



in the loop

Dear members,

Our main focuses are ensuring that our sports are practiced legally, safely, ethically and to the benefit of our members. We of course also want to increase interest in hang-gliding, paragliding and powered paragliding and grow our membership.

That said, there is a lot to be done, and your committee has been busy in the background getting things in place that will support a more efficient SAHPA. Of the many items on the list, our current priorities are licensing, finalizing our MOP, as well as continually working towards building and maintaining a healthy relationship with RAASA.

- With regard to licensing, we are working to put in place a more efficient process and are looking at the possibility of extending the validity of the licence as of next year. Until we have something in place, the old rules apply – so if you have not renewed, please do so according to the old ways. We will be publishing a list of unlicensed pilots on the SAHPA website and sending the list out to club chairmen and L&Sos – please see my note on our ‘pilot peer system’ below...
- With regard to the MOP, the current valid version that you should refer to if seeking guidelines is version 2.4 as published on our website. We have set up some working groups per sport, who will meet during September and October to finalise a version of the MOP that ensures all our procedures are in line with the South African law. This version will be published for your comments and input prior to final submission to RAASA.
- With regard to enabling easier communication, we are working on the concept of a SAHPA forum, very much like the paragliding forum, where SAHPA members are able to engage or find information on a large number of topics.
- With regard to our relationship with RAASA, we had a very constructive meeting with them mid August, and I am positive that the relationship will grow from strength to strength. We are in the process of establishing rules of engagement, which I will share with you in the next newsletter.

I realize my first two (perhaps three) bullet points are items that SAHPA has been working on for a long time, and I'm sure that you are getting impatient for closure. I will keep you updated, and am sure we will soon report good progress.

Go Fly

Exciting news is that Tracey King has decided to relaunch the Go Fly magazine. We wish her every success, and hopefully will be able to contribute in a meaningful way at some stage. I expect she will be covering ‘sexy’ stories of competitions and flying adventures, so will not

be including any detail in this newsletter. Tracey, we are looking forward to the re-launch edition, and to those members who own or operate a school or business, this would be a great forum for advertising.

Safety

Please take the time to read Han's contribution on safety, it's a growing concern and we have dedicated a large part of this issue to the subject.

Pilot Peer System

Our sports centre heavily around a functional peer system – this is good for site briefings, weather briefings, advice, mentoring, assistance etc. and makes for great flying and sharing of stories post flying. This also means looking out

for each other... and whilst you may think it's okay for a friend to be flying without a licence – the fact of the matter is that it is not. So, in light of the fact that a list of non-licensed pilots will be published, I'd prefer not to find myself in an awkward situation, where I have to ask someone not to fly. This is not because the power of my position has gone straight to my usually level head. It's simply that flying without a licence is firstly illegal, and secondly if you are not paid up and licensed, both our and potentially your insurance policies will not cover you.

Let's focus on flying responsibly and safely, wherever we are, and whatever we fly.

Chrissi



Graaf Reinet, Valley of Desolation
- courtesy Dirkies Air

Membership Stats

(Total renewed membership to August 2013) We have a total of 487 of which 42 is HG, 106 is Powered section & 393 are PG pilots.



393



106



47

A summary highlighting notable issues

In the 18 months preceding May 2013 there were six fatalities due to paragliding in South Africa. As far as I recall this is the worst statistic ever in our small paragliding community. This implies that we should not be lulled into a false sense of security by all those who say that our sport is safer because our wings are safer. Nearly all the manufacturers are pushing the envelope for more performance in all the certification levels. There are many EN B wings that are not even intermediate wings but rather intended for experienced pilots, and yet some people still believe them suitable for relative beginners.

Three of the fatalities were foreigners. One of who forgot to close his leg straps and then fell out of the harness from over 100m above ground. One got caught in the venturi at Lions head and was rotored into a built up area. The other spun his glider close to the ridge at De Aar and impacted into the rocks. Coincidentally, on the same day a South African pilot impacted in the Magaliesberg and died. No one is sure of what happened in this accident. There was a student who died due to injuries sustained from a low ground skimming flight because he did not release from the winch and pendulumed into the ground.

There was one paramotoring fatality – this accident was caused by a gust front prior to which the conditions were very calm. This occurred on a Reflex wing, so it should be noted that overseas statistics/websites claiming that no serious incident has ever occurred on a Reflex wing, are misleading and incorrect.

There were quite a few incidents amongst foreign visitors due to their not being accustomed to our strong winds, reinforcing that our policy of briefing and supervising visitors must be implemented without fail. One South African pilot spent the night hanging in his harness in the coastal bush (no injuries) because he got blown over the back of a ridge!



A pilot-less glider and harness ripped up by a whirlley on launch at the 2013 World Championships in Bulgaria

There have been quite a few reserve deployments, generally without injury. Two of these deployments were on EN B wings that had locked into a spiral and could not be exited.

Quite a few back injuries, three of which, upon investigation it turns out, the pilots were either not licenced correctly or not at all licenced. SAHPA received the student licence forms (undated) six weeks after one of these accidents! The individual had been flying for nearly two years at Rustenberg without ever being registered with SAHPA! It is so key that instructors register their students timeously, but also that students and pilots follow up on these things. Not being registered or licenced can impact on both their medical and life insurance. It can also impact our site access, as SAHPA site insurance will not cover those who are not members of SAHPA.

Adopt a proactive attitude towards safety and don't let complacency get anywhere near your flying equipment, especially not introduced by yourself. This is even more important at this time of year where spring is well known for stronger and more turbulent conditions.

Two broken pelvises - both in very strong wind situations. Two mid-air collisions between two ridge-soaring students. In the first one, one pilot

continued flying and the other suffered minor vertebra compression. The other mid-air was in very crowded valley release where one pilot was not adhering to the ridge rules or established pattern. He actually had a mild contact with another wing before the collision proper.

The tandem pilots around the Cape have had a few minor incidents including an accidental reserve deployment. There was a more serious incident including a child bystander on the landing field.

There have been at least two accidents caused in part by un-airworthy equipment. It makes no sense trying to save money by buying a cheaper wing and then spending even more money on hospital bills.

There is an obvious tendency for non-reporting of accidents and incidents. I know of quite a few serious accidents that have not been reported and although this does affect the stats in a positive manner, reality, investigation and prevention of further accidents are compromised. The more we know, the more we can share with our members.

As you can tell, one can always put it down to pilot error and therefore many of the mentioned incidents are preventable. However, I do not feel this is a correct attitude to take at all.

Fly high, fly far, fly safe, but most of all, enjoy!

Hans Fokkens, SAHPA National Safety & Licensing officer.



Fancy learning to fly a glider?

If you're looking at spreading your wings a little further, Gary Whitecross from Airplay Aviation is offering all SAHPA members a 10% discount on the TMG License Package (part 68 & Part 62). This great value package usually costs R38000.00, and includes

- 35 hours of which 15 solo and 20 dual plus all solo consolidation,
- Ground school, all books and exams, radio license, flight test
- Cross country test, radio license, student license & medical.
- Membership of the Aero Club of South Africa, Soaring Society of South Africa, East Rand Gliding Club and/or Brits Flying Club for one year.

Please contact Gary directly for more information on +27 82 553 2204 or e-mail him for a comprehensive pricelist at gary@easyweb.co.za.