



# Hangar Soaring

February 2022

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WOMEN SOARING PILOTS  
ASSOCIATION.

<https://womensoaring.org/>

## IN THIS ISSUE

### PAGE 2

Badges and Records  
President's Notes  
From the Editor

### PAGE 3

2022 WSPA Scholarships  
Election Results  
Achievements

### PAGE 4

A Few Years of Gliding in the  
US

### PAGE 5

In Memoriam

### PAGE 6

Famous Women Glider Pilots

### PAGE 7-8

US Women Soaring Pi-  
lots and Women Soar-  
ing Pilot Association

### PAGE 9

International Merry-Go-  
Around

### PAGE 10

My first solo

### PAGE 11

My Bio  
Hall of Fame Announce-  
ment



Photo: Frauke Elber

## A Hawk named WSPA

(named by Karl Striedieck)

### Latest News:

**Due to the Corona virus concerns, the 2022 Seminar in Germany has been postponed again. WSPA is working on alternative sites. Check for updates at [www.womensoaring.org](http://www.womensoaring.org)**

THE WOMEN SOARING PILOTS ASSOCIATION (WSPA) WAS FOUNDED IN 1986 AND IS AFFILIATED WITH THE SOARING SOCIETY OF AMERICA

## BOARD

**Cathy Williams**  
President  
PO Box 70  
Fairfield, PA 17320

**LindaLee Laberge**  
Vice President  
8150 East Indian Hill Rd.  
Norman, OK 73026

**Gail Schippers**  
Secretary  
403 Collier Ave.  
Longmont, CO 80501

**Margarett Roy**  
Treasurer  
PO Box 1197  
Central Islip, NY 11722-0950

**Kristin Farry**  
Scholarship Director  
7631 Merlin Way  
Amelia Courthouse, VA  
23002

**Ute Kaden**  
Membership Director  
2174 Penrose Lane  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

**Ulrike Franz**  
International Director  
Friederich Ebert Str. 9  
72762 Reutlingen  
Germany

\*\*\*

**Scholarship Chair**  
**Alice Palmer**  
[scholarships@womensoaring.org](mailto:scholarships@womensoaring.org)

**HANGAR SOARING** IS PUBLISHED  
FEB, MAY, AUG, NOV.  
[editor@womensoaring.org](mailto:editor@womensoaring.org)  
OR

**FRAUKE ELBER, EDITOR,**  
1002 Old Denbigh Blvd #206  
NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23602

## Badges and Records

Through February 2022

**Silver Badge**  
Nikita Webb, NM

**Silver Altitude**  
Nikita Webb, NM

**Silver Distance**  
Nikita Webb, NM

**Silver Duration**  
Nikita Webb

**Bronze Badge**  
Grace Whiston, CO

**C Badge**  
Rebecca Kinder, CO  
Adriana Barragan GA  
Lauren Read, CO

**B Badge**  
Lauren Read, CO

**A Badge**  
Anna Downing, FL  
Lauren Read, CO

## STATE RECORDS APPROVED

### New Mexico State Records

**Nikita Webb**  
Feminine Open Class Single-place  
Free Triangle Distance: 117.55 mi

Feminine Standard Class  
Free Distance up to three turn-points  
204.26 mi  
Free Triangle Distance 117.55 mi  
Free Distance  
75.35 mi

Feminine Sports Class  
Free Distance up to three turn-points:  
186.92 mi  
Free triangle Distance 107.56 mi  
Free Distance 75.35 mi

Youth Sports Class  
(Continued on page 3)

## President's Notes



Another New Year has arrived with so many uncertainties for the flying season! I hope you have found ways to make progress toward your soaring goals and plans despite all the challenges. I have some updates that might help you with those plans.

COVID concerns have necessitated that the WSPA seminar in Germany be postponed from July 2022 until July 2023. Your board is actively pursuing a USA venue for the seminar this summer. By late February we will send an email notice and post on the web site with the new 2022 seminar location and dates. The annual seminar is a great way for training or practicing with a group of like minded women soaring pilots.

The WSPA supported 2022 Women's Cross Country Camp at Moriarty, NM has been rescheduled to July 3-8. Those were always the preferred dates because of the better weather, and now there will be no conflict with the seminar dates. The camp is without a doubt the best way to begin or improve your cross country flying! Contact CarolAnne Garratt to register. [cagarratt@gmail.com](mailto:cagarratt@gmail.com)

The 1-26 Championships will be at Chilhowee Gliderport in Tennessee from May 3rd through 10th. Last year, there were three women competitors, and we are hoping for more this year. The top scoring woman is awarded the Virginia Schweizer Trophy. The 1-26 group is very welcoming and supportive of participants new to cross country and competition. If you can thermal safely in a gag-

(Continued on page 3)



## From the Editor

I hope 2022 had a good beginning for all of you.

We here at our retirement community thought we had it made. Since May life had almost returned to normal. We had parties, concerts, trips and art classes again. Everyone was on the up-beat. But then in late December, the news came that the new variant of the virus had come to the assisted living part of our community and with that came restrictions again. Our New Year's Eve party and some other events were canceled. And with the progression of January, the effect of the spreading virus variant was felt. I had to cancel my soaring club party at the end of the month (again). Our dining rooms went on reduced operation and when we leave our apartments, we have to wear masks again. Fortunately, we still can go shopping, we still can attend concerts and theater performances at the university, but masks are a must at these events.

It is beyond my understanding, why some people still don't see the necessity to protect themselves or others by getting vaccinated and wearing masks when it has been proved that both measures help to ease the infection severity (although not totally eliminating a possible infection).

For the first time in the history of the SSA convention it had to be postponed (hopefully not canceled). I always looked forward to this event. Will I ever be able to attend again?

