
**SAC funding
available**
P. 6

**FINDING THE WAVE
IN FRANCE**
P. 19

**TMU TEAM WINS
OSTIV AWARD**
P. 7

**A STUDENT PILOT'S
PERSPECTIVE**
P. 22

FREE FLIGHT/VOL LIBRE



SAC Annual General Meeting

March 8, 2025

Free Flight

SOARING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (SAC)

The Soaring Association of Canada (SAC) is the governing body for the sport of gliding in Canada. Mandated to safeguard and promote our sport, we render support and representation to glider pilots and gliding clubs across the nation through a variety of committees. On a national level, we represent our affiliated clubs and members on issues related to licensing, medical requirements, airspace and regulation. Internationally, we maintain representation within the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale and the International Gliding Commission.

We invest in the renewal and expansion of our sport by offering bursaries for young pilots, financial support for contenders representing Canada in international competitions, and financial aid for clubs carrying out marketing and publicity initiatives. Finally, we work to keep our sport safe by providing extensive training and development programs for instructors, safety seminars and maintaining safety programs.

SAC maintains a head office in Cambridge, Ontario. A volunteer Board of Directors, comprising representatives from all regions of the country, steers the organization. SAC is registered as a Canadian amateur athletic association with the Canadian Revenue Agency, an agency of the Government of Canada. For change of address contact the SAC Office at sac@sac.ca. Copies in .pdf format are free from the SAC website. Please send submissions to the editor at freeflight@sac.ca

Vol Libre

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE VOL À VOILE (ACVV)

L'Association canadienne de vol à voile (ACVV) est l'instance dirigeante pour la pratique du vol à voile au Canada. L'ACVV a pour mandat de préserver et promouvoir notre sport. À travers différents comités, elle représente et soutient les pilotes de planeur et les clubs de vol à voile partout au Canada. Au niveau national, nous représentons nos clubs affiliés et nos membres pour les questions relatives aux licences, aux exigences médicales, à l'espace aérien et à la réglementation. Au niveau internationaux, nous sommes représentés au sein de la Fédération aéronautique internationale et de la Commission internationale de vol à voile (IGC).

Nous investissons dans la relève et l'expansion de notre sport en offrant des bourses à de jeunes pilotes, en fournissant un support financier à ceux qui nous représentent dans les compétitions internationales et en fournissant une aide financière aux clubs qui réalisent des initiatives de marketing et de publicité. Finalement, nous prenons à cœur la sécurité dans notre sport, et des plans de maintenance de la sécurité. Pour avoir plus d'information à propos de l'ACVV, veuillez nous contacter via l'un des liens ci-dessous.

Enregistrée comme une Association canadienne de sport amateur auprès de l'Agence de revenu du Canada, l'ACVV a son siège social à Ottawa et est gérée par un conseil d'administration bénévole constitué de représentants de toutes les régions du Canada. Pour un changement d'adresse, communiquez par sac@sac.ca. La revue est disponible gratuitement, en format "pdf" au www.sac.ca. Veuillez envoyer vos soumissions à: freeflight@sac.ca.

175 Endeavour Dr
Cambridge ON N3C 4C9
226.476.0580



THE JOURNAL OF THE SOARING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
LE JOURNAL DE L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE VOL À VOILE

PRESIDENT AND EASTERN ZONE DIRECTOR: **SYLVAIN BOURQUE**
VICE-PRESIDENT AND EASTERN ZONE DIRECTOR: **GEORGE DOMARADZKI**
TREASURER AND PRAIRIE ZONE DIRECTOR: **JAY ALLARDYCE**
SECRETARY AND ALBERTA ZONE DIRECTOR: **PAVAN KUMAR**
SOUTHERN ONTARIO ZONE DIRECTOR: **STAN MARTIN**
PACIFIC ZONE DIRECTOR: **DAVID GAGLIARDI**

SAC OFFICE MANAGER: **TOM COULSON**
FREE FLIGHT EDITOR: **JEFF KEAY** (FREEFLIGHT@SAC.CA)

WWW.SAC.CA

Cover photo by Warwick Patterson:

Warwick, in Vancouver Island Soaring Centre's PW-6U, gives his intro guest a bird's eye view of Sproat Lake in Alberni Valley, B.C.

DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION

Priorités

Des discussions actives sont en cours entre les clubs par courriel et sur le forum SAC au sujet de la consigne de navigabilité (AD en anglais) des Pawnee. David Gagliardi est en contact avec un « représentant désigné de la navigabilité » (DAR en anglais) qui partagera tout conseil et demandera à TC un « moyen alternatif de conformité » (AMOC en anglais). Une séance d'information sur le Pawnee a eu lieu lors de la réunion virtuelle des agents de sécurité le 15 janvier. 10 clubs SAC avec 14 Pawnee sont concernés. Les pièces détachées Pawnee sont disponibles sur <https://www.univair.com/>

La mise à jour du forum SAC est désormais en ligne depuis l'automne dernier. Le bureau de la SAC peut désormais mettre à jour la liste des membres pour permettre à tous les membres SAC d'accéder au forum.

Stan Martin travaille également à la mise à niveau de notre site Web <https://sac.ca/>. Nous prévoyons qu'il soit prêt pour l'assemblée générale annuelle.

