



# WINDSOCK

The Valley Soaring Association Journal

Photo by Tom Jue

June 2010

VALLEY SOARING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

[www.valleysoaring.net](http://www.valleysoaring.net)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Doc Mayes Memorial –May 1, 2010. Ginny Farnsworth lands MG. Tom Jue (front) is co-pilot.

Photo by Marvin McCormick

*It's a sunny, breezy, north wind day, and I'm finally sitting down to write my "President's Message".*

### Special Thanks

I wish to acknowledge Larry Hood for printing our VSA Windsock Newsletter. These are available at our WSC office. The printing is a substantial donation of both time and money – without his generosity, we would not have these color copies.

Special thanks to Tom Birchfield for creating the attractive posters for both the Winter Series Seminars and VSA Race Series.

Also, a big thanks to Tom Jue for putting together this newsletter. We appreciate Tom's dedication to putting out such a diversified and artistic publication.

Thanks to all of you for your generosity and contributions to the community.

### WSC - "Our Community"

When did life get so busy? What happened to my weekends being free to drive to the glider port, fly, socialize, and if I was feeling really industrious, taking care of the recycling?

I guess I was just lucky to have so many weekends devoted to soaring! The bright side of the equation is that when I'm short on time, I can rent a high performance ship, and it's set up and ready to go when I get there! Or I call WSC in advance and my own ship is set up and

ready to go. How nice is that!? Also, I'm flying with friends more and enjoying sharing the piloting, the navigation, and the beauty and spirit of it all.

I was sitting with a pilot friend recently, and he told me **he was at WSC because it is his community**. That simple statement made me feel really good. We are a community - devoted to soaring, to excellence, to each other. The Valley Soaring Association at Williams Soaring Center works because we make it work, and there are some pretty inspired and inspiring people that make up our organization.

### New Solo and Certified Pilots

We are growing. We have more members this year than last, and mid-year, people are still joining our ranks.

We celebrate our recently soloed and certificated pilots whose names are in this issue and also with featured articles from several of them. Thanks to our newest members for your support and enthusiasm.

### Update on New Instructors and Tow Pilots

VSA welcomes Brian Arnet CFIG and Ed Skuzinski CFIG, both are instructing and towing at WSC this spring.

Charlie Hayes left us for the wide open spaces of the Yukon, and he is missed.

Garry Lee is towing occasionally, and has stories to tell of soaring in the Ukraine.

Stop and welcome these new members of the WSC community next time you come out to fly. Visit the link on the WSC website, click About Us then Meet the Staff.

## **WSC Website**

If you who have been surfing the sky and not the net, the WSC website and the Sage Variometer (manufactured at WSC) website each have a new look this year – check them out at:

<http://www.williamssoaring.com/>

<http://www.sagevariometers.com/>

And don't forget to monitor the latest news and announcements at Williams Today on Williams Soaring's home page – upper left!

## **VSA Race Series**

We are well into the VSA Race Series, with Peter Kelly in the lead. You GO guy! A lot of effort went into the race series this year – there are new tasks, revisions to the rules, etc, which reflect a lot of thought and communication. Thanks to Peter Kelly, Rex Mayes, Bob Ireland, and Jim Darke for all the time, effort and expertise they put into making this series happen. Unfortunately, the weather has not been with us, so many of us do not have the long flights we had at this time last year. There is some frustration regarding this, but, the race goes on. It's a good way to hone your skills, focus on your soaring, and share insights with other pilots, whether it is for one race day or for the season. Although I have not yet submitted a flight this year, I've had fun and learned a LOT trying to complete tasks on the race days.

## **Winter Series Seminars**

The 2009/2010 Winter Series featured some excellent speakers and topics this year. Thanks to all who helped put the series on. It takes many minds/hearts/hands to put these seminars together.

This year we were fortunate to have as speakers:

**Matt Heron** – presented Glide Plan Software – software he created and marketed to assist with flight planning. The software is installed

on the VSA computer in the pilots lounge, thanks to Larry Roberts and Tom Birchfield, for our use.

**Kempton Izuno** – presented an intriguing two part series – Winds Close to the Ridge: A Primer.

Kemp did his usual excellent job with an HD video presentation, facts, insights, applied theory, and excerpts from his experiences. For those of you who missed it, there is a comprehensive reading list on the topic, compiled by Kemp, posted at

<http://www.williamssoaring.com/seminars.html>.

