



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SKYLINE SOARING CLUB, LLC    MAY, 2006

## Things to Think About During Windy Operations at KFRR

*Joe Parrish*

It's been an interesting—although not unusual—spring. As we denizens of KFRR come out of our winter cocoons, we are once again greeted by spring winds, brisk temperatures, and a lot of variability. To some pilots, the prospect of awesome ridge and wave conditions make the gusts and turbulence all worthwhile. Others look forward to the more sedate conditions of the summer.

In late February, we had a very challenging day at the field. If 15+ knot crosswinds were not enough, we had a regular series of snow squalls come through and put the field and/or the ridge into IMC. While waiting for conditions to improve (we ultimately decided to pack it in for the day), a group assembled in the FBO and we had a very thorough “chalk talk” discussion of operations at KFRR under such challenging conditions.

I'd like to pass along a few points from that discussion that still stick in my mind—this is not meant to be a comprehensive briefing on every possible consideration; it's really meant to inspire further thought and conversation, and hopefully improve safety and enjoyment for everyone.

### **Operations from Runway 27**

When the wind is coming from the south and we're operating from Runway 27, expect takeoff and landing to get squirrely when you pass by the stand of trees on the left that starts about 300 feet from the end of the runway. Unfortunately, if there is any headwind component, this is just about the point of normal glider takeoff, and during landing, it's often the point of touchdown if the glider pilot aims for the 09 “numbers” and encounters the typical float due to ground effect. I can't offer too much advice for the takeoff, other than to be prepared for turbulence during the transition from the ground roll to flight. It is also common to experience turbulence during the initial climbout, when passing the area near the pond at the southwest corner of the field. I do think there is more that can be done on the landing, though. Remember that the runway is approximately 3000 feet in length, and there is

no requirement to land in the first 10% of the runway! Consider touching down a bit farther down the runway—perhaps choosing your aim point for 300-500 feet, which will then result in touch-down a bit beyond the point at which the wind “shadow” from the trees begins.

When the wind is coming from the west and we're operating from 27, expect the potential for significant sink when operating in the lee of the ridge. This is usually not a big problem for takeoff and landing operations (unless your landing ends up being in some farmer's field because you misjudged your glide), but I have found that the tow is much more pleasant if taken to the north of the field, then comes back over toward Signal Knob for release to check out the ridge lift situation.

When the wind is coming from the north and we're operating from 27, landing is usually no problem, but be prepared on takeoff to get some turbulence from the hangars and especially from the gully at the northwest corner of the field.

In all cases for high winds, be prepared to alter your pattern as needed to keep yourself within safe reach of the field. I maintain that it is possible to turn from downwind to base right at the “27” end of the runway and still put it down before mid-field, so why go so far out on downwind that you are at risk if you encounter heavy sink? (A reality off the ends of both 09 and 27—just ask Shane.)

### **Operations from Runway 09**

Although operations from 09 are somewhat unusual in the spring, the comments made above about northerly and southerly winds are generally applicable. The good news is that there's usually



Photo by Phil Jordan



Photo by Dick Otis

not much wind shadow when operating in southerly winds from 09—but do be aware of potential turbulence when passing north of the pond, just before touchdown on 09.

Please note that the threshold for the alternate landing option (east of the taxiway, in the grass adjacent to the paved runway) begins quite a long way past the threshold for the primary runway. If there is a strong easterly wind, you might want to plan to touchdown closer to the taxiway intersection to give yourself a good shot at both the primary and alternate landing options. Finally, if using the grass alternate, don't forget about the power box so conveniently located in the middle of the grass near the cross taxiway.

### ***Windsocks***

It's not at all unusual to have the two windsocks disagree with each other during crosswind conditions. (You know the old joke about the man with two wristwatches, right?) When the wind is from the north, I tend to trust the windsock on the south side of the runway, and when from the south, I tend to trust the windsock on the north side. In both cases, this is because I feel that wind shadowing from trees and/or hangars affects the windsock. Note also that I used a bunch of wiggle-words like “tend to trust” and “I feel”—because, frankly, the windsocks are all over the place and it's really difficult to make any strict interpretations.

### ***Premature Termination of Tow***

We discussed this topic at length, and a lot of the discussion focused on the point that a downwind landing in high winds was Not Necessarily A Good Idea™ and that a pilot may need to make a tough decision to proceed ahead to a controlled, low-energy off-field landing into the wind rather than make a risky downwind landing or an even riskier attempt to turn downwind and then upwind again to land into the wind. This is the kind of forward thinking and decision-making that should occur on the ground before the flight, because it's awfully difficult to calmly assess numerous new options when you are airborne and running out of energy after a PTT.

### ***Aircraft Handling***

Ground handling of aircraft merits consideration. We recently had an unfortunate incident during the disassembly of a private ship. While everyone was thinking about how to get the wings off and onto the trailer in gusty winds, in the blink of an eye, the glider canopy took off, and it punched a hole in the wing of the glider on its way to polishing the asphalt on the ramp. I think everyone was stunned at how quickly things went from “OK” to “Not OK”. I'm glad that no irreparable damage was done, and equally glad that it was not a wing that went flying without the rest of the aircraft attached.

