

Skylines

Skyline Soaring Club
Front Royal, Virginia
October 2026



The President's Corner

I was expecting to be writing this from Petersburg, WV, during runway repaving at KFRR, but as you have almost assuredly heard, the repaving was pushed to the spring. As we know more, the Board will continue to communicate plans out to the club. In the meantime, I'd like to thank all of the volunteers who helped move everything out to W99, including Uwe, Shane, Chris C., John, Larry, George, Mike, Andrew, and especially Rob for organizing it all. Additional thanks (in advance!) to Erik for organizing the move back and all of the volunteers who will help him! At the very least, it has been a useful exercise, and we'll be better prepared for the spring. Looking forward to closing out the season at KFRR over the next couple of months—see you at the airport!

Website Development

The following is from Piet Barber.

I have finished uploading and organizing all of the club newsletters since 1991. They used to be an unorganized hodgepodge of PDFs and some

ugly, broken HTML. Now we have a consistent presentation for all of the club's history. Newsletter editors have occasionally questioned the continued value of the newsletter. You might be familiar with the similar scenario: the local newspaper shuts down because, "Who wants to read a newspaper when the news is just beamed to my iPhone every day?" Once that happens, there's no local news and the community isn't served very well.

Now that I've gone through all the archives, I realize the monthly newsletter does indeed have value that might not immediately be obvious. Future generations can only understand that these newsletters are a message to them about how things are right now. They'll see similarities. Maybe they'll be horrified that we managed to muddle along without the really cool technology they started using that we can't even imagine now.

Along those lines, I'd like to point out some of the technology we have today that reading old newsletters reminds me of how it was, and it wasn't much better back then. In the February 1993 issue, the club proudly announced the new technology we would use to figure out if operations were "go" or if they were canceled. Back then,

we didn't have a fancy internet or a fancy website to show our content. We had a phone tree. If breaking news required the whole membership to know something right away, a member would have to start calling people on the phone. And every glider pilot, when they received that phone call, would want to talk for 30 minutes. It could take days to call all of the members. So we divided the work into a "phone tree." Somebody would start the process, calling three or four members. Those three or four members would have to relay the same message to another three or four members. It required a lot of coordination. This was definitely not a great way to get that information out. The new technology announced with such pride was an answering machine. The idea was that this answering machine would sit at the house of a trusted member who had a dedicated phone line. This phone line sat at Joe Parrish's house. It wasn't connected to a telephone, it was connected to an answering machine. The protocol was: if you called it, you'd listen to the message. That message might be "Don't drive all the way out to New Market! The towplane is broken!" On this subject, things were definitely not better.

The December 1996 issue had our treasurer (the most attractive treasurer in club history, by the way) send a desperate request to the membership. We had a serious problem. Back then we didn't have a fancy computerized program to track all of the flights. We recorded the day's flights on a ratty looking piece of paper stained with crayon smears and coffee stains. All of the launches, landings, and tow heights were recorded. The duty officer had to do arithmetic to calculate how much members owed the club for their flights. At the end of the day, members would bring their checkbooks and write a check. How primitive! The duty officer could collect cash or checks. No IOUs were permitted! At the end of the day, the duty officer had to send the envelope of the day's earnings to the treasurer. The treasurer would later decipher the logsheets, which often resembled a psychotic's hypergraphia rantings on a cocktail napkin. The request in the December 1997 issue requested help for one day's operations that got "lost in the mail." Apparently, the duty officer put cash in the envelope. Of course, there's a really good reason why you shouldn't send cash in the mail. It wasn't the loss of the cash that was the problem, it was the loss of the paperwork. We don't

know who flew, what flights got made, how many hours the tow plane flew. All that information was lost forever! On this subject, things were definitely not better.

The May 1998 issue lamented that cracks were emanating from the side window of our ASK-21's canopy, and it would soon need to be replaced. The replacement for the canopy would cost a whopping \$3700 with labor! (that's a real discount compared to what we paid for the last canopy replacement). It turns out the canopies have always been delicate, and this was no different in the 1990s.

Some things never change. Except the price to replace the canopy, which seems much more expensive now.

Instructor Talk

Food For Thought—Spoilers, Patterns, and Aim Points

John Noss, Chief Instructor

Surprisingly, we often see comments in Student Progress Report (SPR) narratives where the student ('learner') claims they were told not to change the spoiler setting after they begin the descent from downwind abeam the aim point, until touchdown. This almost always turns out to be a communication disconnect between what an instructor actually said and what the student understood, but it is an important issue to clarify.

