CONGRATULATIONS TO CLUB'S NEWEST SILVER BADGE HOLDER!

On July 26, the SSA approved Caleb's flight of July 21 for the altitude and duration legs of the FAI Silver badge, completing the badge!! The award will be listed in the October issue of Soaring Magazine.

BURNER DAY WEATHER TUTORIAL

AUGUST 4, 2024

Joel Hough, CFIG

Rwy 3 Winds light and variable 2-3 knots. 2 or 3 widely scattered rain storms. Weatherbug spark app indicated about 10 bolts of lightning around 1:00pm. Though I did hear any thunder, so perhaps the satellite was only picking up electrical discharges. One rain storm occurred about 6 miles south west of the field. This rain produced a gust of about 7-10 knots which was a quartering tail wind for landing.

This quartering tail wind may or may not have reached the wind sock before a Luscombe tail dragger was landing. The tail dragger turned into the corn 50 yards from the right side looking out of the barn. Two instructors thought that the quartering tail wind was a factor in putting the tail dragger into the corn. The pilot stated his foot got stuck trying to work the wheel brakes.

This story indicates why the Airman Information Manual recommends pilots "(14) Do avoid by at least 20 miles any thunderstorm identified as severe or giving an intense radar echo. This is especially true under the anvil of a large cumulonimbus." (https://www.faa.gov/documentlibrary/media/advisory_circular/ac%2000-24c.pdf Accessed 20240807)

The radar echo was yellow in color. Blue and green colors represent light-to-moderate rainfall. Yellow and orange colors show moderate-to-heavy precipitation, while red is very heavy rainfall

and pink colors inside the red color represent hail of different sizes. (https://www.weather.gov/lmk/nws_radar_refl-4panel#:~:text=Blue%20and%20green%20colors%20represent,represent%20hail%20of%20different%20sizes. Accessed 20240807)

The day was dominated by large dark clouds.

Detecting If a storm is getting large enough to generate rain is hard while you are underneath the cloud. One can only look at other clouds in the neighboring area to see any clouds are becoming thunderstorms. Joel's strategy for days like that is to not fly towards far away dark clouds because if the rain starts you are further from the field, the rain takes 25% of your L/D, and the dark cloud may be a down draft. If you do fly under dark clouds, flying out from under the cloud to see how tall the cloud is will give you clues if the cloud is getting tall enough to generate rain.

George Hazelrigg: Here's a link to an article about what happens to a K-21 struck by lightning in clear are near thunderstorms: https://asn.flightsafety.org/wikibase/146762

Happy Safe Soaring!

AVIATE, NAVIGATE, AND COMMUNICATE

Andrew Neilson

It should come as no surprise to anyone that I have strong opinions with regard to radio discipline (I know, a pilot with strong opinions? Shocking!). Even though I've only been flying a few years, I've had enough personal experience to know just how crucial the radio can be to gaining situational awareness in the airspace that we're sharing with other pilots.

In the past, KFRR really wasn't that busy. There were few airplanes on the ramp, and some just never flew. Radios were pretty much only thought of when we were staging or in the pattern. Many times it appeared to me that other than those two instances, radios were largely ignored. Often, I've witnessed someone trying to contact a glider in flight, only to get no response. When there was less air traffic, we could sort of get away with it. Now that things are getting much busier, we can't afford to let habits of the past be brought into the future.

We have all been taught "Aviate, Navigate, and Communicate". Even though "Communicate" is third in line, it doesn't mean that it's any less important than the first two. It's simply the best order to follow so that you can minimize risks. It's kind of like "ABC" when it comes to emergency medical situations. In case you're wondering, the order in which a first responder will assess a potential patient is "Airway, Breathing, and Circulation". It doesn't mean that having a pulse is unimportant, it just means that without the first two, circulation is meaningless.

