

Skylines

Skyline Soaring Club
Front Royal, Virginia
April 2026



The President's Corner

Happy spring, Skyline Soaring members! It was great to see so many of you at the Annual/Safety Meeting—thank you for your attendance, and I promise more donuts and coffee next year. If you haven't watched the meeting yet, remember that it is a prerequisite before flying, so take a look on our (new and improved!) website for the link, and let Piet and Ron know when you've finished viewing it. I'd also encourage everyone to review the operations manual as part of prepping for flying this spring. Finally, as we are all scraping the rust off after winter, remember that while you are required (as per the ops manual) to fly with an instructor before flying a club glider if you haven't flown in a while, you are also encouraged to fly with an instructor as often or as many times as you need, both at the beginning and throughout the season. Fly safely, fly often, and have fun!

Notes from the Board

The result of the 2026 Skyline Board of Directors election resulted in the following, slightly changed, makeup of the Board:

Carlos Troncoso (reelected)
Erik van Weezendonk

Robert Jacobsen
Stephanie Zilora
Todd Morris
Kevin Barrett (newly elected)

Thanks to the outgoing Board member, Jim Perlmutter, for his six years of Board service!

At its March 7 Board meeting, Skyline Soaring Club welcomed newly elected Board members and approved the prior meeting minutes while reviewing the club's financial, membership, operations, and maintenance status. The Board noted that finances are generally in line with last year, though net operating income is lower because of the timing of the Pawnee invoice, and there are a few delinquent dues cases still being addressed. Operationally, the club discussed the need to prepare for anticipated runway closures in 2027, ongoing towplane and glider maintenance items, and the possible replacement or upgrade of equipment such as the club's oxygen system and contest-required FLARM capability for certain aircraft.

Several important action items and policy discussions came out of the meeting. The Board agreed that ADO training should become a prerequisite for full membership, with a proposed ops manual change to be drafted, and also discussed adding website flags to help the Board track

ADO and DO qualification milestones. The club continues to work through several open issues, including recruiting volunteers for key roles such as Trailer Meister. Leadership and volunteer development were also positive themes, with new volunteers stepping up for newsletter editing, social coordination, and glider maintenance support.

Looking ahead, the Board approved support for members taking club gliders to upcoming events, discussed ways to strengthen member participation and orientation for new members, and decided to review volunteer compliance matters regularly at future meetings. The Board also emphasized the need for a club calendar of important dates and milestones so recurring responsibilities do not get overlooked. The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 9.

Safety

If you are new to the Skyline Soaring Club, it is likely that you will want to participate in as much activity as possible. For example, you will help pushing gliders onto the runway, getting gliders in and out of the hangars, installing batteries, wiping bugs off the glider at the end of the day and other such trivial tasks. As much as you may want to contribute, DON'T! Don't get me wrong, it's not my intention to keep you from helping. But before doing anything, find an instructor and ask how it should be done. The simplest things can cause damage if done wrong. For example, the simple task of opening or closing a canopy done wrong can result in a crack that requires replacement, and the typical cost of the damage will be on the order of \$12,000. A canopy can be scratched by wiping it clean incorrectly. Water should not be used to clean the canopy, there is a special canopy cleaner. Installing a battery is a simple task, but there is a trick to doing it correctly. Do it wrong and the battery can break loose in flight. Even pushing a glider out to the runway must be done correctly to prevent damage. My message is, please do help, but before doing any task, no matter how simple it may seem, ask how to do it correctly. *George Hazelrigg*

Instructor Talk

As a new soaring season begins, we welcome several new members many of whom are students eager to

get into the air. But learning to soar in an engineless aircraft involves much more than being in the pilot's seat at 3,000 feet above the ground. I like to think of soaring as a team sport in which one participates alone. In order that you can get that training flight, you must have a team consisting at least of a duty officer (DO), an assistant duty officer (ADO), a tow pilot, an instructor and another three persons to help push you onto the runway in the glider. Beyond these folks, there are others who manage our club and perform financial, equipment maintenance, and "legal" (aircraft registrations, required inspections, taxes, etc.) duties. It takes a team to get you off the ground and, to enable others to fly, you need to help with these duties as well. You come to the field eager to fly, but you may not get off the ground until later in the day. That doesn't mean that you have to sit around waiting to learn.