The Glider Flying Handbook, chapter 7, under "Normal Approach and Landing," sets out some generic guidelines on how to fly a pattern and landing. Our club ops manual, under paragraph 3.8, has some additional specifics for our location and operations. Basically, we want to be at 800 feet AGL abeam the landing point and plan a pattern for half spoilers, accounting for winds. That way, we have the option to reduce spoilers if we are low or slow, or increase spoilers if we are fast or high, allowing us to maintain a steady descent rate and glide path towards our intended aim point, even if dealing with lift, sink or wind shear. Personally, I have never even tried to fly an entire pattern and landing without adjusting spoilers. We have spoilers on gliders for a reason, and we should use them. They are as important to gliders as an engine and throttle are to powered airplanes.

Thinking back to questions from students, I find it interesting that some do not know what we mean

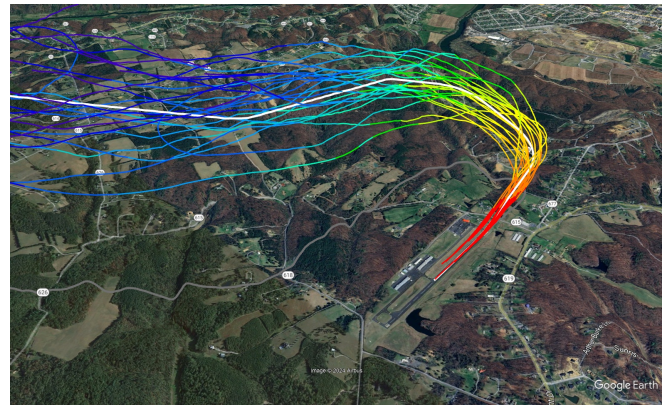
by “half spoilers,” and they think that just cracking them open part way is the sufficient first step, without even looking at the wing. In an ASK-21, I open spoilers part way and then look at their position on the wing. If they are up about as far as the spoiler cap is wide, that is a good starting point—a bit less than half of full extension, but roughly half of full effectiveness. And you have to drop the nose to maintain airspeed at that point.

In a glider under normal conditions, our “stabilized approach” really starts from the time you are abeam the aim point on downwind and crack half spoilers until you get close to the aim point and are ready to flare. When I configure to land and start down from abeam the aim point, I try to visualize a smooth intended ribbon-through-the-sky that takes me all the way down, and then I fly it. The glider goes where you point it, you just need to point it where it needs to go. The spoilers are for energy management, so use them.

There is never-ending open debate about opposing theories on how to maintain glide path on final. The classic “stick-and-rudder” theory was “pitch for airspeed, power for glide path.” In a glider that would be “pitch for airspeed, spoiler for glide path,” which is the way most of us learned it. If you think about how a fully coupled autopilot works to maintain glide slope in a modern airplane, it does the opposite—it uses flight controls to capture the glide path, and uses throttle to control airspeed. That would be “pitch for glide path, spoilers for airspeed” in gliders. Both ways are oversimplifications, both ways are partially correct, both ways are partially incorrect. Flight path control and energy management are inseparable. To repeat, the glider goes where you point it, you just need to point it where it needs to go, the spoilers are for energy management (airspeed *or* altitude), so use them.

Here is a graphic of what a nominal glider pattern looks like at KFRR to runway 28 (the white track), with an overlay of what some actually flown patterns look like in comparison (color shift every 100 feet AGL), taken from flight logs of various club members. They all get to roughly the same aim point on the runway (or grass). But they are all adjusting for winds, sink, lift, and shear, *using spoilers and pattern corrections* when required.

Now let’s talk about aim points. There is no approved single aim point for every glider pattern



here, or anywhere. If you are landing out and trying to squeeze into a 700-foot mowed pasture, your aim point will be whatever it takes to barely clear the trees or power lines or fence posts. If you are landing on a 12,000-foot abandoned bomber runway, it would be based on where you prefer to stop, or the condition of runway segments. At KFRR, you will hear many different opinions about preferred aim points. The “numbers” or the “third stripe” are not universal solutions. Your choice of aim point should factor in the available runway, the runway surface (grass or pavement), the winds, glider performance, desired margin for safety in the event of unexpected sink or wind shear on final, the desired rollout point, and how much abuse the brakes deserve. Personally, in an ASK-21 on runway 28 at KFRR, I like the top of the numbers for no wind, and an extra stripe beyond for every 5 knots of headwind component. I’m certain there are at least as many opinions as glider pilots here, that’s OK. The important part is that you deliberately pick an aim point, and then fly a consistent glide slope to it until it is time to flare.

