

# SKY L I N E S



SKYLINE SOARING CLUB NEWSLETTER

October 2009

## Helping My Kid Sister Soar

My kid sister, Eryn, traveled from her Oregon home to Colorado for a vacation this past June. While there she discovered a lump in her breast, was diagnosed with cancer and flew to Washington, D.C. for treatment. She moved in with me and will remain here for the duration of her treatment, but that's another story. I've long wanted to take Eryn for a glider ride, but residing in Oregon somewhat complicated the matter. Working in and around doctors' appointments and the energy-zapping chemotherapy treatments, we decided that Saturday, Aug. 22 would be the day to try to get her in the air.

We awoke to partly clear skies in Woodbridge but with the forecasted promise of deteriorating weather. As we crested the hill outside Front Royal things changed dramatically, as the Christmas carol says, "... the weather outside was frightful ..." with a broken overcast at 700 feet topped with a solid layer at 2,500. It was hardly a day to soar with the eagles. Running that risk against her pending treatments we decided to run the weather god gauntlet.

Since I hadn't flown since June I deferred the pilot-in-command duties to Joe Parrish, the day's duty instructor. He graciously accepted the task. With Steve Wegner at the duty officer-controls, Martin Gomez preflighted Pawnee 866 and took it for a sniffer flight. Quickly returning to runway 27 he announced, "Deteriorating condi-



Photo by Rob Creedon

**Joe Parrish prepares to fly with Eryn Creedon for a very special eight-minute flight of the day, Aug. 22.**

tions but currently good enough for a flight."

We strapped Eryn into the front seat of the Grob with Joe at the controls. With some creative towing, Martin pulled them under, over and around the low, scattered and eerily dark clouds, often disappearing from view of the Earth-bound observers.

At a mere 2,300 feet, with the meteorological gods conspiring against him, Joe was compelled to pull the yellow knob and begin what proved to be the flight of the day. Circling straight above the numbers at the west end of the field I watched as my kid sister experienced her first flight in a powerless aircraft. After just a few minutes Joe announced his intention to land. Together they flew downwind, turned base and final and executed

a perfect touchdown, all in eight minutes. No sooner had we pushed the glider onto the taxiway than the ceiling came down even farther and rain began to fall, ending the day.

At eight minutes, maybe it wasn't the longest flight in the books, but it was the flight of the day for Aug. 22. And even though it was not the prettiest flight, it was memorable if for no other reason than, thanks to the efforts of Joe Parrish, Martin Gomez and Steve Wegner, Eryn soared like an eagle.

Gentlemen, I cannot thank you enough for safely pushing the weather envelope just enough to enable my kid sister to forget about her cancer, if only for a few minutes, on a cloudy and rainy day at Front Royal.

— Rob Creedon

## New Charity Committee

The SSC board approved starting a committee to study setting up a charitable organization to provide scholarships for young people to learn how to fly gliders, among other things.

We need members, especially ones with experience starting or running a charitable organization, to meet and discuss the issues and help set up the organization.

—**Spencer Annear, SSC Director**

## More See and Avoid

Jim Kellett found an excellent article online by the British Gliding Association and we think it's worth your time to read these thoughts on how "see and avoid" works in theory and in practice. To view the article go to: <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/20090817FOD200927SeeAndAvoid.pdf>.

The AOPA also published an excellent item on the same subject at: <http://www.aopa.org/epilot/redirect.cfm?adid=18376>.

If you need a reminder of why this is relevant, after reading these two articles read the article on last year's glider and tow plane mid-air collision, published in the August 2009 Soaring Magazine (page 9). It's actually three pieces, written by the instructor, the student and the tow pilot involved. Nobody ever plans to go out and have an accident, but they do happen. Don't let down your guard.

The Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association's latest newsletter also has a sobering article on page 4 that details a near mid-air collision. They almost lost three aircraft and four club members in an instant. Read it at: <http://www.m-aso.org/currconv.pdf>. I highly recommend it. Safe Soaring.

—**John Noss, Skyline Safety Officer**

## Aerobatics on tow?

To see a video of a glider performing aerobatic maneuvers while on tow, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r2u9oWaiSU&feature=PlayList&p=A6A42149EAB75B4E&index=0&playnext=1>. Don't try this at Front Royal.

## Are you a Flight Instructor?

Have you ever thought about being a certified flight instructor? Would you like to learn what they study? If you're a CFI or if you've ever thought about becoming one, here's the

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best way to review many of the knowledge areas CFIs must know. The SSA Region IV will host the Fifth Annual Winter Soaring Safety Foundation Flight Instructor Revalidation Clinic Jan. 9-10, 2010, at the Udvar-Hazy Museum on the grounds of Dulles International Airport.

