

SKYLINES

Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for July, 2021

Landing Judges



BOOK REVIEW

Jim Perlmutter

For my birthday, my daughter gave me a book titled, To Fly the Gentle Giants, (2009) by retired Northern Arizona University Professor Emeritus (Zoology), J. Norman Grim, PhD, glider and power pilot, and retired Army Reserve officer. This fascinating 300 page plus work covers the training of American military glider pilots during WW-II. The author's sources are from extensive interviews, written accounts and the resources from the Silent Wings Museum in Lubbock Texas.

It wasn't until the German capture of Fort Eben-Emael (Belgium) May 1940 and the invasion of the Island of Crete May 1941 utilizing gliders, that Army Air Force Chief, General Henry "Hap" Arnold took notice of potential glider operations. The Navy

and the Marine Corps also engaged in glider options. The first half of the book goes into finding instructors, organizing a program of instruction, procuring suitable gliders, construction of training airfields, and recruiting suitable candidates. It is interesting to note that Harris Hill, Elmira, New York, became the first to facilitate this endeavor. This was followed by contract civilian flying schools for primary flight instruction in eleven states. Various engineless modified Aeronca and Taylorcraft were used for training as well as small single engine planes. Upon reaching altitude, usually 3,000ft, the engine was cut and students were to "dead stick" the aircraft down. Training was intensive, flying both day and night, with tow planes pulling two and sometimes three gliders at once, no radios, long cross country flying, and significant emphasis on spot landings. The middle chapters speak to the design and

production of the canvas covered WACO CG-4A. Fully loaded with a 2 ton load capacity, it carried 13 fully equipped troops and two pilots with a glide ratio 12/1. Sixteen primary contractors (including Singer Sewing, Steinway Piano, and Gibson Refrigerator), along with numerous sub-contractors produced nearly 14,000 units of this aircraft as well as numerous larger variants. Later chapters follow through with advanced pilot training with the CG 4-A's, ferrying of the gliders from manufacture to training bases, and flying full loads under combat conditions. A significant part of this training for the pilots was combat operations and tactics, since once on the ground, they became infantry soldiers. One of the lesser known uses of gliders was the snatch and grab extraction. Usually, a very low flying C-47 would grab (set up by cables between posts) a sitting CG4-A, for a kind of modified winch like launch. Also, once in Europe, many pilots transitioned into much larger British Horsa gliders.

Unlike well know World War-II books by the likes of Steven Ambrose, Rick Atkinson, Joseph Hiller, Leon Uris, and numerous others, gliderborne operations get the short end of the bookshelf, newspaper reviews, and major publishing houses. There a few more out there by unknown authors and available through Amazon and other purveyors of the written word. Jill, my daughter found this one online. I intend to seek out more of these gems and bore fellow Skyliners with our past. Spoiler alert, there were eight American glider operations in WW-II.



SHARING THE AIRSPACE

Andrew Neilson

This last Week of Training helped to underscore the importance of radio discipline, keeping a sharp eye out of the cockpit, and being able to identify and adapt to quickly changing situations.

The first thing to keep in mind is that we're at an uncontrolled, public use airport. That means that the direction of landing is at the pilot's discretion. There is no such thing as an "active runway" at an uncontrolled field. That means that we have to pay attention to our radios and be listening to what is going on because there is no guarantee as to which runway incoming aircraft will land on. It's important to let other traffic know where you are. The reason why we start and end our radio calls with "Front Royal" is two-fold. First, we share 123.0 with a variety of airports—it's not uncommon to hear a call from Hummel Field (W75) which is 116 NM to the southeast, so we need to be specific as to whom we're talking to. The other part of the reason is that the hot minute we hear "Front Royal", that is a not-so-subtle hint that someone is in our area, and there's no guarantee that the pilot coming in will respect the fact that you're in a glider. If you haven't already, teach yourself to "tune in" whenever you hear "Front Royal" on the radio. Even when you're on the ground, it's important to listen to the radio and have an understanding of the immediate area if you're going to be anywhere near where an aircraft might land.

