

# SKYLINE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SKYLINE SOARING CLUB, INC

JULY, 2004

## President's Prerogative

*George Hazelrigg*

The only two things that are certain in life are death and taxes, and this certainly applies to our status at KFRR. I can bring you up to date, but don't count on learning anything. On June 14th, the Warren County Airport Commission (WCAC) held its monthly meeting. They publish an agenda in advance, and this one was so full that it was immediately obvious that they wouldn't come close to getting through it. And, of course, the most important stuff was deferred to the last. And, of course, they didn't get through it. Despite this, it was a rousing meeting. We were represented by Richard Freitag. The meeting ended about half way through the agenda, and they noted that they would have to have a special continuation of this meeting to finish the remaining items. The leaves were rustling, the cicadas were dead, and the county Board of Supervisors member Dick Traczyk noted that he wanted to attend the continuation meeting just to see what is the big furor all about.

Later in the week, the WCAC Chairman, David Labovitz, announced that the continuation meeting would convene at 8 AM, Thursday the 17th. We were represented at this meeting by Rick Harris. Early in the meeting the WCAC acted on the motion to charge a Based-Aircraft Fee (BAF) of \$52 per month for each aircraft based on the field. Whether or not it's "each" based aircraft or not is, I think, debatable. For one thing, the tiedown fee has been reduced from \$45 per month for the previous year to \$0 this year, and the new "tiedown charge" of \$52 is called a BAF. For another, the BAF might not apply to all aircraft based on the field. Whatever. The folks who live in the hangar north of us, affectionately referred to as the Pole Barn people, got rather vociferous. It would be fair to say a fight broke out, with several people losing their cool. Mr. Traczyk stepped in to calm things down, and he ordered the WCAC to address the issues of the Pole Barn folks and the glider club (emphasis on the "and"). Rick represented us by merely restating our commitment to the Airport, to being good citizens and to our fervent desire to come to an amicable agreement for

continued operations at FRR. And that's where it was left.

At this point, it seemed to me that we needed to take further action, both to demonstrate our willingness to move forward and negotiate, and to get things moving. So, a group of us put together a lease that we can live with and sent it to the WCAC, copies to the county Board of Supervisors. We have heard nothing in return. But we have the promise of Dick Traczyk that (1) he wants things worked out for us to stay, and (2) we will (worst case) not be asked to leave without being given a reasonable amount of time to find an alternative place to move. How good are these promises? I haven't a clue, and won't venture a guess. For now, I'll take Dick at his word, and work to resolve the issues. The ball is in the WCAC's court, and all we can do is wait.

At this point, let me thank the many Club members who have devoted days or weeks of their time to this matter, and especially let me thank them for their sage advice. Hey, the advice may not be perfect, but it is the best we can get. Whatever happens, you can be sure several members had extensive and well-meaning inputs. We have done the best we could. In the meantime, let's all try our best to be good citizens whenever we are on the field. We share the field with several other users, and it is to our advantage to share well. Within limits of safety, let's be courteous to others, and careful to give the right of way whenever we can. And let's be extra careful with our equipment, to make sure we don't interfere with our friends in airplanes. Most of the people at FRR who fly airplanes really are our friends. They share our goals and our problems.

Through the course of these trying times, we have enlisted the expertise of a local Front Royal lawyer. But the purpose of this was mainly to learn about the County and our rights within the structure of county management. Your Board has deliberately chosen not to be litigious and not to side with others who might be. We have instead stuck with a friends-of-the-airport approach, in hopes that we can remain friendly with the members of the WCAC and the airport management. I don't like the idea of resolving this by duking it out. Hopefully all this mess has a sunny side, and we'll soon find out that we have a future, even if only for another year or two, at FRR.

And now you know even more than I. 

