

# SKYLINE



SKYLINE SOARING CLUB NEWSLETTER

December 2008

## WW II Fighter Pilot Experiences Skyline's Silent Wings Program



**Charlie Brown (left) a former WWII P-38 and P-40 pilot, and SSC instructor, Andy Gerner, chat after Charlie's first glider flight at Front Royal Oct. 11.**

Photo by Holly Brown

**On** Oct. 11 Skyline Soaring Club instructor Andy Gerner flew with Charlie Brown, a 90-year-old World War II pilot, for his first flight in a glider. After a relaunch due to an early rope break Andy showed Charlie just what a glider can do.

"I just had a really great time and enjoyed the maneuvers Andy put the glider through," said Charlie after landing. He also remarked that Andy was "an excellent pilot."

Charlie signed up for the Silent Wings Program during WWII but it was canceled before he could start. Instead he trained as a fighter pilot and was as-

signed to the 18th Fighter Squadron in Alaska where he flew P-38 Lightnings and P-40 Warhawks.

His daughter-in-law, Holly Brown, arranged for the flight with SSC membership officer, Steve Rockwood, saying that "he has always wanted to fly a glider and often said he would like to take a glider ride now."

On Oct. 11 he was finally welcomed to the ranks of pilots who don't need noisy engines to stay aloft.

Come back for a wave flight Charlie.

**Editor's note:** Rumors that Charlie has a beagle named Snoopy appear to be unfounded.

## AirSports Live

There's a movement afoot to promote aviation sports, including soaring, to the masses of groundlings. A New Zealand company, *AirSportsLive.com*, is marketing an interesting combination of live coverage of airsports and virtual flying.

A recent project, called Sky Challenge, has airplanes racing on a course marked by virtual waypoints visible to the pilots; and groundlings can compete in real time on a virtual course. There's a demo video at [www.skychallenge.com](http://www.skychallenge.com).

In collaboration with the Federation Aeronautique Internationale this company is working on live coverage of the Soaring Grand Prix merging live footage from the glider, views from the ground and from airborne platforms accompanying the racing sailplanes.

Who knows? Maybe something like this holds a clue to how our sport can build a bridge to today's younger "virtual pilots."

—Jim Kellett

*SSC Resident Curmudgeon*

## Qualifying Grand Prix Events 2009

- Soaring Grand Prix of Chile, Santiago, Jan 17-25, 2009
- Soaring Grand Prix of Poland, Zar Club, Apr. 26 to May 2, 2009
- Austrian Soaring Grand Prix, Feldkirchen, May 16-23, 2009  
<http://gliding-grandprix.lokf.at>

Information from FAI Web site:  
[www.fai.org/gliding/QSGP0809](http://www.fai.org/gliding/QSGP0809)

## Notes from the SSC Board of Directors

### Tow Planes and Pilots

The Pawnee Tost reel is still down for the rope guide tube to be bent and installed. The old yellow engine preheater finally quit and has now been replaced. The Husky is towing and many new pilots are in the training pipeline. On weekends you'll see the Husky towing as these new pilots receive their required training on actual glider tows. Currently more than eight tow pilots are qualified in both tow planes, with the number increasing.

### Gliders

**ASK-21**—The radio has a temporary fix to the radio antenna connection.

**Grob** — Currently fully operational.

**Sprite** – The radio is being monitored, but the problem appears to be fixed.

**Cirrus** – Still has a bad push-to-talk button and pilots must use a handheld radio.

### Ground Operations

#### Tow Ropes

There are now two 1500 lb. (red tape) and two 1000 lb. (white tape) ropes available for use. Duty crews need to pay attention to ensure the correct ropes and connection rings are used for each glider and tow plane combination. The Pawnee is connected with a Tost ring and the Husky with a Schweitzer ring.

#### Assistant Duty Officer Training

George Hazelrigg is putting together a new ADO training plan for next year. He'll brief the plan at the annual membership meeting and initiate the new training process at annual safety meeting.

