

SKYLINES



Newsletter of the Skyline Soaring Club for May, 2025

KUDOS

Ralph Vawter

Congratulations to Anand Mohan on being awarded the SSA Bronze Badge #2578. Congratulations to Cindy Lawyer for volunteering to be the Merchandising Meister for the club.



NATIONAL CONTEST IS LOCAL!

Ralph Vawter

The 2025 1-26 Championships will be held in Virginia this year. The Merlin Soaring Association in Amelia County will host the event running from May 7 through the 14th. This will be a great opportunity to see a national soaring event, mark it on your calendar. Skyline member Jim Garrison is acting as a contact person for the event.



SEMINOLE LAKE GLIDERPORT

Ron Wagner

Airplane pilots who seek an add-on glider rating can progress much more quickly than the Skyline Soaring Club's (SSC) training opportunities at Front Royal permit. The primary reason for that is that our short runway and the taxiway arrangement mean you will spend more time walking than you do flying, which means that earning your add-on could require an entire season and dozens of drives to Front Royal.

A professional soaring flight school, however, allows you to earn your add-on in less than a week. But you need to select a school that will give you training that is relevant to flying with the SSC at Front Royal. If you choose a school that flies Schweizer SGS 2-33 gliders from wide grass fields, you will likely pick up lazy, sloppy

habits and need many weeks at KFRR learning to fly the ASK-21 in our more demanding environment.

Seminole-Lake Gliderport near Orlando, Florida also has a wide, grass runway, but it won't allow you to become sloppy because they fly an aggressive schedule, which demands that you learn to land with precision equal to what you need at Front Royal.

Seminole-Lake students must make spot landings to stop right where the tow plane is already waiting, engine idling. They'll hook you up within a minute after you've stopped and launch you immediately. You can make four 3000-foot training flights per hour and seven to eight pattern tows per hour.

How Fast Can They Get It Done?

They are closed on Mondays and so the norm is for you to fly down there Monday, train Tuesday through Friday, and take your practical test on Saturday. You can spend the night on the field in a clean—but very basic—room for far less than a hotel. That's what I booked.

I flew their Blanik L23, which is close enough to the ASK-21 that I transitioned to KFRR with two local flights.

For a commercial add-on, the plan is to get you soloed, fly 20 solo flights (15 pattern tows and five to 3,000 feet), then get the three-ride practical test endorsement. For a private add-on, you legally need only ten solo flights, but I recommend more.

Those two scenarios are routine for them, and you'll leave well-prepared for landing at Front Royal because you will have become an expert at spot landings and precision stops right between the gazebo and the idling tow plane.

I got rained out on two of my four scheduled days. But they are dedicated professionals, and we got it done with just two training days. To be ready for my practical test Saturday, I needed 24 flights on Friday, and they got it done for me. If you have good weather all four days, it will be easy.

What About the Cost?

Each flight down there will cost you more than at Front Royal. But you will need fewer of them. When counting the costs at Front Royal, be sure to factor in the miles and fuel you'll burn driving to and from KFRR.

More importantly, however, even if it cost you a bit more, what is the value of enjoying a whole season as a rated glider pilot compared to spending most of your days in your first season waiting on the ramp watching others fly?

I suggest that you fly a couple of Saturdays with the club to get used to our operation and to the ASK-21 and see how you feel about the opportunities to log the flights you need to earn your add-on rating. Maybe you will prefer a more casual curriculum.

After getting to know us, if you decide you'd prefer to start soaring—rather than spend a whole season as a student, mostly waiting to fly again—then check out Seminole-Lake Gliderport.



THE FUZZ DROPS IN

Jim Perlmutter



A police helicopter drops in . . . and sits there with the rotors going! Good thing we all had our safety review about helicopter downwash!!



MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Ralph Vawter

I would like to give you a little heads up on the financial state of the club as of the end of April. As you know, we have two main sources of revenue, dues and revenue from operations (tow fees and glider rental). To date, the dues have been collected and are on track. We have had a couple of items that have hindered our revenue from operations. First, as you know, one of our flagship ASKs has been out of service. Secondly, the weather has vexed several days of operations.

The club has experienced two significant expenses so far this year. First, the hull insurance on our gliders has increased by \$9000 over the previous year. It is a pretty straightforward increase (27%) across the board, not particularly tied to one glider. The club did have one claim in the previous year, our insurer was acquired by another entity, and insurance costs in general are on the rise. As mentioned previously, 341KS is in the shop and will incur another significant insurance claim for this year.

The second major expense to the club was the annual inspection on the Pawnee tow plane. In response to some safety concerns, our towplane meister had additional checks and repairs done on the Pawnee to ensure that it is a safe plane to fly and will be available as a tow plane for operations. We laud him for his proactiveness. This years charge for the annual inspection was almost \$25,000, significantly above the \$6800 average for the previous four years.

A third expense that the club has not been charged for is the installation of the canopy on 341KS. This is being done at the same time as the current repairs, but the expense will be borne by the club at the direction of the Board of Directors. It is estimated that this expense will be about \$8000.

So, what do we do about this situation? We could do nothing out of our normal activities, fly when it is convenient and see how things wash out at the end of the year. If the club is in the red at the end of the year, the Board may raise the dues or the tow and glider rental fees, or both. Or, we could step up our flying activities this year and get something for our money. That sounds to me like a better option. Let's pick up our participation in the club. Get more flights, step up your skill level and utilize those beautiful Discus (Discii?), go for some of those SSA badges (ABC, Silver, Gold). Fly the PW.

It is early in the year. The best weather is yet to come. 341KS will be out of the shop soon and available for training. Make plans to get to the airport often, and head off any financial problems. See you out there.



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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