



22 May, 2014

Mr. Peter W. Smith, Director
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

RE: Soaring Hall of Fame Nomination: Henry "Hank" Nixon

Dear Mr. Smith,

I'm writing to nominate Hank Nixon as a candidate for induction into the Soaring Hall of Fame in 2014. Hank's career in soaring clearly exemplifies both the "highest achievements" and the "highest contributions" to the sport of soaring. As a result, within the US soaring community, the name "Uncle Hank" is a household word. A detailed summary of his achievements and contributions follows.

First, let me speak in personal terms. I met Hank in 2004 when I was fortunate to have him take me through my ab initio training. An instructor par excellence, he brings his lifetime of experience to the task of turning neophytes into skillful and safe glider pilots. For many, he becomes a long-term mentor, and continues to impart his enthusiasm, encyclopedic knowledge and personal philosophy of cross-country flying and racing, encouraging "his kids" to grow in the sport. It's exciting to have a former National Champion and famous racing pilot guiding our first tentative forays into badge flying and racing. Additionally, a large number of us come to rely on Hank for help sorting-out and repairing the gliders we purchase and fly over the years. When it comes to helping his students and other soaring pilots, the word "no" is not part of his vocabulary. This kind of deeply personal investment in his students and fellow club members increases the number of pilots who swell the ranks of the SSA and who will populate the sport of soaring for the rest of their lives.

As a member of Valley Soaring in Middletown, NY, the club that Hank founded with his wife, Dianne Black-Nixon, I have watched him work tirelessly, year after year. After the typical, long days of volunteering as Chief Instructor and tow pilot on the weekends, virtually every other free hour throughout the year goes to maintain and restore the club's fleet in Skunkwerks, his basement workshop. He is the steady hand and the voice of experience within our club of approximately 100 members, and without his enormous, ongoing, contributions, not only would the club not exist in the first place – it is unlikely that it would have survived and flourished over the ensuing decades. Without Hank, it is no exaggeration to say that a whole lot of soaring pilots would spend their weekends staring at the cumulus from the sidewalk, wishing there was someplace nearby where they could go flying.

Last summer, my fourteen-year-old niece soloed in a 2-33, under his instruction. She was one of more than 300 students to do so. The empowerment and confidence a teenager gains in learning to soar, (before being licensed to drive!) is a profound thing. It is hard to calculate the enormity of this gift, given again and again by Uncle Hank, and the effect that this has had on hundreds of lives and on the sport of soaring in the US.

Doug Jacobs once described flying sailplanes to me as a tiny sport, one that would "fit in a tea cup." Because it's so small and admittedly esoteric, because our races have no appreciable audience, and because there is only modest press at best, the heroes of soaring are essentially unknown outside of the sport. This begs a definition of "fame." Are even our World and National Champion pilots really "famous", if their name recognition doesn't extend beyond the community of other soaring pilots?

I am a garden-variety, weekend-warrior kind of soaring nut. My career and family limit my flying, but even so, I have managed to fly in places like Marfa; Parowan; Mifflin; New Castle; Durango; Mount Washington; and recently at the Seniors in Florida (please *don't* look at the score sheet!). Wherever I travel, at some point I mention Uncle Hank to the pilots I meet. This never fails to bring a smile of recognition to their faces, invariably followed by some appreciative comment which usually runs along the lines of "He is a true gentleman...." "He's a superb pilot...." "He's taught an unbelievable number of people to fly...." "I love the winglets he made for my '27...." "He's done a lot for racing in this country...." Sometimes someone drags out the old joke about "Admiral Nixon," or the small lake in Pennsylvania which is now named after him. I've been taking an informal survey, and I've discovered that Hank is truly famous within our tightly-knit US soaring community. Virtually every pilot I've ever mentioned him to knows his name. Uncle Hank has an enormous, and well-deserved, reputation within our little tea cup.

Soaring is Hank's life's work. He has undertaken this work with gusto, intelligence, patience, humor, and kindness. His achievements are not just the very long list of accomplishments on the following page, but in a larger sense, the enormous community of people whose lives have been touched through his skill and generosity, who hold him in highest esteem, and in their hearts. I am confident that each of them would agree that Uncle Hank has a rightful place in the history of soaring in the United States, and in the Soaring Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Paul Villinski

SSA # 18243

Hank Nixon Soaring Achievements and Contributions

Glider pilot since 1972; SSA member since 1962; Commercial Pilot and CFIG

Soaring Accomplishments:

