

## President's Prerogative

*George Hazelrigg*

We are nearly at the end of another year. I cannot believe how fast it has gone. I am reminded of the question asked in a C&W song, "How'd I get so old so damn fast?" But I can still look forward to next year! As our season winds down, I hope to see everyone at our annual party. The venue can't be beat. And we will close operations for the year on December 19. Shortly after that, we will send the Grob out for repairs and do an annual on the Pawnee. We have some pretty hefty expenses coming up here, and that means that we will need your annual dues to be paid promptly. Remember that they are due by the first of the year. I believe the amount is \$304, which includes \$240 in dues and \$64 for your SSA membership.

I am still looking for some volunteers to run for positions on the Board of Directors. So, if you are interested in contributing some time and brain power to the Club, please come forward and tell me. And that's about all I have to say this month. Happy Holidays and a great New Year! Let's all soar 2005. 

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## Ground School

*Dave Weaver*

You've probably seen the note that Carlos Roberts sent out concerning ground school. I just want to provide a little information that may help you to decide if you want to attend.

In the past we have used the facilities at AVED in Tyson's Corner which made the class cost on the order of \$325 per student because AVED took a cut. This time around I think that we can operate independently from AVED which will make the cost only about \$100 for books and reproduction of materials.

In addition to the fiscal considerations, you should consider the educational aspects. Do you need a ground school to pass the FAA Private Glider Knowledge Test? Definitely not. I know many club members who have used various techniques to study for and pass the test with excellent results. I have personally signed off several of them to take the test using their own preparation after

## Significant Events

*December 2004*

1. *Joe Clark* soloed in the Grob with a picture perfect first flight.
2. *Steve Wegner* passed his PPL-G.



3. *George Hazelrigg III* got engaged to *Megan Pearson*. Megan is an actress about to star in two movies, including one horror movie (to be filmed in Baltimore—that's scary enough in itself). We'll be seeing more of both of them, both on the screen and on the field. Marriage to occur September 2006.
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demonstrating adequate knowledge of the material to me.

So..... why take the ground school? There are several reasons:

1. You are guaranteed to pass the test.
2. You will leave the course with more in-depth knowledge of the material. When you study on your own you tend to study the answers to the questions rather than actually understanding the material.

3. You will stay on schedule and take the test in a timely manner. When the course starts, the train has left the station and we are going to drag you along if you don't get onboard.

4. The course material is punctuated with real life anecdotes making it more interesting. Do you remember sitting in 9th grade algebra and someone asking, "why do I need to know this?" Well, I'll tell you.

5. Its fun.

6. I provide the bagels.

We're planning a December 10th deadline for registration, so if you'd like to take the class, please e-mail Dave Weaver (david.weaver@comcast.net) or Carlos Roberts (carlos3@verizon.net) as soon as possible.



## Wave!

*Jim Kellett*

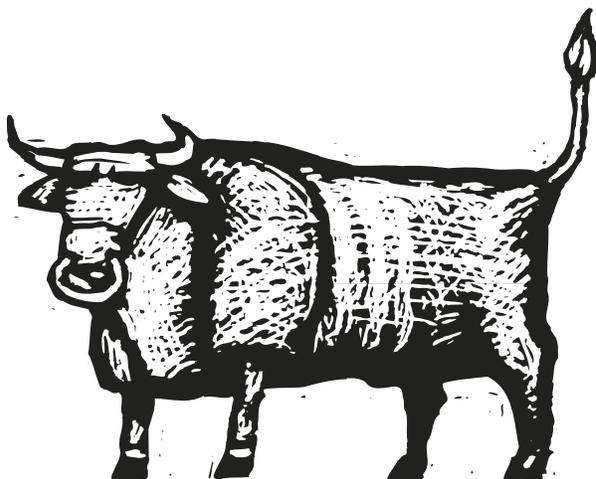
There'll be a towpilot available at the Grant County (Petersburg, WV) airport (W99) December 15–19 inclusive. If you can find a glider and want to experience some right neat winter soaring, call Larry Stahl (the FBO) at (304) 257-8300 for details. (Maybe the Club'd let

*Photo by Baude Litt © 2004 courtesy of M-ASA Convector*

some members trailer over one of the two place gliders???)

