

SKYLINES



Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for January, 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Stephanie Zilhora

As another soaring season draws to a close at Skyline Soaring Club, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of our members for everything you do for the club. From the folks who show up, week after week, to stay all day and push gliders around, to the meisters, to the duty crews who enable us to fly every week, THANK YOU all. I've said it before, but I'll say it again--the club doesn't function without volunteers. Among those volunteers are

your Board members--we work hard to both address issues as they come up and to plan for the future of the club. Please always feel free to reach out to me and/or any of the other board members with any suggestions or concerns. Elections will be held at the beginning of 2025 (generally just before the annual meeting), and there will be two seats up for election/re-election. I encourage anyone who is eligible according to the by-laws to consider running for the board.

The end of the regular season doesn't necessarily mean that the soaring has to stop, though! Any member can call for an ad hoc day if the weather looks good--it helps to start planning a couple days ahead, in order to make sure you have a full duty

crew. Also, there is a group that flies virtually on Condor on Wednesday nights that anyone is welcome to join. Please reach out to Chris Wuerker for more information. See you March 1 for the Annual/Safety meeting (if not before then!).



WHO KNEW?

(An Example of a Founding Skyline Club Member)

It is useful, I think, to occasionally reminisce on the lives of Club members, particularly those who have played a large role in the formation and long term success of the club. One such member of our band of brothers was Bela Gogos.

Bela was born in [Hungary](#). He graduated in 1944 from the Hungarian Air Force Academy, and served to the end of the WWII in the Hungarian Air Force as a pilot flying the ME109 and Ju87 (Stuka) on the Eastern front.



Bela Gogos in 1940

Bela Gogos (present day)

In the picture at above, Bela is shown (second from right) with his primary glider trainer.

In 1948, the Hungarian Government arrested him for anticommunist activities and handed him over to Soviet Authorities for sentencing. In Baden bei Wien, Austria, a Soviet Military Court convicted him to 25 years of prison and hard labor. After spending three years in Moscow's Lubianka prison in solitary cell, he was transferred to a labor camp above the Arctic Circle (Inta, Vorkuta). In 1956 he was sent back to Hungary. During the Hungarian

uprising in 1956 he fled Hungary and immigrated to Canada.

In 1957 he met and married his wife, Susan, and they had a daughter, Lilly. In 1962 he graduated from the University of Toronto in Electrical Engineering and in the same year he joined IBM in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. in research and development as an electrical engineer. In 1965 he received his Master Degree Electrical Engineering from University of Syracuse, N.Y. In 1970 he completed the requirements of PhD in Electrical Engineering with the exception of "one year on campus".

He holds five International patents in the area of computer memories and LSI (Large Scale Integration).

In 1987 he retired from IBM as a senior engineer and in the same year started his accounting and tax service, PSS, Inc. In 1992 passed a two-day IRS examination and earned an EA (Enrolled Agent) title. Bela did the Club's taxes for years!

In 1993, he was honored by promotion to the rank of Colonel in the Hungarian Air Force. In 2004, he published a stirring account of his persecution by Russia in his book "Youth Lost in Red Hell" (see <https://www.amazon.com/Youth-Lost-Hell-Bela-Gogos/dp/1571973729>)

His soaring achievements understandably span many years, and include the FAI C badge in 1943, the FAI Silver Badge #4439 earned in 1982, the FAI Gold badge #1729 earned 1991, the FAI Diamond badge #806 (International #5676) earned in 1995, and the Symons One Lennie Pin also earned in 1995. He flew an ASW-20 with Skyline until his retirement from flying. (Editor's Note: I was fortunate to purchase, with two other Skyline members, Bela's glider.)

Bela endowed a special scholarship fund with \$50,000 of his own money, administered through the Collegiate Soaring Association, to help young

people share in the sport that was such a big part of his life.

His total flying time includes powered aircraft approx. 2000 hrs. and sailplanes 1800 hrs.

Bela slipped the surly bonds of earth in 2007.



SUMMARY OF BOARD ACTIVITIES

Keith Hilton, Secretary

Your Board of Directors continues to stay busy ensuring the Club runs smoothly. Since my last update in July, the Board met via ZOOM video conference in August, September, and November. The Board reviews reports of significant issues from the Treasurer, Membership Officer, Chief Instructor, Chief Tow Pilot, Chief Duty Officer, Chief of Tow Plane Maintenance, Chief of Glider Maintenance, Warren County Airport Advisory Commission meetings, Community Relations, Ground Tow Vehicles, and Tow Rope Status.