★ *Happy Fourth of July*

**BUT WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION?**

**DO YOU MEAN THE AMERICAN WAR?**

**THE REVOLUTION WAS EFFECTED BEFORE THE WAR COMMENCED.**

**THE REVOLUTION WAS IN THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE.—John Adams**

## Update on Club Operational Site(s)

*Jim Kellett, Chair, Field Options Committee*

Many of the Club's newer members may not realize that the Club has had, since its creation in 1991, the goal of operating from a privately owned and controlled site. Our experience, as well as that of many other Clubs, shows that without such ownership the Clubs will wander from site to site as local politics dictate. For some time, a small committee (presently consisting of Spencer Annear, Janice Farr, Richard Freytag, Jim Kellett, Kolie Lombard, and Shane Neitzey) has been actively pursuing alternative locations, some of which may be available for purchase. The Committee can be addressed at <mailto:Field-Options@skylinesoaring.org>Field-Options@skylinesoaring.org. This search includes those that might serve as expansion sites (to supplement our operations at Front Royal) and as possible permanent or

semi-permanent alternatives.

While the Club's goal (and our present expectation) is to retain at least some operations at Front Royal for the foreseeable future, we are actively considering pursuing, in the near term, some supplementary trial operations at several other existing airports; such locations could potentially serve as an alternative to Front Royal should it become undesirable to continue operations at this location.

In the longer term, we are actively pursuing the acquisition of a private site for our permanent home. We are now exploring several possible venues and the funding strategies for acquiring them. Some members have expressed interest in investing in an airport property; possibly with a nearby residence. The Club can make this an attractive investment purchase for an individual(s) if made with the club. We welcome interested members to come forward and work with the Committee towards a mutually beneficial agreement.

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## Tow Pilot Reflections

*Richard Otis, CTP*

Every now and then, something happens which makes you stop and think; and to realize we are engaged in a very dangerous business. When risk is properly managed, the danger, barring an act of God, is also managed. But all it takes is a moment of distraction, a touch of overconfidence, a chain of events which should be broken but is not, and flying can be fatal in a heartbeat. It is a risk we all take in exchange for the pure joy of flight.

I learned to prop general aviation aircraft almost from my first flights. The Piper Colts used in the Navy Flying club often had dead batteries. In addition to making the call to base operations on the crystal controlled, coffee grinder receive radio, a dead battery makes it very difficult to go flying. But I'm going to leave the topic of dead batteries for another day. The Colt had a low compression ~100 HP engine. It was very easy to hand prop, and so we did. From the start, my CFII-A,G SEL/MEL/SES/MES A&P flight instructor (CDR Gordon Otis USN) drilled me on the procedure. ALWAYS tie the aircraft down, AND chock, AND have a qualified pilot in the cockpit. ALWAYS treat the prop like it is about to start. NEVER walk or reach through a prop arc, no matter what. ALWAYS check for breaks set and switches (COLD or HOT). NEVER wrap your finger tips around the prop—hold them flat against the blade. And swing your leg up and back hard to get the momentum to pull the prop through, backing away from the prop when you pull.

Later my brother and I had a 65HP J-3. It didn't even have

a battery or starter (or radio), so we had to prop it every time. The compression was so low, you could easily do this with one hand. Some pilots like to prop from the cockpit side (e.g. behind the prop). This approach never seemed safe to me. Much later, I owned N68221, a Cessna 152 with a 125HP modification. It too was easy to prop, but it also had a nice 24v jack just forward of the pilot's door just for the occasion of a dead battery, and my need/desire to prop planes has diminished with age.

When I was in Patrol Squadron Twenty-six, in Brunswick Maine, I was the Navy Flying Club President. Unfortunately, we lost a flight instructor on a routine training mission. The CFI and a student had landed at a nearby airport in Bath, and the Cessna 152 battery was dead. Following all the proper procedures discussed above, the CFI attempted to prop the plane. Unfortunately the aircraft was parked on sheet ice. When he pulled the prop through, the engine started just as the CFI slipped and fell into the prop arch. Incidents like this you remember for the rest of your life, often with the thought "there but for the grace of God go I".

