

# SKYLINE



SKYLINE SOARING CLUB NEWSLETTER

November 2008

## Getting to Know the Cirrus

**As** all club members are probably aware, SSC recently acquired the use of an Open Cirrus. Since it's new to most of us, I want to talk a bit about how it flies and give some tips and tricks for using it.

In case you're unfamiliar with it the Open Cirrus is an early single-place fiberglass design with 18-meter wings. Although its performance is no longer top-of-the-line, it's still very good. It outperforms our trainers and outclasses the Sprite. With a published best glide ratio of 44:1, and an actual best glide of perhaps 40:1, it has nice long legs. With a minimum sink rate in the low 100s of feet per minute it climbs

great, and despite the long wings, it handles easily enough to make centering a thermal about as straightforward as it can be.

The Cirrus is being kept partially disassembled at the far west end of the private ship hangars, behind the Sprite as you come in the usual front door. If you recall the gigantic Capstan trailer's brief stay, the Cirrus now occupies that slot. This, of course, means that it must be assembled if anyone wants to fly it.

Fortunately for us, Shane Neitzey constructed some extra rigging aids which make assembly and disassembly a snap. It's relatively easy to do alone, and with an extra person it goes

very fast. Both wings rest on dollies, which means they don't have to be carried around at all, keeping the workload nice and light. Obviously you'll need to get a thorough checkout from an experienced member on how to use the rigging aids and assemble the glider, but it's nothing to be feared. When not assembled, the glider sits in three pieces on its dollies and stands, not in its trailer. As an aside, try not to land this glider out; it has what may be the worst trailer known to man. Bring it home so that you can use our convenient assembly aids and stow it directly in the

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Photo by Dennis Johnson

**Vern Kline and Craig Bendorf push new Cirrus pilot, Mike Ash, to Front Royal's runway 27. Dan Noonan's Cirrus is now under lease with the club and ready for proficient pilots to enjoy.**

hangar.

The cockpit is very roomy and comfortable. I fit in it great at 6'2" and found it extremely comfortable for a 3.5 hour flight recently. My feet did get a little sore, as they had to turn inwards to reach the pedals in the nose, but this is a very minor problem. All this room comes at a bit of a price: several of our more vertically-challenged members have discovered that they cannot reach the rudder pedals and keep the control stick out of their privates. As of this writing the solution is still being worked on, but it sounds like it may be possible to fit some removable blocks to the pedals to alleviate this. Aside from the pedals not going very far aft, the cockpit is nicely adjustable with adjustments on the headrest and two separate adjustments for the backrest.

You'll also discover that the canopy is not hinged in any way but simply comes off the glider entirely. This is a bit of a pain. It's advisable to secure the canopy before pushing out onto the runway to ensure that any snags encountered don't end up blocking traffic.

Like most fiberglass single-place gliders it only has a CG hook which makes the takeoff run a bit more interesting than you may be used to. If you've flown one before, or just heard people talk about it, you'll know that you have essentially no directional control for the first few seconds of the takeoff and the tow rope does absolutely nothing to keep you straight. Once again it's nothing to be afraid of, but it's good to keep in mind.

In contrast to the initial uncontrollable takeoff run, once it gets up to speed it becomes extremely responsive. Of course some people call that quality "twitchy" instead and it needs a light touch on tow. Once off tow it responds as if reading the pilot's mind.

Strangely, I found that the trim seems to always be too far back unless it's right at the front stop, even with my 200 pounds in the cockpit. Fortunately the stick forces are so light that it flies perfectly at anywhere from stall to Vne with the trim locked at the forward limit, so I haven't found this to be a hardship. I recommend simply leaving the trim at the full forward limit from takeoff to landing.

Once off tow it's also time to retract the gear. The gear lever has a strange locking mechanism that's tough to get right. It's possible to practice retracting the gear on the ground when the glider is in its cradle, and I recommend practicing it a few times on the ground to get the hang of it. And even more important than retracting it after you get off tow is to extend it when you land. This is easier, since the gear naturally wants to fall into place with the help of gravity, but it still takes some effort and wrist technique to get the lock to engage. (Warning: Pulling up on the gear handle will collapse the gear while on the ground. Do not try this.)

The instrumentation is pretty standard. The electric variometer is a bit different from others that I've seen, but it's not too hard to figure out the basic operation. Hold the big red button until it turns on, and then press the yellow and red buttons to adjust the volume. We've been having trouble being heard on the radio, so I've been carrying a handheld, but hopefully that problem will be resolved soon.