**Guy Acheson** – put together a day long Acrofest – a program which included learning the theory of aerobatics in gliders, and flying the maneuvers with an instructor. Excellent job of gathering interest, developing the program, and carrying it out! Not to mention the great Acrofest T-shirts for the participants! For those who missed it, there is a syllabus available at

<http://www.williamssoaring.com/seminars.html>.

**Pete Alexander "98"** – presented Dissecting the Sky – Finding Energy Lines in the Sky With and Without the Clouds. Drawing from his vast experience of soaring on several continents, Pete presented some valuable information how to decide "what's next" and what to do if you can't make a decision based on what you see ahead. Valuable stuff!

## **VSA Website**

If you haven't been there recently, visit the VSA website at

<http://www.valleysoaring.net/>

Our webmaster, Peter Kelly (yes, this guy wears many hats) has created a slide show on the home page portraying our newest pilots receiving congratulations on their accomplishments. It's inspiring to see them one after the other, receiving congratulations from either Rex or Charlie. The web site has one of the most comprehensive weather pages I've seen, and is full of links to other useful information on soaring. The photo gallery is - well, it's just eye candy - makes the day tolerable when you are stuck at work, etc. Thanks, PK for your

dedication and talent. You set a precedent of excellence that we all aspire to!

## VSA Officers

I would like to extend thanks to our VSA officers for their time and dedication to VSA. They volunteer their precious time, and sometimes their resources to make our organization possible:

• <b>President</b>	Ginny Farnsworth
• <b>Vice President</b>	Jan Sciacca
• <b>Editor</b>	Tom Jue
• <b>Communications Officer and Secretary</b>	Tom Birchfield
• <b>Treasurer</b>	Frank Peale
• <b>Webmaster</b>	Peter Kelly

Special thanks to former VP Larry Roberts, who maintains the computer and associated equipment.

## Thank You WSC!

Also, a BIG Thanks to Rex and Noelle Mayes, and all the staff at WSC for maintaining a sense of excellence and professionalism in every aspect of the operation. It's a privilege to fly at Williams. We are fortunate to have the facilities at WSC to conduct our events and to base our soaring community.

## Join VSA

So – why join VSA? Well, if I haven't given you enough reasons by this time, you really need a long winded explanation! VSA is a great organization, and for \$20.00 per year, it's a pretty minimal expense to stay connected to a community that promotes excellence in soaring. We look forward to a season of soaring, camaraderie, learning from each other, and an occasional feast! See you on the field -

*Ginny*

## Doc Mayes Memorial Scholarship

by Ginny Farnsworth

It's time to replenish our Doc Mayes Memorial Scholarship. The fund is now without monies, and to continue the tradition of the scholarship we need donations.

This year is special as we also honor the passing of Hal Chouinard and Sean Boylan.

Our tradition has been to donate \$500.00 each year. This is awarded through the Colusa County Scholarship Committee. In 2009 and 2010 we did not sponsor a scholarship due to lack of funds.

The scholarship has been in existence since 1989. It was originally established in memory of Doc Mayes and funded with bereavement funds received in the wake of Doc's passing.

The scholarship has continued with donations in memory of many folks, including Fred Frauens, Dave Peterson, Stan and Jan Montagne, Billy Carter and Joe Findley.

Currently awarded through the Colusa County Scholarship Committee (CCSC). This scholarship is offered at all six high schools in Colusa County, with students from Williams High School as primary candidates.

If there are no qualifying applicants at Williams, the recipient is chosen from the rest of the county high schools. CCSC reviews the essays and chooses the recipient. Noelle Mayes, who is on the school board, awards the \$500.00 scholarship in person on graduation night.

The most recent recipient of the scholarship sent a Thank You note to Noelle, pictured below. As you can see, the recipient appreciated the contribution!

