

Shenandoah Valley Soaring

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Eagle's Nest, Waynesboro, VA

Jan-Mar 2002

Annual Meeting – April 6

Mark your calendars! We are making plans for SVS's Annual meeting. Suggested Time and Place: April 6, 5PM at the Eagle's Nest FBO office. Larry will arrange for a dinner to follow at 7 PM for those who can make it. Agenda: Election of officers, update on 98Z, financial review, spring safety program, other subjects. – *Hal Loken*

Intensive Care for 98-Zulu – Full Recovery Expected by Late Spring

There has been much behind the scenes activity within the past two months aimed at keeping us flying at another location, and at getting us flying again at Eagle's Nest within a few months.

As most of you know, our Pawnee's annual inspection was due in December and some potential problems spotted by our tow pilots raised the issue of whether we should bite the bullet and seek a complete overhaul and recovering of the airframe.

SVS members dealt with that question at a January 19 meeting, and the SVS board – at a meeting at Jim Garrison's house also attended by a number of members – decided to go ahead with the overhaul, which will be costly and which may require some deep pocket-digging by us. Most members felt it better to have a completely overhauled, safe tow plane than to buy another for less money that could have its unknowns and costs down the road.

Chic Randow has been the go-between for SVS and Witmer Aircraft in Pennsylvania, where 98Z is undergoing its total therapy. Recent photographs from Witmer, posted on our Community Zero site, showed a frayed control cable and some areas of rusted, broken and corroded tubing. In his initial, mid-January briefing, Chic reported from Witmer:

Generally the aircraft is in pretty rough condition although it was airworthy and not about to have any catastrophic problems. It appears to have been seriously damaged twice with numerous structural repairs made. Unfortunately, many of the repairs were done more for expedience than for the long-term.

And here is Chic's latest report.

I spoke to Tom Witmer at Witmer Aircraft today [March 13] about the status of 98Z. He provided the following information:

All horizontal stabilizer welding and repair is complete. The tail structures have been primed and covered. All fuselage tube welding is complete and the surfaces cleaned and primed. As far as the fuselage goes, they are now waiting for new stringers since those on both sides of the fuselage were broken. If no structural members are involved they will also remove the hopper.

Wing repair has also begun. Unfortunately, they couldn't get new ribs and will have to repair the old ones. To do this, they got rib extrusion material from Univair that will be put in place of cracked sections. They have also begun repairing the wood end ribs that hold on the tips. Tom was not too willing to commit to a completion date but when pressed he said the beginning of May. I'll check back with him in a couple of weeks for another update.

I plan to visit Witmer Aircraft on April 8 and will take some more pictures at that time. By then we should have a better idea of the completion date. Unfortunately this will be after the member meeting scheduled for April 6, at which time I'll be out of town.

In my last conversation with Tom Witmer he said that it was time to decide on color. White is by far the least expensive way to go. He suggested that a simple scheme of all white with a red stripe down the fuselage side and red 12 inch "N" numbers would be the least expensive. Recognizing the glider pilot's need for good visual references I believe that the wing tips, rudder and elevator should also be painted red. This would give the tow plane a visual look something like an attitude indicator with very good references for pitch and bank. It is my recommendation to proceed with this scheme. [A poll on Community Zero asks members to vote yea or nay to that scheme. As of a day or so ago, seven members approved the suggested white, red stripe scheme and one voted for yellow, for improved visibility.]

Meanwhile, We Are Still Flying

Through a kind invitation by owner Dick Kavannaugh, we are guests at Merlin Aerodrome with its excellent tow planes, experienced tow pilots and a nice 3200-foot-long runway in Amelia County.

Merlin's two Ag Wagon tow planes flew to Eagle's Nest one day in mid-February to ferry our equipment to the Amelia field. Eva and Randy flew tow in the 2-33 behind Steve Harvey, while Bud and Hal flew the Lark, towed by Leonard Walker. Eva had earlier brought her 1-26 to Merlin and tied it down there.

Merlin Aerodrome, which includes a 2-33 and a privately owned Blanik L-23, operates weekends and during the week by prior arrangement.

All SVS members should get a field check, either by an SVS instructor if we are using our equipment, or by a Merlin instructor if you want to fly the 2-33 there.

Instructor Steve Harvey notes that SSA approved hand signals are used on the ground for all launches at Merlin, even when radios are being used. So SVS members are encouraged to review the standard ground launch signals.

The wing runner, for example, must circle his/her arm to signal the tow pilot to begin the takeoff. Other points raised by Hal Loken:

- There is very little power traffic at Merlin, but there is some. We must not let that lull us into

complacency. Also, keep in mind that radio use is not universal there.