Depuis 2023, les fonds inutilisés programme de subventions de développement des instructeurs et de sécurité ne sont plus reportés d'année en année et ne se cumule plus. Les réclamations des clubs pour la saison 2024 doivent être envoyées au bureau de l'ACVV-SAC avant la fin mars 2025 afin de ne pas perdre la subvention annuelle disponible. Des réclamations plus importantes peuvent être faites au cours d'une année donnée et le solde peut être réclamé les années suivantes. Pour plus d'informations, veuillez contacter votre Directeur de zone.

Le Vol Libre / Free Flight est le principal lien de communication entre notre organisation, nos clubs et leur membres. Ceci est possible grâce à l'engagement de notre éditeur Jeff Keay, qui y travaille en collaboration avec d'Herrie Ten Cate. Ils sont toujours à la recherche de contributeurs : écrivains, photographes, personnes ayant des compétences en publication en ligne, qui peuvent les contacter directement à : freeflight@sac.ca

Le 8 mars 2025, nous tiendrons notre AGA en mode virtuel.

Voici le lien afin de se joindre à l'AGA virtuelle de l'ACVV-SAC : <https://sac-agm.in.howspace.com/2025-agm>

Ordre du jour

10h30 – 12h00 – AGA de l'ACVV-SAC

12h30 – 13h00 – remise des trophées et récompenses de l'ACVV-SAC 2024

13h00 – 16h00 – Séminaire de formation périodique des pilotes de planeurs approuvé par TC

- Examen du rapport national sur la sécurité
- Gestion de risques du vol à voile
- Initiatives de sécurité (discussion ouverte)

Si vous avez des questions concernant l'AGA de l'ACVV-SAC, veuillez nous contacter via sacoffice@sac.ca

Nous espérons vous y retrouver.

Sylvain Bourque
Président ACVV-SAC

FROM THE BOARD

Priorities

Active discussions ongoing among clubs by email and SAC Forum about the Pawnee Airworthiness Directive (AD). David Gagliardi is in contact with a “Designated Airworthiness Representative” (DAR) who will share any advice and ask TC for an “Alternate Means of Compliance” (AMOC). There was an Info session about the Pawnee at the Safety Officers virtually meeting on January 15th. 10 SAC clubs with 14 Pawnees are impacted. Pawnee parts are available from <https://www.univair.com/>

SAC Forum Upgrade is now live since last fall. SAC office can now update the member list to allow all SAC member access to the Forum.

Stan Martin is also working on upgrading our Website <https://sac.ca/>. We plan it to be ready for the AGM.

Since 2023, unused funds of the Instructor Development and Safety Grant program are not carrying over from year to year and no longer accumulate. Clubs Claims for 2024 season need to be sent to the ACVV-SAC office before the end of March 2025 to not lose the annual grant available. Larger claims can be made in a given year and the balance claimed in following years. For more information, please contact your zone Director.

Free Flight, the main communication link between our organization, our clubs and their members. This is possible with the commitment of its editor Jeff Keay, who works on it in collaboration with Herrie Ten Cate. They are always looking for contributors: writers, photographers, those with online publishing skills, who can contact them directly at: freeflight@sac.ca

On March 8, 2025, we will hold our virtual AGM.

Here is the link to connect to ACVV-SAC virtual AGM: <https://sac-agm.in.howspace.com/2025-agm>

Agenda

10:30 – 12:00 – ACVV-SAC AGM

12:30 – 13:00 – 2024 SAC Trophies and Award Presentation

13:00 – 16:00 – TC approved Glider pilot recurrent training seminar

- Review of National Safety Report
- Risk Management in Soaring
- Safety Initiatives (open discussion)

If you have any questions about the SAC AGM, please send an email at: sacoffice@sac.ca

We hope you will join us.

Sylvain Bourque
ACVV-SAC President

NEWS

SAC Funding available!

SAC offers several funds to Canadian gliding clubs. At present, they've not been used to their full extent. Have a look and see what may be available to help your club:

- **Safety and Instructor Improvement Grant:** Clubs can claim any expenses that result in improvements to safety or aid in the development and training of instructors. Clubs can receive a minimum of \$1,000 and larger clubs can receive larger amounts based on their membership numbers.
- **Financial Support for Club Marketing & Publicity Initiatives:** SAC will cover 80 percent of marketing-related expenses to a maximum of \$1,000.
- **Soaring Simulator Fund:** SAC will cover a third of the cost for the club to construct a soaring simulator, up to a maximum of \$1,000.
- **Contest Hosting:** Clubs can get \$1,000 for hosting a contest that is less than six days, \$3,000 for a contest that is more than six days, and \$4,000 for hosting a national contest.
- **Youth Bursary Program:** SAC will offer \$500 for up to five youths under 25 years of age per club. The fund is to be used for towing and glider rental charges.
- **Youth Contest Support:** SAC will cover the cost of entry fees for young glider pilots interested in competing in the Canadian Nationals.

Note that these funds have different submission time limits. Club representatives should consult their Zone Directors when applying for funds. To get more details about each fund, go to the SAC website, click on the SAC/ACVV tab and you will see the funds listed in the Programs Section. Please keep an eye out, SAC is considering adding other funds.