The Board of Directors manages the Club in a very conservative fashion. The Club continues to maintain a bank account averaging between \$110,000 and \$120,000. This balance varies depending on large expenditures for such things as insurance, hangar rental, tow plane annuals, and major glider repairs. Our Treasurer Ralph Vawter also noted that the Club is in very good financial condition and asked that the Board consider lowering the tow fees and glider rental fees. The consensus of the Board was to wait until the end of the season to re-evaluate the fees.

Board President Stephanie Zilora asked if we should invest in CDs with a higher interest rate than our checking account. Director Carlos Troncoso noted that the rate for CDs is around 4.5% and asked what rate we get on our money at Truist Bank. No action was taken to purchase CDs.

Ralph has been working with Quick Book and accounting experts to “clean up” the books. He recently identified Club “Bad Debts” in Fixed Expenses from members that are long gone. It was nearly impossible to track these individuals down. Additionally, Vawter noted that he cleaned up “Accounts Receivable” by removing 86 accounts in Quick Books of Club members that are long gone. The positive amount in their accounts is held in the historical records and could be paid back if individuals asked for it back. Ralph also noted that he is searching for a CPA to do this year’s taxes.

Membership Officer Tim Moran noted that the Club membership hit its highest in September with 112 members. It dropped by one in November. He also noted that the student waitlist remains in the mid-thirties.

At the November meeting, Chief Instructor John Noss noted that we currently have 34 student members. Of those, 3 had not flown yet, and another 7 had not flown this calendar year, so consider those 7 inactive students. Of the remaining 24, 18 had flown in the last 3 months, 12 of those have flown in the last month. John also noted that we are not accepting new students while down to one two-seat glider.

John also noted that the instructor cadre is considering adding use of “GPS tools” to the syllabus. He did note that it will NOT be a requirement for student solo. To support that training, the Board approved the purchase of RAM mount extensions and phone holders. The mount extensions and phone holders have been purchased and are in the DO bag for member use.

The Board continued lengthy discussions on Club members not “pulling their weight” in some duty crew position such as ADO, DO, tow pilot, or instructor as their contribution to the Club. Additionally, the Board discussed if there should be consequences for someone not completing DO or ADO training. It also considered if qualification in a duty position should be a

requirement of Probationary or Full membership. Rather than making another rule, the Board decided to monitor the situation for a while and determine if formal action should be taken.

The Board had a lengthy discussion on how a new Assistant Duty Officers meets qualification requirements. It was noted that it would be a good idea to have an ADO “shadow” a competent ADO prior to being assisted to a Duty crew position.

Director Erik van Weezendonk provided updates from recent Warren County Airport Advisory Commission meetings. He noted that the Commission was updating the KFRR “Rules and Regulations” but didn’t anticipate significant changes to our Club operations. The new rules applied primarily to drones and FBO management.

Erik also noted that the KFRR Safety Seminar was a hit. Ron Wagner gave a Skyline Soaring instructor perspective and Andrew Neilson gave a tow pilot’s perspective. He noted that the next Seminar will be more of an aviation career day.

Erik noted that the County had received Federal/State funds to resurface the runway and make other improvement to the airport. It is anticipated that the runway will be closed for up to six weeks. The Board is considering moving to Luray or possibly Burner’s during the resurfacing to inhibit distribution to Club operations. On a positive note, the airport has offered to place a “porta potty” at the runway 10 approach end of the airfield.

Erik also noted that there was an attempted airplane theft at River Bend Airport. He suggested that everyone be vigilant around the airport for suspicious activity.

Matt Vosika keeps the Board informed on our relations with the local Front Royal community. Matt recently noted that the FBO would be placing a sign by the fuel pumps asking

pilots not to park there after refueling. Planes parking in front of the fuel pumps and blocking other aircraft from using the pumps.

Chief of Tow Plane Maintenance Andrew Neilson noted that there is an Argentina AD on inspection of the Pawnee wing spars. He has been in contact with our A&P, Nick Bosquete, about it. Since our Pawnee has never been used for crop dusting, they don’t believe there is an issue. Andrew also let the Board know that he is scheduling the Husky in for the annual inspection in February and the Pawnee in for annual inspection in March.

The Board briefly discussed the brake issues with the Pawnee. It had been noted on several days that oil had to be added to the brake cylinders. Our Nick Bosquete has been investigating. There is no easy fix since parts are not available. It would require a complete system rebuild. This is something that the tow pilots need to keep an eye on.