- As at Waynesboro, there can be operations in either direction on the runway. Be alert!
- Merlin wants a “hard” release from normal tow position.
- As at Waynesboro, no thermalling in the pattern.

A map showing one way to get to the field, especially if you’re coming from Charlottesville, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg and other points west is on Community Zero, in the Images Gallery, and is reproduced here. Figure an hour and 45 minutes driving time from Charlottesville, much of it over two-lane country roads.

There also are directions at the Merlin website for Richmond area members. Do visit the website, www.merlinaero.org to learn more about the field, procedures and people.

Remember, we are guests of some very gracious, friendly and helpful kindred spirits.

A Working Day

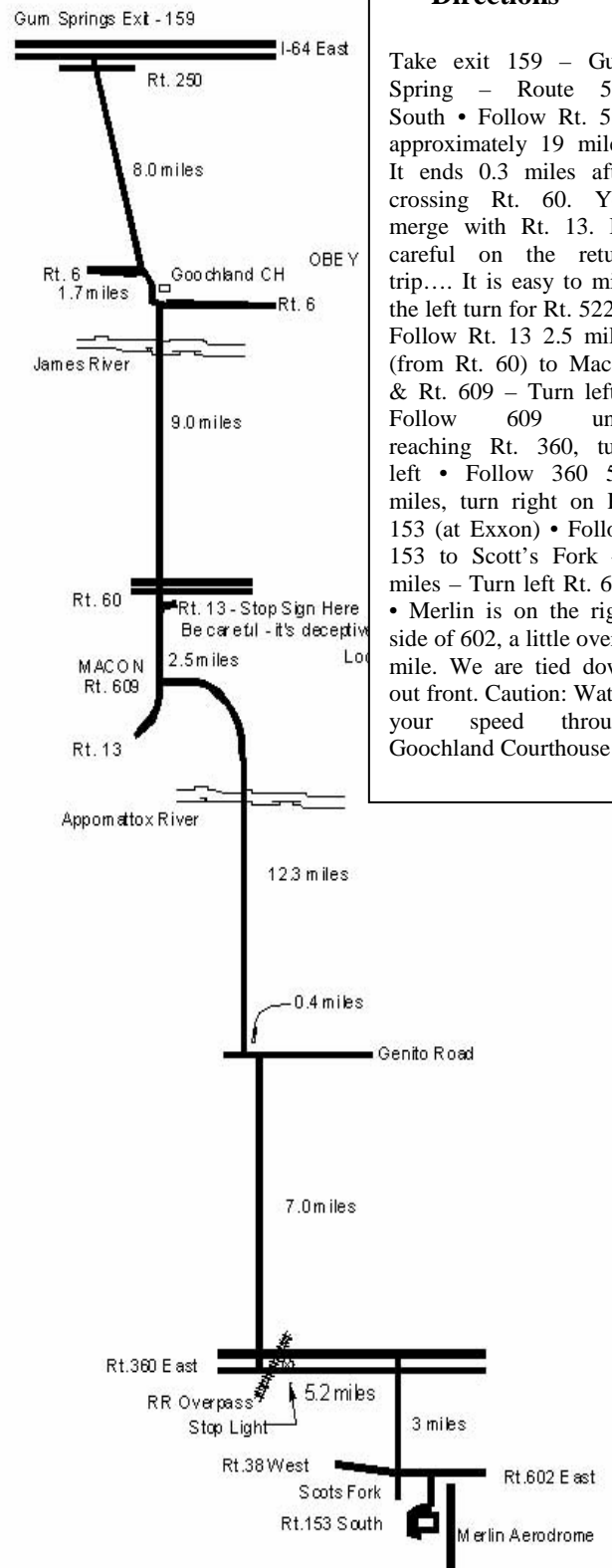
Feb. 23 was a work day for SVS members at Amelia field. Members installed a new rear interior side panel in the 2-33, which was then washed and waxed. The work crew included Norbert, Jay, Mike, Ben, Randy and Bev. Jay and Bev then flew the newly slick 2-33, which Jay successfully thermalled, sometimes with Merlin pilots in a Blanik, for nearly an hour. Hal made a couple of flights late in the day in the Lark as the thermals were dying.

Newsletter Note

The newsletter will now come out quarterly and will be posted on our web site. Printed copies will continue to be mailed to members who are not online and to those who prefer a paper version over an electronic one. Those of you who prefer the printed version should let me, Bev Orndorff, know of your desire.

Articles, commentaries, whatever from members would be appreciated.

For SVS members coming from points west.



Map by Ben Johnson