Radios are not perfect. Over the last five years that I've been in the Club, there have been many times that I have witnessed radio calls that have gone unheard, be it from the ground or a glider. This could be for a variety of reasons—some legitimate, others not so much. Regardless, we need to be better about listening and responding to what's being said and, just as importantly, to what's not being said! A good example of that happened on the first day of the WoT. A pilot in a C-172 came in to land at Front Royal. I was in the Pawnee at the time and I heard a ten mile call and a five mile call. Good things to know because that put me on notice that another airplane was coming in. He and I were talking and he had me in sight. Good for safety. What did I not hear? Pattern position calls. Didn't hear a 45, downwind, base, or final. Given the speed of a 172, if you don't hear any further calls in three or four minutes after the five mile call, you should begin to wonder what's

going on. Why am I not hearing pattern calls? That's a good indication to become very alert. Sure enough, after I was on the ground, I saw this person in a right base for 28. After he shut down, I went over to talk to him and to explain that powered traffic used a left pattern. He then looked at me and said, as if to defend his choice, "The chart says RP asterisk". Oh my. In my utter disbelief that a certificate-holding pilot does not know how to read a sectional chart, I exclaimed, "That means that you have to read the Chart Supplements! It's right hand traffic for ultra-lights and gliders!!!" Of course, this does not even bring up the fact that he heard me giving left 45, left downwind, and left base calls while he had me in sight. It seems that he got so locked in to what he was doing, he failed to clue in to the fact that I was in a powered aircraft in a left pattern. That goes to my point of being flexible and being able to adapt. This pilot didn't know how to read a sectional chart, decided to use a right pattern and was not paying attention to what was really going on.

You will also run into pilots who will not respect anything that is going on and just do their own thing, like the Navion that came blasting in at 140 kts on June 5th doing a right base for 28 without making any radio calls. Near miss on that one; FAA was notified. We also had someone in a Piper Cub come in during the WoT who was determined to land on 28 while gliders were landing on 10. This person had a radio and was making his calls, he just refused to honor the fact that he was landing in the opposite direction of a glider. Thankfully he was (barely) clear of the runway when the glider landed in the safety area. Then to compound the error, the same pilot took off on 28 while a glider was landing on 10, forcing the glider over to the safety area. The scary part was that he knew a glider was coming in and still elected to take off.

Even though these situations worked out and only a few feathers were ruffled, it was a great learning experience for our student pilots. They saw first-hand just how quickly things can go sour and how important it is to be flexible. It

underscored to them just how crucial it is to make clear and concise radio calls. It gets your point across and frees up the radio for other people to make important and timely declarations. It's also very important to listen to the radio to build up a three dimensional picture of the airspace and see where you fit into the whole thing. Finally, you need to keep your head and eyes outside the cockpit and scan. We all know that aircraft can be extremely difficult to spot even when we know where they are, but just because you don't hear a radio call, it doesn't mean that someone isn't trying to cut you off in the landing pattern.

The bottom line is that even though we do everything by the book, there are others out there who are stupid/selfish and will not play by the rules. We have to constantly be paying attention and be ready to change our plans in an instant. Flying is much like social dancing. The best leaders and followers are continually adapting to the situation in order to have the best outcome. They expect the unexpected and make it look like it was planned. That's how we need to fly.

WWII AVIATION GAS

William O. Bank

This is a must read note for those interested in WWII aviation history that continues to unfold: it is an article from the British Society of Chemists, declassified in 2014.

It seems that the German and British aircraft both used 87 Octane Gasoline in the first two years of the war. While that was fairly satisfactory for the German Daimler-Benz V-12 engine, It was marginal in the British Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine in British aircraft. It fouled the spark-plugs, caused valves to stick and made for frequent engine repair problems.

Then came lend-lease and American aircraft began to enter British service in great numbers. If British engines hated 87 Octane gasoline, American, General Motors Built Allison 1710 engines loathed and despised it. Something had to be done!

Along came an American named Tim Palucka, a chemist for Sun Oil at their South East Texas Refinery. Never heard of him? Small wonder, as very few people have. He took a French formula for enhancing the octane of Gasoline, invented the "Cracking Tower" and produced the first 100 octane aviation Gasoline. This discovery led to great joy among our English cousins and great distress among the Germans.

A Spitfire fueled with 100 Octane gasoline was 34 miles per hour faster at 10,000 feet. The need to replace engines went from every 500 hours of operation to every 1,000 hours which reduced the cost of British aircraft by 300 Pounds Sterling. And even more when used in 4 engine bombers. The Germans couldn't believe it when Spitfires that couldn't catch them a year ago started shooting their ME-109 E and G models right out of the sky.

Of course, the matter had to be kept secret. If the Germans found out that it was a French Invention, they'd simply copy the original French patents.

The American Allison engines improved remarkably with 100 Octane gasoline, but did even better when 130 octane gasoline came along in 1944. 130 Octane also improved the performance of the Radial Engine Bombers we produced.

The Germans and Japanese never snapped to the fact that we had re-invented gasoline. Neither did our "Friends" the Russians.

In all, 100,000 Americans died in the skies over Europe. Lord only knows what that number would have been without "Super-Gasoline." And it all was invented just a few miles west of Beaumont, Texas and we never knew a thing about it.



