



Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for July 2024

CLASSIFIEDS

Ralph Vawter
Help Wanted

Trailer Meister - Skyline Soaring has several trailers used to house and transport gliders. The club is in need of a dedicated member who will monitor the health and viability of the trailers. Duties include ensuring trailers are functional: tires inflated, inspections are current (for trailers with brakes), lighting works; and other needed maintenance or repairs. You may not necessarily do the repairs, but more importantly see that they are completed. Apply now to the club president.

Merchandising Meister - Skyline Soaring seeks motivated marketing person to produce another income stream for the club. Duties include inventory maintenance of current merchandise (t-shirts, log books, patches, etc) as well as keeping the drink supply current. New inventory items can also be suggested to increase the visibility of Skyline Soaring. Apply now to the club president.

Wing Runner - The Soaring Safety Foundation provides a Wing Runner course for all members. Go to the SSA website (SSA.ORG) and click on Online Learning. On the left is a link to the Wing Runner Course. Complete the course and show your certificate to your instructor to get a Wing Runner Pin.

Assistant Duty Officer - **All club members are expected to provide service to the club.** Where to start? ADO. The club has a syllabus for the ADO, check with any instructor to get yours.



LESSONS FOR SOARING—AND LIFE George Hazelrigg

I was inspired by Ray Bourgeois' Soaring article, "Survival Mode," to write about my 20 years of

experience as a CFI-G. I come from a background that includes degrees in mechanical and aerospace engineering, as well as experience as a consultant to the FAA and NASA, and several years teaching engineering at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I am well versed in teaching the theory of soaring, but recognize that I am totally incapable of teaching the art of soaring. Similarly, I could teach the theory of bicycle riding in the most minute detail. Yet, no matter how well a student might be taught the theory, when put on a bicycle for the first time, it's for certain that they will fall. Likewise, no matter how well the theory of flight is taught to the student, if left to their own devices for their first flight in a sailplane, it's a near certainty that they wouldn't reach the far end of the runway in one piece. Flying is an art that can be learned only by experience, while my job as the instructor is to keep the student alive long enough to obtain the experience needed to become proficient and safe while flying on their own. As I learned to fly sailplanes, I experienced several key lessons that I found equally applicable to soaring and to life in general. Allow me to review some of these lessons here.

Too much control is no control: I tell my students that flying a sailplane is much like riding a horse. To ride a horse successfully, you need to be able to do only two things, (1) don't fall off and (2) tell the horse what you want it to do. You don't need to tell the horse how to trot or gallop. It already knows how to do these things, and trying to teach them to the horse will only annoy the animal. Likewise, you should learn how not to fall out of the sailplane—i.e., keep your seatbelt on and tight from the first movement on the ground prior to takeoff until completely stopped on the ground after the flight. That shouldn't be too difficult. Secondly, you need to learn how to tell the sailplane what you want it to do. This means gentle but firm and appropriate application of the controls. The sailplane already knows how to fly, don't try to teach it how to fly. Don't believe me? Next time you are experiencing a bad case of PIT (pilot-induced turbulence), just let go of the controls and see what happens. Some students want to correct every little deviation the sailplane takes from the intended course, and I find the

controls flailing about with no useful outcome. You cannot prevent every little bump from occurring, just average it all out and things will be fine.

Likewise with life. You cannot control every aspect of your life, and attempts to do so will only make the bumps worse. Some bumps are good, some are bad. But, if we just average them out, most likely all will be well in the end. Keep your focus on the things that you can control and control with moderation.

Coordination is everything (almost): Back to our horse analogy. You want the horse to go left but, while pulling on the reins to the left, you are leaning to the right. The horse is confused and comes to the conclusion that you are about to fall off. Same with the sailplane when the stick is moved to the left and the rudder to the right (or not at all). The sailplane is confused, so it tries to go both ways at the same time—the left wing drops and the nose goes right, and the turn is a long time coming, if at all. Start each maneuver by determining what you want the sailplane to do. Then apply an unambiguous control input to get the desired result. This may take some practice, but it doesn't have to be in the air. Practice your control inputs sitting in the sailplane on the ground. It works.

The lesson for life here is to begin by thinking about the direction that you want your life to take. Then, unambiguously take the action necessary to set your course in the desired direction.

