

SSA Directors Report
Regions 2 and 4
February, 2018
James C. Garrison

This report is an update of the September, 2017 report for SSA Regions 2 and 4 as compiled in February, 2018.

Happenings in Our Regions

Alby

Alby has made it to the National Soaring Museum in Elmira, NY. Alby's travels through Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania were reported in September, 2017. In August, Alby was brought to Karl Striedieck's field by Shane Neitzey for the next leg(s) of his voyage across America. Those legs required soaring from State College, PA to the final destination at the National Soaring Museum at Elmira, NY. Remarkably, the trip from Mid-Pennsylvania to Elmira was made in a single flight on a cold day in November. On November 10, 2017 a cold front passage brought excellent soaring conditions to the region. Karl and Sarah Arnold took off from Karl's Eagle Field in his Duo, flew the Bald Eagle ridge to Williamsport, PA, climbed to about 6000 feet MSL in a thermal and flew cloud streets all the way to Harris Hill in Elmira without any additional circling. This flight has been detailed in a number of places; recently in the February 2018 edition of *Soaring* and in other magazines intended for more general aviation audiences. For one of these, see –

<https://generalaviationnews.com/2018/01/29/albys-remarkable-journey-across-america/>

Region 4 Virginia Clubs

Virginia Soaring Association – The five clubs in Virginia comprise the Virginia Soaring Association (Tidewater Soaring Society, Skyline Soaring Club, Shenandoah Valley Soaring, Merlin Soaring and Blue Ridge Soaring Society). No major VaSA activities since September, 2017.

Tidewater Soaring Society – Tidewater has 79 active members, operates off their own airport, has 13 CFI's, 2 towplanes, 3 two place ships and about 23 private ships. No winter activities were reported following my request for information to include in this report.

Merlin Soaring – Merlin also operates off of a private airport in Amelia, Virginia. They purchased a new (to them) Cessna 152 towplane and have upgraded its propeller and radio equipment in the past few months. They now have two instructors and membership currently stands at 25 pilots with 5 new members added in the last year. They are holding group Condor sessions this winter.

Skyline Soaring - Skyline operates off of a public airport at Front Royal, Virginia. They have about 98 members and obtained a Discus CS for their membership in September. Skyline had a bad ending to the summer with a fatal towplane accident in October. This is a strong club and they have regrouped with the purchase of a 260 hp Pawnee to replace the one involved in the accident. They also had a SSF site visit by Burt Compton in September. Skyline stopped operations for the winter and will resume flying in late February, 2018 after their safety meeting.

Shenandoah Valley Soaring -- SVS has a stable membership of about 60 pilots. The club owns a 235 hp Pawnee, two 2-33's, an ASK-21 and a SGS 1-26. The club is still displaced from its home in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and is operating at the airport in Petersburg, West Virginia. This is a great soaring site, but the distance between members' homes and Grant county airport is becoming a burden for the club. Possible new sites for a gliderport in the Shenandoah Valley are being actively explored.

Blue Ridge Soaring Society - BRSS operates off their own airport and has upgraded their fleet with the addition of a new ASK-21 which replaces a Blanik L-23. They have about 15 CFG's, but only about 5 are active. John Moluphy, one of the region's DPE's is the current president. They do not have any winter activities to report.

Region 4 Maryland Clubs

Atlantic Soaring - Atlantic Soaring is based close to the Chesapeake Bay at Harford County Airpark (0W3) near Churchville, Maryland. No winter activities were reported following my request for information to include in this report.

Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association – Their president, Mike Higgins, reports that MASA received two new ASK-21's to replace their aging Grob 103s and by all reports they are very pleased with them. Their instructors are working to check out members in the new sailplanes. Their membership has increased about 10% over the last year, and they are planning to continue the Region 4 North contest in October of 2018.

Clubs in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York

The Information for the three clubs directly below (Aero Club Albatross, Brandywine Soaring and Nutmeg Soaring Association) is paraphrased from their President's email response following my requests for information about their winter activities.

Aero Club Albatross - Aero Club Albatross is based at Blairstown airport (1N7) in New Jersey. They fly a Grob G103 Twin Astir, a LS-4, a LS-3, a 1-26, a 1-34 and a 2-33.