Gliders on the ramp need to be secured in gusty conditions. Even if the glider doesn't take off on a less-than-solo flight, it can still weathervane and do significant damage to adjacent aircraft or people. Tying open the dive brakes is any easy thing to do, and you can use the lead shot ballast bags to weigh down wingtips.

I will note that the club Operations Manual has very clear rules regarding operations in high surface winds. See Section 5.8. At 20 knots, club gliders go back to the hangar. At 30 knots, the towplane goes back to the hangar. These rules were not defined arbitrarily—please observe and respect them.

### ***Final Thought***

It's ironic (and somewhat unfortunate) that some of our most difficult field conditions come at the very beginning of the season, when many pilots are still rusty from the winter layoff. It is quite reasonable for a thoughtful, intelligent pilot to self-assess and decide not to fly in strong conditions that they might otherwise accept if encountered later in the season. (Or take a dual flight with an instructor, even if their spring checkout requirement has already been met.) A carefully considered decision to not fly is an example of good judgment and decision-making.

I hope these thoughts and ideas have been helpful. I wish to thank the chalk-talk crew of 26 February, along with Richard Freytag, David Weaver, Jim Kellett, and Judah Milgram for their insights and suggestions.

CLAIM CHECK!		Preliminary Duration & Altitude Gain Results			
Pilot Name	Piet Barber	Flight Date	2/18/2006	Sailplane Type	LS 4
Take Off, UTC	2/18/06 21:03:37	Release, UTC	2/18/06 21:05:36	Landing, UTC	2/18/06 22:27:16
<i>All altitudes corrected for non-standard pressure only</i>					
<b>Flight duration</b> (For Silver Duration purposes only)	1:21:40	"Loss of Height"	2060.3675	feet	
<i>( If the Loss of Height shown above is a positive number greater than 3280.8, the Duration claim is invalid. See SC3 4.4.2 )</i>					
<b>Altitude Gain</b>	Low nearer take off, High nearer landing				
	<b>Low, feet</b>	<b>Gain, feet</b>	<b>Gain, meters</b>		
	2769.3675	10314.9606	3144.0000		
<b>Absolute Altitude</b>	13084.3281		feet	3988.1032 meters	
If no red message is displayed above, your claim appears to qualify for the following Award(s):					
<b>Silver Altitude</b>			<b>Gold Altitude</b>		

## Significant Events

Judy Ruprecht, SSA's Badge Lady sent the above Certificate to Jim Kellett, SSA Region IV Director, to pass on to Piet Barber, SSC's Chief Flight Instructor. The certificate summarizes Piet's successful Gold Altitude, which will be published in the June edition of *Soaring* magazine.



Photos by Dick Otis



## Soaring Cadet

On April 22, headed by Jim Kellett, Skyline Soaring Club participated in the Randolph-Macon Academy Decabration, celebrating ten years of middle school at R-MA. The weather was heavy rain, which dampened Jim's attempts to put H3 on display. But the Club had a booth extolling the virtues of soaring, and George Hazelrigg donated a glider ride, which was auctioned off. The lucky winner was Marshall Gressly. Marshall flew with George on Saturday, April 29, and got 56 minutes aloft at altitudes up to 5,500 MSL. Marshall is a student pilot at R-MA, with about 20 hours of Cessna 152 time. Reports are that he found soaring "awesome." Maybe we'll see Marshall around our tent in the future.

Photo provided by George Hazelrigg





## Boy Scouts Ride

George Hazelrigg, Jr.

In an arrangement that began with discussions over a year ago, the Skyline Soaring Club has undertaken an initiative to give rides to a few Boy Scouts. The rides, which began in March, will provide a gliding experience to about 14 Scouts.

Photos provide by George Hazelrigg



## No Place Like Cloud Base Quilt

Walter Klemperer from High Desert Soaring Club sent the following information to Frauke Elber.

High Desert Soaring Club of Bend, Oregon is raffling this magnificent quilt in soaring motif entitled "There is no place like Cloud Base".

Professional quilter, Andrea Eckhart of Prineville, Oregon, made this original quilt.

Estimated value of the quilt is \$850.00

Monies raised by High Desert Soaring in this raffle will be used to upgrade Club safety equipment.

There are three options in purchasing raffle tickets: Individual tickets cost \$2.00 Three tickets for \$5.00 Seven tickets for \$10.00

The raffle drawing will be held on August 26th, 2006 during the Air Show, Madras, Oregon.

Winner need not be present to receive the quilt. High Desert Soaring will pay shipping to winner if necessary.

Total of 4,000 tickets will be available for sale.

Go to <http://hdsoaring.org/> for ticket purchasing details.

One neat aspect of this adventure is that the quilt's creator, Andrea, has stated very clearly that she does not want to be reimbursed her costs (around \$1,000). We plan to give that to her and if we do, she will turn it over to her husband, an HDS club member, to finance his flying to get his private glider rating. Then he can take her up for her first glider ride.



