President's Prerogative

George Hazelrigg

Welcome to soaring season 2005! Unless you live on the back side of the moon, you cannot escape the fact that we have begun our new season. Already a few people have enjoyed the wave, and we have given several spring check rides. As you know, our season was kicked off with our annual safety meeting, with Bill Vickland our featured speaker. Several of you have commented to me that this was the best safety meeting ever. Let's all give Bill a big thanks for his great presentation. It was a very valuable learning session for all of us. Of course, thanks to Dick Otis, the DVD will be out soon so that those of you who missed the meeting can see the talks, and also so that we who so choose can see it again. It really was good enough to see more than once. And for those of you reading this who are not Skyline members, stay tuned. You may want to get a copy of the DVD-it's that good.

Also, as you probably know, soaring at Front Royal has become a political activity, with members of the Club spending quite a bit of time working with the newly forming Airport Users Association, and in meetings with the Warren County Board of Supervisors. I don't know how all this activity will end, but one good thing has already come of it. We have the support of the power plane pilots at the field. Many of them have testified on our behalf, and they have said good things about us. It is very important that we keep a good relationship with these folks. If they are happy with us sharing the field with them, we will remain welcome at the airport. I propose that we take care to treat them as nicely as we possibly can.

First, let's give them the right of way for takeoff and landing as much as practical when we are doing launches (of course we will need the right of way on landings, and I'm not proposing to change that). DOs take special note here. If a plane is getting ready to taxi, call on the radio and try to resolve any possible conflict before it arises. Tell them that we will hold for their departure.

Second, let's work to keep occupancy time on the runway to a minimum. The best way we can do that is to get people strapped in and ready to go before we roll the glider onto the runway. This takes about two extra people to push the glider out. So I am asking you to give the ADO a hand in pushing gliders out for takeoff. With quick work, we can keep our time on the runway closer to one minute than three or four. Never sacrifice safety for speed. But careful planning and preparation for takeoff before pushing out need not sacrifice safety, and yet we can roll into position and go in about a minute with a good ground crew.

Third, I am working to reinstate our social program. I propose that, as soon as the weather permits, we have a third-Saturday-of-the-month cookout to which we invite the airport staff and power pilots. A few hamburgers and hot dogs will go a long way to keeping harmony at the field. We will benefit more than you think.

Fourth, let's offer rides to the power pilots. Especially the commercial pilots who are qualified to give rides, I suggest that whenever it might be appropriate, you offer a glider ride to a power plane pilot. This will gain enthusiasm for gliders among the power pilots. But it will also give them a much better feel for how we fly and how we use the airport, and the special problems we face. This will benefit us because they will be better aware of how to see and avoid us in the air, and how to avoid conflicts with us on the ground. It will also make valuable friends. So, if you are about to go up with an empty seat behind you, and if there is a power pilot standing around, give thought to inviting him or her to be your "ballast."

As you can see, these activities will require some effort. So I am looking for volunteers here. If you have any interest in helping us in these areas, please step forward. The Club needs you!

During the month of March, there are likely to be some good ridge days. Remember the Club policy on ridge flying. You may fly club equipment on the ridge under proper circumstances: (1) you must have your Bronze Badge (this shows that you have minimal land-out skills) or you must be flying with a Club instructor (not a non-Club instructor), and (2) you must have a ground crew at the ready, complete with a properly equipped tow vehicle, to retrieve you should you land out. The ASK and Grob may be taken on the ridge provided that the above conditions are met and provided that the DO allows as how the flight roster will permit this use of the trainers. But we strongly encourage that, if you want to fly the ridge in a Club ship, you do so in the Sprite. Not only is the Sprite much easier to retrieve, but a landout in the Sprite will not shut down training operations for the day.

Finally, I urge everyone to be careful this season. Let's hold accidental damage to a minimum. If you face a task that you aren't sure you know how to do-like putting the glider in the hangar, ask someone to help you through it. And, for any task that requires more than one person, especially an off-field retrieve, be sure one person is in charge and that everyone there knows who that person is.

