



## Monthly Newsletter of Skyline Soaring Club, Inc. December 2016

# SKY LINES

Masthead photo: Jimmy Corey

## President's Message

*Dan Ernst*



The end of the official soaring season approaches and we can look back on another safe and productive year. Our last day of operations will be on the 11th of December. The weather was not our friend this year and we are below our numbers compared to last year, but we still did well. We had a good number of people earn their rating this year and quite a few people turned in great flights. Thanks to everyone who flew and flew safely in 2016.

Many Skyline members got together in early November to celebrate the founding, and the founders, of our club with a 25th Anniversary bash featuring good food and good friends, not to mention some good drink and enthusiastic dancing. We were treated to special performances by members Maryam Ali and Steven Jr and Susan Zaboji. I can't say thank you enough to the dynamic duo of Miriam and Greg Ellis who spent many, many hours planning and preparing to make this a memorable night. There were four founding members of Skyline Soaring Club (defined as those who put up money to

start the club) present: Jim Kellett, Spencer Annear, Shane Neitzey and Phil Jordan. Among the original members of 25 years ago was Piet Barber. And Joe Parrish travelled all the way from California to celebrate with us. I, for one, had a great time. The club has grown significantly since the early days and indeed we continue to grow. All of us who came after owe a debt of gratitude to those who risked their money and set up the governance and culture of safety that we enjoy today. And by the way, there is a great written history of Skyline Soaring Club on the web site at: <http://skyline soaring.org/HISTORY/>. Jim Kellett has done a great job telling this interest-





ing story. Check it out this winter in front of the fire while it is snowing outside!

In big news on the tow plane front, by the time you read this we will have inked a contract with George Taylor of Old School Aviation located at Van Sant Airport in Erwinna, PA to recover the fuselage and tail feathers of the Pawnee and a repaint of the wings and any other surface that does not get recovered. This work is being paid for out of a fund that specifically set aside a few dollars from each Pawnee tow, so no increase in dues or taking on any debt is involved. The Pawnee was the first airplane purchased in the early days of the club and the old gal will look great after a well-deserved spiffing up!

And speaking of dues, Skyline dues will remain the same next year. A small increase that you will see in your bill comes from the SSA who are raising their annual dues. See Steve Rockwood's article in the last newsletter.

If he gets enough interest, George Hazelrigg is going to hold ground school in the off-season after the first of the year about late January/early February. If you are interested, don't delay, please contact George at ghazelrigg@verizon.net

Before Thanksgiving I had a very pleasant conversation with a gentleman named Sorri Halgrimmson who is a long time glider pilot and who also happens to have a complete set of Soaring magazines dating back to 1969. There may be a couple missing, but Sorri thinks it is more than 99.9% complete. By his estimation it takes up about 25 to 30 running feet of shelf space. If anyone would like to take on his collection, please let me know and I will put you in contact with him.

Looking at the coming year, mark your calendars for the Annual Membership meeting on the 28th of January. On-line

reservations have not opened up yet, but we will try to get the room at the Samuels Library on Criser Road in Front Royal. Likewise the annual (and mandatory) Safety Meeting will be held on the 25th of February also at the library if we can get it again. If you cannot attend this meeting you must review the slides and certify to the Safety Officer that you have done so before you fly or stand duty at the field, so pull out those calendars and mark 'em!

One of the major reasons for the Annual Meeting is the election of board members. Each year two of the board positions come open. A board of directors committee is accepting nominations for two board positions whose terms expire this year. If you would like to stand for election to the board, please let me know.

And finally, we wish Guinevere Burner Kutella and husband Josh Kutella and their growing family a fond farewell as they move to Oregon so that Josh can run the family business. Guin and Josh have been a big part of the welcoming atmosphere at the Away Days at the Be Soar Inn at Burner Field. On behalf of the entire club, it was a real pleasure to make your acquaintance. All the best in your new home and new business endeavors!

I hope that you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and that you enjoy the coming holiday season. See you next year!

