



Masthead photo: Dick Otis

FROM THE PRESIDENT

John Noss (one last time)

Well, as we close the books on 2015, it strikes me that it was a very good year. With a strong finish in December, thanks to a couple of good ad-hoc days, we ended up with 6 more flights than the previous year, which means 2015 was our second biggest ever. If the weather had not gone all silly with rain and low clouds for the last two weeks, another couple of ad-hoc days (or one good one) might have given us another 24 flights to top our all-time record from 2012. And we did this with some very uncooperative months for weather, and we did it with no major incidents. So thanks to everybody for a safe year of flying!

It was also a very productive year, the most checkrides I have ever seen here, probably an all-time record. Tim Moran teased one more checkride out of prolific DPE Piet Barber in December, so I count at least 13 new glider ratings for Skyline members this year! That's good news in terms of being able to clear out the training pipeline a bit, and great news for a lot of new pilots who can now shift gears from checkride preparation to discovering the fun part of soaring – developing skills, getting more than 3 miles from the airfield, and working on badges. Special thanks to Piet for unilaterally jump-starting a lot of that activity with motivational Duo flights for some lucky members. But in addition to that, remember that if you want to learn, there is much you can teach yourself

Photo: Martin Gomez

while flying the Sprite or Cirrus, and you normally need only ask to get an instructor with a private glider to chase you and work on improving your skills. By the way, if you have recently been approved for any badge, you need to contact Piet to get it posted on the club's online 'badge board' – if you don't tell him, nobody will know.

I highly encourage everybody to attend the annual membership meeting, which will be at the Samuels Library in Front Royal on Saturday, 23 January. Doors open at 1000L, the meeting begins promptly at 1030, and will run no more than 2 hours. In addition to reviewing operations for the year, finances, membership, and other routine but important big-picture topics, we will be electing two new board members. If you have thought about throwing your hat in the ring to serve your club in a very important way as a member of the board of directors, please drop me an email. Any full (active,



non-probationary) member is eligible. Many of the 'long-timers' in the club have already served, we intentionally limit terms to spread the work, prevent burn-out, and ensure fresh blood and ideas. After we elect two new members (replacing Martin Gomez and myself), the new board will pick a replacement President.

Looking another month down the road, we have now also confirmed the Samuels Library location for the mandatory annual safety meeting on Saturday, 27 February. We normally only require an all-hands turnout once a year for safety meetings, this is really important, so please plan on being there. If you miss it, you will not be allowed to fly until you make up the meeting by studying the briefing material and then contacting the safety officer.

By now I trust everybody knows the ASK-21 is at Gehrlein (near Erie PA) for some finish repairs. When it comes back, please treat it better than we have been treating it in the past. The blue logo stripes have been worn from the sides due to people grabbing it with their hands and banging shoulder harness buckles against it. The tail boom has been scratched from people slapping the tail dolly around and removing gelcoat. The nose in front of the Tost hook

release has been gouged from going way too low while practicing boxing of the wake. The leading edges of the wingtips have been dinged from runway lights and hangar rash. These repairs will cost several thousand dollars, and the glider will be out of service while it happens. This is not just 'normal wear and tear', it is avoidable carelessness that costs every one of us. When the K comes home, the Grob will go up for a similar set of repairs, for the same reasons. We really need your help to take care of the equipment! Hopefully both will be completed before the beginning of the formal flying season in about two months.

This will be my last 'Presidents Message' for the newsletter. I would like to thank everybody in the club for making it one of the best soaring organizations ever, and I especially would like to thank the many volunteers who take on hard jobs as board members or club officers or meisters, doing the really heavy lifting that everybody else depends on. And to Phil Jordan, for your unbelievable work in putting out this world-class newsletter (and tolerating chronic last-minute inputs) – well, you are just the best!

Fly Safe, Fly Often, Have Fun!

CURMUDGEON'S CORNER

Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon

In the December SKYLINES, President Noss noted: "We are still looking for members interested in running for the two slots on the board". On January 23, 2016, the membership will elect two new Board members (replacing John Noss and Martin Gomez who will be leaving the Board) to serve a three-year term. Want to be a leader? Talk to a current Director (Noss, Tete, Garrity, Hilton, Gomez, Ernst) to learn more about the nitty gritty of being a Director. And give serious thought to becoming a candidate in the January election and bring some fresh blood to the management team!

Skyline's first flight was on November 21, 1991. In the 24 years since then, a total of 38 men and women have served as Directors, including 14 who are still active, current members. These are the men and women who, often in addition to serving the Club in other capacities, stepped up to guide the growth of the club.

At this writing, Skyline has 105 members of all types, including 18 Probationary members. Among the full members are 6 elected members of the Board of Directors (the only officers elected by the membership!). In addition, the Board has appointed (or approved) one Webmaster, one Safety Officer, one Hangar Meister, one Membership Officer, one Ground Vehicle Meister, three Maintenance Meisters (one for each glider), one Duty Roster Chief, one Chief Duty Officer, one Chief Towpilot, one Chief Flight Instructor, one Treasurer, one newsletter editor, 16 flight instructors, and 16 tow-

pilots. Membership status is also approved by the Board; including Probationary and Full membership categories. Oh, and the Board delegates the appointment of our 28 Duty Officers to the Chief Duty Officer.