- Diamond Badge #1040; 2013
- World Distance Award #13; 2009
- FAI 1000KM Diploma #33; 1990, on furthest racing task ever called to that date
- Diamond Distance; 1977; Diamond Goal; 1976
- Gold Badge #1053; 1976
- Silver Badge #2684; 1974
- More than 130,000 cross-country miles logged
- Currently 6500 glider hours in over 12,000 flights

Racing Accomplishments:

- 15 Meter National Champion; 2000
- Schreder 15-Meter Class Trophy; 2000
- Numerous Top 5 National finishes
- 18 Regional Championships in Sports, Standard, 15M, Open, and Two-Seat.
- US Club Class Team; Gawler, Australia; 2001. Twice on daily podium; finished 7th overall.
- US Club Class Team; Musbach, Germany; 2002. Finished 15th overall.

Contributions and Service to Soaring:

- SSA Exceptional Service Award; 2010
- Most active SSA Instructor in Region 2 numerous times
- Commercial operator in partnership with Dianne Black-Nixon from 1977 to 1994
- Founding Member of the Valley Soaring Club, Middletown, NY, 1994
- Over 9000 training flights provided in the commercial and club environments; more than 8000 tows provided
- More than 300 student pilots endorsed for solo, including more than 30 first solos on 14th birthday
- More than 150 pilots endorsed for certificates with a 100% pass record
- During their commercial operations days, Hank and Dianne provided more than 30 youth training scholarships
- Has provided a glider for club juniors to fly free of charge for over 20 years; currently provides SGS 1-26 # 002 and a Standard Libelle, competition ID "JRS"
- Served on the SSA Competition Rules Subcommittee for 18 years, acted as Chair for close to one-half of that time
- Served on Editorial Advisory Group 2008 - 2014
- Served as Contest Director and Advisor many times
- Authored numerous articles for *Soaring*
- Designs and fabricates sailplane performance parts widely employed and respected by US pilots
- Restored dozens of damaged sailplanes, keeping them operational and flying within the US fleet
- Conceived and developed a "Competition Rookie School" for new contest pilots; has taught this course to countless pilots over the last two decades.
- Coached/mentored numerous junior contest pilots and US Junior Team pilots including Liz Schwenkler; Corey Sullivan; Devin Barganier; Dan Sorenson; Chris Saunders; Joe Walter; Jason Howard; and many others.
- Has provided racing sailplanes to young contest pilots including Liz, Jason, and Chris.
- Implemented a "Contest Riding Program" to introduce pilots to racing, emphasizing these pilots flying. Recently, this program has mostly benefited juniors with several flying during winning days

May 25, 2014

Mr. Peter W. Smith, Director
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

Dear Peter,

This letter is in support of Hank Nixon as an inductee to the SSA National Soaring Hall of Fame.

I feel this honor is more than justified by Hank's soaring achievements, service to the governance of the sport and long-time and continuing training and mentoring of new pilots with an emphasis on youth.

Hank is a seasoned and accomplished soaring competition pilot with multiple regional wins as well as a national gold medal in the 15 Meter class.

He has been a member of the US Soaring Team on two occasions.

He has organized many fund raising events for US Teams, especially the Junior Team, and contributed a substantial amount of his own money to the cause as well.

He has served for over 18 years on the SSA Competition Rules Committee.

He has organized many regional soaring competitions.

He has loaned his high performance gliders to promising, but financially strapped junior members.

He has donated his knowledge and skills with repairs of composite structures to the benefit of junior members, thus giving them a chance to fly in competition.

He has been a driving force in the Valley Soaring Club of Middletown, NY contributing countless hours of flight instruction at no charge.

For these reasons I would like to nominate Hank as an inductee to the US Soaring Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Karl Striedieck
Member, Soaring Hall of Fame.

Al Tyler
PO Box 65
Wagener, SC 29164

June 2, 2014

Mr. Peter W. Smith, Director
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 13903

Peter,

As a long time member and volunteer for SSA I have gotten to know most everyone involved as Paul says in this "Tea cup" sport. I have been privileged to work , socialize, admire and best of all fly with most of the "greats". You know them all and most are focused on their goals and achievements , some more than others. In this talented group of individuals are a few that willingly share the gift they have in various ways by writing, volunteering, mentoring, sharing techniques, and other various methods. I know of no other individual in this sport that has shared his love and passion of this sport and his gifted talents more so than my good friend Hank Nixon.

At the contest in Perry this year Hank reveled in telling me the stories of the daily flights in the " Bus Class" and how these young pilots just had a blast racing in the front seat of the club's ASK21 with Hank coaching them along (doing very little of the actual flying). Hank would rather ride with one of these kids than win the Nationals and I know that just listening to him and seeing the joy on his face as he smiles and occasionally rears back and lets go with that unique Nixon laugh!