Stick and rudder skills are just a small part of what you will have to learn to become a rated pilot. You need to know how to prepare a glider for flight: how to install the batteries, how to get the glider out of the hangar without damaging it, how to perform a preflight inspection, how to tow the glider around on the ground, how to push the glider, and a myriad of other things that don't involve your actual flight. While not in the air, you need to be at the field to learn these things. A few times every year, a glider fails to return to the field and we need to do a "retrieve." Every retrieve is different, posing its own challenges. If you are there, you learn. If you aren't there, you miss the opportunity.

My point is that learning to soar is much more than an occasional trip to the airport where you arrive, jump in the glider for your lesson and leave. Learning to soar involves everything that goes on during the day, from getting the gliders out of the hangar to putting them back at the end of the day. And you need to learn it all. Furthermore, for your lessons to be effective there cannot be too much time between them. So, you need to plan for at least three days per month at the field, and you need to be there the full day. You'll also find that many of us don't leave as soon as the equipment is in the hangar. We often get together for dinner in town where we discuss the day's activities and other "stuff." This too can be a learning environment. It may seem like I'm asking a lot here, but you will find that full participation leads to quicker and more effective learning and, surprisingly, more fun in the

long term. *George Hazelrigg*

The ASK 21 flight manuals specifically note that, “very tall pilots may fly without the back rest.” I wanted to share this information so that you are not surprised when the back rest is coming out and are aware of the flight manual section that permits it. *Rufus Decker*

Tow Pilots’ Squawk

Mathematically speaking, the tow pilot will always get at least as many ($\geq$) takeoffs and landings as any glider pilot at the field (unless there are multiple tow pilots and only a few glider pilots). Tow piloting often goes beyond the realm of “fun” and into a state of near exhaustion. So, show some pity for your tow pilot. Offer gifts: some water or food. If you are going out to get lunch, ask the tow pilot if you can procure some culinary delight for him/her (we would welcome female tow pilots at Skyline Soaring Club). A well fed and hydrated tow pilot is a happy tow pilot. Please keep that in mind as we get into the hot summer days.

The Students’ Desk

Typically, when a new student starts flying lessons, they think that they will be immersed in the excitement of flight. But they, especially aspiring glider pilots, will soon learn that the flying part is the least of becoming a rated pilot. It is likely that you will spend more time on the ground learning about such things as the federal regulations, airspace, aircraft dynamics and control, navigation, and weather. Aspiring glider pilots also need to learn about ground handling, glider launch and retrieval, preflight inspection, glider assembly and disassembly, etc. It likely will be that over 90 percent of the time you will spend working on your rating will be on the ground, and much of that time will be at the airport. There are several ways you can take advantage of your time at the airport. You can participate in getting the gliders out of the hangars, ground handling activities, morning preflight inspections, becoming qualified for and participating as an ADO (assistant duty officer), and you can ask an instructor for ground instruction in a specific area such as airspace or weather. A key element of flight instruction is to learn coordination of the controls. This can actually be learned on the

ground as well. So, take advantage of the time you spend on the ground at the airport. It’s all part of the process.

Kudos

The Club recognized the exceptional contributions made by Keith Hilton with a goodbye party at Ned Devine’s in Herdon on February 7. Thanks to everyone who attended, and special thanks to Keith for his devotion to the Club over the past several years.

The following persons were recognized for significant achievements during the annual meeting:

- ★ Jonathan Faux, A Badge
- ★ Anatol Dziadek, A Badge
- ★ Paul Brower, A Badge and PPL-G
- ★ Hugh McElrath, Silver/Gold Endurance
- ★ Cliff Storey, PPL-G
- ★ Nick Meeder, PPL-G
- ★ Robb Hohmann, CPL-G and CFI-G

Additional recognition went to:

- ★ Nick Meeder, Most flights (61)
- ★ Ron Wagner, Most instruction flights (152)
- ★ Robb Hohmann, Most tows (279)
- ★ John Noss, Longest duration (5.5 hrs)
- ★ Piet Barber, Longest distance (232 nm)
- ★ Piet Barber, Highest altitude (15,997 msl)
- ★ Piet Barber, Most OLC points (3231)

Meet Our Members



Juan Carlos Paez Zamora: I’m a civil engineer and work for a multilateral development bank. I have been living in the USA for almost 13 years after having lived in Ecuador (my home country), Germany (where I did my master’s degree), Panama, Bolivia, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. Since very young, I have been doing air modeling and have participated in several national and international pattern contests. Lately, I have been engaged in flying ultralights with some of my friends back in Ecuador. I have taken off and flown them several times but only landed once. Never had a license for that as usually I do not have the time to certify myself while I’m visiting my relatives. I’d like to be a certified glider pilot and to be able to take my children to fly with me.



