

# Shenandoah Valley Soaring

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Eagle's Nest, Waynesboro, VA

April 200 1

## Safety Meeting

To inaugurate a safe new flying season, a safety meeting for SVS members will be held at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, April 7, at the Augusta County Library at Fishersville. All members are strongly encouraged to attend.

## Annual Meeting Report

At the SVS annual meeting March 24, Hal Loken was elected president to succeed Bud Klaser, whose two-year leadership resulted in many accomplishments for the club. Hal began his term by encouraging members to offer suggestions on long range planning for the club, and he noted he would like to appoint maintenance and safety officers for our operations.

In an earlier e-mail to members, Hal expressed the following thoughts on what our priorities should be for the coming year:

- We must continue our focus on safe operation. It was wise to pick a maintenance facility [Classic Aviation] with high standards. We must continue to emphasize safe participation in the greater airport community.

- We must continue to strengthen club finances.

- We should have a long term plan for the club. What kind of club do we want in 5 or 10 years – and how will we get there?

I hope we can arrange for three committees to address each one of the above issues.

I believe that the optimum membership for a small club with one tow plane is about 40-50 members (assuming some less active members and about 5-7 active

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## 'Ten Minutes In Rotor – A Lifetime'

By Eva Tashjian-Brown

Petersburg Wave Camp beckoned, but the forecast was not great and the roundtrip was a very long drive. Also, we would have to stop in Waynesboro, take Bob Lock's ex-1-26 off my trailer, put it on his trailer, and then take my 1-26 apart and put it on my trailer. All that without being sure we would fly in Petersburg anyway.

So we made a plan On Saturday morning Mike Moses drove his truck to Waynesboro and met up with Bud Klaser. I flew up in the Cessna, picked them up and we flew on to Petersburg. That (1) got us there quickly, (½ vs. 2 ½ hours), (2) gave us an opportunity to case the joint and maybe fly their Blanik, and (3) left us the option of going back for the 1-26 if things looked good for Sunday.

Petersburg was active, but not the madhouse I expected. There were all sorts of different gliders there, from antiques to a new Discus. There was a long line for the Blanik, so that was out. However, there was a short line at the homemade buffet. And there was lots of hangar talk about the wave that morning. People had been launching at 6:30 – 7:00 a.m. to get the best ride – it was afternoon and some of them were still up there. Even if you don't fly, it is worth going to Petersburg just to see everything and listen to the pilots.

Encouraged to get the 1-26 for the next morning's wave, we flew back to Waynesboro, where I really impressed Bud and Mike with my inability to land powered aircraft anymore. Then, with the help of club members who had been flying the afternoon thertnals, we loaded the 1-26 and Mike and I headed back to Petersburg.

Sunday morning the field was busy at the crack of dawn. Jayne and Frank Reid from Bermuda High helped us assemble the 1-26 and offered good advice. Jayne

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students). That way the high fixed costs of flying are spread over a larger base. However, before increasing efforts to recruit more members, we need to fully understand the implications of more members on availability of aircraft.

Other officers unanimously elected at the meeting included Larry Burruss, vice president; Gordon Aylor, secretary, and Bud Branch, treasurer. Board of directors members unanimously approved at the meeting are Jim Garrison, Bob Lock, Bruce Burkholder, Mike Moses and Avery Groves.

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loaned me a barograph that I wrapped protectively in a fleece sweater and tucked securely behind the seatback (more about that later).

Then came the tow. Everything anyone ever says about rotors is an understatement. Ten minutes in rotor *really is* a lifetime. Even with extra tight belts I slammed my head more than once on the canopy. The GPS that had been velcroed to my leg took flight. The wings made bad noises. The rope went slack and then jerked forward. The glider went on its side. I worried about pulling the tow plane's tail up too high – or too low – or just plain off.

Then, as suddenly and violently as it had started, it stopped. I released in wave.

That's when I found out neither vario was working.

I notched what I thought was a working barograph (it actually had gone unconscious from rotor trauma – so much for the gold). After that, since there was no vario, I watched the altimeter to see which way I was going vertically. At first, that was nowhere. Then slowly I regained the altitude and – again slowly – I went up. I knew the wave was supposed to be right over the runway. That's where the big lennie was. I headed there and turned into the wind. Again, slow but steady lift. The now recovered GPS showed a backward track. I lowered the nose to about 60 mph just to stand still.

I swung the nose from about 200 to 360 degrees to see when the altimeter showed the greatest climb. (It was so smooth, I had to keep tapping the altimeter to make it move.) In the meantime, Jayne and Frank Reid were on the radio with their location, altitude and heading, all of which was helpful. They appeared to be climbing faster. Even circling though, I couldn't see where they were, so I stuck with my slow but steady lift.

Mostly I just sat back and took in the incredible scenery – crisp blue sky, snow-capped mountains in every direction. I climbed to seven, then eight, then nine – silver altitude – I thought this was pretty great stuff. I put on the oxygen at about nine thousand – early, but better safe...

At about 16,000 msl, I gave thought to flying the glider back to Waynesboro and maybe getting a distance leg too. It would be so much easier than disassembling, trailering, and reassembling. As I pondered the possibilities, I upped the oxygen flow and thought more realistically about the headwind and the lack of landing fields in the mountains. I also remembered that Mike was on the ground waiting for his turn in the glider. I went back to thinking how beautiful the ice crystals were on the canopy – and how splendid the mountains were – and how glad I was that I had worn fleece longjohns.

About 17,000' msl (16,000' agl) the lift began to give out. I inched up another few hundred, but was mostly level. I savored it for a while and then began a slow spiral down working my way upwind of the airport.

I was just thinking what a wonderful day it was when – KABAM – I hit the rotor again. I expected the rotor on tow. It never crossed my mind that it would be there coming down too, only worse. I suddenly found myself going up again, then down, then the whole plane tried to flip over sideways. The wings were perpendicular to the ground for what seemed an eternity.

I slowed down. I tried putting the brakes on to slow more, but they made such an awful noise, on top of the other awful noises, that I closed them again.

That kept up from 5000' all the way down to the ground. I was sure the wings were going to fall off and swore I'd get a parachute if I lived long enough to order one.

I heard a radio call that the field had a crosswind of 20 gusting to 30. As I bumped and crabbed my way downwind, I was struck by the comforting thought that, without an engine, I would only crash instead of crashing and burning. I might live through that.

As it turned out, the landing was just fine. The plane stopped well before the other planes scattered in the grass. It was very quiet.

I took a deep breath. I opened the canopy to the warmer air and I rejoiced in being alive in the mountains of West Virginia on a wave day.