Last year was a safe soaring year for us. Let's make this another safe year. Happy soaring.

It All Started with A Martini on the Veranda...

Steve Wallace

The scene at Dillingham

You have all seen the ad in for soaring in Hawaii: ***"A Thousand foot tow and stay up all day!"*** Is it true? I am sure there are many Skyliners I could have asked, but I decided I had to find out for myself. After all, I had never been to Hawaii and was looking for an excuse to go.

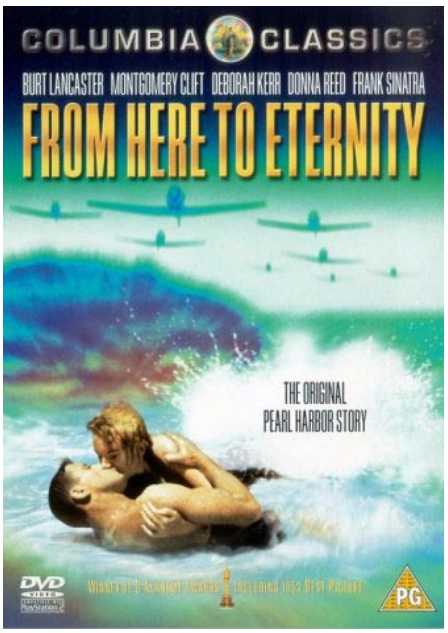
In fact getting to Hawaii had become an obsession for me. A few years ago I even complained to my mother, no longer a young woman, that I had never been there. To my surprise she instantly responded that this was perhaps not strictly correct. "I never thought to tell you this, but maybe it somehow explains your Hawaii obsession. You were conceived there." This was a conversation with mom that I was not prepared for, and the only thing I could think to ask was if it had been some kind of Burt Lancaster/Deborah Kerr romp in the surf (For you younger Skyliners, Google "From Here to Eternity."). Mother declined to elaborate, saying only that it all started with a martini on the veranda of the Moana Hotel. This might explain my taste for gin.

How many of you have had this conversation with your mother?

Fast-forward my age (?) plus 9 months to early February 2005, same island, Oahu. I looked up glider rides in the phone book, called out to Dillingham Airport, and spoke to Mr. Bill. A nice fellow with a K-21 and some 2-33s, but Mr. Bill said that to check out his K-21 I would need non-owned aircraft liability coverage, which comes with most Costello policies. So I called Costello, to learn that it did not come with mine, since our glider, with 3 owners, is registered and insured under the name of our LLC. They were ready to sell me this additional coverage for a few hundred dollars, but I declined and tried the other operator at Dillingham, Soar Hawaii (www.soarhawaii.com). The two operations appear to be in a friendly competition, sharing the same little open-air structure at the side of the runway. Soar Hawaii did not have the same onerous insurance requirements; in fact they did not seem to have any insurance requirements. They also did not have a K-21. They had some 2-33s, a Grob-103 (down for maintenance) and some Schweizer 2-32s, which had been modified with a nose wheel instead of a skid. I had always wanted to fly a 2-32 so that was my choice. They said their 2-32 check included spins, which was fine with me since I wanted a glider spin endorsement anyway.

My instructor, Sam Balch, age 19, had finished one year at Embry Riddle and decided to bail out for Hawaii and do gliders. He had actually been flying gliders for only about 9 months, but had done his Commercial Glider and CFIG quickly, and had made about 1,200 glider flights from Dillingham.

After a short ground school session, we put on our parachutes and took off. Things are fast and simple, since the glider operation is based in the displaced threshold section of a former military runway, 9,000 feet long! You simply land fairly close to the beginning of the pavement, and as you slow down steer the glider on to the ramp, which is contiguous with the runway. To take off you just turn the glider around on the ramp and point it at a shallow angle down the runway.



Left: Sam, Steve, and the 2-32. Above: After release, at about 3,000 feet over the runway. Below: A spacious but Spartan cockpit.