Lately your tow pilots and duty officers have expressed concern to me about the somewhat cavalier attitude of pilots and guests around the Pawnee prop. We tow pilots are always careful to clear the area before starting, calling CLEAR before turning the engine, and taxiing clear of gliders being ground handled. However we are concerned about the propensity of people to come close to the prop as we taxi out for glider hookup. There is also a propensity for people and guests to approach the tow plane upon return the ramp. We solicit your help in ensuring everyone, club members and guests, have a healthy respect for and avoidance of the tow plane propeller.

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## SpaceShipOne

*Nathan Saichek*

This e-mail was written by Nathan Saichek. Nathan is an Aeronautical Engineering student at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. Nathan took a year off to do an internship at XCOR the company that launched the first private vessel to successfully enter space. Nathan's inspiring first hand account of the flight and what was going on at XCOR immediately before and during the launch follows.  
—Carlos Roberts

Adrian comes from a particular genetic stock. It is burned into his arteries and lungs... into his stomach and feet. He is always late. He inherits this trait not from some psychological complexity or lack of caring for the time of others. He inherits it from his parents.

We were supposed to leave San Luis around 8 or so to get to Mojave around 11 or 12.

Come 9:00, there was no word from them. Come 10:00, they had not yet manifested. At 10:45, John Pocock (who drove from Fresno to carpool with us) and I departed to Adrian's place so we could leave immediately upon their arrival. We went down and knocked on Adrian's door. His roommate answered and we asked where he was. They had just left... he was surprised we hadn't

walked past them on the stairs. So we dashed out to the street to see them just driving by. We hollered, they stopped, and we got in. We were off.

We made excellent time and arrived in Mojave around 1:45. We went to the XCOR hangar, completely unmolested by the copious security, and rang the bell. The door opened, and we were ushered inside where we were advised to find a quiet corner and lay down our pads and sleeping bags. There was going to be breakfast at 5 and a private spacecraft launch at 6:30.

Adrian's family slept in the car, while Adrian, John and I holed up near the electronics bench. It was a rocket engine night... hot and dry, with a slight chemical tinge.

Upon awakening, I helped make a billion cups of coffee for the approximately hundred people who rose from various corners of the hangar, bleary eyed and excited. There were space dorks of every variety. There were college interns and students with laptops and cameras. There were seasoned aerospace professionals in business suits with cards and briefcases. There were the old hands, wearing battered leather flight jackets with dozens of patches and hats with pins with logos of conventions and former aerospace ventures. Then there were the XCOR employees. Standing tall and clean, comfortably dressed with a confident air they meandered, cumulatively, through the crowd, shaking hands and smiling and nodding.

As the hour approached, the crowd left the hangar, which now smelled of coffee and bacon, and stood in clumps on the flightline. Security cars drove by every minute, keeping people off the taxiway. There were more cameras and binoculars in that crowd than in any other single gathering of people I'd ever seen. We heard the whine of jet engines, just as Buzz got his radio hooked up to the PA. "White Knight is ready to taxi to runway 2-6" "White Knight, Taxi to runway 2-6" "Taxi to runway 2-6" The engine whine escalated and the vehicle taxied along the flightline. It looked like a vulture carrying a dangerously oversized egg. A few moments later, it lofted by in the opposite direction, just off the ground. Takeoff.

Shortly thereafter, another Scaled aircraft, the Starship (which looks like a very large Long-Ez), took off to fly chase plane. The two aircraft circled higher for an hour. For the last 15 minutes or so, they were only visible by their contrails. Finally, we heard the countdown on the radio, starting at 8 minutes. At 5 minutes, people were getting settled down, searching for the craft which were now at 50,000 feet and barely visible to the naked eye. At 2 minutes, binoculars and cameras trained skyward, people pointing out the location of the vehicle to each other. At 1 minute, everyone got very quiet.

