



# SKYLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SKYLINE SOARING CLUB, INC JUNE 2011

Masthead photo by Dick Otis

## From the President

Curtis Wheeler

Your BoD has recently completed a strategic retreat to review the larger issues before SSC. Although I have no dramatic announcements to make at this time, we did consider issues ranging from our base of operations, community outreach, finances, future aircraft acquisitions and other items. I just wanted to let you know that we are working to try to do some long-range

planning that will lead the Club in the direction that you the members have given us through surveys and other means.

I also want to quickly pitch the upcoming event at Soaring100 in Kill Devil Hills, NC this fall. Shane Neitzey has agreed to lead the effort to take the K there for the commemoration of the Wright Brothers first glider flight. Shane will need a lot of assistance in this effort so please be sure to let him know that you are onboard with getting the K to the site, flying it there, and returning.

Thanks, and see you at FRR,  
Curtis 

## Reach Out and Touch Someone

Jim Kellet, Secretary

The Club's Board would like to better coordinate and promote our Club with others, including but not limited to the general public. We'd like to strengthen our ability to "do our part" to promote our sport, our club, and our airport with other pilots, airport and community managers, news media, and others. Some examples of recent activities some members have been involved with have been newspaper articles about member accomplishments, presentations to service clubs, displays at airshows and other aviation events, etc.

We'd like to find a member who has some "PR" skills (or enthusiasm to develop them) who could coordinate the various

activities to present a positive image of our sport and our club, and be creative in finding new audiences and new ways to deliver our message to them. The scope and involvement of the task is wide open to a volunteer who can craft the program in coordination with Club members, the Club's Board and other officers, and the Skyline Soaring Educational Foundation.

Interested? Touch base with Club President Curtis Wheeler and discuss it!! 



## Grob-N4794E Up (for now) Canopy Rail Cracks Found

*"Fly gently with your muse. Open and close all canopies most delicately!"*

Michael Christensen

Sad findings on Saturday, a post flight observation during battery removal (followed by a very close inspection) of our Grob - N4794E rear canopy, revealed significant cracks. She was grounded. The inspection found that the rear canopy's fiberglass structural rail has failed at the rear latch pin. Longitudinal 10"+ cracks were found in the structural rail, separating the rail from the Plexiglas canopy. In addition, there is a crack in the Plexiglas canopy running 80% of the distance from the "apple core window" to the canopy base. These structural cracks are clearly due to closing the canopy with the latch lever, in other than the FULL open position. This repair will be costly. The Grob will be down for several weeks with the canopy removed and out for repair.

SSC needs your help in finding an FAA Approved Composite shop that can do this repair quickly. If you know of composite shop with capacity for fast work and/or of a salvageable rear canopy let Sobek, the Grob-Meister know!

The Grob was put back in UP status for the remainder of the Memorial Day holiday weekend, through the training week. The built in redundancy of two latch pins and both can be engaged by the rear pilot's careful closing, engaging and inspecting both lock pins before takeoff, will permit short term continued ops. Further damage to the rear canopy may result in immediate grounding of 94E.

---

## Safety Note

John Noss, Safety Officer

Need to pass along a safety-related note to every member. Reggie approached me about a complaint from recent operations, specifically the need to limit personnel on the taxiway and runway to minimum essential. We've discussed this before, please remember that the only people past the glider hold line should be those moving the aircraft and launching the aircraft. Especially on the runway, one or two people maximum (other than the pilots) is all that should be there, and one person should clearly be in charge. Photographers and well-wishers should stay behind, no guest should ever be allowed in an area where there might be a surprise conflict with a landing or taxiing aircraft. Time on the runway should be minimized – take the time you need to launch safely, but do not waste time. DO's and ADO's please take charge and run a disciplined operation, even if it requires being blunt with members or guests. We are fortunate to be able to operate at Front Royal in mixed-use operations, we need to work hard to fit in professionally and safely.—Fly Safe!

---

## 2011 Operations Statistics

Craig Bendorf, Chief Duty Officer

As of the end of May 2011 the Club has flown 420 glider tows with associated glider flights. The tow planes flew a total of 94.2 hours while the gliders flew 228hours. We are slightly

ahead in tows when compared to past years at the end of May. The following is a breakout of the glider operations:

The ASK 21 has flown 206 flights / 78.4 hours

The Grob 103 has flown 122 flights / 48.6 hours

The Sprite has flown 35 flights / 25.3 hours

The Cirrus has flown 10 flights / 9.5 hours

The 11 Private gliders have flown 47 flights / 66.2 hours

The weather for the past couple of months has been good for training, but poor for cross country flying which is why the Private glider and Cirrus flights / hours are lower than one might expect.