The fee for the class is \$150. If you're an active club instructor SSC will reimburse \$125 of that cost. All materials are provided by the SSF.

Reservations should be made as soon as possible. For information, or to reserve a slot at this course, e-mail Jim Kellett at: [Jim@Kellett.com](mailto:Jim@Kellett.com).

—**Jim Kellett, Region IV Director, Soaring Society of America**

## TRACON Open House

The Potomac TRACON is again holding an open house, Nov. 14. It's a great chance to tour the facility and ask questions about the FAA and air traffic control. To register you must e-mail your name, pilot certificate number or the last four digits of your social security number, country of citizenship (if other than U.S.) and the tour time you prefer (two tours are offered—10 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m.) to: **Randolph.horner@faa.gov**. The same information must be provided for any guests. Review the information at: [http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/headquarters\\_offices/ato/tracon/pct/raincheck.htm](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/tracon/pct/raincheck.htm), especially if you're not a U.S. citizen.

This is also an occasion to put a club glider on display. Any volunteers? It's also a great venue to interact with non-glider general aviation types. The more we know about each other, the better.

—**John Noss, Skyline Safety Officer**

## A Gathering of Eagles

One of the advantages of serving as SSA Region IV Director is the privilege of being invited to all sorts of events at other clubs. A particularly memorable event was the celebration the Cumberland Soaring Group's 50th anniversary, Sept. 19.

For those who've not visited CSG they've got a spectacular location, right on the ridge at a loop of the Potomac River in Cumberland, Md. The airport is actually in West Virginia, in spite of the official name of Cumberland Regional Airport. CSG offers very light traffic, a huge hangar, long and wide grass and paved runways and a fleet of good gliders.

But on Saturday, Sept. 19 it was the gaggle of soaring luminaries who founded CSG that attracted the attention of club

### 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 — Craig Bendorf

Secretary — Jim Kellett

Treasurer — Daniel Noonan

Membership — Steve Rockwood

Chief Tow Pilot — Curtis Wheeler

Chief Flight Instructor — Jim Kellett

Safety Officer — John Noss

Skylines Editor — Dennis Johnson

Directors — Shane Neitzey, Spencer Annear, Paul Seketa, Jim Parrish, Vern Kline





members and guests.

CSG founders who attended included Bill Holbrook, the pilot who flew the first out-and-return 1000-kilometer flight in the U.S; Ed Byars, who (with Bill Holbrook) organized the "Soaring Symposia" training series for advancing the skills of cross-country pilots, and won the coast-to-coast Smirnoff Derby in 1974; and Lanier Frantz, owner of Newcastle International Airport in the central Shenandoah Valley and home of the Blue Ridge Soaring Society.

Bill and his wife Sophia flew in from their home in Tucson, Arizona for the occasion while Ed flew his Bonanza up from Clemson, S. Carolina, and picking up Lanier on the way. These three pilots are each members of the Soaring Hall of Fame.

CSG's Tim Long organized the event, which included an afternoon of flying, a cocktail hour and presentation ceremony featuring a nostalgic show of images from CSG over the years, including contests, flying experimental machines and promoting soaring. Among the notables who appeared in the photos was none other than Werner von Braun, an enthusiastic glider pilot who flew with CSG.

Let's hope that in 2041 there's still a Skyline Soaring Club for our children and grandchildren and to enjoy.

## Weekday Flying

Club members are trying to organize more flying on weekdays in the waning weeks of the season. Check the roster frequently for updates. If you want to fly on a weekday, particularly if you want instruction, contact the instructor early. Even if you do not want instruction it's smart and helpful to let the tow pilots and instructors know you'd like to fly. Remember, volunteers are taking a day out of their lives to provide towing and instructional services for the rest of us. This is not a commercial operation, so show them the consideration they deserve. Often there will be entries in the "notes" section of the roster by the instructor-du-jour indicating who's planning to fly. Just to come out to help others fly; a bad day at the airport is



**Rob Creedon creates soaring fine art with his camera and Photoshop skills.**

still better than a good day at the office. The days may be getting shorter, but some of the best soaring conditions of the year often occur in October.

—**Jim Kellett, Skyline Soaring Club Resident Curmudgeon and Flight Instructor**

## Christmas Party Anyone?

Shane and Valerie Neitzey have generously offered the use of their shop, next to their home in Gainesville, Va., for our annual Christmas party, Dec. 5.

It's now listed on the club website's "events" page and more details will be published in the November Skylines.

We will need a few sturdy volunteers to come out early, about 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, to provide the muscle to convert a working shop into a holiday ballroom. At least four or five would be sufficient. These prestigious positions will go fast, so hurry and sign up now.

It's always been a potluck party; bring your own adult beverages and something tasty to share, and the club will fund the soft drinks.