NEWS

TMU team wins OSTIV award

Episode #55 of **Herrie Ten Cate's** popular gliding podcast **The Thermal** recently included an interview with **Joel Navaratnam**, winner of an OSTIV Award, who spoke about a Toronto Metropolitan University project to dramatically reduce the amount of time it takes to get students to their first solo flights through the use of simulators. Here are excerpts from their conversation:

Herrie: The 2024 International Scientific and Technical Soaring Organization (OSTIV) awards were handed out at the World Gliding Championships in Uvalde, Texas. The Segal Safety and Training Award went to a team from Toronto Metropolitan University. TMU's University Soaring Society submitted a paper titled Enhancing Student Glider Training Through Simulator Integration. They designed and implemented a simulator training program that reduced the number of instruction flights to solo by half; roughly from 40-50 flights to around 25. Joel is past president of the University Soaring Society....

Joel: It was definitely a lot of work. Not gonna lie. The goal was to find a way to get newer generations involved in the gliding culture. We worked with Youth Flight Canada chairman Charles Peterson and my professor, Dr Goetz Bramesfeld. We realized the biggest detractor to entering gliding was cost, so wanted to reduce the number of dual flights to go solo. In Canada, we don't really have year-round flying weather. So from January to April, I trained on the Condor simulator for about 20 hours of flying. After that, we went to York Soaring. I got my solo in about 17 flights. Since then, we've been trying to get this to other students as well. Last summer we had about six students who were trained on the simulator and those who were able to come consistently went solo in about 25 flights on average, which is amazing.

Condor definitely has a big part to play, but it's also a lot of effort coordinating all the instructors and students. We had a program for the winter semester--about three months-- with people signed up for about 20 hours per week in total. I could put on my VR



headset, get things turned on and there could be an instructor 3000 miles away to take you through the lessons. If you go through all the modules, from basics to thermalling and ridge flying, you can see a clear difference between people who use a simulator and those without, on their first time flying.

So right now, the goal for us is to make our own simulator and we have a prototype whose cost undercuts the market by two and a half times. Beyond that, we had a central location on the TMU campus. Since the students were on the campus already it was easy to get them on to the simulator. And even if you have to charge twenty bucks an hour to use the simulator, you're still saving bags of money versus 50 actual flights, you're saving bags of money. And with subsidies from Youth Flight Canada, that makes it even less expensive for students.

... continued

NEWS

Three members of the TMU team went solo last summer and were duly soaked. Left to right, Lester Pinlac, Ammar Mahmood, and Emily Peelar.



Postscript from USS:

Since this interview, the University Soaring Society has continued to soar to new heights. All six students who completed the simulator training program have flown solo and are working towards continuing licensing requirements.

One of the students completed their training in ten months from start to finish with the simulator training program, and a cost of \$1300 to become a licensed glider pilot. With two of the six new students

fully licensed, and more on the way, the USS is looking forward to growing their wings. The selection

process for new students has started, with candidates beginning their journey on the simulator program. Advanced thermalling and cross country flying practice on the simulator is currently being exercised by members of the club who are looking to grow their skills. In addition, progress has continued on the new simulator manufacturing/design, which will be completed and put to the test in due time.

With the soaring season not too far away, the USS is excited to see what this season will bring.

NEWS

KERRY STEVENSON

(Courtesy ASCent Magazine)

There was an astonishing attendance at his Celebration of Life on June 6 at Cu Nim.

The hangar was packed with 300+ of Kerry's gliding friends, current and old, from Alberta clubs, his family, and many friends from his other areas of recreational interest, work and church.

Kerry was an influential, very well-regarded, friendly, often funny, and quiet person who helped direct the flying careers of many Cu Nim glider pilots over many years as a supportive flight instructor, and shaped the club as a vice-president 2013-17 and president 2018-19.

He pursued the love of the sport as a cross-country pilot, mostly in the Duo-Discus, was a regular at Cowley, and a frequent participant in soaring competitions held in Alberta.



In his life away from the club, Kerry was a husband, father of three sons, a realtor, a motorcyclist, and many other titles.

Kerry will be fondly remembered and missed by Cu Nim members and by members of the many communities where he contributed.

JIM CARPENTER

Jim Carpenter passed away peacefully, at Hillsdale Estates, Oshawa, on June 14, 2024, after a long battle with Alzheimer's.

Jim was a creative genius in the world of Canadian design and advertising. While graphic design was his forte, Jim's true passion was flight.

He was an award-winning glider pilot and a three-time Canadian National Champion. He competed across North America and as far afield as France, Argentina, and Australia.

Donations in Jim's memory may be made to the Alzheimer Society of Canada (www.alzheimer.ca) or a charity of your choice.

FROM THE CLUBS

The **Saskatchewan Soaring Club** had a mixed 2024. Mixed because the atmospheric conditions during spring and summer were stable and not very good for thermic flights. On the other hand, we had a very safe season, where the club operated every single weekend without any interruptions.

We also purchased a new (to us) Miller Tern single seat glider and our Flarm station is finally up and running. Additionally, we welcomed a few new

members who have the right stuff to make a big difference and keep our club vibrant.

Lastly, we received a very generous donation from a member: a very mighty lawn mower that, jointly with our existing equipment, will allow us to mow our runways very quickly indeed!