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS
Keith Hilton, Secretary

Tim Moran provided the latest membership report that noted current Club membership of 98 members. Caleb Smith and Jackson Loyer have joined as SSEF scholarship students. Many of you have probably seen Caleb and Jackson around the airport. Congratulations Caleb and Jackson!

Chief CFI John Noss noted that we currently have 28 students of whom 13 have flown this calendar year with an instructor. There are a few new members who should start flying soon. Forty-six of non-student members have flown this year.

The GPS antenna in the defective ADS-B transponder in N321K has been replaced. An oxygen system has been installed in the Discus and weight and balance updated.

Keith Hilton briefed the Warren County Airport Commission on their tour of KFRR on May 19 which was very well received. The head of the airport commission (Alan Edwards) suggested a Club member to replace Bob Gould and indicated the requirement to be a resident of Warren County could be waived. The Board subsequently named the Club's Outreach Officer, Matt Vosica to be that representative.

The Board and various Club tow pilots in attendance at the May 27 meeting reviewed the Club requirement for our tow pilots to maintain an FAA 3rd Class Medical certificate, which requirement predated the implementation of BasicMed. The discussion included comparing the requirements of BasicMed to a FAA 3rd Class Medical certificate; that your own doctor knows you better than an aviation medical examiner since they know what medicines you are taking etc.; that M-ASA, BRSS, and Mifflin accept BasicMed for their tow pilots; and that our insurance company leaves it up to the Club to establish the rules. It was also pointed out that in order for a pilot to fly under BasicMed they must have had an FAA Medical (whatever class) in the past to be eligible for BasicMed. Our Chief Tow Pilot, Shane Neitzey, wasn't in favor of changing the requirement and still strongly supports the Third Class Medical requirement.

After a lengthy and spirited debate, the Board adopted the following change in the Tow Pilot Manual: "Require Club tow pilots to maintain Basic Medical, Third Class Medical, or higher FAA medical certification (i.e. Second Class or First Class Medical) as long as it meets FAA and Club insurance (Costello) requirements." Club tow pilots have been notified.

To encourage use of the Sprite, the Board agreed to not charge a rental fee for the Sprite after 90-minutes of flight time.

A recommendation to establish a "contest course" for members to navigate in a glider and posting a "leader board" in the FBO with the Club member that completed the course and their time as a friendly competition to stimulate cross country flying by Club members. Brian Clark recommended appointing a meister to administrate this challenge. [It was discovered after the Board meeting that a similar program already exists for our club, but there has been little interest.]

Brian Clark sent out a survey to gauge the membership's support for a celebration to commemorate the Club's 30th anniversary in November, and what type of celebration they were in favor of. Please take the survey if you have not yet taken it.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 15 July 2021 via Zoom video teleconference. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please notify Brian Clark and he will provide you the link.



1984 LS-4 (N370JS) FOR SALE – ½ SHARE FOR \$13K

Asking \$13,000 for ½ share in LLC of a 1984 Rolladen Schneider LS-4 15-meter standard class sailplane. N370JS S/N 4370, TT ca.1900 hours, last inspection June 2021. Experimental Airworthiness Certificate.

JS is a great flying Club class glider (no flaps), with a 40:1 L/D and great thermalling ability. Gelcoat was sanded, polished and waxed in 2020 and looks shiny and feels great.

This is a perfect glider for newly minted pilots transitioning to

single seat fiberglass ships - it flies straight and easy, thermals nicely, and handles itself well in cross-country and contest flying.



Basic instrument panel, including a Nano flight logger and an SN10 flight computer with good speed to fly indications and simple moving map. Comfortable and big interior, even for taller



pilots, and very easy to rig. Includes a parachute, tail dolly, trailer, and Mountain High oxygen system.

For sale either as 1/2 share at \$13,000 or the entire glider for \$26,000. A long time resident at KFRR, this is a known SSC glider (ask Piet Barber about it!), and includes a simple and low-cost ownership transfer - No Sales tax will be owed since the LLC has already paid it. It is kept in Hangar B13 and costs are shared equitably among the tenants, currently \$112 per glider per month.

Current partner is Mike Hess, who has been very flexible and easy to work with. Contact Chris at 301-254-3436 or chris@carswellbros.com or Mike at 703-606-9462.



CANDID CAMERA FROM THE WoT

Evan Dosik

Mia Anderson and her dad Brent after a day at FRR. Mom Kari said, "Those who soar together, snore together"!



