

SKYLINES

Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for December, 2021

A FAMILY REMEMBERS

Skyline members who were at the field on November 6 were witness to a moving tribute for one of our own who “flew west” at an untimely age.



L to R: Dan Trexel, Ralph Sharpe, Shannon Trexel, Gail Sharpe, and Hayden Trexel

Ryan Trexel, an SSEF Scholarship winner in 2017 who had soloed and was working toward his

PPL(G), passed away in his sleep on April 1, 2020. You should read more about this inspiring and courageous young man at <http://ssefva.org/ryan-trexel-memorial-soaring-scholarship/> (Ryan’s grandfather Ralph Sharpe supports the Ryan Trexel Memorial Scholarship fund, administered through the Skyline Soaring Educational Foundation, in memory of Ryan.)

On what would have been his 19th birthday, his parents, grandparents, and brother gathered at the field to watch operations and remember the joy Ryan had flying with the club.

May his memory be a blessing.



SUMMARY OF BOARD ACTIONS

Keith Hilton, Secretary

Once again, our Board of Directors earned their huge salaries (humor intended) and made some very significant decisions at the 4 November 2021 Board meeting.

Our Treasurer, Ralph Vawter presented the Club financial situation. We have over \$98,000 in the bank. Those funds are broken out into the following "funds:" \$36K engine, \$9.5K tow plane recovering, \$7K operating reserve, \$23K capital investment, \$11K avionics. A percentage from each tow is allocated to these funds. Additionally we have \$11.5K in cash reserves. Thus, the Club financial situation looks good.

With the Board considering the purchase of a PW-5, Ralph asked the Board to consider paying off the interest-bearing loan to the Club members for the ASK-21 N321K of around \$30K and securing no-interest loans from Club members (who have indicated they interested) for the purchase of a PW-5. He noted that with \$98K in the bank (that includes the \$23K capital investment account) and with the only major expense pending being the \$20K insurance payment in April, now would be a good time to consider the payoff on the ASK-21 loan. This would save the Club a significant amount of interest in the long run.

After considerable discussion, the Board voted unanimously to authorize Ralph to pay back the Member loans for the ASK-21 loan as soon as practical.

The Board also discussed the rise in the cost of aviation gas for the tow planes and the need to raise tow fees. At this time, they decided to leave things as they are.

Ralph also informed that Board that he received notice from PopMoney that the sending or requesting funds through Popmoney.com will cease as of December 5, 2021. Previously, the

bank that the club uses - Oakview National Bank - offered PopMoney through their online banking, but that is no longer true. Ralph noted that he will continue to evaluate other methods of payment that will work for Skyline Soaring. However, most other applications charge a service fee.

Club "fixed expenses" include insurance, hangar rent, loan servicing, etc. These expenses are covered by annual dues. With the projected increase in hangar rent and other fixed expenses, the Board discussed the need to increase annual Club dues. Ralph Vawter took the action to assess the need to raise dues and fees prior to sending out the annual dues invoices for 2022.

In his report to the Board, Tim Moran noted that we currently have 104 members. That includes eight probationary and five introductory members. We have forty prospective student members on the wait list. Prospective members that already have a glider rating are considered for immediate introductory membership.

John Noss noted that as of the 4 November Board meeting, we had 33 students on the rolls. Four are new members who have not flown yet, but probably will soon. 20 have flown this year, and they have all flown in the last 100 days, the rest are considered inactive students, though they may start up again. 16 of our students had flown in the last 60 days, 8 of those had flown in the last 30 days. Several students have not flown in over 1,000 days.

Chris Carswell noted that he and Tim Moran discussed adding 11 members to the ADO roles and promoting about four ADOs to DO. All of this requires going through the relevant training first. Chris asked the Board for clarification on the minimum age for ADOs. The consensus of the Board was that an ADO must be at least 16-years old.

There was some discussion on Club members performing duty crew duties. We all know that it

is the volunteers that make the Club work. As to members away at college, the consensus of the Board was that college students should be on the duty roster. Like everyone else, they can let Mike Ash know when they are at school and what dates they are not available.

Andrew Neilson noted that the tow planes are in good shape. We have sufficient spare parts/tires/oil/TCP. He noted that he would like to address the seat belt inertial reel, canopy heat, and redirecting the exhaust during the Pawnee annual.