### Membership

#### Introductory Membership Revisions

Based on our insurance requirements for SSA members to control our aircraft in flight and discussions with SSA membership services about when someone actually becomes an SSA member, the board changed the introductory membership policy to ensure we meet our insurance requirements. The change requires people to show proof they're a current SSA member or purchase a FAST voucher (the preferred method for most new members) before they can become an introductory member. Since FAST will be the primary method for people to join the club the \$50 credit for transitioning from introductory to probationary membership will not be valid after Dec. 31.

Below is the description of introductory membership, with

the changes underlined, that will be added to the operations manual.

#### 3.3.1 Introductory Members

Introductory memberships may be established for individuals who are interested in experiencing soaring and sampling SSC operations, assets and camaraderie before committing to full membership. Also, individuals who are involved in soaring elsewhere and who are in this geographic area for a limited period of time may establish introductory memberships. If an individual is an SSA member they need to provide an SSA membership number and expiration date, fill in a membership application and pay an introductory membership fee (see SSC fee schedule) for the privilege of 30 calendar days of membership. If an individual is not an SSA member he will need to who participate in SSA's FAST program (see [www.SSA.org](http://www.SSA.org)) and fill out a membership application. The FAST voucher will pay for the introductory flight and a 30 day SSC Introductory Membership. The introductory membership entitles them to utilize club equipment and assets at normal membership fees within conditions and privileges set by the board.

The board of directors reserves the right to withdraw any introductory membership for any reason deemed appropriate by the board. An introductory member has no voting rights and may participate in the club decision making process only as an observer. Introductory members who reside within 125 miles of the club's base of operations are limited to two introductory memberships per calendar year. Introductory members may not use club gliders to carry passengers or obtain ratings, recommendations, endorsements, or flight reviews.

#### SSA Affiliated Club Visiting Membership

A new "SSA Affiliated Club Visiting Membership" has been created to meet the commitment made at the First Annual Regional Leadership meeting last February to have a method to allow members of another SSA club an opportunity to fly in our club gliders with an instructor.

The board approved the description below that will be added to the operations manual and sets the daily fee for the new membership to \$10/day to match the visiting pilot fee.



**Skyline Soaring Club, Inc.** is a private, 501(c7) non-profit organization, dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of the sport of soaring. SSC is based at the Front Royal-Warren County, Va. Airport and is an affiliate club of the Soaring Society of America. For information about the club go to [www.skylinesoaring.org](http://www.skylinesoaring.org) or e-mail [welcome@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:welcome@skylinesoaring.org).

**President** — Shane Neitzey

**Secretary** — Craig Bendorf

**Treasurer** — Daniel Noonan

**Membership** — Steve Rockwood

**Chief Tow Pilot** — David Dawood

**Chief Flight Instructor** — Jim Kellett

**Skylines Editor** — Dennis Johnson

**Directors** — Robert Creedon, Spencer Annear, Paul Seketa, Craig Bendorf, Shane Neitzey





### 3.3.X SSA Affiliated Club Visiting Member

Visiting members of other SSA affiliated clubs may be interested in flying with an SSC instructor to gain experience in flying at a different location or flying different gliders. An SSA Affiliated Club Membership is limited to five days per calendar year. An individual may be granted a one-day membership upon completing a check of their SSA and affiliated club membership currency and a logbook review by a club instructor or duty officer to verify their training status. Prior to flying the individual must complete a membership application and present a check to the duty officer for the cost of the anticipated tow and glider rental plus a daily SSA Affiliated Club Visiting Membership Fee (see the SSC fee schedule).

Additional flights on that day must also be prepaid. An SSA Associated Club visiting member must fly with an SSC instructor and may not use club gliders to obtain ratings, recommendations, endorsements, or flight reviews.

### Annual Membership Meeting

The annual membership meeting will be held **Jan. 17, 2009** at Shane Neitzey's accessory building at his home in Broad Run, Va. (check the SSC Web site "Events" page for more information).

