

Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for November, 2021



SKYLINES

OCTOBER KUDOS

Ralph Vawter

I should start off with an apology for a grievous omission from last month's Kudos. I failed to note Ron Wagner's participation in the Week of Training. Ron instructed in the non-winch flights and was kept very busy the entire week, logging over fifty instructional flights during the week. Ron's efforts should not have gone unrecognized.

Skyline had two distinguished guests during the month. On the 2nd and 3rd, JP Stewart – a former member – and Daniel Sazhin brought their private ships to KFRR. Daniel and JP participated in the World Gliding Championships in France in August, flying in the Club Class. They have flown in other world class events and are quite the budding soaring superstars.

The soaring weather gods were favorable on the 17th of October. Skysight predicted brisk winds from the west promoting wave and ridge conditions. Shane Neitzey used both conditions to fly to Merlin Soaring in Amelia, VA to retrieve the Boomerang Trophy. In the process, Shane reached over 17,000 feet of elevation. Piet Barber thought the conditions were ripe for a 1000k flight. In Wave!!

Congratulations to both for demonstrating their soaring expertise. Also on the 17th, JP Stewart again visited KFRR and earned his Diamond Altitude Badge (5000-meter altitude gain).

Look for more detailed articles about Shane's and JP's flights later in this issue!! – (Editor)



QQ “BALLAST”

William O. Bank

In the October 2021 issue of Skylines, Allison Diaz had an interesting review of a question that should never be in question of “Who’s got it ?” uttered in an aircraft with more than one set of controls: “I have control ... or do I ?” In her article she recounted that she had mentioned to Piet Barber that she “would be hesitant to speak up in the hypothetical scenario that I [she] was flying with him in QQ and became uncomfortable with something about the flight,” because “Piet has decades of experience, thousands of glider flights, and QQ is his glider.”

That comment immediately reminded me of two incidents in the same flight with Piet when I served as “ballast” in the front cockpit of QQ during a contest flight from Mifflin.

The first occurred on the ridge as we encountered traffic that had not been announced by the FLARM. We both saw it at about the same time and talked about it. He had not seen the other glider on his FLARM. When I learned to fly as a Student Naval Flight Surgeon, seeing another aircraft at any distance, required a turn of the student’s head in the direction of the bogey and a double-click on the intercom button. The instructor would then acknowledge, usually with a statement of the exact aircraft type of traffic that had been seen, its altitude and direction of flight. In our case with Piet in Mifflin, a radio call from him to the other competitor revealed that he had seen us on his FLARM, but was unaware that the signal from his FLARM was not revealing his presence to others: a problem to be corrected.

The other incident occurred as we were on final glide to the Mifflin airport, pushing QQ to get a good result from the day’s flight. I asked Piet if we were just going to fly straight-in to the finish line, or avoid the rain shower to one side or the other. Immediate response: “What rain shower?” (And I was neither wearing a large hat nor do I admit to being a fat head.) What Piet sees from the back seat is different from that which I could see directly in front and slightly below the flight path of QQ. A slight deviation of our approach to the finish line avoided the majority of the rain — just enough to wash the bugs from the wings.

When flying as a passenger or co-pilot, do not fail to use the adage of “If you see something, say something.” If you are the pilot giving a ride to someone else, whether they are an experienced pilot or not, that adage should be an important part of your pre flight briefing. It doesn’t just apply when you are taking the METRO.



FAA GUIDANCE FOR TRANSPONDER USE BY GLIDER PILOTS

Jim Garrison, SSA Chairman

Some time ago, the FAA changed the guidance for controllers for VFR traffic on transponder codes, but forgot to update that same guidance for gliders. This has now changed and the new guidance is that Gliders use 1202 at all times whether they are in communication with ATC or not. A bit of simplification for glider pilots.

The AOPA is reporting this but the SSF was involved in the change as well.

https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2021/october/06/faa-expands-glid-ers-use-of-transponder-code-1202?utm_source=epilot&utm_medium=email

And here is the FAA version -
- https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/FAA_Order_JO_7110.66G_NBCAP.pdf

I doubt this is going to change anyone's life much - my transponder has been on 1202 for a long time



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Joel Hough, Tow Rope Meister

The first annual tow rope meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2020 8:00pm. Topics to discuss include criteria for ropes, pluses and minuses of rope options, current rope manual. All are welcome.

Manual at:
members.skylinesoaring.org/docs/Manuals/SSC_Prolypropylene_Tow_Rope_20210731.pptx

Rope analyses provided upon request.
More details to follow in December.