To me, communication is an interaction. It involves listening as much, if not more, than talking. In the past, my interpretation of "Aviate, Navigate, and Communicate" was to fly the aircraft and figure out where I'm going. Once all that was taken care of, then it was okay to talk on the radio. Now, I have a somewhat different opinion. Aviating and navigating requires situational awareness. An important component of situational awareness is being aware of any other aircraft in your vicinity and what they're doing. The easiest way to do that is to pay attention to what other pilots are communicating (though you still need to keep your head out of the cockpit and scan for traffic). By incorporating listening, you can reduce risk by taking into

consideration what's going on around you. I now consider listening as an important part of "Aviate and Navigate". Another way to look at it is that we gather information by listening, not by talking. So, communication does not just mean talking on the radio. Communication also means listening to the radio. One thing that happens a lot during staging for launch is that the glider pilot does not contact the tow pilot. Why do we require everyone to talk to the tow pilot? It establishes that your radio is functional in both transmit and receive and that you're on the correct frequency. It's not strictly necessary to say "radio check"; just telling the tow pilot what you want to do and getting an acknowledgement accomplishes the same thing. It's ridiculously easy to get distracted during staging. There's a lot going on, but you still need to pay attention to the radio. I know of one instance where a glider was getting ready to perform a rope break and only one person (not in the glider) was aware of a different glider on the downwind. It's unclear if the glider on downwind was aware of the impending rope break or not. Once everyone got on the same page, the rope break was canceled. Let others know if their intended actions may cause a situation for you! Another thing that happens frequently is someone in the pattern is so focused on making their radio calls that they "step on" radio calls in progress. That could mean that you interrupt a call where someone is announcing that they're on final. That way, no one knows what you're doing and no one knows that there's an aircraft on final. Listen before you transmit! An example of not listening to the radio happened just recently. Stephanie (the PIC) and I were landing at Front Royal in a C-172. We were at midfield downwind when a glider called the 45. No biggie, we figured we had time, but I got a tally on the glider and didn't take my eyes off it. Stephanie called final for 28 and when we were less than a half mile out, the glider pilot called right base and turned in front of us. We were uncomfortably close, but since we were aware of the situation, we bailed out of the pattern, came around for another pass and everything was fine. I had a polite conversation with the glider pilot, and they had no clue that we were even there. When I said that we were less than a quarter mile apart, eyes got as big as saucers. That lack of situational awareness could have led to an NTSB report. It was fortunate that Stephanie and I are both well versed in glider operations and were primed to take immediate action. That is not true of most powered pilots coming in to KFRR. There have been multiple instances of transient pilots coming in to KFRR and being in the wrong pattern and/or on the wrong frequency. There's not much we can do about strangers coming in on the wrong frequency (except keeping our heads on a swivel, which you should be doing anyways), but if a powered aircraft starts calling that they're in a right pattern, that's something you need to take seriously. Don't hesitate to call the other pilot and let them know! Even though the verbiage has been changed in Foreflight and the AWOS spells it out in kindergarten terms, transient pilots still get it wrong (and will sometimes argue the point). If you're in the right pattern and there's a powered aircraft in the left pattern, contact them and coordinate your actions if you feel that there's a potential for conflict. They might not know that you're there! We also have SkyDive Front Royal sharing the CTAF with us now. It's really important that you know when they're about to drop parachutists over the field! The jump pilot has expressed concern that while trying to contact a glider during operations, there was no response to the jump pilot's calls. We cannot continue to operate like that.

My final observation about radio calls is to be brief and specific. We've all heard transient pilots give the equivalent of a "Ted Talk" when they're coming in. It clogs up the frequency, and no one remembers what they said anyway. The less you say, the easier it is for others (me) to absorb what it is that you're saying. Standard radio calls also greatly reduce the amount of mental bandwidth needed to figure out what's going on. I hear a glider call a right 45, I know exactly what's going on, and I don't need to try and figure out what you mean. Being specific is also very important. The best example I know of is when we're staging for launch. I've heard multiple people say, "Glider <tail number> staging for launch on runway 28. Three minutes". Someone unfamiliar with our operations will most likely be confused by

that. Does that mean that we're on the runway FOR three minutes or that we'll be on the runway IN three minutes? It's a best practice to specifically state that you will be "on the runway for three minutes". It removes any doubt as to what exactly is going on.

Aviate, Navigate, and Communicate!

CONGRATULATIONS TO CINDY LAWYER!!