The club's requirements for the Cirrus are considerably more advanced than for the other club gliders, but not too difficult to meet. Currently the requirements are a private pi-

lot glider certificate, 75 flights as pilot-in-command, with 12 flights in the past year, and the appropriate instructor endorsements. The rental rate for the Cirrus is \$24 per hour.

All in all, the Cirrus is a great addition to the club. It's loads of fun to fly and deserves to see a lot of use.

—Mike Ash

## Copy That

### SSA Board of Directors Elections

Phil Umphres, Region 10 director and current treasurer, will assume the post of chairman of the board, effective January 1, taking over from Dianne Black-Nixon. Al Tyler was elected as first vice-chairman as well as being re-elected as Region 5 director. John Dezzutti will serve as Region 1 director and as a vice-chairman. David Pixton was elected as a director-at-large and appointed to serve as treasurer. Cindy Brickner, director from region 12, will serve as a vice-chairman as well as secretary.

—SSA News

### Design a Trophy

Through a generous gift an endowment for an 18-meter nationals trophy is in place. As we have no current trophy SSA requests proposals from the membership for its design and construction in time to present it to the 2009 winner. Since this will be a traveling trophy, awarded each year at the competition, it must be sturdy and include a strong container to protect it from damage. It would also be beneficial for the design to have surfaces to inscribe the winners' names for many years. Beyond that creativity and ingenuity are encouraged and all proposals will be reviewed by the endowment donor and the SSA.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is Dec. 31 and the winner will be announced by Jan. 31, 2009. Completion of construction by the final day of the 2009 18-meter nationals competition is mandatory. Send design and cost proposals

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**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





to Doug Jacobs at [soarer@cox.net](mailto:soarer@cox.net) and SSA awards chairman, Jay McDaniel, at [soaringjay@cox.net](mailto:soaringjay@cox.net).

—**SSA News**

## Badges / Records

Beginning early in 2009 SOARING Magazine will be featuring a series of articles highlighting the SSA's ABC Training Badge Program, obtaining FAI Badges, and setting state, national and world records. Personal stories from pilots who have been successful at these endeavors are being solicited from the membership. Whether you've recently set a new national record, or just obtained your Bronze SSA badge, your words and example can inspire other SSA members in attempting their own achievements. Essay length is flexible; photos are not required but certainly acceptable. For more information, contact Chuck Coyne, SOARING editor at [editor@ssa.org](mailto:editor@ssa.org).

—**SSA News**

## New Members

Welcome to new member, John Kouris, a young man of 15 years who made his first three flights at Skyline Soaring Nov. 1. Also welcome introductory members Carlos Ferriera, Brian Altman and Giselle Minoli.

## First Solos

On Oct. 5 Matt Jackson soloed on his fourth flight of the day. Skyline Soaring Club members, Matt's father and sister watched a smooth take-off, followed by a picture-perfect landing. Congratulations to Matt and his instructor, Bruce Codwise.

On Oct. 11 Ertan Tete made his first solo at Front Royal in the ASK-21. Ertan, who had soloed previously in his native country, Bulgaria, and at a soaring club in Cincinnati, recently joined Skyline Soaring. Welcome.

Rick Regan, a professional jet pilot, made his first glider solo at Front Royal Oct. 26.

**New SSC member, Ertan Tete, lands the ASK-21 after his first solo at Front Royal Oct. 13.**

**Photo by  
Dennis Johnson**



## Final Glide

Some of the Warrenton Soaring Center crew may remember tow pilot Bill Bradbury. I just heard that he died. Interment will be at Arlington Cemetery in December. Bill also flew P-51s in combat during WWII, the ETO if I remember correctly.

—**Spencer Annear**

## Flying Spiders

Saturday, Oct. 11, was one of those rare days when you could observe one of the more obscure soaring animals, the flying spider. There are several species, including several of the genus *Lycosa*, that travel by sitting on top of some elevated point, such as a tall stalk of grass or a tree limb, and when the conditions are right, spinning a two to three-meter long strand that is picked up by the wind. Such flying spiders can travel many miles. Only twice in many years have I seen mass migrations of these spiders. They're quite tiny, less than one cm. in diameter, including legs, and can usually be seen only when the long strands of filament sparkle in the sun as they fly along. It can be both quite spooky and beautiful. Balloonists have reported seeing clouds of them flying along - seems they like to travel in the same conditions balloonists like. There were many in the air last Saturday around Front Royal. One landed on the total energy probe of our ASW-20C and built a small triangular web between the horizontal tail and the tip of the probe before I found it.