Think about what flying a constant speed, constant glide path angle on final to your desired aim point really means. That would be a constant line between your eyeballs, a point on your canopy, and the aim point on the runway, all the way down final. If executed to perfection, your nosewheel in an ASK-21 would impact the runway about ten yards short of the aim point, and your eyeballs would never make it to the aim point. So, we have to start the flare before that. The GFH says to start the flare 5 ft above the runway. Most of us start a bit earlier. The important part is to not start too early or too late, and to smoothly get the glider down to a foot or so above the runway with the proper airspeed. How far beyond the aim

point you touch down depends on winds and your energy state (including spoiler deployment). Some think that a precision landing should be scored based on the touchdown point, I think a precision landing should be scored on ability to hold to the desired aim point with intended energy state until the flare. On our runway, depending on winds and your technique, touchdown may typically be about one stripe beyond your aimpoint.

Finally, let's talk about use of spoilers in the final landing phase. If you are an experienced glider pilot in a ship you know well, making fine adjustments to spoilers in the flare is no big deal. If you are a student working towards a first glider solo, making sudden big changes to spoilers in the flare is probably not a great idea. Personally, I like to visually check my spoilers as I cross the threshold, and if conditions look normal, get them at least half way out (but not all the way out engaging brakes in an ASK-21), and then stop messing with them until after touchdown. Until touchdown, all my attention is devoted to stabilizing the glider a foot off the runway, on centerline, wings level, and waiting for the airspeed to decay and the glider to settle onto the runway in the proper attitude. If you forgot to monitor your spoiler position and closed them before the flare, you may find yourself floating down the runway in ground effect, then get weary of that and try to fly it down onto the runway, inviting a PIO. This happens much too often! If you do find yourself in a PIO, that is one situation where you should absolutely know how to recover and make a low-altitude spoiler adjustment — climb up to shoulder height, close the spoilers, take a deep breath, then plan another touchdown, forgetting about making the midfield taxiway.

Short version after the long discussion — use the spoilers throughout the pattern, but unless you are very experienced, try not to get fancy in the flare...

Bonus task: Review the videos of normal landings at KFRR at <https://www.skylinesoaring.org/TRAINING/Syllabus/21/>

Opportunities Lost

George Hazelrigg

A few weeks ago, the forecast was for early morning rain followed by fog, clearing mid-morning. Based on this forecast, the DO sent out a message delaying duty crew arrival time to 10:00 AM. As it turned out, the forecast was reasonably accurate

although it actually cleared about an hour earlier than forecast. The result was that we started operations closer to 11:00 than 9:00, which it could have been. Not a big deal as only two students showed up for lessons, and both were able to do as many flights as they wanted. As I was towing a glider back to the staging area, I was impressed with how perfect the day was for training. Where were all the students?

Discussing the day at our apres-soaring dinner, it was noted that things were different in the pre-Covid era. We never delayed duty crew arrival time and cancelled ops altogether only if road travel was dangerous, e.g., a foot of snow. Even on a rainy day there was plenty to do. And so it was when I did my glider training. Part of the reason we never cancelled ops could be attributed to Kellett's Law, namely "*If you aren't at the airport [KFRR], you don't know what the weather is at the airport.*" The Front Royal Warren County airport lives in an area of the Shenandoah Valley between the Blue Ridge and Massanutten mountains that enjoys a microclimate. The forecast for the surrounding area can be rain, high winds, ceiling 15 feet, visibility 25 feet and Bubonic plague, and it can be CAVU, wind nil and good lift at KFRR. Trust me, I've seen this more than once. But another, perhaps more important reason was that there is always plenty of stuff that needs to be done regardless of the weather.

We spent many rainy days doing necessary things that were perhaps just a bit less exciting than cruising around in wave at 12,500 MSL — cleaning the hangars and putting stuff back where it belonged, waxing the gliders and repairing broken gear. We also spent many rainy hours holding ground school in the terminal building. A glider rating demands more than knowing how to strap into the glider and hold the controls. Students actually need to know how to assemble and disassemble a glider — something that can, believe it or not, be taught in the presence of a 15-foot ceiling. They need to learn proper care of a sailplane, proper cleaning and waxing methods, care of the batteries, how to check the brake fluid and fill the reservoir, how to use the oxygen system in a glider, proper care and use of the parachutes and their preflight inspection. These are things that are covered during the Practical Test. But, before we get to that test, we have to pass the dreaded Knowledge Test.

Back in pre-Covid days, I conducted a 5-day

ground school class during our winter hiatus. The course included one weekend day, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM with a break for lunch, per week while we went through 35 learning modules covering key items you have to know to both pass the Knowledge Test and be a safe pilot. The course ended with a practice Knowledge Test, and I signed off everyone who got a grade of 80% or more to take the test. Everyone who completed the full five days passed both tests. I ran the course for about ten years with up to 15 students attending each course. I've offered the course three times since Covid, but essentially no one signed up for it.

