

Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for March, 2021



A TOURING MOTORGLIDER ADVENTURE

Hugh McElrath

In February, I flew my Pipistrel touring

hang-glider with an ultralight, which I will start doing at Blue Sky hang-glider operation, located northeast of Richmond, upon my return – see next month’s SKYLINES for a story about



motorglider from College Park MD to the Wiltree Flight Park in Groveland, Florida: 700 nautical miles, 6+ hours, according to Skyvector. (I was to be trained in how to tow

that!) It looked like I had a weather window on February 4th, with Westminster, Maryland forecasting north wind at 35 knots at altitude, but abeam Fort Bragg in North Carolina, I

encountered strong headwind. The window in Foreflight showing "time to destination" began to increase rather than decrease as I motored along, so I accepted reality and stopped for the night in Walterboro, South Carolina, 75 miles north of Savannah, Georgia. The FBO made an exception and lent me the courtesy car overnight, a Crown Victoria. America, what a country!

With 7 hours of fuel on board, I set off in the morning and entered the Savannah class C, where the controller helpfully pointed out that the military airspace sandwiching me against the coast was active - and the 1500-foot antenna farm southwest of the airport. I was at 1850 feet. *Who puts 1500-foot antennas next to an airport?!* The headwind had intensified. While on final for a rest stop at St. Simons Island with two notches of flaps and 65 knots, my ground speed was 27... Yet it was preternaturally smooth. Departing St. Simons to the southwest at 2000 feet with 45-50 knot headwind, I was able to let go of the stick, open a yogurt cup and eat it with a spoon... 110 knots indicated, 63 knots speed over ground.

Entering the Okefenokee swamp west of Jacksonville, there was only one airport, Davis. (One of the great things about flying in the U.S. is the plethora of small airports.) North of Gainesville, I dove through a hole as the clouds coalesced into a solid overcast and started to get squeezed between cloud and swamp. At 800 feet, I did a 180 and headed back toward Davis, but I had plenty of fuel, so I worked around to the west near the Taylor VOR and resumed course south under the low ceiling. It was rough too - bumpy! This was one of those "if I survive this, I will never fly over Okefenokee again!" moments. Alligators!

Finally, I could see blue sky through the layer, climbed on top and was much happier. Smooth, and there were holes if I needed to get down. It was easy after that: Gainesville, Ocala, Leesburg all had clear air. The final challenge was actually finding Wilotree 17 miles south of Leesburg, just

beyond CERMO intersection. It's not on the sectional, nor in the Garmin database, but Foreflight has its designator, FA42/Sheets. It was great to see some of my old hang-gliding buddies again.

For my return trip I planned a route through all the controlled airspaces along the coast. No Okefenokee!



WOMEN FLY!!

Jim Perlmutter

Along with SSC having our first woman president (Stephanie Zilora), past member Elise Wheelock (now a CFI and test pilot for Piper) on the cover of the recent "Ninety-Nines"



publication, and inactive member Kay Ebelt (now the president of her local Ninety-Nines chapter in Florida), I thought I'd share a recent read on previous lady pioneer aviators. [The Women with Silver Wings](#) by Texas Woman's University History Professor, Katherine Sharp Landeck (2019). This work covers the 16 months of the Women Army Service Pilots (WASP) during WW-II. Two dynamic women aviation trailblazers stand out in the planning, organization, and competitive agendas in this piece of WW-II history... Jacquelin Cochran and Nancy Harkness Love. Reading about these dynamic women, their backgrounds, aviation experience and subsequent war flying was astounding. These aviators flew, ferry flights, target towing, were test pilots, and

instructors of 78 different aircraft from trainers, fighters, transports, and multi-engine bombers. Their entry requirements were extremely stringent, considering only 7% of 25,000 qualified applicants were accepted in the program. It wasn't until 2009 that these Congressional Gold Medal recipients received their well deserved but late Veteran's status. Only a small handful of these unique pilots remain today. The book reads some 330 pages plus another 100 of detailed and fascinating footnotes. It comes in hardback, softcover, Kindle, and audio. Spoiler alert, gliders and soaring are never mentioned in this work. Still, well worth the read.

HOW MAY I HELP?

Erik van Weezendonk

The great thing about Skyline Soaring Club, IMHO, is that we've got a myriad of experience in the club. We have a few 80+ year old soaring pilots that have been soaring before Bernoulli was even around! We also have teenagers that are anxious to learn soaring and even one or two that have soloed but cannot legally drive yet! The age range is vast, and so is the experience level....but there is one thing we have in common.

