



SKYLINES

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SKYLINE SOARING CLUB, INC DECEMBER 2011

Masthead photo by Dick Otis

From the President

Curtis Wheeler

Well, its been a quick year and my tour of duty as your SSC president is wrapping up. As planned, John Noss will be taking over in January, and I just wanted to give a few thanks to the BoD members, the various Meisters, the Skylines editor, and the Club treasurer for all each of them have done this year. Your contributions have enabled us to meet all the goals I outlined at the start of the season: safety, financial stability, and outstanding member participation in flight operations.

The bottom line is that nothing happens here at SSC without volunteerism. We have a number of positions open at any given time, such as now with the Skylines editor position. We need members to continue to step forward to take on these challenges.

Due to schedule conflicts, I will be unable to attend a number of gatherings over the next couple of months. Nevertheless, its been my privilege to serve as your SSC President.

See you at FRR, Curtis 

From the Chief Towpilot

Martin Gomez

I'd like to make two requests from my lofty new position as Chief Towpilot. The first is to please take a minute to help push the towplanes around on the ramp when they're being refueled.

They weigh more than any glider, yet we always help each other push gliders around...and towplanes seem to mysteriously get heavier towards the end of the day.

I assure you your towpilot will thank you!

The second and far more serious request is to please be more careful around spinning propellers. Recently while towing I saw three cases of people standing or walking on the ramp and taxiway who were not watching the towplane as I taxied towards them.

Please: walk on the grass, not the pavement. Maintain eye

Photo by Dick Otis



contact with the pilot of any airplane moving towards you. Assume his brakes will fail. And don't congregate on the ramp unless you have a purpose. Complacency and spinning props are a dangerous combination.

Our Husky, in particular, offers the pilot a very poor view of what lies ahead. A couple of months ago, I was taxiing towards the runway while a few people pushed a glider to runway 28. In addition to the crowd pushing the glider, a handful more were wandering over to help. I saw five people cross under the nose of

the Husky—while I was moving towards them—so I slowed down until they passed. Then I resumed taxiing after the glider. I then dimly realized that only four had emerged out of the right side of the blind spot. I stopped quickly, and sure enough, the fifth person showed up on the right side of the nose, well behind the rest, ambling blissfully ten feet in front of my spinning prop. His back was towards me, and he seemed unaware of how close he had come to dying.

How long does it take to taxi ten feet?

Christmas in Broad Run, with all of the folks at Home!

Great Christmas Party and the Skyline Soaring Club's 20 Year Anniversary Party.

7 p.m. Saturday December 17th.

Shane and Valerie Neitzey's
17015 Gaines Rd
Broad Run, VA 20137
70-3753-3806 h

We are in need of a 5:30 p.m. decorating crew.

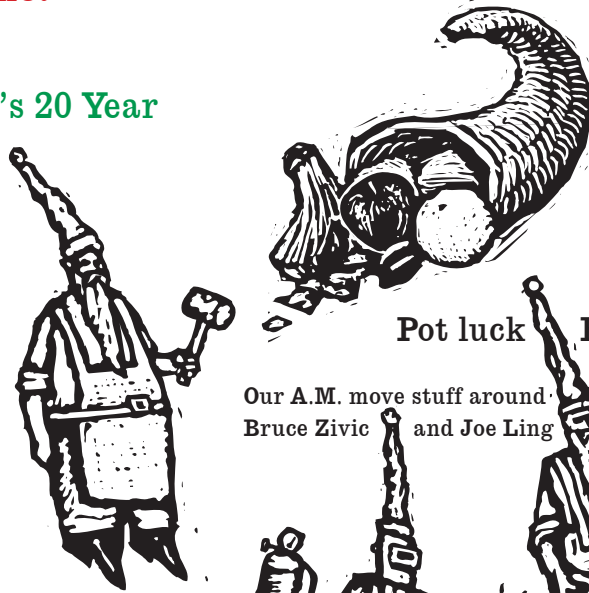
Also,

Need someone to buy garland, dingbats and whatnots.

Need someone to buy drinks, ice.

Need someone to buy cups, plates, plastic ware, napkins, etc.

Club will reimburse.



Pot luck Bring a dish

Our A.M. move stuff around volunteers are Rob Creedon, Bruce Zivic and Joe Ling avitch.