## Operations Notes

We are now over three months into the soaring season and the pace at the airfield is picking up with the warmer weather and stronger thermals. Overall operations have gone well and safely, but there are areas that we need some attention to improve our efficiency and safety.

A critical area for safety is the proper control of visitors at the field. FAST flights and visiting guests usually mean small crowds of family and friends wanting to get pictures in the airplanes and of the aircraft launches. However the place to do that is in the staging area before they are pushed out on the runway. Visitors should not be out next to the runway and taxiways watching and taking pictures due to the dangers of landing gliders and taxing/landing powered aircraft. The only people who should be out on the runway are the trained SSC members that are required to launch the aircraft safely and efficiently.

With larger crowds of fliers showing up to the field on the weekends we need to improve our efficiency of operations to get the maximum number of flights out of our equipment. Before the tow plane enters the pattern for landing the glider and crew for the next flight need to be in the staging area and ready to go. If there are enough people on the field any students, FAST members, and guests need to be strapped into the aircraft by the time the tow plane clears the runway. If the next scheduled flight crew cannot be ready before the tow plane lands than the next aircraft in the cue should be moved up and launched. By paying close attention to the operations and having planes ready to go we can easily get more 4-6 more flights accomplished, reduce wait time at the field, save on tow plane fuel and make the experience better for everyone.

With the increased heat and humidity that comes with summer operations it is very important that the duty crew get plenty of water and take a few cool off breaks during the day. By improving the efficiencies in glider launches, in many cases you will get all the aircraft launched quicker which can then allow the ground crew and tow pilot a little break and cool down time with minimal impact.

Additionally make sure you take care of your tow pilots. Many people do not understand the physical demand you ask of your tow pilots on a hot humid day with over 15 launches. They get into the aircraft and launch continuously for hours with short stops for gas and a bathroom break. Efficient ground operations make things much easier for them and allow to better plan out their breaks and fuel stops.

## A Shuttle a Duck and a Biplane

*Rob Creedon*

I arrived at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport at 1:30pm on Thursday, 28 April 2011, anticipating a flight to Orlando, Florida via Charlotte, North Carolina. I was bound for Cape Kennedy to observe the launch of Space Shuttle Endeavor, STS-134 to knock out an item from my personal bucket list. To my pleasant surprise, I was offered an opportunity to depart an hour earlier than scheduled and on a direct flight! My trip was getting better already.

The flight was uneventful until we began our descent into Orlando where mountainous clouds caused the aircraft to pop into and out of menacing shadows. As we continued to descend, the pilot took evasive action in an attempt to reduce the turbulence we were experiencing by making successive forty-five to ninety-degree turns slaloming amongst the towering thunderheads. It was rather like being in rotor on a windy ridge day at Front Royal. Not long thereafter we made a rather sporty landing.

Excitedly, I drove to my hotel in anticipation of the following afternoon's launch. I had purchased a ticket for a spot on the causeway, approximately five miles from Pad 39A, advertised as the closest public viewing spot for non-astronaut families and VIP's. Instructions directed an arrival at the bus pickup point, "Not later than 5:30am Friday morning as we will leave promptly and without you," the paperwork warned. All this for a 3:47pm launch! I arrived early, parked my rental car and waded through a sea of over one-hundred buses in search of #64. Finding my ride, I boarded and began to chat with other passengers. Promptly at 5:30am the first buses began to roll. Dawn broke revealing cloudy skies and winds blowing at 10-15 knots but with a clearing forecast.

We drove to the Kennedy Space Center where we disembarked and were given two hours to tour the museum facility along with thousands upon thousands of newfound friends. At 9:45am the mass of humanity queued-up and began filing through a single gate to re-board the buses. You could feel the excitement building amongst the crowd. At 12:30pm buses began to depart the facility in groups of ten for the short ride to the causeway. The buses exited the facility,

turned right and down the two-lane road toward the Cape. True to the forecast the sky was clearing but the winds remained gusty. Just as our bus crossed a small bridge and touched down on the causeway word rippled through the bus that the mission had been scrubbed. It was first announced the mission would launch on Saturday ... then Sunday ... then Monday ... and finally NASA announced an indefinite postponement. Although a major disappointment for all who paid for this missed-adventure, the crowd remained surprisingly jovial and friendly.