The scholarship criteria are summarized as follows. The student must be pursuing a four year degree in one of the following:

Aviation Engineering Science

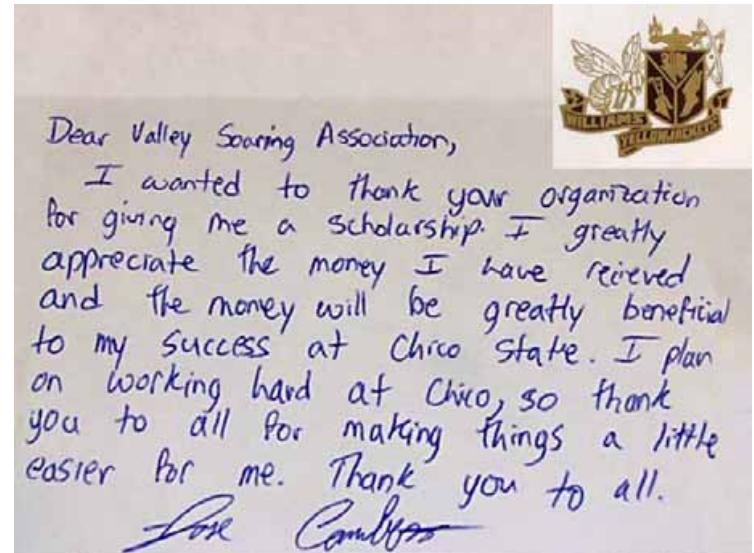
In the past, local recipients have included a student in the Charters family, whose strip between WSC and the mountains is well known to most of us. Other local students have received the scholarship – and it has been an influential factor for land out hospitality! (Who doesn't like to be greeted with a smile and an offer to assist with de-rigging.)

Needless to say, the scholarship is a very positive thing for the soaring community, it shows our interest in the local community and gives us positive visibility.

VSA is currently inviting donations in the memory of those pilots and crew who so enriched our sport and are greatly missed. Anyone wishing to donate to the scholarship fund should send their check made to VSA (denote "Scholarship Fund" in the Memo section of the check), and send it to the following address:

Valley Soaring Association  
Williams Soaring Center  
2668 Husted Road  
Williams, CA 95987

Below is a "Thanks" for the last scholarship VSA awarded, in 2008.





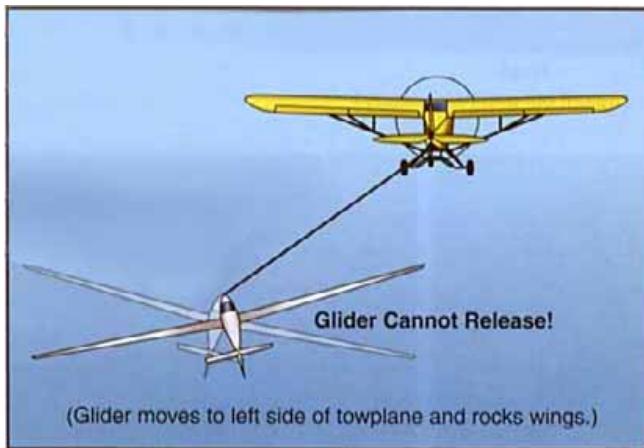
Glider Flying Handbook by FAA 2003

It is the usual tremendous day at Williams Soaring Center. The time is 11:00 a.m. and most everybody has launched already. You are in a hurry to join your comrades in the air. Slap a few wings on, do a quick control check, roll out and wag your rudder. As you are rolling for taking off you finish your pre takeoff check list while preoccupied with confirming in your mind that you hooked everything up properly. Everything seems fine, until you notice the tow plane is climbing quite a bit faster than you are.

Hmm, must be lots of lift out there; can't wait to get off and play. **The tow plane is wagging his rudder. Something is wrong with the tow plane,** I better get off. O schucks, I'm only 400 feet agl. No problem, I have landed many times like this before with Kenny. What in the world! !! am sinking like a lead weight. There must be lots of sink.

Or, my mind might not be as focused on flying as it should be. Maybe the tow pilot wagging his rudder might mean that my spoilers are open. Wagging the rudder to signal that the spoilers are open on the glider is a somewhat new signal.