Hook up the towplane, waggle the rudder, and go. The glider is on the ramp at the beginning of the takeoff roll, but it is easy to fall in behind the towplane and straighten out as you get to the runway centerline. No radios, no wing runners, and no towing back the glider.

I was immediately struck by the feel of the 2-32, heavy, strong, and stable. It seemed to follow the towplane like it was on railroad tracks.

Sam said we would do the first tow to 3,000 feet and immediately do a series of spins. He explained that the 2-32, unlike all the power planes I had done spins in, would stay in a spin all day unless you took positive action to recover, including brisk forward stick as well as opposite rudder. It also recovers with nothing but the Pacific Ocean in the windshield, about straight down. Do it all close to correctly and you will lose about 300 feet in a one-turn spin. He said he would do the first one "over the top" (Out of a slipping turn) and then wanted me to do one to the left, one to the right, and one out the bottom of a steep turn. And that is exactly what we did. Great fun and everything worked as advertised.

They have a specific approach procedure. Crosswind over the numbers at 800 feet and 80 mph, turn downwind and hold 80 mph all the way to the flare. I guess they are concerned about folks stalling and spinning or just dropping in their gliders, so they use what seems like a way excessive speed. Best L/D is about 65 MPH and min sink about 55. Even holding 80 to the flare, it is easy to stop the 2-32 fairly short, due to its fantastic speedbrakes.

Next flight was a simulated rope break, which he briefed fully in advance. He said he would release after the towplane made a right turn out, at about 300 feet, and that I was to pitch over to 80 mph, and continue the right turn back to the runway. Being a checkout, I did exactly as he said, and we went whistling by some palm trees, flew an "S" pattern, and landed uneventfully. I suggested it would have been a much more leisurely affair to have targeted 65 MPH after the break, and make an continuous left 270 degree turn back to the runway. Sam said I was free to do whatever felt right if the rope really broke.

After that a pattern tow and I was good to go. My wife hopped in the back seat and took the in-flight photos. One shows the view along the cliffs and over the ocean. The other shows how little I look in that spacious cockpit. For more photos of the area go to www.soarhawaii.com

Stay up all day? We were about 2 knots short of the required on-shore wind this day. We hung on the cliff at about 1,200 feet for 30 minutes or so, then got below 1,000, so headed for home. Unlike the Massanutten ridge, at Dillingham a 9,000-foot runway is right under your wing.

By the end of the day's glider flying I had concluded that, as a full time glider site, I would not trade Front Royal. But it was a great fun experience and highly recommended.

That evening I made a little roots pilgrimage down to the Moana hotel. I walked out on the veranda and listened to the surf, then I sat down, ordered a martini, and called my mother. I told her I was ending a great day by having a martini in her honor on the veranda of the Moana hotel. She laughed a little and told me to contemplate the rows of hotel room windows, and see if I sensed anything. I told her that I could definitely sense something, but that it was coming from the surf.

Of Props and Men

Judah Milgram

I just saw some photos taken on the landing deck of a small Navy ship. Way too gruesome to describe, but they did make me think that it's time for a reminder about propeller safety. Spinning propellers are invisible and if you walk into one, guess what happens (think "Itchy and Scratchy"). Because we can't see them, we have to rely on good habits to protect ourselves. Merely resolving to "remember" that the prop is there isn't good enough. "Remembering" is even less effective for our ground crew, who do the routine, repetitive work of getting the rope, hooking up the glider, etc.–often under time pressure.

My own suggestions for good prop discipline follow (send me yours if you have any). Note that "good habit" means you always do it, even when it seems you could safely skip it this once.

(0) Be afraid, be very afraid.

(1) Don't violate the prop arc whether the engine is running or stopped.

(2) When out on the flightline, walk, don't run.

(3) Stand back, don't walk out to meet the towplane.

(4) If you have to talk to the tow pilot, wait for full stop and eye contact, then approach via the trailing edge (obviously).