Safe and memorable flights in 2025, everyone!

Five months of soaring at the **Canadian Rockies Soaring Club**, starting on May 3rd and ending on September 30th, saw 14 club members and 10 visiting pilots combine for more than 150 soaring flights over the scenic Columbia Valley.

Three bursary students attended our soaring camp in early July. Once again club members volunteered their time and expertise to pilot the tow plane and provide flight instruction. The keen students were attentive and soloed in July and August.

Attention to flight detail and confidence in their ability was pushed to the forefront when one of the students encountered a major potentially damaging situation.

In September, while on tow flying solo in the club's 2-33, the student had the weak link break while 200 ft AGL and past the runway threshold.

Staying calm and assessing the situation, the student realized a return to the runway was impossible and a controlled forward landing was the correct and safe option.

Controlling the descent and while very close to touchdown, the right wing clipped a pine tree, one of several in the vicinity, causing the 2-33 to ground loop.

The student was able to walk away uninjured. It was an excellent display of confidence, calm piloting while maintaining control of the glider in a very stressful situation, especially considering how few flights and soaring hours the pilot had.

The 2-33 was written off and insurance was paid out. However, the insured value would not finance a suitable newer training glider.

Fortunately we were able to purchase a K-13 from the TSC without completely draining our reserve funds.

The K-13 will be a great replacement for the 2-33. Thanks to everyone at the TSC for being so accommodating and helpful in transferring the K-13 ownership to the CRSC.

Wes James, president CRSC

FROM THE CLUBS

By Kim Empey

2024 was an outstanding flying season at the **Gatineau Gliding Club**. GGC logged 870 glider launches, which put us back to pre-Covid tow numbers.

Spring was exceptionally good. Pilots flew every weekend from mid-March to mid-June. Often, the great weather encouraged a tow pilot and private pilots to fly an additional weekday.

Check flights started in mid March with pilots logging long distance and FAI duration

achievements early in the season. We had many days with over 6000ft ceilings. One of our pilots logged 36 hours in six flights during this period.

For our "May Fly" competition on the May long weekend, we had four challenging but rewarding flying days. While the winner was GGC's **Doug Remoudos**, we were joined by pilots from neighbouring clubs including MSC, RVS and SOSA. The upcoming competitions will be held May 23-26, 2025, and May 22 -25, 2026. Mark your calendars.



The Fall weather offered more opportunities for good flying. Pilots flew mostly both days every weekend in September through to the beginning of November when our hangar closed.

2024 had GGC focus on pilot development through cross country tasks, including joining the Proving Grounds program, FAI badge achievements and the

Baron Hilton challenge. **Karl Boutin**, our CFI, had the highest result in Canada for the Baron Hilton longest distance challenge for a pre-declared triangle on OLC with a distance of 329.18km and 389.03 points. Four other club pilots were also in the top 10 for longest flight distance in Canada.

.... continued

FROM THE CLUBS

Effort was underway by several new and seasoned pilots on their FAI badge progression. Both **Mike Mackay** and **Norman Wong** completed their silver badges in 2024. **Brian Pirie** and **Drew Carter** completed Bronze badges and made progress toward silver. **Lawrence Maulsby** also made progress towards his silver. GGC successfully launched four solo pilots and licensed one glider pilot.

Due to the Pawnee AD, GGC did not hold a wave camp in Lake Placid in October with the Montreal Soaring Council. Repairs on the GGC Pawnee are on track for completion near the start of the 2025 season. The wave camp in October 2025 is expected to proceed as planned.

For the Pendleton facility, work continues to maintain and upgrade our excellent grounds and buildings. Under the direction of our tireless facility manager **Jacques**, many club volunteers spread 110 tons of sand on the 31-13 runway to improve this surface. Another group of handy volunteers rebuilt the floor at the entrance to the carpenters shop. Over the season, others took out the chainsaws and removed decaying and fallen trees around buildings and campsites. The 25 meter club pool had some work done on patching and painting. The pool was open early in the season with the first dip in May and last on Labour day. Flax

was planted as a new crop along the runway borders. Volunteer mowers kept the grass runways clear and the gardens blooming. Another group of volunteers renewed website and advertising material.

We had a number of socials including informal Saturday BBQs at the clubhouse, hangar opening and closing with chili lunch, and a francophone “Bastille” day BBQ. We finished off the season with an awards banquet and dinner.

A club pilot travelled with the Canadian Soaring Team to the World Championships in Uvalde, Texas. Another senior pilot travelled to Baie St. Paul to try out the CVVQ wave airfield.

If you are interested in flying at the Pendleton airfield with our dynamic club, we have a two week visiting pilot flying package. You can fly your own glider, or fly club rentals. Of course, we have instruction programs for new students to get a pilot license. To find out more on these programs, contact us or check out the club website link below.

See you on the flight line!

Please Contact us at : info@gatineauglidingclub.ca



FROM THE CLUBS



Andy Huddleston gets ready to do his checks while Neil Duffee briefs “Ninety-Nines” Jane Tilley on the various aspects of the Grob. Inset: Group photo of some of the “Ninety-Nines” EO chapter who came out for flights with us.

Drainage issues at **Rideau Valley Soaring** (rvss.ca) led to a late start in 2024.