—**Jim Kellett, Skyline Soaring Club Resident Curmudgeon and Party Animal**

## 2010 Soaring Calendar

SSA is offering a special promotional price for the 2010 SSA Calendar to members. Calendars will cost \$6 plus shipping. (Normally they are \$12.95 +) Send an e-mail to: [dan@arclt.com](mailto:dan@arclt.com) with "SSA Calendar" in the subject line and

state how many you want. The club will charge you \$6 per, plus your share of the shipping, around 25¢. Bickering over the shipping costs will not be tolerated (OK, it will be tolerated, but you will be mocked in private) Calendars will be distributed at the annual meeting (not the safety meeting) which is normally held in January. Ordering deadline is Oct. 15.

—**Dan Noonan, SSC Treasurer**

## Help the Economy, Buy SSA

I drink my coffee from an official SSA coffee mug each morning and I've sweated through a few SSA baseball caps. It may not be as helpful as willing the SSA your estate (which is an option), but I reckon that buying some SSA stuff is a painless way to support the cause of soaring, and maybe the economy (of China where they make all the stuff).

I've also been approached by other SSA members when I'm traveling and they see my hat. It's always nice to chat with another member of the secret soaring brotherhood. Anyway, this is just my suggestion to support the sport by buying calendars, T-shirts, coffee mugs and bumper stickers from the SSA. Who knows? It just might inspire someone to join when they see that glossy calendar pinned to your cubicle wall.

—**Dennis Johnson, Skylines Editor**

## Cockpit Notes

I placed some draft "cockpit cards" in the four club aircraft. My intention is to collect in one place the information you're likely to need while flying (and preparing to fly)—the preflight inspection, before-takeoff and before-landing checklists, operating limitations, weight and balance information, and speed-to-fly rules of thumb based on the polar charts.

Of course, this is no substitute for a thorough reading of the pilot operating handbooks, but I hope this helps to place often-needed information where it's convenient. After some time to correct any errors and react to your feed-

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**Top: Craig Bendorf, SSC president, provides smiles to a passenger.**

**Middle: Elaine Chou helps Mike Ash complete a positive control check.**

**Bottom: Igor Boras gives the thumbs up on a FAST ride with Bob Sallada, Sept. 13.**

**Photos by Martin Gomez**



# Martin's First Glider Solo Flight



**Top: SSC tow pilot Martin Gomez lands the club ASK-21 at Front Royal after his first solo flight in a glider. Bottom left: Martin pushes the ASK off the runway (solo) after his first solo. Bottom right: SSC instructor Joe Parrish signs off Martin for his milestone flight.**

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back, I plan to print them on heavy stock and laminate them for each cockpit. If you're interested I posted the current draft of the cards online at: [http://noss.ws/temp/Cockpit\\_Cards.pdf](http://noss.ws/temp/Cockpit_Cards.pdf).

The file also includes the polar charts so you can see how the speed-to-fly numbers were derived. If anybody wants the editable master file in PowerPoint format (you could personalize your own version) or the spreadsheets where I did the polar calculations, drop me an e-mail and I will send it or provide a link. As this continues to be a work in progress, feel free to provide comments. Fly Safe.

—**John Noss, Skyline Soaring Safety Officer**

## Young Eagles

A friend is looking for a way for Boy Scouts to earn their aviation merit badges. I was wondering if any members are willing to give rides to a Boy Scout or two ... or 10, as your guest. If you're an EAA member this can count as a Young Eagles ride. I'd offer to do it myself but I'm not yet rated in gliders. If

enough of you are interested I suppose we could organize a Young Eagles day on a weekday. I would be happy to tow. Thanks.

—**Martin Gomez**

## Letter from the President

October has arrived and we only have about two and a half months left of the scheduled 2009 soaring season. So far the club has been doing well with more than 960 tows and 673 hours of soaring in the club and private gliders. Fall is here and soon the leaves will be changing and the air will be crisp and clear. The beauty of soaring over the ridges near Front Royal in the fall is something I look forward to each year since the season normally brings some great flying weather. If you haven't been to the field lately this is the time to come out and enjoy the beauty of the sport.

However, not everything has been going perfectly due to a rash of ADO no shows. When someone doesn't show up to perform his duty it requires someone else to pick up the slack, which is unfair to those who pull their normal duties and, in some cases, causes safety concerns. We're a club and everyone

is required to perform periodic duty to support the club's activities. Once the schedule is posted it's up to the member to perform the duty or find a substitute. It is not always easy to find a substitute, but I recommend that when you have a conflict and an e-mail to the entire club fails, try to contact members who have duty on days when you're free. Sometimes others are happy with their schedule and hope that someone else will volunteer first but are willing to trade if approached directly. However, you must plan ahead and not wait till the last minute if you want to be successful.

