



SKYLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SKYLINE SOARING CLUB, INC MAY 2011

Masthead photo by Dick Otis

From the President

Curtis Wheeler

Although the weather has been uncooperative lately, it has been a great month for preparing for better days. Paul Seketa did a rear seat refresher checkout in the Husky and is ready now to start minting new towpilots. Also, a diligent crew led by IA Eric Litt and assisted by K and Grob Meisters Mike Christiansen and Sobek Dziadek, and others, has accomplished fresh annual inspections on both of those ships. The depth of the talent pool here at Skyline never ceases to amaze! These kind of off-day prepara-

tions are essential to having the ability to fly effectively when real soaring days appear.

But not all preparations are for better days. I want every member, and especially the DO's, who really have the toughest job, to review the Mishap plan in the Club Ops manual in detail. As some of you may have seen lately, a neighboring club suffered a recent fatality. We will do all in our power to prevent such an occurrence, but I need each member to plan ahead and think about how they would respond to such an unfortunate situation. Take a look at the Ops manual, talk it up, and think it through.

What we prepare for rarely happens.

See you at FRR, Curtis



“Away Day”

Jim Kellett

Mark your calendars for Skyline Soaring Club's third “Away Day.” On Saturday, June 11 (rain date June 18), the club will split its fleet, taking the Husky, Grob 103 and the Sprite to a lovely, private, rural grass strip about 20 miles northeast of Front Royal for a day of relaxed flying without the hassle of concrete, flush toilets or other pilots. (Note: There will be “normal” operations at KFRR with the K-21, Cirrus, and Pawnee. And don't be confused by the Roster that shows an operation on Monday, June 13—that's really the roster for June 11, because we can't fit two simultaneous operations on the same day into the roster!)

This is a good time for club pilots to get a chance to take off and land at a completely different kind of airport, one rather more like most real gliderports in the world. It's also a chance to meet the requirement for cross-country flying in club gliders (flying at a different airport) and a perfect way to gain experience landing on unfamiliar territory, and finding the airport in the first place. For some snapshots of an earlier "Away Day", see <http://tinyurl.com/3ovdnxc>

Our goal is to ferry up the Husky and two gliders in time to arrive by 10:00 AM. John Noss has graciously volunteered to bring a sunshade, some chairs, another laptop so we can keep the operational records, and a cooler. (Note: It'd be wise to bring your own lunch/drinks, as there are no services in the immediate area.) If you would like to fly or receive instruction at the new site, please let Jim Kellett know—dual checkrides will be required for members flying there for the first time.

How to get there—If you're driving and want to plug the address into your car's GPS, it's 311 Swimley Road, Berryville, VA 22611

If you're driving without GPS find Leesburg, Virginia and take Route 7 west past Berryville and take a right onto Crums Church Road. This will be the third traffic light past the Shenandoah River, about 30 miles from Leesburg. Take Crums Church Road 4.5 miles to the T-intersection at Old Charlestown Road and make a right. Go half a mile and make a left on to Swimley Road. Go 1/3 mile and turn into driveway at stone gateposts.

If you're driving and bringing your own glider, go past the

main entrance and turn into the field gate entrance.


If you're flying—let the owner and duty officer know first—it's on the Washington Sectional as High View Farm, N39° 14.242', W78° 00.640'.

Parking—For members bringing their gliders go past the main entrance to the farm about 150 yards. Turn into the gate following the road past the pond and turn left staying on the road past the barn and park to the left of the runway. Mr. Hageman, the owner, will be there to help park the first ones.