While conditions in Eastern Ontario were weak/wet for much of the season, we were kept busy with many visitors to our operations. We hosted a tour to a group of 30 youth in the SHAD Canada program, and even an impromptu group of children from a nearby church picnic who dropped by.

In September we hosted the Eastern Ontario chapter of “The 99s,” eleven of whom took introductory flights with us.

In all, we did more than 100 intro/guest flights introducing folks to the sport.

We held an annual “fly week” and folks worked on their bronze badges. Work was done to improve our OGN monitoring station, and volunteers worked hard at clearing the neglected drainage ditch along the field.

One evening **Ulli Werneburg** gave a wonderful photo presentation of gliding in the 1950s-60s.

It was a delight to see Gord’s Ka6e flying, and a few of us even got to retrieve it from a land-out.

FROM THE CLUBS



Photo prise par **Bertrand Moreau** à Saint-Dominique (Québec) à partir de l'avion remorqueur suite au largage du planeur.

Le planeur est un DG 505 de l'**Association de Vol à Voile Champlain**, piloté par **Simon-Pierre Dupont** (instructeur de voltige senior planeur) et **Anny Gagnon** (instructeur de vol planeur).

Simon-Pierre a mis en place un programme de formation complet de voltige à L'AVVC en 2013. Depuis ce temps, plusieurs de nos membres sont

maintenant qualifiés en voltige et à l'enseignement de la voltige.

L'AVVC utilise deux ASK 21 et un DG 505 pour la formation et les vols de familiarisation de voltige. La voltige a été une source de revenu importante pour le club suite aux deux dernières années de météo moins propice au vol-voyage dans la grande région de

Montréal et la baisse récente d'inscription des nouveaux élèves pilotes.

FROM THE CLUBS

Unfortunately, wet weather which lasted into late July hindered **SOSA**'s operations for the first three months of the 2024 season. In early August the weather changed and dry conditions prevailed to the end of the season. This allowed us to catch up on the number of flights and training opportunities we'd lost earlier in the season. Due to great fall weather we were able to operate until mid-November.

In June we took delivery of a new DG 1001 with 20m wing extensions, which was well accepted by the membership as a basic, aerobatics and cross-country trainer.

In July we held a Bronze Badge course and a cross-country clinic. A student acceleration week during late August was well attended by students and instructors. We were able to fly five days, with all students making significant progress. We have implemented a mentor-based cross-country

training and coaching program to guide cross-country novices up to Gold level.

Despite the slow start, SOSA had a good year, with 159 flying members, a 10-year high. The strong membership numbers and well over 3000 flights translated into a healthy financial situation which will enable us to continue keeping our fleet and facilities up-to-date. We expect delivery of a new ASK 21B in March to replace our oldest ASK 21.

Between the end of February to the end of April we will again host a series of Hangar Talks which all pilots of SAC clubs in Canada are welcome to attend. Details will be posted on the new SAC Forum and the SOSA website www.sosaglidingclub.com.



The club completed drainage work to address the challenges of “Lake SOSA”

FROM THE CLUBS



2024 was a year that brought many positive results for the **Toronto Soaring Club**. Our project with Toronto Metropolitan University's University Soaring Society picked up its pace after the next batch of six students all came to the field with many hours of CONDOR simulator under their belts and eager to fly the YFC K-21.

All six have soloed and two are licensed. Our non-USS students also did well. One of them earned his license and another went solo. We awarded eight A badges, six B badges and we saw the **Cole** brothers claim altitude legs from their Cowley adventure, with **Bill** earning a Gold and **Dave** earning a Diamond. A special shout-out to **Stan Maj** who flew a dual 1000km in Namibia.

After years of planning and plotting, we finally launched and completed the new hangar project. The whole venture was club-based, with the design by two member architects and one engineer. This club-funded project used many financial vehicles, including future rent payments from the YFC so that their K-21 could finally live indoors rather than

outdoors in pajamas. Other volunteers repaired the winch and in late October we winched for the first time in years. New protocols are being developed and the winch will see more regular action in 2025.

TSC is also now part of the OGN, having established a receiving station and club WiFi. We have sold our beloved ASK-13, which will fly over the Rockies in Invermere in a few months. Our refurbished 1-26 is also up for sale. We are looking for a nice composite twin for advanced cross-country training, which is the goal of all of this work. This will allow TSC to fulfill its aim of becoming a true cross-country club.

What has really stood out above all of these banner moments is the depth and hard work of our volunteers. Every member has contributed to the projects, and some have lent themselves to many projects throughout the season. A special thanks to our two club AMEs, **Vic** and **Martin**. Good leadership promotes good club life, and we are looking forward to 2025 so that we can reap what we've sown.

GET MORE SOAR

By Ronald Smith

With hopes of improving my cross-country soaring abilities, when possible I benchmark my flights against those of **Andre Pepin** and/or **Nick Bonniere**. Both are accomplished distance pilots; witness Andre and Nick ranking respectively first and second “All Flights OLC-Plus 2024” for Canada. They fly from Montreal Soaring Club, a mere 37 km from my home, the Gatineau Gliding Club.

