

# Shenandoah Valley Soaring

Eagle's Nest Airport – Waynesboro, VA

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[www.svsoar.org](http://www.svsoar.org)



## Chic Randow: Impressive Aviation Career

By Jeanne Pitsenberger

It was not long after Graham and I joined SVS that we attended our first annual safety meeting that was being held at his home. I walked into the house and remember seeing an airplane *inside the house* out of the corner of my eye! Sure enough, our **Chic Randow** was building an airplane in his shop located in the front part of his and Judy's home. Now this is my kind of guy!!

While Judy was studying to be a special education teacher at Jersey City State College, Chic's aviation career began at Teterboro Airport while he was in college at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. His initial flight training was in the Piper Colt, and after just 35 hours of flight time, he took his Private Pilot check ride. Following Air Force ROTC at college he was sent to Del Rio, Texas where flight training continued in T-37s [a twin-engine turbojet built by Cessna], followed by the Lockheed T-33 [trainer version of the Korean War era Shooting Star jet fighter].

Chic's interest in aviation began in his youth. His father served with a carrier air service unit in the Navy, and for as long as he can remember, Chic's ambition was to fly. He served our country in his Air Force career first flying the C-135B [the military version of Boeing's 707-158], and then C-141 "Starlifter" in its first operational squadron. In Vietnam, he flew the O-1 [L-19 "Bird Dog"] and the O-2A as a forward air controller. Operating from Thailand, most of his time was spent conducting air strikes to interdict enemy supplies and defensive anti-aircraft systems along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He also supported Marines and Special

## President's Corner

### **This and That**

I'll just ramble this month.

Last month I wrote about **Mike Shulman** trying to get the decades old lien on N3619T relieved, **Jim Garrison** working on the Blank trailer, and the Board looking into sponsoring an SSF clinic. It is with great pleasure that I report that ALL of these projects have been completed! What an organization!

Almost weekly someone shows up at W13 with a comment about our great website and the friendly reception they get from our secretary, **Ben Johnson**, and others. I am always surprised when strangers have read our newsletters on the website and have reviewed our organizational chart to the extent that they are familiar with our Club to even know the names of members on committees, etc! Our website is the creation of **Alec Bateman** and our hat goes off to him for the outstanding job. **Alec** gives a great deal of the credit to **Bud Branch** who started the website many years ago for SVS. With **Ben's** urging, he just added a calendar that includes activities, tow pilots and tailgate hosts. And, the big thing -- it only takes one click to get to it! Maybe <http://www.svsoar.org> should be your home page, especially if you want to go to some great weather links.

**Hunter Johnson** is providing some extra newsletters each month that will be at W13 for visitors – in full, living color, too!

Some things do not develop as quickly as I had anticipated. For example, I have not seen a great deal of cross-country development that was kicked off by an absolutely great ground school. I HAVE noticed that at least one person has earned a "C" badge and have seen **Jim Garrison** in the cockpit with **Ben Johnson**, conspiring to beat mother nature over the Blue Ridge Mountains, so maybe we're moving in that direction.

We have seven new members since July 1 - all taking lessons. This makes twenty-four on our student roster. The flight instructors are busy!

I am excited to have SVS host for the Soaring Safety Foundation (SSF) clinic on January 12 and 13 and hope we have 100% SVS member participation. Our instructors are good, but they can't possibly cover all glider education material that the SSF professionals will. Please save those dates!

*Graham*

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Forces from the Marine base at Khe Sanh, Vietnam. The L-19s, built by Cessna, were the first all metal and high-flying observation aircraft and were able to take off and land in short distances. [Some of those "Bird Dogs" have been retired for use by the Royal Canadian Air Cadets for glider towing and familiarization flying!]

After a year in Thailand and Vietnam, Chic returned to California where he continued flying C-141s as an aircraft commander, instructor and flight examiner. Two years later, he and the family were off to Japan for three years where he worked mainly in a "ground job," but he did fly T-39's (the Air Force version of Rockwell's N-265 Sabreliner) as he was required to fly a minimum of 100 hours a year. He also taught other pilots in the T-39.

After Japan, he returned to California for two years, still flying the Sabreliner, and eventually settled back east where he was assigned to a "Current Operations" job at the Pentagon in which he planned reserve flying unit force structures. His next job took him to Chile where he was the Air Attaché at the American Embassy.