Photo: Phil Jordan



*Sunday November 6 George Hazelrigg, Chris Zaboji and JP Stewart all rode wave above 12,000 ft. with Chris going to 13,300 ft. Chris' stunningly photo speaks better than any words to the beauty of our valley and our small place in this historic landscape.*







Photo: Greg Ellis



# Skyline Soaring Club's 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration



*Congratulations to Miriam Ellis and President Dan Ernst (left) and all concerned in arranging this marvelous event and to all the talent that entertained and informed us. We were treated to special performances by members Maryam Ali, Steven Jr and Susan Zaboji.*



Right: Speaker Eric Nelson and a guiding force in the creation of Skyline Soaring Club—Shane Neitzey.

Below: Speaker JP Stewart warms up the crowd..





*We had talent to spare...and fun for everyone!*







## Safety Corner

Chuck Stover



Photo: from Chuck Stover

## Wind Blows

Anyone who has flown with the club at least twice will recognize the plane in the photo. On Sunday, Nov 20 your duty crew wisely chose not to conduct flight operations due to high winds. The highest wind gust I observed was 37kts., but I'm sure there were higher.

We were hunkered down in the terminal building enjoying a talk on wave flying when a strange noise was heard outside. A quick look out the window revealed one of the FRR aeronautical monuments on its back, 50 or more feet from where it had been tied down, landing mere feet from Reggie's Cherokee.

This was a very exciting reminder for us about section 2.9 of our ops manual. To cover a few highlights:

1.) While parked with wind speeds in excess of 10kts. glider spoilers will be left open and wings weighted with shot bags. Tow plane parking brake will be set.

2.) At wind speeds above 15kts. A wing walker is required on each wing unless it is tied down.

3.) At wind speeds exceeding 20kts. (steady or gust) Club gliders must be returned to storage areas and secured.

4.) At winds in excess of 30kts. towplanes are returned to the hangars.

5.) If insufficient manpower to meet the above requirements everything gets put away.

The published stall speeds of our trainers are 35 or 36kts—depending on the plane. I'm sure the empty stall speed is a few knots slower. Remember I mentioned with gusts of 37kts. Some of the wind gusts we saw surely approached the minimum sink or best L/D speeds of a typical glider.

Why the tie downs didn't hold is another discussion, but the little Cessna sacrificed itself as a reminder to us. Reggie said it hadn't flown in 20 years until Sunday.

**Respect the wind.** 

## Sad Sidebar

One of the things 152s and 1-26s have in common is they *love* to fly and it's hard to hold one down. That's just an attempt at humor to disguise the genuine anguish your editor has each time he looks at this photo.

Back in the old days we had three 1-26s tied down outside on the grass in front of the gas tank. In the fall of 2003 during expansion of the runways, 081 was moved to the infield temporarily to accommodate the alterations.

Although I was assured it was secure, I asked my partner Mark Ballinger, former USMC pilot, to double check it as circumstances prevented me from coming out and winds were predicted to gust to 25mph. Mark and Reggie were confident

in the tiedown and I relaxed.

Soon after the winds almost doubled in strength from predicted. An original Schweizer wingpin straightened out and 081 flew itself to pieces.

This was one sweet-flying little plane—in which Ted Teach won the 1973 1-26 Championship and placed second in 1975.

Like Chuck says: respect the wind.—*Phil Jordan*



Photo: from Phil Jordan



# Baptism by Fire

Steve Zaboji

It was in early May 2015 that SSC member Keith Hilton and I had a casual discussion about his interest in purchasing an aircraft and learning to fly it in order to achieve his lifelong ambition of becoming pilot. Since he was already an accomplished private pilot- glider, my recommendations centered on aircraft that bypassed the stereotypical first-time aircraft models i.e. Cessna 172, Cherokee 180 or a Grumman Tiger. Even retractable geared aircraft like the Piper Arrow or the Cessna Cardinal seemed too benign for his ultimate aircraft.

As a former Piper Comanche owner and current flight instructor in the Comanche Flyer Foundation's Comanche pilot proficiency program, I understood the performance, and especially the value aspects, of the Comanche and thought it would be a perfect long term fit for Keith. There were some naysayers regarding to someone starting powered flight training in a high performance complex aircraft like the Comanche but I was convinced that Keith's glider background coupled with his tenacious perfectionism would yield a happy ownership balance.

Keith's work schedule, weather and an extensive annual inspection put a little over a year between soloing his highly modified 1964 Comanche 250 Lopresti GTO and his SEL type rating that he achieved on November 13th (pictured). With a



160KT+ cruising speed and nearly a 1000SM range, Keith is now in position to truly enjoy the fruits of his hard work.

