

# SKYLINE



SKYLINE SOARING CLUB NEWSLETTER

January 2009

## Bela Gogos Makes His Final Glide

**Bela Gogos**, a founding member of Skyline Soaring Club, died suddenly of heart attack Dec. 18 at his Gainesville, Va. home.

The 84 years of Bela Gogos' life was an amazing adventure. Born in Pápa, Hungary in 1924 he began flying gliders in the 1930's and 1940's. Late in World War II he was flying fighters against the Russians with the Hungarian Air Force. In 1945 he taken as a prisoner of war by the Russians and spent over two years at a work camp inside Russia. Returned to Hungary in 1947 Bela joined an anti-communist group which led to his arrest as a political prisoner and eight years in Soviet prisons and gulags. He was released and returned to Hungary just in time to flee to Canada during the few weeks of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. In Canada he met and married Susan, herself a famous Hungarian athlete who defected from Hungary's communist rule.

Bela earned a degree in electrical engineering in 1962 and started a long career with IBM. Bela and Susan moved to America where he worked at IBM in Manassas in the 1970's when he joined the Virginia soaring community, flying his ASW-19 at the Warrenton Soaring Center.

Bela became a founding board member of Skyline Soaring Club, serving from 1991-1995, and was club treasurer from 1991-1994.



Photo by Dick Otis

**Bela Gogos looks over Front Royal Airport after a long career of flying adventures, from the war-torn skies above Europe to the freedom of soaring in America.**

He was the featured speaker at the club's 10th anniversary gala, delivering a riveting essay on "How Aviation Shaped my Life" which included many of his amazing exploits during the war.

Bela documented his early life in a book, "Youth Lost in Red Hell," and several Skyline Soaring Club members were honored to review early drafts of the book.

Bela was also a most generous philanthropist who provided a \$50,000 gift to SSA to provide youth scholarships for soaring and which supported many deserving young people to learn the sport

that helped define his life. Between 1998 and 2001 18 students each received \$2500 to advance their soaring training.

In 2003 Bela finally retired from soaring and selling his last glider. Susan and he lived in Gainesville. Bela is survived by his wife, Susan, and daughter, Lily.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Jan. 9 at Lee Funeral Home, 8521 Sudley Road, Manassas, Va. (703) 368-9800. Susan Gogos requests that in lieu of flowers friends make donations to either the Diabetes or Heart Associations.

# Remembering Bela Gogos

*Never a cross word and  
always a gentleman.*

—Richard Freytag

*Bela was truly a one-of-  
a-kind mentor, aviator  
and friend. We will miss  
him.*

—Dick Otis

## Bela's Bananas

I met Bela when I first started my soaring training at the Warrenton Soaring Center in 1990. I was training with Leo Meacher on Thursdays and Fridays and Bela was one of the few other pilots to come out on weekdays. Being young(er) and eager I helped Bela assemble his glider a few times; my first experience hefting long fiberglass wings. He was always patient and willing to educate a novice on any point about flying.

I did not know him well, but I always remember him as a quiet, calm man, with a gentle demeanor. He exuded an air of confidence; you just knew he knew what he was doing.

I was especially impressed that first summer of flying as I only saw him land once. Each day I'd have finished my training flights and loitered around the airfield for a few hours and Bela would still be out there somewhere after everyone else was shot down by weak conditions.

One funny thing I remember about Bela was his black banana. He always took an over ripe (I thought) banana as an in-flight snack. I said to him once, "Ya don't think that banana's a bit past its prime, do ya?" and he replied, "Nah, they're better this way." A banana and a bottle of water and he'd be off soaring for hours.

Club members told me snippets of his story - the captivity in Russia - and they said "no one appreciates the freedom of soaring in America like Bela." It certainly seemed so.

I also remember Bela returning to Hungary when the communist government fell in 1990. After over 34 years in exile he was excited to see old friends once again and fly in his home country as a free man. He told me he planned to get a glider and fly over Budapest, even though he was quite

sure that absolutely forbidden. When he returned from the trip he said he'd rented a glider from a local club and made the flight. I don't think anyone could've stopped him.

I wished I'd seen him again in these past few years when I've returned to soaring. I only hope I can appreciate the freedom of soaring as he did.

—Dennis Johnson, *Skylines Editor*



Photo by Dick Otis

**Bela Gogos' flying career spanned eight decades. He was an inspiration to anyone who ever met him.**

## Gogos' Gap

One of my favorite memories of Bela goes back to our days of flying at New Market. Bela would get up and be gone for a lot longer than any of us could imagine. I asked Bela one day how he could do it. He then told me of "the gap" and invited me to follow him, me flying the Sprite. So I got my introduction to "the gap" with real positive results. I know there are many of us that affectionately refer to the gap as "Gogos Gap." Many times after my introduction I would ask "where is Bela?" The response would be, "Where else? At the gap." I loved to follow Bela anytime he was up.