- We need volunteers and some equipment to support this meeting.
- We need to borrow a projector to display briefing slides from a laptop computer.
- We need people to pick up coffee, juice and doughnuts.
- Everyone will need to bring their own chair.

Club officers will be expected to make presentations and should contact the club secretary, Craig Bendorf, for any help or any additional information. Craig will send out a full agenda in December. The board will take a poll of the members on what they want the club to do, the next acquisition, and their view on a few club issues. The volunteer of the year award will be presented and full members will vote for new members of the board of directors.

### Nominations for 2009 Board of Directors

There are three openings on the SSC board of directors in 2009 and nominations are requested for the 2009 elections to be held at the annual membership meeting. Jim Kellett and Joe Parrish have thrown their hats into the ring and challenge others to join them. Anyone who would like to nominate someone, or volunteer to be nominated, should contact Craig Bendorf.

### Upcoming Events

- Last day of scheduled operations – Dec. 14
- SSC instructor and tow pilots' winter caucus – Dec. 20
- Annual membership meeting – Jan. 17, 2009
- Annual safety meeting – Feb. 7, 2009
- Start of 2009 scheduled operations – Feb. 7, 2009
- Region 4/2 club officer meeting – Feb. 21, 2009



- W99 wave camp – Feb. 21 to March 8, 2009

The next board meeting will be held 6 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 10 at Shane's shop in Manassas. Anyone with issues for discussion should send them to the SSC directors e-mail address: [directors@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:directors@skylinesoaring.org)

### Wave Camp and Glider Operations

Stahl Flying Services at Grant County Airport (W99) in Petersburg, W. Virginia will host several wave camps during the winter 2008-2009 soaring season. Go to: <http://wave99.info> to view the latest schedule, announcements, to sign up for alerts, to view photos and videos. Glider pilots are encouraged to sign up and advise of interest and intentions by e-mail or telephone. At this time a wave camp is scheduled for Feb. 21 to March 8, 2009. Help plan for tow services by announcing your intentions (dates of arrival, expected duration of stay, and any requests) to: [confirmation@wave99.info](mailto:confirmation@wave99.info) or by calling the airport. Shorter (2-3 day) impromptu operations will be announced on short notice throughout the winter soaring season. Visit <http://wave99.info/> to sign up for alerts and view the latest schedule, or reply by email to: [signup@wave99.info](mailto:signup@wave99.info) and advise of your interest in receiving future e-mail announcements.

The wave camp registration fee is \$20. Glider rental availability is not yet determined. Hangar space costs \$10/day with limited availability. Oxygen refills are \$30/ bottle. The on-airport campground facilities have been upgraded to include a pavilion with heated bathroom and shower facilities. Camping costs \$5 per day, per person.

Aero tow rates are \$25 to 1000 feet plus \$10 per 1000 feet over that. Cross-country aero tows cost \$135 per hour.

For information contact Larry Stahl at [larry@stahlflyingservices.com](mailto:larry@stahlflyingservices.com) or call (304) 257-4435.

### Husky Rental Rate

The Husky rental rate is \$120 per hour, \$12 per 1/10 hour, so it will be difficult (impossible) for there to be a rental charge for the Husky that would involve any cents. Thanks.

— **Dan Noonan, SSC Treasurer**

### How're Your Landings? And German?

Check out this spot landing competition video sent in by Piet Barber, SSC's Web master in exile.

[www.christophschlaeppli.ch/filme/zlk\\_2008.wmv](http://www.christophschlaeppli.ch/filme/zlk_2008.wmv)

### New Threads

I recently decided to replace my old and well-worn denim work shirt. The darn thing was 20 years old and refused to die. After several hundred washes it was more dirty white than blue. I received an e-mail catalog from Sport's Pilot Shop in which they had a very inexpensive shirt (\$29.95), so I ordered one with the glider logo. I thought the SSC membership might be interested when the conversation goes, "I just don't know what to get you for Christmas anymore."