—**Jim Kellett, SSC Resident Curmudgeon**

## Log Sheet Program Updates

There is a new version of the log sheet program at <https://members.skylinesoaring.org/LOGSHEET/>.

Download *ssc53.dmg* (for Mac) or *ssc53.zip* (for PC) and extract as usual.

- The tables directory in the archive has the new tow rates; everything was raised by \$2 for SSC tows. The rates are equal for the Pawnee and the Husky.
- In the Startup / Staff & Settings page, choose the primary

tow plane, usually the Pawnee.

- In the Operations / Flights page, the controls at the bottom have been rearranged to allow you to enter a tow plane for each flight. If we only use a single tow plane on a given day you don't need to record this, and it will default to the primary tow plane you set earlier. This allows tracking how many flights each tow plane made, and allows proper billing if we ever use tow planes with different rates on the same day.
- The menu shortcut Control/M loops through the previously used tow planes, just like Control/G cycles through the gliders.
- The Shutdown / Tow Plane Data page allows you to enter tach times, gas added, and comments for up to two tow planes.

—**Jonathan Kans**

## Weekday Flying

There are many new members these days and a few might not know about the [weekday@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:weekday@skylinesoaring.org) mailing list. This list contains announcements and notes about the ad hoc weekday operations. Unlike the members mailing list it is limited to those who subscribe to it. Members who wish to be on the weekdays mailing list must send an email to [weekdays-subscribe@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:weekdays-subscribe@skylinesoaring.org) or go to <http://skylinesoaring.org/mailman/weekdays>. You may view the weekdays archive by going to this URL. [Archives]. You do not need to be subscribed to the weekdays list to view the archives.

## New Tow Pilots

I've completed full Husky checkouts with Bill Vickland, Martin Gomez, Paul Sekata and Curtis Wheeler. That makes five Husky tow pilots including myself. I've also been flying with David Dawood, Martin Walker, Craig Bendorf, Steve Wallace, Hugh McElrath, Dick Otis and Chris Groshel.

With Simon Thorton leaving the area, and the venerable Eric Litt out for repairs, we've been down these two great tow pilots.

The Husky will soon allow Martin Gomez, Craig Bendorf, Chris Groshel, Martin Walker and Hugh McElrath to be fully-fledged Pawnee drivers. I love it when a plan comes together.

Martin Gomez made his first solo tows in the Pawnee Nov. 1. Let's all welcome him and help make his achievement worthwhile.

—**Shane Neitzey, SSC President**

## Winter Ad Hoc Operations

For those of you who may be new to the club you may not be familiar with our winter ad hoc flight operations that occur between the last day of scheduled flight operations, Dec. 15, and the first day of scheduled operations next year, Feb. 6. Winter is a great time to fly at Front Royal due to mountain wave and ridge soaring days that are quite common.

The whole process normally starts when one of the experienced club members notices that the weather forecast predicts a good day for flying and a flurry of e-mails go out to the membership looking for a tow pilot and anyone interested in flying. Those who want to participate in winter ad hoc flying must comply with section 4.2 "Staffing for Non-

Scheduled Days" of the SSC Operations Manual. Some of the key points are:

- Operations on nonscheduled flying days must conform to all club rules and a duty officer must be chosen from those Skyline members present and qualified.
- Those members participating assume responsibility for club equipment and operations.
- The operations logs for each day must be loaded to the club website, and checks and receipts sent to the treasurer.
- The group organizing such operations shall notify one of the directors or a club officer of their intent and any particulars of the event.
- Notify the club membership through e-mail of the event so that any interested members can participate.
- There may be interest shown by other neighboring Clubs to have some of their members participate. If they bring their own gliders and are an active SSA member they can become a Visiting Pilot Member for \$10 per day and be towed by our tow aircraft at normal prices. We do ask that they download and read our operations manual before they arrive so that they understand our procedures and can help out. If they want to bring their own tow aircraft we ask that they contact the FBO as a courtesy, read our operations manual and work closely with the acting SSC duty officer to facilitate smooth integration of operations.

If you come out for winter flying, make sure that you dress warmly but not too bulky so that you can move in the cockpit. If you plan on flying in mountain wave make sure you familiarize yourself with the proper procedures outlined in the Glider Pilot Handbook and are familiar with FAA and club (which are stricter) oxygen requirements. Plan to stay the whole day and doing some work since there are no assigned duties and everyone is expected to help.