**April 30, 2006:** In a scene reminiscent of the late "Invasion of the Black Snakes" soar opera of several years ago, multiple PhDs decided to replace the pictured rope after a serious consultation.

Photos by Phil Jordan



Yakety-Yak visitation.



 **Bob Collier**, who stores his 1-26 at home in a garage, reported this morning that he had mice – and they'd really done a number on the inside of his glider (cushions, belts, etc.).

Which should serve as a reminder that “it’s that time again” (if not too late already!) to take steps to keep the horny little critters out of our machines. I know from personal experience what a mess they can make – using belt and cushion material to make a nest, and then usually building the )\_)\*\$^ nest in a totally inaccessible space out in the wing or tail boom.

Most people are convinced that some old-fashioned mothballs (the naphthalene kind, not the p-dichlorobenzene kind) in the glider and/or trailer is sufficient. The theory is that the smell is sufficiently unpleasant to the mice they avoid the space. Of course, once you take off, the airflow through the glider quickly dispels the smell. Anyhow, better take steps ASAP.

—**Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon**

**Congratulations go to Craig Bendorf**, who soloed the K April 9th in a rather nice 50-minute first flight alone. It’s not Craig’s first solo, so we didn’t get to tear his shirt to shreds, but it’s a great step nonetheless. Craig, welcome to the ranks of glider pilots.

—**George Hazelrigg, Jr.**

**Similar kudos go out to Dan Noonan** (aka Noonan the Elder), who has once again (after 20 years) proven himself able to aviate without someone else talking in his ear all of the time. Congratulations Dan! —**Joe Parrish**

**Floyd Sweet, 91**, a soaring leader both in Region IV and nationally, finished his final glide on Thursday, March 30, 2006. Floyd was a prominent soaring enthusiast, a dedicated Director of the Soaring Society of America, and a stalwart of the Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association for decades.

During WWII, he taught at Elmira and directed flying operations at the Army Air Forces Glider Training School at Twentynine Palms and also prepared the Air Corps Basic Glider Training Manual.

Funeral services were held at Church of the Holy Cross, Dunn Loring, VA. Interment in Woodlawn Cemetery, Elmira, NY. Memorial contributions may be made to the National Soaring Museum, Harris Hill Rd. #3, Elmira, NY 14903.

**Things You’d Rather Not Know**—REBOOTING YOUR AIRBUS (AFTER ALL THE SCREENS GO DARK) Cures aside, pilots of Airbus A320-series airliners are getting new guidance on what to do if the screens on their electronically biased aircraft go blank. “Checklists will be streamlined so re-booting of power is quicker,” an Airbus spokesman told the London Daily Mirror after Britain’s Air Accidents Investigation Branch released a report on an

incident aboard a British Airways A319 last October. The plane was carrying 76 passengers to Budapest from London when most of the electronic displays went blank. The crew was able to bring everything back online in 90 seconds and the passengers were blissfully unaware of the glitch. The incident brought to light five similar instances on Airbuses. —**AVwebFlash 12.17a**

**HOMES VS. AIRPORTS, FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA** Conflict over GA airports is one of those recurring issues that just won’t go away, but with real-estate markets around the country at record highs—pushing builders farther into urban outskirts, where the small airports are—and with more and more GA aircraft being built and sold and flown, the outlook is for more of the same, only worse. That forecast is coming true right now in Southern California, where officials in Bakersfield and Rialto recently moved to shut down their airports. In the 1930s, the Los Angeles basin had 56 active municipal airports and only nine remain, the Los Angeles Times reported this week. Further, Santa Monica may turn into an aviation environmental research center of sorts. But across the country in Florida one airport is buying homeowners out of their homes for more space. —**AVwebFlash 12.17b**

**Crossfield’s 210A Likely Pulled To Pieces By Storm**—An NTSB early report says most of the lifting surfaces on Scott Crossfield’s Cessna 210A were found about a mile away from the wreckage of the rest of the plane, suggesting the Category 6 thunderstorm the veteran test pilot had the misfortune of encountering on April 19 was just too much for the aircraft. Moments after Crossfield asked air traffic control for a diversion around weather, the plane disappeared from radar screens. The body of the 84-year-old aviation icon, who was the first to fly at Mach 2, was found with the main wreckage about four miles from Ludville, Ga. The slight damage to nearby trees suggests the main wreckage fell almost vertically and created a crater four feet deep. The main wreckage consisted of cockpit, engine, propeller, left and right main wing spars, nose and main landing gear, left and right flap, and portions of the empennage, according to the NTSB. Everything else was either found in the other debris field or hasn’t been recovered. The NTSB didn’t find any evidence of mechanical, instrument or control failure. Crossfield was on a flight from Prattville, Ala., to Manassas, Va., when he encountered the storm and asked for the diversion. A family-only funeral service was scheduled for May 1 but there’s no word on any public memorials being planned. —**AVwebFlash 12.18a**

We always suspected Piet was a little high. Now it's been certified.



**SKYLINES**

Skyline Soaring Club, LLC

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