(5) Visitors might seem to understand all this, but they are actually clueless. Keep an eye on them. Pets too–I knew a black lab who lost his life to a Pawnee prop.

(6) When you hear, "clear!", look around to see who it is and where. This also helps the pilot, since it's another set of eyes to look for people near the prop.

P.S.... just FYI, the pilot can't just cut the engine if he sees someone absent-mindedly walking towards the prop. It takes many seconds for the engine to stop.

P.P.S.... Not a prop thing, but don't walk after the taxiing towplane to grab the rope out of the hitch while it's still moving. I actually saw someone do this. The towplane can stop unexpectedly while you're focusing on the tow hitch, leaving a skull-shaped dent in the rudder trailing edge. Wait until it stops in position.

This sure isn't your father's sport any more....

Jim Kellett

I never saw a glider with a radio in it for the first three years of my soaring career (which began nearly 40 years ago). In fact, that one was the first with any kind of electrical system in it at all! There were no glass gliders, and the 1-23 was a competitive, high performance glider!

This winter I attended a special soaring software seminar at the convention, one at which about a third of the attendees followed the discussion with their laptops in their laps The only non-glass sailplane on the exhibition floor was a venerable 1-26, and there were at least seven gliders with self-launch capability, one of which was actually a twin turbojet! (Another, the Carat, sported a solar panel that could recharge a completely dead battery during a two hour soaring flight sufficiently to re-start the engine!!)

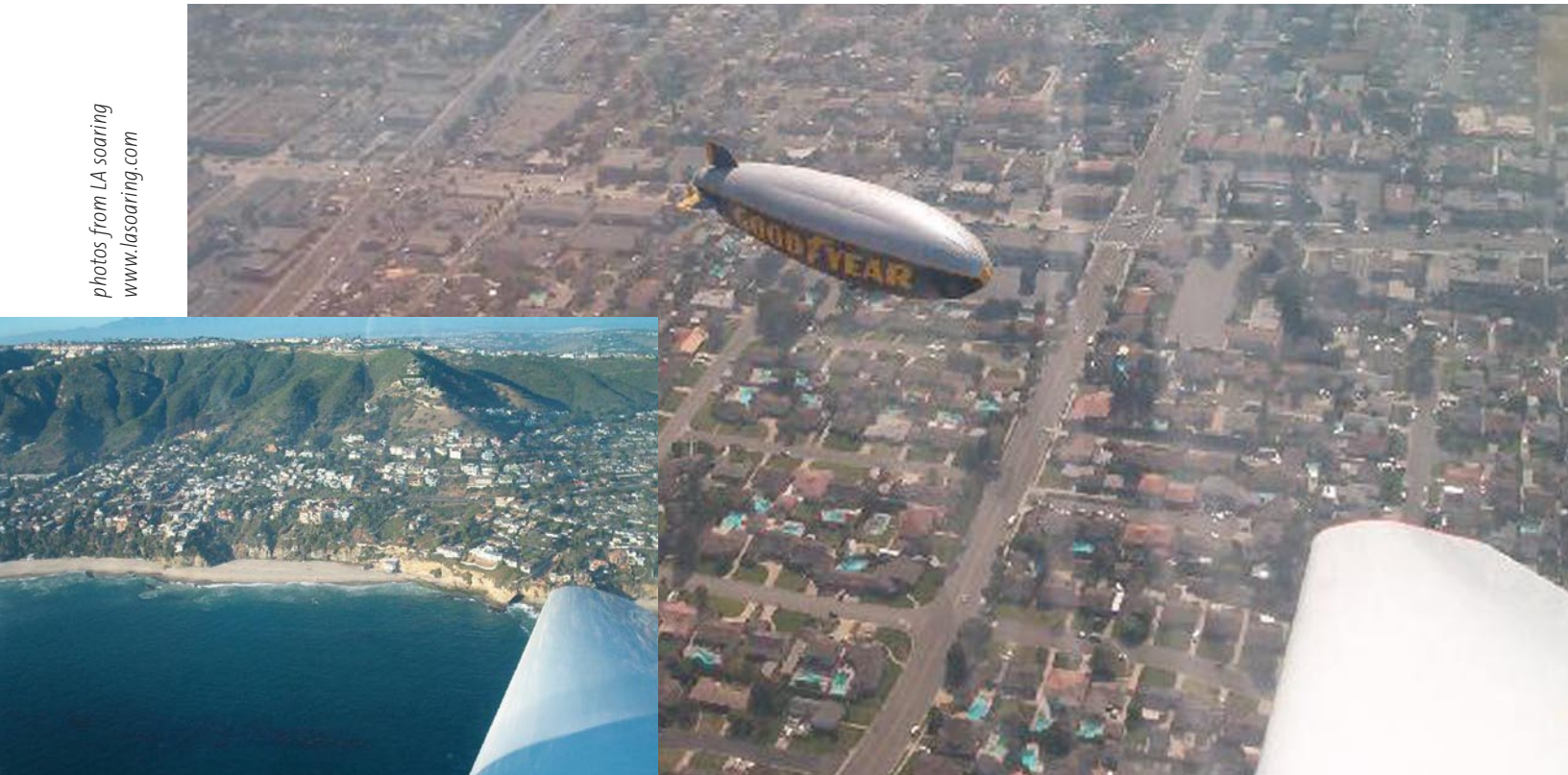
The most popular vendor booths were holding seminars touting their competing computer systems for flight management and data recording/display; three were selling transponders; and there was one full-size simulator (built around the nose of a G-103).