We are a CLUB. We are NOT a commercial glider operation. This club operates on the principle of a solid structure, by-laws, procedures, and rules. Lots of stuff keeps us viable. However, the most important facet of our club is the volunteer nature of our members. Nobody gets paid \$ to be here, to fly, to help. The currency is camaraderie, experiences, personal growth (don't want to get too kumbaya). If that isn't your thing and you just want to show up and fly a glider, I'd advise you head to Bermuda High or Lake Seminole or out West where you can show up, pay, strap in, and fly a glider. It doesn't work like that here.

Members, we need you to show up at show time. The duty crew's job is NOT to make everything ready for you. It's to run the ops.

Different positions are needed, and if you're not sure what they are, then start learning them and more importantly, get yourself qualified to fill a position on the duty crew. If you're new, start by taking the Wing Runner course (SSA, online) and get that badge. Then, your next step is to become ADO qualified.

Sorry, don't mean to sound like I'm ranting, but there are a few NOT ready, or not able, to be the ADO (medical/physiological). However, the ADO is not just a glorified wing runner, and launching gliders is not the only thing the ADO does.

So, in the spirit of mandatory volunteerism (haha) I offer the following personal tidbits:

1. Showing up and spending the morning helping with student flights is a good time to mentor the folks taking instruction. Helping launch and recover gliders in the morning is investing in the folks that will launch and recover gliders in the afternoon. I get it that some folks don't have all-day stamina. However, showing up really late to go fly gliders (regardless of club or private ship) makes you a Taker instead of a Giver. Think about it. We generally don't have too many folks showing up in the morning. IF that happens, wait til number 3 down below. Caveat is this....if you were there in the morning to get instruction, you should also stick around in the afternoon to help the folks that helped you before noon.

2. There are many official positions at SSC. Meisters of aircraft, the Chief Flight Instructor, Chief Tow Pilot, Chief Duty Officer, the Hangar Team, the Tow Rope Guru, the Duty Roster Meister, etc. I'm missing quite a few folks, my apology. Read the Newsletter (another volunteer) and you can see all the folks stepping up to help out. Use whatever strength you have (your God-given talent, if you like) to help us all. Mechanically inclined? Web/IT professional? Budding writer? Events coordinator or party planner.....I have a task for YOU!

3. Our hangar is pretty crowded. If you're ever looking to help out, that place is a

great place to start. I don't think we need to have a hangar cleaning party every weekend, but when you're there, please look if trash needs taking out, if we've got a bunch of clutter in the corners, etc. and any help with organizing is welcome. This is just one example of how you can help.

4. Event days/weeks. Week of Training is our crown jewel. If you're unfamiliar what WoT is, please reach out to Piet Barber or Chris Norris, they typically drive that show. If you're willing to pitch in for 2-3 days as a support person, then Jim Perlmutter can let you know how to be asset. You'd be surprised....even a cook (or willing to help with meals) can be helpful.

5. Skyline Soaring Education Foundation, if you want to help with donations, will always happily guide that money towards educating/training/mentoring our young members. They do a GREAT job of managing the funds and ensuring the Scholarship money is well spent. Check out SSEFVA.ORG

Just a few of my thoughts. As we begin the season. remember that we all make this work. We all need to pitch in. Be the one that can answer the question, How May I Help?



WILL PARTY TIME EVER RETURN?

In the early years of the Club and membership was still somewhat less than it is now, we used to gather for holiday parties at the home of some generous member in the wintertime when flying opportunities were low.

Then the membership got a little too big for such gatherings, and we adapted by finding venues (country clubs, wineries, etc.) to have larger holiday celebrations

For one example, in 2013 we held a holiday party at the Aspen Winery in Front Royal, and instead of depending on volunteers to bring

drinks and eats, had the event catered by the Winery.



Also, after more than a decade we'd been in existence long enough to be a little proud of our longevity as a Club! So we held relatively elaborate celebrations of our significant anniversaries! These events were, relatively speaking "big deals", held in venues that were large enough to accommodate members and friends of the club. Our 15th, for example, organized by the club's "social engineer", Miriam Ellis (Greg's spouse) was a black tie event with dancing and gourmet eats. Doug Jacobs was the guest speaker on the topic "Return to Kitty Hawk"; there was dancing and music! The party wasn't inexpensive, but boy, did we have fun as a band of soaring brothers (and sisters)!



