



NEW PILOT INTERVIEW – SCOTT BRADLEY

by Edited Marcelo Morichi

1. When did you take your practical test?

A: 05August2023 – Glider Add On.

2. How long did it last?

A: 2-hour oral and 40-minute practical over two flights

3. Who was the tormentor (Designated Pilot Examiner)?

A: Piet Barber



4. What were the flight conditions that day?

A: Perfect – relatively calm, though there was a slight tailwind on the second, longer flight

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

A: Two flights. I forgot all about the premature termination of tow (PTT). I asked for a 3,000-foot tow – not to be on that flight. The PTT was a nonevent – all that training kicked in and we arrived back at the airport in less than a minute. I find it slightly uncomfortable that we are making the first 180+ degree turn without seeing the runway. We know it is behind us – somewhere. And sure enough, the runway comes into view, and we complete the turns to



line up – all the while the trees are getting bigger.

Incidentally, many VFR power pilots love the words, “Can you make short approach?” There is something fun about landing an aircraft, SAFELY, from pretty much any orientation or height to the runway. The PTT is a little of that. So that students don’t get me wrong – for a glider (no engine) there are no go arounds, you must set up the approach correctly. The words Yippee-Ki-Yay are not in your vocabulary below 1,000 feet.

6. How did you prepare for the oral portion of the practical test? What was difficult about that part of the test and what advice would you give other students preparing for it?

A: The oral was 2 hours but seemed shorter. Several regulatory points require looking in the AIM for clarification. My initial advice is to know how to look up information in the AIM (Parts 61 and 91). There are several good YouTube videos. Since I am a glider add-on pilot, I was not required to retake the written test. I suspect the glider written test is very similar to a power pilot test. Regardless, there is a lot of information to absorb. I took a formal ground school, years ago. I am old school and would do that again, but there are plenty of on-line courses and ground school kits that can be purchased. Practice taking the test. I have heard people mention Dauntless software as a resource, it has glider specific tests. I did get a Dauntless subscription (glider only) during the last week of study just to make sure I had all the glider areas covered. I did.

The oral portion was not hard but the examiner has a checklist (pilots love checklists) so they are going to hit all the knowledge areas. And that includes the compass, the most neglected instrument in the pilot’s world. SCC instructors can advise on strategies to optimize your demonstration of knowledge to the examiner. Being professional and don’t ramble on or showing off how smart you are (and kids today are wicked smart) seems to be

good advice. Just answer the question. Remember, the examiner wants to go flying too. I am hoping my two-hour inquisition was more about waiting for thermals, than my performance.

7. Who was (or will be) your first passenger after you became a pilot?

A: No one identified yet. My wife, married 44 years, to a power pilot, is of the opinion that aircraft needs at least one engine. She is warming up to the idea that I am a glider pilot. Eventually, I will learn to fly from the back and take her on a ride. She might as well sit in the best seat in the house.

8. What is your most memorable flight since you become a pilot?

A: As a glider pilot I have yet to build memories, right now the most memorable is the last flight – with Piet – landing at the intersection. As a power pilot, we avoid clouds, we fly above them or below, and will make a point not to fly under them. Under clouds is where the lift is, but that’s also where the turbulence is – so my wife makes me go around clouds. However, I love clouds. Flying next to them (1,000 feet horizontal) is great. I love to look at clouds and always wanted to know how they are formed. During some solos, I got to fly close to clouds (did I say 1,000 feet horizontal?) – that is most memorable.

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

A: The FAA thinks I can fly a glider. I think I can fly a glider better. I will seek to be a better pilot – which is an on-going life pursuit. We will see about cross country flying. I am, after all this time, still amazed that we can stay up without an engine. I’d like to do more thermaling and really ingrain in my mind, that they really are there, I can find them, and they really do work.

10. If you met with Scott when he started his flight lessons, what advice would you give him?

A: Scott made a mistake when he first started and was flying 5 or 6 flights a day (not at Skyline). I am completely aware that at some point, my mind will just not accept information. After 3 flights, learning stops – especially if they are winch launches. If I have learned anything, it is that I am normal or even average. That means that if I stop learning after 3 flights, it is likely that other students do too. The exception to this was the Week-of-Training (WoT) where consecutive flights are broken up into morning and afternoon. That provides plenty of recovery time. WoT was great – and take advantage of that opportunity if possible.