The dinner speaker, Mike Melville, talked about how he got his Commercial glider certificate so as to comply with the FAA regulations before flying Burt Rutan's new motorglider, aka Space-Ship One, the first privately designed and built spacecraft (yes, it's certificated as a glider!!)

As I left the motel on Sunday afternoon, a Stemme S-10 flew over the parking lot, having just taken off from nearby Ontario airport on a sales-demonstration flight.

Boy, times have sure changed.

Why you need a motorglider *over Ontario*



photos from LA soaring
www.lasoaring.com

Four First's and a Funeral

Ron Hansen

Although small, our airfield is home to six soaring clubs and over two hundred active pilots. Although we rely mostly on six tow planes to get our 80 some gliders into the air, we also have a rather old, somewhat cantankerous winch. In order to make the winch operations more attractive, the clubs got together and bought a new electric winch. In our tests, this winch had proven itself to be much easier to use, to give much smoother tows, and to give a little more altitude.

Today would be the first full operational day for the new winch. We were all looking forward to that. A young lady was looking forward to her first day as a winch operator. Under the watchful eye of the man who would be supervising her, she carefully backed the winch out of its shed and drove it down to the far end of the field. As she drove past, I thought I saw a lot of joyful anticipation in her face tinged with a bit of performance anxiety. I would also be making my first start today with the new winch. I would be flying our club's ASW-20. Each start with the old winch had been unique and often like a 1000 meters of bad road. I was looking forward to something smoother and above all, much more predictable. There was also a young man from another club who was looking forward to his first winch start with his newly purchased high performance glider. It promised to be an interesting day for all of us.

A minor problem with the newly installed wiring delayed the start of winch operations and convinced most of the less patient pilots to take an aerotow. This allowed me to move quickly to the front of the winch line. Although I've grown more comfortable with winch starts over the years, I still regard the first ten seconds of a winch launch as our sport's most dangerous interval. In addition to the usual prestart checks, I always pull first my lap belt, and then the shoulder belts as tight as possible. I then pull the pedals as close to me as possible without interfering with my ability to move them through their full range. I then push on the pedals with roughly my full weight to make sure that I'm securely strapped in and won't end up in the baggage compartment when the winch snatches me into the air. Before letting off on the pedals, I make sure that I can still easily move the stick all the way to its forward stop. Although others had bragged about their launch altitudes with our new winch, I was planning on putting my emphasis once again on safety and not on performance. A few extra meters rarely makes a difference in whether one can stay up or not.