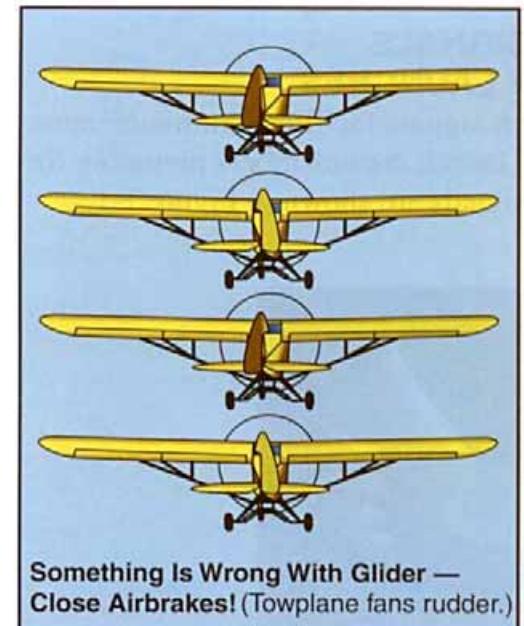
The first time I had a chance to use this signal as a tow pilot I hesitated to use the signal. We were low, but climbing alright. My fear was that the glider pilot would panic, thinking something was wrong with me, and get off tow at a low altitude with spoilers inadvertently open. So I continued climbing and turned towards the IP. When I was plenty high over the IP I wagged my rudder and sure enough the glider released immediately.



Source: Glider Flying Handbook by FAA 2003

Later the glider pilot acknowledged that he thought something was wrong with the tow plane. Subsequently, the few times the glider pilot failed to lock his spoilers, I would climb high over the IP before giving the wagging signal. More often than not, the glider pilot would release instead of closing the spoilers.

The moral of this story is “know your tow signals” and if you don’t know them, review them. Officially, the signal is for the tow pilot to rock their wings if they are signaling you to release because something is wrong with the tow plane. Focused minds plus focused lift equals good soaring.



Glider Flying Handbook by FAA 2003

Spot is a Satellite GPS messenger which works virtually anywhere. For glider pilots, it is the ultimate, multipurpose, low cost device which has multiple distinct uses:



It can be used as a personal locator beacon to call for emergency from anywhere with a press of a button. **No cell phone coverage is needed.** Emergency services will get an immediate notification with GPS coordinates. This can be a life saver in case of a bad landout or a crash, which may happen where no cell phone service is available.

By automatically sending your track point every 10 minutes, **it can be served as an emergency locator if a pilot is missing.** It will either pinpoint the location of the crash or will show the last known location prior to the crash, significantly reducing the search area. This will most likely eliminate days or months of risky and costly searches we have seen or heard of many times before.

**In case of a landout,** it can be used to send OK message to your crew to indicate that you are OK, or a help message to indicate you need a retrieve. Since it sends both a text message and email message with exact coordinates, including Google map link, it makes locating the glider an easy task. No more looking all over for a glider.

During cross country flights it can be used to **send agreed upon messages to your crew** to update them on your status and alternate plans. Crew no longer need to guess where their pilot may go.

Perhaps the most common use, by pressing the tracking button before each flight, one can **broadcast their location to friends and family via a web interface.** The device will provide position report automatically every 10 minutes, which will show up on a google map in near real time. For social networking fans, this is like an automatic tweeting! This became a popular venue for friends and fans to follow flights and contests, and for spouses to check on their pilot status.

**It can even be used as a security device** to protect an asset. Worried that someone may steal your car or trailer? Leave the spot on with a good view of the sky and you'll be able to locate it if stolen, although it will stop transmitting after 24 hours.

There are even more innovative ideas how to use Spot: A local pilot turns it on when driving back home **so his wife can prepare dinner on time...**

## **Cost**

You would think that such an amazing multipurpose device should cost a fortune like most things aviation related. Not so. Since it was not designed for aviation, it can be bought not only at Williams Soaring Center, where Noelle Mayes is the expert at setting up the service, but also at many sport outlets, online sites such as Amazon, and of course soaring catalogs for a mere \$150, often much less or even free with rebates! The only other cost is the yearly \$150 service fee, still a great bargain!

## **No Installation**

No installation is necessary, but don't put it in the side pocket! It needs clear view of the sky, so best is to Velcro it somewhere on the canopy where it has clear view, or strap it to your parachute below the shoulder straps, making sure it will not interfere with deployment (see photo). The later might be your best option in case of a bailout if you don't carry a PLB.

## **Operating**



Operating the unit is very simple, just press the on/off button and the tracking/OK button. In case of emergency press the 911 button. Switching between tracking mode and sending OK messages can be cumbersome due to a use of a single button for both functions. This was vastly improved in the

new smaller Spot 2 which has separate buttons for each function, so it is possible to easily send OK messages as well as custom messages while you are in tracking mode. The Spot2

also apparently has more transmission power and send multiple tracking points each time so significantly reducing dropped trackpoints.