I can remember Charlie Spratt advising that the SSA Hall of Fame is such an important nomination that only those individuals that truly deserve to be there should be considered. Maybe some years no one is worthy of this great honor. This year I think Hank is truly a worthy nominee and I support Paul's nomination and ask that it please receive your committees consideration.

Respectfully, Al Tyler



JOHN GILL
HARRIS HILL SOARING CORP.

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ELMIRA, N.Y. 14905

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corkygill133@gmail.com

Dear Sir and Madam,

I would like to support the nomination of Henry Nixon to the Soaring Hall of Fame for 2014. I have known Hank for forty years and I believe he is one of the biggest promoters of soaring I have ever met.

He founded the Valley Soaring Club and has worked endless hours there to help many, many people enjoy, and join the world of soaring. He has restored many sailplanes to flying condition and even restored a Libelle sailplane which he assigned to the Junior members of the Valley Soaring Club.

Every year in November Hank has brought many of his club members to Harris Hill for the Snowbird Contest. This gives them a taste of Soaring competitions. Most of these people return every year.

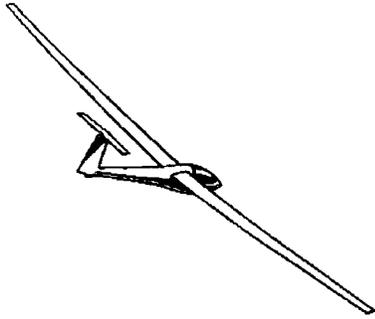
Hank has come to several Regional contest with a ASK 21 two place sailplane. That was so he could take a student pilot along on a SSA Sanctioned Contest.

He has been a U.S. National Champion and represented the United States in the World Club Class Contest in Australia in 2001.

I cannot think of a more deserving person for entry into the Soaring Hall of Fame for 2014.

John Gill
John "Corky" Gill

SSA # 264938



Bob Wander
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June 2, 2014

Mr. Peter W. Smith, Director
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

Dear Peter,

Hope this letter finds you well. I was browsing in my Merriam-Webster dictionary this morning and came across this definition of sportsmanship:

Sports-man-ship (noun): Fair play, respect for opponents, and polite behavior by someone who is competing in a sport or other competition.

Full Definition of SPORTSMANSHIP:

Conduct (as fairness, respect for one's opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing) becoming to one participating in a sport.

Nice and simple, isn't it? I admire those individuals who exhibit a high level of sportsmanlike behavior.

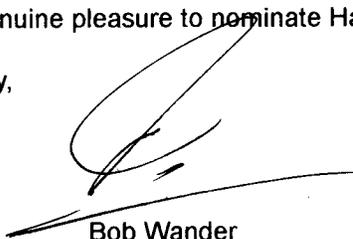
Hall of Fame nominations are coming due. I think that inclusion in the Hall of Fame should be based upon soaring accomplishments and sportsmanlike behavior.

Hank Nixon's involvement in ALL aspects of American soaring is unique. From SGS-2-22 training flights to glider repairs to SGS 1-26 fleets to SSA Board duties to mentoring future pilots and racing pilots to national champion racing pilot, he has not only done it ALL, but he manages to do it all with a huge grin on his face. I have enclosed an addendum that summarizes a lifetime of soaring achievements.

I have had many contacts with Hank and many opportunities to observe his participation in our sport. In my line of work I have met literally thousands of soaring pilots. Hank has consistently demonstrated the highest standard of sportsmanlike behavior.

It is a genuine pleasure to nominate Hank Nixon for induction into the Soaring Hall of Fame in 2014.

Sincerely,



Bob Wander

Addendum (next page): Summary of Hank Nixon's soaring accomplishments and contributions; special thanks to SSAer Paul Villinski for preparing this summary.

Moses J. Acee
5201 Creaser Road
Westmoreland, N.Y. 13490

Mr. Peter Smith
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

Subject: Hank Nixon – Nomination Soaring Hall of Fame

Dear Peter:

This letter is written to give my support for the nomination and induction of Henry “Hank” Nixon into the Soaring Hall of Fame.

His soaring resume speaks for itself. What elevates Hank above many Soaring Hall of Famers is his diversity of activity in our sport. Whether in the arena of competition, instruction, promotion or service he has excelled and continues to do so. He is experienced in the field of sailplane structure and repair and has helped many glider pilots during competitions with on-the-spot repairs to keep them in the race, not to mention the Libelle he restored for the Valley Soaring Juniors.

