



# SKYLINES

## **CURMUDGEON'S CORNER**

Jim Kellett

Yep, this is gonna be all about me . . . and how this sport led me to meet the amazing band of brothers (and sisters) that I'd have never met otherwise.

For starters, the masthead photo this month – my SGS 1-23H, aka the Bluebird, at one of the International Vintage Sailplane meets at Harris Hill. The paint job was designed by a good friend and soaring colleague (Scott Callander) who just happened to be a forensic artist with the Secret Service who also worked in the same building as I did!

We're indebted to Marcelo Morichi who has taken on the job of interviewing club members we might not have met, and about whom we probably don't much about other than they fly with us. Those interviews got me to musing about all the people I've had the honor to know over the last half-century just because we both loved soaring. Here are just a FEW examples:

- The Me-109 pilot who flew on the eastern front in WWII
- The person who trained dogs for the Iditarod
- The "real" Viet Nam vet who was in the French Foreign Legion when Viet Nam was still a French colony

- The leader of the software development team who wrote the code for the spacecraft that flew *completely autonomously* for years into Venus orbit!
- The pilot of a torpedo bomber who sank a Japanese cruiser in WWII who, 50 years later, dined with the captain of the ship he sank
- The author of science fiction books who chauffeured presidents in the air
- The project leader for Mars rovers
- The F-86 pilot who ran out of fuel over water miles from land and glided it back to Korea for a safe landing
- The Central Intelligence Agency field operator who was married to a staff member in the National Reconnaissance Organization. (Imagine *THEIR* pillow talk!)
- A classmate of Sully Sullenberger when they were learning to fly gliders at the USAF
- The Navy pilot who flew a trainer up 16<sup>th</sup> street in Washington, DC to buzz the apartment building where his wife-to-be was living.
- An Olympic tennis coach
- The marine colonel who led the ground forces in the 1980 attempt to rescue hostages in Iran.



**HAPPY SOARING SOARING SEASON 2022**  
**kickkkkkkooooooooofffffffffffffff!**  
 Stephanie Zilhora, President

Sorry, got blown away for a moment there. Our 2021 board members may have been overly optimistic in setting an early March start date for the 2022 season, as Mother Nature seems to still be raging outside most weekends. Perhaps the new 2022 board members will be more clairvoyant—congrats again to Rob and Peter! However, the lousy March weather gives me an excellent

opportunity to offer kudos to the duty crews thus far—kudos for making the tough decisions to cancel ops or end early every single ops day in March 2022.

Skyline Soaring Club tries very hard to emphasize safety in all that we do, and sometimes that means deciding to stay on the ground and keep the aircraft in their hangars. It’s not an easy decision to make, especially if (when?) there are multiple pilots wanting to fly and differing opinions on whether it is safe or not. However, the saying rings true: “It’s better to be on the ground, wishing you were in the air, than in the air, wishing you were on the ground.”

It also offers a good opportunity for all of us to remember and reevaluate our personal minimums (and maximums!). Of course, SSC has its own club limits, and the operating handbooks for each aircraft outline limits, too, but each pilot has his or her own rules to fly by, too. What’s the maximum crosswind component that I feel comfortable flying in? What’s the maximum headwind I am confident flying in? How does that change, if at all, if I have a more experienced pilot with me? What about if I have an instructor with me? What if I haven’t flown in the past 89 days? How does the gust factor affect my limits? What if the wind direction is highly variable? What if I notice the tow plane having to go around on every other landing?

I challenge each of us to use this blustery March as an excuse to review and update our personal limits. Once we finally do get some good soaring days, we can confidently take off and enjoy the flight, knowing that we are within our soaring safety limits.



**MEET THE MEMBER**  
 Chris Zaboji  
 Interview by Marcelo Morichi

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

A: I joined SSC in early September 2010. I took my FAST flight with James Kellett and was immediately hooked. My dad had heard of the soaring club before and knew I was at a good age to start taking lessons. We made our way out one lazy Sunday afternoon and the rest is history.

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

A: I took my first lesson a little over 11 years ago at SSC.

3. What ratings do you have?

A: I have CFI-Airplane, CFI-I, CFI-G, ATP multiengine airplane with CL-65 type rating.

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

A: My dad was a pilot, so I was fortunate enough to grow up around aviation. My first flight was when I was 3. Although I don't specifically remember it, there's a photo of my face right after takeoff. I was thrilled!

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: My work schedule this past year has dominated my life and any free time, so I seldom make it to the field. I live in downtown Washington, DC in Dupont. I take 66 all the way out and budget close to 1:20 travel time. The Apple House is a good spot for a donut!