Sometimes doing nothing is best: I learned this lesson while managing some 40 people at work. Rather perplexing problems never ceased to arise with great regularity, but I found that, whenever there was no clear and immediate solution, doing nothing seemed to work rather well as the problems tended to solve themselves. Doing nothing is not always the right approach while flying, but there are times when it works pretty well. I have had the opportunity to observe more than a few rather rough PIOs (pilot-induced oscillations). These typically occur when a landing sailplane is forced onto the runway with excess

energy and the nose wheel touches first, resulting in a significant bounce. Often, the bounce is sufficient to lead the pilot into thinking that he/she has once again arisen to the heavens and, in complete panic, overcontrols the situation by shoving the nose down to counter the altitude gain. But, as the nose comes down, the pilot sees the runway rushing up to meet the sailplane—the bounce really wasn't so high after all—and to keep from smashing into the runway now applies full aft stick at precisely the moment that the nose wheel hits the ground again. And, using the remaining excess energy, the bounce is amplified into a second, bigger bounce, followed by several more cycles. The good pilot will simply close the spoilers, level out and wait for things to settle down for a second attempt at the landing. The not-so-good pilot is best advised to do nothing, namely to stop moving the stick and let the sailplane figure out how to land on its own.

Never stop flying until the flight is over: The flight ends when the sailplane is motionless on the ground. Accidents occur when a pilot surrenders to nature and just stops flying the aircraft. No matter how bad the situation may appear, always maintain whatever degree of control you can. A common mistake that students often make is to stop flying on landing the moment the wheels touch the ground. A sailplane must be flown until it comes to a complete rest on the ground.

Life ends when we become motionless. Up to that point, we have decisions to make and actions to take. Don't stop living as long as you can move.

Don't circle in sink: Once you are good enough to fly straight and make stabilized circular turns, you will want to begin to work on thermalling skills. Thermalling requires that (1) you learn to find the thermals and (2) you learn to use the thermals. Finding thermals is another skill for which the theory is relatively straight forward, but the practice is clearly an art. Beginning students seem to hope that the thermals will come to them, it seems so easy when they watch the experts. As a result, students often wind up circling if only because that's what the experts always seem to be doing. The first lesson in finding lift is, don't circle

in sink. When you encounter sink, fly straight to get out of it as quickly as possible. It's a good idea to do the counterintuitive thing and push the nose down to speed up and get out of the sink as fast as practicable. You'll be descending more quickly, but for much less time and that will minimize your altitude loss.

Few things apply to life more than this. When things go south for you and are getting worse fast, take the dive, accelerate and get out of there as fast as you can. We all encounter sink at some time in our lives. The key to success is to plot a course for a fast escape from it.

It's most often better to release in lift rather than to be searching for it after release: My personal rule is that I do not release at less than 2,000 feet AGL (except in cases of huge lift)—it's just too embarrassing to need a second tow. Above that altitude, I release whenever I encounter lift strong enough and large enough to circle in. It's almost always better to start your flight while going up than looking for the way up while going down.

The same is true with life. It's better to start your life while you are going up. Avoid leaving the nest while things are getting worse. A saying I've often heard is, "if you find yourself in a hole with a shovel, stop digging."

When in trouble, don't leave zero sink: Sometimes the lift that was so good an hour ago just seems to quit, the air becomes smooth as a baby's butt and you are out of range of the home field. But then, you reach a spot where the vario stops making ugly sad sounds—you are in zero sink. At least for now, things aren't getting worse. When this happens, taking refuge in a thermal just strong enough to prevent altitude loss may be the best option. It's most likely that the thermal is either improving or dissipating. You've got roughly a 50-50 chance of things getting better just by staying where you are, and that's certainly better than continuing to lose altitude in the surrounding smooth air.

Likewise in life. When things are heading south no matter which way you turn, you may be best off by

clinging to a plateau if you come across one. That gives you some time to work out a plan should you get the opportunity to escape the downward spiral. Besides, things are bound to change sooner or later, and it could be for the good.

When looking for lift, don't keep flying over the same spot: When everything seems to have become sink, fly out over new territory. Don't retrace your previous path. You already know that there is nothing there. Set out on a new direction. Maybe even zig-zag a bit to expand your search. But, most of all, don't circle.

In life, when things seem bad everywhere you go, strike out on a totally new path. Try a few totally new things, including things that perturb your path and offer new possibilities. But, most of all, don't stay in the funk that you are already in.

You can fly anywhere you can land: While learning cross-country flying in New Zealand, a very wise instructor taught me an excellent lesson. He told me that "I can fly anywhere I can land." In essence, as long as I have a place to land within range, I can spread my wings, venture out and live to talk about it.

In life, we may tend to be conservative in the extreme, taking no risks whatsoever. But this approach doesn't get us very far. We need to be ready make significant moves that can be life-altering for the good, and we can take such moves with confidence if only we have a place to land should we fail.