From my privileged perspective as Keith's flight instructor, I can attest to the fact that a glider gateway to becoming a pilot is the most fundamental way to learn to fly. Further, that the SSC community of instructors and members is the finest group that I have had the privilege of knowing and that Keith's achievement, both in powered and soaring flight, clearly reflect the quality and discipline of our soaring community. Congratulations Keith, you are an aviator.

Merry Christmas and keep the blue side up!



Photo: Chris Zaboji





# November 26th Ridge Day

Charles Norman

In the days leading up to Saturday the 26th of November the weather forecasts were predicting a good day—it looked like wave and probably ridge if the wave didn't cancel out the ridge. As I drove out to Front Royal early Saturday morning things were looking good. Heading west on I-66 I could see nice long lenticulars stretching from the southwest towards the northeast. Unfortunately, as I continued to head west I could tell there was quite a bit of moisture in the air and the sky was transforming from rows of lenticulars high in the sky to a solid overcast at about four thousand feet. Four of us looked to the north where the sky was still clear(er) and assembled our ships – Shane Neitzey in XZ, Chuck Stover in RW, Piet Barber in QQ, and me in 9Y.

Cold weather gear on, oxygen systems on, checklists complete, the four of us launched over the next hour. XZ was first aloft and promptly reported that the ridge was working. RW was next—after a quick foray to the north in search of wave, RW also dropped onto the ridge. QQ was next and I launched last, comforted to know that some experienced pilots were having some success on the ridge. For three hours, we flew the ridge. It wasn't an exceedingly strong day: winds were somewhere between 300 and 320 degrees in the high teens and low twenties, so flying high above the ridge and benefiting from the weaker ridge lift at altitude wasn't an option. Today you had to be down on the ridge and I felt like I spent a good part of the flight at speed just above the ridgetops and at times at ridge height offset upwind climbing in the upslope lift (Laird's Knob comes to mind where I rounded the knob northbound at the same altitude as the antennas and fire tower on the peak)

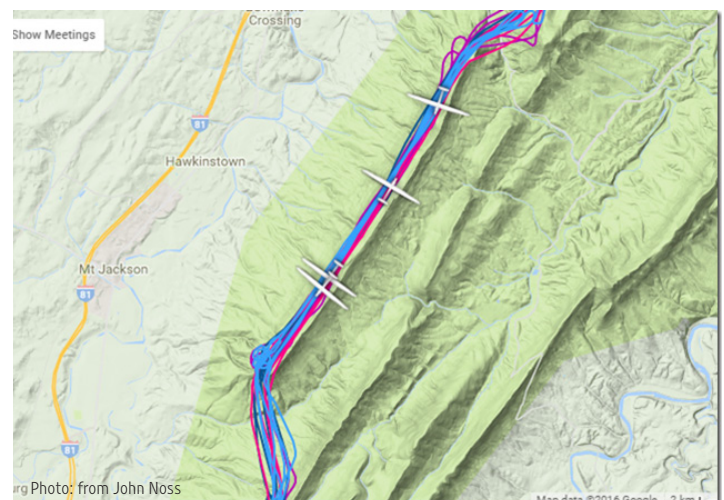
So here we were, four Skyline gliders (plus Karsten Petzold in his self-launching Discus) flying at relatively low level along the same lines back and forth. A few things really stood out in my mind: First, communication is key: we were all talking and sharing position reports, wind data, reports on the strength of the ridge—you really need that teamwork to stay safe and maximize performance. Second, you better have a plan: things happen fast on the ridge. Whether it's the glider approaching you in the opposite direction at your altitude (closing speeds can exceed 200kts) or losing your lift when you're at ridge top level—you had better know what you need to do when a threat presents itself, counting to five and working the problem is not an option. Three, know your equipment and technology: My flight computer and Oudie gave me great situational awareness, helping me stay on top of things I needed to know like land out options and wind speeds. I gained further respect for PowerFlarm, which two of the ships had. I saw a lot of gliders pass by me, but I am not sure I saw them all and I heard Piet and Shane both call out traffic they acquired on their PowerFlarm boxes before they had a visual. (With more and more private ships carrying PowerFlarm, maybe it's time the Club two seaters have PowerFlarm installed.)