Bill Thar reports that club membership has remained relatively constant in the past year. Because some of the Blairstown pilots (like Daniel Sazhin) are making excellent ridge and wave flights on their ridge system, ACA has begun to try spread the word about the excellent soaring in their area (which is only a 1 hour drive from the NYC area). In 2018, ACA scheduled two soaring seminars open to all pilots covering (a) Wave soaring in the Catskills and Pocono Mountains, and (b) Ridge Soaring on the Blairstown ridge system. About 60 pilots attended the Wave seminar in January and 40 are planning on attending the Ridge seminar on February 17. The club is gaining new members from some of those attending these educational events.

The club members have recently refinished their LS-4 and Twin Astir. These projects have required a great deal of work but the projects have helped build the club's spirit and cohesiveness as well as providing members with beautifully restored gliders for flying.

ACA has also begun a renewed emphasis on safety following the loss of 2 sailplanes (fortunately with no injuries). A SSF site visit is planned for 2018.

ACA will acquire a tow plane in 2018 to provide the club with more flexibility in soaring operations. Their current glider FBO only provides tows on weekends and an ACA tow plane would allow them to increase their weekday operations.

Brandywine Soaring Association - Richard Kellerman reports that Brandywine Soaring is anxiously awaiting the arrival of a brand new ASK-21 (Schleicher seems to be selling lots of gliders). Funding of the purchase was achieved with member donations and a small loan from the AOPA. The ASK will round out their fleet which currently consists of a Pawnee, a Blanik L-23, a SGS 1-26, and a Grob 103.

During the past year, Brandywine Soaring was flying at Smyrna Airport in Delaware while the runway at their home airport (New Garden, N57 in Toughkenamon, PA) was being improved. They are excited to return to New Garden airport as the Spring soaring season arrives. They report that thanks to a farsighted and glider-friendly airport manager they will have a wide, smooth and long grass area to the South of the new runway which will greatly facilitate their operations. (We should all be so lucky).

Nutmeg Soaring Association - Nutmeg Soaring Association Members own and operate Freehold Airport near the Catskill Mountains. They have ten aircraft hangars on their airport, operate a Pawnee and an Husky as tow Planes, and fly their Grob 102, a Grob Twin Astir and a SGS 1-26. The airport maintains 22 campsites with electricity, a bunk house and showers.

Mike Opitz reports that during a long cold winter, they are working on selling their Twin Astir. Opening day has been set for Saturday, April 14. They are planning to have Open houses in May and/or June to increase interest in their club.

Other Region 2 & 4 Clubs

No response to my request for information was received from the following Clubs:

CloudNiners, Cumberland Soaring Group, Hawk Valley Soaring, Long Island Soaring Association, Philadelphia Glider Council and Valley Soaring Club. Presumably, they are all enduring a long, cold winter as best they can.

US Team Pilots

Two Junior pilots from the region, Daniel Sazhin from Brooklyn and J.P. Stewart from Roanoke remain on the US Junior Team. J.P. is heavily involved in promoting soaring among the US Juniors. See - <http://juniors.ssa.org/>. Daniel has organized the ACA ridge and wave seminars (see above). The next Junior event will be held this summer at Sandhill Soaring Club in Adrian, Michigan in conjunction with the Region 6 North Contest. Dates are June 30 – July 7, 2018. See - <http://www.r6n.org/> for more information.

Regional Contests

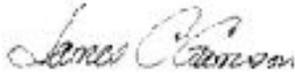
Region 4 South Contest at New Castle – The R4S contest had 30 entries in 2 classes – 18 meter and FAI combined. The weather was excellent and provided 6 full contest days with good flying. Top speeds were in the high 50 mph to mid 60 mph range most days. The usual social events took over after flying and the contest was another example of the excellent hospitality provided by BRSS. Tim Wells won the 18 meter class in his Ventus and Karl Striedieck won the FAI class with his ASW-27. Ken Sorenson and Evan Ludeman were second in the 18 meter and FAI classes, respectively.

Region 4 North Contest at MASA – The R4N contest had 20 entries – unfortunately the weather was not among those who showed up. Only a single, devalued day was flown. Undaunted, MASA will hold the event again in 2018.

FIRCs

FIRCs - The Soaring Safety Foundation held a FIRC in the Washington DC area on January 20 / 21, 2018. Rich Carlson and Tom Johnson presented. The course was held at the Heritage Hunt Club in Gainesville, VA with 21 participants from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. A very wide range of aviation experience was represented leading to many interesting discussions. All instructors revalidated their CFI-G certificates.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James C. Garrison".

James C. Garrison
Regions 2 and 4