Keith Hilton briefed the Board on the glider fleet. Various tires have been replaced and both ASK-21 trailers are back in service. He noted that the LX Nav vario in N321K was replaced with a rebuilt LX Nav vario. Additionally, the position of the vario and G-meter have been swapped in an effort to prevent damage to the vario screen. As noted through Club email, the bi-annual transponder recertification was also completed on N321K. After many volunteer hours by Tom Ward, Richard Good, Eric van Weezendonk, Piet Barber, as well as Dave Schober, the MASA resident DAR/IA/A&P, the Discus is back in service. Piet Barber also completed installation and ops checking of a gear warning kit. Thanks to the volunteer labor, total cost of repairs and the warning horn was less than \$1,000. After the gelcoat completely cures, the Discus still needs some wet sanding and polishing to smooth out some drips where some cavities were filled, so you too have a chance to get your hands dirty.

Andrew Neilson brought to the attention of the Board that during guest flights and FAST flights that friends and family members have a tendency to encroach of the runway and have gotten in the path of the tow plane. He wanted to remind Club members to watch for unsafe behavior and control the visitors.

Justen Mensen pointed out to the Board that sections 1.1-1.4 and perhaps 1.6 of the Ops Manual contradict the bylaws concerning Student membership, and that the operations manual may have been used to bypass the process to change the bylaws. The Board agreed with Justin



and plans to address this during a revision of the Skyline Soaring Operations Manual and possible updates to the Club bylaws during the winter break in operations.

Piet Barber addressed the establishment of a wave window at Petersburg, WV. Piet noted that Petersburg is better than Front Royal for high altitude wave. Piet has proposed a Wave Camp at Petersburg from 5 – 13 March. He said he already has 30 pilots interested in participating.

As you may have noted in the last newsletter, the Board authorized Chris Norris to spearhead the search effort for a PW-5. Well, the search was successful. Chris found a couple of PW-5s of interest. The PW-5 located at Tidewater soaring was less than desirable. Another PW-5 in San Antonio showed much more promise.



The PW-5 in San Antonio at the Boerne Stage Field Airport is owned by the airport manager, J.J. Romano. He has been out of commission for medical issues. He has three single place gliders that are too many to just sit around not flying, so he's open to an offer on one (or more). His minimum threshold for his PW-5 is \$20k. It has working radio, mode C transponder, and has just over 400 hours TTF. Nick Leonard, Sr. examined the glider for us. Nick noted that it is in very good shape. There are some minor cracks in the gelcoat, but it has been kept in a hangar or trailer all its life. It has a transponder albeit out of two-year cert and it is also out of annual. The ship has an experimental certification. Chris Norris noted that it was privately owned and not a club ship. There is no history of damage to the ship. The trailer is in fairly good shape but needs new tires. It hasn't been advertised for sale, but J.J. knows we are interested.



Being quite conservative with the Club's funds, the Board did not take this decision lightly, but after a significant amount of discussion, including concerns of Club debt, the Board voted four in favor and two opposed to authorizing Chris Norris to lead a visit to San Antonio to examine the PW-5 owned by J.J. Romano. The Board will address selling the Sprite after a deal is made on purchasing a PW-5.

After some discussion, the Board decided that instead of holding the Annual Membership meeting and Annual Safety meeting on separate days, to hold a combined Annual Membership and Safety meeting on 12 February. The Board is investigating the possibility of using the new fire department building next to the field for the meeting.

If you are interested in **seeing** the "sausage being made," the next Board meeting is scheduled for

22 December at 6:30 PM via ZOOM. Just contact Brian Clark and he will provide you the link to the meeting.

If you are interested in **participating** in the "sausage making," two Board of Directors positions will be up for election/re-election at the 12 February 2022 Annual Meeting. If interested, please let me or one of the Board members know. You are also welcome to campaign and place an ad in this newsletter.



KEITH HILTON – MODEL FOR NORTHERN FACE HOODIES AND SCHLEICHER SAILPLANES



Photo by Robb Hohmann



MEET THE MEMBER – MIKE ASH Interview with Marcelo Morichi

1. When did you join SSC? How did you learn about the club?

A: I joined in the summer of 2006. I had been thinking about learning to fly small planes. I eventually realized that flying small planes was going to be purely for fun, and of no practical use

for me. Given that, gliders looked like a lot more fun to fly than powered aircraft, so I started looking into it and eventually found SSC on the SSA's "Where to Fly" site. I got in touch and the rest is history.