Petersburg is just a few clicks downwind from "the" eastern ridge; it has a Club-managed wave window to ca. 23,000'; paved (5000') and grass runways, and a comfortable terminal building with homemade sandwiches/snacks.

Tows are more expensive than Club tows, but not outrageous.



## Of Wind, Ridge and Cow Pies

*George Hazelrigg*

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.

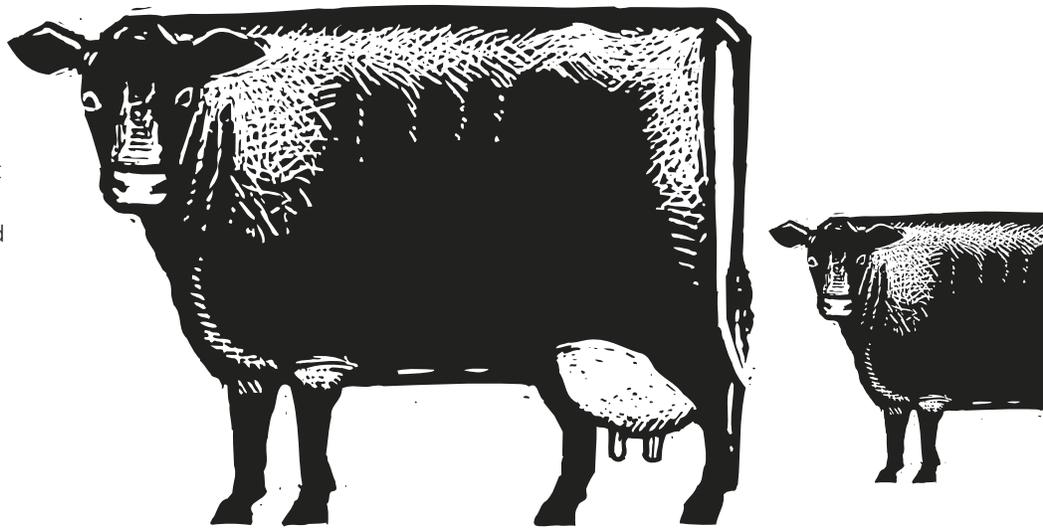
**T**his brings me to Sunday, October 31. The windsock is standing straight out, more or less. But the bug in the ointment is that it's a bit more southerly than we would like. Still rather enticing, though. I'm about ready to assemble. Dave Weaver is instructor of the day, and he's about to go up in 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.

**N**ow 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.

**N**ow 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!

**W**hat 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, re hitch 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, viola, 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.

**S**uch 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. 

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## Curmudgeon’s Corner

The Apostrophe... and Other Mysteries of Grammar

A panda walks into a cafe. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and fires two shots in the air.

“Why?” asks the confused waiter, as the panda makes towards the exit. The panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder.

“I’m a panda,” he says, at the door. “Look it up”.

The waiter turns to the relevant entry and, sure enough, finds an explanation.

“Panda. Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves.”\*

No, that’s a “comma story”, not an “apostrophe story”. But it points up just how important grammar can be! When the curmudgeon reads (actual example) “Giant Kid’s Playground” (a playground for one helluva big kid?) he hears fingernails screeching down a blackboard...

The apostrophe isn’t the only abused grammatical notation, but it’s one of the most frustratingly misused. The most common uses include the separation of the plural “s” from a noun (or, if the noun ends in “s”, to follow the final “s”). It also is used to indicate possession (e.g., “Jim’s” or “the airport’s” something-or-the-other). Oh, yeah—also indicates dropped letters in contractions, often a simple vowel (e.g., “can’t [for “can not”]). That’s how the grammatically incorrect word “ain’t” evolved—as a contraction for “am not”.

Part of the problem is that there are so many exceptions!! For example, there are possessive forms (e.g., your, his, ours, etc.) which don’t need an apostrophe; the improper use in plurals that don’t need it (e.g., trouser’s).

I won’t even go into the “its/it’s” or the “your/you’re” explanations! For them, and more, see the book referenced in the footnote.

**Jim Kellett**, Resident Curmudgeon 

*“Eats, Shoots and Leaves”, by Lynne Truss, 2004, ISBN: 1-592-40087-6*

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**Mike Melvill**, pilot of SpaceShipOne’s first two flights into space will be the keynote speaker at the SSA National Convention Awards Banquet, Saturday, Feb. 12, 2005 in Ontario, CA. N328KF is registered as a glider.