—**Craig Bendorf, SSC Secretary**

## Notes from the SSC Board of Directors

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### Volunteers Needed for 2009

The SSC board of directors will have three openings in 2009 that need volunteers to fill these important and very rewarding positions. We currently have one open position, and Rob Creedon and Shane Neitzey will be completing their terms in January. If anyone is interested in being nominated, or have someone they would like to nominate, send an e-mail to the board or contact Craig Bendorf, SSC secretary. These are critical positions that directly affect how the club operates and its future direction.

The club has an urgent need for a new Grobmeister for 2009. Frank Banas has done an outstanding job as the Grobmeister over the years, but would like to step down at the end of the season. Anyone interested should contact the board or Frank Banas to learn more about this rewarding position.

### Tow Planes

The Pawnee has been having some starting problems, which seems to be the result of fouled plugs. The maintenance officer is looking into different plugs that may be more resistant to fouling, otherwise the plugs will need to be

checked more often. The Pawnee Tost reel is still down for the rope guide tubing to be bent into the proper shape and installed.

The Husky has been flying tow pilot training flights for the last two months. The Aviat tow release has been installed and it's now available for towing.

## Gliders

All four of the club gliders are currently operational and flying. The Sprite and Cirrus have radio transmit problems, but they receive OK. If you fly these aircraft before their radios are fixed, be sure to take a handheld radio.

## Droppable Tow Ropes

The club will be using 1000 lb. droppable tow ropes for the light-weight ships (Sprite, 1-26s, etc.) and 1500 lb. tow ropes for the two-place and heavier private ships. The 1000 lb. ropes have white tape on the ring connections and the 1500 lb. ropes have red tape at the ring connection. Slugs will not be used on the droppable tow ropes due to higher probability of losing a rope. The droppable ropes will be used while the Pawnee Tost retractable system is inoperative and for all Husky operations.

At the beginning of the day both tow ropes should be laid out next to the end of the runway to ensure efficient operations. Before each launch the hookup crew must check with the pilot to make sure they know which rope to use for each glider.

**[Note:** There are several 200 foot tow ropes and two adapter ropes. Two of the tow ropes have red tape on the ends that indicate 5/16" 1500 lb. rope. One of these red ropes has Tost rings on each end, the other has Tost on one end and Schweizer on the other; good for towing by the Husky.

One tow rope has white tape on the ends that indicates 1/4" 1000 lb. breaking strength. One tow adapter that has red tape is 1500 lb. and for adapting Tost to Schweizer. The Schweizer system is on the Husky and the Tost system on the Pawnee. The other adapter has a Schweizer ring for use on the Sprite. —*Shane Neitzey*

## Husky Loan

The board discussed the Husky loan and agreed to continue the plan to make the first payment to the members at the one year point, May 1, 2009. As we get closer to that date we will determine what payoff schedule the club can afford with the desire to pay off the loan as soon as practical.

## FRR Air Show

Even though the Front Royal Air Show was canceled due to weather the board would like to thank the club members who volunteered to help. Some people didn't get the word and showed up for the air show on Saturday and our members took time to show them the gliders and our operations.

Special thanks to Steve Rockwood for all the work he did to coordinate the schedules and activities. As promised he will be awarded a free tow and one hour of glider time for taking the lead for the club.

## Student Training Kits

The board approved a proposal by Jim Kellett and the SSC

instructors for creating and selling a student training kit that should make it easy to ensure that new students start their training with the right materials. The board approved the proposed general plan, initial investment and inventory.

Steve Rockwood has volunteered to be the initial manager of the program. Due to the time needed to obtain the items and flesh out the implementation details the board recommended the program go into effect for the 2009 flying season and that the plan and process be briefed to the members at the 2009 Annual Membership Meeting

## Glider Ballast

The club has new yellow glider ballast bags. These bags weigh 20 lbs. each and are kept in the plastic bin in the trailer. Take care of them and ensure they're returned to their bin at the end of the day.

## Upcoming Events

Last day of scheduled operations – **Dec. 14, 2008**

SSC Annual Membership Meeting – **Jan. 17, 2009**

Flight Instructor's Revalidation Clinic – **Jan. 17-18, 2009**

SSC Annual Safety Meeting – **Feb. 7, 2009**

Start of 2009 scheduled operations – **Feb. 7, 2009**

West Virginia Wave Camp – **Feb. 21 to March 8, 2009**

## 2009 Dues

The board reviewed the current annual membership dues and agreed that they should remain the same for 2009. SSC has maintained a large enough membership to cover a majority of the fixed expenses and the club is financially sound.