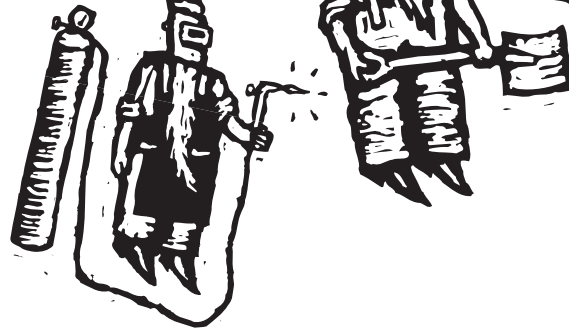




Photo by Mike Peterson

Now What?

And other random thoughts on soaring.

Doug Hiranka

Now that I have finally gotten my private ticket what do I do? Do I magically stay up for hours with thermals appearing in front of me. Does wisdom ooze from my soul being one of the “old timers”? Can I start copying the guys in the private ships and fly where they do?

Before trying anything you see someone else do you should always know what they are doing why they are doing it and what to do if something goes wrong. Experienced soarers will sometimes jump off tow lower than the standard 3,000 foot release used for instruction. The rules of thumb I use are that I wait until I have gone through 3 3-5 second updrafts of 3kts or more of lift, at a altitude that I can return to the field from. 3-5 seconds of lift on tow is big enough to circle in. Lots of small strong lift can't be worked because it is too narrow. I always keep track of the lift as I am towing and make a mental note of where the lift was to try on the way back. Note that once in a while one of the private ships will jump off early and end up right back at the field. So even a good set of rules of thumb sometimes fails which is why the rule that you can always make it back is included. If the tow pilot starts thermalling with you on tow take a clue, YOU ARE IN LIFT!!! Don't be afraid to ask the tow pilot where the lift is and don't be afraid to ask him to take you some place new if everyone is coming down right away.

Learn to tow well. If you can stay in the tow pilots mirror through the whole tow you are doing well. If you can keep the glider from making large deviations behind the tow plane in turbulent conditions it makes the tow pilots job easier. Learn to land long, short where ever you choose to stop not just where the glider ends up.

The difference between successful soaring and sled rides can be subtle. I was told several times to turn steeper before it sunk in that the strongest part of a thermal is in the core. 45 degrees is the sweet spot. All of my longest flights have been on mediocre lift days with lots of time spent patiently riding zero sink, slight sink or weak lift. The problem with booming days is everyone wants the gliders on those days so getting a flight requires patience. Also experience is everything. I fly 40-50 hours a year so I see lots of different conditions and get lots of practice in scratch-

ing around for little bits of lift. I also talk to the guys staying up the longest. This is where I learned the subtleties of scratching out the most of weak conditions. They didn't have some magic spot for lift. The answer was to be patient. Take what you can get and fly lots. I still have lots of days of being the shortest flight of the day. I counted and so have many members with way more experience than I have. Sometimes flying at the right time is the key. That isn't easy to control.

If there is a west wind I avoid the east side of the Massanutens. The wind puts massive sink just to the east of the ridge. Fort Valley itself is a mixed blessing. Students are warned to avoid the valley because when lift is there so is serious sink. If you can stay in the lift you can stay up for hours but fall out and the sink is serious. Recently three seasoned pilots stayed up for more than an hour riding along the ridge while sink was everywhere else (including where I was flying). The general rule of thumb is at 3,000 ft at Signal knob start back to the airport. Why? 3,000 ft is above the glide ratio of the Sprite so even in the trainers you have lots of margin to return to the pattern.

In the winter there is sometimes lift near the river because the river can be a warmer area than the land. In the summer the river is a cool spot and generally a area of sink. By the way there are thermals even when the air is below freezing. All you need is unstable air of different temperatures to have thermals. Chemical foot warmers are a staple of winter flying.

Many club members don't like flying the Grob but the Grob is actually a very decent performance glider. You can feel the penetration compared to the Sprite and the flatter glide path.

Learn to fly in a gaggle but be willing to try something different. My longest flights have been away from the crowd. Generally if there is lift there is lift all over the place. Certain conditions put the lift in the same places. Cloud streets are obvious but sometimes getting up to the street is the biggest challenge. Wave is off the north end of Signal Knob out in the valley. Learn about the house thermal at the entry point to the pattern and use it to extend a flight when it is working.