## **Battery Life**

Battery life is excellent in the original Spot, over 300 hours, so most pilots will not need to replace batteries for few years. Spot 2 has shorter battery life of about 150 hours.

## **Google Map**

To be able to share location on google map, it is necessary to create a shared page on the Spot web site, which is rather simple to do. It is possible to set the page to display the trackpoints from 24 hours to 7 days. However keep in mind that the longer the period the more flights will show in a single track. One solution is to go to the Spot web site and delete/hide the trackpoints after every flight. Also it is recommended to set the shared page to display OK/Help messages as well, and press the OK button every time you land. Leave the Spot on for another 10 minutes at least, to make sure that your last message will show you back at the airport and not somewhere along your final glide.

## **Publishing**

Creating a shared page by itself is not sufficient. You will next want to publish it. Many clubs, including VSA and FBO's maintain a list of spot shared pages of local pilots, and the SSA has a nationwide sailplane tracker page, so make sure to submit your shared page url to VSA and/or SSA.

## **iPhone and Blackberry**

Other than the Spot provided Shared page, which is using google maps, additional user interfaces are available, such as iPhone and Blackberry apps, as well as tracking services which are capable of displaying multiple tracks in one page, especially useful for contest tracking.

## **Issues with Spot**

1. **Occasionally spot can not get a message through**, which results in missing trackpoints. On average there are 10%-20% missing trackpoints. The implication is that there could be as much as 30 minutes gap between trackpoints.
2. **Additional delays occur in the web site back end** until a track point is shown online. The delays can be anywhere from few minutes to an hour or more, so the track is not always real time, and a long period with no new trackpoints is not necessarily alarming.

## **Spot Web Site**

<http://findmespot.com/>



**About the Author**

Ramy Yanetz has been flying sailplanes since 1997 and flown over 3000 hours and 200,000 km.

Prior to flying sailplanes, he flew hang gliders for 20 years in many countries around the world from Europe to South America and briefly held the rigid wing hang glider world record in 1998.

He moved to USA from Israel in 1989. He currently flies an ASW 27 "TG", and is a PASCO board member and award administrator.

The link to the Valley Soaring Association on Google groups is:

<http://groups.google.com/group/valleysoaring>



**Every pilot with a SPOT Messenger is invited to join at:**

<http://groups.google.com/group/valleysoaring/web/spot-shared-pages-by-pilots>

A screenshot of a web browser showing the "SPOT Share Pages" page for the Valley Soaring Association. The title bar says "SPOT Share Pages - Valley Soaring Association | Google Groups - Windows Internet Explorer". The main content area has a yellow header bar with "Valley Soaring Association" and a "SPOT Share Pages" link, which is circled in red with an arrow pointing to it from the left. Below that, it says "This page lists all pilots who have an operational SPOT Tracking device and have set up a Share Page and have elected to post it here on this page - every pilot with a SPOT Messenger is invited to list them selves - go for it!". There are also instructions for editing and sending corrections.

This page (left side) lists all pilots who have an operational SPOT Tracking device and have set up a Share Page and have elected to post it here on this page.

All pilots are asked to periodically check your link on this list and correct the link if it is wrong. If you need help with any of the Pages on the Valley Soaring group, then send problems, corrections and updates to my email address at: [gliding@sonic.net](mailto:gliding@sonic.net)

## The Spot Messenger Is A Must Have

**Flight following is essential when flying gliders. If you go down, and no one knows where you are, a lot of people are going to spend a lot of time and money looking for you. That is what friends do.**

**If you do NOT have a SPOT, please consider the following. No matter how good you think you are - you are still flying a glider and no matter how well you plan, nature can sometimes change the flying conditions faster than you can plan for it. You will land away from the gliderport - eventually.**

Soaring and Gliding is a social sport. We all enjoy the company of other pilots - to one degree or another, and we rely on each other. Don't be an inconsiderate 'so and so' by NOT carrying a SPOT with you on each and every flight.

IF you don't have a SPOT on board, then stay over the central valley, because landing in the valley will greatly increase the chances that you will be able to call the gliderport to tell us you are not coming home that night! Don't make us use our time and make us spend our money looking for you. Buy your SPOT device now and save us all a lot of money - including YOU.



