technical and scientific sport that draws heavily from meteorology, aerodynamics, electronics, and mathematics. As students and participants in the sport, we become technician/consumers who look outward to the next OSTIV paper, the newest flight computer, the latest variometer advance, the best weather predictive program, and other new technical tools to help us. But soaring also remains a remarkably non-physical sport, success which is directly related to our mind's ability to interpret and act upon what our senses and instruments tell us is happening in the air and with the glider. Yet very little in our sport is written about the human mind which is the central factor that coordinates everything that we do.

The great golfer Bobby Jones once said, "Golf is a game played on a 5-inch field – the distance between your ears." I think that is even more true of soaring – which is far less physical and significantly more mental than golf. So please bear with me a little as I try to explore what we can find – and change- within our "5-inch field".

This is an article in two parts. The first part focuses on the importance of our perception of ourselves as pilots – and how we can change that perception to help us improve as cross-country pilots. The second part of the article focuses on achieving and maintaining mental discipline while flying cross country and avoiding the debilitating effects of fear and distraction.

Part One: You are the pilot that you think you are.

This quote appears in the PowerPoint program that I use in teaching cross-country soaring:

Agree to tell yourself every time you fly, every hour that you fly, and every time you confront a problem while flying, that "I am a good pilot that makes good decisions in the air and who stays patient, relaxed, and focused regardless of any problem". If you agree to do this only one of two possible things can happen: Either you will stop doing it, or you will become what you tell yourself you are.

I began to learn about pilot self-perception and mental management about 22 years ago when as a CFI I was confronted with the task of helping a post-solo student recover flying status after a serious solo accident. After her accident, we flew dual a lot together and we talked a great deal about her history and background. I was struck by several statements that she made about herself that seemed to go beyond an immediate reaction to her accident. "I think I'm just a klutz", she said, "Things keep happening to me . . . I'm accident prone." These and similar negative statements about herself kept recurring to a point where I realized that there was a problem that went beyond what I could fix only by flying exercises and in-air coaching.

At that time, I was familiar with some of the mental management concepts advocated by the Olympic coach Lanny Bassham (see the suggested reading list below) and fortunately, my student was motivated enough to fly again that she began a program of rethinking her self-image using one of his books and particularly his concept of change through affirmations. An "affirmation" is a statement that one makes to themselves repeatedly, and which is designed

to move the mind and self-image toward the desired goal. We did not simply focus on “self-image” as that is not enough to solve all the problems that contributed to her accident. We also focused on the very specific tasks that she needed to master and the lack of which had contributed to her accident. We tried to make those tasks fun to work on. She reprogrammed herself to enjoy the tasks that she needed to practice (and which she had previously avoided). Eventually, we both agreed that she was ready to solo again, and she did so quite successfully. I often suggest when I talk about this, that she was not so much happy with herself because she had soloed again but rather that she re-soloed because she learned to be happy and confident with herself as a pilot.

It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.

Edmund Hillary

What, you may ask, does any of this have to do with flying cross country? The answer is that we are continuously becoming the pilot that we think we are. Do you say (or think to yourself) “I’m not a cross country pilot?” or, “I’m not a competition pilot”? Or more specifically, “I don’t do long (duration or distance) flights?” Or “I don’t fly in the blue?” Or “I don’t fly well in weak conditions?” Or “I’ll never win a race.” What limitations in your own gliding repertoire do you assign to yourself, and have you come to believe in? And of equal importance – what have you done to try and change those limitations? The student in my accident situation had the advantage of having a coach/CFI assigned to diagnose her problems. It’s more difficult to do a self-inventory and really dig out the progress-limiting conceptions that we hold about ourselves. Partly, this is because we don’t think of them as “progress-limiting conceptions” at all instead we mistakenly think of them as “truth.” But they are only true because we have told ourselves this thing, repeatedly.

It's very hard to change your self-image or even recognize that it is an illusory self-imposed limitation. I have a friend who says with certainty, “I’m not a cross country pilot” – “I just can’t do it”. But he regularly flies for 3 hours or more locally around the airport in all kinds of conditions including windy days, blue days, and low and weak thermals. I once pointed out to him that on a 3-hour flight in a 12 kt wind, he covered more than silver distance through the airmass that was moving over the airfield – and demonstrated the same skills needed to successfully fly 66 km downwind in the same 3 hours. The only things that keep him from flying cross-country are his own self-image as a “local pilot” and perhaps a sense of fear that arises as his home airport disappears. There will be more on the fear subject in Part 2.