He missed flying, so he went to the Chilean Air Force for help and was invited to fly their L-19 tow planes. While there he also flew the Blanik L-13 and obtained his Chilean civilian glider rating. He enjoyed the ridge and thermal flying in Chile and particularly liked to take Chilean and American friends and coworkers for flights along the foothills of the Andes Mountains.

Three years later it was back to the Pentagon where he helped start up President Reagan's Strategic Defensive Initiative (SDI) or "Star Wars" program! Initially responsible for developing international cooperative research programs, he eventually became Chief of Staff for SDI, which had grown about 300 civilian and 200 military employees. This important work lasted for fourteen years during which time he traveled extensively throughout the United States and to eighteen countries involved in the SDI program. Unbelievably, one of these cooperating countries was Russia. Judy also had the opportunity to join Chic on many of these trips.

After his distinguished military and civilian career, Chic and Judy retired to Waynesboro, Virginia in 2000. They looked for a place where there was an airport and a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. They were familiar with the Valley while living in northern Virginia, having made several trips to Virginia Tech to visit their son while he was a student. Bethany Lutheran Church in Waynesboro, the W13 family, and SVS are fortunate to have such a wonderful couple in

our midst. Even though we thank Chic for his work as Chief Tow Pilot, and Judy for serving on the current Social Committee, it seems they are often going beyond the call of duty doing something to make SVS a joy to be a part of – like helping with repairs and inspections of Club aircraft, hosting annual safety meetings, etc., etc. And, Chic is having a lot of fun with his Ercoupe! He's been so generous to "give rides" to our members who need to get back and forth to W99.

Thank you, **Chic**, for sharing your story, and for all you do as our SVS Chief Tow Pilot that helps make our soaring so glorious!

*[If you would like to write a profile on another member, Jeanne has an outline to make it easy.]*

## To West Virginia



**Chic Randow** played a key role in getting 19T to **Larry Stahl's** shop in Petersburg, WV last month to replace some bolts on the 2-33's horizontal stabilizer struts. **Larry** is a special member of SVS.

**Graham Pitsenberger** flew 98Z and **Ben Johnson** flew 19T on tow for the trip to Petersburg on September 12, and **Ben** snapped a few pictures on the way. **Chic** flew **Ben** back to Waynesboro in his Ercoupe. The following Saturday, **Chic** flew **Bruce Burkholder** to Petersburg for the return tow, again with **Graham** flying the Pawnee.

**Chic's** commuter services in his Ercoupe made the whole operation efficiently possible.



## ‘I Did It!’



### Evelyn Solos

**Evelyn Gorman** successfully piloted the Blanik alone on Sunday, September 9, at Eagle’s Nest, followed by multiple congratulatory words from fellow SVS members and visitors. Her prime instructor, **Walter Grooms**, performed the ceremonial cutting of her shirttail.



## SVS Board meeting notes, 10-05-07

**Paul Roberts** was elected to the board to fill the unexpired term of **Michael Shulman**, who resigned from the board due to job obligations that take him out of Virginia.

Other actions and notices included:

- Authorized reimbursements up to \$10 for providers of snacks, if needed.

- Gave a go-ahead for **Jim Garrison**, along with fellow committee members **Tom Belt** and **Ben Johnson**, to pursue specific arrangements for SVS hosting an SSA safety seminar/ instructors' certificate renewal clinic January 12 and 13, probably in Charlottesville. Although a primary purpose is to provide instruction for instructors' certificate renewal, it's an excellent course for all glider pilots.
  - Authorized use of SVS aircraft at the Petersburg Wave Camps this winter.
  - Named a committee to look into providing hats and tee shirts with SVS logos on them, for sale to members and to riders and visitors. The committee members are **Jeanne Pitsenberger**, **Mike Moses** and **Norbert Hamm**.
  - The next social activity will be a Winter "Twelfth Night" dinner on Sunday, January 6, at a Charlottesville restaurant yet to be selected.
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## New members

SVS has gained five new members, including two Junior Members, within recent weeks. They are:

- **Daniel S. Hallberg**, 15, of Staunton
- **Steven Webb**, 17, of Lynchburg
- **Lawrence W. Randall** of Ruckersville, retired from the FAA and who has a glider rating
- **Matthew M. Sketta** of Staunton, a US AIR Express captain and check pilot
- **Noah J. Merritt** of Charlottesville, who flies paragliders



**Vultures over Eagle's Nest obey rule about circling in the same direction in a thermal**

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