Seen here with her instructor, Piet Barber, upon completing her first solo and earning her first badge**!**

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY
Chris and Ryan Baughman

This past weekend, the circumstances lined up for me to take my add-on practical test for Commercial Pilot – Glider, but that's not the real lead for this story. It happened to work out that my 16-year old son Ryan also achieved a milestone on the same day, earning his Private Pilot – Glider rating. Twenty years and one day exactly prior to that day, I took my first flight lesson at the Dover AFB Aero Club, and embarked on a flying career that can be summarized in one word – blessed. When Ryan was just under the age of 3, we moved to Edwards AFB where our family's aviation story really began. We had an airshow over our house every day, sonic booms became the norm, and made frequent visits to the Air Force Test Center Museum – what the kids referred to as "the airplane museum." Ryan was captivated by all things that fly as long as he can remember.

Left: Ryan and I watching Shuttle Endeavor depart Edwards atop the B747 for the last time; Upper right: The kids and I with a T-38; Lower right: While enjoying family day at Skylark North glider port, Ryan (3) checks out a glider for the first time

We moved to Manassas in 2016 and Ryan spent plenty of time with me at the airport. One of the first merit badges he earned in Boy Scouts was aviation. He wanted to start flying right away, and he learned that gliders were the best way to achieve that goal. We joined the SSC wait list at the same time, and started our training in the spring of '23. At age 14,. Ryan took his first solo, and held bragging rights as first in our family to solo a glider, at least for a few hours, thanks to Week of Training. During the rest of the 2023 season, he continued to progress, and picked right back up at WoT 2024, where he got checked out in the PW-5 and prepared for his checkride while waiting to turn 16. I also worked through my training, and with far fewer requirements to be ready for my practical test, had planned on finishing it the weekend after WoT.

Left: Ryan copiloting the Conquest; Upper Right: Ryan with the KIS TR-1 homebuilt; Lower Right: Ryan at the controls of a C152

My plans to knock out my rating in July were delayed with the passing of my father, who was my example of how to be a dad. As we took some time off to say goodbye to my dad, it was he who in a way presented me with the unique opportunity to share with my son a special day on August 24th. After a marathon day of flying in which Piet administered back-to-back checkrides, the verdict was in – we had both passed! Indeed this was a huge accomplishment for Ryan, who had just turned 16 – still too young for a drivers license in the Commonwealth. But for me, it was worth the wait not only because of the surreal pride I have in seeing my son earn his pilot certificate, but because we got to share such a momentous day.

Joining the Skyline Soaring Club is easily one of the best decisions we've ever made, not just because soaring is the most pure form of flight one can experience, but because it's fun and the people make it great. Big thanks to all the instructors, duty crew, and tow pilots – especially those who made WoT possible – so that we could focus on learning to fly and make the most out of our flight time. Ryan is looking forward to encouraging other youngsters to start flying, and I look forward to my CFI-G add-on, so that I can give back to a community that's given so much to us.

UNPLANNED CROSS COUNTRY FLIGHT? CONDOR IS EASIER!

D. Marcelo Morichi

It was a hot and beautiful summer day. The thermals looked promising. It was going to be a busy day at the club. Shortly after the training flights were completed, John took off on his own glider on his way to a long duration flight. Joel went up with a passenger. Shortly after, he informed on the radio that he was above 6,000 feet.

I took off next. The aerotow was bumpy. I released at 3,000 AGL over signal knob. The thermals were not very well defined at that altitude. I spent quite a bit of time climbing slowly to 4000 feet. Then, I flew over to the rocks and I started climbing fast. Really fast. I concentrated on staying inside the thermal, watching my altitude increase, and taking an occasional look at my position relative to the airport.

I continued performing the first two actions for the next several minutes. I overlooked the third one over the next several minutes. That was mistake number one.

I called Skyline ground to confirm our allowed ceiling. Syed, the DO, confirmed it had been raised to 7000 feet. I reached that altitude after almost 30 minutes in the air. Then, I decided to slow down, and enjoy the view. The sights were beautiful and somewhat unfamiliar, and this triggered a slight concern. Hmm, where is the airport?

The town to my right looked like Front Royal. I drew a line to the west and scanned the area for where the Front Royal should be. It was not very helpful. Later, I learned that the town was Woodstock. Marcelo, we are not in Kansas anymore.

I had plenty of altitude and that gave me some peace of mind. At the same time, I realized that I needed a plan B. The first emotion I felt at the prospect of a landout was not fear. It was embarrassment in front of my peers on the ground. So, you went soaring near the airport and ended up landing out?

I decided that there was no time for that type of thinking.