On May 10, 2024, Andre flew his LAK-17 “Delta Bravo” 7:28 hrs while I flew my LAK-12 7:23 hrs. Though our flight times were nearly identical, Andre travelled 25 percent farther than I did:

731.4 km versus 587.1 km. While Andre’s 21 meter sailplane has spectacular performance (56/1 L/D), I knew he’d flown farther primarily because of his superior long-distance soaring abilities. Andre and I both post our flight files to On Line Contest and OLC can upload those .igc files to the free flight analysis software SeeYou Cloud, making it easy to examine our two flights.

First I note our respective OLC scores: Andre was credited with 635 OLC km, 87 percent of his total distance, while I was credited with 310 OLC km, only 53 percent of my total distance. Favouring task flying, whether declared or not, rather than OLC wandering, would likely contribute to improving cross-country soaring abilities. I also study the cruising portion of our flights: Andre cruised on average at 132 kph inter-thermal, achieving an average L/D of 53/1 while I averaged

123 kph with an L/D of 44/1 (adjusted for high-speed final-glide).

What to make of this? Nick Bonniere provides me with polar data for when he flies his LAK-17B “Sierra Tango” with 21-meter wings. The

polar indicates that Andre’s still air L/D may have been 49/1; Andre would have had an average Neto of +4.4 points. My still air L/D was 40/1, so my average Neto was +4.1 points.

While this appears to indicate that we both found more rising than sinking air inter-thermal, further analysis is more cautious. Lift to drag ratio is mainly a function of indicated airspeed.

..... continued



ST and AB on the grid at Hawkesbury



Launch grid at Pendleton May 2024

Based on that, Andre's still air L/D may have been 53/1 and mine 44/1 and accordingly Andre's Neto was +0.3 points while mine was -0.2 points. A sound understanding of inter-thermal flying— porpoising, blockspeed, probability speed-to-fly, etc.— might contribute helpfully. I also look at the climb portion of our flights. Andre stopped for 43 thermals and gained 44,903ft while I stopped for 42 thermals and gained a nearly identical 45,412ft. My largest single climb was 5,596ft while Andre's was 5,671ft. But Andre achieved an average rate of climb 36 percent higher than mine, 384ft/m versus my 281ft/m, even though we both generally glided far, looking for good thermals: 16.6km was Andre's average inter-thermal

distance while mine averaged 13.7km, proportional to our sailplanes' performances.

Though Andre flew nearly 100km further north than I did and may have encountered stronger conditions, I'm confident that he understands the art of the climb far better than I do. The fact that his eleven circling attempts (<45 sec) gained him 1,811ft while my thirteen attempts only gained me 10ft (!!) is but one example. Had I achieved Andre's rate of climb, a task calculator indicates that I would have flown an additional 71km or 12 percent farther.

Understanding how to achieve higher average rates of climb would be a valuable objective!

.... continued

Ingo Renner, four time world champion, ranked “Meteorological Nav” and “Tactical Decisions” as numbers one and two in importance for distance flying. He ranked “Thermal Technique” eighth. What may need attention are 1) improving reading of the sky ahead, 2) better evaluating whether to stop or not for a given thermal and, in my case at least, 3) possibly leaving thermals sooner. Climbing all the way to cloud base might feel reassuring when far from home, but at times

it reduces average rate of climb and by extension cross-country speed.

Top distance pilots like to say that long-distance soaring flights are about three things: “Rate of climb, rate of climb and rate of climb.”

Ronald Smith has been flying at the Gatineau Gliding Club since the 1970s and his experience ranges from gliders to jetliners.



Finding the wave in France



By Marco Pronto

Some time back I learned about a winter weather phenomenon that would create strong wave flying in the south of France. You can imagine my motive when I asked my wife, “Would you like to go to the south of France for Christmas?” She said yes and I spent some time reaching out to gliding clubs to ask about wave programs. We then planned a trip to France for Christmas, which included visiting about 20 magnificent churches. And a few days for me trying to arrange a wave flight. This was a good deal.

We moved into an AirBnB in the small village of Les Matelles, about 40 minutes north of Montpellier and about five minutes from gliding club Pic St Loup (www.cvvm.fr). I introduced

myself to the club with the intent of getting a run-down on their procedures and on the possibility of flying wave. Here I met Roland, one of their senior flight instructors. We discussed a possible flight, given an optimistic forecast for strong wave effect. Roland said he’d reach out to Gérard “Ge-Ge” Lherm, a world champion and multi-French national champion.

A mega system soon arrived. It had a huge low-pressure cell off the south coast of France and a major high-pressure cell in the interior. This looked like a unique wave event in the making.

That morning I packed a baguette sandwich and arrived early. The various pilots checked my

...continued

clothing to ensure I would be warm enough, loaning me a special pair of foot warmers. I went through a series of debriefings to ensure our communication procedures. Ge-Ge speaks little English and I speak even less French. The glider was a Nimbus 4DL with a wingspan of 26.5m and an extended cockpit.

The Nimbus dwarfed the small, 100hp towplane. However, with an asphalt runway and a tailwind we were soon airborne. Looking at the surrounding fields, the first thing I realized was that they were unlandable vineyards.

Although we were flying in a straight line, the tow had us both bouncing wildly. I have a lot of respect for the pilots at this club.