On a personal note, Hank, always in a situational safety awareness mode, saved a possible life-threatening event by observing, prior to my flight departure at Middletown, the detachment of my elevator push rod.

His contributions to soaring more than qualify him for the Soaring Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Moses J Acee

June 12, 2014

Mr. Peter W. Smith, Director
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

RE: Soaring Hall of Fame Nomination: Henry "Hank" Nixon

Dear Peter,

I am writing in support of Hank Nixon's nomination to the Soaring Hall of Fame.

Frankly, this nomination is so obvious I'm surprised Hank wasn't awarded this honor long ago. "Uncle Hank".... To a large degree, this says it all. How can someone who is widely known within the sport as our "Uncle" not be in our Hall of Fame?

I've known Hank well for many years, initially as a fellow competitor in soaring competitions and then later also through his work as an SSA volunteer. I was privileged to work with Hank on the SSA Contest Rules Committee for many years. He served as chairman of the committee for most of that time. During his tenure on the committee he could always be counted on to be intently focused on what was best for the sport – safety, growth, junior participation, competition fairness, affordability, and of course, the pure enjoyment of it all.

Uncle Hank has contributed to our sport at so many levels – Club founder, club operation and management, CFIG, towpilot, mentoring young pilots, glider and towplane "fixit guy", cross-country mentor, glider racing mentor, glider enhancements innovator, and SSA volunteer. He has also become one of our most successful and highly respected competition pilots, competing at regional, national, and international levels, and has represented the SSA on the US Team at World Championships. And he even has a lake named after him.

Please support Hank's nomination to the Hall of Fame.

Thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth Sorenson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Sorenson
SSA Board of Director and 1st Vice Chair
SSA Contest Committee Chairman

From: Aerophoto Walter Striedieck aeropics@sover.net
Subject: Hall of Fame Nomination
Date: July 17, 2014 at 12:35 AM
To: petersmith@soaringmuseum.org

Hello Peter,

I would like to put in a word for Hank Nixon's nomination to the SSA Hall of Fame.....

The SSA Hall of Fame has an impressive collection of inductees, each representing a worthy contribution to the sport of soaring in one or more ways.

Hank Nixon has earned the status of an inductee by showing a rare talent for both mechanical expertise which he has leveraged to contribute to the soaring fleet, together with teaching and mentoring skill to supply pilots for that fleet.

I feel that I am writing this together with a very large crowd who have benefited from Hank's style in almost all aspects of the sport.

The definition of fame.....

"The condition of being known or talked about by many people, especially on account of notable achievements"

.....is fully applicable to Hank.

Please enter my support for his inclusion.

Walter Striedieck

802 460 3686
802 376 9922 (C)

6/6/2014

Mr. Peter W. Smith, Director
National Soaring Museum
51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

Re: Supporting Soaring Hall of Fame Nomination of Henry "Hank" Nixon

Dear Peter,

I am writing in enthusiastic support of the nomination of Hank Nixon into the Soaring Hall of Fame. A nominee needs to exemplify both the "highest achievements" and the "highest contributions" to the sport of soaring. The specific achievements of Hank Nixon are listed in Paul Villinski's letter. I would like to add personally observed contributions that Hank has made to the sport of soaring.

Youth involvement is the future of Soaring. I have seen the results of Hank's tenacious work with youth over the last 20+ years I have known him. Every year he has brought a well trained and enthusiastic group of youth to Harris Hill's Snowbird Contest, over Thanksgiving weekend. Not only are they having fun soaring, but they often win.

I have also seen his encouragement, mentoring, and support of US Junior Team members. He provided my son, Jason Howard, as well as others, with a contest ready sailplane, in preparation for the Junior World Championship. A picture of Jason, flying in Hank's ASW24, during a Miflin contest, was the centerfold in a Soaring Magazine. The encouragement and mentoring, as well as the sailplane, did a lot to prepare him for the Junior Worlds. He has done the same thing for a number of other US Junior World Team members, as detailed by Paul Villinski's letter.

Uncle Hank, as he is affectionally known in the Soaring World, has been a consistent contributor to the world of sailplane racing. His individual achievements are again documented by Paul Villinski's letter. I have also seen him work late into the night, working on a competitor's sailplane, so they can fly the next day. "That's just what we do", is his reply to thanks.

His character as a person, as well as his decades of contributions to the sport of soaring, makes "Uncle Hank" an ideal candidate for the US Soaring Hall of Fame.

Guerry Howard, MD