—Kevin Fleet



Photo by Dick Otis

**Bela and Susan Gogos each emmigrated from Hungary to Canada after World War II. They met and married in 1957 and then moved to America in the 1960's.**



# Copy That

## Log Sheet Updates

I've written a program to make searching for the log sheets that have been uploaded to the server a bit easier. If you have needed to search for a log sheet in the past and got discouraged by the massive RAWLOGS directory, then you might find this useful. <https://members.skylinesoaring.org/LOGSHEET/LOG-SEARCH/>

Note: The duty days with 25 uploads are usually me debugging something and not an indication of the duty officer problems.

—Piet Barber, Webmaster in Exile

## 2009 SSF Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic Schedule

The Soaring Safety Foundation offers glider flight instructors the ability to renew their FAA flight instructor certificates in a clinic tailored to the need of glider pilots and students. CFIs can renew any certificate, such as glider, airplane or rotorcraft. The clinics are also open to any glider pilot interested in learning more about soaring. You do not need to be a flight instructor to attend.

Jan. 17-18, Windsor, Va.

Jan. 24-25, Chicago, Ill.

Feb. 7/8, Perkasio, Penn.

Feb. 21-22, Anchorage, Alaska

March 7-8, Mason, Ohio

March 14-15, Naples, Fla.

For more information go to [www.soaringsafety.org/events/firc.html](http://www.soaringsafety.org/events/firc.html)

## Historic Soaring Movie Available Again

The Disney movie "The Boy Who Flew with the Condors" is now available on DVD from Amazon and Disney. I thought I'd pass on this news since many of us got their first taste for the great sport of soaring from this episode of the Wonderful World of Disney.

Kind regards,

—Andrew Hall, Buenos Aires, Argentina, SSA E-News

## Involvement Opportunity

Are you Looking for a New Soaring Challenge? The SSA Growth and Development Committee needs members to be committee "idea people," "project managers" and "overall program manager" to sustain current membership, recover prior members and extend membership to new soaring pilots and power pilots. Contact Phil Umphres at [pumphres\\_ssa@yahoo.com](mailto:pumphres_ssa@yahoo.com) or Dave Newill at [dbnsoaring@ameritech.net](mailto:dbnsoaring@ameritech.net).

—SSA E-News

## D.C. ADIZ Becomes Federal Regulation

The FAA has announced that the new Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA) will go into effect in February. The SFRA replaces the DC ADIZ and will be published under 14 CFR Part 93.

The government issued the rule despite overwhelming opposition from general aviation pilots. More than 22,000 pilots wrote to the FAA opposing the rule.

"It's extremely disappointing that the ADIZ—something that was hastily implemented as a temporary measure—has become federal regulation," said Andy Cebula, AOPA executive vice president of government affairs.

"We never gave up trying to eliminate the ADIZ, working with security officials, members of Congress, the White House, and the FAA."

Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area Special Flight Rules Area is a 30-nautical-mile radius, extending from the surface up to 18,000 feet msl and centered on the DCA VORTAC.

The ADIZ Notam will go away but pilots flying through the area will need to comply with the same rules as they have for years. See AOPA's ADIZ Operations Checklist. Incorporating current policy, anyone who willfully violates the SFRA will be subject to criminal penalties.

Special procedures at Leesburg Executive Airport in Leesburg, Va., are not included in the rule and will continue to be controlled by Notam.

As mandated earlier by the FAA, pilots who will be flying in or within 60 miles of the SFRA must complete the agency's online course: "Navigating the New DC ADIZ," by Feb. 9.

—Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association E-News

## Club Badges & Records 2008

A / B Badges - Tom Park

Silver Altitude - Frank Banas

Silver Distance - Frank Banas, Craig Bendorf

Gold Altitude - Gordon Roesler

Pilot Certificate - Mike Ash, Tom Park, Rob Creedon

CFI / FOI - Craig Bendorf

## BADGE FLYING



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 [welcom@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:welcom@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



## Triple Tow

The photo of the three TG-2s [see SKYLINES Dec. 2008] was most certainly taken by a young Bob Cardenas who was a pilot at 29 Palms and had been involved in gliding as a youth. Among General Cardenas' many cutting-edge flying accomplishments was assembling the X-1 team and flying the mother plane that dropped Chuck Yeager on his sound barrier breaking flight. Go to <http://members.tripod.com/derekhorne/cardenas.html> for a fascinating biography of a most gifted pilot and a stand-up American. Also a good read is "The Quest for Mach 1" (Penguin Books, ISBN 0-670-87460-4)

— **Phil Jordan**



## Winter Highs

Some of you know there's winter wave flying over at W99 (Grant Co. Airport in Petersburg, W. Va.), about an hour and a half's drive from Front Royal. An old friend of Skyline, Larry Stahl, runs the place. It's a lovely field and a great place to get in some "other-than-FRR-experience," as well as some great wave soaring. Navigate to <http://wave99.info/> for more information.