Visit <http://www.ssa.org> and click on “The Convention” for a full schedule of events, speaker topics, and convention details.





## *Skyline Holiday Party*

*Who: Skyline Soaring Club members and guest*

*When: Saturday, December 11, 2004 - 7:00pm -??*

*Where: The Canary Cottage, home of Bill Wark & Lynne Garvey Wark  
7153 Main St., Clifton, Virginia 20124 (703) 322-1811*

*Come join us for this festive get-together & opportunity to visit with other  
Skyline Soaring Club members & their families!*

*Heavy hors d'oeuvres & soft drinks will be provided.*

*Feel free to bring a favorite dish & BYOB, if you'd like.*

*Directions: I-66 to the Fairfax County Parkway (Rt. 7100 - head to  
Springfield, NOT to Reston...) to 1st exit, Rt. 29, Lee Highway.*

*Right on Lee Highway South to*

*Left onto Clifton Rd. for 5 miles into the heart  
of the historic town of Clifton, Virginia.*

*(please note cell phones do not work as you approach Clifton)*

*Please park on the street or at the Post Office parking lot  
(on Chapel Rd. - 1 block away).*

*For additional information, feel free to visit our Bed & Breakfast web site,*

*[www.canarycottage.com](http://www.canarycottage.com).*

*Please RSVP by December 5, 2004 via e-mail or at (703) 322-1811.*

*'Looking forward to seeing everyone!*

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## Another Clinic Without Flu Shots

The Region IV FIRC is nearly half-subscribed! It's January 29-30 at Dulles International Airport, all day both days. \$125 per person; current CFI(G)s can use the certificate to re-validate within 90 days of the FIRC. Non-CFIGs, or CFIG wannabes, will also find the session, led by the one and only Bob Wander, a valuable experience. Checks made out to "Soaring Safety Foundation" and mailed to me (103 Settlers Circle, Winchester, VA 22602) guarantee a slot

The second weekly issue of the SSA'S e-letter is available on the SSA website (go to the member login and then E-Newsletter link). You may be able to access it directly <http://ssa.org/Test/Docs/Enewsletter/Nov%20%20newsletter.pdf>

It's neat, and a great way to stay on top of what SSA's doing. Note that Region IV's own Val Brain, a long time M-ASA member, has taken on the job of editing Gliding and Motorgliding International e-magazine! See <http://www.glidingmagazine.com/>.—**Jim Kellett**, Director-Elect Soaring Society of America Region IV

## Club Stuff In Case You Missed the E-mails

Because of the excessive damage incurred in the handling of our equipment over the past year, the Board has decided that we will, in the spring of 2005, institute a mandatory training program that will cover all aspects of our operations manual, with particular emphasis on ground handling of aircraft, and especially including getting our equipment in and out of the hangars and doing off-field retrieves. You will be notified of this training early in 2005.

The Club has six members of the Board of Directors. The Board makes all policy decisions and is responsible for the fiscal management of your Club. Each member of the Board serves a three-year term, and two new members are elected each year. However, this year, in addition to the normal rotation, two more members, each with two years service remaining, are resigning from the Board. Thus, we will need to add four new members to the Board. If you wish to volunteer to run or nominate someone, please come forward at this time. Elections will be at our annual meeting on January 15.—**George Hazelrigg**

**Copy**  **That!** *Selected flotsam and jetsam from the editor's daily Tsunami of e-mail*

**Brain In A Bowl Flies Simulator**—Someone once said he could teach a monkey to fly but researchers at the University of Florida have taken it a quantum leap further. The biomedical team says it has a dish full of about 25,000 rat neurons that can keep a PC flight simulator on the straight and level. "It's as if the neurons control the stick in the aircraft, they can move it back and forth and left and right," Professor Thomas DeMarse told Wired News. Now, the researchers aren't explicitly looking to replace pilots with rat neurons... at least not yet. DeMarse said the team needed something for their neurons to do so they could try to decode the "language" they use to communicate with one another. After a few first-flight jitters (we all have them, right?) the rat neurons got the hang of keeping the simulated F-22 straight and level. "Right now the process it's learning is very simplistic," said DeMarse. "It's basically making a decision about whether to move the stick to the left or to the right or forwards and backwards and it learns how much to push the stick depending upon how badly the aircraft is flying." Hmm. We know some pilots who haven't quite grasped those concepts, yet... **Avflash**