Learn to circle accurately but thermals are rarely round. Some are very elongated. Don't be afraid to do a variation of dynamic soaring. Working a too small thermal slow down in the lift and speed up in the sink part of the circle. You can actually gain altitude doing this. I did this for 15 minutes once waiting for a bigger thermal to cycle.

Read “Cross Country Soaring”. Over and over and keep trying the techniques.

The Magic Seven Years

Joseph M. Rees

“Most organizations fail in the first seven years.”—Spencer Annear, second president, Skyline Soaring Club.

With that admonition in mind, twenty-three charter members set out to organize a club that would live on past the “magic seven”. Without a doubt the very best of intentions for any kind of club you are trying to build cannot be realized unless the club can survive financially. The formula established was fixed income to cover fixed costs and variable income to cover variable costs; a simple formula that has worked well through the years to keep the club financially viable. The 23 charter members each loaned the new club \$1,000 and with the \$6,900 from the \$300 initiation fee (the dues were set at \$20 a month with a discounted \$10 a month for sailplane owners) we were able to purchase the Pawnee and “Miss Daisy” the venerable 2-33.

However, it takes more than a tow plane and a glider to make a club and the authors are convinced that the “club atmosphere” we established in the early days were every bit as important as a sound financial footing (looking more sound in retrospect than at the time). A personal investment in the organization was established with a service requirement that everyone spend at least a few days a year as a tow pilot, instructor, duty officer or assistant duty officer. We also wanted a club that would be united in its mis-

It’s my last newsletter and I’ll cry if I want to!—Your former editor takes great pride in coining the iconic term “Miss Daisy” and having been about the only one who ever flew the old bag of aluminum bones, I leave you with this photo of the former editor—driving Miss Daisy.

Photo by Johnny Jordan

sion and vision of what constituted a club. We were determined not to become an organization that looked like a commercial operation with pilots coming in to buy a tow and disappear. Coupled with a very strong safety ethic, mandatory duty and as many social events as we can cram into a season we think we succeeded.

At the risk of sounding like your father or grandfather who “walked five miles to school through rain and snow”, those early days were no picnic. Sliding corrugated doors on warped frames were no fun when they froze to the uneven gravel floor and taxi ways. We ran into maintenance problems early on due, in part, to the aircraft being tied down outdoors. As an example, a tow pilot noticed that the balance on the rudder was waving at him one day when he started the engine. Inspection showed rust in the rudder so it had to be repaired and recovered. A big maintenance item was breaking cylinders on the tow plane, one a year for three years and then two the fourth year (the problem was that when we bought the Pawnee the rubber cooling seal had deteriorated, we replaced it right away but the damage was done). At a thousand dollars a pop that cut into the plans of our small organization.

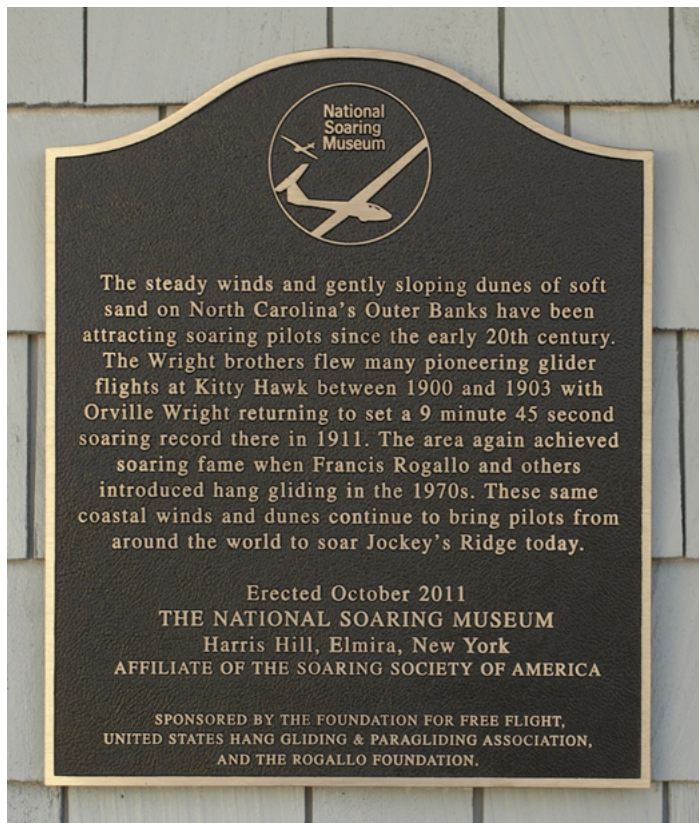
About the time we moved to Front Royal (the high rent district) the topic of evening the dues came up. After much debate it was decided that because sailplane owners could use club ships any time they wanted they should pay the same as renters to have the club ships available.