Chief of Glider Maintenance Keith Hilton noted the major maintenance that has been completed on the glider fleet. N341KS’ transponder was repaired, reinstalled, and certified. The new interface cable for N321K’s rear NAV variometer has been received from Cumulus Soaring. The cable will be replaced during the Winter break.

The Board approved purchasing new seat cushions for N341KS to match the new ones for N321K and both ASK-21 trailers have had minor repairs completed and they have been washed.

John Noss noted that Andrew Neilson fabricated ballast plates for FW. He also noted that the cockpit cards have been updated to reflect the ballast requirements. It was noted that 9Y will require moving some coax cable and tubing to install ballast plates.

Tow Rope Meister Joel Hough noted that members are taking great care of ropes. Ropes are being retired from normal wear and tear and sun exposure. New rope from ropeandcord.com is

1400 pounds with fewer thicker fibers than Cumulus Soaring's 1230 pound rope. These new ropes are lasting 20% longer from ADO's care and thicker fibers. As a bonus being stronger with thicker fibers keeps the rope straighter with less of a tendency to knot.

Because of his tremendous contribution to the Club as a Tow Pilot, the Board voted to bestow Richard Good Service membership. That will allow Richard to tow when he is in town, especially during the week of training. From the SSC By-Laws: "A Service member performs special critical service for the Club, e.g. tow pilot, instructor, mechanic with an airframe or powerplant rating, or avionics repair license, and may only use Club equipment in connection with the performance of that service." Richard joins Mike Ash as our two Service members.

The Board discussed sending out a Club "Climate Survey" to the members to get a feel of the direction the members want the Club to take. Director Carlos Troncoso has drafted questions for the survey for the Board to review. You should see that survey in the very near future.

In conjunction with the Climate Survey, Ralph Vawter and Marcelo Morichi asked the Board if the club ever had any long-term goals or guidelines? They commented that the Club is mostly reactionary, takes things as they come up, and go from there. Marcelo led the discussion with a detailed presentation. Vawter also provided his views and support of conducting a Strategic Planning meeting. Marcelo will be heading a Strategic Planning meeting over the winter. He has reached out to a variety of general members, Instructors, Tow Pilots, Students, etc. to participate in this meeting to build a Strategic Plan for the Club.

Director Rob Jacobson made repairs to the old radio base station. It was noted that we were only allowed to broadcast on 123.3 not the CTAF/UNICOM 123.0 frequency. Ralph Vawter

noted that the Club's radio license for the old base station was going to expire and noted that we will require a new license. When Ralph attempted to renew the license, he learned that it had to be the same individual that acquired the original license. Ralph is pursuing a new Club radio operating license.

With Ron Wagner's departure, the Board approved Chris Wuerker as the new head of the Club's Safety Committee.

The Board had an extensive discussion concerning the new FAR 61 § 61.57 Recent flight experience: Pilot in command determination and how that will affect our instructor cadre. In summary: "....any flight instructor must have three takeoffs and three landings as the sole manipulator of the controls in category and class within the last 90 days to be current, and in thus give flight instruction. A CFI providing dual instruction to student or pilot may not count any landing during which the student or pilot, but not the CFI, is the sole manipulator of the controls."

Brian Clark asked to address the Board concerning this change to the FAR. He asked why instructors are required to pay for currency flights when no one else must pay to volunteer for their assigned duty position. He asked if instructors could fill their duty requirements as DO or ADO instead. Stephanie noted – yes. Brian recommended that the Club pay at least half the cost of the instructor qualification flights. It was noted that instructors would have to pay ~\$450/year to maintain their qualifications. It was noted that it is historical precedent in the club for instructors to pay for their own currency flights. The Board is continuing to monitor the situation to evaluate options.

The Board also had extensive discussions concerning Club member financial responsibility for recent damage to Club equipment.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 2 January 2025 via Zoom video conference.



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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Carlos Troncoso

Jim Perlmutter

Peter Ross

Erik van Weezendonk

Stephanie Zilora

Keith Hilton - Secretary

Ralph Vawter – Treasurer

Marcelo Morichi – Asst.

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Chris Wuerker - 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
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Mike Ash - Duty Roster Chief

Piet Barber - Webmaster

Brian Clark - Assistant
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Jim Kellett - Newsletter
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Meister

Rob Jacobsen – Discus
Meister

Steve Paris – Tow Vehicle
Meister

Andrew Neilson – Towplane
Meister

Keith Hilton – ASK-21 Meister

Matt Vosika – Organizations
Liaison Officer