Experience

LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY

1. Wheel brakes become less effective in wet grass. Plan your landing patterns to not need them. We'd rather pull a glider in from the middle of the grass than have one roll though the launch area.
2. Landing lights on one side, the ditch on the other…if you 'connect' with either you won't be the first. Be careful, be aware.
3. Plan all your patterns with the intention of using ½ air brakes from base through final. No lazy, flat, patterns.
4. Have your rope break plan figured out before you fly. Each day is different and will require a new plan.
5. Do not take off with the tail dolly still attached.
6. Double-check the L-33 canopy is closed. Don't just push up on the canopy - look at the latch and make sure it's engaged.

One of the things I greatly enjoy about our club along with our camaraderie, is the willingness to pass along lessons learned including energy management that soaring provides. In that vein, I want to pass along an interesting experience I had yesterday in the CAP 2-33. Herb and I had been flying cadets since mid-morning (and thanks to all the club members who helped out and tolerated the delays in launchings) with nothing out of the ordinary. It was a nice day but one without a lot of lift. I had found weak lift over Barton's Distillery around 1,500 ft earlier that had increased to 2.000 ft later in the afternoon...hold that thought.

Last year...or maybe two years ago, as time flies....Sam and I were in our glider hangar and heard this 'swooshing' noise overhead. We both looked up to see the club 2-33 zooming diagonally very low over the hangar toward our grass landing area...the 'wrong way'. It was Larry and Elizabeth out on a routine flight yet found themselves in strong sink as they entered downwind...they opted to come in over the hangars and land unconventionally but safely. I tucked that away in the ol' memory banks, yet thinking 'how could that happen?'. Our landing procedures coming in over the I.P. at a grand or so then easily executing our normal pattern become so ingrained into our common landing practice.

Well, yesterday I found out how it can happen. On the last cadet ride of the day, the cadet and I had been able to eek out a little longer half-hour flight in that Barton's lift at 2k. I actually came in over the I.P. (the white house with the swimming pool) a bit high...1200-1300 ft. But by the time I was 1/3 or so way along downwind, things were not progressing well. I was already between 600-700 ft AGL and the variometer would have been screaming had it been an audible one. At that juncture, the point downrange to where I'd normally turn to base leg looked a looooonnggg way off and the altitude was decaying...things just did not 'feel right'. Fortunately, I remembered that little tidbit that Larry and Elizabeth taught us previously and by the time I was at the halfway point downwind, I said to myself...'Self, this sucks!" I opted to alter course directly toward the field making a safe and easy landing 'the wrong way'. Could I have made it through a normal landing pattern?...my spoilers were fully closed yet I could not count on getting out of that sink. So my thanks to Larry and Elizabeth for teaching me that lesson and would advise other club members (especially relatively inexperienced glider pilots as myself) to condition yourself not to become too rigid in your thinking. Consider solutions outside the box...or in this case 'outside the pattern' to adapt to changing conditions.

In thinking about these two episodes I'll offer the following explanation and something for us to look for in the future. We have our landing routines so ingrained that we count on things going according to Hoyle. But as with yesterday, should you find that Barton's lift, consider where the peripheral sink is going to be...sometimes it'll be right on our downwind leg.

As a postscript, about an hour afterwards, Steve and I did a last flight of the day in the club 2-33. At that point in the afternoon, there was virtually no lift...one of those nice smooth rides that ya just know ain't gonna last very long. Steve did a masterful job of flying a completely normal

pattern with no sink or problems encountered whatsoever....conditions had changed. My compliments to Steve for flying a beautiful pattern and landing despite me yipping in his ear the entire time....'this is where the sink was...this is where the sink was'. But as things continued to progress normally as they do 99.9% of the time, we were both alert and ready to modify that pattern and 'go for the field'.

Give those alternate landing sites we enjoy at BRY some thought from time to time and if you should find yourself in that unusual circumstance of rapidly decaying altitude in the pattern, just take a slow breathe and 'Do a Deener'. Easy, smeasy.

Thanks Larry and Elizabeth for a lesson re-learned. Paul O.

Additional Comments From Our Leader - *Been there - done that...*

The house with the pool was what I was taught was our IP when I joined years ago. Since then, I've switched to the near distillary - I think the house is OK with south or westerly winds, but I've been anxious too many times trying to eek out a normal pattern from a 1000' start over the house with northerly winds pushing me back. The distillary provides a more centric start.

Mike

Dave Wright Lesson

Years back, I went to one of Tom Knauff's seminars. He taught (among many other things) the **TLAR** (ThatLooksAboutRight) landing system. This was particularly geared towards outlanding. His point was to always use your touchdown point as a reference, having flown directly over it to have a look and check wind. Then fly your pattern in reference to that point, adjusting distances until it "looks right".

Tom said that using landmarks around the home field diverts attention away from what is most important, where you intersect the ground! He went on to say that you should practice approaching the field from many directions, and run your pattern accordingly.

Now I know we have mixed traffic, and want to end up at the tow point, but on quiet days we might try altering our patterns and see how we do.