## Service Membership

The board reviewed how many service members we have and their current roles. The board agreed that the club still needed tow pilot, flight mechanic and flight evaluator service members, however the club does not require any glider instructor service members.

## 2009 Membership Meeting

The 2009 Membership Meeting is currently scheduled for Jan. 17, 2009 at 10 A.M. at Shane's accessory building at his home. Maps and details will be provided in December. Club officers will provide briefings and updates in their areas as they did last year. The board will brief the overall health of the club, the way forward for 2009 and take a new survey of the club member's preferences for future activities, procurements and direction.

## Wave Camp

The board has let Jan Scott at the Petersburg airport know that we are willing to provide some support to the wave camp. We are waiting to find out what support he may need.

## Board Meetings

The next board meeting will be held at 6 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 13 at Shane's shop in Manassas. Any members who have issues for the board should e-mail the SSC Directors at: [directors@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:directors@skylinesoaring.org).



# Autumnal Virginia as Seen From a Unique Motorglider

## Many of you

know Joe Parrish, one of Skyline Soaring Club's flight instructors. Joe lives near Boston and commutes down at least once a month, sometimes more, on a combination of business and pleasure, if you can call flight instruction for our member's pleasure.

Joe is blessed with, in his own words, "an incredibly handsome identical twin brother," Jerry, who lives out West.

Jerry spent 6,000 hours building a lovely Berkut airplane, a canard pusher that looks like the many Rutan-designs you've seen elsewhere. The really good news is that Jerry's life got full of other stuff, so the bottom line is that Joe now owns this beautiful machine. This model has fully retractable gear, is a tandem two-place pusher, and a cruising speed of ca. 200 knots. So Joe's sacrifice in commuting all the way from Boston to Front Royal is now mitigated in some part by the fact that he can fly himself down in about two hours, and in a seriously cool, attention-getting airplane.

Joe says the best L/D is stated to be about 18:1 at 110 knots. In every other respect though, this machine wants to go fast. Well, it wants to go fast once it gets rolling, which means Joe's not all that comfortable putting it in or out on Front Royal's mere 3000' runway.

That's why on Oct. 26 he presented me with a slightly delayed birthday present of an hour-long tour of the valley, starting and finishing on Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport's (KSHD) 5,000' runways.

Pat and I met Joe on the ramp about 10 a.m. with the plane parked next to some older, but still interesting planes — a P-51, B-17, B-24 and B-25. There was a three-day visit by these antique warbirds with rides for sale in each of these lovely WWII antiques. Yes, Joe's Berkut attracted as much attention, at least among the real pilots around.



**Joe Parrish (front) and Jim Kellett preflight Joe's latest commuter vehicle, a canard wing, pusher aircraft called a Berkut, before a tour over the Virginia countryside, Oct. 26.**

Finally, we figured out how to get a creaky 73-year-old curmudgeon up on the wing and into the back seat and strapped in.

The cockpit gets a little busy on takeoff and landing (did I mention this plane is fast?), so I got to watch and listen while we taxied to the departure end, doing the run-up on the way, to avoid prop ding hazards of a stopped run-up. It's easy to taxi with the front canopy up and presents an unusual view, watching the horizontal tail in front and the elevators moving up and down. The cruise pitched prop doesn't blast the plane off the chocks on takeoff and Vr is somewhere above 80 knots. But boy, once the gear comes up it's a real homesick angel.

Under a clear sky we cruised up the Massanutten to Front Royal where tried to raise Skyline ground on the radio, to no avail. There were gliders on the ramp so we know someone was planning to fly. Then back down the Blue Ridge to KSHD.

Flying from the back seat is interest-

ing; you can't see the panel and there're no rudder pedals. But like the big boys (did I mention this plane is fast?) you wind up not needing or using the twin rudders to fly, just to takeoff, land and taxi.

The roll rate is amazing - just think turn and off you go. Joe mentioned that the transition from his commuter airplane, with a pattern speed of 100 knots and a cruising speed of 200 knots, and the gliders he instructs in, with a pattern speed of 55 knots and a cruising speed of 60 knots, takes some getting used to.

I learned that when I made a medium-banked turn down around Luray and discovered that a 180 degree turn in a 200 knot airplane pretty much takes the entire valley between the Blue Ridge and the Massanutten.

Anyhow, all too soon we were back at KSHD doing some hangar flying over a nice lunch at the restaurant there, and then Joe took off again back to Boston.

It was a good day to be alive.

—Jim Kellett

**SSC Resident Curmudgeon**