Skyline began as an around-the-field club but as it matured it has developed an interest in cross country flying as well. In its New Market years it hosted the DuPont Regatta but nothing since. It has never had any formal contest structure to create interest but that can change if the members are willing. The challenge of the first seven years was survival in the face of much skepticism and little money. The challenge today is not only to grow in size and character but to never forget our roots.



Soaring 100— Kicking off the event was the dedication of a National Landmark of Soaring, coordinated by the National Soaring Museum, at Jockey's Ridge. The Landmark plaque honors those who have flown the Outer Banks dunes, including the Wrights, Francis Rogallo (father of the modern hang glider) and current sailplane, hang glider and paraglider pilots.

I am attaching two images, one of the NLS16 plaque and the other showing Art Greenfield, speaking just prior to the unveiling of the Landmark plaque. Standing by from L to R is John Harris, Rich Hass (USHPA), Greenfield (NAA), SAI Tyler (SSA) and Bliss Teague (AMA). —*Simine Short*



For those holding back until the last moment—Larry Stahl is holding a wave camp at Petersburg on November 26 / 27 and Dec 3 / 4. Not totally sure about tows during the week in between, but the SVS Pawnee will probably be there.

Petersburg is one of the best sites in the East for wave and W99 is a great airport. There will be entertainment on Sat 26 November. Come on up to Petersburg and join in the fun. —*Jim Garrison*



Skyline Soaring Education Foundation News—Jim Kellett made a presentation about soaring and SSEF to an aviation class at Randolph Macon Academy in November. I talked to a Guidance Counselor and an Engineering Instructor from the Blue Ridge Tech Center of the Warren County School System in November about SSEF's scholarship program and about SSEF possibly doing presentations about soaring there. —*Spencer Annear*



For Sale—LAK-12 "Lietuva" is an open class high performance sailplane designed for participating in competitions and for record attempts. The LAK-12's most important role is that of a high performance recreational pleasure and cross country soaring sailplane. Made in Lithuania and fabricated with composites of modern epoxy fiber-glass and carbon-fiber materials. It is finished with trouble-free white epoxy paint instead of the usual beautiful but prone to crack polyester gelcoat finish. It has a 20.43 m (66.98 ft.) wingspan and glide ratio of about 50/1 max L/D. N12LY was built in 1987 serial # 699 and has 649 total hours. It has a one man rigging system. I normally assemble and disassemble by myself in about 30 minutes taking my time. Includes custom built 40 ft trailer and parachute. Factory tail skid was removed and tail wheel installed in 1997. Sailplane has flaps as well as airbrakes, retractable landing gear, and 50 gal water ballast tanks in wings. Instruments include Microair 760 radio and Filser DX50 flight computer. All for \$25,000 or best offer. Glider is located in Broad

Run, Virginia. Contact Steve Wegner at 703-863-7599 (cell) or steve_wegner@yahoo.com.



Photo by Dick Otis

Recycled
Information
Worth
Repeating
SAY AGAIN



“Having personally benefited from knowing Jim since my beginning days in soaring in August 1986, I can testify to his many contributions to the soaring sport and to probably hundreds of us who became enamored with the sport by way of his enthusiasm and skillful talent in teaching the art.” —Jim McCulley

“I thank you and acknowledge you for your extraordinary contribution to me, to the members of our club, and to the soaring community.” —Greg Ellis

“Wow. . . those comments really humble me into speechlessness”.

