

# SKYLINES



Photo by Phil Jordan

## PARTY! PARTY! PARTY!

There are only two short months left until our Club holiday & 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary party! And the sign-up deadline is November 15 – less than one month away. Please plan to join us at the SSC holiday



social event of the year to spend a fun & entertaining evening (yes, there will be entertainment) with your soaring friends & family, their friends...etc...you get the idea.

This is your ticket to a beautiful finale for the year. Send your check for \$90 per person made out to Skyline Soaring. Send to Miriam Ellis 6918

Birkenhead Place Gainesville VA 20155. See you at our event!



## REMEMBER RUBE GOLDBERG?

Piet Barber

Did you notice in the Board Notes last month my request to do a couple of exams for a non-club member? Well, turns out the complete story is more than a little weird!

- I was supposed to do commercial pilot checkride observation with Jerry O'Connor at PSA's new airport Greene County, PA; just north of Morgantown, WV.
- Then they had the claw tie-down that blew away in the middle of the night. It had a 0 pilot flight for 150 meters downwind when their Blanik came out of the ground.
- Then they managed to get a Grob Twin Astir to replace the Blanik. Cool !

- Then the Grob Twin Astir -- on its first day of instruction, landed gear up. The instructor can't see the gear handle from his vantage point in the back seat, and there is no gear indicator in the back seat. And the student put up the gear, insisting that it was down, but it wasn't. That's a trip to Gehrlein!
- I jumped through a lot of hoops to get Board approval to do the practicals, observed by the FAA, at KFRR. But that never happened, because . .
- Instead, we rescheduled the practical tests to be at Cumberland. But the FAA guy lives in Reno. His plans were to fly into Pittsburgh on the red-eye, drive 1 hour or so down to Greene County to do the observation for the practical test, then get back on a plane back to Reno. Having the observation at Cumberland made it impossible for him to just bop over to Cumberland. Cumberland apparently is 2 hours from every big airport.
- So I did the commercial practical in a 2-33 at Cumberland with Jerry, and a private add-on with Chuck Moses in the 2-33 at Cumberland on Saturday. The plan was to do Jerry's CFI-G on Sunday after the commercial was out of the way.
- Sunday morning, I do the ground portion of the practical with Jerry in the terminal building at Cumberland. We walk out about noon to go fly the 2-33.
- On the VERY FLIGHT RIGHT BEFORE we were to do the flight portion, a solo student decides to roll off the runway to the right, with the right wing down, right into a runway light. Dave Hart watched in horror. "I never told him he could do that". Apparently this is a case of a student seeing somebody do something less than perfect, and did a poor job of emulating this behavior which resulted in bent metal. After surveying the busted wingtip on the 2-33, I issued Jerry a letter of discontinuance. That's a trip to Gehrlein!
- Jerry and I rescheduled for Greene County Airport in Pennsylvania. We'll do the flight portion in the Grob Twin Astir which has since been repaired in record time by Gehrlein. (cool!)
- We got that practical test done, but no FAA guy to observe.
- I tested another guy later on Saturday, and I failed him because he was going to crash into the grass and destroy the landing gear. I had to slam the spoilers closed to keep us from doing a carrier-crash-landing. Well at least I'm not Santa Claus, giving ratings to everybody who pays me!
- Dave Hart is in London right now.
- So I'm going to Reno on Thursday night to go get a check-out with the FAA guy on Friday. I'll hang around at Reno for a few days, in case the weather doesn't work out. Maybe I'll meet up with Curtis Wheeler and / or Fred LaSor. I'm giving up a good wave and ridge day on Thursday and Friday this week for this adventure. I'm flying to Reno and staying at a creepy clown hotel (Circus Circus) at my own expense.
- There's only one FAA guy in the whole country who can do glider observations, and it's hard to get on his schedule. There used to be 3, but one retired, and one got promoted. As far as we can tell, it's just this guy in Reno. And he sounds like he's had enough.
- It's conceivable that there's going to be a point when the FAA can't manage me anymore because they can't find a glider-qualified ASI to observe me, and they'll [terminate my designation](#). (Then they'll have even bigger problems than they have right now!)
- I only charge \$250 per checkride, flat-fee all ratings, all distances traveled. I don't charge Juniors (under 24 years old and an SSA member), and I just found out there's a [DPE down at Florida](#) who is charging \$1000 for a glider private pilot checkride.