MEET THE MEMBER – PETER ROSS

Interview by Marcelo Morici

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



A: I took a FAST flight on October 30th, 2016 and could join the club in the Spring of 2017. I found SSC online as it looked to be the best option to try gliding around DC area.

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

A: Since July 2018. All my flying was at Front Royal, VA and Petersburg, WV.

3. What ratings do you have?

A: Only one - Private pilot glider

4. How long and what is your commute like to the airport?

A: I live in DC. If there's no construction or traffic on the way, it takes me about 1.5 hours to get to KFRR via I-66. No stops.

5. Who were/are your mentors are SSC?

A: I am forever grateful to the fantastic instructors I had a chance to fly with at SSC. While JP Stewart, Joe Lingeitch, Chris Zaboji, David Dawood, George Hazelrigg, Steve Wallace, John Noss, Rufus Decker, Jim Kellett, and Chris Norris all had significant impact on my ability to fly, hours on Shane Neitzey's simulator and Piet Barber's Week of Training were critical for me to get my rating in reasonable time.

I was lucky to join the club when Bob Sallada was still

instructing. He took me under his wing and mentored me all the way through getting my rating. Bob, ex-Navy pilot, was phenomenal in the air, but he also spent many hours helping me prepare for the ground portion of the test.

Here's a picture of Bob with model planes he assembles during his retirement. These are only a fraction of all the aircrafts he got to fly during his fascinating career.



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

A: The ridge and the weather. There were so many times when I left home in pouring rain, drove in complete overcast or fog just to arrive to a sunny Front Royal valley. Some people call it Kellett's law... I think there's some kind of witchery going on there. I often see elders of the club standing in mysterious circles around the FBO building. I think that's how they cast spells to keep the rain away.

Also, at Front Royal we get to play on the ridge when the winds are right.

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

A: After I had my FAST flight, I knew it would be cool to continue training, but I needed to have a goal. My dad shared with me in my childhood that he was interested in flying, so I decided to learn and take him on a surprise ride. My first glider passenger was my dad in August of 2018.

On the day of the flight, he climbed in the front seat of the K thinking Ertan was going to take him up in the air. He didn't realize I was sitting in the back until we were pushing back for positioning on 2-8. I will always remember how he asked me if I'm "really going to fly this thing" as we were climbing about 100ft over the end of "1-0".

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

A: First flight in the Sprite. John Noss did a great job preparing me to fly the Sprite. He was very thorough and went through all the particulars of the 1-36. Unfortunately, that didn't stop me from coming in too low on the final approach getting both John and me worried. Since that time, I tend to come in with quite a bit more energy.

9. What do you do for a living?

A: I'm an account manager with HP (think PCs, printers, and other IT junk). For the last few years, I've been covering Department of Energy – so I get to work with very interesting and smart people all over the US.

10. Where did you grow up?

A: I was born in a city and a country that does not exist anymore – Leningrad, USSR. Now it's St-Petersburg, Russia. When I was 15, I moved to the US and went to high school in Roanoke, VA. Then Williamsburg for college. And I've been in the DC area for over a decade now.

11. What do you like the most about SSC?

A: There are two things.

First – the people. Amazing instructors. Amazing members with different backgrounds and broad areas of interests.

The second – it's that feeling of calmness and joy when you are walking a glider from the hangers in the morning. There is something special about that 1500 ft walk in fresh mountain air that makes all my daily worries go away and just allows me to enjoy the nature around.

Chilling under a cloud with +4 lift is also fun, but not unique to SSC.

12. What's on your gliding bucket list?

A:

1. Mountain flying in the Alps
2. Fly cross-country on six continents
3. Teach gliding when I retire

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

A: Being from Russia, I am fluent in Russian. Know some Spanish. As for the hobbies – prior to the pandemic and breaking my clavicle on my electric skateboard, Onewheel, I was having fun learning Jiu-jitsu 5-ish times a week. In general, I like hiking, camping, sailing, kiting, traveling, and cold showers.

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

A: I started learning how to soar at 31. Nobody in my family had anything to do with aviation. I started from zero. No experience being in small aircraft, no concept of how lift works, not even understanding what words pilots were saying to each other. If I could do it, you can do it too... at least with 80% probability. Well, I don't know the odds, but it's possible.

I am not a natural flyer (aka chicken), and my body was not on board with my decision to start soaring. It took me about 10 flights to get my adrenalin levels in control so my legs would stop shaking so much that I could start pressing rudder pedals. What I figured out so far – the amount and the frequency of flying matters, a lot. If you want to

see progress, fly as much and as frequent as you can. If you can, sign up for the week of training. Also, remember, checklists are very important!