Since I mentioned normal, let me clarify myself as old normal. I was disappointed at how long it took me to learn to fly a glider. I have been told that that is normal – especially for older power pilots. So, for all you older students, especially you A-type personalities (you know who you are), who have lived in the real world a long time; it is not a race. Relax and enjoy learning and flying. That applies to everyone.

11. 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: 1) Since I already passed the practical with Piet, I am not just brown nosing. That training software is first rate at communicating to all concerned where the student is in their training and where they need to go next. The hyperlinks between training objectives and reference materials makes life much easier. 2) Exposing the student pilots to multiple instructors may be a practical matter of resource management, but it is probably good for the student to learn from different perspectives. And, when a student resonates with an instructor, they can schedule accordingly. This latter student flexibility can be very important for increased success rates.

The ground activity is also important. In fact, it is the team effort on the ground that is attractive to

me. Here is Ron Wagner, the brave soul, who endorsed me to take the practical exam.



Areas for improvement: Too many faces and names for the student. It would be nice if I could just use people’s names without asking who they are – for the 3rd time. If there were pictures of members, I could do a little homework before I show up in the morning. On the other hand, I have no problem just saying, “I am sorry, what was your name, again.”

Area of interest: It might be good to ask students who are half-way through training their take on how the system might be improved. Early on I was informed to have a plan prior to arriving in the morning. This is good advice. I wonder if everyone gets that advice, or perhaps new student pilots have so much to learn that a focused plan is not necessary until the end stage of their training.

As previously mentioned, I love clouds. I thought these were cloud streets, but they may also be from wave. I started glider lessons to learn about how wind and terrain interact. I was preparing to take a mountain flying class in Colorado and someone said I needed to take glider lessons. In an underpowered single-engine piston aircraft at 10,000 feet, thermals and ridge lift help us get over those mountain passes. Speaking of clouds, this is a photo over



Illinois on my way back from Colorado.

Editor’s Note: Those are rotor clouds, formed on the boundary between stable and unstable air under wave conditions.



THERE ARE LOTS OF PLACES TO LAND OUT – I SAID

Scott Bradley with Piet Barber

When QQ PIC Piet Barber asked me where we should land out, I thought this was another training lesson question. I am a new add-on glider pilot which means I may not be a student, but I am always in learning mode. As a power pilot, like a glider pilot, we are always aware of the possible land out fields – it is instinct to look for traffic and fields. I said, “I see lots of fields – perhaps over there is a good one.” That was easy.

A little later, over Strasburg (in the valley of unexpected sink - on this day), the question came again, and as before, I saw lots of fields, except the ground details were easier to see. I pointed out a specific brown field. Piet agreed that the brown field close to the river looked good. Wait a minute! What’s with this focus on fields? It took me a while, but then I realized I wasn’t the student, I was the copilot. I was now on the same page as Piet.

I had been in relatively safe-student cruise mode. A real land out was imminent, and surprisingly I was not too stressed, as I knew Piet would execute the perfect land out. It was not likely he was going to hand the glider over to me and “see” how I performed. It could happen. Like most VFR power pilots and Virtual Airline captains, we dream of the day when an airline crew member comes to the cabin and asks if there are any pilots aboard. Yes – I would say, where do they keep the POH?

I looked at the bright side, inevitability does that, and thought what was coming may inoculate me from some of the fear of a future land out when I am the PIC. In general, fear/stress does not make me a better decision maker. The better prepared the safer we become, and this was not textbooks and theory.

Then we decided to give it one more go over a very large warehouse (with a white roof) surrounded by an asphalt parking lot. The intended field was close by too. The Oracle was on our side, and we must have had some good-deed chips to spare. There was a thermal and the rest is history – after another 3 hours of cross country flying, we landed back at Front Royal.