The next day, unsure what I wanted to do, I searched the Internet for "flying things to do in Florida." I came across Kermit Weeks' "Fantasy of Flight" and decided that was the ticket. It is purported to be the largest private collection of vintage aircraft in



*Photo by Laura West*

the world. I drove about thirty-five minutes west of Orlando to Polk City unsure what to expect.

Upon my arrival, I saw a spectacular facility of three large hangers, concrete aprons, grass strips, and aircraft displayed outside: Lockheed, Super Constellation; Consolidated, PBY Catalina; Short Sunderland, four-engine, floatplane; Grumman, J2F Duck, amphibian biplane; and a Boeing, N2J Navy Stearman Kaydet, biplane trainer. At about 12:00pm Kermit Weeks, Fantasy of Flight proprietor and looking much like Jimmy Buffett, strutted onto the field. After a bit of personal history—including his vision for Fantasy of Flight and from where he gets his funding—along with a motivational challenge to discover and live our individual passions, he



*Photo by Rob Melehan*

climbed aboard the J2F Duck. The starter wound ...the large radial engine turned over ... and suddenly rumbled to life in a cloud of blue-gray smoke. "Candy Clipper" taxied across the apron and onto the grass strip. Weeks swung around into the wind and took off. He climbed into the clear, blue sky, retracted the landing gear -- surprisingly, the aircraft is also equipped with an arresting gear -- and proceeded to make half a dozen passes for the gathered crowd of about fifty. All agreed it was an awesome sight -- and quite a throaty sound! The truth be told, the Grumman Duck is so ugly it's cute but it's a face only a mother could love.

Still chatting about the flybys, several people walked around the facility and took advantage of tours to the maintenance shop, wood shop and storage facilities which include dozens and dozens of aircraft and over one-hundred aircraft engines, both in-lines and radials. In one hanger stood a dozen original Rolls Royce Merlins with zero-hours on the engines! Weeks is not a museum fan and has two mandates in any restoration project; that aircraft be restored to original condition utilizing only original techniques, procedures and equipment and that they be brought back to flying status.

Without question, the highlight of my day was a forty-minute flight in an immaculately restored U.S. Navy N2J Stearman biplane trainer, N67412. My PIC was Sarah Wilson, ATP-CFI/CFII/MEI. She asked about any previous flying experience. When I told her I was a glider pilot she smiled and said, "Good, then you'll know just what to do with the rudder pedals." She briefed a choice of two flights; "First, a few shallow turns followed by a tour across the countryside or second, steep turns, figure-eights, stalls and wingovers." I jumped at number two! She warned of the non-existent visibility over the nose and that I would need to fly by sight picture in relation to the horizon and with my peripheral vision. The latter proved less challenging that I initially imagined.

We strapped in and taxied across the apron and down the grass runway where she allowed me to S-turn the aircraft with

the rudder while she controlled the throttle. We taxied downwind, turned around and began to move down the runway into a ten-knot left-quartering wind. Rising to full power, the big, radial engine sounded wonderful. Although I'm not sure, it felt like the Stearman left the ground from its three-point stance. She relinquished control to me just after takeoff and I was immediately hooked!

The aircraft was surprisingly light on both the stick and rudder as to what I had imagined a World War II trainer would be. And I must say that I really did a good job of flying. OK, except for the part where I pushed the throttle lever forward thinking it was the trim tab. In my defense, it did have a "T" on it and besides who needs a motor anyway? In sequence, Sarah demonstrated shallow turns, steep turns, figure-eights, stalls and wingovers and then let me try my hand at three or four iterations of each maneuver. It was an absolute thrill! The aircraft handled very smoothly and responded agilely to my inputs. We conducted the maneuvers at about 100mph and 1,800' AGL.

All too soon, it was time to head back to the field. Sarah allowed me to set up the landing. We crossed the field and headed upwind still flying at 100mph. I turned perpendicular to the field and then onto downwind. "Perfect alignment," Sarah called, "is to have the edge of the left wing on the runway." I was just a bit tight. Upon turning to base Sarah cut the power, we slowed to 80mph and our descent increased noticeably. Turning to final she called, "Now keep us on the centerline and crab into the left-front quartering wind." I complied. Just prior to touchdown she took control and landed.