KUDOS
Ralph Vawter

There have been some happenings around Skyline that I think have not gotten their just attention. The following folks have done some remarkable things and/or provided some behind the scenes services that need to be recognized:

Tom Ward – I see Tom mostly as a Tow Pilot for Skyline, and his soaring exploits need some laudation. Tom flew for Gold and Silver Duration flights last year. Last month, Tom flew to Louisa County, the home of the Merlin Glider Club, to retrieve the Boomerang Award. To top it off, Tom participated in the regional soaring contest in Mifflin, PA last month. It takes a lot of courage to enter your first contest and Tom stepped up and did it. When you see Tom at the airport, ask him about contest flying.

Andrew Neilson – Andrew took a FAST ride at KFRR and was immediately hooked on aviation. Since that time, he has earned his glider and power certificates. On June 6, he flew the club Discus for four hours and ventured farther away from the airport than ever before. That's a lot of progress for just a few years of flying. To top things off, Andrew earned his Silver Duration badge with a five hour flight on June 23rd. Give Andrew a pat on the back when you see him next time.

Richard Good – Richard is more than just a raconteur around the FBO. He has upped his power capabilities to being a tow pilot for the club as well as an accomplished glider pilot. But have you noticed that the things you expect to happen have happened? Of course not! Things go on behind the scenes on days when we aren't flying and we rarely

thank the people for doing those much-needed tasks. Old airplane tires piling up in the hangar. Richard saw to it that they went to the dump to be properly disposed. Clean rags to wipe off the gliders. Richard took the dirty rags to the laundromat and cleaned them for the club. Gas in the cans for the Gators. Yep, Richard again. Hangar door fixed, Sprite annual taken care of, base radio repaired. Yep! Yep! Yep! When you show up at KFRR and can just jump in a glider and take off, take a minute to thank Richard.



HAVE YOU READ THE JULY ISSUE OF SOARING??

Not only are your fellow Skyliners excellent pilots and all-round nice people, several of them can actually write legibly!! The July issue proves that, not only with Jim Garrison's regular column as our Regional Director, but with a letter to the editor by Hugh McElrath, an ode to the beauty of flight by Ron Wagner, and a lucid explanation of a complex issue by George Hazelrigg! Enjoy!



WEEK OF TRAINING 2021
By Marcelo Morichi

Of all the possible ways to start the week, meeting at the Front Royal Airport club



house early on Monday morning to fly gliders for a week ranks among the best. Certainly, it does beat

being at the office, school, or a Zoom breakout room.

Monday was sunny, calm, and hot. After the initial safety meeting, operations started with both ASK and the two tow planes. The Husky cut its flying short because density altitude was not suitable for glider towing. We continued operating with the Pawnee and accomplished almost 30 flights.

This was my first week of training. While the opportunity to train at Petersburg might have resulted in more individual flights, I benefited from being able to train at the same airport where we conduct regular operations. It gave me a chance to work on the skills and challenges associated with flying at Front Royal. I suspect my fellow student pilots also welcomed the opportunity to practice taking offs and landings on an asphalt runway.

Every hand on deck

The difference between training in an event like the WoT at SSC and at a glider commercial operation is like visiting a city and staying at a friend's house or checking in at a nice hotel. In a



commercial operation you check in, brief with the instructor, and fly. Then, repeat that as many times as you like (or can afford). The operations' staff help you launch and take care of putting the equipment away after you are done.

As it is the case with regular operations at FRR, during the WoT you wear multiple hats during the day. Student pilot is just one of them. The only difference is that the operation requires the full commitment of every participant throughout the

day. It was an opportunity to practice as ADO and assist in launching gliders.

Our DO, Stephanie Zilora, ran a professional and flawless operation. She, the instructors, and tow pilots endured long days with a positive and enthusiastic attitude.

Unused burritos

Dinner at the end of the day gave us a chance to decompress and socialize. It was an opportunity to get to know other club members in a way that is difficult to do during normal operations on weekends.

We ate in town a couple of nights, but the culinary highlight of the week was the delicious



(unused) burritos prepared by Justin Mensen and craft beers generously supplied by Andrew Neilson and Chris Carswell on Thursday night. It was a spectacular evening at the Front Royal Airport with an illuminated runway and a full moon bathing the Blue Ridge mountains and Skyline Drive in white light.

The power of repetition

Intensive flying allows us to speed up the learning and working with the same instructor every day makes the process efficient and productive. I flew with Ron Wagner every day and made significant improvements in my training.

I am grateful to him and to all the other members who made the Week of Training possible.



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)

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N341KS) Meister

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Guido Kramp / Rob Jacobson -
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Richard Good - *Sprite Meister*

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