Richard Hiegel: I started flying hang gliders in 1976 and continued until 2023 attaining over 2000 hours in multiple different glider models and designs. During that time I was a hang gliding instructor with the hang gliding shop “Sport Flight” based out of Gaithersburg, Maryland, while also serving as a Board member of the Capital Hang Gliding Association. I made the decision to pursue sailplanes in 2023 and joined Mid Atlantic Soaring Association. In 2025 I started flying with Seminole Glider Park outside of Orlando, Florida. I was able to solo in May of 2025 and attain my glider license in December of the same year. My wife and I decided to purchase a property outside of Orange, Virginia, which has brought me to the Skyline Soaring Club.

SSEF Awardees

The following members are recent Skyline Soaring Educational Foundation awardees.



Maria (Masha) Nizheberskaya: I’m really passionate about aviation and search-and-rescue missions. I serve as a Cadet Senior Master Sergeant in Civil Air Patrol and have completed several Emergency Services qualifications. I also have experience co-piloting small Cessna aircraft through Civil Air Patrol and the EAA Young Eagles program. In the future, I plan to develop my flight skills in a glider and learn as much as I can about what really happens on the flight line, with the goal of earning my glider license and possibly someday taking up students, maybe even Civil Air Patrol cadets, for their first glider flight.



Jose Aviles Rosa: I am a ninth-grade student at Sherando High School. I currently serve as a Chief Master Sergeant in the Civil Air Patrol’s Winchester Composite Squadron. My interest in aviation grew out of my passion for engineering, particularly after discovering how fascinating aircraft mechanics are. As my curiosity grew, I began reading books about aviation and spending time on flight simulators. At the age of 11, I had the incredible opportunity to fly a Cessna 172 through the nonprofit organization STEM Flights. After that

experience, the first words I said to my parents were, “This changed my life.” Since then, my passion for aviation has only grown stronger. I aspire to become a powered aircraft pilot and an aerospace engineer so that I can both fly and help design the aircraft of the future.

Meet Sebastian Noessner



Interview by Marcelo Morichi

Q: *When did you join SSC? How did you learn about the club?*

A: I joined the club in August 2024. I looked for a soaring club close to Washington on the SSA website.

Q: *How long have you been a glider pilot? Where did you learn to fly gliders?*

A: I started my soaring training in 1993 at Lechfeld, 50 miles west of Munich, an active Luftwaffe Air Base, where the soaring club is a “subtenant.”

Q: *What ratings do you have?*

A: I fly only gliders with a rating for aero-tow and winch-launch. I’m also a rated winch operator.

Q: *When did you fly for the first time? What do you remember about that experience?*

A: In 1992 I made a holiday trip to Palatine with my family and there was an airfield close to the hotel. I went there and was immediately invited to hop into a glider. I was overwhelmed by this experience.

Q: *How long and what is your commute like to the airport (routes you take, time you leave home, any favorite places to stop along the way?)*

A: I live in McLean and usually need 80 minutes to get to the airfield. When I ride my Vespa scooter I prefer the VA-55 instead the I-66. I like to stop at the Red Truck bakery in Marshall.

Q: *Who were/are your mentors at SSC?*

A: Fortunately my German license was recognized

by the FAA, so I had only to do some flights to get to know the local procedures. Thanks to Piet Barber, Brian Clark, Rufus Decker, Uwe Jettmar and Ron Wagner.

Q: *What do you like the most about flying in the Front Royal area?*

A: The scenery with the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah River is simply spectacular.

Q: *What is your more memorable glider flight? When did it happen? Why do you remember it?*

A: In 2008 I “surfed” home on the edge of a storm front that moved toward my airfield. The final approach was quite bumpy and the far end of the runway disappeared already in the rain.