Wave flying brings its own challenges and risks, as well as pleasures, and the operator at "SoaringNV," a new commercial operation at Minden, Nevada is none other than former Skyliner, Fred LaSor. Fred's written a nice, concise article with tips for winter wave flying which you can read online at <http://tinyurl.com/8yeuzp>. Although the article is written about flying at Minden, which is much higher flying start to finish than east coast flying, the substance of the article is still relevant.

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

## SSC Board of Directors Notes Tow Planes

The Pawnee Tost reel system is fully operational again so it can tow without having ground crews chasing after the ropes between launches. However the Husky still uses droppable ropes. The Pawnee also had its ignition system replaced and it now starts easily in cold weather. The Pawnee will be going into the shop for its annual inspection sometime in January but the Husky will remain available for ad hoc glider operations.

## Annual Membership Meeting

The club annual membership meeting will be held Jan. 17 at Shane Neitzey's accessory building at his home at 17015 Gaines Road, Broad Run, Va. Check the club Web site "Events" page for a Map Quest link.

Everyone will need to bring their own chair. Club officers will make presentations on the club's financial, membership, instructor pilot, tow pilot and equipment status. There will also be presentations on changes in training for 2009 and how well the club did in 2008. The board will be taking another poll of the members on what they want to see the club do in the future, for its next acquisition, and their views on a few club issues.

The volunteer of the year award will be presented and full members will cast votes for new members of the board of directors.

## Nominations for Board of Directors

The club has three openings on the board and is requesting nominations for the 2009 elections that will be held at the annual membership meeting Jan. 17.

Jim Kellett and Joe Parrish have put their names into the hat and have thrown down the gauntlet for others to join them. Anyone who would like to nominate someone or volunteer to be nominated should notify Craig Bendorf, the club secretary.

## ADIZ Training

New FAA regulations require that any pilot who flies within 60 miles of the Dulles VOR complete the "Navigating the New DC ADIZ" online course in the Aviation Learning Center on the FAA

safety Web site ([www.faasafety.gov](http://www.faasafety.gov)) by Feb. 9.

## Annual Safety Meeting

The SSC annual safety meeting will be held at 10 a.m., Feb. 7 at Front Royal airport. This meeting is mandatory for all club members prior to any flying after that date. There will also be mandatory training for duty officers and assistant duty officers, tow pilots and glider instructors after the safety meeting. If you miss the safety meeting you'll be required to view the videotape of the meeting before flying. The 2009 season starts after the safety meeting.

## Upcoming Events

**Jan. 17** - Annual membership meeting

**Feb. 7** - Annual safety meeting and start of 2009 flying season

**Feb. 21** - Region 4/2 club officer meeting

**Feb. 21 to March 8** - W99 wave camp

## Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Jan. 14 at Shane's shop in Manassas. Any members with issues for the board should send them to the SSC director's e-mail address: [directors@skylinesoaring.org](mailto:directors@skylinesoaring.org)

## SSA Meetings

The Soaring Society of America board of directors meeting and annual membership meeting will be held Jan. 23 in Rosemont, Ill. All members are welcome. The Soaring Safety Foundation Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic will be held at the same location Jan. 24-25. For more information go to [www.soaringsafety.org/events/firc.html](http://www.soaringsafety.org/events/firc.html).

—**SSA E-News**

# Know Your Ground Operations

## Ground Operations Test Required Before Flying in 2009

*In order to ensure a high degree of safety and to promote good relations with other airport users, it's imperative that all SSC members be capable and competent in ground operations. Furthermore, proficiency in ground operations is required to obtain your glider pilot rating. For these reasons SSC is adopting a policy of minimum ground operations proficiency and testing. Two tests will be administered to SSC members on the following time schedule:*

**Before flying after the fifth time at the field members will be tested on these areas of proficiency:**

### Basic Safety

Safe areas (under the terminal roof and on the grass area next to the terminal), caution areas (all aircraft operating areas and the grass landing zone), avoiding propellers, consumption of alcoholic beverages (not on the field until the end of the day, not in the terminal area, not before arriving at the field), be observant.