[http://www.sportys.com/acb/showdetail.cfm?DID=19&Product\\_ID=10588&CATID=115](http://www.sportys.com/acb/showdetail.cfm?DID=19&Product_ID=10588&CATID=115)

— **Phil Jordan**

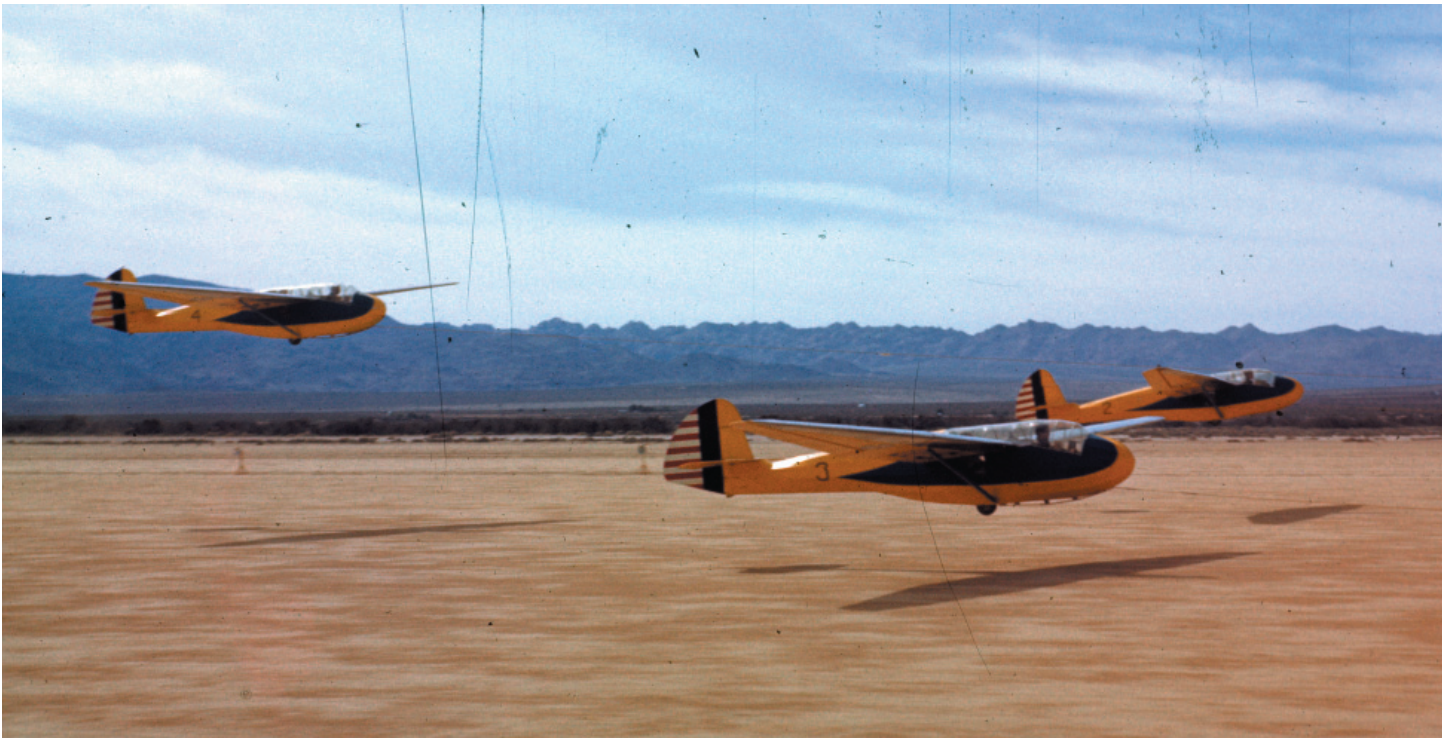


Photo by Bob Cardenas

## Save Money on Tows

Above is a photo of a triple-tow conducted during glider training (1940-43) at 29 Palms Army Airfield during World War II using TG-2 training gliders. This was standard practice during military glider operations.

As a child during the war I watched C-47 tow planes towing multiple CG-4A gliders during training exercises over my grandparents' farm near Donaldson AFB in Greenville, S. Carolina.