Q: *Any close calls? If so, please provide a brief description.*

A: When I was still a student I flew a K13 trainer already solo. I heard a strange sound from the back and realized that one of the two pins keeping the wings together was lying on the back seat. My instructor told me via radio to avoid any sharp movements, lose altitude and land gently. The plane made an out-landing the day before and after return to the airfield by trailer was put together in a hurry. They forgot to secure the pin. The checks before the first flight of the day were also done incompletely.

Q: *What do you do for a living (or did, if you are retired)?*

A: I’m a Catholic Priest and currently serve as the Chaplain for the German-speaking faithful in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Q: *Where did you grow up?*

A: Mering, a little town close to Augsburg was the place I grew up.

Q: *What do you like the most about SSC?*

A: The welcoming attitude for new glider pilots.

Q: *What’s on your gliding bucket list?*

A: Maybe someday I’ll get my silver badge.

Q: *What might other members not know about you? (i.e., you are fluent in another language, lived overseas, a hobby, etc.)*

A: Members that only show up at the airfield on Sundays won’t know me at all, because I fly only on Saturdays, due to my vocation.

Q: *What would you tell a student pilot who struggles to see the light at the end of the tunnel?*

A: At the beginning of my training I had to struggle a lot with nausea. But the more I flew by

myself and the less with the instructor, the problem disappeared.

Miscellaneous Chatter

We practice low-altitude release failures a lot! They’re a good exercise in polishing ADM (Aeronautical Decision Making) and dealing with the unexpected. Now, having said that, in my 60+years of flying gliders, I have NEVER witnessed an unintentional low-altitude release failure. Go figure. *Jim Kellett*

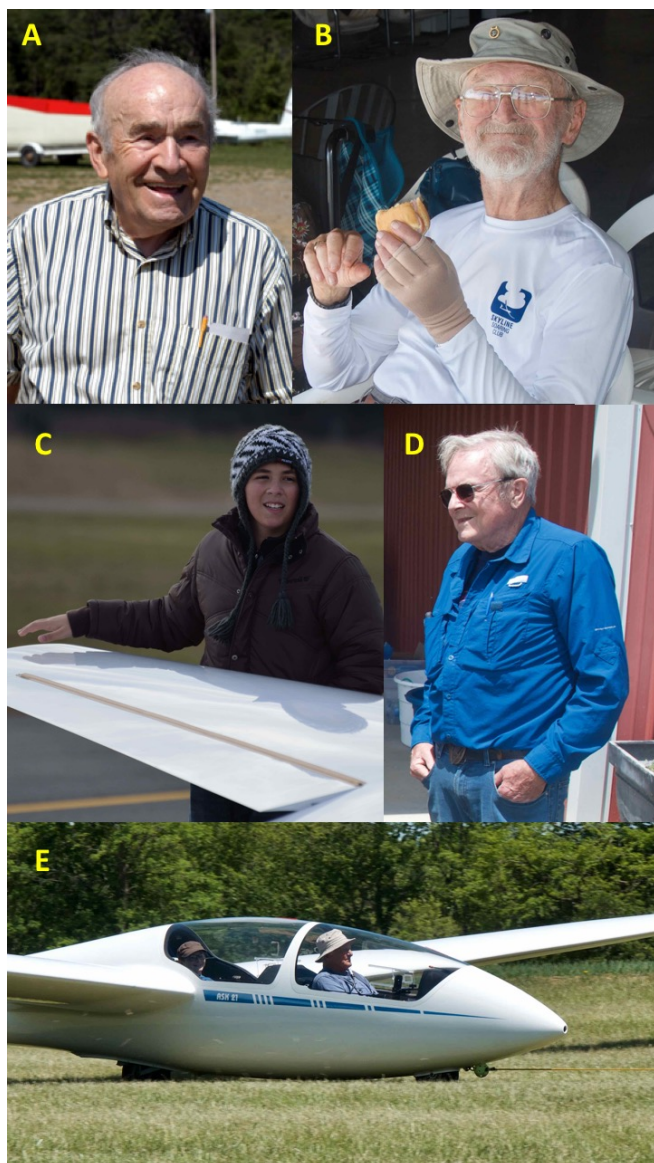
Know the condition and legal status of the aircraft you fly. You can access the condition and dates of the next required inspections from the new Skyline Soaring website. Log into the website, www.skylinesoaring.org, and go to the Equipment tab. From there, you can access a list of maintenance issues and their resolution, the maintenance log and maintenance deadlines. Students especially should look at this website to determine that, in addition to a careful preflight inspection, the aircraft that they are about to fly are airworthy and that all required inspections have been have been completed. *George Hazelrigg*