AN INCREDIBLE DAY, PART ONE!

J. P. Stewart

Sunday, October 17 was one incredible day. It's taken over 10 years for the stars to align to make this possible but I'm really pleased to finally have completed my diamond altitude (and the diamond badge) with a 16,404 ft gain. It's even better, to be able to do it on the east coast, without a wave window (below 18kft), and in a club glider (the same BRSS club LS6 I did all my other badge flights in). There probably aren't too many of those...

[Daniel Sazhin](#) called me out on facebook so I thought I'd emerge from under my rock to share a bit of the story.

Towards the end of last week, I'd been watching the weather while talking to [Piet Barber](#) and [Shane Neitzey](#) as we were scheming over the approaching cold front. The skysight wave forecast was suggesting strong conditions and it looked like a promising day for the Diamond climb. I returned from a conference late Friday and spend Saturday playing catch-up on work and preparing for the flight. Completing 5000 m (16,404 ft) of altitude gain is quite difficult when you have to stay below 18,000 ft msl and the ground is ~600-700 ft msl here and takes some special consideration.

I looked at the wave forecast, google earth, and altimeter errors to formulate a plan. I would fly from Front Royal (KFRR) and tow to the Massanutten ridge. I would then test the ridge and work my way down to doing a pass between 1100-1200 ft msl (~500' AGL) and 120-130 kts over a field at the steep base of the ridge. I'd then pull back up onto the ridge and work my way back up to the top of the ridge. A challenging timing maneuver you might do once a decade but I wouldn't make a habit of it... I'd then fly the ridge to the end of the Massanutten, thermal up and push upwind to Harrisonburg, Virginia to join the wave. I'd have to climb up to between 17,800 ft and 17,850 to ensure I met the minimum gain while leaving margin to stay out of Class A airspace and risk invalidating the flight.

Sunday morning, I was still going a bit slow getting ready being partially on Pacific time still. I picked the glider up from [Shane Neitzey](#)'s house (thanks Shane for letting me leave it there!) and spoke to [Daniel Sazhin](#) for some final words of encouragement. I arrived at FRR midday, assembled, and started the process of getting into the glider. It's a bit of a production to get all the gear ready for this kind of flight (lots of layers, electric heated socks, chemical shoe heaters, water, bathroom, food, oxygen, 2x loggers, etc.) and get it all to fit into the glider comfortably. Thank you [Thomas Ward](#) and [Tim Moran](#) for the help getting ready!

I launched and it was a bit of a wild ride - I released into the incredible lift in the lee of the ridge and climbed a few hundred feet so I could push further upwind to join the ridge. When I got onto the ridge, it was absolutely smoking. I ran down it a few miles while to scout out my field for the low-point. The airport near the ridge I had initially planned to use was full of crop. I picked a nice field at the base of a very steep part of the ridge - perfect. I did a few practice passes before diving for the low-point. It was quite busy trying to watch speeds, altitudes, and the ground. I pulled up onto the ridge and connected with the lift and effortlessly re-joined it. I ran down the ridge ~40 mi to the end where I thermalled up and found the thermal started getting really smooth and stopped drifting with the wind (instead, staying in a fixed location) - wave! I decided I'd go as high as I reasonably could here before pushing upwind to the next wave (there was only weak wave forecast here, I thought the better wave was going to be upwind).

To my pleasant surprise, it just kept going. Crossing 16,000 ft, I started to wonder if it might actually happen... by 17,000 the lift had dropped off to ~1.2 kts and I was getting a bit concerned that it might die off before I get to the goal. Fortunately, it was softer but kept going steady. I crossed 17,800 ft indicated and started my descent by 17,835 ft (inside my pre-defined window). I had decided



before that this was the only goal for the day and immediately headed back to the airport to mitigate the chance of anything messing it up (like a logger failure from extending the flight). I landed, saved off both logs, and launched on a second flight to go try it again just in case there was an issue with the first.

Thank you [Matt Vosika](#) for being the duty officer and kindly waiting (hours) for me to land and helping me pack up.

There's still some risk that there are unexpected issues in the validation but all-in-all, an incredibly successful day with thanks due to many people (some listed here and others who know who they are :)).

You can find the flight logs here:

- Diamond flight:

<https://www.onlinecontest.org/.../gliding/flightinfo.html...>

Congrats to [Shane Neitzey](#) on getting a boomerang flight in and [Piet Barber](#) for some excellent soaring the same day.



AN INCREDIBLE DAY, PART TWO!