As I followed Shane and Chuck north on our last leg, the ridge began to soften up. The three of us made the jump northbound onto North Mountain from a lower-than-desired altitude (3,500', would have liked 4,000'). We then proceeded

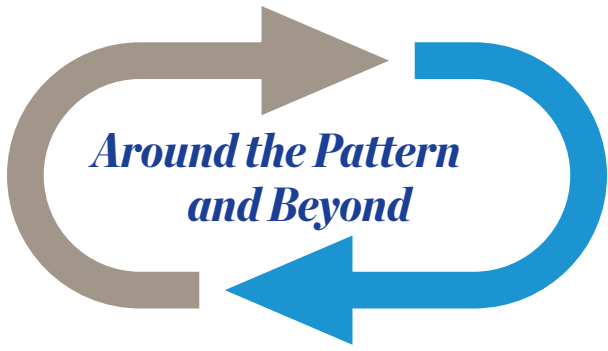


to continue northbound, judiciously trading speed for altitude until the final shoe dropped on the day. Just south of Signal Knob we started to get freezing rain. It was time to head home. Piet was on the south end of the ridge complex when he got our Pirep. I could tell he was not too enthused about the prospects. I was first to land with Shane and Chuck right behind me. About half an hour later Piet also made it home and the post flight conversations started and story swapping began. Over the next few hours we uploaded our flights to OLC and it was possible to see what we had achieved. Shane had 334 OLC points, Piet and Chuck had 286 and 282 respectively and I had 204 points. In my case, I think it's kind of cool that you can travel over 200 kilometers in a sailplane, never climb higher than 4000' and never gain any altitude in a circle—I lost a net of 45 meters in turns SeeYou tells me.

Thanks to a great club—it's our members who make it possible. On this day, four people come to mind. Greg Ellis did a great job as Duty Officer even though he was under the weather and had not slept much the night before. Shane, Chuck, and Piet were also great “big brothers” keeping me out of trouble and teaching me about the ridge along the way. Thanks again for everyone who make our operation run—We really should be thankful for what this club helps us all achieve in the sport.