So anyhow, here we are now in the midst of a pandemic that inhibits ANY kind of realistic social gathering, and with the Club's 30th anniversary coming up on November 11! Will it be safe to organize a gathering by then? **If pandemic conditions by then make such an event safe, are members and other guests* interested in such an event? If so, let the**

Board of Directors know! And if any members are interested in planning for and organizing such an even, please let the Directors know.

*This newsletter goes out to many people other than current members!!



SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Ralph Vawter

Perusing recent issues of SOARING magazine and the SSA badge records for 2020/2021, I noticed several significant accomplishments by SKYLINE members, e.g.:

“A” Badge:

Ben Bierstine, August 2020

“B” Badge:

Allison Diaz, August 2020

Ben Bierstine, August 2020

Richard Good, January 2020

“C” Badge:

Allison Diaz, October 2020

Richard Good, June 2020

Bronze Badge:

Andrew Neilson, October 2020

Other Badges:

Tom Ward, Silver/Gold Duration, July 2020

Chris Carswell, Gold altitude, October 2020

Other significant events that merit noting include four new probationary members:

Peter Devine

Damon Feldman

Felix Gruoso

Dan Scarzello

Congratulations to all these members!!

You should be aware that we now have two new handheld radios for the club, a new battery and charger for the Sprite, and an ADS-B installed in the Husky.

Finally, on February 10, the Airport Commission accepted Shane Neitzey’s proposal for new

nose art and stripes on the airport’s F-86 that guards the entrance! Well done, Shane!



SAFETY CORNER

Erik van Weezendonk

This is my last newsletter input as the Safety Officer because next month I hand the reins to the new Safety Officer and Safety Team. What did you just read? Well, let me explain...

In October of 2017 we had a tragic accident in our tow plane. Soon thereafter, the SSC Safety Officer quit, resigned from the club and we (SSC) were in a lurch. I was asked to become the new Safety Officer. Agreed to the appointment (it’s a BoD appointed position) and took the reins. Didn’t think it was too busy or onerous of a contribution to the club...oops! Monthly newsletter inputs...not too bad. Investigations as directed by the BoD...had a few- anytime we had a safety situation or damage to equipment. Coordinated the Annual Safety Meeting (mandatory attendance or viewing of slides/presentation IOT fly at SSC)...that took some work.

Well, now that I’m moving to BoD, I can’t wear two hats. We’ve got so many qualified people in SSC, my replacement could basically be any full-status member. However, the BoD has agreed with the concept of a Safety Team...a few folks from SSC that will all contribute to the SAFETY CULTURE that SSC needs. We don’t need more rules and regulations and policies...we need a SAFETY CULTURE. I’ll expand on that in a few paragraphs. First, however, is our new team.

Ron Wagner will be the new Skylines Soaring Club Safety Officer. An Air Force veteran, Ron has jumped into SSC Ops and will be the point man for our Safety Team as the official Safety Officer. He’s participated and instructed at Week of Training, assisted and crewed at Region 4 Competition, and lately has been

published in the SSA Magazine. Our next great communicator.

Allison Diaz will be a great addition. Allison has been a member of SSC for almost two years now, is constantly working on upgraded badges, and most importantly, her full-time, normal job is with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). I'm hoping and praying we never need to get officially involved with NTSB ever again, but in meantime her expertise will do wonders in the way of safety and training. We'll be seeing her (virtually) at the Annual Safety Meeting on March 13th.

Piet Barber will round out the Safety Team. Piet is by far one of the most experienced members, actively involved since his teenage years. Piet is a very active instructor, flies in soaring competitions, and most importantly, is a Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE) which means not only can he sign folks off for solo at SSC but can issue FAA Pilot Certificates. The brainchild behind Week of Training, we're lucky to have many folks move along in their glider flying progression because of Piet's dedication and initiatives.

I'll let them give the inputs for next month, introducing themselves with expanded bio's as they see fit. In meantime, please welcome Ron, Allison, and Piet, and thank them for stepping up!

Safety Culture. IMHO, it's where good practices and common sense come together. Aviation has plenty of regulations (the CFR or FAR's depending on whom you ask) given to us by the FAA, the definitions in the safety world given to us by the NTSB, the Ops Manual that we follow at SSC. Plenty to know, study, and occasionally refresh. Safety Culture is more than knowing all that stuff, though. It's an attitude. It's looking at ourselves and not patting ourselves on the back. I'm not saying we need to be paranoid (that's not safe, either) but we have to make sure we're not lulled into complacency. We follow our procedures in order to keep things routine...but we surely don't want boredom.