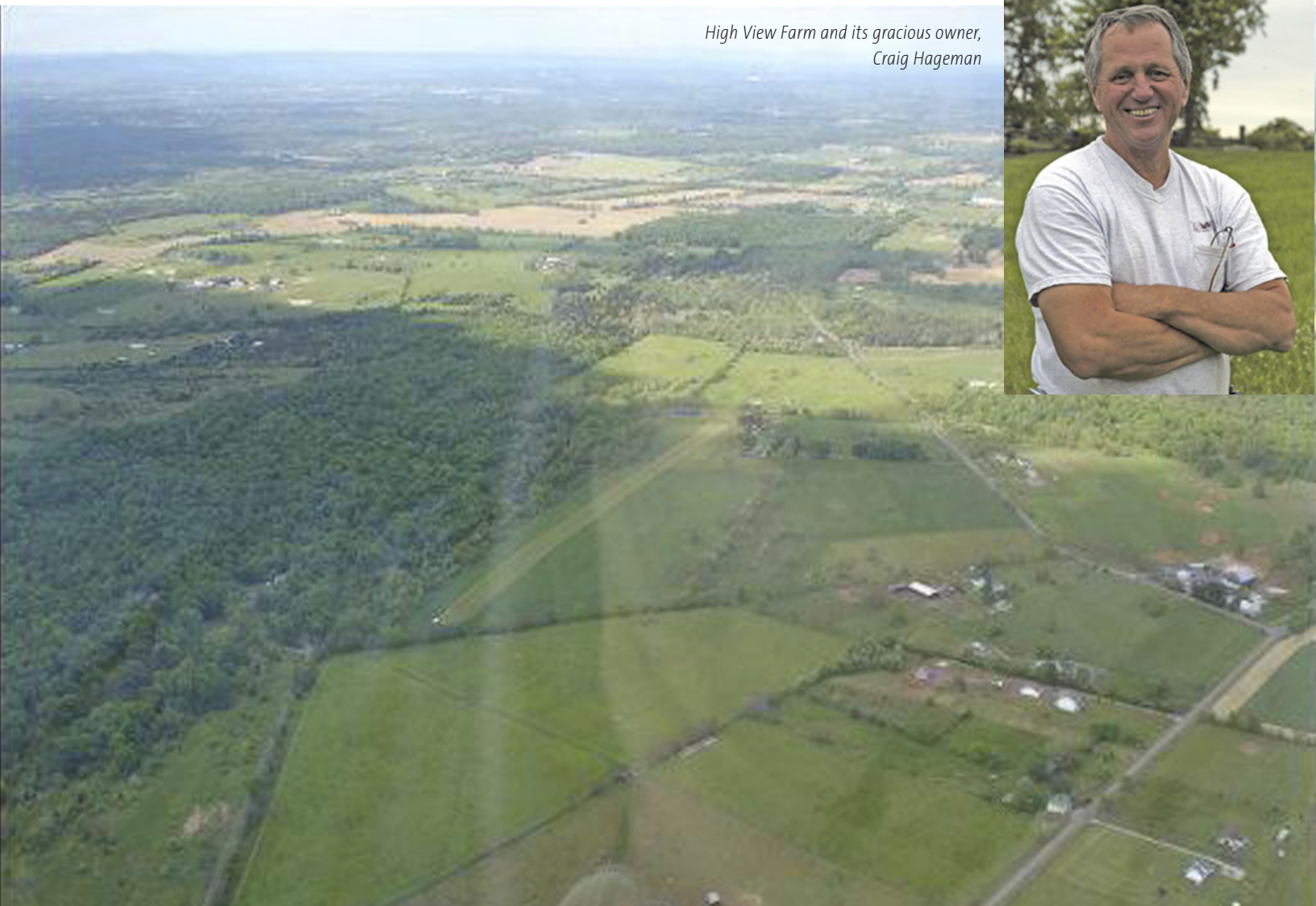
For everyone else driving, turn in the main farm entrance and park alongside the driveway before the circle at the end of the driveway. Parking between the trees is okay. Other than the initial staging and removal of the tent and equipment keep vehicles off the runway. Mr. Hageman will supply his ATV for ground towing gliders and will try to supply some type of ferry service if we are using runway 03.

Remember we are guests on private property, behave accordingly. The house and other buildings are off limits. There will be a porta-potty available. There's no food or drink available so bring a cooler with lunch, snacks and drinks.

Bring sun block and bug repellent. Deer and dog ticks are likely to be out already, and we're going to be in a grassy area, so come prepared.

There will also be operations at Front Royal so you'll need to decide where to fly and let the instructor, Jim Kellett, and/or duty officer Vern Kline know." 

*High View Farm and its gracious owner,
Craig Hageman*



Membership Report

Steve Rockwood, SSC Membership Officer

We are on a very slow but steady pace to increase our membership. The club now has a total of 79 active members, up two from last month, including one new Probationary and one new Introductory Members. Please welcome the following member who has recently joined with Probationary Membership status:

- **Greg Davis:** Greg lives just up the road from KFRR in Winchester. He is currently working for FAA System Operations Security at the NCRCC in Herndon where they provide a continuous watch of the SFRA and FRZ and enforce the current FAR and NOTAM provisions. Greg is a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force Reserves. His resume includes 6 years of active duty, 25 years in the Air National Guard, and a short stint in the Reserves before retiring. A very accomplished pilot, flying everything from

puddle jumpers to jets, he has flown numerous aircraft including the; T37 Tweet, T38 Talon, A7 Corsair, F111, A37 Dragonfly and A10 Thunderbolt. He has also piloted the Cessna 150 and 172 Skyhawk. He has private, multi-engine and instrument ratings, as well as a ground instructor rating. No rating for a glider yet, our team of instructors can fix that, but he does have about 75 hours of glider time when stationed in Oxfordshire, UK many years ago. Greg brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the club and should have loads of good flying stories to tell as well.