### Operations Areas

Runway, grass landing area, taxiway (may be used for landing), ramp area; use extreme caution whenever you are in any of these areas

### Ground Handling

- Launch
- Rope strength requirements
- Types of rings (Schweitzer and Tost), which to use where
- Which rope to use
- Location/type of hookup on each glider
- Hand signals
- Launch responsibilities—clear pattern, clear runway, check tail dolly off, check spoilers closed, glider rudder waggle, tow plane rudder waggle
- Proper way to run CG hook gliders

### Tow Car Operation

- Speed limit
- Areas of operation
- Use of taxiway by tow car

- Retrieving gliders from the grass
- Driving from taxiway onto the grass (beware of the culvert)
- Proper operation of the tow car while towing gliders
- Parking the tow car at the terminal, on Runway 09 and to retrieve gliders at midfield

### Reference Materials

SSC Operations Manual / Glider Flying Handbook / Soaring Safety Foundation Wing Runners Course - [www.soaring-safety.org/school/wingrunner/toc.htm](http://www.soaring-safety.org/school/wingrunner/toc.htm)

**Before flying after the twentieth time at the field members will be tested on these areas of proficiency (in addition to the above):**

- Location and storage of club equipment: batteries, radios, tow rope, spare rings, spare tires, rags, canopy cleaner, etc.
- Proper care of gliders: wipe down procedure, cleaning canopies, general canopy care, spoilers kept unlocked, radios on during the day
- Proper movement of gliders out of and into the hangars, proper use of the ASK-21 dolly
- Preflight for each SSC glider
- Glider assembly/disassembly as possible
- Open and close hangars
- Uncoiling and inspecting tow ropes
- Coiling and storing tow ropes
- Securing gliders in windy conditions
- Proper use of tow car, especially in windy conditions
- Batteries, radios on charge at the end of the day
- Emergency procedures

### Reference Materials

**(in addition to the above) SSC Duty Officer Instruction Manual / Emergency Response Plan**

### First Level Ground Operations Test

1. It is dangerous to stand south of the drainage ditch between the ramp and

the taxiway because:

- (a) The tow car uses this area to retrieve gliders
- (b) The taxiway is a landing zone for gliders
- (c) This area is used by taxiing airplanes
- (d) Gliders are very silent on approach
- (e) All of the above

2. The main hazard in the ramp area is:

- (a) Taxiing aircraft
- (b) Glider movements
- (c) The possibility of getting hit by a propeller
- (d) The possibility of fire from aircraft fueling

3. When a pilot yells "Clear:"

- (a) He wants you to clear the ramp for taxi
- (b) He is about to start the engine, watch out for the propeller
- (c) He is asking you to check that the aircraft is untied
- (d) He is announcing that he has completed her pre-start check list

4. Alcoholic beverage consumption is:

- (a) Not permitted on airport property
- (b) Not permitted by pilots within eight hours of flight
- (c) Not permitted by SSC members
- (d) Should not be conspicuous
- (e) (b) and (d) and is permitted by SSC members only after all equipment is put away

5. Gliders may land:

- (a) Anywhere on airport property, including the ramp area
- (b) Only on the runway or the grass
- (c) On the runway, the grass and the taxiway
- (d) On the overrun strips east and west of the runway
- (e) Both (c) and (d)

6. Gliders should be pushed forward (nose first) because:

- (a) It enables the pilot to see the traffic pattern
- (b) It keeps the people pushing behind



the wing

- (c) It makes it easier to line the glider up with the runway centerline
- (d) It doesn't matter whether the glider is pushed forward or backward

7. Never push a glider by:

- (a) The tail surfaces
- (b) The trailing edge surfaces of the wing
- (c) The canopy
- (d) All of the above

8. Use extreme caution opening and closing canopies because:

- (a) They are fragile
- (b) They are expensive
- (c) They are not easy to replace
- (d) All of the above

9. The ASK-21 rear canopy must remain closed at all times unless someone is entering or exiting the rear cockpit because:

- (a) When the canopy is open, it can set the glider on fire
- (b) Wind can easily damage the rear canopy
- (c) It would damage the glider if someone takes off with it open
- (d) The front canopy cannot be latched shut unless the rear canopy is closed

10. When walking a glider it is best:

- (a) To have only one person on a wingtip
- (b) If sufficient people are available, use one on each wingtip
- (c) To never push a glider near the wingtip
- (d) Both (b) and (c)
- (e) Both (a) and (c)

11. Explain why the answer you chose to question 10 is correct.

12. When towing the Grob with the tow car, you should use someone at the nose of the glider:

- (a) To push down on the nose when the glider is turned so that the tail wheel is not scrubbed
- (b) To prevent the glider from rolling into the tow car
- (c) To control the glider in windy conditions
- (d) To keep the glider tracking behind the tow car

13. When entering or exiting a glider, you should never touch the canopy be-

cause:

- (a) It leaves fingerprints, degrading visibility for the next pilot
- (b) You can break the canopy
- (c) Oils on your fingers cause the plastic to craze
- (d) Both (b) and (c)
- (e) Both (a) and (b)

14. When opening and closing a canopy:

- (a) Never hold the canopy by the plastic at the top of the vent window
- (b) Let the canopy drop shut for the last inch to assure that it is properly closed
- (c) Reach through the window and hold the canopy by placing your hand up on the top of the canopy
- (d) Always use two people, one on each side of the canopy to protect it