Syed called on the radio to tell me it was time to come back to the airport. I had been up for one hour. I replied that I might need to land out. No response. While I could hear the radio traffic at Front Royal, none of my radio calls would be heard on the ground again.

I was at 4,000 feet and beginning to lose altitude. I started looking for potential landout fields. There were not that many. I focused on two.

I was at 2600 feet and nearing decision time. Happily, I was able to find lift again. I climbed to 4000 feet. I moved to a different location. The lift quickly disappeared, and I was descending at the fastest rate of the whole flight. I looked for fields again. Again, there were not that many that meet the criteria.

I settled on one field (http://tiny.cc/landout). It was rectangular, it had grass and no visible ditches. There were trees on one end and a fence on the opposite side. There were cattle on the field past the fence, a grain silo, and a house. Robb Jacobsen's words in his Skyline article about his landout resonated in my ears: once you commit to a landout, there is no turning back.

I positioned myself in a 45 to the field and started my pre-landing checklist. It surprised me – and it still does today - how calm I felt. My attention was laser-focused on landing the glider. No distracting thoughts or panic.

As I turned downwind, new details of the field emerged: there was grass and a slight upslope on the last 80 feet that led to the fence. As I continued flying downwind, I looked to my right and assessed my angle with respect to the field. I picked a touchdown point.

That's the thing about landouts. There is no hangar to point the nose of the glider to when you start your 45. Trying to match your 1500 feet abeam Ron Wagner's third dash, or the runway's numbers, if you belong to John Noss' school, is pointless. They are nowhere to be seen.

I looked to my right to find the 45-degree angle with respect to my chosen touch down point. I turned base and the ASK seemed big. The size of the landing field magnified the glider's dimension. I never experienced that sensation when landing at Front Royal.

I flew over the line of trees. There was plenty of vertical separation. Still, the trees were taller than they appeared when I started the pattern.

The final approach was stable. I could see at a distance, where the terrain upslope began. I decided to leverage that portion to stop the glider. The touchdown was smooth, and I pulled the brakes to slow the glider as quickly as possible.

The glider stopped. Everything was very quiet. I noticed that it was hot. I felt relief. A lot of relief. I opened the canopy and got out of the glider. I looked around and noticed that I was alone. I had stopped about 25 yards from the fence. On the other side were several cows and a bull staring at me. They were nonchalant about my presence.

I radioed Skyline ground to inform them that I had landed out. No answer. During our debrief, a week later, John Noss told me that he was flying above me when I started my descent to land. He never heard me or saw me. He discovered it when he looked at my flight's ADSB data and compared it to his.

My cell phone rang. It was Syed. He wanted to know if I was ok. I texted him a Google Maps' pin so he would know where I was.

I was relieved to have a bottle of water with me. It would be two hours until Joel Hough would bring me another bother and a cereal bar. What a guy!

It was my lucky day in more ways than one. Keith Hilton was at the airport that day. If you are going to landout, you should plan it for when Keith is at the airport. He drove his pick-up truck with Joel and Richard Auer. And the trailer.

While I waited, I went to look for an entrance to the field. I walked towards the house on the other side of the fence. The cows followed me with their bovine looks. So did the bull. I decided to walk on the opposite side of the field, next to a wooden fence. That would be my shield if the bull decided to get friendly.

Nobody answered when I knocked at the door of the house on the property. Next, I tried at the solitary house across the street. An older gentleman opened the door. I felt like Tom Cruise when he enters the bar after ejecting from his supersonic flight on Top Gun Maverick. He remained silent after I explained that I had just landed on the field across the street. I pointed to the glider. The raised wing was visible from his front porch. His wife joined us, and she kindly offered to call the farmer who rented the field where I landed.

The farmer arrived and we drove over to the field. He left the gates open for my crew. He stayed to watch as we disassembled the glider under Keith's guidance.

We drove back to the airport and reassembled the glider. The glider was intact.

During the 30-minute drive back home, I reflected about how I left my guard down during the initial portion of the flight. The follow-up flight debrief with John Noss and Joel Hough provided additional valuable insights. Could I have made it back to the airport from where I was and with 4,500 feet of altitude? John did the calculations…. That was a second lesson learned.

Everything happened very fast during the flight. I was frustrated with my mistakes. At the same time, I was happy that I was able to land the glider in new and challenging conditions.

Years' worth of learning condensed in less than 60 minutes.

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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