Welcome the following member who has recently joined with Introductory Membership status:

- **Jasmine Reidenbach:** Jasmine lives in Front Royal and learned about Skyline Soaring as she toured local airports. It looked like fun so she purchased a FAST package from the club and took a 37 minute instructional flight with Piet Barber. After checking us out I would hope she could join the club on a more permanent basic and work toward a glider rating. At least we hope so!!

Conditional Inspection

Doug Hiranaka

Each year our club aircraft must be inspected by a A&P AI (airframe and power plant mechanic with Inspection Authority) to verify that their condition is capable of safe flight. This year inspections of both trainers were scheduled on the same day with one being inspected while the other was in service providing limited interruption in club activities. This year we didn't need to have a second glider available with the looming line of thunder storms that limited flying to lies and hand waving in the hangar.

The day started with a petty decent group of volunteers arranged by Mike Christensen and Sobek Dziadek. Seats were removed and debris was vacuumed from the bottom of the fuselage. Each glider depreciated \$0.01 as a lucky penny was found and removed from each airframe. Lucky we found them so they wouldn't get jammed in the control linkages. Front and tail wheels were removed inflated lubed and replaced after Eric



checked them and the mounts. The controls were lubed then checked for smooth action with no excessive play. Cable ends were checked for tight swaging and free of wear and fraying. Tubing, connectors and capacity flask were checked for obvious cracks or leaks. The main wheel fairing was removed the brake inspected. The gap seal tapes were removed and the old adhesive removed (thank you "Goo be Gone"!) then new gap tape applied. The air brakes were adjusted on the Grob to make the initial unlatching easier and the right vibration springs were tightened to stop the annoying buzz at partial deployment.

Instead of doing a minimal glance and sign of the documents both gliders were completely cleaned lubed, all missing washers were replaced and squawks were addressed.

Thank you Tommy Childress for several runs to the Ace for miscellaneous lubes, cleaners and h/w. Thank you Sobek and Mike for organizing the crews. Especially Mike for supervising the screw turners and for the airframe adjustments to make flying our gliders that much more enjoyable. BTW we managed to finish ahead of our set schedule for both machines



Photos by Phil Jordan

1-26 Championships: A First Timer's Perspective

Ken Ekman

I had the good fortune of participating in the Championships hosted by Bermuda High Soaring, South Carolina, in June 2010. This was my first sailplane contest. It was also an exciting next step in the soaring interest I've pursued since I was a kid.

My early exposure to soaring sparked an interest in the sport and aviation in general. In high school, I expressed a desire to attend the Air Force Academy. My dad, a USAF fighter pilot and former Academy soaring instructor, purchased a Grob 103 to teach me to fly – we should all be so lucky. I continued my pursuit of soaring at the Academy and became a cadet soaring instructor and earned my CFIG. After pilot training, I was assigned to the USAF Test Pilot School to fly sailplanes on the basis of my Academy soaring experiences. My subsequent assignments as an F-16 pilot demanded a lot of my time and led me to living in places like Japan and Korea, but I flew sailplanes from time to time whenever I could.

The year 2004 found me back in the States, not flying fighters while attending school at Air University, and possessing some extra time and resources to cultivate my soaring interest. I wanted to do more than the basic training and aerobatics that made up my 580 hours of sailplane time. Cross-country soaring was appealing yet unknown to me. I determined that sailplane ownership was a path to greater cross-country potential, so I started a search in earnest for a moderately priced sailplane.

This search quickly led me to the 1-26. I had flown the model some at the Academy and enjoyed it as the “sports car” it seemed compared to the 2-33. The prospect of making a relatively small investment appealed to me. I wasn't sure that I would fly regularly and wanted to avoid tying up a lot of money in an unused toy. The 1-26 also had a good safety record with plenty of anecdotal evi-

Ken Ekman poses with sons Derick and Kayden after a landout at Camden airport, SC. All photos provided by the author.



Colorful 1-26s gather on the grid at Bermuda High Soaring, SC.

dence suggesting that the ship's occupants fared well in most mishaps. I liked the sailplane's basic construction, and reasoned the 1-26 would be easier and cheaper to repair following poor off-field landings. Finally, I was inspired by the large number of 1-26s still flying, and excited by the idea of competing in the annual Championships. The existence of the 1-26 Association and its newsletter and web site clinched the decision for me, and I purchased my 1-26.