15. Explain the correct answer to question 14.

16. It is important to announce yourself before pushing a glider onto the runway:

- (a) To be sure no power traffic is on the approach
- (b) To be sure that no glider is about to land
- (c) To indicate to the tow plane that you are ready to launch
- (d) Because doing so assures that you will not interfere with runway traffic
- (e) To add a level of safety although you must also clear the area visually

17. FAR 91.309 notes that a tow rope must:

- (a) Be at least 200 feet long
- (b) Must be at least as strong as 80 percent of the gross weight of the glider
- (c) Must have the appropriate rings on each end
- (d) May not be stronger than 200 percent of the gross weight of the glider
- (e) All of the above
- (f) Only (b) and (d)
- (g) (b), (c) and (d)

18. There are tow rings on each end of the tow rope. Which of the following are true?

- (a) They are all the same
- (b) There are two different types—Schweitzer and Tost
- (c) There are three different types—Roladen, Tost and Shemp-Hirth
- (d) They are interchangeable

19. Explain the rings and their use

20. Which of the following are true?

- (a) The tow hook for the ASK-21 is in front of the main wheel
- (b) The tow hook for the Grob is in the nose
- (c) The Sprite uses the Tost ring
- (d) Most CG hook gliders have the tow hook in front of the wheel inside the wheel well
- (e) Both the ASK-21 and Grob use the Tost ring

21. The signal to the tow plane to take up slack in the rope is:

- (a) Arm waving back and forth below the waist
- (b) Circular motion of the arm above the head
- (c) Both arms horizontal
- (d) Arms crossed above the head
- (e) Draw hand across the throat

22. The signal to the tow plane that the rope is tight is:

- (a) Arm waving back and forth below the waist
- (b) Circular motion of the arm above the head
- (c) Both arms horizontal
- (d) Arms crossed above the head
- (e) Draw hand across the throat

23. The signal to stop the launch immediately is:

- (a) Arm waving back and forth below the waist
- (b) Circular motion of the arm above the head
- (c) Both arms horizontal
- (d) Arms crossed above the head
- (e) Draw hand across the throat

24. Which of the following is the wing runner responsible?

- (a) Checking the pattern for traffic
- (b) Checking the runway for obstacles (deer, bear, etc.)
- (c) Assuring that the glider tail dolly is off
- (d) Assuring that the glider spoilers are closed
- (e) Assuring that the glider pilot has completed the check list
- (f) Assuring that the glider canopy is locked shut
- (g) Assuring that both glider and tow plane have done a rudder waggle

25. Which of the following is true when

running a wing on a CG hook glider?  
 (a) The upwind wing should be held low  
 (b) You should be briefed by the pilot on how to run the wing  
 (c) The wing should be held level unless otherwise instructed by the pilot  
 (d) You should not push or pull on the wing tip  
 (e) You should be sure the tail dolly is off before beginning the takeoff  
 (f) You should run as fast as you can (comfortably) before letting go  
 (g) You should be sure that the glider is lined up properly

26. The tow car should not be driven on airport property faster than:  
 (a) 10 mph  
 (b) 15 mph  
 (c) 25 mph  
 (d) 30 mph  
 (e) There is no speed limit on airport property, it is private property

27. The tow car may be driven on:  
 (a) The hangar access road, the taxiway and the ramp area  
 (b) On the taxiway only when towing a glider  
 (c) On the grass when retrieving a glider from the grass landing area  
 (d) On the road, but only to get gas  
 (e) On the taxiway when it is necessary to get to the intersection quickly

28. The tow car may be driven:  
 (a) Directly onto the grass to retrieve a glider that has landed in the grass  
 (b) Only on the taxiway to retrieve a glider that has landed in the grass  
 (c) The tow car may not be used to retrieve a glider that has landed in the grass  
 (d) Onto the grass, but only from the hangar end of the taxiway

29. It is extremely important to use caution when driving on the grass:  
 (a) To keep from getting stuck in mud  
 (b) Because there is an invisible culvert that you could drive into  
 (c) To watch out for landing aircraft  
 (d) Because there are ticks in the grass

30. When retrieving a glider from mid-field:  
 (a) The tow car should be parked to the right of the taxiway, not blocking the

midfield off ramp  
 (b) Be sure to bring the dolly for the Grob  
 (c) Drive the tow car onto the runway if the glider stops short of the intersection  
 (d) If an aircraft is taxiing behind the glider, speed up so as to expedite the return to the ramp  
 (e) None of the above

## Second Level Ground Operations Test

31. Where are the following to be found?

(a) Batteries for the ASK-21 and Grob  
 (b) Battery for the Sprite  
 (c) Tow rope and tow rings  
 (d) Spare tires

32. Explain how canopies are to be cleaned. Demonstrate.

33. How many persons should be used to get the ASK-21 out of the hangar? Where should they be stationed? Demonstrate.

34. How many people are needed to get the Grob out of the hangar? Where should they be stationed? Demonstrate.

35. Explain the use of the red line and box painted on the tarmac in front of the Grob hangar.

36. What is the proper use of the ASK-21 dolly? Demonstrate.

37. How are the spoilers to be left in the gliders? Why?

38. Where are the batteries charged?

39. What precautions should be taken when charging the radio batteries? Why?

40. What precautions should be taken when opening hangar doors?

41. When should the hangar doors not be opened?

42. How are the hangar doors raised and lowered? How are they secured?

43. If, during operations, the wind increases to 20 knots or more, what ac-

tion should be taken?