There is one thing that happens once or twice every year and that every new glider pilot should take part in—a retrieve. We mostly make it back to the runway to land, but not always. That's when the fun begins. Every retrieve experience is different. I've participated in at least five or six and documented a couple (see "*Of Wind, Ridge and Cow Pies*," December 2004 edition of *Skylines*, reprinted in the Miscellaneous Chatter section of this edition, and *Three Minutes of Terror and Lessons from a Difficult Retrieve* in the July 2008 edition of *Skylines*). You have to stick around until all the gliders are *not* back to go on a retrieve.

These are all opportunities lost when operations are delayed or cancelled. I would urge that we return to the days before Covid. Let's not delay arrival of the duty crew just because it's raining or foggy. Let's not cancel days except when the roads are actually hazardous. When students sign up for a lesson, they need to come to the airport, rain or shine. Let's not lose these learning opportunities.

Kudos

- ★ Thanks to Rob Jacobsen and assistants for getting contest letters on Fox-Whiskey.
- ★ Thanks to Joel Hough for replacing our worn tow ropes.
- ★ Thanks go to Allison Diaz for washing the Husky (see the photo top right). Also, we look forward to Allison joining our cadre of tow pilots as she completes her taildragger training and tow qualification process.



Meet Our Members

Meet your Fellow Member: Fritz Treyz

Interview by Marcelo Morichi

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

A: I joined around March 2025. My wife and I were taking a drive and we saw the Front Royal Airport sign. We stopped and I met Jim Perlmutter. Seeing the gliders fly is all it took for me wanting to fly again after a 37-year hiatus!

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

A: I earned my private glider rating in 1989 at Meadow Lake Airport in Peyton, Colorado, with the High Flights Soaring Club. The club operated only a SGS 2-33 and a SGS 1-26. I still remember our clubhouse, an abandoned trailer with a wood burning stove, beside a grass strip.

Q: *What ratings do you have?*

A: Single Engine Land and Private Glider

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

A: Growing up on Air Force bases with a fighter-pilot father, we talked about flying at the kitchen table. I tagged along with him to runways, hangars, and maintenance facilities. We watched takeoffs and landings.

Q: *How long and what is your commute like to the airport?*

A: I live in Fairfax, a little over an hour from Front Royal. I usually leave around 6:45 a.m. and take I-66 so I can arrive in time to help roll the gliders out of the hangar. When flying wraps up early, I sometimes take the scenic route home through Middleburg and stop at an art gallery.

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

A: Mentorship at Skyline is not limited to one

or two people. Instructors help refine my flying, while ADOs teach me essential skills such as ground handling and wing walking. Although I initially found it frustrating to fly with different instructors each weekend, I now recognize that their varied perspectives broadened my understanding of glider flying. The instructors and members who provide specific, constructive feedback are especially valuable.

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

A: The Shenandoah scenery and the variety of lift.

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

A: It was during our last Week of Training in Petersburg. I had not solo'd in nearly 37 years. When I was endorsed to fly solo by Piet Barber, I had a rush of nerves. There was a slight cross wind, and I knew everyone in the club was watching me land! But the nerves, the cross wind, and the audience all made me focus.

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

A: While flying solo in an SGS 2-33 in Colorado, the tow rope broke at about 1,000 feet AGL. Neither the tow pilot nor I knew whether it was still attached to the glider or tow plane. I pulled the release handle repeatedly to try to ensure it was free. I was concerned about clearing a fence near the grass strip during landing, but I touched down safely as far down the strip as possible. We never found the rope—go figure.

Q: *What do you do for a living?*

A: I served 26 years in the U.S. Army Armor Branch, commanding units from platoon through brigade level. After retiring from the Army, I spent 14 years at Raytheon, overseeing Airspace Management and Homeland Security. I later started a firm, Avanti Partners, and for 10 years consulted for General Atomics and several other companies.

Q: *Where did you grow up?*

A: I was born in Tucson, Arizona. Because my father was in the Air Force, we moved constantly in the US and overseas. I went to three different high schools.

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

A: What I enjoy most is the teamwork. Launching a glider takes people working in sync—moving

aircraft, walking wings, hooking up tow ropes, and watching out for one another. Between launches, we trade flight stories, share lessons, and celebrate each other's progress.

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

A: My gliding bucket list begins with becoming a safer, more precise pilot—sharpening my stick-and-rudder skills, reading the weather with greater confidence, and earning a few soaring badges along the way. Gliding never stops challenging me to think, learn, and improve.