Self-defined limitations continue to haunt us later in our soaring careers, too. How many times have you heard pilots say things like “I usually land out” or, “I am always the slowest”? or, “I hate blue days” or – and this is one of my favorites-, “I always thermal to the left” (or right). But these statements are almost never followed by an explanation of what they are doing to change or fix the issue like flying shorter tasks to avoid land outs, not using every thermal, making a

point to fly on blue days, or forcing yourself to only turn in your “weak” direction. None of these problems are permanent if you just work on them. But you must make working on and changing them fun, or else you just won’t do it. For example, pilots who only thermal in one direction do it because they are



better in that direction – and it’s fun to do what you are good at. They will continue to do what is fun for them (and what they are good at) until they get to a contest where the entire gaggle is turning in the other direction . . .

Part of changing self-image-imposed problems is learning to enjoy the exercises that correct the problems and celebrate your small victories in overcoming them. Let’s say that you see yourself as a very slow and conservative XC pilot and your habit is to work every thermal you come across and work them right up to cloud base (even when the rate of climb drops off). As a result – you rarely land out but you are super slow. Our action plan to deal with this might be to decide in advance of today’s flight that we will only use every third thermal or only use thermals to a specific climb rate drop-off point or to a set altitude below cloud base. But, we need to make this fun and positive, too. So, we might use an affirmation (something we keep telling ourselves before, during, and after flying) like, “I really enjoy learning to fly faster, and I love the freedom of using more of the height band. It’s fun cruising the glider more and climbing less and I like being able to see the development of the cloud paths that I miss when I get too close to the clouds. I think I’m getting better at this!” If it sounds like the pilot is becoming his (or her) own cheerleader – then you’ve gotten the point. We have to make the change fun and rewarding to ourselves. The alternative is beating up and berating yourself – and that doesn’t work as either a general teaching method or a self-teaching method.



Note the 3 mental management steps involved in the foregoing slow pilot example:

1) We identified a self-imposed limitation on our flying that we wanted to change, 2) We came up with a concrete plan or exercise to eliminate the problem, and 3) We re-programmed ourselves to make solving the problem fun and satisfying (even before we see the results). You can do this with almost any problem, but you can’t skip a step. Just pretending the problem is solved (like, “Today I’m going to fly fast”) doesn’t work without the concrete steps to make it happen. And not reprogramming your thinking to make the change fun risks making it very likely that you will go back to your old way of doing things.

With Winning in Mind – Lanny Bassham
The Warrior Athlete – Dan Millman
The Mental Athlete – Kay Porter and Judy Foster
Success is a Choice – Rick Pitino
How Champions Think – Bob Rotella
Building Mental Toughness in Sport- Benjamin Bonetti
The Champion’s Mind – James Afremow

Have fun, stay safe, get better.

What topic do you want to see in an upcoming newsletter? Email us sales@wingsandsheels.com



Roy Bourgeois is a well-known US and South African glider pilot who served many years as the Chief Pilot for the Greater Boston Soaring Club and now lives and flies in Arizona. He has held several US national records, competed in many US and Canadian Nationals, and has flown over 300,000 XC kilometers in his 4400 hours of gliding. He can be reached at royb@bw.legal

Wing and Wheels sell all gliding supplies check them out - Soaring & Gliding Pilot Shop (wingsandwheels.com)

Duty Roster For Oct,Nov,Dec

Month	Date	Duty Pilot	Instructor	Tow Pilot
Oct	1	S HAY	A FLETCHER	P THORPE
	2	R BAGCHI	I WOODFIELD	F MCKENZIE
	8	T O'ROURKE	P THORPE	P EICHLER
	9	M MORAN	L PAGE	R CARSWELL
	15	I O'KEEFE	S WALLACE	R HEYNIKE
	16	K PILLAI	R BURNS	D BELCHER
Labour W/E	22	K BHASHYAM	L PAGE	P THORPE
	23	T PRENTICE	R BURNS	P EICHLER
	24	N VYLE	S WALLACE	R HEYNIKE
	29	D MCGOWAN	A FLETCHER	R CARSWELL
	30	C BEST	I WOODFIELD	F MCKENZIE
Nov	5	R MCMILLAN	P THORPE	D BELCHER
	6	A MICHAEL	L PAGE	R CARSWELL
	12	R WHITBY	R BURNS	P THORPE
	13	C DICKSON	A FLETCHER	P EICHLER
	19	K JASICA	S WALLACE	R HEYNIKE
	20	J DICKSON	I WOODFIELD	F MCKENZIE
	26	S HAY	P THORPE	D BELCHER
	27	R BAGCHI	L PAGE	R CARSWELL
Dec	3	T O'ROURKE	R BURNS	G CABRE

	4	M MORAN	A FLETCHER	P EICHLER
	10	I O'KEEFE	I WOODFIELD	G CABRE
	11	K PILLAI	S WALLACE	R HEYNIKE
	17	K BHASHYAM	L PAGE	F MCKENZIE
	18	T PRENTICE	P THORPE	G CABRE