As the season starts winding down and we start looking at next year, there will be a few key club positions opening up. Currently the most immediate and important position is treasurer. Dan Noonan has served the club for many years and it's now time to let him take a break. Due to the importance of the job and the time involved, the treasurer is not required to pull any other duty for the club. If you're interested in this position contact any board member or talk to Dan about the job.

In January we will also be voting for two new directors and we're looking for members who want to get more in-

volved in running the club.

One last note, the operations manual has been updated and posted in the club website documents section. Make sure you take a look at the changes involving membership, tow pilots, Sprite and Cirrus operations, and Appendix B.

## Too Old to Soar? Never.

I took my 88-year-old mother, Adriana Johnson, up for her first glider flight Sept. 4. We were lucky to have booming conditions, beautiful blue skies and picturesque fluffy white clouds, and we flew for one hour and seven minutes, usually between 4500 and 5000 feet.

The lift was so widespread that we didn't have to thermal much and could make long glides in every direction and only gentle turns. It was the perfect day for a novice's first flight. We had to deploy the spoilers from 5000 feet all the way to the ground to land. She enjoyed the flight thoroughly, with the only problem being getting her in and out of the

aircraft - well, she's less than five foot tall and 88.

Does anyone know the oldest pilot or passenger to fly with SSC?

—**Dennis Johnson**  
**Skylines Editor**

## Woodstock Airport For Sale

There's a grass strip airport in Woodstock, Va. for sale. It might be of interest to some members. The asking price is \$899,000. The grass runway is 3,000' X 100' and could easily be widened by at least 100' feet on each side. The grass runway is smooth, well graded, and drains quickly. The property totals 68 acres, most of which is tillable. The land on each side is currently planted with corn. There's a small wooded area. There is a metal 60' X 56' hangar on the west side and a few small buildings. Electricity and a well that produces potable water are



also on the property. The property has been divided into nine residential lots, each one of which has passed percolation tests and has an approved septic tank location. So technically the property is set up to be developed as a private airpark, but full development might be resisted by the neighbors. It is depicted on the Washington Sectional as the Woodstock airport, immediately west of the town.

If anyone is interested in buying some or all of it, feel free to contact me for more details.

—**Bill Burner**

## News From the SSA Board Meeting

The Chapter Rebate Program returns. When SSA was faced with the fiscal crisis the board canceled this program as one part of the recovery. It was not a popular step with SSA clubs and chapters, but on Jan. 1, 2010 the rebate program will return. SSA hopes the revised procedures and guidelines will make it easier to operate, and the revised schedule of rebates will be welcome to SSA Chapters in Regions II and IV (and particularly their treasurers.)

There was much concern about the increasing complexity and time required to process badge claims for the silver, gold and diamond badges. It seems that, while the technology has made huge strides forward in recent years (e.g., replacing barographs and cameras with electronic flight recorders), the guidelines for processing claims has been static. This results in the imposition of requirements that are not only no longer useful, but are actually hindering the processing of claims. For example, there have been instances of a pilot flying a legitimate badge flight only to discover that one of his partner's names is still on the flight record, and that the official observer's documentation of the flight is insufficient to make the claim valid. In a conversation with the vice chairman with oversight of the SSA Badge and Claims Committee we learned that the SSA has the primary authority for managing badge processing for FAI badges, required only to comply with the International Sporting Code which does not specify some of the actions now found in U.S. processing. We were assured that the SSA volunteers who oversee badge claim processing will review and revise the procedures to cor-

rect these deficiencies.

Pat Costello reported that SSA club and chapter insurance policies can soon be modified at no additional premium to permit charging for towing a pilot who is not a member of that club, provided that the pilot is insured through the SSA group policy. Costello also reported that we've had four accidents, including one fatality, during winch launching in 2008. Given the low level of winch launch activity in the U.S. this is a stunning increase in accidents. He opines that, as winch launching becomes more popular in the U.S., we will endure a "learning curve" of accidents that could have a serious effect on the overall health of the group insurance program. Those using, or planning to use winch launches, should be sensitive to the need for good safety procedures.

SOARING magazine is being electronically archived. Denise Layton and Charlie Minner reported that a word-searchable electronic archive of the entire collection of SOARING (back to 1932) should be available to members on the SSA website by the end of the year.

The United States will host the 2012 World Soaring Championship in Uvalde, Texas.

The 2012 SSA Convention will be held in Reno, Nevada.

SSA's finances are now back on track and the recovery is making excellent progress. For this accomplishment we owe thanks to many people, but two in our area come to mind right now—Dianne Black-Nixon for a generous personal financial contribution and a huge time contribution, and Dave Pixton's diligent stewardship of our current treasury.

—**Jim Kellett, Region IV Director, Soaring Society of America**