Then we heard the announcement of separation. Then we saw the contrail, lit up by the rising sun, as the small ship screamed skyward. Everyone cheered. It passed in front of the sun and we lost sight of it for a moment, but it kept climbing and soon we saw it again, reaching faster and faster for the sky. After the engine shutdown, we stayed quiet for a moment, hoping to hear the faint distant rumble of the engine. It was too far for me to hear. Then we all relaxed. I grabbed some food and we waited. We were snapped out of small talk by a double sonic boom, characteristic of Space Ship One's reentry, we were told. We looked around. The radio told us they'd reentered over Rosamond, 15 miles to the south. There was some dispute about exactly how high they'd gone. Had they actually made it up to 62 miles, the definition of the edge of the atmosphere for these purposes? We didn't know. There were reports of some damage to the craft... some electrical problems.

Finally it came into view, gliding along over the airport at perhaps 10,000 feet. It was smooth and clean, practically the platonic ideal of sophisticated space flight, untouchable and unreal. It coasted silently overhead and came in and landed, perfectly, on the runway, taxiing off to the side. We cheered again. Two support vehicles pulled up and started helping the pilot out. There was a news crew out there too.

White Knight landed next, followed by the chase plane, Starship. It was like a parade of advanced composite technology aircraft. There was no indication that there was anything stopping humanity from reaching any goal we can imagine.

Word came in from the command center that according to Space Ship One's INS and radar, it had in fact left the 'atmosphere' by reaching greater than 62 miles. The electrical problem was a small subsystem that had a manual override the pilot had activated. There was no appreciable degradation of the thermal protection system. The flight went off without a hitch.

Back in the hangar, I saw XCOR's chief Engineer, Dan DeLong sitting and looking up at the rafters. I told him I couldn't tell what he was thinking. He said he wasn't thinking of anything. I just stood there. Then he said "Okay. I was just wondering when the bolts holding those rafters up there were last torqued. I don't think I want to know." Typical unshakable invincible aerospace engineer.

We went to the public viewing area and got within spitting distance of Space Ship One. It was completely encircled by Kern County Sheriffs, standing shoulder to shoulder to keep out the crowd. As they towed it back to the hangar, we got some excellent pictures unobscured by the mob.

Then we headed home.

I feel like I was present at the start of a new era. We're starting over what was begun back with the mercury missions, and this time we're doing it right. Private companies are replicating government accomplishments for a fraction of the cost and with greater repeatability and reliability. There are rumors of an X-Prize Mark II, for successfully orbiting a human. There are companies talking about sending research payloads to the moon. It's very exciting to be kicking the government out of places where it just doesn't belong.

I'm gonna go to mars.

—Nato out

***Orbit, Sooner Than You Think***—Rutan hopes success in this venture would initiate a new private space race to usher affordable space travel to the common (perhaps upper-upper-middle class) man. Rutan estimates first-generation public spacecraft—and SpaceShipOne is scaleable—will offer "rides" at \$30,000-50,000 and second-generation craft will do it for closer to \$10,000. "We're heading to orbit sooner than you think... The next 25 years will be a wild ride... and one that historians will note was done for the benefit of all," said Rutan. The people who drove to the site in the Mojave desert clearly shared Burt's vision that the event would be, like the Wright Brothers' first flight before a skeptical audience in Europe, an exhibition for the ages. "I just wanted to be here to see it," said Greg, who flew in from Falls Church, Virginia. Nobody mentioned the 90-degree temperatures and the blowing dirt.—*AV-flash 10.26a* 

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**The new order of logbooks and intro-to-soaring video tapes are in the hanger in two boxes on the very top of the book shelf. We have 30 of each.—Joe Lingeitch Membership Officer**