Q: *What do other members might not know about you, that is, you are fluent in another language, lived overseas, a hobby, etc.*

A: I'm an artist. I use oil paints to paint portraits, landscapes, and still lifes. My work can be seen in local galleries, and I am sometimes asked to judge at art shows.

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

A: Keep studying, keep practicing, and DON'T QUIT!

Miscellaneous Chatter

XC Development Camp at M-ASA was a Scorcher

Hugh McElrath

SSA has been supporting a series of cross-country development camps for the past couple of years. The most convenient one yet was hosted by Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association in Fairfield, Pennsylvania, 28 June–4 July. I knew if I didn't sign up I'd be kicking myself. Once committed, I tried to prepare by flying my motorglider to M-ASA and landing at several small airports nearby that are the best landout options. With so many small airports and flight computers, you can generally plan a cross-country flight while keeping easily located and smooth runways underfoot. The camp entrance requirement is to show up with a glider, a Bronze Badge and an instrument that can produce an IGC file. I obtained permission from the board to use one of our beautiful Discuses and purchased an Oudie N IGC. Chris Wuerker kindly spent a couple hours setting it up for me and getting some waypoint databases loaded. I flew around with it in the motorglider and tried to pick out the many farm airfields listed—they are not always apparent!

Richard Hiegel agreed to crew for me and to tow the trailer to and from Fairfield. Shane Nietze pointed out that one of the Discus trailers was preferable because it has crank-down feet to support the rear end. I ended up taking the preferred trailer with the glider that happened to be stored in it.

More than the challenge of flying cross-country, I was concerned about trailering and assembly in the field. I brought one of the large wooden wingstands, along with an electric air pump (and valve stem extension!), tire iron, wheel chocks, tools, batteries/chargers and the all-important jimmy bar for levering the wings together that last half inch.

Both Richard and I had a hard stop on 1 July, he for his long-planned Montana flyfishing vacation, me with my elder son and granddaughter arriving for a visit from Germany. So, we arrived a couple of days early on the 25th in order to take advantage of the availability of tows for practice flights. We got the Discus assembled (with help) and left it out for four nights. The weather was remarkably hot and humid. We were so hot and tired after assembly that I needed a long rest and rehydration before flying.

Mornings were occupied with lectures. We were paired with mentors (mine was Piet Barber), although we never actually managed to fly together when the conditions were good. (Piet and I did grovel for lift in the vicinity of M-ASA for 90 minutes one of the days.) Tony Smolder was the camp director. His enthusiasm was infectious. He set triangular tasks with 17-mile circles around the turnpoints so 1-26 pilots could just nick the edges of the circles while remaining almost within glide-range of M-ASA for, say, 45 miles, and more ambitious pilots flying fiberglass ships could go deeper into the circles for, say, 150 miles on task. Tony would then generate a QR code and all you had to do was aim your Oudie at it and your task was automatically loaded! Ain't technology wunnerful! I was so allergic to disassembling in a field in that heat that I flew like I was in a 1-26!

The XC camp corresponded with M-ASA's annual "10 Day Weekend," which accounts for why towing was available. But there was competition with M-ASA members for tows. Cathy Williams administered the camp and marshalled the towing queue, trying to launch mentors and mentees together, etc. There was a lot of shouting involved. As mentioned, Richard and I both had to leave the camp early, but by 2 July, the heat was grinding

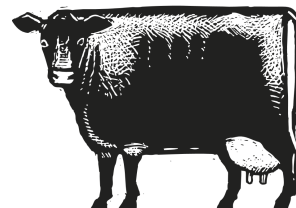
down the ground crew and storms were in the forecast, so camp was suspended. Piet and the rest came back on July 3 and 4.

I learned a lot in the camp lectures and by flying the tasks, but also from trailering. It's really helpful to have retrieval already set up (even if you are trying like hell to avoid a landout!) so that you give yourself permission to fly away from the airport. People came from far and wide to participate: Detroit, Boston. It was great to meet so many pilots, including young ones. (Pro tip: if you need help with an electronic instrument, seek out a digital native...) We are so lucky to have two - TWO - Discuses in the club, let's use them!

Of Wind, Ridge and Cow Pies

George Hazelrigg, Originally published in the December 2004 edition of *Skylines*

There are few things in this world that are as exhilarating as flying down the ridge at 90 knots, 100 feet above the treetops. Top that off with autumn colors in bright sunlight, and it's a scene that's hard to beat. So, when the wind is getting just a bit too strong for instruction, and when it is out of the west to northwest, it's time to leave the students on the ground, assemble my own ship and head for the hills—the Massanutten, that is. Just one little bug in the ointment: how can you be sure the ridge is working?