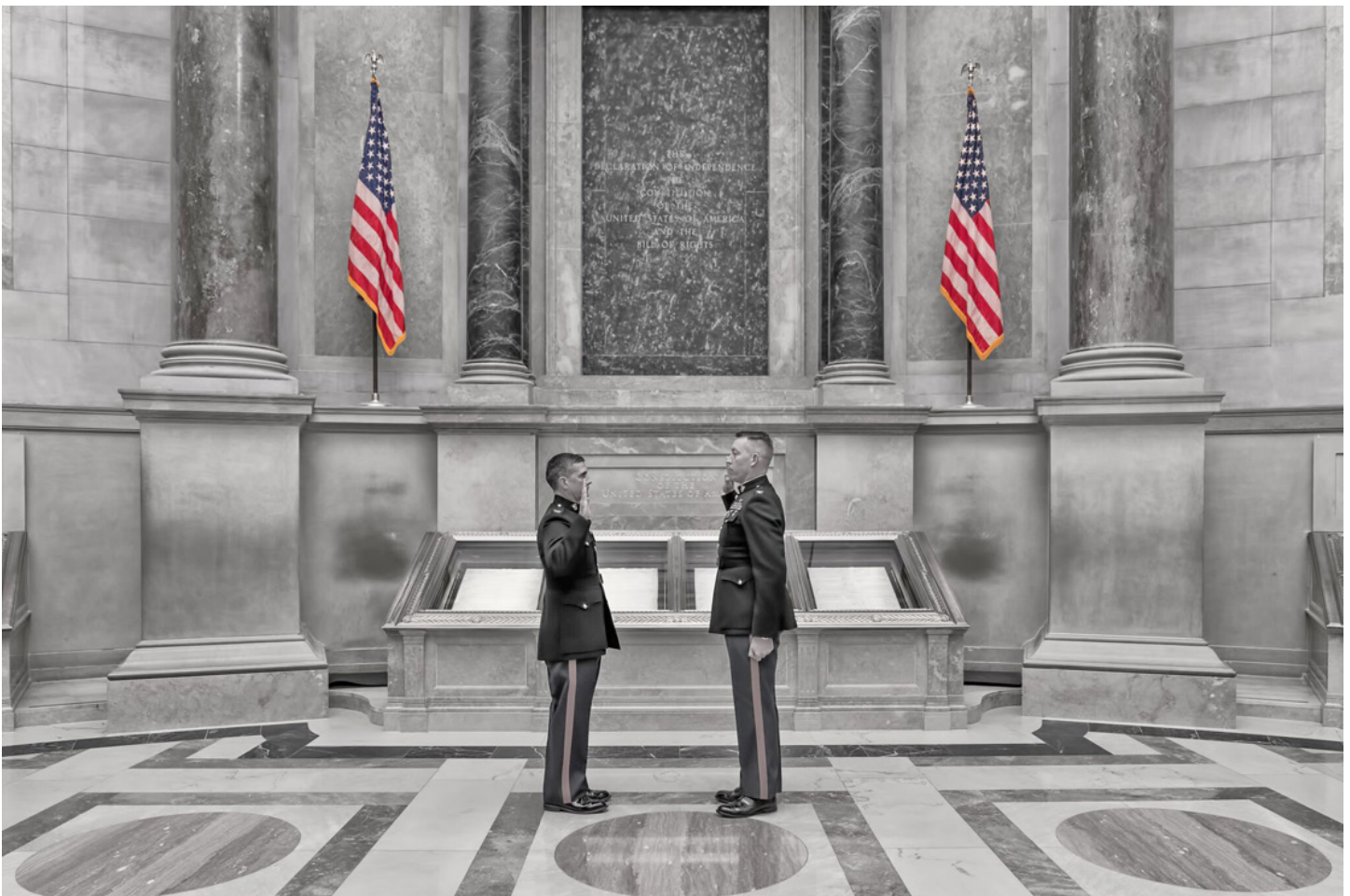




On November 4, 2016, the United States Marine Corps promoted Skyline member **Erik Van Weezendonk** to full Colonel in the USMC Reserves. Family, friends and colleagues arrived early at the United States Archives building in Washington DC to witness Col. Weezendonk accept the promotion in front of the Constitution of the United States. Sons Alex and Matthew pinned the eagles on dad's shoulders. Erik recently completed a one year active duty tour and has resumed his primary occupation as a FEDEX pilot. Congratulations Erik! And thank you for your service.—*Reynolds Renshaw*



Photos: Buzz Covington





**Eastern Soaring Center (ESC), Inc.** announces the start of glider operations at Grant County Airport (W99) in Petersburg WV next week! ESC will offer year-round (Thursday through Sunday) soaring rides, flight instruction (basic, advanced and ground launch endorsements) and winch launch tows by appointment. They are the only commercial operation in the mid-Atlantic region exclusively offering winch launching; and provide one of the highest winch launches available on the East coast. Situated in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia (just 2 hours west of the Washington DC beltway), ESC is conveniently located to thermal, ridge and wave soaring with a wave window to FL230 available. The airport is large and quiet with landable fields surrounding it. For further information, please visit [www.EasternSoaringCenter.com](http://www.EasternSoaringCenter.com) or call/text or email us. We look forward to flying with you!



Photo: from Jim Kellett

Above: Reynolds Renshaw in his brand new toy.

Below: Congratulations to Andrew Neilson for his solo in the ASK on November 27.



Photo: from Michael Bishton



Brian Collins, owner/operator  
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Grant County Airport (W99)  
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304-851-4106 (call or text)  
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Also on November 27: Congratulations to Matthew Vosika and Syed Ali both of whom soloed with the Sprite and to Michael Bishton who was signed off for the back seat in the ASK 21.

And congratulations to Evan Dosik on capturing the Flight of the Day on November 26—a stunning 23 minutes. At \$41.75 he could have taken the editor to lunch and saved a few bucks on the gas. But, of course, the view would have left a lot to be desired.