## To those who are leasing hangar slots

### for their trailers:

Until further notice the club is going to have to rent our hangar space on a monthly basis, which in turn means you are going to have to pay for your hangar slots on the same basis. The monthly rate is \$60.42, which is due at the beginning of each month. You can remit directly to the treasurer or at the field. Except for the payment due now (for July) all future payments are expected to be made on time in order not to risk forfeiture to someone on the waiting list. Treasurer's address:

SSC  
358 Windsor Lane  
Winchester, VA 22602-2328

*Thanks, Bob Collier, SSC Treasurer*

The hangar rental rate requested by Bob is the same as our previous rate. We have not negotiated new rates, nor has the Warren County Airport Commission provided any written notice of any rate change or based-aircraft fee. We did send to the WCAC a proposed lease that would incorporate a fee increase of approximately



*Some days you just need to stop what you are doing, and smell the clover.  
Bob Collier and 289—Dick Otis Photo*

\$10 per month and we did agree that we would accept our proposed lease as an interim agreement (though the WCAC might not).

Thus, you may be on the hook for an additional ~\$10, but we have not agreed to a BAF. My best legal advice is that possession is "n" points of the law, and we are better off staying put at this time than fleeing the scene. Maybe this is not as definitive a response as you (Bill and others) might like, but it's the best I can do.—George Hazelrigg

## Shoo In

Dennis, thank you for your letter of June 3, 2004 announcing my nomination as a candidate for Regional Director for SSA Region IV. If elected, I look forward to working with you and the other SSA Directors.—Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon

### Biography

Jim learned to fly Gliders at Godfrey Field (now Leesburg Municipal Airport) in 1965 at age 29. Since then, he's accumulated a little over 2000 hours in gliders, plus another couple of hundred in single engine airplanes, and a CFG. He has been a SSA Instructor since 1983, and is currently a Master SSAI.

He has owned four personal gliders, plus a part of a couple more in a commercial operation. He currently flies an ASW-20C in partnership. He holds the Gold C with two diamonds.

He was a Director of the Warrenton Soaring Center, a commercial operation in northern Virginia and was its Corporate Secretary for several years. Later, he was a founding Director and Secretary, later (and currently) the Chief Flight Instructor, of the Skyline Soaring Club, created in 1991. He has been associated as an active member of four other soaring Clubs over the years.

As the Chairman of the Classic Division of the Vintage Sailplane Association (a Division of the SSA) since 1995, he promoted the concept of internet "type-sites" for Classic Sailplanes, (those over 25 years old), and is currently the manager of one of them - the Cirrus website - recognized internationally as a key resource for the maintenance and restoration of the Schempp-Hirth Cirrus sailplane.

He helped create the Glider Program in the Virginia Wing of the

Civil Air Patrol in 1999, and is currently a CAP Glider Check Pilot.

He was recently appointed as a FAA Safety Counselor, specializing in soaring, by the Dulles FSDO.

If elected, he intends to pursue a program focusing on recruitment and retention of SSA members, promotion of SSA Club/Chapter creation, and intra-Regional information networks to promote safety, training, resolution of airspace and airport issues, promotion of SSA-CAP collaboration, and the exploitation of the Region's unique human resources to affect national policy regarding soaring.

Don't miss Jim's article "Glider Basics for the Power Pilot" in The Front Royal Unicom, <http://skylinesoaring.org/FRR-NEWS/200406.pdf>—Editor

*Photo by Karl Mueller, 2001*



*I will not be back in VA until sometime in September or October. —Fred LaSor*

Fred is returning to the farm in Ohio. The club owes a deep debt of gratitude to Fred LaSor for all the services he has provided as both flight training instructor and tow pilot. Thank you Fred, we hope to see you again in the Fall. You will be missed by the Club.

Congratulations to Rob Creedon on his solo, June 18.