Although it wasn't the "Space Shuttle launch" I checked off my bucket list, I did check off "Flying a Stearman." If you ever find yourself in Orlando for a Shuttle launch or a trip to Mickey Mouse Land, I highly encourage a visit to Fantasy of Flight in Polk City, Florida. It is well worth the trip--and please tell Sarah that I said "Hello!"





## Return of the Wayward Towpilot

*Shane Neitzey, returning to currency with the care of Dick Otis who expertly illustrated the experience.*

I had not flown the tow planes since January and wanted a CFI to ride along as a safety during my currency flights. We flew into Bill Burner's new field then over to John Ayers' mountaintop. He was home so we stopped to chat for a while. Very nice airport, unusual location, appears relatively short—but the runway's slope makes for a short landing up the hill and short takeoff down the hill. I want my own airport, (whining sound).

*John writes:* Shane, Sometimes it feels like a remote village in Nepal—not a complaint at all. If you or Dick or other instructors want to practice some off field landings my field has the advantage of no hidden power lines or ditches. As to altitude you can give students a hint that it is probably above sea level.

Nice shots as always Dick.

*Dick Otis writes:* Shane and I were just out looking for adventure and getting him current. We just dropped in to visit. Due to my advancing age and 95 degree heat, we only chatted from inside the plane for a few minutes (it is hard to get in and out of the Husky!)

John reports his Citabria has been annualled, but otherwise not been out of the hanger. He has been busy putting in a geothermal heat/cooling system consisting of 3000 feet of small piping buried at a depth of 5 feet. Apparently, it works good.

It is quite an adventure flying into his field—it sits in the middle of a big bowl, kind of like a volcano crater.

*Bill Burner's field on the left and John Ayers' mountaintop below.*  
*Photos by Dick Otis*



## Meet new Temp Member Maria Luengo

Maria was out driving the countryside Sunday before Memorial Day, when she saw the airport sign. After introducing herself to the duty crew, she jumped right in to help, and stayed the day. In fact she purchased a FAST certificate, and braved the airways with Duty Flight Instructor Dick Otis. She had so much fun, she booked a hotel room in Front Royal and returned Monday to spend another full day pitching in, after which she decided she would just go ahead and join as a new temporary member. Since Dick disappeared over the horizon with Shane in the Husky, instead of providing Maria a second instruction flight, Gallant Flight Instructor George Hazelrigg came to the rescue with a more intensive introduction to soaring, including a climb to 6000 feet. Much later, when Dick and Shane returned from their unplanned cross country they (tried to) made amends by having Shane give Marie her first small plane ride. (Quote: Nice, but I like the glider better"). Not withstanding the 95+ degree heat and humidity, you will most likely see Maria "aka Loly" at the field next Saturday—and many weekends to come. Marie hails from Madrid, Spain. Although she has been a US Citizen for 20 plus years, she sounds like she left Madrid yesterday. Please welcome her to the club when you meet her. —*Dick Otis*

Photo by Dick Otis



## Membership Report

Steve Rockwood, Membership Officer

**M**ay has been a banner month for new club membership. FAST package sales have gone out of the roof; in fact we sold them all and need to replenish the stock. The club now has a total of 92 active members, up thirteen from last month, including one new Probationary and fourteen new Introductory Members. Please welcome the following member who has recently joined with Probationary Membership status:

- **James Stevens:** James lives in Fairfax, has completed his solo rating for powered aircraft, but wants to learn how to really fly. Everyone knows that glider pilots make the best power pilots, so James has decided to work toward a glider rating for now and put off the power rating for later. Welcome to the club James. Our instructor will most definitely teach you how to fly!

Welcome the following members who have recently joined with Introductory Membership status:

- Fares Atoum
- Laith Atoum
- Alexandra Burgard
- Quinn Burgard
- Christopher Davis
- Kelly Gray
- Mustafa Kamel
- Austin Lee
- Mohammed Loraoui
- Maria Luengo
- Conner McAlevy
- Jon Normile
- Erin Robertson
- Carlos Zaragoza

One thing Skylines doesn't lack is good photographs. This one by Shane Neitzey

A healthy man, indeed, is the complement of the seasons, and in winter, summer is in his heart.  
—Henry David Thoreau



*Photo from Vern Kline*

## **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words, Give or Take a Few**

*FOD and Last Flight: photos by Doug Hiranaka*





*For those of you interested in being checked out in the club's Cirrus*, This Sunday, June 5, Steve Rockwood and Jim Kellett have generously agreed to provide a clinic to address the two key club endorsements SSC pilots must receive in order to be eligible to fly the ship.