I found that my 1-26 became a toy of occasional use in balance with the other important portions of my life. I soon returned to actively flying fighters, leading to my being away from home over half the time during a five-year period with stints in Iraq, Afghanistan, and various U.S. training locations. My family expanded via two adoptions, and having four kids at home kept my bride and me busy. Fortunately, I was assigned to Shaw AFB in South Carolina which made an excellent, close soaring site available via Bermuda High Soaring. Ultimately, over my five years at Shaw, my logbook shows I averaged four cross-country flights and 16 soaring hours per year. I participated for three years in the excellent Sweepstakes competition hosted on the Association web site. I also earned my silver badge while growing my skills and confidence.

February 2010 found me with some extra time and no planned travels as I returned from a four-month tour in Afghanistan. Bermuda High Soaring was hosting the year's Championships. Finally, I had my chance to compete, and at my home field no less! Over the next three months, I prepared as intensively as I could for my first contest. I brushed up on my cross-country soaring theory and knowledge via a few of the many publications on the subject. I prepared my ship via basic care and maintenance, avionics updates, and foam and tape in the right places to preserve the 1-26's modest performance.

Then, I flew every chance I had. I forced myself to fly all directions from my home field rather than just doing the “milk runs” over familiar ground allowing easy land out retrieves. Over my two

months of prep, my logbook shows eight cross-country flights for 13 hours, along with four land outs. All of these efforts, and mistakes, helped my build my confidence and recent familiarity with terrain and conditions at the planned contest field. I also found great value in practicing the basic of preparing for each day, taking all the right equipment to the airfield, assembling and disassembling the ship, and retrieving land outs. Finally, I was blessed by the friendship and support of Bermuda High instructor Robin Fleming who pulled me out of a couple of fields and volunteered to crew for me during the contest.

The day of the contest arrived quickly and brought with it confirmation that my desire to fly in a Championships was well-founded. I was immediately struck by the positive and supportive atmosphere surrounding the contest. I saw a reunion of friends. Yet, despite my status as a newcomer, the group welcomed me to the event. A tremendous spirit of cooperation and fun permeated everything from ship assembly, to social events, to retrieves, to cancelling contest days due to bad weather. All the fun and camaraderie hinted by the newsletter and web site materialized in person.

As a professional aviator, I also liked what I saw in terms of contest conduct. Competition Director Rick Sheppe, along with hosts Frank and Jayne Reid, kept the busy contest relaxed yet professional. Every decision and every operations policy reflected a strong emphasis on safety. This was my first exposure to the role of the contest director, and I was very impressed by Rick Sheppe's thoughtful tailoring of each day's task to maximize the probability of achieving a contest day while balancing risk and the sometimes poor weather. Jayne Reid orchestrated the three tow planes like a seasoned F-16 flight lead, communicating well as she directed their patterns and sequencing to minimize conflicts. And, as always, Frank Reid ran a ship-shape flightline as he directed the activities of 20 contest pilots and their crews.

I wanted to approach my first contest safely. I've done dangerous things in airplanes, but have never sought to accept the same levels of risk in my soaring hobby. First, I decided I wasn't going to fly recklessly or exceed the limits I'd established over my limited

Skyline's own Bill Vickland conducts a portion of the annual 1-26 Association members' meeting.



Contest pilots talk strategy and avoid the sun while waiting for the CD to launch the fleet.

Below: Marvin Willis entertains his fellow competitors with a ukulele. This was Marvin's last 1-26 Championships.



cross-country experiences. I needed to pay closer attention than normal to flight path deconfliction given the large number of airplanes in the same airspace. Flying a low L/D sailplane, I wanted to avoid the temptation to commit to course lines presenting no viable landing fields. The contest area had certain segments consisting of high trees and water bodies with no nice landout areas. Furthermore, I wanted to avoid the temptation of executing very low-altitude saves. In my experience, the transition from soaring to flying a traffic pattern is one of our sport's most difficult mindset adjustments.

I tried to be consistent. I decided that I wanted to finish the task every day, regardless of how fast I flew or how much distance I covered. I wanted to leave the start cylinder as high as possible and manage winds from that departure point and on the rest of my planned course line. I wanted to believe and apply what the weather brief told me, while still reserving the right to "adjust the forecast" based on what I saw looking through the canopy. I had some basic rules of thumb for my planned cruising altitude band relative to cloud base, and relative to the altitude where I would become worried and take the next available thermal regardless of

its strength. And, I felt reasonably comfortable with speed-to-fly use and final glide planning, though I knew I would have to overcome my training tendencies to fly slower and depart the last thermal higher than necessary. Incidentally, while I'd like to claim that I did all the above correctly, in execution I failed in all these tenets at some point in the contest.