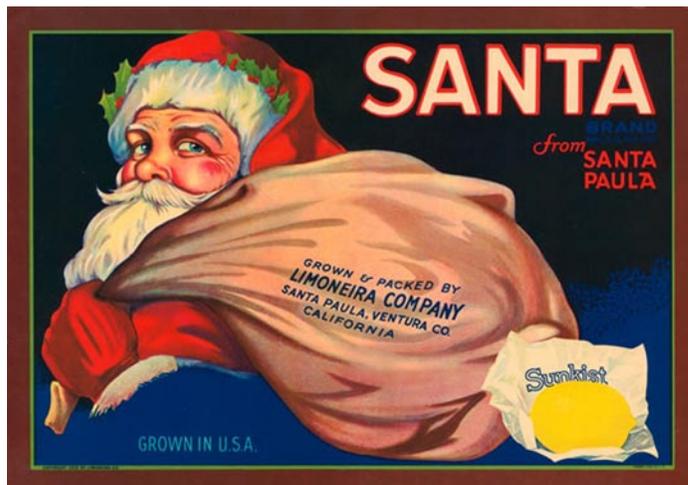
**Results of TSA Rules on Gliders**—"The SSA, with a lot of effort, assisted by a letter writing campaign by chapters and commercial operators, was successful in persuading the TSA that gliders do not present a material threat," commented Dean Carswell, SSA Chairman of the Board. "Accordingly, gliders will be exempt from the final rule – a very substantial saving to chapters and commercial operators who would otherwise have been affected," he continued.

The first set of what TSA called an Interim Final Rule went into effect on October 20. The SSA analysis of these rules indicated that they would have had a chilling effect on glider flight training in this country. Of particular concern was the impact on commercial operators that host foreign nationals.

"At that point, the soaring perspective was well-represented among the 280 comments which had been submitted to the TSA docket," said Judy Ruprecht, SSA's government relations volunteer.

Those comments were certainly part of the reason program definitions were recently re-interpreted, implementation of certain new rules was delayed until December 19 and an exemption was granted to simplify record keeping for students who are US citizens. Even with these changes, SSA estimated that the rules would have been directly responsible for a 15 to 20% decrease in soaring school revenues nationwide. This means SSA's business members and Chapters – your soaring sites – were still in real jeopardy. SSA stayed on the case. We continued to work with the officials at TSA and continued to encourage SSA members to provide their comments to the docket.

Our perseverance paid off in a big way. On October 29th, the TSA issued an exemption that eliminates glider operations,



as well as airship and balloon operators, from the requirements from the AFSP.

"This is BIG," exclaimed Dennis Wright, SSA's Executive Director. "Staff and members who commented to the docket brought well reasoned arguments for the exclusion of glider operations from these onerous rules," he added "The result is better than we expected."

This demonstrates very well the role of the SSA in representing the soaring interests of it's members. The fantastic results of this process is the result of a concentrated effort by not only staff, but volunteers and rank and file members to identify a common threat and work together to bring pressure and well reasoned arguments to bear on the politicians in charge of writing these regulations. No other organization in the United States is prepared to represent the interest of soaring pilots.—**SSA Website**

**Be sure to checkout the December/January issue of Air&Space** magazine. They'll have a very nice (I'm told) photo essay and article on vintage gliders. Chad Slattery, well-known photographer and writer spend a few days at Tehachapi photographing and interviewing at their fly-in.

**Accidents are up**— Thirty-nine people died in general aviation aircraft in October, EAA reported ... That's the second-deadliest October in over six years, and should be a "wake-up call" for aviators, EAA said. With winter ahead, and the extra challenges of icing, darkness and marginal weather, pilots need to be extra-vigilant to bring the accident rate down. All pilots should take advantage of the available... safety programs offered by the FAA, AOPA and other organizations. "Fly in good weather, and practice superior airman-ship," EAA says, and that's a good start for advice on how to avoid becoming a statistic.—**Avflash**



You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, 'My God, you're right! I never would've thought of that!' —**Dave Barry**



**SKYLINES**

December, 2004

Phil Jordan, Editor

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**Skyline Soaring Club, Inc.**

<http://www.skylinesoaring.org>