Think how much money we could save this way; all we need is a wider runway. By the way, there've been some multiple (two, not three) aero-tows in our area, notably at the Flying Farm Gliderport in Lovettsville, Va. This would be a good way to sharpen your formation flying skills.

— **Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon**

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## Are You Board Worthy?

In the November **SKYLINES** (p. 4) SSC secretary Craig Bendorf asked for members who might be interested in being nominated for one of the openings on the club's board of directors. Directors are nominated and elected for three-year terms at the annual membership meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 17, 2009. The club quite literally runs on volunteers. If something is to be done it's up to us to do it, there's no "they." A healthy club will have members who recognize this and gladly contribute by becoming a candidate. I'll start the ball rolling by volunteering to be one of the candidates myself. I also wish to nominate Joe Parrish, with his permission. Who else?

So that all members have a chance to consider the candidates prior to the annual membership meeting I'd like to suggest that each candidate write a succinct statement of their candidacy

and send it for inclusion in the December issue of Skylines. I plan to, and I invite all other candidates to do the same. For those announcing their candidacy in December there will be another opportunity to present a statement in the January issue.

— **Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon**

## SSA Audit Completed

The SSA is pleased to report that its auditors, Johnson Miller & Company in Hobbs, N. Mexico, have completed their audit of SSA's consolidated financial statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2007 and SSA received an "unqualified" report. The report can be accessed in .pdf format under the "News" section on the SSA Web site.

An "unqualified report" means that the auditors have concluded that the integrity and reliability of the financial system has been restored, financial statements are being prepared in accordance with appropriate accounting

rules, and there's no longer any evidence of deliberate distortions or inaccuracies in the financial statements.

The auditors reviewed SSA's "consolidated" financial statements, which combines SSA Operations, the SSA Foundation, the US Team, the Hilton Cup, and the Soaring Safety Foundation into one set of statements. As a result these statements are of somewhat limited use to the casual reader who wants to understand SSA's overall financial picture. Nevertheless, because SSA is committed to providing the membership with financial information the audit report has been posted on the Web site.

Now that the audit is complete the accounting manager, Judy Blalack, will be taking the audit adjustments and using them to bring the interim financial statements for 2008 up to date. Look for revised financial statements for SSA Operations (through the third quarter) on the Web site soon.



While the auditors have allowed SSA to make their audit opinion available online, they've asked that SSA add the following caveat.—The financial statements included in the report are the responsibility of SSA management and the auditors are responsible solely for opining on the accuracy of management's representations. The financial statements available online are presented for convenience and information purposes only. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the integrity of the information presented online readers should not rely on such information for transactional purposes. A printed copy of the financial statements and audit report will be provided on request submitted to SSA headquarters along with payment to cover the costs of copying and mailing the report.

—SSA E-News

### Parachute Packing Interval Extended

The FAA's final rule amending regulations governing the packing intervals for certain types of parachutes was published in the Federal Register Nov. 19 and becomes effective Dec. 19. The amendment extends the required packing interval from 120 days to 180 days. To read the new regulation go to: [http://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/rulemaking/recently\\_published/media/2120\\_ai85.pdf](http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/rulemaking/recently_published/media/2120_ai85.pdf)

—SSA E-News

### New SSC Commercial Glider Pilot

Today (Nov 16), of all days, I took and passed my commercial check ride in the club's Grob 103. I hope the fact that I went ahead and did it today, in such gusty conditions, reflect my enthusiasm for soaring and not just poor judgment. I didn't scare the designated examiner too much.

I want to thank Bruce Codwise for all his hard work, Bill Vickland for towing on Friday for my preparation flights, and everyone who helped or had to wait for me to get the check ride finished. I know I'm a new member and have just jumped right in to get this done. Everyone has been very supportive and gracious with their time and assistance. Thanks again to the club. Warmest regards,

—Rick Regan

### A Few Bugs

I've discovered a few bugs in the log sheet upload program that duty officers use to upload log sheets to the club Web server. Namely, many new members don't have any of their flights show up on the "Your Flights" link on the left menu. (<https://members.skylinesoaring.org/STATS/>) Take a moment to view that page and notify me if you have lots of flights that aren't showing up. I'm slowly working through the list and fixing them.