As we got close to the ridge, Ge-Ge cut away and we immediately caught ridge lift with strong gusts. We flew a figure eight to gain altitude and were quickly at eight or nine thousand feet. We turned north and Ge-Ge said “hold on, we’re going to fly through rotor.”

We bounced around for a couple of minutes, though not as dramatically as I anticipated. I saw clouds in the classic circular formation, actively rotating at differing altitudes and counter to the expected rotation. I learned that there is rotor at the base of the wave and also a sort of rotor effect at the shear line between the calmer air and the fast-moving

wave, which is to say, there is rotor all over the damn place.

The bouncing stopped and we were flying smoothly, like an average flight in Ontario. “Are we in the wave?” “Yes.”

There were no lenticulars, only blue sky above. Clouds below were broken. I didn’t quite know what to expect. Wait a minute, clouds BELOW are

broken? Our flight was now going to be above the clouds.

About then, the club radioed to ask how I was feeling, having cleared the bouncy rotor section. Very thoughtful! Good to go!

At 8,000 ft Ge-Ge slowed the glider to about 75km/hr with full flaps. I’m thinking we are about to stall and suddenly you feel it—the vario needle shoots right off the clock.

we were going up like a homesick angel at 13.6 knots. Wow!

At about 14,000ft we turned west and sped up. At this altitude you can’t trust the VNE on your ASI, so needed to look at the calculated VNE on the LXNav computer. Or in this case, the LXNav lit up with a red alert “Overspeed!”



.... continued

At 245km/hr Ge-Ge gently pulls up, slows down and lets the wave take us back to 13,500ft before pushing forward on the stick, trying to get the right balance between going up and going fast. To my mind this is a good place to be. Most of my flying has been about the right balance between not going down and not going too slow. In Ontario we look up at the clouds to look for the best lift. On this flight Ge-Ge was looking down at the clouds for the best route to fly.

The clouds closed up. I ran a mental exercise of what to do should Ge-Ge become incapacitated and I have to take control. I know the cloud base is 6,000 ft and the tallest mountains below me are 4,000ft, leaving a 2,000 ft gap. This ship has a 1:60 glide ratio, so I felt confident I could be guided to a landing strip. Okay let's enjoy the flight.

We flew westward for a good hour. I could clearly see the Mediterranean ocean below the clear blue sky. Then, snowcapped mountains. "Are those the Pyrenees?" "Yes, and below us is the city of Carcassonne." I could also see a towering lenticular cloud. I asked how high can one fly with that? Ge-Ge told me that would be a record-breaking flight of around 30,000ft—well out of bounds. On the French side of the Pyrenees we are capped to 19,000ft. We were in controlled airspace and, requested to stay below 15,000ft.

We flew eastward and kept going. Ge-Ge kept pushing the glider to VNE as we crossed France for the next three hours, skipping from one wave to another. I spent most of my time trying to understand what Ge-Ge was looking for when sniffing out the next wave. Although most of the time the clouds were closed up, every so often they would break open and I began to notice that there

was snow on the ground. If you know the south of France, you would know that they don't get snow.... Unless you are by the Alps.

We had found the eastern side of the Rhone valley. I could clearly see the jagged peaks of the Alps and Mont Blanc.

After some four hours in the air, it was time to head home.

The trip was tiring and as the sun got lower the cockpit got significantly colder. Ge-Ge announced we'd reached 600kms of flight. The spoilers popped out and we made our way down, breaking through the rotor again. I could see Pic St Loup and Hortus mountain along with other landmarks I had memorized from Google Earth. The race was on to get home while there was still light. Again the LxNav lit up, indicating we were over speeding - this time we were a lot lower and the ASI needle was heading up to the red line. Ge-Ge eased back, gently

slowed us down then popped out the spoilers again. We did the full circuit and landed.

I would like to express a sincere thank you to Ge-Ge and the wonderful people at Montpelier, Pic St Loup gliding club for this experience.



My Journey into Aviation:

A Student Pilot's Perspective

By May Tremblay

I mostly grew up in a small town about an hour from Cranbrook that some of you may know—Fernie, BC. I originally moved there for my athletic career with the local alpine ski team, but over time, I grew to love the town for more than just its skiing. I have always been someone who travels a lot, whether for sports or simply for vacations.

When I entered high school, I started considering future careers. Initially, I had a long list of fields that fascinated me—everything from aerospace to mechanics and aviation. However, now that I am in my final year, I have narrowed my focus to one general field: aviation.

In Grade 11, I was presented with an incredible opportunity that I would like to share. I learned about a bursary offered by an aerodrome just two hours from home, which awarded selected candidates two weeks of gliding at the Invermere Soaring Centre. Excited by the possibility, I quickly submitted a short essay and a reference letter to the listed email, hoping for a response. To my surprise and delight, I received the very email I had been hoping for. Before I knew it, I was driving to Invermere.

On July 1st, I arrived at the clubhouse, where I was greeted by the owner, Trevor Florence, along with others who would be guiding me throughout my stay. I was quite nervous for my first flight in a glider, but the experience was unforgettable. The silence, the smoothness of the flight, and the breathtaking view created a sensation unlike anything I had ever imagined. As we



gained altitude, I was struck by how peaceful it felt, with only the sound of the wind rushing past the canopy.