Always have a Plan B: I refer to soaring as the Plan-B sport. It is a sport where things are changing every second, and you need to make command decisions several times every minute. Hopefully, your decisions are in accord with your Plan A. But Plan A rarely lasts more than a few minutes. That cloud over there looks great, let's go there. But, by the time we get there the cloud is dissipating. Did we hang ourselves out to dry by heading to the cloud? Not if we started with a Plan B.



Likewise, with any major decision in life, it's good to have a Plan B as a backup for those times that Plan A doesn't go as hoped.

This summarizes my thoughts on soaring and how they relate also to life in general. I can state them as though they are theory with the idea of teaching them. That is my fantasy. The bottom line is that we can teach only science, art cannot be taught. It must be learned, and the learning comes only from experience. A mentor can offer only advice and criticism. Such is the case both in soaring and life.



MIA ANDERSON TAKES NEXT STEP TOWARD AN AVIATION CAREER

Skyliners Rob Hohmann, Alison Diaz, and Ron Wagner congratulate Mia upon graduating from high school!





ANOTHER TEEN STARTS CAREER CORRECTLY

Which means starting it in gliders! Caleb Smith graduated from high school May 2024 with honors. Trying to currently pinpoint what educational institution he wants to attend (getting close). As you may know, he obtained his PPL Aug 2023, so two licenses now. Working on IFR.



Flying his Sparrowhawk, Caleb has earned his A, B, C badges, and the distance legs of the Silver and Gold badge.



SNAPSHOTS FROM THE WOT

George Hazelrigg



BOARD NOTES

Keith Hilton, Secretary

Your Board of Directors continues to be very busy and meet about every six weeks via Zoom videoconference. The following is an update from the 9 March in person meeting that was held after the Annual Membership and Safety Meetings, 25 April, and the latest meeting held on 13 June.

At the March meeting the Board reelected Stephanie Zilora as President and Keith Hilton as Club Secretary. Additionally, the Board set 8 March 2025 as the 2025 Annual Membership and Safety Meeting to be held at the Front Royal fire house.

Your Treasurer Ralph Vawter continues to keep the Club's finances in accordance with public law. As he noted during the Annual Membership meeting, Zelle is charging us 1% fee on each transaction. He indicated that it is minimal, and he is not passing on the fee to the members that are using Zelle.

Ralph made the recommendation for the Board to consider lowering the ASK-21 rental fee by \$0.05 per hour. The Board discussed the recommendation but didn't take any action on the request at this time.

I noted to the Board that I received an email from our long-time insurance provider, Costello Insurance Associates, that they had "merged" with

Heffernan Insurance Brokers. From the email I received on 15 June 2024: “We are very pleased to announce that as of May 1, 2024, Costello Insurance, your aviation insurance broker has joined Heffernan Insurance Brokers. We are excited about this new partnership and look forward to introducing you to the collective strengths of Heffernan. We are staying in the same location with the same staff.Heffernan is starting an aviation division with the addition of Costello Insurance. Rest assured that you will continue to receive the same superb service that you have enjoyed in the past.” We hope that our insurance rates will not be increased by this merger.

As of June, the Club has grown to 108 members. This is the highest in Skyline Soaring Club history. We currently have 31 students, and still have 35 students on the wait list. Your Board voted to allow the two students from the wait list that will be attending the June Week of Training to join the Club. As a reminder, rated glider pilots can join the Club without being put onto the wait list.

John Noss noted that overall club progress on sorties is a bit behind where we would typically be for this time of year, weather has not done us any favors. As of the 13 June Board meeting the Club flew ~400 glider flights.

The Board had a lengthy discussion on Club members not “pulling their weight” as a Duty Crew member. As everyone knows, it takes ALL Club members to make the Club successful. The idea of implementing consequences for members not completing DO or ADO training (if applicable) was discussed. The requirement for completion of ADO training/certification during the Probationary membership period and a requirement to become a Full member of Skyline Soaring is being considered. Additionally, a requirement for a member to complete a minimum number of Duty Days as Instructor, Tow Plane Pilot, Duty Officer, or Assistant Duty Officer per year was discussed.

On the topic of contributions to the success of Skyline Soaring Club, there are still some support

positions open. The Board discussed the need for a Club merchandising meister. The merchandising meister would handle stocking the books, logbooks, and T-shirts, as well as stocking the refrigerator with water and drinks. Additionally, the Club still needs a Glider trailer meister to ensure the trailers remain operational and receive a Virginia safety inspection each year. If you are interested in helping the Club as the merchandising meister, or trailer meister, please let one of the Board members know.