It was one of the nicest winch launches I've ever had. The initial acceleration was brisk, but not abrupt. After a short roll phase, I had flying speed and gently reduced the forward pressure on the stick to allow the glider to lift off. I then eased the stick slightly forward to stop any uncommanded pitch up. As the speed continued to built up, I slowly let the nose rise, obtaining optimal climb attitude just as the glider reached its maximum winch launch speed. The climb phase was very smooth. Speed control was very easy. At the top of the climb when the operator let off the "gas", I moved the stick forward to allow the cable to gently back release. The whole start was not only very smooth, but also very predictable and controllable.

I thought briefly about giving my compliments to the winch driver for the great start, but I got too busy getting the plane cleaned up and finding the all important first thermal. The next guy up on the winch did send down his praise. The winch driver thanked him for finally giving her some feedback. This made me feel somewhat guilty. Later I would deeply regret not having said something. But in the meantime I had cored a thermal and was quickly headed towards cloud base. As soon as I got there, I switched to the cross-country frequency and joined the cloud of gliders quickly spreading out from our field.

At about this time the young man with his new glider had advanced to the head of the start line. Eye witnesses reported that the initial acceleration was normal. But almost as soon as the glider lifted off, it started to pitch rapidly upwards. At an altitude where I had just started to pitch up into a steep climb, his glider was pointed almost straight up. A weak link break was imminent and would have been unrecoverable. But before this could happen, the glider stalled, rotated rapidly around the still attached cable and slammed almost straight down into the ground.

Within a few minutes, a doctor from our field reached the crash site with his medical bag. He was quickly joined by a total of three helicopters: one Emergency Medical services, one Police, and one Search and Rescue. They were quickly joined by an ambulance and several police cars. The whole operation was very impressive both in terms of scale and speed. It was everything an injured pilot could have wanted. But it was all to no avail. The young pilot had been killed on impact.

Nobody knows just what went wrong during his launch. It would be very easy to say that yet another pilot had deliberately over rotated at the start of the launch in order to maximize his altitude gain. However, those that knew him well find it hard to believe that he would have done that. He had spent a long time preparing for the start. Although his glider had at least an automatic elevator hookup, he did a full control check. Although he had already done a couple of aerotows with the glider, he still spent a long time sitting in the cockpit, manual in hand, going over all the details of a winch start. Although he was only in his mid twenties, he had been flying for over ten years and had done numerous winch launches.

Even those who didn't know him at all find it hard to believe that he would have wanted to rotate any where near that aggressively. Maybe he didn't do up his belts as carefully as I had and found himself sliding backwards, taking the stick with him. Maybe his glider had a greater tendency to over rotate than most of the ones he had flown before. Maybe the different view-over-the-nose led him to believe that he wasn't over rotating. Maybe any of a dozen other factors conspired against him. Probably, as often is the case, it was a combination of several factors.

We do know that our sport has lost a very promising young pilot. We also know that the young winch operator could hardly have imagined a worse first day on the job.

It took a long time for the news to reach the pilots on the cross country frequency. At first there was only a report about the field being closed because of helicopter traffic. But after listening in on the ground frequency, we quickly realized that there had been a serious, probably fatal accident. The only remaining question was how well did we know the victim.

The young lions, hardened by years of contest flying, said we should concentrate on flying, that there would be enough time after we land to worry about the details. However, like many of the other older pilots who have been through this too often before, I wanted to know how close lightning had struck this time. I didn't feel like flying, I only felt deep sorrow. But I have to confess that the sorrow was tainted by more than a bit of annoyance that yet

another good flying day had been ruined by an accident. Instead of concentrating on flying, I was wondering if I would go to the funeral, and what I could wear if I did. I even wonder if it would be held early enough so that we could go flying afterwards. I'm sure I wasn't the alone with these thoughts.