The Club maintains two parachutes for member use. If you intend to use a parachute, be sure to get instruction in its care and use. The National 360 parachute (the blue parachute) has a manual in the tote bag. Read it. Then replace it in the bag being careful not to damage it. Be sure you don’t lose it. The blue parachute is limited to 188 pounds gross weight (including the parachute, which weighs about 11 pounds), 177 pounds maximum for the pilot (including clothing). The gross weight limit assures that you will descend at an acceptable speed. You also must know how to inspect the parachutes prior to their use, how to put them on and how to stow them after their use. Parachutes must be repacked every 180 days, and you should know how to check whether this requirement is met. Never allow the parachute to get wet. If you do get it wet, it must be dried and repacked as soon as possible. Take good care of these parachutes. New ones cost well over \$3,000. *George Hazelrigg*

The Photo Gallery

Since I’m just sitting here waiting for photos to come flooding across my desk, I’ve decided to dig

into my collection and put up a few on my own as a challenge: guess the names of these SSC members. The answers and kudos to the winner(s) will be in the next edition. [Editor]



Prepping for Masha's first glider flight with instructor Shane Neitzey.



QQ in wave over Butchers Knob WV, looking south, at 11,500 feet, Nov. 23, 2025. Peter Glause is in the front seat.

Operations

- Note that gliders use right-hand traffic in order to remain unconflicted with airplane traffic, which uses left-hand traffic. All gliders flying with the Skyline Soaring Club have radios and announce takeoffs and landings on 123.00. Expect that gliders will be using runway 28 unless winds dictate the use of runway 10. Also, gliders are approved for use of the grass area to the north of the runway for landing.

- Be aware that skydiving operations may be conducted concurrent with SSC operations depending on the weather. Operations are announced on 123.00 beginning about five minutes prior to jump time and at *jumpers away*. Please avoid the area directly over the airport and to a radius of one mile until all jumpers are clearly in sight. Jumpers typically land in the grass areas directly adjacent to the taxiway on both north and south sides. Gliders can safely fly a normal approach to runway 28 while jumpers are in the air, but should stay north of the tree line on downwind leg. Jumpers will strive to remain clear of the grass area where gliders land.

Upcoming Events

- The Burners will host an “*away-day*” on May 9. Operations on that day will be conducted at Burner field (VG55) in Woodstock, 14.4 nm west of KFRR. Burner field is a private airport with a 3,100 foot grass runway that is not exactly level or straight. It provides training for off-field landings. This event includes ferry flights from and back to KFRR and a social gathering to include pilots, students and families. A great chance to meet fellow members and get some great training in off-field operations.



Directions to VG55: On I-81 south, take Exit 283 and turn right at the stop light onto Route 42 south (Senedo Road). Go 1.5 miles to Coffmantown Road (at the bottom of a hill immediately after crossing Narrow Passage Creek). Turn right onto Coffmantown Road, go 0.3 miles and the airport road (gravel) is on the right. As you drive on the gravel road, please stay on the gravel (do not go on the grass) and do not exceed 15 mph. Cars should continue past the hangar and park in the open area to the north of the hangar. Glider trailers should use the wide grass area next to the runway where the road jogs to the left. Gliders can be assembled in this area. See the photo above.

- A Wings & Wheels event will be held at KFRR during May 9. The event will feature aircraft, classic cars, an all-you-can-eat breakfast and

skydive demonstrations.

- The Great Pumpkin Drop, anticipated during October, will feature a pancake breakfast and a pumpkin drop from airplanes.
- The April SSC Board meeting will be on the 9th. Members are invited to attend via Zoom.

For Sale

This section is to allow SSC members to post items (preferably, but not limited to, aircraft-related stuff) that are offered for sale or as freebies.

Rolladen-Schneider LS1-f, N6108J, 1974, based at Warren County Front Royal airport (KFRR). Contest number 6E. 2863 hours TT, June annual (will re-inspect before sale). Borgelt and Winter varios, Dittel VHF radio. 1995 Anschau KOMET trailer. Trailer and glider in good condition. Offered to SSC members at \$18,000. For information, call: Evan Dosik (703-338-4688) or Tim Moran (202-247-8820).



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