Well, when the wind is out of the northwest at 20 knots, there can be little doubt that the ridge is working. But what about when the wind is a little south of west and a little less than 20 knots? That's the time we need a ridge dummy. Now, a few weeks ago, when Fred Winter and I had thoughts about doing the ridge, we sent Steve Wallace out in the Pawnee as our ridge dummy. "Go out there and see if you can maintain altitude on the ridge at idle." Sure enough, he came back with semi-enthusiastic reports and, in short order, Fred and I were heading southwest down toward the ski area. It wasn't a great ridge day but, hey, we both made it down and back. So it couldn't have been all that bad. Of course, this success only stokes us for another go at it, hoping for better conditions yet.

This brings me to Sunday, October 31 [2004]. The windsock is standing straight out, more or less.

But the bug in the ointment is that it's a bit more southerly than we would like. Still rather enticing, though. I'm about ready to assemble. Dave Weaver is instructor of the day, and he's about to go up in the K with Rick Harris. Dave's been staring wistfully at the ridge, suggesting that, although the wind is a bit too far south for comfort, "I bet the ridge is working." Ah, I think, I've found a wind dummy. So I suggest that Dave try it. Being no dummy, Dave quickly retorts, "So if we land out, you'll come get us, right?" Now I'm in a corner. What can I say? "Sure!" We roll out the K, strap in Rick, and push him to the center line. Dave hops in, Bill Bentley fires up the Pawnee and, in a few short moments, they're off. We wait. I get my handheld, anxious for the report. Then a brief call. "We're landing ou. . ."

"41 Kilo Sierra, say again." Silence.

"Hey, Bill. I think you ought to go look for the K. Somewhere around the Knob." Bill is off, but still in sight when Reggie comes out of the terminal saying, "You have a phone call." Within moments, I have two reports on their location, one from Dave on the ground and one from Bill in the air. Only problem is they're different. Oh well, we have a general location. Let's go.

Now to retrieve the K, it's a wise idea to have plenty of people. But there's a tradeoff. They all, including the people who were in the K, will have to fit in the tow vehicle on the way back. Take four, that seems like a reasonable number. That will give us six to do the retrieve (count Dave and Rick, duh). Fred LaSor is quick to turn to Joe Clark and say, "You need to do a retrieve. Get going." Curiously, and generously, Craig Sutherland, a first-timer to our operation, and who is standing around waiting a turn to fly, also volunteers. Down to the hangars to get a trailer. Which one? Well the old K trailer is already configured for the K, the new one is configured for the Grob. Seems to me that it will be less of a hassle to take the old trailer. So I begin to hitch it to my 4Runner, only to find out that it has a five-pin electrical connector. Craig says, "My [shiny new (ed.'s note)] Yukon has a five-pin connector. Let's take it." "Is it four-wheel drive?" "Sure." We hitch the trailer to the Yukon (of course the connector is incompatible anyway), and we're off-sans tail lights. We need one more warm body, so we draft Bob Critchlow, who is just standing in the way in the driveway.

Out the back roads to Route 55. West on 55 to the bridge over the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (they call it the North Fork because it's west of the South Fork). There's the K! Right in the middle of a big old cow pasture. Now to retrieve it.

The first thing you have to do to retrieve a glider from a cow pasture is to drive the trailer out into the pasture, preferably somewhere close to the glider, and most preferably on the same side of any intervening fences. Well, the K wasn't just in "the" pasture, it was in a second pasture, which was accessible only by entering through a gate into a first pasture, traversing the first pasture and entering the second pasture through a second gate. The first gate appeared chained and locked but, upon closer inspection, it was clear that the chain was merely clipped on around the fence. Bob and Joe went to the farmhouse to inquire about getting out to the glider. "Just open the gate, it's not locked, and drive out." We open the gate, but the access road doesn't make it easy to get a Yukon and 40-foot trailer in. First, Craig takes the glider up the road a piece and turns around to get a straighter shot at the gate. A few tries, interspersed with some reverse gearing, gets the Yukon-trailer combo through the gate. We traverse the first pasture.

Now we get to the second gate, which we have to open. But it is being guarded by a large cow with calf. And this cow makes it abundantly clear that we ain't goin' nowhere near that gate. A Mexican standoff occurs—we walk around, giving the cow and calf a wide berth, and the cow stares us down, apparently quite aware that we want to get to that gate. Several minutes pass. Finally, the cow takes her calf and saunters off, with an obvious, "OK, you can go through the gate now."

