



DOWNWIND

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTREAL SOARING COUNCIL

From the Editor

By Dave Clark

Happy New Year to everyone. Let's hope we have another great flying year. I have enjoyed producing Downwind for the past year, but I do need your help to fill up the pages. Don't be shy, send me your articles. Everything is published – guaranteed! ❖

President's Book Review

By Terry Beasley

Breaking the Apron Strings; Soaring Cross Country

by Phil Petmecky, (Bob Wander's Mentor Series), published by Soaring Books and Supplies. See www.bobwander.com for address and full list of products. With the welcomed apparent interest in cross-country flying at MSC this is a book that I can recommend. The author makes several very sensible suggestions on what the cross-country aspirant should be doing in preparation for the big day. For example, he starts off by advising you to gain confidence in knowing how far your glider can really go from a given height.

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To save you some trouble he presents a table showing the distances you can go, per 1,000 feet of height, for various L/D ratios and safety factors. As you gain confidence you can lower your safety factor.

If you read this book you will soon realize that you can do a lot in your usual one hour flight that will prepare you for your first real cross-country and will increase your chance of success in making it a Silver Distance flight. This will be far more useful experience than simply floating around in the 'house' thermal.

He goes on to stress the importance of teaching yourself to fly at optimum speeds. This is not important for your first few cross-countries but when you are ready to try for longer distances you have to realize that your time is limited from take-off time to dusk and the distance achievable depends solely on your average speed.

Unfortunately, books seem to be getting more expensive every day, particularly from the USA when exchange and postage have to be considered. Just remember that if a book can save you the cost of a couple of wasted tows then it was worth it!

P.S. Not all Bob Wander's books can be recommended to MSC students as some USA practices are not in conformance with those taught at MSC. ❖

A Look Back at Last Year

A selection of photographs supplied by Martin Detering, just to remind us what we are all looking forward to during the new season.



Up a lazy river.....



The Canadian National Family Picnic

Whiteface Mountain; ride the wave



View from the runway at Lake Placid



At the threshold, Lake Placid



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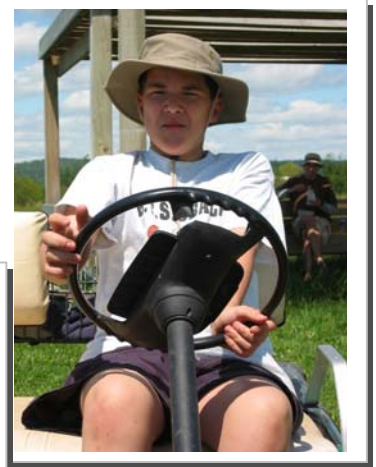
The CFI and high-tech friends



Remember this place? And grass...?



Special thanks to the
always-helpful Monsieur
Lussier junior....



...and to our President

The best line crew

Just a reminder about the AGM, which will be held in Mount Royal United Church, 1800 Graham Boulevard, TMR, on Saturday, 22 March, starting at 9.30 a.m.

Now, who's for
steak?



Club Survival

By Terry Beasley

(The use of 'Sailplane & Gliding' material in this article is gratefully acknowledged.)

The British Gliding Association magazine 'Sailplane & Gliding' published an article in the Oct/Nov 2002 issue titled 'Is your club in a spiral dive.' The author, Neil Rathbone is the chairman of the Buckminster GC. He examined the overall membership situation in his club and mentions that it is typical of many clubs in the U.K., and probably elsewhere.

Take a look at the two charts presented below and see how you believe MSC fits in. We experience considerable wastage in MSC and I am sure that it is largely due to the perceived lack of value for time.

Chart One: what people want.

The requirements of the identified markets were agreed to be:

- Value for time
- Convenience
- Availability (launch types/all weather/seven day operation)
- Equipment standard
- Organization (administration, and motivation of pilots)
- Social scene/activity
- Pleasant atmosphere (welcome)
- Progress (especially in training)
- Advanced training (cross country)
- Good financial deal (offers)
- Hangarage and storage
- One person operation
- Accommodation/catering
- Status/image
- Partner/family facilities
- Safety
- Thrill.

Value for time (as well as money) was felt to be the main requirement – and significantly above all others.

The author of the article concludes with the statement: - "If we are honest, given the unavoidable cost of aviation, perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Professional – or Recently Retired and Comfortable – form our main market. We have to make an honest list of their expectations and, even if we don't like some of them, take specific actions to begin to meet them. All the evidence is there that there is a strong leisure market out there; we simply have to offer ordinary folk what they want from their leisure rather than try (and fail) to impose our values on them.

The results of last winter's MSC brain storming sessions have now been promulgated and will be the subject of further discussions early this season. Any bright ideas on how to keep members will be welcomed by the Directors at any time, so keep thinking. ❖

Chart Two: what we deliver

The following was proposed as a 'devil's advocate' view of what we actually deliver and we believe it to be largely true, both of us and of gliding clubs generally:

- The calibre and attitude of instructors varies wildly
- Which instructor you get is a lottery
- No-one looks after you or tells you what you are expected to do
- Members give you conflicting instructions
- You are expected to give up a whole day in order to fly for a few minutes
- When you qualify you have to give up extra days to help run things
- The launch point is a shambles- you waste half the day
- They all dress like scruff bags – even the instructors
- Its all older males and old equipment
- If flying is cancelled there is nothing to do
- There is no café or restaurant
- The toilets are disgusting and broken
- You can't find the place
- Its terrible value for money
- Most beginners give up after a few seasons.