That was certainly a memorable flight. We did a lot of thermaling and hopefully I improved those skills.. I

also got a glimpse of flying a glider at 90 knots along a line of lift marked

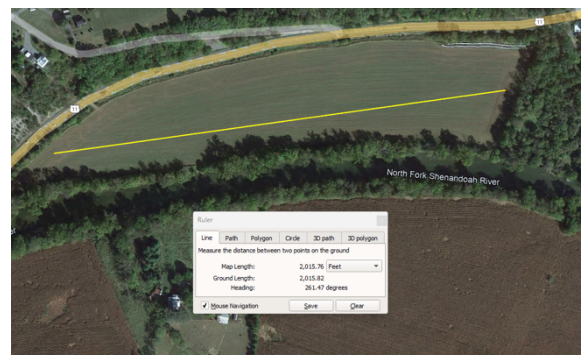


by clouds that took us to Winchester. When above 5,000’ it gets nice and cool, making for a

. Newly minted glider pilot (add on) sporting a cherry blossom festival bucket hat. Piet was telling himself out loud, “Don’t drop the phone, don’t drop the phone.” I thought that was some advanced Soaring language I was unfamiliar. No – it means don’t drop the phone.

much more comfortable day. I learned a lot.

In a post-flight analysis, Piet provided Google Earth images of our intended land out field, and indeed it was a good candidate. Though acceptable,



The “brown field” that we agreed on looked like a good land out area. This is post-flight Google Earth image (color was browner at the time) and shows we had 2,000’ to work with, but with 50’ trees on either end. (Students: for a 50-foot obstacle on approach, subtract x10 the height of obstacle from the runway length. That is the effective expected landing distance remaining.)

Piet knew of another field about 1.85 miles Southwest of our present position that would have been better. Apparently, he had visited that field 23 years ago. The farmer might remember Piet – that’s a positive.



Post-flight Google image of a field Piet had landed in 23 years ago – it was 1.85 miles SW of our position and would have been easily reached with a timely decision. It was also 2,000’, but there were no trees guarding the approach. The bottom graph is an elevation profile showing a ~12’ variation in height.

I have not given much thought to cross-country flying. This experience and post-analysis give me some confidence that a successful land out is part of the calculus and mental preparation for soaring beyond line-of-sight to the home glider port. I suspect Google Earth is a good tool for pre-flight planning as well. In other words, I could already have landing areas in mind before I launch.

I’ll leave it as a future homework problem as to the decision to take the field we can see or take a chance on a better field that is only 2 minutes away. Regardless, this conundrum points out that there are lots of places to land out in Virginia.



SOME THOUGHTS ON COMPLACENCY

John Noss, Chief Flight Instructor

Yeah, I know you probably don't think you need to hear another rant about safety and training and discipline and club rules. My personal observation is that as we are getting into the last half of our flying season, a lot of us are letting our guard down on important flying standards. You have all heard that complacency kills. It does, and it also can damage equipment and limit our privilege to conduct operations where we want, and when we want, and how we want, at a price we can afford. In the last few months we have seen some stark examples of narrowly avoided serious incidents due to:

- Gator drivers failing to monitor speed and outrunning wing walkers
- Gator drivers failing to monitor glider position and path, nearly hitting parked aircraft
- Failure to do a thorough preflight
- Pushers outrunning wing walkers taking the runway, dropping a wingtip
- Failure to confirm the yellow final-3 before takeoff checklist items (canopies, spoilers, dolly)
- Wing runners not confirming canopies secured
- Wing runners signaling to take up slack before moving behind the wing
- Getting too high on tow, or getting out of position just before release
- Entering glider pattern without calling on a 45 in time to allow the ground crew to decide on staging launch
- Failure to keep track of other aircraft in the pattern and on the runway when approaching to land
- Flying a pattern too wide or too low to make a normal touchdown

- Failure to track centerline on landing and contacting runway lights, without reporting
- Not being aware of spoiler position over the runway, floating in ground effect with spoilers closed, PIO
- Or, not aware of spoilers full out when they shouldn't be, landing short and hard
- Failure to confirm transponder on and in ALT position
- Failure to make required radio calls
- Failure to stay away from overhead the airport when jumpers are approaching drop
- Over-estimating tolerance for heat exhaustion on hot humid days

These are all things that have happened during club operations in the past couple of months! Most of them I have seen personally from on the ground, from a towplane, from the back seat instructing, or flying solo. A few were reported by concerned duty crew.