Over the next week, I not only discovered a new passion but also found a sense of belonging within the small aviation community. They welcomed me warmly, and we shared experiences, challenges, and even group suppers. The instructors were patient and encouraging, always there to offer guidance, which made the learning process both exciting and fulfilling.

One of my most challenging moments came on July 6th while flying with my instructor, Bryan Deans. We experienced a rope break at around 200 to 250 feet AGL. At the moment, everything seemed to happen too fast to process. Thankfully, thanks to my instructor's quick decision-making, we were able to turn back safely and land on the runway. It was a frightening experience, but I now see it as a valuable lesson—an opportunity to prepare for future emergencies and build confidence in my abilities.

..... continued

Then came July 15th, a day I will never forget. I completed my first solo flight, and the feeling was surreal. The moment I took off, I felt a mixture of excitement, nervousness, and pride all at once. It was a massive accomplishment that marked a significant milestone in my journey.

Looking back, this experience has been filled with challenges, growth, and countless

unforgettable moments. Each flight has brought new lessons and a deeper appreciation for both flying and the surrounding community. Whether facing unexpected obstacles or enjoying the pure thrill of flight, every moment has reinforced my determination to pursue this remarkable field.



FLIGHT TRAINING & SAFETY

Do we look back or forward?

By Dave Donaldson
SAC Safety Officer

For years we've looked at what has happened and said, "We need to learn from this, so we don't repeat our mistakes." This approach has served us well over the years. For a time, our safety record improved but now it has stabilized. What is the next step? How do we improve our safety record?

Let's be clear, I'm not suggesting we abandon our annual safety reviews. Those insights are crucial for keeping us on track. But if we only analyze past accidents we're always reacting, never anticipating. Instead, we must start spotting patterns in the data—warning signs that help us stay ahead of the next inevitable challenge—that help us anticipate and prevent future incidents.

For this, let's use a culture-based approach, look at a situation with a proactive and holistic lens. Nothing happens in a vacuum and behind each accident is:

- **a pilot**
- **a CFI**
- **a cadre of instructors**
- **a safety officer**
- **a Board of Directors**
- **a club culture**
- **a national organization**

Considering the James Reason Swiss Cheese model, what is the layer (or layers) at each of the above levels? Every incident/accident is a series of events that led to an unfortunate outcome. We have multiple opportunities to break that chain of events and prevent the result. Think of each mitigation/prevention action as a layer of Swiss cheese. Individually each layer has holes, yet when you stack multiple layers, the likelihood of a path for that chain of events to pass through, uninterrupted, is greatly reduced.

Let's apply this to a simple incident. This past year, I am pleased to report, we didn't have any canopies open on take off. Since 2017, we've had between 3-5 canopies opening in flight per year. Fortunately, only one was classified as an accident when that canopy departed the aircraft and struck the tail. What are some of the layers that have contributed to this improvement?

1) **National Organization:** SAC's role is to advocate and advise. Representing gliding as the national voice, SAC advocates with regulators such as Transport Canada. Based on feedback from members, other jurisdictions, and the results of the national safety reporting, SAC added the wing runner checklist as a layer of cheese to mitigate recurrence of this incident.

..... continued

FLIGHT TRAINING & SAFETY

2) **Safety Officer:** leveraging the regular safety officer meetings, this new checklist was socialized and recommended. The feedback has been quite positive with most SOs reporting they have adopted and now practise the wing runner checklist.

3) **Club Culture:** what the majority does directly impacts individual behaviour. While this influence will vary based on personality and experience, we are all impacted by it. Increasingly there are reports of canopies unlocked caught and corrected by the wing runner prior to take-off. There is a culture shift in Canada, towards celebrating the catching of errors. We all make errors. How the culture of your club responds to the error defines whether that will be received as positive or negative.

4) **Pilot:** at the end of the day the PIC is responsible. While this is the final layer in the model, how are we setting them up for success? A pilot preparing to launch is attempting to get through their pre-launch checklist; what are the factors that are supporting or impeding that process? Do we have a wing runner insisting on hooking them up before they've completed their checks? Do they have a fellow pilot who is not flying interrupting them? How is the pilot responding to those distractions? Is that response supported or shunned by the club membership?

What does this look like in practice? Here's a real-life example. The club has safety written into the SOPs. There is support of the Safety Officer by the board. The Chief Flight Instructor (CFI) and Chief Tow Pilot (CTP) are supportive of that safety culture. One very hot and busy day, an instructor (not the duty instructor that day) observed a couple of small mistakes. They also saw some interactions among members that were unpleasant and out of character. In short, nerves were getting a little frayed.

Knowing that safety is stated in the SOPs, is taught in ground school, is supported by the board of directors and the club membership as a whole, that instructor halted all operations. With several gliders on grid ready to launch, including a couple of guest flights, everyone went to the club house, got a drink of water and cooled down (both literally and figuratively).

There was an open and frank conversation and the mood on the field changed almost instantly. After a brief pause, maybe half hour, operations were resumed. Not only did the level and number of small mistakes drop, but it was also a much more pleasant experience for the rest of the day. Members expressed their appreciation for the use of this safety mechanism on that day. This mechanism would not have been effective if not for the support up through the organization.

As you look forward to the 2025 flying season, reflect on what you see at the various layers. Where do you see a missing layer of cheese?

Fly Safe.