Also, I've noticed that some log sheets with terribly bogus or missing values for takeoff times and landing times are getting uploaded to the server. I'm going through all

the old log sheets and finding the ones that have bad takeoff times or bad landing times. I'm now going through 2008's numbers, and if I find a log sheet with some bogus numbers, I'll be privately contacting that day's duty officer. I'm rather obsessive about this, as this is our source of data that the board of directors uses to determine aircraft usage.

What this means to duty officers is that I've corrected the log sheet program to be even more paranoid about problems with the submitted data. From now on the program will no longer allow you to upload a log sheet with blank takeoff/landing times or have truly grotesque numbers (e.g. landing time is 115:00). Sorry for the inconvenience but I'm trying to have accurate information in the database.

I'm especially interested in feedback from duty officers who have problems uploading log sheets, especially after I've gone mucking around with the log sheet program. Just tell me when you had a problem uploading a log sheet, and for which day of operations, and I can find the log sheet that failed and work through the problems and get it working.

As punishment for these bugs, the programmer responsible is taking an involuntary 50 percent pay cut.

—Piet Barber, SSC Webmaster in Exile

### Start of Ridge and Wave Season

As expected, Sunday's (Nov. 16) weather forecast delivered - even with an almost too westerly wind component - a good day for ridge flying and, in the afternoon, wave flying picked up where the ridge left off. The wind velocity hung around the 20-knot mark most of the day.

The morning began early with Craig Sutherland coordinating the ground activity with eight visiting pilots from M-ASA. By the time I arrived at the field at 8 a.m. most of the M-ASA ridge-runners were in their final assembly stages. It was quite a sight to see, the entire parking area filled with gliders and our two tow planes to boot. Baude Litt in a South African JS1 ([www.jonkersailplanes.co.za](http://www.jonkersailplanes.co.za)) was the first to launch at 9:13 a.m. Due to Curtis Wheeler showing up early to help tow and Shane Neitzey flying the Pawnee, we were able to get 10 ships airborne in the first hour. Gotta' love having two tow planes, eh?

After the morning crunch the pace slowed just a little. We ended the day after 22 launches with a half-dozen or so gliders coming home around sunset. Several pilots reported altitudes over 11,000 feet in the wave. The flight-of-the-day goes to Baude Litt at 7:27 and the FOTD for SSC pilots goes to Mike Ash in 289 who landed out somewhere, and Vern Kline in the Cirrus, with both flying just over an hour and a half. There are some really nice high-altitude pictures on the SSC Web site from the day's flying. Go to: [www.skylinesoaring.org/FLASHSHOTS/index.cgi?mode=album&album=Wave\\_Soaring\\_KFRR](http://www.skylinesoaring.org/FLASHSHOTS/index.cgi?mode=album&album=Wave_Soaring_KFRR).

### Craig's Videos

Craig Sutherland posted video



The club's ASK-21 flies above the clouds in wave Nov. 16.

of Baude Litt's South African JS1 and SSC gliders running the ridge Nov. 16. To see the video go to: <http://vimeo.com/2275655>

## M-ASA Thanks

Thank you Bob, Hugh, Curtis, Shane, Paul, Bruce and everyone else who helped out Sunday, Nov. 16. All the visitors from M-ASA expressed their appreciation for the hospitality extended by everyone at SSC. I hope to see more Skyliners and member ships out there "representin" (as the kids say) next time.

—**Craig Sutherland**

## Hat in the Ring

After a lot of reflection I'm pleased to announce that I would appreciate your consideration as a SSC director. My current priorities include:

- Promoting dialog with other aviation organizations, e.g., AOPA, and agencies, e.g., FAA, VADoA.
- Promoting cooperation between soaring clubs, see, e.g., <http://ssa-region-iv.pbwiki.com>.
- Enhancing the club's management processes.
- Training that includes developing the skills to have fun as well as fly safely.
- Promoting social activities in the club.