Many of the appointed 'staff' (towpilots and instructors) must have qualifications that are established outside the club—particular licenses, endorsements, etc.—but others (e.g. Duty Officers) must be trained 'on the job' to serve the Club's particular and often unique requirements and approved or appointed by the Board of Directors. Finally, Directors themselves—the only elected officers, remember—should have some significant aviation experience, should have been a member of the Club long enough to appreciate the Club's management, and—arguably the most important—the ability to 'play well with others' in a work environment. These are the people who deal with the shifting mixture of complex management issues that affect our Club, and who develop the policies that have made us one of the more successful Clubs in the United States.

Which brings up another point. With few exceptions, pilots—and especially glider pilots—fill a certain rather elite demographic. They're successful enough in some other career to be able to afford this expensive sport. They're smart enough and disciplined enough to master the skills required for safe aviation. So it comes as no surprise that many Club members, in their careers, have also developed some proficiency in team building, working on complex technical problems, managing money, and managing personnel, etc. The skills that good Board members need.

How about you?



HOLIDAY PARTY RECAP

Bruce Zivic

In an early December Saturday evening merry revelers from the SSC converged again on Aspen Dale Winery for a festive holiday party. If you have not visited this vineyard it provides a very casual, warm and inviting atmosphere enjoyed by all who attend. The established fellowship is enhanced by the food and adult beverages plus the added dimension of the spouses etc. I did observe that only in this group do you see guys with a drink in one hand while the other hand is

demonstrating aero maneuvers supporting a “near incident” narrative. Of course the happy ending is that they are there to tell the tale. Let’s drink to that!

This year did mark a lower than hoped for attendance, in two previous years we attracted a crowd of around 60, although it did little to diminish the good time. With only 40 we barely met critical mass so that the party could financially support itself. It’s the intent of the club to make this event inclusive of as many members as possible, including their significant others. There several theories as to why the attendance was lower this year and I would very much you like input from those who didn’t attend as what it would take to make them participants.



Photos: George Hazelrigg and Evan Dosik



I LOST MY VIRGINITY ON THE RIDGE WITH PIET

Bruce Zivic

It was promising to be a ridge day, Vern rang the bell for Tuesday ad-hoc ops and those able to get away made an appearance for what turned out to be a purely pleasurable day for all.

I being a ridge virgin I happen to notice that Piet and his most capable Duo were planning to run it, recognizing an opportunity I offered my services as ballast which Piet inexplicably accepted. To my way of thinking the far side of ridge from FRR was always a mystery I imagined that only unspeakable and spooky stuff resided there, so now was the time to see what's out there.


After a 3000 foot tow to Signal Knob Piet released and set a course SSW parallel with the ridge. We settled into an elevation of 3200 MSL and it stuck. Sitting in the rear I was trying to suck up as much of the instrument readings as my head could hold. I asked Piet to talk about what he was doing as much as possible which he did also answered my questions.

For a good portion of the trip we were at or just below the top of the ridge on the windward side, alarmingly close to the trees from what I imagined, I swear I could spot coins on the ground. This was my first big revelation, learning how close you get to the ridge. For a majority of the flight we held an elevation between 3200 and 2800 MSL and mostly maintained an airspeed of 80 kts. The second revelation was the balance of airspeed to speed of the wind at the ridge. On our day 80kts was the right balance I understand that higher winds allow faster airspeeds and visa versa, Piet said his minimum threshold for airspeed on the ridge is 65 kts. I will stow that little nugget way for later. All this was new to me, around the airfield I rarely go above 70 kts and for relatively short bursts. With the westerly wind (I didn't get the wind speed) it was a magic carpet ride all the way to Massanutten Ski Resort, about 40 sm from Signal Knob.

Looking to the west into the valley I was surprised to see so many potential landout spots, being out of range for a straight glide back to FRR knowing so many options existed was reassuring and a confidence builder. Although it didn't happen, I secretly was hoping that we would need to landout. Doing that with Piet would have been a great way to scratch that off the bucket list. It's true sadly, I fly like a chicken.

Mario launched JS on a course to the ridge and we were able to team up. This leads to the next thing I haven't done much and that is listen and learn about to craft to craft chatter. This chatter is much more relaxed than the more formal in-the-pattern radio work. After teaming up we flew together for about 15-20 minutes, I can't explain it but it's really a hoot! JS was able to situate himself a couple hundred feet higher and more directly over the ridge. Piet was a bit envious of his position. At other times JS was lower, then higher, then ultimately quicker.

Any one ridge does not go on forever. Important to note, ridge lift does exist if there is no ridge. Next lesson, transitioning! In an effort to make a jump to the next ridge with no lift in between its time to recall your birds best L/D. During this maneuver Piet was able to hold his elevation with minimal elevation loss, JS however went from above to below us but he happily found lift at the next ridge and assumed his "above us" status quickly.