44. In the event of threatening thunderstorms that appear mild and isolated, what action should be taken?

45. How close may thunderstorms be to FRR before operations must be shut down?

46. What is the rated tensile strength of the tow ropes?

47. Which gliders can be towed with which ropes?

48. Can the Sprite be towed with the stronger rope?

49. What is the proper procedure to tow, with the tow car, a glider when the wind is above 20 knots?

50. In the event of an accident, what is the Club procedure?

51. Name the items that must be picked up and returned to the hangar at the end of the day.

52. Where are ballast weights to be kept when not in the gliders?

53. What is the inspection procedure for the tow ropes?

54. Why is it important to assure that the tow ropes are not knotted?

55. Demonstrate how to assemble a tow rope.

56. What is the tensile strength of the tow rope on the Tost reel? Why can this rope be used to tow all the Club's gliders?

57. What is the proper procedure for wiping down gliders after the day's flying?

58. How are the club hangars properly secured at the end of a day's flying?

59. Where may cars park near the hangars?

60. Where may cars be parked when operating on Runway 09?

# Soaring Beyond the Turbulence of Life

*You couldn't plot a flight plan for Bela Gogos' life. But he thinks there's been one nonetheless.*

Originally published in the  
Winchester Va. Star  
July 24, 1999

"People say, 'It happened by accident.' In life there is no accident. What happens to you has to happen to you. You have something to accomplish in your earthy travel, and until you finish that, you don't go."

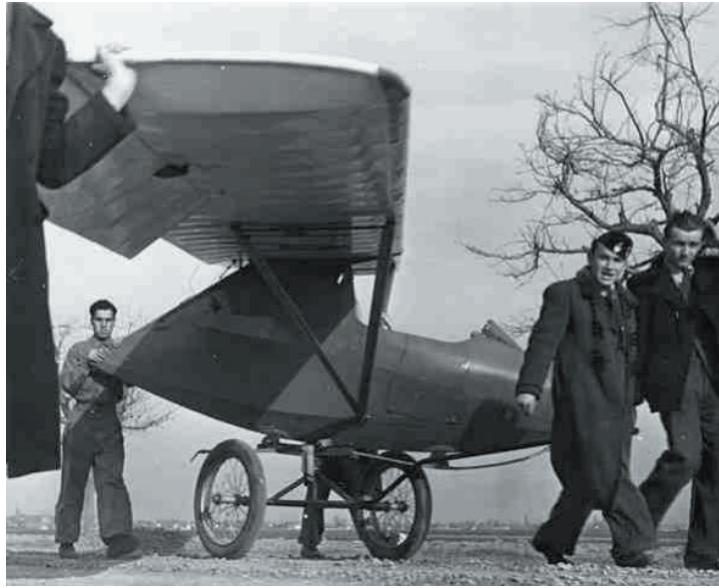
Bela Gogos is speaking at the Front Royal Warren County Airport. His English is perfect, if a bit accented. He holds forth from a wobbly conference table producing a copy of his as-yet-unpublished autobiography and various papers documenting an extraordinary life.

[His autobiography, "Youth Lost in Red Hell" ISBN-10, 1571973729, was published Jan. 2004. Now out of print it is still available at Knauff & Grove Soaring Supplies for \$24.95. Go to [www.eglider.org](http://www.eglider.org) or call (814) 355-2483.]

He and his wife, Susan, look like typical retirees, dressed in casual wear with a new minivan parked outside. But to reach this sunny point in American senior citizenship the 75-year-old Gogos made a journey through some of the darkest places mankind has created.

Born Feb. 9, 1924 in Pápa, a town in western Hungary not far from the Austrian border, Gogos joined his first soaring club in 1939 after arguing the permission to fly out of his widowed mother. Gliders of the 1930's were wood-framed, covered with fabric and ground-launched with bungee cords or by a car.

In 1939, the year World War II began, Gogos enrolled in the Hungarian Air Force cadet program. In June 1942 Hungary entered the war on the Axis side fighting primarily against the Russians. Having completed his studies at the Hungarian Air Force Academy Go-



**Bela Gogos, second from right, after a flight as an air force cadet in Hungary in the 1940's.**

gos was assigned to a fighter group in August 1944. By this time the fate of Hungary's wartime effort was already sealed with the Red Army bulldozing its way across Central Europe.