- If you ever wonder why you never see me fly QQ anymore, it's because I'm doing checkrides every weekend.
- You guys don't deserve me.



**COFFEE WITH A NEW PILOT – MIA ANDERSON**  
Marcelo Morichi

**When did you take your practical test?**

A: August 6th, 2022

**How long did it last?**

A: I believe my oral was three hours



**Who was the tormentor (Designated Pilot Examiner)?**

A: Piet Barber

**What were the flight conditions that day?**

A: The flight conditions were very nice but bad weather was starting to roll in. Overall it was a beautiful day!

**How many flights did you complete? What do you remember most vividly about that flight?**

A: We completed 2 flights and the thing I remember the most is all the “Nervous Mia” jokes I made. After doing the preflight, we were doing positive control check and I told him I’m rechecking the air brakes because I don’t trust the pilot who did the preflight. I also was asked to make a turn to a heading but I turned the wrong way. I brushed it off by telling Piet “That was just my clearing turn”.

**The knowledge test tends to be something many student pilots procrastinate on. What’s your helpful advice for them?**

A: I advise that students not be afraid of it. I know that’s how I felt and it definitely hurt my

progress towards getting my pilots license. Yes there is a chance you may not pass it the first time but you can always study what you got wrong, and figure out other subjects you may not feel 100% about.

**Who was your first passenger after you became a pilot?**

A: My dad

**What is your most memorable flight since you became a pilot?**

A: I would have to say that my most memorable flight was that first right after I got my license. My dad has been flying since he was 17 so having my dad as my first passenger was very special.

**What are your goals as a glider pilot for the next two years?**

A: I hope to continue to learn about gliders, get my commercial glider license and possibly learn aerobatics.

**If you met with Mia when she started her flight lessons, what advice would you give her?**

A: I would tell her, Don’t let little bumps in the road mess you up. You have to keep going and keep that momentum up no matter what.

**What are the two things that Skyline Soaring Club does well in developing new pilots? What is the one thing that could be improved?**

A: I think that having several flight instructors can be good and bad. The good part is that you have 15 different people teaching you what they like and with that you can pick and choose your own preferences. The bad of it is that it’s a little hard to communicate to each and every instructor about where you are in your training. The student progress report is definitely a good system for helping this issue.





### **WANT TO BE IN CONTROL??**

Our esteemed Chief Duty Officer, Chris Carswell, is stepping down as the Club's Chief Duty Officer, so we're looking for a volunteer to take over that task. If you're not sure what that entails, talk to Chris! And let the Board of Directors know!



### **CANOPY SEPARATION IN FLIGHT**

Christopher Wuerker

Situations can change fast and that was certainly the case with my ferry flight to Burner on the morning of October 8th, 2022. It had been a bumpy tow over to Burner. I kept the landing gear down to increase drag but was still getting significant slack lines and hit my head on the canopy a couple times but not hard (I didn't have a hat or headset on). I stayed on tow until we were just north of the field, made a clean release and was looking back over my left shoulder when there was a sudden loud noise followed by a blast of wind. My first thought was "OMG, I accidentally jettisoned the canopy" but saw the jettison handle in its normal locked position. It took a moment to recover from my bewilderment but quickly realized I had lost my canopy but was otherwise flying normally.

"Aviate, navigate, communicate" echoed in my head. Fortunately, my sunglasses were doing an excellent job protecting my eyes so I had no visual impairment. The Discus felt normal in straight and level flight at a little over 60 knots with 3,700 feet MSL (about 2,800 AGL). I slowed down to 50 knots to reduce the wind in the cockpit. Not knowing if the aircraft had sustained other damage, I was comforted knowing that I had a parachute and plenty of altitude. It helped that I've completed

more than 60 skydives so I was confident that I could successfully bail out and descend via parachute if needed. I started to turn my head to the right to inspect the starboard wing for damage but realized doing so risked having my sunglasses blown off so I decided to minimize my head turning. I confirmed the rudder, elevator and ailerons were working normally and made a shallow left turn towards the airport. The airport was close and I had plenty of altitude.