Once the contest started, I settled into a comfortable routine. I paid close attention to the weather briefing during the pilot meeting. I then reviewed the task closely with my friend and crew Robin Fleming to build a plan for the task in light of the weather. We then assembled #160 and put it on the grid as soon as possible. I found being ahead during this phase allowed me to mentally prepare for the day's task. After the day's flying, I reviewed my .igc file looking for (and finding) obvious errors and trends. Furthermore, using See You, I compared my key mechanics and performance metrics to those of the top pilots to determine where my strategy or skills were flawed. I also sent my .igc file along with a self-critique to a soaring friend who lives on the west coast. He in turn provided me further critique and points for improvement. This debrief process helped me get the most out of each competition sortie.

In the end, the Championships stand as my most valuable and intensive soaring experience ever. I've struggled with the notion of competing in a recreational interest. Furthermore, I felt intimi-



Competitors, crews, and family attend a post-flying barbecue, complete with antique fire engine.

Below: From horses to PW-5s competing in the World Class contest, 1-26 landouts

dated by the prospect of competing given my relative inexperience in cross-country soaring. Instead, I found that there's nothing like competition and watching others perform well to hone your skills. The Championships cater to all levels of soaring ability. Furthermore, the lessons I learned are relevant to every soaring task and aren't just limited to application in future contests. The camaraderie of the 1-26 Association is second to none. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the great group of people who shared their infectious enthusiasm and friendship. If you've never competed in a 1-26 Championships, now's the time. I'll see you at Kendallville in 2011!





25 minutes. LZ was lighty but not scary. At 20 feet the glider surged in front of me and I pounded in hard. I broke both legs at boot top with open fracture of tibia on right. Broke right wrist and shattered L1 vertebra. Ann handled the emergency superbly. ER squad immediately ordered a helicopter. I am in UVA hospital. Nine hours to reconstruct vertebra and reduce open fracture. Just had filter installed in vena cava to prevent blood clots from invading lungs. Further surgeries coming for both legs and wrist. I can wiggle my toes!! Thanks for all the good wishes—Hugh (scribe -Sallie)

April 21—

had further surgery on hand/leg. Managing pain pretty well. very groggy. Sallie reports all went well and the doctors are pleased as of now, thanks for all the good wishes. one day at a time. wiggling toes!

April 23—

On the mend: out of ICU, starting to take off some of the medical devices, drains, got a bath, shampoo, shave, visits from a 1/2 dozen friends and my whole family. Probably moving to “skilled nursing facility” near home next week.

I’m sure everyone who hasn’t yet will join the editor in wishing Hugh a steady and speedy recovery and return to the air.

Soaring Magazine ‘Theme’ Issue—One of our upcoming ‘theme issues’ for Soaring will include a section filled with a variety of land-out retrieval stories, cruelty to crew accounts, and towing tales of epic adventures. Such essays should be true stories to the highest degree possible, while allowing for an adequate amount of plausible deniability if discretion is advisable.

If you’ve suffered high adventure while towing a trailer or during a retrieve that you would like to relate, or if there is a club fable or folk lore that is the stuff of legend, now is your chance to tell the world. These do not have to be first person accounts, but if perhaps you may have done something embarrassing or inelegant during a retrieve, remember -- confession is good for the soul . . .

As soon as we have enough good manuscripts in the files, we’ll put this special issue together. I suspect that by the end of the summer we’ll have some exemplary narratives on hand, and I think it will be an issue that the SSA membership will find amusing, entertaining, and perhaps a bit educational.

With hopes of a good response to this request, a maximum word count of 1452 words will help conserve space and allow running as many of the entries as possible.

So, crank up the computer and start writing. If you know of someone who has a good ‘incident’ to relate, please encourage him or her to contribute their version of history to this issue.

Thanks in advance for your participation, please let me know if you have any questions.

Best Regards,
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Dick Otis

Hugh McElrath

As of this writing most Skyliners are aware of Hugh’s most unfortunate accident. Here is a history of his progress in Hugh’s own words from his Facebook postings <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=532053542>

Tuesday, April 19, 2011

I was observing Ann Dunlap on hang gliding yesterday at Daniels. She had her first soaring flight! I launched my paraglider after she landed . Had a good flight, got to 600 over. Came out to land after



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

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