The biennial SSA ‘full’ convention - with exhibit hall - will be in Reno on February 2-4, 2012. There’ll be something for everyone - new products, speakers, mini-gatherings at breakfasts and luncheons for groups like club officers, acrobatic pilots, contest pilots, 1-26 drivers, antique lovers, instructors, towpilots, technical weenies and much more. Rub shoulders with glider pilots from all over the world . . .

Check out <http://ssa.org/myhome.asp?mbr=2116815447&show=blog&id=2206&hide=-1> when you can peruse the offerings and pre-register (and save \$40 by pre-registering). There’s even a group rate at the casino-hotel!

Warning: SSA meetings can become addictive!—*Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon*

Got Gas?—There used to be a transfiller apparatus with the clubs Oxygen System. It had become lost, separated or evaporated.

We now have a new and improved \$395 transfiller so once again we may refill our own O2 bottles. The Club’s O2 bottle now indicates 2000 psi and is ready to go. The system is currently in my possession.

Question: does anyone have a metal suitcase to donate for the O2 system? I would like to make foam cutouts for a safe nest inside said suitcase.

Hopefully we will keep it all together now.—*Shane Neitzey*

“Virginia Aviation Person of the Year”

is something for Jim Kellett to be very proud of..—*Bob Sallada.*

“I would like to congratulate Jim for a well-deserved award. I would probably not be flying gliders today if it were not for all the Thursdays of instruction bestowed on me by Jim.” —Frank Banas



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

President—Curtis Wheeler
Secretary—Jim Kellett
Treasurer—Thomas Park
Membership—Steve Rockwood
Chief Duty Officer—Craig Bendorf
Chief Tow Pilot—Martin Gomez
Chief Flight Instructor—Piet Barber
Safety Officer—John Noss

Skylines Editor—Phil Jordan
flyingfish2@cox.net
Directors—Craig Bendorf (Emeritus),
Mike Christensen, Jim Kellett,
John Noss, Joe Parrish,
Steve Rockwood, Curtis Wheeler

Well, not really—Let’s be honest—the award was really for being the current leader of the new Virginia Soaring Association, and doesn’t properly acknowledge the hard work and initiative of several real leaders of soaring in this state, notably Graham Pitsenberger (President of SVS) and Randy Burdette (Director of the Virginia Department of Aviation) who actually came up with the concept of VASA and funded the publication of a VASA brochure, Peter Pfortner and J.P. Stewart (of BRSS) who did the artwork for the brochure and established the VASA website, and Gary van Tassel (TSS) who was VASA’s first Coordinator.

Moreover, there are many folks right here in Skyline who also should be recognized for pursuing the goals of VASA (outreach which promotes the sport beyond just our Clubs). In 2011 alone, they include (but are not limited to):

Shane Neitzey (who made sure we were well represented at the Soaring 100 event by flying our K-21 in this historic event),

George Hazelrigg (who supported the sport at this year’s Warren County Days celebration by displaying his LS-1f and greeting visitors),

Frank Banas, Doug Hiranaka, Terry Tripp, and Bob Gould (who displayed gliders to the Smithsonian’s “Be-a-Pilot” day last June),

The dozens of Skyliners that Steve Rockwood organized to support the Warren County Airport airshow, and

Bob Gould, who took on the burden of serving as an Airport Commissioner for the Warren County airport, making certain that soaring interests are represented to the entire community using KFRR.

Seriously, though, thanks for the kind thoughts. . . .

—*Jim Kellett, Coordinator, Virginia Soaring Association*

Cross Country Soaring— that the great classic book on cross country soaring, written by Helmut Reichmann in 1975 and revised in 1993, is back in print after long being unavailable! See <http://www.cumulus-soaring.com/books/CrossCountrySoaring/Cross-CountrySoaring.htm>

This is a must book for anyone even thinking about XC flight. It approaches the topic at several levels—for the rank beginner wanting to know how to take the first steps, to the intermediate pilot working to polish his badge-getting performance, to the competitive racing pilot looking for that last 1% edge. A good read for anyone.

Stick and Rudder—An Explanation of the Art of Flying by Wolfgang Langewiesche—Is another really good reference for pilots wanting to learn the finer aspects of flying and landing a plane. It is possible to learn to do a precision “greaser” just about every time. Patty Wagstaff read and recommends Langenwiesche.