New pilot lands to the north, look hard for the landing spot Instructor Kenny Price marked in the dirt with his left foot. It's not there! The kids or dogs must have rubbed it out. "Time for "Plan B". Photo by Marvin McCormick Nov 6, 2004

My most memorable moments in soaring are my first solo and landings to the north. For my first solo, I was filled with confidence and pride as I successfully landed ASK-21. Landing to the north? Well, I can't say I do my best landings to the North, with the challenges of wind gradients and a very short field, but that's another story for another newsletter!

In this issue, we recognize all those who have successfully soloed since 2009. **We also interviewed three of these new solo pilots on their thoughts on soaring.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW PILOTS WHO SOLOED SINCE LAST YEAR

3/20/2010 Moses Salgado	3/14/2010 Austin Heidt	<b>3/7/2010 Marianne Guerin</b>	3/1/2010 Amir Garrison	9/11/2009 Greg Slyngstad
8/21/2009 Richard Abi-Habib	8-9-09 Bob Kearby	<b>7/23/2009 Larry Foster</b>	<b>7/17/2009 Matt Epperson</b>	5/9/2009 Tom Duncan
4/19/2009 Jason Rossi	3/5/2009 Ben Fetzer	2/20/2009 Jim Marshall		

# Thoughts on Soaring by New Solo Pilot Matt Epperson

Interview by Tom Jue

**[Matt]** I'll give you a little background and then try to answer the specific questions.

I began flying hang gliders a little over 8 years ago. I earned my advanced hang glider rating several years ago and usually fly Mount Diablo, and the Sierras.

I'm a Yosemite Park Hang Gliding Monitor and my longest XC hang glider flight is a little over 50 miles in the Owens Valley.

I was drawn to sailplanes because of their better performance, comfort and ability to handle a wider range of weather conditions.

I started glider lessons last Spring, Soloed and earned my license in the Summer and have been flying WSC gliders since.

I just obtained 100 hours and 100 flights and have been as far North as Sheet Iron and as far South as the Berryessa Dam.

I'm loving flying sailplanes as I am able to do what I only dreamed of doing while flying a hang glider, being able to fly further, longer explore more and fly in stronger/better conditions.



Matt Epperson first glider solo with tow pilot Pete King. They were fellow firefighters from Orinda. July 2009

When were you first attracted to flying?

**[Matt]** Ever since I was a child I had a dream of flying. My grandfather was a pilot but it wasn't until much later in life that I actually did something about it.

What attracted you to soaring?

**[Matt]** A dream of flying in its purest form. Using nature instead of engines. Soaring is what I think flying is all about, being one with the weather, the atmosphere. Using skills and knowledge soar over beauty.

What was your first experience in a glider like compared to your first solo?

**[Matt]** Because I was a hang glider pilot, Charlie took me to Walker Ridge for some soaring. I couldn't believe we were 20 miles out in mediocre conditions and had the performance to get back. Except for the tow which was nerve racking I loved it from the first flight. Thermaling felt natural but the glide blew me away. My first solo was pretty standard except for the two ice buckets of water which my ex-Fire Captain Pete King poured on me.

How was your relationship with your instructor?

**[Matt]** Excellent. I had two instructors. Primarily Charlie but also Rex. They are both absolutely great in very different ways. Charlie is very patient, teaches through practice and seems to love flying as well as teaching. Charlie has a great ability to see exactly what his students are doing right and wrong and develop the best qualities while fixing the mistakes. It is a pleasurable experience to take lessons from Charlie. Rex is analytical, precise and demands perfections. One is able to learn a great deal very quickly as he makes his students good and very safe.

Do you know other glider pilots? Have they inspired you?

**[Matt]** Pete King was my Fire Captain several years ago before he retired. My hang gliding instructor Wally Anderson occasionally flies gliders however his wife Ginny is our President. Because of these people choosing WSC was a no brainer.

What is it about Williams Soaring that makes it such a special place?

**[Matt]** The eclectic attributes of the various staff. Rex has a great work drive, is meticulous and exacting. He keeps the operation, equipment and employees top notch. Noelle is so friendly and accommodating, making sure everyone enjoys themselves and that the place feels like home. Charlie is a great, laid back, patient and knowledgeable instructor. The tow pilots including Pete King are excellent as well as the rest of the staff. Second only to the people, the equipment is also top notch and kept in great shape.