6. Who were/are your mentors at SSC?

A: There are way too many people here to list that have helped me get to where I am, and for their help and support I am eternally grateful. It's true that if it wasn't for the support and mentorship that SSC has given me I would not be close to where I am now.

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

A: I love the terrain. The shape of the mountains, rivers and roads in the 20 mile radius from the airport are all cemented in my head. It's home for me and holds a special place in my heart.

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

A: The most memorable flight was when I flew a LS-6 from New Castle to Front Royal and got to claim my name on the Boomerang. It was a relatively weak day and I thought I was for sure going to land out several times on the way up. I always seemed to wiggle my way up from my landout decision height and made it. I remember Pete Maynard on the radio jokingly saying the airport was closed while I was in the pattern and my dad happened to be at the airport and got to greet me after I landed. We took pictures and I got aero-towed back down by some buddies in the club's SuperCub. This was the week of the R4S contest at New Castle and there was



large crowd for dinner when we landed. One of the best days in my life.

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

A: One is too many, and I've had several. More so in powered flying, but with gliders specifically, aircraft landing ahead of you without a radio, seeing a regional jet cruise by you when you don't have a transponder. Thankfully, no close calls that truly spooked me!

10. When did you become a tow pilot and who taught you the ropes?

A: I became a tow pilot first down in New Castle the summer of 2016. My dad was the Chief Tow Pilot at the time and signed me off later that year. These days sadly it's rare that I tow at SSC.

11. What do you like about towing gliders?

A: I don't have to get up and push! I'm pretty lazy...

12. Please tell us about any challenging or memorable tow flight?

A: The most memorable tow was WoT 2017. I got to tow my dad up on his first solo glider flight. I forget who was nice enough to swap with me out of the old Pawnee (Theo maybe?) but being able to do that was very memorable.

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

A: I'm an Airline Pilot with Air Wisconsin Airlines. We fly some of the regional jets for United out of Dulles and Chicago.



14. Where did you grow up?

A: Reston, VA.

15. What do you like the most about SSC?

A: The people!

16. What's on your gliding bucket list?

A: I'd love to fly gliders in Namibia or New Zealand. The stories you hear are out of this world and I would love to get a taste of it.

17. What do other members might not know about you

A: I played the violin for 8 years!

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

A: I'd say trust the process. We have a great group of instructors who have very diverse backgrounds in and out of aviation. Find the one that you click best with and work through it. If you can, go to WoT and devote the entire week to becoming better and learning the most you can. Flying once or twice a month makes it hard to develop solid skills. Rapid repetition will take months off the learning process.

I'll also add, don't look at the more experienced pilots and see them as indestructible or without imperfections. Everyone has it within them to make

a fatal error. Even as a beginning student pilot you have every right to speak up when you feel something is wrong.



## BOARD NOTES

Keith Hilton, Secretary

The Board of Directors met on 24 February and again on 5 March 2022 with the new Board members (Robert Jacobsen and Peter Ross) after the Skyline Soaring Annual Membership and Safety Meetings to deal with Club business. Stephanie Zilora was once again elected as President and Keith Hilton volunteered and was approved by the Board to continue on as Secretary for another year.

Club Treasurer, Ralph Vawter, noted that the KFRR fuel prepaid program may or may not hang around. Rock increased our fuel prices toward the end of last year. If we end up paying at the pump, prices may increase substantially. President Zilora noted that we may need to revisit tow prices at some point.

The Board spent a substantial amount of time discussing what to do with members that hadn't paid their Club dues for the year. As noted in the Skyline Soaring Operations Manual: *"Club dues, and other charges such as hangar fees for members who keep a trailer in club spaces, will be invoiced by email and those charges are due within 30 days of the invoice date, with payment by check mailed to the Treasurer (or handed to the Duty Officer).....Accounts more than 30 days overdue will be considered delinquent. A delinquent member may not fly until the account has been settled, and after 45 days the Board of Directors may review the case and consider terminating membership."* Following the guidance in the Operations Manual, the Board decided to look at each delinquent member on a case-by-case basis.

Matt Vosica noted that he was contacted by Ken Roko and asked to resubmit an application for membership on the Warren County Airport Commission board. Matt confirmed that that he would be happy to do so. It will be great to have a Skyline Soaring Club member on the Commission again to look out for our interests and the interests of all pilots that use the Front Royal Warren County Airport.

Matt Also noted that Rock Skobo is resubmitting a contract for FBO in June, and he is not sure if he will get it or if the county will take direct control. This is part of why he is hesitant to do the fuel fob program. Other people are also submitting bids. (Editorial Comment) Rock has made tremendous improvements to the airport and we hope he continues to run manage the airport.