For those of you who don't know me I've been an active glider pilot since 1966 and a CFI(G) since 1975, and an airplane pilot between 1973 and 1988. Over the years I've owned all or part of six gliders (currently flying an ASW-20C in a partnership) and I hold the FAI Gold Badge with two diamonds. I've been a member of four soaring clubs (including previous service as a director, chief flight instructor and secretary of SSC), a glider check pilot with the Civil Air Patrol, and a part owner and corporate secretary of a commercial soaring operation. I'm currently serving a second three-year term (through

2009) as Director for Region IV of the Soaring Society of America.

—**Jim Kellett**

**SSC Resident Curmudgeon**

## Joe Parrish Joins the Race

### Statement of Candidacy

I've given this a great deal of thought and I strongly believe that I can help serve the club as a director. I am committed to upholding the club's emphasis on instructional quality, safety, fiscal responsibility, member communications and that elusive thing called "culture" - which is really the essence of what so many of us love about Skyline. We have many things to be proud of, and also a few things that can be improved; finding the right balance requires judgment and experience. I would like to help set a course toward a better match of our club equipment, facilities and services to the size and needs of our membership. I would very much like to see the club's strategic plan used for actual decision-making, which implies regular review and update. On a more tactical level I would like to see the board of directors operate in the most efficient manner, and to increase the level of communication between the board and the membership.



**Jim Kellett (above) and Joe Parrish have been nominated for positions on the 2009 SSC board of directors.**

By way of background, I've been a glider pilot since 1993 and an instructor since 1994. Since joining Skyline I've held the positions of membership officer (1994-1998), director (1995-2002) and president (2000-2002). I also led the development of the club's strategic plan in 2000. It's reasonable for anyone to wonder if the distance from my home in Massachusetts would be an adverse factor in my ability to serve effectively as a director. I commit to attend the necessary face-to-face meetings and to make the "distance factor" a non-issue.

Thank you for your consideration of my candidacy.

—**Joe C. Parrish, SSC Instructor**

## Glider Pilots Keep It Up Longer

So, what are you going to do once you've learned to stay up? Ever thought about cutting the umbilical cord and actually using the sailplane to go somewhere? Maybe that occurred to you when you read the operations report for Nov. 16 when half-a-dozen or so pilots collectively flew over 1000 kilometers from our very own field at Front Royal. How'd they do that?

First, helping members continue to learn skills over a lifetime that will enhance their flying pleasure is why the club's training program includes the A, B, C and Bronze badge program steps. These awards, made on the basis of objectively-measured soaring skills, are designed to help pilots safely make the transition from soaring around their home airport to flying cross-country.

Second, an even better way to help Region IV soaring pilots literally expand their horizons is the excellent day-long ground school for cross country soaring provided by Jim Garrison. (Jim flies an ASG-29 and a Duo Discus from the Shenandoah Valley Soaring Club in Waynesboro, Va. He's also a member of SSC.) Jim has provided this program several times in the past and is planning to offer it again this winter. This is a must-do program for any pilot who is even remotely interested in pursuing cross-country soaring. The knowledge imparted will also heighten the pilot's enjoyment of local flights, which can be surprisingly long.

The location and date for the course will be established when Jim knows the number and location of interested participants, so if there's any chance you'd like to be involved, contact Jim at: [jcg8w@cms.mail.virginia.edu](mailto:jcg8w@cms.mail.virginia.edu).

—**Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon and Interim Chief Flight Instructor**

## Plea from Editor

Thanks for the photos that everyone sends, but please remember to provide complete caption information. Provide the names of those in the photo, "who" they are - a guest, visiting pilot, club instructor - the date, what they're doing, full name of equipment shown, and who shot the photo? The five W's. Who, what when, where and why.