According to his autobiography, on Christmas Eve, 1944 Gogos learned the Soviet noose around Budapest, where he was visiting his girlfriend, was tightening. He also learned two Bucker Jungmanns, fueled and ready, were parked at Hosok (Heroes) Square. He went to the square, and seeing nobody claiming ownership of the planes, took off with the help of a couple bystanders.

Gogos avoided the tall buildings and wires of the city and flew to a base at Szombathely, 150 miles away, coming under Russian fire as he did. From there, he was transferred to Zeltweg, Austria.

Gogos' last military flight was in February 1945. The Allies were bombing any and all fuel trains, so getting planes off the ground after that was impossible.

On May 8, 1945 American P-51 Mustangs destroyed several of the Hungarians' planes on the ground at Zeltweg and Gogos knew the end of the war

was at hand. Gogos told his commanders he wanted to fly to Italy to ensure he would be captured by Americans. They showed him a map designating American and Russian occupation zones in Austria and assured him if he stayed he'd be captured by the American forces. They were lying.

At 4 o'clock the next morning Gogos heard a commotion in the hall and a language he didn't recognize. When two soldiers opened his door he saw they were wearing the red star of the Soviet Army. Gogos was so upset by his superior officers' lying to him, and the prospect of being

held in a Soviet prison camp, that he briefly contemplated suicide.

The Soviets ordered the prisoners to surrender their weapons (any prisoner found with a weapon would be shot on the spot). They sent Gogos and about 2000 prisoners on a forced march under the harshest conditions. Prisoners were given 250 grams of bread and a small, salted fish each day. They had no ready water supply which, combined with the salt from the fish, led to dehydration and a great deal of physical pain.

Gogos slept on the ground at night and was forced to walk through a battlefield in Graz, Austria, rife with the smell of decomposing bodies.

After four days the prisoners arrived at a barbed wire compound with no shelter. There the prisoners were sorted by the amount of fat on their buttocks. Prisoners deemed fit to work were sent to the Soviet Union where the Russians assured them they would be treated well and could eventually apply for Soviet citizenship.

It was a 24-hour journey to the Soviet Union in train cars into which prisoners were herded like cattle.





**Far left: Bela Gogos was born in Pápa, a small town in western Hungary.**

**Left: Gogos pilots an open-cockpit glider in the early 1940's.**

At the end of the line a fellow prisoner, Aurel, Gogos' former history teacher for whom Gogos had been caring, died with his head in Gogos' lap. Gogos had to carry his teacher's body outside the prison compound and throw it on a pile.

Gogos ended up in a POW camp in Saratov, a large industrial city near the river Volga. The POWs were used like slave labor. Their main nutrition was bread, and how much each received depended on how much of his work he accomplished.

German POWs in the camp told the new arrivals the worst work detail was the Moscow-Saratov gas pipeline. Transferred to a smaller camp, where he slept on straw under a leaky tent, his first work detail was the worst possible, the gas pipeline. Prisoners had to dig a six-foot deep, three-foot wide trench for the pipeline. Gogos' group was given a daily quota which they met the first day and never again.

Their declining physical condition made it impossible.

Prisoners were sometimes sent to Kolhos, community owned and operated farms to harvest potatoes. Gogos also worked in a furniture factory where pay depended on output. However, work making furniture also resulted in gifts of vodka and food. Looking for vodka was almost the end of Gogos. During the spring of 1947 he nearly died when he drank what another POW thought was vodka, but was actually methyl alcohol.

In October 1946 Gogos was given two postcards to send to relatives saying he was alive and well treated. He learned just before Christmas 1946 that his family had survived the war. Until then neither knew the fate of the other.

Gogos was repatriated to Budapest on Aug. 7, 1947 and was compelled by deadlines to take an exam for an electrical engineering course

at the university in Budapest with no preparation. He passed but his student career was not to last long.

One of Gogos' relatives, a general in the Hungarian army, had organized an anti-communist group and Gogos agreed to represent it in Budapest. An informer tipped off the Hungarian Secret Service (AVO) and Gogos was roused from his sleep on March 15, 1948 by two policemen who knocked him unconscious and spirited him away before anyone could notice. Ironically, March 15 is the anniversary of the 1848 Hungarian revolution against Habsburg rule, a national holiday celebrating freedom.

That day began eight and a half years of imprisonment for Gogos. Early in his captivity Gogos was beaten nightly in an effort to get him to divulge the names of other members of the opposition. Even though Gogos said two thirds of the nation was taking part in groups work-

ing against the communists, members did not deal with each other directly, nor were they aware of one another's identity.