The final part of the experience was the non-technical aspects including flying with lots of birds, releasing yourself mentally from FRR, flying camaraderie and views only available by flying. As a new-be to the ridge there is absolutely no substitute for flying there with a knowledgeable pilot and observing many of the nuances on how to handle it. I didn't get the smile off my face for quite a while and the kicker is Piet said it was just a good ridge day, not a great day. Whoa, now there's something to light a candle for. Vern keep paying attention to the forecasts and let us know. Piet, I owe ya for opening up a whole new world. 



Photos: Bruce Zivic

AROUND THE FIELD...



Photo: from Piet Barber

Congratulations to our newest Private Pilot Tim Moran—left with with DPE Piet Barber. John F. Noss commented: In case anybody was wondering about the short sleeves, we hit 72F on December 12 at KFRR.

Bill Vickland's Challenge: Maybe it is too early in the winter to find alternatives to real flying, but I have a challenge to the membership. In about 1978, I landed 238 inside the city limits of Front Royal. I will buy two additional glasses of wine at the Christmas party, for the first person who can identify the location of my landing depicted in the attached picture.

Bill accidentally sent the first notice to the 1-26 Association and Wayne Walker identified the location. Wayne lived in DC back in the 60s and made frequent trips to Front Royal. He correctly said it was at the intersection of 522 and 55.

Photo: from Bill Vickland



Not a creature was stirring...not even a gator—waiting for towing in the new year. Photo by Steve Zaboji



AROUND THE FIELD...AND BEYOND



Photo provided by Kaye Ebel

Skyline Soaring West representative Kaye Ebel— We miss you good buddy—Editor.



Photos: Walt Grobowski

Walt Grobowski enjoys his first glider ride with Greg Ellis. Walt's photo below clearly illustrates our mild winter.



**RECYCLED
INFORMATION
WORTH
REPEATING**
SAY AGAIN



Really nice screen grab photo by Craig Sutherland—from Craig and Piet Barber’s December 15 ridge flight superb video:

<https://vimeo.com/149662308>

Full Senate passes medical reform—The full Senate has passed the Pilot’s Bill of Rights 2, which will now go to the House for consideration. The Senate passed the bill, which includes third class medical reform, by unanimous consent on Dec. 15, less than a week after it was reported out by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. The bill must also pass the House, where it has 152 bipartisan cosponsors, before it can go to the president for his signature.

Under the medical reforms of Pilot’s Bill of Rights 2, most pilots who have held a valid third class medical, either regular or special issuance, within 10 years of the legislation’s enactment would never need to get another FAA medical exam. The rule would apply to pilots flying VFR or IFR in aircraft weighing up to 6,000 pounds and carrying up to five passengers at altitudes below 18,000 feet and speeds up to 250 knots.—*Dick Otis*

SSA Special Announcement, Dec. 30, 2015—Nominations have been received for the position on the US Team Committee. Voting is now open! Cut and paste the link to cast your vote. Voting runs through 1- 25-2016

<http://asserver.adamsfive.com/assoaring/survey/surveys.php>



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*—John Noss
- Secretary*—Keith Hilton
- Treasurer*—Steve Rockwood
- Membership*—Steve Rockwood
- Chief Duty Officer*—Craig Bendorf
- Chief Tow Pilot*—Martin Gomez
- Chief Flight Instructor*—Piet Barber
- Safety Officer*—Charles Norman
- Skylines Editor*—Phil Jordan
wingup126@gmail.com
- Directors*—John Noss, Ertan Tete,
Martin Gomez, Richard Garrity,
Keith Hilton, Dan Ernst

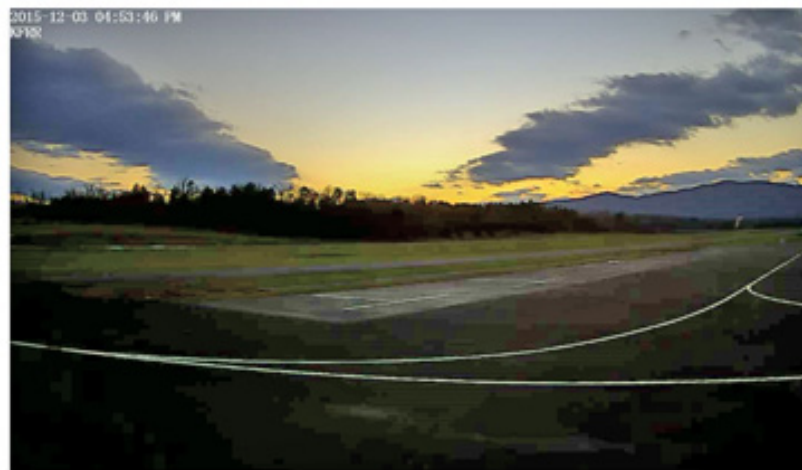


Photo: Dec. 3 webcam waves thanks to Chris Carswell