Shane Neitzey

The Boomerang returned to its rightful home Sunday, October 17!

The forecast was looking pretty good for a ridge mission with on a relatively cloudless/blue day. My plan was to fly wave 60 miles upwind to Cumberland, MD, fly the ridge system up to State College then return home. This always is a fun trip.

With a 10:30 launch to 4K, using wave generated rotor lift, I worked my way up into wave lift. But now clouds were seriously developing, and 4,000' thick between 5k to 9k. Over Strasburg and climbing up thru a large hole to 11,000, the clouds in the direction I planned to fly appeared broken to solid overcast for as far as I could see. (Oblique views can make the clouds look as if they are solid overcast.)

Piet Barber reported the ridge working while maintaining 100 kts in cruise and was headed to Short Mountain. I was still over Strasburg, considering the apparently heavy cloud cover, and so decided to open spoilers for a descent onto the ridge and head south instead. Arriving the Massanutten Overlook, my altitude was relatively close to the ridge top. Winds were indicating 10kts and the tree tops were not moving, so not good. Scratching around with an eye on suitable fields near Keezletown, I was able to work my back up into wave, climbing at times over 1000 feet per minute. I started considering the Boomerang which was at Merlin airfield. My last attempt was dead slow and landed 45 miles short, but this day could be different. I called Merlin on the radio and they reported 1-2 kts up to 5k with scattered clouds at 6k. But it sure appeared to overcast in that direction from my point of view. Looking below and around me, the cloud coverage was about 50%.

Humm . . . at 17,000' and climbing , Oudie IGC indicating 8,000' arrival over Merlin 96 miles away, reported scattered clouds, 40 kt tailwind; It all



added up to a go for Boomerang. What do I do for a 1 hour final glide? Concentrate on traffic, speed-to-fly and wind correction angle. BTW, my L/D ranged from 37:1 to 303:1 with a mean of 110:1, ground speeds ranged from 80 to over 150!!

About 20 miles out, I diverted towards a large hole in the clouds just west of Merlin. Within 7 miles or so and well above the clouds, I opened spoilers with a lazy spiral down while comfortably maintaining VFR,



scrubbing off 3000' to a spectacular view of the Merlin Aerodrome nestled in Virginia's piedmont.

I thought about staying up for a while but remembered a need to call Skyline to coordinate a retrieve.

And here's the OLC trace for the flight:

<https://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-3.0/gliding/flightinfo.html?dsId=8663770>

Hugh McElrath graciously volunteered to crew and was ready to depart in short order. Thank you, Hugh for the 7 hour round trip, I owe you a very nice dinner. And I'll crew for you anytime.

Merlin is a beautiful grass field with just-as-nice glider pilots. And amazing facilities.



WHO'S A GREAT FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR??

The Airplane Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) conducts a survey every year of student pilots to evaluate their flight instructors. And this year, our very own Ken Ring was named one of the best in the Eastern Region for his instruction in airplanes! (OK, Ken . . . time to add a "G" to your CFI?)



HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS! FOR YOU AND OTHERS

You may have noticed fellow club members wearing various articles of clothing – windbreakers, baseball caps, sweatshirts, etc. – sporting the Club's logo. As the holiday season approaches it's a good time to think about gifts for yourself . . . oh, and maybe others as well!

All these garments are available online from Land's End, and the logo, with the words "SKYLINE SOARING CLUB", has already been registered with the company.



SKYLINE SOARING CLUB

Some Guidelines, cautions and caveats for ordering Skyline Soaring Land's End items. We recommend

that the items selected should be the following colors:

Navy Blue, Black, Dark Green or White in order to get the best display of the logo and lettering.

Since the logo is composed of Blue, Orange and Yellow its visibility will be severely compromised by selecting clothing colors that resemble the logo's colors. Some other colors can also prove less than desirable. For example, the type simply disappeared on a khaki colored polo shirt.

Land's End suggest that we limit our selections to the catalogs you each have rather than catalogs you receive in the mail. Members can select any item color in the catalog BUT neither SSC or Land's End will be responsible for the results.

So it is imperative that we KEEP IT SIMPLE!

Land's End ID # 0152832N

Each application charge is \$6.95 regardless of quantity.

There's also another copyrighted logo is also available to SSC members, Land's End ID # 0151500C Phil Jordan And Associates



WHY YOU MIGHT SOON LIVE IN THE YEAR 2218

Ron Wagner

For the first 16 years of my professional life, I was a professional pilot with the USAF at Andrews Air

Force Base and then with Eastern Air Lines at Washington National. Since Eastern's demise in 1989, I've been a professional writer, authoring more than 100 books that sold more than 10 million copies. All of which have been non-fiction.