Super Moon Day by Jim Perlmutter





*A healthy man, indeed, is the  
complement of the seasons,  
and in winter,  
summer is in his heart.*

*Photo: Chris Zaboji*

*Henry David Thoreau*



*Have a happy, peaceful  
holiday season  
while visions of soaring  
dance in your head.*





*Flotsam and Jetsam  
from the Editor's  
Daily Email Tsunami*

**The Dates for the 2017 Petersburg Wave Camp** have been set. The camp will be hosted by Stahl Flying services and Shenandoah Valley Soaring. The Petersburg Wave camp is a long standing event and the geography often produces spectacular wave. A wave window is established at W99 with a maximum altitude of 23,000 feet MSL. The Grant County airport is very large and the runways (both grass and pavement) are oriented into the prevailing wind on wave days.

The dates are similar to last years. The Camp will begin with an "arrival/staging" day on Friday, Feb 24, 2017. Some flying may be possible on the 24th depending on personnel availability and the weather (of course). Airport orientations can also occur on Friday.

The wave flying is planned to run from Sat Feb 25 thru Sat, March 4, 2017 or Sunday March 5, again depending on the weather.

In the past couple of years snow has caused problems getting towplanes and gliders to Petersburg. However, this year the SVS towplane is already hangered in Petersburg and working fine. We will have to see about the snow.

The Camp will be advertised much more heavily this year and we will try to get people committed well ahead of the event. We will also have more talks / dinners and the like to make it more of an instructional and group event.

More information will be coming later, but if you are interested in flying wave, please mark the dates on your calendars for now.—**Jim Garrison, SSA Director Regions 2 & 4**

**Observing how the Lat and Lon information was handled** when Shane called in from his land out was a bit of a fire drill. It took awhile to sort out and happily it wasn't an emergency

situation. This is not the first time I've witnessed confusion in the ranks, including me, when handling called in coordinates. It always seems to get done but not easily.

Bottom line, it appears we need a procedure that clearly defines how land out coordinates are called in and then processed. I would like to include an agreed upon step by step process in the DO manual.

I would take a whack at the process but I'm betting there is someone in the club who has a better handle on this than me. I would also bet there are several ways to do it, but I would like to settle on one or two processes to include in the DO Manual for easy reference in the future.

Do we have a volunteer?—**Bruce S. Zivic**

**For one thing**, every XC glider should carry a small bottle of bourbon. This could be a gift to the farmer whose field the glider landed on, or if there is no one around, the pilot could drink it in celebration of his survival. Just a thought.

—**Steve Zaboji**

**I will hold a winter ground school** if there are four or more people committed to attending. I can do it either on Saturdays or Sundays (majority choice but not both) on the week-ends of Jan. 7/8, 14/15, 28/29, and Feb. 4/5 and, possibly, if we decide to do an extra week, Feb. 11/12. Note, I will not be around on the weekend of Jan. 20/21, so that is a week off from the class.

The class will be from 9:00-4:30, with a break for lunch, and there will be homework. I have a few somewhat more advanced people interested, so we could slew the class a bit in the advanced direction or not, depending on your preferences. Also, I am amenable to alternative locations. If there are only 4 or 5 students, I suggest using my home. I live at 8427 Idylwood Road, Vienna, VA.

If there are 8-12 or more, it would be better to find a larger venue, such as the airport or Bob Sallada's meeting space, if that is available. I do not teach to pass the knowledge test, but rather to have a thorough understanding of the material, and to become a safe pilot. However, if you successfully complete the course, I will sign you off for the knowledge test. I do ask that, if you decide to sign up for this course, you commit to coming to all sessions. Please do not sign up just on spec because I start preparing as soon as I decide to hold the class.

Also, I may charge a small fee, probably on the order of \$10 to defray my cost of materials, and I will require that everyone purchase a 2017 FAR/AIM and current Washington sectional chart.

If you want to take this course, please let be know by December 1. If you respond, please note whether you prefer Saturdays or Sundays or if you can come only one of these days, state your preferred venue, and give me an idea at what level you would like me to teach the course.

This is a great way to stay in touch with aviation during our off season.—**George Hazelrigg**

**Please note, especially DO's and ADO's** the FRS radios (the handhelds used for Skyline Ground use only) have been officially decommissioned.—**Bruce Zivic**



**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)

- President**—Dan Ernst
- Secretary**—Keith Hilton
- Treasurer**—Steve Rockwood
- Membership**—Steve Rockwood
- Chief Duty Officer**—Bruce Zivic
- Chief Tow Pilot**—Steve Zaboji
- Chief Flight Instructor**—Piet Barber
- Safety Officer**—Chuck Stover

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