Please welcome our newest members to the club:  
*George Ross and his son Loring (family member).*

Some thoughts from an ADO—Reggie asked me to experiment recently by retrieving aircraft using the left side of the taxi way. I found it is easier to see both the wing walker AND the aircraft, (remember the left side mirror is broken) when using the left side. Another advantage would be the ability to allow a power craft to pass by temporarily backing the glider, tail first, into the grass.

While it may seem obvious, **always** be sure the tow cable is released and clear of the glider before moving the tow car back to its staging area.

For those who have not taken the Wing Runner course offered by Soaring Safety Foundation I highly recommend it to you—<http://www.soaringsafety.org/school/wingrunner/toc.htm>—*Rick Harris*

*Four Drugs Found in Pilot*—A pilot who died in a crash that also killed five others had taken a cocktail of powerful prescription drugs, according to an NTSB report released last week. The pilot, identified by the Sentinel & Enterprise as Robert A. Monaco, had the antidepressants imipramine and desipramine, the anti-seizure drug carbamazepine and the narcotic pain reliever morphine in his system when the Beech B200 went down in a sheet-metal shop near the Leominster, Mass. airport. The Sentinel & Enterprise, of Fitchburg, Mass., said that combination of drugs could cause drowsiness and a lack of coordination in a pilot. The plane was taking six people from New York to Leominster. Only a 13-year-old girl survived. Witnesses told the NTSB the plane made sharp turns as it approached the airport. The pilot was being treated for severe pain, episodes of disorientation, seizures and migraines, according to the report.—*AVflash 10.26b*

*Ercoupe Fulfills a Fantasy*—It might not be everyone's idea of a dream flight, but for Broderick Nixon, an Ercoupe was his ticket to fulfilling a lifelong fantasy. FantasyKids.com arranged a day for 17-year-old Broderick, who uses a wheelchair because of cerebral palsy, in the right seat of the Ercoupe piloted by John Trowbridge. With Broderick on the yoke and Trowbridge working the rudder pedals (this Ercoupe had the conversion) the pair flew between the Texas cities of Willis, Conroe, Brenham and Tomball last May 28. The civic governments of each of the cities also pitched in to make the flight memorable. At each stop, Broderick was greeted by local

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We live, my dear soul, in an age of trial. What will be the consequence, I know not. —JOHN ADAMS TO ABIGAIL ADAMS, 1774

officials and declared the honorary mayor. He was treated to lunch and generally given the VIP treatment at each of the stops. His only complaint was the effect of a Texas sky on the bubble canopy of the Ercoupe. "The next time I fly, I'm gonna wear my bathing suit. It's hot in there," he said.—*AVflash 10.26b*

*Update of last month's USAF Academy article*—Officials at the U.S. Air Force Academy, in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Tuesday cleared 45 aircraft to return to service; the aircraft had been grounded in January and again in April for safety concerns. The Academy says it has resolved all issues about the safety of the fleet. Affected aircraft include: TG-10B\C\D unpowered gliders and TG-14 motor-gliderns, T-41 and Cessna 150 single-engine aircraft, and UV-18 Twin Otter jump-platform aircraft. Changes made to address the maintenance issues included a detailed nose-to-tail audit of all aircraft components, improved documentation procedures, and modified maintenance contracts to allow for stronger contractor oversight.—*AVflash 10.25b*

*K-21 Ramp assembled for use*



Thank you Dick for showing us the photo of the ramp in position.

One point to notice on that photo is that the **Left Wheel is not in proper alignment for loading the "K"**. Unless both wheels are in line with the direction the "K" is to be pushed (**like the right wheel is**), the dolly could twist in its chocks causing misalignment of the ramp.—*Bill Bentley.*

*Really nice meet symbol—Phil*



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*All Adams quotes are from "John Adams", David McCullough's Pulitzer Prize winning biography. Copyright © 2001 by David McCullough and published by Simon&Schuster.*



**SKYLINES**

July, 2004

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**Skyline Soaring Club, Inc.**

<http://www.skylinesoaring.org>