**Example:** Col. Joe Blow, Mile High Soaring Club's chief flight instructor,



(left) explains to Randy Boy, a new club member (and just 14 years old), how to preflight the club's Schleicher ASK-21 before Randy's first flight at Front Royal Warren Co. Airport, Nov. 5. Photo by Dick Avedon.

— Dennis Johnson, SKYLINES Editor

## Mailing Lists

There are two new club mailing lists to which you may want to subscribe.

### **Husky@skylinesoaring.org**

This list is designed for those who fly the Husky tow plane. There may be a lot of overlap between the tow pilots list and the Husky list, but there are people who fly the Husky who are not necessarily yet tow pilots. To subscribe send an e-mail to [husky-subscribe@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:husky-subscribe@skylinesoaring.org) or go to <http://skylinesoaring.org/mailman/listinfo/husky>.

### **Cirrus@skylinesoaring.org**

This list is for those who have specific information they want to share with other Cirrus pilots. To subscribe send an e-mail to [cirrus-subscribe@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:cirrus-subscribe@skylinesoaring.org) or go to <http://skylinesoaring.org/mailman/listinfo/cirrus>.

It's recommended to use the URLs instead of subscribing by e-mail.

—Piet Barber, SSC Webmaster in Exile

## Safety Brains

Some may remember my comment during the last safety meeting that we see what we expect (remember). That was based on simulator training that showed airline pilots would not see a Cessna 172 poised to take off right where they're landing.

Here is a neuroscience result that explains why this might be happening: [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/06/30/080630fa\\_fact\\_gawande?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/06/30/080630fa_fact_gawande?currentPage=all)

"The images in our mind are extraordinarily rich. We can tell if something is liquid or solid, heavy or light, dead or alive. But the information we work from is poor—a distorted, two-dimensional transmission with entire spots missing. So the mind fills in most of the picture. You can get a sense of this from brain-anatomy studies. If visual sensations were primarily received rather than constructed by the brain, you'd expect that most of the fibers going to the brain's primary visual cortex would come from the retina. Instead, scientists have found that only twenty per cent do; eighty per cent come downward from regions of the brain governing

functions like memory. Richard Gregory, a prominent British neuropsychologist, estimates that visual perception is more than ninety percent memory and less than ten percent sensory nerve signals ..."

"The account of perception that's starting to emerge is what we might call the "brain's best guess" theory of perception: perception is the brain's best guess about what is happening

in the outside world. The mind integrates scattered, weak, rudimentary signals from a variety of sensory channels, information from past experiences, and hard-wired processes, and produces a sensory experience full of brain-provided color, sound, texture, and meaning. We see a friendly yellow Labrador bounding behind a picket fence not because that is the transmission we receive but because this is the perception our weaver-brain assembles as its best hypothesis of what

is out there from the slivers of information we get. Perception is inference."

— Richard Freytag, SSC Safety Officer

## Member Milestones

The club's operations software collects a huge amount of useful data (flight hours per aircraft, per instructor, money, etc.) which is extremely valuable in managing the club's money and equipment. It even provides flights and flight hours for every member ... but it does not collect data on individual members' accomplishments. This information is very important to the instructors who are constantly working

to improve our training program; and our training program is very definitely not limited to student pilots or to earning FAA certificates.

It spans the entire soaring life of all our members. A better understanding of our members' needs in this area will help us craft a better training program.

That's why we could really use your reporting of all milestones for 2008 before our next instructor's caucus in December. E-mail me the information on any badges earned or certificates earned, or other accomplishments you may have made in the last year.

Thanks in advance.

— Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon and SSC Interim Chief Flight Instructor



**All SSC tow pilots should subscribe to the Husky mailing list to keep up-to-date on the latest news about the club's latest tow plane.**

## BADGE FLYING





**Phil Jordan,** *SKYLINES* former editor, took his camera and photographic talents to the birthplace of aviation, Kitty Hawk, N. Carolina. These two images depict a helicopter departing at sunset in front of the Wright Brothers Monument on Kill Devil Hill (above) and the beauty of a Carolina blue sunset as lights illuminate the monument.