What is it about being a glider pilot that is so special?

**[Matt]** Doing exactly what I have dreamt of doing. Not only philosophically but I actually had dreams.

What is it about glider pilots that separate them from everyone else?

They pushed themselves to a rare sport which is something one would only do if they truly enjoyed it. It seems everyone who soars truly enjoys it.

Why would you rather be soaring than using this precious time for other sports or entertainment, like playing golf or going to a ball game?

Words unfortunately cannot describe..

Now that you have achieved your solo, what's next?

**[Matt]** Since I have also earned my license and done some short XC my dreams are of longer XC. The flights that I have read about North into the Trinity Alps sound magical and I would like to develop my skills to fly long XC flights like those some day.

If you continue to pursue this sport, what is your next goal?

**[Matt]** Longer XC flights. I think this will just take time as I feel I have the skills but need to develop my judgment as I am a new glider pilot.



Rex Mayes (left) congratulates Matt Epperson (right) on Private Glider Pilot Certification -

August 2009

# Thoughts on Soaring by New Solo Pilot Marianne Guerin

Interview by Tom Jue



Photo with Jim Indrebo (left) at Crazy Creek, very early on in Marianne's (right) journey.  
Circa May 2009

Marianne soloed in March 2010 and quickly achieved her glider pilot's license in May 2010.

When were you first attracted to flying?

**[Marianne]** It was 2008 and I was late to meet John Apps (my husband) - I was finally taking the time to join him at Montague where he was flying in a competition with his partner, Mike Green.

I had just turned onto the road into the glider port when I saw several sailplanes coming in to land. I stopped and watched. They each turned

onto what I now know are base and final, following some unseen track in the air. They were so graceful, quiet and elegant! I thought this was a sport I really had to take a closer look at.

What attracted you to soaring?

**[Marianne]** After I decided I was finally going to give gliding a try, I knew I had to find a time when I could devote enough energy into learning how.

This is NOT a sport you can dabble at. It took me about a year. On my birthday in 2009 (at another competition at Crazy Creek where John and Mike were flying), I had asked John to buy me a couple of lessons to see if I would enjoy soaring.

So, I was with Jim Indrebdo on a clear, sunny day in late May. It only took a few minutes and I was HOOKED.

What was your first experience in a glider like, compared to your first solo?

**[Marianne]** Well, that first flight was remarkable – Jim found a thermal, got us centered and then let me take the controls. I don't recall how much altitude we gained as I worked my first thermal, but it was probably several thousand feet. I admit, it was a bit intimidating with all that altitude and no engine. However, the thrill of flying and beauty of the landscape was much more powerful. My first solo had that same feeling: thrilling!



Charlie Hayes congratulates Marianne (right), a very happy pilot after her successful solo on March 7, 2010

#### How was your relationship with your instructor?

**[Marianne]** I had two instructors, first Jim Indrebo at Crazy Creek and then Charlie Hayes at Williams. They each taught me different things. They both clearly loved soaring and that helped get me through the rough patches in my transition to solo and then to pilot.

#### Do you know other glider pilots? Have they inspired you?

**[Marianne]** When I met John, the fact that he was a glider pilot was interesting. He talked about gliding, the technical nature and challenges associated with cross-country flying. This intrigued me.

Soaring has a great combination of things I like to do:

- Outdoor sport
- Technically-oriented
- Requires passion and commitment
- Something that was a bit uncommon.

Also, being a bit older myself, it was clearly a sport I could pursue for many years to come as I saw folks well-past retirement still participating at competitive levels.

#### What is it about Williams Soaring that makes it such a special place?

**[Marianne]** The great fleet of rental planes helps, but it's really the expert level and dedication/passion of the pilots I've met there that make it special.

#### What is it about being a glider pilot that is so special?

**[Marianne]** I don't know about other pilots, but for me it's the passion for soaring that I've developed. As I mentioned above, it is such a challenging sport. I feel I can pursue it the rest of my life and still be learning new things. I don't imagine I'll ever get bored.

#### What is it about glider pilots that separate them from everyone else?

**[Marianne]** Passion. I have noticed that many other people seem to have the same passion I have for soaring. This is a great sign. Long-term passion for the sport means it is something you can pursue for years. I haven't seen any bored glider pilots.