The sad truth is, soaring, our beloved sport is dreadfully dangerous. But we don't seem to care. Although the young man was not from our club, later that day we briefly discussed whether we should not fly the next day, a Sunday, out of respect. The winning argument was that it was supposed to rain anyway, so we didn't need to worry about it. Normal flight operations resumed on Monday. Because accidents only rarely interfere with our fun, we continue to place more emphasis on convenience and performance than on safety.

Soaring is such a fantastic sport that we have come to accept death as merely part of the price of participating.

Editor's note: this article was sent to Skylines in June by Judah Milgram, a friend of Ron Hansen who flies in a German Club. It was overlooked until my recent review of past input folders. A very thoughtful story for us and thanks to Ron and Judah for sharing it.

Skyline Safety Meeting in Pictures by Dick Otis

Superman and Lois Lane covertly join SSC Members at the Annual Safety Meeting. Noted cinematographer Dick Otis, whose latest movie " Million Dollar Safety Meeting" was passed over for an Oscar, captured the couple. Said Otis, "lucky I happened by with my camera".

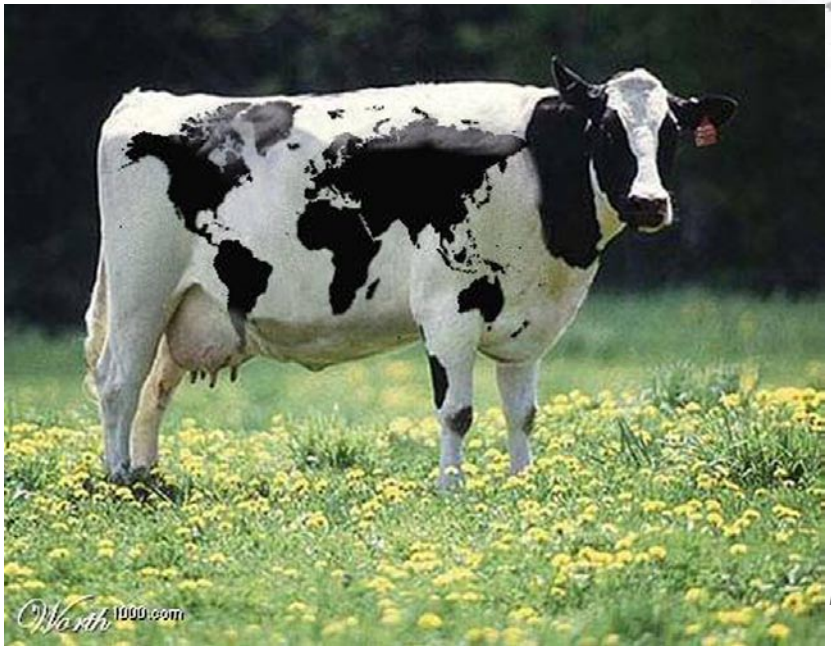
"Despite the opinion of some plastic worshipping heatherns, THIS is a sailplane."

Visual proof that safety is a sobering subject. These guys were all 25 years old when the meeting started.

Riding the tide of public acclaim for his new book "Give Your Cat Flying Lessons", distinguished Federal Investigator is selected PETA's Man of the Year.

Gentlemen's Quarterly selects much revered Treasurer for its "Best Dressed 1-26 Pilot" award invoking a characteristic response.

Renewed SSC operations are put on hold while over enthusiastic Tow Pilot searches for the throttle.



Although not an Otis photograph this picture does illustrate an important off-field landing safety principle: if pilots collide with one of these they're in a world of trouble.

Photo: Worth—1000.com

Demonstrating the age old, but frustrating, principle of that which goes up must come down

Demonstrating proper digital display when not in I-66 traffic.

A 1-26 hurries down on final, while out of the picture, the cat (on a supervised solo) turns base.

Dick Otis casts a big shadow on smiling sunlit Skyliners leading one to wonder just what they're up to.