We open the gate, which is no easy feat—there's a large mud puddle under the gate—and Craig drives through into the second pasture. Now there seems to be nothing between the Yukon and the glider. So Craig, in a spate of exuberance, takes off toward the K, leaving us behind. A hundred yards later, the Yukon is in mud half way up to the axles. Stuck! Now, I need to make it clear that, while I am referring to the substance that the Yukon is stuck in as "mud," that is not entirely accurate. You see, this is a cow pasture, and only about half of the slimy brown stuff is mud. Several desperate attempts to free the Yukon merely christen its virgin finish. It soon looks much like the vehicle in the

Subaru Outback add. Only this ain't mud!

What to do? Well, the Yukon isn't about to move with the trailer attached. So we unhook the trailer and, standing in half a foot of "mud," we push the Yukon back and forth and eventually rock it out of the yuck. Next for the trailer. The six of us manage to rotate the trailer 90 degrees to the north and push it out of the "mud" to dryer ground. Back with the Yukon, rehit the trailer, and tow it over to the glider.

If any of you have ever done a retrieve on a two-place ship, you know it can be a bit of a challenge. Add to that a surface that is not exactly smooth (undulating grass), dotted with "land mines." The challenge is exaggerated. So, here we are, already looking a bit like we've been in a mud wrestling contest (only it ain't mud), slippin' and a slidin' around trying to get the K into the trailer. For reasons that I don't want to go into in detail, we wind up taking the wings off first, and then we wrestle the fuselage into the trailer. Now, we face only the challenge of towing a loaded trailer across the same field we were just stuck in with an empty trailer.

This time, Craig is a bit more cautious. He allows Dave and me to test the ground ahead before he charges in. We arrive at the first gate—the one with the big mud puddle. And there's no way around this mud puddle. We take no chances. Dave gets in the Yukon to coach Craig. "Whatever you do, don't slow down." Craig blasts through the gate in four-wheel drive, and we're back into the upper pasture. Now it's a simple matter to get back onto the road, turned around and headed back to the airport. And to think, we've only burned about two hours on this little caper, so far.

Back at the ranch, we pull up in front of the whole crowd and solicit lots of arms to assist in the re-assembly process and, voila, the K is again ready to fly. As we take the trailer back to its parking place, the left fender falls off. Whatever, we're back!

Boy, do we ever owe Craig a ride! So Dave hops in the K with him, and they get a 35-minute ride to 5,000 MSL. In the meantime, Joe and I hose ourselves off for the trip home. Steve solicits Dave for one more adventure skyward, and I decide that one retrieve is enough for one day. So Joe and I slip out well before Steve and Dave can call for another retrieve.

Such is soaring. Nobody ever said it was going

to be all wind and ridge. Into each glider pilot's life there also enter a few cow pies. And you never really know: wind and ridge, or cow pies? So, if you always expect wind and ridge, you stand a good chance of being more than a bit disappointed. But if you are in it for the adventure, and if a few measly little (well actually Costco sized) cow pies don't discourage you, then every soaring day is a new adventure, to be taken as it is for what it is. Just lay back and savor it.

The Challenge Problem

You all should know the answers to these questions. If you don't, you should learn them now. Please email your answers to me (ghazelrigg@verizon.net). I would like to know how many of you can answer these questions.

1. Why is it mandatory that the rear canopy of the ASK-21s be closed at all times when no one is sitting in or attending the glider?
2. Why must we know the difference between a tow plane wing rock and rudder waggle?
3. Why is there a maximum strength limit on the tow rope and what is it?
4. What are the names of the different tow hooks and how do they differ?
5. Is it possible to take off in an ASK-21 with the front canopy latched and the rear canopy not latched?

The Photo Gallery

This month's photos document our move to W99. Here's hoping we come back home soon! But I begin with scenic view of Piet Barber on tow.





Operations

Now that we have operations moved to W99, we get to move it all back to KFRR. The following is a letter from airport manager John Bert:

Greetings, all:

This email is an update on the Runway Rehabilitation Project taking place at FRR.

On Friday, we received communication from the asphalt contractor stating that, due to the continued weather issues and colder weather approaching, they felt it would be better to move the project to next spring. The engineer scheduled a mid-afternoon call today, Monday, September 21, 2026, to discuss the matter with the County.

During that conversation, it became clear that the contractor was concerned about having sufficient time to complete the project properly before the end of the construction season. Unfortunately, the outcome of that discussion was not what we had hoped for, and the project has been moved to spring 2027.

It is important to note that the project contracts have not yet been fully executed, and we are still awaiting the required grant paperwork from the Virginia Department of Aviation. Therefore, there will be no runway closure associated with this project for the remainder of 2026. Airport operations, including private, business, and training activities, can continue as normal for the rest of the year.