#### Why would you rather be soaring than using this precious time for other sports or entertainment, like playing golf or going to a ball game?

**[Marianne]** Part of it is the fact that it's a very un-practical way to spend my time. My work is demanding of my time and energy. Soaring allows

me to put that all behind on the weekends. There have been no dedicated work-weekends this year – that is a real change in my life! Now that you're past your solo and are newly licensed, what's next?

**[Marianne]** It has always been my goal to pursue cross-country flying and eventually get good enough to fly in competitions. Given that I started late in life, just being able to enter and finish a competition will, in my mind, make me the winner no matter where I place.

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If you continue to pursue this sport, what is your next goal?

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**[Marianne]** I don't know how long it will take. I imagine it will be a couple of years before I can enter lower level competition. I can't wait until I'm good enough!

In other sports I've pursued, I've found that aiming at competition keeps you focused on improving, and on staying involved so you don't let life and work commitments swallow up your time.

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Any last thoughts?

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**[Marianne]** One of the most important things soaring has taught me is the necessity of being at peak performance.

There have been several times when I was under instruction that I now know I was really too tired to fly, and the fall-off in my ability to make good decisions and react appropriately was really noticeable.

Since then, I've altered my habit of working long hours (well not totally, but usually!). If I'm working on a challenging problem or even just performing a rather routine calculation, I now realize the fall-off in performance starts earlier than I had previously imagined.



Recent photo of John Apps and Marianne Guerin.

# Thoughts on Soaring by New Solo Pilot Larry Foster

Interview by Tom Jue



Solo Pilot Larry Foster in the infamous ASK21.

When were you first attracted to flying?

**[Larry]** I was a youngster when I first became interested in flying. A gentleman gave several people a ride in his new V-tailed Bonanza. I was fortunate in being included, and that sparked my interest in aviation.

However, it was not until after my third year in high school, that I was able to take flying lessons. The local FBO didn't need a "line boy" so I paid for the lessons by painting houses and had some help from dad.

It took me about 3 years to get my pilots license. Due to school, then having a family and running a business I didn't fly much during the following years.

What attracted you to soaring?

**[Larry]** Over the last several years, I occasionally noticed a glider in the air over Williams when I was driving through the area. So I knew a glider facility was in the area.

About two years ago, I took a ride in a glider at Ryan airport in Hemet, CA. I was hooked! Due to circumstances, I had to wait until the summer of 2009 to start lessons.

What was your first experience in a glider like, compared to your first solo?

**[Larry]** My first ride was a demonstration of several aspects of gliding. But my first solo was mostly a journey "around the patch". Yet, it was still exhilarating!

How was your relationship with your instructor?

**[Larry]** I have had instruction from both Charlie Hayes and from Rex Mayes. Both are excellent instructors and have differing approaches to teaching. Yet, both were inspirational, informative, and fun.

Do you know other glider pilots?

**[Larry]** I did not know other glider pilots until I started lessons at WSC.

What is it about Williams Soaring that makes it such a special place?

**[Larry]** The two aspects of Williams Soaring that stand out the most for me are:

1. The people - the staff are friendly and helpful, going out of their way to answer questions
2. The facilities, the rental fleet is diversified and modern.

In addition, the web site is very good.

What is it about glider pilots that separate them from everyone else?

**[Larry]** Glider pilots develop a different set of piloting skills, skills that enables them to use the atmosphere to defeat gravity. They develop a sort of camaraderie with soaring birds.

Why would you rather be soaring than using this precious time for other sports or entertainment, like playing golf or going to a ball game?

**[Larry]** For me, soaring is a challenging and enjoyable activity, personally more fun than "going to a ball game." Especially as a new glider pilot, I learn something from each flight. These classes are most enjoyable!

Now that you have achieved your solo, what's next?

**[Larry]** I have already "moved up" to obtaining the private glider pilot rating. Now I want to expand my information base to better thermal and to learn to XC.

If you continue to pursue this sport, what is your next goal? How long will it take you?

**[Larry]** The amount of time needed is unpredictable, but I also want to learn and do more aerobatics and may eventually enter contests.



Rex Mayes (left) congratulates Larry Foster (center) along with instructor Charlie Hayes (right)  
7/23/2009









# VALLEY SOARING ASSOCIATION

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE EVENTS at WILLIAMS SOARING

Aug 21, 2010	VSA Race Day #6
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