As noted during the Annual Membership meeting, the Skyline Soaring Educational Foundation Board of Directors awarded three new scholarships: Mia Trkulja the *2022 Ryan Trexel Memorial Scholarship* for \$2500; Emma Tetley and Jack Gray an SSEF \$2000 Scholarship. Additionally, they continued the scholarship for Nerrisa Zobel for the *2021 Ryan Trexel Memorial Scholarship*.

The Skyline Soaring Club Board of Directors allows three scholarships per year without need to go through the student membership waitlist. Craig Bendorf noted that Jack Gray had already been approved through the student waitlist.

Because of COVID and weather, we haven't had the opportunity to gather at Bill and Sharon Burner's beautiful field in Woodstock, VA for the past few years. The Board has scheduled 21 May for the next Burner family day with 28 May as the backup. Anyone that has attended in the past will confirm that it is a wonderful day to gather with family and friends and experience flying from a different field than Front Royal.

Noting the time it has been since the Club has performed operations from Burner Field, the Board also voted to remove the special currency requirement of requiring a field check if they have not flown from the field of operations within the past two years. Operations Manual paragraph 3.1.5. Special Currency Requirements. *“Members may not fly a Club glider unless they have performed at least three takeoffs and landings in a glider within the last 90 days, and have flown from the field of operations within the past two years. If a pilot does not meet this special currency requirements, the member must fly with a club-approved instructor in a glider and be signed off as having accomplished a ‘field check.’”*

The Board voted to confer Emeritus Membership for Spencer Annear (Club Founding Member) and Bill Vickland for their contributions to the Club over the years.

After extensive discussion, and multiple requests for Member no-interest loans to pay for the PW-5, the Board voted to drop the request. It was noted that the Club is in solid financial condition after repaying the loan for N321K and purchasing the PW-5, so it wasn't necessary to seek loans from Club members. It was also noted that the Club doesn't have any major capital investments on the horizon. If the Club would have a need for a large capital investment, the Board would again seek Member loans at that time.

After postponing the Skyline Soaring Club 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala last year, the Board voted to hold the celebration in November 2022. The Board has asked Miriam Ellis to assist in the planning of the event. Jim Kellett noted that Miriam Ellis has planned previous celebrations and has done a wonderful job.

Erik van Weezendonk made the recommendation to plan joint ad hoc operations with MASA either at KFRR or MASA or both. He noted that holding the Week-of-Training at MASA might be a good

idea. He also noted that operations shouldn't disrupt MASA operations, thus a week day event would be preferred. Board members thought that was a good idea, but no further action was taken.

Ron Wagner made the formal request to give the green light to Burt Compton to come to Skyline Soaring Club for a FREE Soaring Safety Foundation audit on 30 July 2022. He noted that Burt would arrive on the 28th and would like to have an informal “event” on Friday evening in the Northern Virginia area, and then the formal audit event on Saturday at the field. Members may remember Burt's visit a few years ago. The Board thought it would be good to get an outsider's opinion on our operations and approved the request.

Erik van Weezendonk also made the recommendation to build a CONDOR flight simulator and ask for space in the hangars across from the Club hangars for the simulator for Club use. There was a discussion on the cost of the computer and other equipment to set up the simulator. The cost would be around \$2,000.00. The Board took no further action at this time.

The Board is still vigorously working on publishing an update to the Skyline Soaring Club Operation Manual. The update will correct some conflicts between the Club Bylaws and the OPS Manual. Additionally, the update will: correct minor typographical and format errors; delete membership categories (still under review); add comments on electronic payments; clarified operating hours for Club operations ; deleted the acceptance of credit cards at the field; update transiting to runway 10 parking; delete the Honda ATV for ground towing at KFRR; clarified parking location for the Gators; clarify visitor participation in Club operations; delete references to the Grob-103; add PW-5 qualifications and performance data; update takeoff considerations and deleted obsolete diagrams; update fuel and oil requirements for the Husky; update recommended towing speeds;

remove reference to the Tost reel in the Pawnee;  
correct the link to the Wing Runner training course;  
address pattern altitude; just to name a few. We  
are having our local legal expert, Chris Norris, guide  
us in this endeavor. You should see the new  
Operation manual in the next month or two.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 14 April  
2022 at 1830 via ZOOM video teleconference. All  
Club members are welcome to attend to watch the  
sausage being made.



**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)

Stephanie Zilora - *President*

**Directors**

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Stephanie Zilora  
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David Collier - *Tow Vehicle Meister*

Andrew Neilson - *Tow Plane Chief*  
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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*