As stated in Section 5.5.3 of the SSC Operations Manual the two logbook endorsements are:

1) "an endorsement in the member's logbook by a Club CFI that he has received ground instruction in the operating characteristics and control systems of the glider and is deemed proficient for safe flight"

2) "an endorsement in the member's logbook by either a Club CFI or a non-CFI Club member who is experienced in the assembly/disassembly of the glider and use of the trailer that he has performed those tasks under supervision and is capable of directing those actions himself/herself"

**Note:** Pilots also need to have at least 50 PIC flights in gliders, 12 PIC flights in the last 12 months, and a Glider Pilot Certificate.


**Our agenda will be as follows:**

9:30 - 11:30—Steve Rockwood (Cirrus Meister) will lead a demonstration of the assembly and disassembly of the Cirrus. (There should be time to practice in this period also)

11:30 - 12:30—Jim Kellett ( a former Cirrus Owner) will lead a discussion of the operating characteristics and control systems of the Cirrus.

Please let me know if you'll be attending. If you can't make it this Sunday but are interested in attending in the future, also let me know and we'll try and arrange a follow-on event sometime in the near future.—**Charles Norman**

*As student pilots, its always more fun to come out when the flying is good.* But, to get your rating, there are lots of things you need



**Skyline Soaring Club, Inc.**  
is a private, 501(c)7 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)

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

Skylines Editor—Phil Jordan  
[flyngfish2@cox.net](mailto:flyngfish2@cox.net)  
Directors—Craig Bendorf (Emeritus),  
Mike Christensen, Jim Kellett,  
John Noss, Joe Parrish,  
Steve Rockwood, Curtis Wheeler

to learn that aren't so much fun. For one thing, you have to have a thorough working knowledge of the FARs, particularly Parts 61 and 91. For another, you need to know all about ground handling of the gliders. And you need to know how to assemble and disassemble the gliders. These are mandatory items, and you will be tested on them, and you learn them all on the ground—not when you are flying. Yesterday, we did the annual on the Sprite. It was an excellent opportunity for students to be involved in a very thorough inspection of a glider. To see how the control systems work, and to see how the glider is (somewhat) disassembled. We also cleaned and waxed the K and Grob. You will have to know how to care for a glider to get your rating. It was an excellent opportunity to learn all this stuff, but nobody came. I urge you all to consider coming out even when the weather is less than promising, especially when you can help with glider inspection and maintenance. Not only will you get some much needed instruction, but you will spare the instructors from having to do this instruction when the flying is good. And you can help maintain our equipment as we expect that all active members will do. Think again about staying home when the weather threatens.—**George Hazelrigg**

*I have had my spare parachute* inspected (ph and pull test) and repacked. It is hanging on the wall next to the Cirrus in a red carry bag. Feel free to use it, at you own risk of course, but please keep it off the ground so the critters don't use it as building material.  
—**Mike Hatfield**

*The club has been exploring the possibility of accepting credit card payments* from members in addition to checks, and we are now ready to begin small-scale trials of credit card payments. For now, a small group of DOs will be taking credit cards on their duty days to gain some real-world experience with the system and evaluate how well it works for our needs. For the other days, only checks (or account funds) will be accepted as usual.

We actually had our first trial run of the system today, with John Noss taking payments from some of the folks who were out to fly. The overall report was good.

The next trial day will be this coming Sunday, as Mike Peterson is in the DO trial group. If you'd like to give the system a try and help the club test it out, bring out your plastic and pay with Mike's smartphone at the end of the day. If you would otherwise pay by check, it's probably still a good idea to bring them just in case the card payments system hits a snag, although it shouldn't!

One quick note on fees: at least for the trial period, cost to the member of paying by card will be the same as paying by check.

In addition to Mike this Sunday, I will be accepting cards on my duty day on June 12th, and Steve Wegner will too on June 18th. Some weekday ops may also have the option, depending on who's present and whether they feel like it.—**Mike Ash**

The 32nd World Gliding Championship (July 28-August 19, 2012, Uvalde, Texas) website is now live. The Web address is <http://www.wgc2012uvalde.com/>

Looked interesting, so I thought I'd share.—Dick Otis  
<http://www.zazzle.com/fearlessthinkers>