In 2015, my literary agent, Bill Adler, Jr., closed his shop because most writing content these days is online. And then Bill did something he'd never done before: he began writing fiction.

In 2017, Bill published a science-fiction novella entitled No Time to Say Goodbye. I read it, saw Bill's first fictional work as the pilot episode in a long-running series, and loved the idea of writing fiction with Bill.

Over the past four years, I developed the complete world in which the storyline will exist, as well as all the characters, agencies, good guys, bad guys, and technology that will propel the stories. Together, Bill and I have advance-planned five "seasons" of episodes.

After four years of work, the serialized novel went on line on October 22, 2021.

The venue is Substack, where Season One, Episode One is posted free as a teaser. Substack is a "newsletter" oriented system, but which has come to be used by authors as a venue for serialized fiction. Generally, there is a free newsletter that teases the paid content of the novel itself.

The paid content is time-travel science-fiction, set in 2218, a time when humanity is dying because its smartest people are dying. To save the world in 2218, they are extracting the brightest people from the era of 1940 to 2040, with "no time to say goodbye."

You could be next!

I'll follow the model established by other Substack novel writers of publishing a free weekly newsletter about the details of the ongoing story. Each newsletter will refer to what is going on in the paid content, which unfolds concurrently in our era and in 2218.

So, you can vicariously live in the world of 2218 by reading the free first episode and then following the free newsletter. Or, you can get hooked on the main story for the monthly cost of just one Starbucks decaf, iced venti, caramel macchiato with light ice and two Splendas. (You'll get the tie-in when you read the free first episode.)

<https://ntsg.substack.com/>



MEET THE MEMBER – ROB JACOBSEN

Interview by Marcelo Morichi

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

A: October 7, 2017.
Recruited by George Hazelrigg, a close friend of 50 years.



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

A: Glider rating added to Private SEL March 16, 2019. Learned to fly gliders at Skyline Soaring Club at KFRR.

3. What ratings do you have?

A: SEL & Glider

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

A: September 23, 1971. There was this radio tower about 1300 ft high which kept sucking the Cessna 150 towards it.

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: Absolute minimum traffic, at speed limit, 80 minutes. Route - Mclean to 495, to 66, to Exit 13, to 55, to Front Royal, to airport. Typically leave home around 7am. Like to eat in Front Royal on way home.

6. Who were/are your mentors are SSC?

A: Each and every one of our instructors taught me something useful - thank you!

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

A: The inherent beauty of the area, the ability to both thermal, run the ridge and ride wave.

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

A: My land-out in Fort Valley on June 23, 2021. It was successful, conducted as planned on the fly from the cockpit, very satisfying.

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

A: No, not really, worst experience occurred in a Decathlon when a partial control jam occurred. Lost up elevator, thanks to the inverted fuel system I was able to fly it inverted while I jiggled both front and back sticks (together) until I had enough up elevator to attempt a landing (successful). It was a FOD issue, some idiot had "lost" the fuel drain cup (with screwdriver) in the cockpit, it ended up alongside the elevator bell-crank in the aircraft tail, which it partially jammed. Not as exciting as it sounds, I was 5000 ft AGL, wearing a parachute.

10. What do you do for a living (or did, if you are retired)?

A: I am a physicist, had many years of fun designing and building some very interesting pieces of experimental hardware (Tokamaks, Synchrotrons, accelerators, X-Ray Sources, Phased Arrays, Ionospheric Modification). Ended up as a major program manager at BAE Systems; final years spent as Director of the R&D Lab within the Electronics Warfare Sector. Now I work a few days a week for my son, who started a company which produces Hypersonic Flight Test vehicles for the Air Force Research Laboratory. I oversee the flight instrumentation and telemetry effort as well as function as the CFO.

11. Where did you grow up?

A: Durban (the city) and in the bush South Africa.

12. What do you like the most about SSC?

A: The friends I have made.

13. What's on your gliding bucket list?

A: To continue enjoying for as long as possible.

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

A: In my misspent youth I climbed rock walls and mountains, was a member of the Mountain Club of South Africa mountain

rescue team. During my midlife crisis I purchased a Pitts S1E, ended up competing in IAC Unlimited Category, was relatively successful.



Rob next to his Pitts S1E
N888KK

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

A: Keep at it, it will suddenly come to you, it always does!



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

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