Gogos was imprisoned in a two-by-three foot, windowless cell when he wouldn't talk. He was forced to stand all day every day and his legs swelled to twice their normal size. He was deprived of food and water. When they couldn't break him the AVO gave Gogos over to the Russians who charged him with espionage, sabotage and organizing against communism.

Before being taken to the Soviet Union he was held at an estate outside Vienna that he had flown over as a pilot. Every night at six Gogos could hear prisoners being taken away, followed by the shots of their execution.

After a brief trial Gogos was sentenced to 25 years at hard labor. Gogos' first prison in Russia was Lubyanka Prison in Moscow. He was

held there for three years in a four-by-eight foot cell under a 40-watt bulb that burned round-the-clock.

Mental nourishment was as important as food in this environment, said Gogos. During his first year in Lubyanka he walked from one corner to the other of the cell every minute from reveille to bedtime while he thought about his past life. In that first year he estimated walking 12,000 miles in that manner. During his second year Gogos persuaded a friendly guard to get him two pieces of paper and a pencil so he could do calculus problems, something he found very difficult to do without paper. His third year led Gogos to find the power of prayer shortly after New Year's and he prayed and meditated as he walked. But after six months he lost hope and decided to commit suicide.

Gogos decided it would be very hard to assemble the rope necessary to hang himself with a guard looking in the peephole to the cell every 20 minutes. Still he found a way to assemble the materials necessary. Every other week prisoners had a bath and used coarse towels to dry. Gogos plucked two strings from the towel after each bath planning to have a 52-string rope ready to hang himself by the end of the year.

On the day he decided to commit suicide Gogos hooked his rope to a rod that ran across the light fixture. At that very moment, in an event Gogos describes as divine intervention, a guard opened the door to start the transfer procedure. It was Christmas Day, 1951.

While divine intervention may have saved Gogos, his treatment following his release from Lubyanka was unholy. He was loaded aboard a specially designed prison car called a Stalopinski, after a former Russian minister of state security. The Soviets learned that more prisoners could be transported lying down than standing up, so they built caged shelves where prisoners were forced to lie down. The space was so tight prisoners had to decide whether to lie on their stomach or back. Once in place they remained in that position except for two breaks each day. Gogos' trip lasted six weeks, his destination was Inta, part of the Soviet Gulag system above the Arctic Circle. Once

there, he was given a number: A-548. Such designations allowed guards to tell at a glance if an inmate was a political prisoner. Soviet criminals were given the right to terrorize political prisoners.

At Inta Gogos worked in a mine for four years. Some inmates were former Soviet soldiers who'd been captured by the Germans, an offense punishable by 21 years of hard labor.

The 4,000 prisoner camp was effectively run by 250 Blatnois, career Soviet criminals who could do anything to the prisoners, including murder, with virtually no fear of retribution. Gogos said Blatnois played cards once a week with the low scorer having to kill someone the group had marked for death.

Gogos witnessed one particularly brutal stabbing death that resulted in only a two-month sentence for the Blatnois who committed it. Eventually a group of prisoners banded together and attacked the Blatnois and they were transferred to another camp.

Gogos was repatriated to Hungary from the Gulag in 1956 and fled to Canada during the uprising of the same year.

There a friend introduced Gogos to another Hungarian exile, Susan, a former member of the Hungarian national track team who defected during a tour of Italy. They met Feb. 24, 1957 and married on April 20.

Gogos earned a degree in electrical engineering in 1962 from the University of Toronto and joined IBM the same year. He later earned a master's degree and retired from IBM as a senior engineer in 1987. He moved to America and ended a long career with IBM in Manassas, Va. In 1993, the Hungarian Air Force promoted him to colonel.

Through all his ordeals, Gogos never lost his love of flying. "It grows deeper and deeper," he said. He's logged more



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than 2,000 hours in gliders and reached a high altitude of 30,000 feet. Of flying his glider Gogos said, "You feel that you are alone, but really you are not alone because God is with you." Gogos said soaring gives him a feeling of freedom that only someone who has lost their freedom can truly feel.

Despite everything that has been taken from him, Gogos said he still has much to give. One thing he is giving is the Gogos Scholarship for youth who want to learn about soaring. He's also bringing a girl to the United States from Hungary for a life-saving surgery unavailable in her homeland.

"It's a good feeling to give someone a life start."

After talking for about a half hour, Gogos and Susan go to a nearby hangar to load their glider for a trip to Sugarbush, Vt.

"Nice air, cool air, clear air ... good lift" is Gogos' assessment of his destination.

Gogos said he doesn't soar too much because a hobby done too much turns into something like work. But at Sugarbush he'll soar 30-50 hours in two weeks, making 10-12 flights.

In summing up the flight path of his life Gogos had this assessment, "I would start the same way and do the same way as I did. Even through the 10 years in the Soviet prison it wasn't wasted. They say you are the product of your past, and I am."