We are very fortunate to have Erik van Weezendonk as a member of the Warrant County Airport Advisory Commission. Erik noted that all five current members of the commission are pilots and provided an update on membership and assignments of individuals on the advisory commission. He noted that the FBO now has a “courtesy car” for visitors to use and that short-term camping will now be allowed on the airport property.

Erik noted that there had been a Wings & Wheels “After Action” meeting. Methods to make it better were discussed. He noted that Skyline Soaring should NOT attempt to conduct normal operation during the next Wings & Wheels event. He also noted that the Commission is updating the KFRR “Rules and Regulations.” He didn’t think there would be any significant changes.

Erik noted that KFRR will be supporting another “Heros on the River” event. The event will include 60 sky dives over two days the end of July / early August, so we can expect a higher number of sky divers than normal.

The Club paid Hangar 13 LLC \$350 for the expeditious temporary repair of N341KS’s forward canopy. It may not be pretty, but we are very thankful that we are able to fly the glider. We are still waiting for the new canopy transparency. We plan to have the canopy replaced over our winter break.

I have contacted Paul Remde at Cumulus Soaring about a replacement harness for the LXNAV vario

repeater in the back seat of N321K. Paul notified me that he doesn't have a harness in stock, but will order one for us. The harness is \$40.00 plus \$10.00 for shipping. I will get it installed when we receive it.

I have been notified that there have been some complaints that the VHF radio in the PW-5 was not working very well. Andrew Neilson noted that the squelch was up too high. The radio appears to be working. I'll keep an eye on it and will order a replacement if required. A replacement radio would be around \$1,800.00.

Rob Jacobsen is working diligently to keep the twin Discus operational. Rob will be replacing the goose neck mic and replacing the zigzag tape on the bottom of the wings of 9Y.

The "new" Discus (FW) is currently at Gehrlein getting the canopy replaced. While there, some minor cosmetic repairs will also be completed. When it returns, Rob intends to install a gear-up alarm and replace the mechanical variometer. Rob is also working with the Commonwealth of Virginia to register the FW's trailer.

Ron Wagner asked the Board to fund the installation of RAM mount extensions and phone holders in each glider. Ron recently provided the RAM ball mounts for each Club ship. Ron noted that the club seems to be moving to embrace "See You" devices. Ron noted that at first, he was opposed to making it easy to mount a device in a cockpit because he thought it would be a distraction. But has learned that they are good for training and how not to be distracted by it when they need to ignore it. The Board discussed the pros and cons of providing the RAM accessories but voted against Ron's recommendation in favor of members providing their own accessories.

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The Board briefly discussed the requirements for use of oxygen in Club gliders. The Board decided not to change current Club requirements as outlined in the Club Operations Manual.

Ralph Vawter noted that the Club's radio license for the old base station was going to expire and if the Board wanted to renew the license. It was noted that the old base station requires repairs. Particularly the base station antennas. It was noted that a new base station would cost over \$5,000. The Board did not want to invest that much capital in a new base station. However, the Board was interested in repairing the current base station. Rob Jacobsen took the action attempt repairs to the base station. The Board asked Ralph to renew the radio license.

The Board approved President Zilora's request to add an additional day (actually half a day) to the Club's Week of Training. It was noted that returning the Club equipment on the Saturday morning following the Week of Training would allow the Week of Training participants and additional day of training. Currently they have to cut Friday short to get the equipment back to KFRR. It was noted that they MAY have an issue with fog on Saturday morning, but they could trailer gliders back if necessary.

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be seen. Some questioned whether possible damage to Club equipment was worth the risk. After discussions, the consensus of the Board was to leave the current limits as written in the Operations Manual.

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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

Robert Jacobsen
Carlos Troncoso
Jim Perlmutter
Peter Ross
Erik van Weezendonk
Stephanie Zilora

Keith Hilton - Secretary

Ralph Vawter – Treasurer

Marcelo Morichi – Asst. Treasurer

Ron Wagner - Safety Officer

Tim Moran - Membership

Officer Shane Neitzey – Chief

Towpilot John Noss – Chief CFI

Ken Ring - Hangar Meister

Ertan Tete - Field Computer

Meister

Carlos Troncoso – Chief Duty

Officer

Mike Ash - Duty Roster Chief

Piet Barber - Webmaster

Brian Clark - Assistant

Webmaster

Jim Kellett - Newsletter Editor

Evan Dosik - ASK-21 (N321K)

Meister

Rob Jacobsen – Discus Meister

Steve Paris – Tow Vehicle

Meister

Andrew Neilson – Towplane

Meister

Keith Hilton – ASK-21 Meister

Matt Vosika – Organizations

Liaison Officer