All of us at the Airport appreciate your patience and understanding in this matter. In the end, we want to ensure that the project is completed properly and that the finished product meets the expected standards. If there is any concern that completing the work under the current conditions could compromise the quality of the project, moving the work to a more appropriate construction window is the prudent approach.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out.

Until then, let's fly!

Upcoming Events

- From John Bert

THE GREAT PUMPKIN DROP 2K27

Saturday October 24, 2026 - 9:00am - 2:00pm

Once again, the Airport Commission will host The Great Pumpkin Drop at the Scareport! This event is open to the public as an aviation-style “trunk or treat.” All tenants are welcome to dress up their aircraft and bring them up to the ramp for the kiddos. Candy pass-out, costume judging, face-painting, WINGS accredited AOPA safety seminar, pancake breakfast and the pièce de résistance, THE PUMPKIN DROP!! Come participate on whatever level you wish and let’s show off our airport to the community, together.

- There’s a small group of aviation oriented folk (and their partners) who convene monthly for lunch at the Sweet Rice Thai restaurant on Rt. 7 just east of I-66. The next luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, at noon. The group is moderated by Lucinda Vavoudis. Come join us! [Jim Kellett]

This is a monthly event. Please contact Jim Kellett for information on the next luncheon.

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, fresh July 2026 annual. Borgelt and Winter varios, Dittel VHF radio, one-man rigger & Mountain High O2 system. 1995 Anschau KOMET trailer. Trailer and glider in good condition. Buyer has first right to the Front Royal hangar it’s currently stored in. Reduced price to SSC members at \$16,000. For information, call: Evan Dosik (703-338-4688) or Tim Moran (202-247-8820). See photo below.

This Rolladen-Schneider LS1-f is a joy to fly. The controls are well balanced, and the glider responds beautifully to a light touch. It thermals well,



holding its bank angle with only minor corrections. The spoilers are effective and predictable, and the glider is straightforward to land. These qualities make it an excellent choice for a pilot transitioning from a two-seat trainer to a single-place glider.

The LS1-f was previously owned for 16 years by a SSC club instructor in Front Royal. Before that, it belonged to a German pilot who brought the glider with him when he moved to Winchester, Virginia.

Assembly is straightforward. A one-man wing rigger is included, and the wing spars, lift pins, and spar pins all go together easily. The Komet trailer tows well and is equipped with integrated surge brakes.

A previous owner refinished the upper surfaces of the wings as well as the fuselage. During our ownership, we made many upgrades, including:

- Mountain High EDS O2D1 oxygen system
- IMI One-man wing rigger
- New CG Tost hook
- New gas spring for the landing gear lever
- New gas damper for the landing gear
- New gas spring for the canopy

This glider has been a pleasure to own and has given us many memorable flights, ranging from enjoyable local soaring to a five-hour duration flight and a Gold-altitude wave flight using the included Mountain High oxygen system.

We hope its next owner will enjoy it as much as we have.

Want to Fly the Pawnee? Start Here.

By now, you’ve probably flown behind the Piper Pawnee countless times. But have you ever thought I’d like to do that — but I lack a tailwheel endorsement and 10-hours tailwheel PIC to begin training as an SSC tow pilot? Well there now exists

a clear path to get there—and a local resource that can help you take the first steps. Virginia Tailwheel Academy, based at Warrenton-Fauquier Airport (KHWY), offers dedicated tailwheel instruction in a fleet of well-equipped Cessna 140s—electric start, ADS-B out, and AV30 PFDs. Most pilots earn their endorsement in 7 to 12 hours. Once endorsed, you can continue building the required PIC time through dual or solo rental of the Cessna 140—making it a practical one-stop path from zero tailwheel experience to SSC tow pilot candidacy. You’ll receive dual ground and flight instruction from SSC’s own Robb Hohmann: commercial pilot, airplane and glider CFI with over 600 hours PIC in tailwheel aircraft.

For the full picture of what’s required, the SSC operations manual states: *“To begin training as an SSC Tow Pilot, a pilot must have logged at least 200 total hours flight time in airplanes and have a tail-wheel endorsement. Additionally, the pilot must have logged at least 10 hours of pilot in command time in tail wheel airplanes after receiving a tail-wheel endorsement.”*

To make the investment manageable, the academy offers discounted block time: 10-hour blocks at 6% off, and 20-hour blocks at 12% off. Given the endorsement training plus the 10 hours of solo PIC time you’ll need, a 20-hour block is worth considering from the start. If you’re ready to start working toward the endorsement, Virginia Tailwheel Academy is ready to help. info@vatailwheelacademy.com, 540-783-7FLY.

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