

# Shenandoah Valley Soaring

Eagle's Nest Airport, Waynesboro, VA

February 2007

## ANNUAL MEETING

*SVS's annual membership meeting will be held Saturday, March 10, 9 a.m. at the Augusta County Library, 1759 Jefferson Hwy (Rt. 250), Fishersville.*

*Officers and board members for the coming year will be elected at this meeting, and our annual pre-season safety seminar will be conducted by Hal Loken.*



Walter built his two-seater SparrowHawk II gyroplane from a kit

## 'GYROMAN' RATES AGAIN

Walter Grooms, aka Gyroman, picked up yet another rating – certified flight instructor, gyroplane – during a recent trip to Arizona. That rating is now added to his many others –CFI-G, CFI, CFII, CFI-RG, AGI and multi-land commercial.

Walter's long road in aviation all started with his first glider instructional flight at Eagle's Nest in September, 1991 when he became hooked on flying, and when, he says, "the slippery slope to the poorhouse" began. Then came ultralights, powered aircraft and now – as we can't help but notice on many a Saturday morning as he arrives from the sky for a day of glider instructing – gyroplanes.

A gyroplane looks sort of like a helicopter, with a large overhead rotor blade. But unlike a helicopter, the rotor is powered by the forward motion of the craft, with the forward motion provided by a conventional prop. The gyroplane's engine can, however, provide a boosting start for the rotor.

Walter says he became intrigued by gyroplanes during a visit to the EAA's Oshkosh Fly-

In several years ago, when he saw craft exhibited there by the American Autogyro division of Groen Brothers Aviation, Inc., which is based in Salt Lake City, UT.

The company had developed a kit gyroplane, a two-seater called the SparrowHawk II, and soon, Walter bought one and built it.

And, within the past year he became a dealer for American Autogyro – the dealership is named American Autogyro of Harrisonburg, VA. He's already sold one SparrowHawk II kit, and will be instructing its builder on the art of flying it.

Walter says he plans to retire shortly, and he wanted a post-retirement career in aviation. Representing American Autogyro, he says, will be a major part of that new career.

"On March 1," he says, "I will begin a sheltered existence of life on a fixed income. I will leave the ever-dangerous occupation, as an officer of the law, walking around as a live target at the Rockingham County Sheriff's department, and trade it for the peaceful serenity and safety as a gyroplane flight instructor."

## NOTES

### **Our sympathy**

Condolences to **Chic Randow**, whose father passed away in early February.

### **1-26 Support**

Thanks largely to versatile handyman **Mike Moses**, with the support of several SVS members, a hoist and suspension arrangement for the 1-26 has been installed in the hangar. The 1-26 will be suspended above the Pawnee. At the moment, it hangs above the Blanik with One-Nine Tango's hoist and suspension paraphernalia.

### **19-Tango**

The word is that work on and annual inspection of 19T at **Larry Stahl's** shop in Petersburg, WV is completed, with logistics of returning it to Eagle's Nest still up in the air (so to speak). Meanwhile, the **wave camp** at Larry's airport, **Grant County Airport**, will be conducted **Feb. 24-March 4**.

### **98-Zulu**

As of mid-February, steps toward repair and inspection of the **Pawnee** were underway. A new prop is available, and arrangements for inspecting the engine were being made. Watch e-mails for the latest.

### **New Plane**

**Jim Garrison's** brand new Schleicher ASG-29 has arrived, paperwork is completed and, as he noted after a frustrating assembly effort one recent weekend, "If I can ever get the @#\$\$%^&\* wing pins in, I may be able to fly it." It's a flapped glider with an 18-meter (59 ft.) wingspan (it can also be 15 meters, or 49 ft., due to a two-piece wing design) and its stated L/D is 52 to 1. It has state-of-the-art construction design and materials, and, as Jim notes, the trailer is especially nice, too.

## **Got something to say about SSA?? Good! Here's how!**

*By Jim Kellett, Soaring Society of America  
Region IV Director*

The Future Restructuring Task Force (FRTF) is now formally up and running - - and one of the very first steps is an ORGANIZED tool to (a) keep you up to speed on what's going on with this group, and (b) start gathering USEFUL suggestions from YOU!

In case you've forgotten, the FRTF was one of the two major initiatives from the SSA's Board of Directors last October; it is a small group of highly dedicated volunteers with a one-year mandate to 'reinvent' SSA. So, for those of you who've been generous with me with your ideas about 'what's wrong' with SSA or 'what SSA should be doing', or for those who have ideas for new things that we should consider doing, *please* check this out and – see below – make YOUR experience and suggestions known to the Task Force!!

There is now a "FRTF" web page accessible to SSA members. Go to the <http://www.ssa.org> website; log in as a member (don't know how? Go to the SSA homepage, look in the lower left hand corner, and click on 'Login Help'); and click on the link in the news paragraph about the FRTF . . . once there, you'll see all kinds of information about who's on the Task Force, what they're doing, and the first (of what I hope is many) links to share YOUR thoughts with the Task Force.

**"If flying were the language of man, soaring would be its poetry." - anon**