Copy That! *Selected flotsam and jetsam from the editor's daily Tsunami of e-mail*

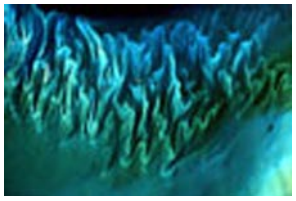
It's a Girl!—Her name is Alanna Lucia, born December 13, 2004–5lbs. 9.8oz., 18 inches. First name is Celtic for love. Second name, pronounced Lu-chee-a, for her B'day, the Feast of St. Lucy. So we'll call her Alanna, Lanna, Chi, Chia-pet.

That right folks, I am a new Daddy!....Oh yeah....and Denise is a new Mommy too!—**Raul Fumagali**

Daddy's princess...or ground crew in training

Familiar Face in Minden— Fred LaSor will start working at Soar Minden on April 15, managing the office and occasionally towing and instructing. He wants all Skyline Soaring Club members to know he's looking forward to a visit from you, but please not all at the same time! He says: "come on out and try some strong thermals and high wave flight!" Fred will be in northern Virginia through the end of March and will be flying weekends at Front Royal, as weather and glider availability permit.
—**flasor@frognet.net**

Our Earth as Art—http://earthasart.gsfc.nasa.gov/
The USGS and NASA have teamed up to bring the public stunning images of the Earth taken by the Landsat-7 satellite and the Terra Satellite's Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER). Visitors can browse the images by continent or alphabetically. The images can be used as supplementary materials during educational lectures about rock outcrops, deserts, deltas, clouds, glaciers, and many other earth science topics. The website allows users to download the images as posters and wallpaper. This site is also reviewed in the February 4, 2005_NSDL Physical Sciences Report_. [RME]—**Dick Otis**



Soaring Seminar— March 26 State College, Pennsylvania • All day seminar with speakers, lunch and evening banquet. • Speakers include George Moffat, Karl, Striedick, Tom Knauff, Mike Hutnick, Frank Pascale, Mark Maughmer. Banquet speaker, Michael Bird (Platypus) from England. • $60 includes meals. Sign up at www.eglider.org, or phone (814) 355 2483 Information for this event is provided by Thomas Knauff of Knauff & Grove Soaring Supplies 3523 South Eagle Valley Rd, Julian, Pa 16844 Phone (814) 355 2483 Fax (814) 355 2633

No Medical, No Certificate—Still Supported— Survivors of a crash of a Cessna 180 skydiving plane in Pennsylvania last October say they don't fault the pilot... even though he was flying with a revoked medical for a heart condition, had vision corrected to no better than 20/40, clipped trees on takeoff from his own 1,515-foot grass strip (its condition is listed as poor in the NTSB's report), and was at the controls for the subsequent fatal crash. Emil Kindelberger, 81, was denied a medical on May 27, 2003, after being diagnosed with coronary artery disease requiring a bypass. He apparently continued to fly skydiving customers and they remain supportive of him. "Emil is Beaver County legend material," said Cecil Smith, who still suffers neck pain and sleepless nights from the accident. "It's sad that something like this happened at the end of his career." Another skydiver, Nancy Elm, died in the accident. Kindelberger and skydiver Timothy McGraw were also injured.—**AvFlash, February 9, 2005**

Flying lost one of its most eloquent spokesmen on February 9th when Edwards (Ted) Park died. Ted and I worked on a few projects over the years. He wrote for Smithsonian, Air & Space and numerous other publications. Ted was a consultant for The Classic Aircraft stamps that I produced in 1997.

Ted Park wrote 5 books including "Treasures of the Smithsonian" and "Nanette" the memoir of his temperamental P-39 during the early days of WWII in the Pacific. He was a dedicated pilot, sailor and historian.

My favorite of his stories concerned a fellow P-47 pilot who roared off a South Pacific airstrip only to glance down and discover a large snake coiled at his feet.

With great presence of mind, the pilot retracted his canopy and rolled inverted. The snake didn't have a chute.

Ah, he was one of a kind—Ted—not the snake.—**Phil Jordan**

Billboards you're not likely to see anytime soon—

www.dribbleglass.com