Seriously, every time we come to the airport, we should ask ourselves "what could go wrong?" It's so easy to relax when nothing really bad has happened for a long time, and nobody is looking over your shoulder. Most of the checklists and SSA standards and club procedures that we ask all members to adhere to are there because of previous things that went wrong, sometimes fatally. Nothing sets us up for future failure like past success leading to complacency. Please don't let that bite you, or bite the club!



MANY THANKS TO FRED WINTER!

Keith Hilton

As many of you are aware, Fred Winter graciously donated his beautiful Discus CS to the Club in July. Fred was a previous member, a current Emeritus member, and awesome benefactor to Skyline Soaring for many years. In addition to this wonderful gesture, Fred leases N341KS to the Club for practically nothing.



Keith Hilton shakes hands with Fred Winter to Seal the Deal

Being the meister for N341KS for many years, I have communicated with Fred periodically on the registration and other issues over the years. In late June Fred sent me an email indicating that he was thinking of the donating his Discus CS to the Club. He wondered if we would be interested. My first reaction was \$&%"# yes! However, I had to get the Board of Directors to accept the offer. The donation would not come without some cost to the Club for taxes, insurance, and other maintenance costs. The Board deliberated and voted to accept Fred's very generous offer. I arranged to pick up the Discus at Mifflin County Airport in Reedsville, PA on 8 July. It was a beautiful drive from my home in Ashburn, VA to Reedsville. If you have never been there, the Mifflin County Airport is absolutely beautiful. That Saturday morning the EAA Chapter 518 was hosting a fly-in breakfast. It was great seeing the variety of aircraft and people fly in for the breakfast. The EAA hosts the breakfast the second Saturday of every month. Whether you fly in or drive in, everyone is welcome. I would highly recommend it if you are not flying gliders at KFRR! Having never met Fred in person I noticed someone in the FBO with a glider t-shirt on. I asked: "Are you Fred by any chance?" Indeed, it was Fred. We then proceeded out to the hangar where Fred helped me get the Discus out of the hangar and hook the trailer up to my truck. We had a very nice visit. He is a nice fellow. Glad I got to finally meet him in person. We concluded the "sale" of the awesome glider for a crisp \$1.00 bill. After a photo, I headed back to KFRR with glider in

tow where Shane Neitzey agreed to lease a spot in his hangar, at least for a little while, to store the glider

Along with the glider and trailer there are some spare parts, a one-person rigger, tail dolly, wing dolly, and a couple new wing stands. The wing stands are in the nifty slide out storage bin under the trailer. The trailer also has "landing gear" in the back like the ASK-21 trailers so you don't have to put jack stands under the back to roll the fuselage and wings out.



Rob Jacobsen, as the current Discus meister, volunteered to be the meister for the new Discus as well. Thanks for stepping up to the task Rob! This Discus is a few years newer than 9Y and the entire glider and trailer are in pristine condition. This Discus CS is also certificated in the "experimental category." Thus, it requires a conditional inspection every year as well as a "Program Letter" on file with the FAA. Daniel Wells completed the conditional inspection on 9 August and confirmed that there was not a thing wrong with the glider and affirmed its airworthiness. John Noss is going to perform a test flight on 26 August. Then it should be



available to the Club members. The Club will eventually upgrade the ship's avionics including our standard ADS-B OUT transponder.

Fred's professional as well as aviation career is impressive: Check out his biography on the members-only page of our website!



CLUB PATCHES

We now have Skyline Soaring Club patches. You can get yours the next time you are at KFRR. The patches are \$5.00 each. They will look nice on your sweatshirt, jacket, or hat. They also make great coasters for your cold or hot drink.



MORE BADGE CONGRATULATIONS!

On August 26, Anand Mohan completed his "C" badge, awarded by SSA instructor Chris Norris!



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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