At this point, I decided that the best course of action was to land as soon as possible. I opened up the spoilers and made a shallow bank to the left away from the airport. I yelled "Burner traffic, glider niner yankee, I have lost my canopy, landing burner" but doubted anyone would be able to hear me above the wind noise. The remainder of the flight was remarkably normal. I intentionally flew a high pattern but kept a normal approach speed of 55 knots repeating my shouted radio call on downwind. She touched down at the intended spot and rolled to a stop a beam of the hanger. I just sat there gathering myself as the ground crew approached. I didn't realize that the canopy frame was still attached to the fuselage until I tried to get out of the aircraft. When I attempted to lift the hinged instrument panel to get out, I discovered it was being held down that the frame. I unlatched the frame and it opened normally. We pushed the glider off the active runway and parked her on the south end of the grass ramp. By this time, most everyone had heard what had happened and had come over. Everyone's first concern was making sure that I was okay followed by inspecting the aircraft.

It was remarkable how fast it happened. There weren't any warning signs or noises. Even though I was looking out through the left side of the canopy, I don't recall seeing the canopy depart the aircraft (which makes me wonder if I flinched at the loud noise). I also don't recall the noise itself other than it being loud.

After the accident, I debriefed the event with Tim Moran, Duty Officer, Ron Wagner, Safety Officer and Piet Barber, FAA check pilot. Piet consulted Allison who recommend we report. Piet provided me with the number for the NTSB Communication Center. NTSB took an initial report with the basic information and then connected me with the on-call NTSB Duty Officer. I provided a more detailed report over the phone and then texted her photos of the aircraft and damaged canopy. She called back and said that because there was 'substantial' damage to the aircraft, they would be classifying it as an 'accident'. She said she would be notifying the FAA and I should expect a call from an FAA accident investigator. I was instructed to not touch the aircraft until the FAA investigate had inspected it. I was contacted shortly thereafter by the FAA accident investigator who said he would be at the airfield in about 90 minutes. Once he arrived, he took photos of the aircraft and we discuss what happened. I also provided him a written statement. He then gave us permission to disassemble the aircraft and he made arrangements with Stephanie to come to the hanger to review the maintenance logs.

The next day, I was contacted by Bill Burner, who owns the airfield, that a neighbor had discovered a piece of the canopy in their yard about 300 yards from the airfield. A second piece was discovered the following day about 50 yards from the first. I notified the FAA investigator who gave me permission to collect the pieces and have them sent to the NTSB lab. The FAA investigator met with Rob, Discus meister, and reviewed the maintenance logs for the aircraft. A few days later, I was contacted by the assigned NTSB senior investigator who provided me a form to complete which included detailed information



about my flying experience, location of the accident and weather at the time of the accident. He already had my original statement provided to the FAA to which I provided a supplemental statement about the discovered canopy pieces and other recollections I had since the original statement.

I won't speculate as to the cause pending the NTSB investigation although I'm confident about ruling out a few causes. I'm confident that the tow rope/ring did not strike the canopy or aircraft. I'm also confident that it was not a bird strike since the recovered canopy pieces did not show any evidence of impact (biological or other).

What I learned: (1) Sunglasses, glasses, or goggles can be a life saver. I plan to always wear a pair when flying but will add a head a retainer; (2) Training and practicing emergency procedures works; (3) We have an amazing and wonderful club of talented and caring individuals.

I would like to thank Bill & Sharon Burner for hosting the club at their airfield, Randy Hoover, Burner Airport Manager, for recovering the canopy pieces, the Club Directors, Officers, instructors and members for their immediate and continued support, Rob Jacobsen for maintaining the Discus (which continues to be my favorite club aircraft) and Stephane Zilora & Andrew Nelson for retrieving the Discus.

In the end, this does not scare me away from flying, it reinforces that I have the training and skills to fly safely as long as I prioritize safety. I'm so pleased to be a member of Skyline Soaring Club.



**WANT TO LEARN SOMETHING?**  
(Especially in preparation for the FAA written)

Then you need to attend George Hazelrigg's outstanding ground school series (several weekends later in the winter)! George's classes go well beyond the simple "teach to the test" and while you'll almost certainly ace the written, you'll come away being a real soaring smarty-pants.

But you need to contact George quickly!



***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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