We cannot spaz out when something goes a little bit awry (power plane with no radio landing in the pattern) but we also shouldn't be so laissez-faire or nonchalant that we let little things build up until they become big things. So...when you see a good decision, applaud it, and when you see a bad decision, address it. Safety culture is a key part of soaring, and it's a team sport!

PSA...for this year, the Annual Safety Meeting will be virtual, utilizing ZOOM technology. Hope to see you all there and get ourselves ready for another year of soaring. Our desire is to make this year's meeting meaningful, but not clogged with too much stuff. With that said, we're going to send out links and videos that people will NEED TO REVIEW IN ADVANCE! It will make the discussion move along quicker if folks are up to speed on the content. Thank you, in advance, for all of us being a part of the Safety Culture at SSC.



WHAT YOUR DIRECTORS ARE UP TO

Keith Hilton, Secretary to the Board

While the Club is down during the winter months, your Board of Directors continues to conduct Club business. The Board met on 15 December, 21 January, and 30 January after the Annual Membership meeting via Zoom video teleconference.

The Board voted to make Bob Sallada an "Emertis" member in recognition of his contributions to the Club.

Pete Ross asked the Board to consider adoption of electronic payments for flights. He noted that writing checks is so outdated. Heck, for some of us, the only checks we write at to the Club. It was noted that internet connectivity is non-existent on runway 10 and in our hangar. The Board asked our Treasurer, Ralph Vawter, to investigate methods to accept electronic payments. Ralph reported back to the Board that he has investigated such applications as Pop Money, PayPal, Zella, and VENMO as options to accept electronic payments. Most of the applications impose a transaction fee. Additionally,

some of the applications only allow the transfer of payments among “friends” whereas we are more like a business. The consensus of the Board was that any fees for electronic payments would be paid by the member making the payment and the Club would not incur any fees for accepting the electronic payment. Ralph indicated that he was going to pursue Pop Money as an option for members to send electronic payments to the Club.

The Board asked me to check with K&L Soaring LLC about the use of a K2 battery in the Sprite. K&L Soaring said that there were not issues using the K2 battery in the Sprite. I subsequently ordered and received the K2 battery and charger for the Sprite. The battery will be installed as soon as I have the time.

The Board discussed the Club by-laws and how they do not provide specific direction on who can be a Board Member. The Board voted to change the Club by-laws as follows:

“The following membership types may serve on the SSC Board of Directors:

1. *Full Members*
2. *Family Members, but no more than one member per family may serve on the board at the same time.”*

The Board voted unanimously to start scheduled operations on 14 March (the day after the Annual Safety meeting) with **volunteer Duty Crews only**.

After a request from Piet Barber, the Board voted unanimously to allow the use of the Discus, one ASK-21, and one or both tow planes for the wave camp at Petersburg. It was stipulated that if both tow planes were used at Petersburg that at least one would be returned to Front Royal to support ad hoc operations (if ad hoc operations were to be held at KFRR) on the weekends.

The Board discussed the possibility of new hangers being built at Front Royal. The Board was interested in assembling a committee to work with the airport manager on the design of a hangar for the Club. John Noss volunteered to lead the effort. John has worked on many different hangar options over the years and was interested in helping with this effort.

The SSEF requested an additional guaranteed slot (no wait list) for scholarships. The Board voted unanimously in favor of allowing three SSEF student scholarships (not subject to the student wait list) per year.

The Board voted to purchase two additional hand-held VHF radios. Evan Dosik has purchased two new radios for the Club. Additionally, we purchased a new battery for one of the newer old radios.

The Board approved the appointment of a new “Safety Committee” to replace Erik van Weezendonk as the Club Safety Officer. Ron Wagner will lead the new Club Safety Committee consisting of Ron, Allison Diaz, and Piet Barber.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 4 March 2021 via Zoom teleconference. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please contact Brian Clark for the Zoom link.



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

Stephanie Zilora - *President*

Directors

Brian Clark
Evan Dosik
Jim Perlmutter
Erik von Weezendonk
Stephanie Zilora
Jim Kellett

Keith Hilton - *Secretary*

Ralph Vawter - *Treasurer*

John Noss - *Chief CFI*

Shane Neitzey - *Chief Tow Pilot*

Chris Carswell - *Chief Duty Officer*

Ron Wagner - *Safety Officer*

Tim Moran - *Membership Officer*

Ken Ring - *Hangar Meister*

Ertan Tete - *Field Computer Meister*

Mike Ash - *Duty Roster Chief*

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*

Peter Ross - *Sprite Meister*

Matt Vosika - *Organizations Liaison Officer*