2. How long have you been a glider pilot? Where did you learn to fly gliders?

A: I learned at SSC, so I've been flying gliders since 2006.

3. What ratings do you have?

A: Just a private pilot rating.

4. When did you fly for the first time? What do you remember about that experience?

A: I don't know exactly what my first time would be, but I do remember taking a ride at SSC as a small child, back when SSC was at New Market. I grew up just a couple of miles from the airport there, and we checked out the operations one day. I remember being very impressed with the pilot and how he knew exactly what he was doing (I'm afraid I don't remember who it was, though!), and looking over the side watching from above as the tow plane took off on another flight.

5. How long and what is your commute like to the airport (routes you take, time you leave home, any favorite places to stop along the way?)

A: I'm a little over an hour away, straight out 66. I'll usually leave 7:30ish. I'm not much of a morning person, and I always run a little behind. Coming home, if there's daylight and time permits, I love taking route 55 back towards the city, at least until Haymarket or so, and enjoying the sights of the countryside.

6. Who were/are your mentors at SSC?

A: There are so many. I'm going to miss some, so I apologize in advance to anyone I fail to name.

The first and biggest is Bob Sallada. He was my primary instructor while I got my rating, and my main introduction to the club in general. His incredible depth of knowledge and skill made

everything look effortless, but he always had genuine appreciation and pride for my own relatively minor accomplishments.

Bob Collier taught me to fly cross country. He was incredibly generous in allowing me to fly his 1-26 and crewing for me when I inevitably landed out. He'd talk my ear off (and anyone else who would listen) about his flying adventures and his various ideas about soaring cross country. He grew my world beyond the vicinity of the airport.

Jim Kellett is another major one. He was my partner in H3, an ASW-20, for many years. He taught me about owning and caring for an aircraft, and about flying in the "high performance" world where you'd actually expect to get back to the airport by the end of the day.

There are, as I said, many more, but this is already getting long. Ultimately, I could name every member, current and past since 2006, since everyone at the club has taught me something.

7. What do you like the most about flying in the Front Royal area?

A: I like the variety of the terrain and the conditions. Thermals, ridge, and wave all make an appearance. We have rugged mountains and wide-open farmland. You'll see rock outcroppings and forests and towns but never be too far from a place to land.

8. What is your more memorable glider flight? When did it happen? Why do you remember it?

A: It's hard to pick one, but there was a particular wave flight in H3 that sticks out. It was a typical Front Royal wave day, cold and post-frontal, with clouds clearly marking the wave. I got into it easily and climbed. I spent the day fooling around at high altitude, easily getting up to 14,000ft (no oxygen on board!) while gradually freezing my butt off. As my feet started getting seriously cold, I decided I should head back, then I found some tremendous lift and decided to give it one more climb first. This repeated several times as my feet

got ever more painfully cold. Finally, my feet stopped hurting, and that's when I knew it really was time to head home.

9. Any close calls? If so, please provide a brief description.

A: In my third or fourth flight in H3, I didn't push the air probe in far enough when assembling the glider. The result is that my airspeed indicator stayed at 0, a fact I discovered to my dismay during the takeoff. I decided it would be best to complete a normal tow and take some time to explore flying it without airspeed indication before landing. When entering the pattern, there was a tremendous tailwind on downwind, which resulted in a high groundspeed and caused me to subconsciously fly slow. Turning base, I suddenly found myself low and slow with a substantial headwind, not a good place to be! Putting away the spoilers and diving for the runway got me back safely.

10. What do you do for a living?

A: I'm a computer programmer, currently working at Apple. If you use an iPhone, there's bits of my stuff running in every program you use.

11. Where did you grow up?

A: I grew up near New Market until we moved to Tomah, Wisconsin when I was a young teen. Wisconsin really makes me appreciate the mild winters we get here!

12. What do you like the most about SSC?

A: Definitely the people. Everyone is kind, highly knowledgeable about something (whether flying-related or otherwise) and willing to share. It's a great bunch of people to hang out with.

13. What's on your gliding bucket list?

A: I'd love to do some serious cross country flying in the desert southwest someday. It sounds like such a different experience, with much stronger, higher thermals, and without the ubiquitous farmers' fields to land in. Not to mention such a different landscape.

14. What do other members might not know about you?

A: I'm fluent in French and speak enough Mandarin to get around.

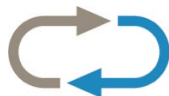
In 2005, I was one of the winners of the International Obfuscated C Coding Contest, a tongue-in-cheek contest where programmers compete to write the most ridiculous, painful, and impossible-to-understand programs they can. My entry can be seen in the list at <https://www.ioccc.org/years.html#2005>.

15. What would you tell a student pilot who struggles to see the light at the end of the tunnel?

A: Two things:

First, understand that you are making progress even when it feels like you are not. Sometimes you might feel like you've plateaued, that you're just not getting better at landings or tows or turns or whatever, no matter how much you practice. This is an illusion! One of the critical parts of learning any skill is when you begin to move from doing it consciously, where you're always thinking about what to do and how to do it, to doing it unconsciously, where it just flows from you. This transition can feel like you're not improving, but important things are happening in your skull. Keep at it, and you'll soon wonder what all the trouble was.

Second, look at training flights as part of the experience, not an obstacle to overcome before "real" flying can begin. You can have just as much fun with an instructor as you will with a passenger or flying solo. Treat your training flights as a team effort and a way to enjoy some time in some pleasant and interesting company. Your first solo and your checkride will come. If it takes longer to get there than you'd like, enjoy the journey.



NOVEMBER KUDOS

Ralph Vawter

November gave Skyline many reasons to shine. We have two newly rated pilots. Caleb Smith continues to grab the headlines by passing his flight practical test two weeks after turning 16. His examiner – Piet Barber – dubbed him the youngest rated glider pilot in the US at the time. Caleb was also the subject of a news article on a local DC channel, touting his gliding skills as well as his membership in his HS ROTC organization. Hurrah Caleb!

Max McGowan also gained his glider rating under the watchful eye of Piet Barber. Congratulations,

Max! Max will be studying aeronautical engineering in college; he has his eyes on the Oklahoma University at the present. Boomer Sooners!

Kudos to Ken Ring! Ken has been a long-time member of Skyline, and when he's not flying gliders with the club, he earns his paycheck as a powered instructor. Ken has added CFGI to his resume and will be sitting in the back seat in the future. It should also be mentioned that Ken was recognized recently as a top power instructor. Justin Mensen has also become a CFGI for Skyline. Along with that, Justin has procured employment locally and will be staying in the area for a couple more years. Justin is finishing up his PHD at George Mason and was slated to move to the USAF Academy as an instructor. Their loss is our gain. Yahoo!

The efforts of Piet Barber, Tom Ward and Erik van Weezendonk need to be recognized and applauded. You may have heard that the Discus incurred some damage that took it off the flight line. Usually, repairs like this require a trailer ride to a vendor such as Gerlein, for a costly and time-consuming repair. Piet, Tom and Erik worked diligently, along with some folks at MASA and repaired the damage. At the same time, a gear down warning system was installed/updated/replaced in the Discus to prevent future damage. A great big THANK YOU goes to Piet, Tom and Erik for jumping in and taking the initiative to keep our fleet up and running.

Mike Christiansen has made some hangar space available to Skyline, while his airplane is being repaired. The Discus is assembled and ready to fly. If you are already checked out in the Discus roll it out and get it in the air. For those who need to get a check out ride, this may be the time to do it, the end of the season is nigh. Thanks, Mike!





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

Stephanie Zilora - *President*

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Evan Dosik
Jim Perlmutter
Erik von Weezendonk
Stephanie Zilora
Jim Kellett

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Piet Barber - *Webmaster*

Brian Clark - *Assistant Webmaster*

Jim Kellett - *Newsletter Editor*

David Collier - *Tow Vehicle Meister*

Andrew Neilson - *Tow Plane Chief of Maintenance*

Peter Melenson - *Club A&P*

Keith Hilton - *ASK-21 (N321K &*

N341KS) Meister

Evan Dosik - *ASK-21 (N321K) & Grob Meister*

Guido Kramp / Rob Jacobson - *Discus Meister*

Richard Good - *Sprite Meister*

Matt Vosika - *Organizations Liaison Officer*