The 2022 WSPA seminar in Germany has been post-

poned again. WSPA is already looking for an alternative within the US.

And today with a major winter storm moving up the East coast, it's dark and rainy outside and I am in a state of gloom. I hope it will get better soon

### Let your fingers do the walking.

In the August 2020 issue of Hangar Soaring, I reported on one of our TSS scholarship students, who really did his homework and raked in many scholarships that paid for all his flying in the last two years. His aviation career began when he applied for the TSS scholarship in 2019 and became one of the three recipients. He now was featured in the 2022 January edition of SOARING. Not only did he apply for several soaring scholarships and got them. He also found out that there was scholarship money for taking power lessons. He applied and was awarded two: a Pathway scholarship which offered ground school training and 10 hours of Cessna flight training and a Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship which offered Cessna ground school and over 60 hours of flight training. Just after turning 17, Abdalla got his PPL and came right back to soaring and got his PPL-G on October 21, 2012.

This is only to show, what is possible when you do your homework and go for the money out there. This applies to male and female flying enthusiasts.

Check the scholarship calendar in the January SOARING page 44. Be aware that many of these scholarship applications are due in March

**Frauke**



## 2022 WSPA Scholarships

It's time once again to think about our WSPA scholarships. For most scholarships, applications and all materials are due by **March 15**.

If you or other women soaring pilots in your club or commercial operation are eligible for one of the scholarships, please apply. International WSPA members are also encouraged to apply, as almost all scholarships are open to members regardless of where they live. The exception is the Competition Scholarship, which is only for U.S. residents planning to compete in an SSA-sanctioned contest.

Our WSPA Scholarship Committee members, who also serve as judges, are **Phyllis Wells**, **Elaine Ernewein**, **Cathy Keller**, and **Susan von Hellens**. Our new Scholarship Director on the WSPA Board is **Kristin Farry**. I want to thank all of these women, as well as our past Scholarship Director **Dani Cerne**, for their dedication and the hard work they devote to our WSPA scholarship program.

Information and online application forms are available on the WSPA website: <https://womensoaring.org/scholarships/>. The scholarship page also includes tips for preparing a good application.

If you have any questions about eligibility or requirements, please contact me at [scholarships@womensoaring.org](mailto:scholarships@womensoaring.org). Canadian WSPA members can also contact our Canadian WSPA scholarship contact, **Elaine Ernewein**, at [ernewein@execulink.com](mailto:ernewein@execulink.com).

We are looking forward to receiving your applications!

Alice Palmer  
WSPA Scholarship Chair

*(Continued from page 2)*

gle and land out safely when required, you are ready for the fun of this contest. Registration fees are waived for first time entrants. The WSPA competition scholarship could help you with other contest expenses. I can help you find a 1-26 to fly in the contest if you do not have your own. If you have the time, but are unsure about contests, consider volunteering to crew for our WSPA members. We could really use the help, and it is a great way to learn while sharing in the fun.

Please look over the WSPA scholarships available to you! The application deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>. WSPA wants to facilitate your progress with financial assistance and a personal mentor.

Lastly, please take the time to update your profile on the WSPA website. Simply log in and you will find the dashboard with the profile tab. Keeping your information up to date ensures we can send you Hangar Soaring and email notices. I encourage you to use the membership roster for networking. Perhaps reach out to nearby WSPA members and get together for an informal flying event.

Spring will be here soon. No matter your soaring goals, make plans now for how you will enjoy what our wonderful sport has to offer.

**Cathy**

## Election Results

**Cathy Williams and Ute Kaden** have been re-elected again.

**Kristen Farry** joined the Board, replacing **Dani Cerne**.

See new Board and positions of it's members on page 2

## Achievements

On December 18, 2021, **CarolAnn Garrat** added to her credentials a Commercial Glider rating.

On January 13, 2022 she passed her glider instructor test. Both were flown at Seminole Gliderport in Florida



L to R:  
Jan Driessen, instructor  
CarolAnn, Shawn Knickerbocker,  
DPE

**Frauke Elber** has been named recipient of the 2021 Paul Schweizer Lifetime Achievement Award

**Nikita Webb** is the recipient of the Kolstadt Award

\*\*\*

*(Continued from page 2)*

Free Distance up to three turn-points  
186.92 mi  
Free Distance 75.35 mi  
(all in Discus 2b, Moriarty NM)

## A few Years of Gliding in the USA

by Ulrike Franz , WSPA International Director

*Ulrike wrote the following article for the German magazine "Der Adler" (the Eagle) which has been published in February 2022. The here seen translation from German into English is computer generated and edited by Frauke Elber*

Work related, my husband Heiner Beutel and I, Ulrike Franz, spent the past decade mainly in the US state of Alabama. That we did not have to do without our beloved hobby of soaring during these seven and a half years had to do with the fact that I made the acquaintance of Frauke Elber through my artistic work in 2004.

Frauke Elber started gliding in Westphalia in 1962 and has lived in the US State of Virginia since 1970, where she, together with her husband Dr. Wolf Elber, joined a local gliding club. She is the author of numerous writings, biographies of women glider pilots and above all the quarterly "Hangar Soaring", the newsletter of the Women Soaring Pilot Association "WSPA", an American glider association that has supported women in gliding since 1986 financially and soaring wise. Since 1978, the annual WSPA Soaring Seminar has been held at a different locations in the USA and overseas and has become the main "fund raiser" for gliding scholarships, which are awarded annually to young (and now also to older) female pilots.

In 2009, one year before we moved to the USA, I was fortunate enough to participate in my first WSPA seminar which took place in Lesce-Bled in Slovenia, the first held in Europe. It was there, where I finally got to know Frauke in person, with whom I had been corresponding for years by email and SKYPE.

On our flight to Atlanta at the end of December 2009, when we moved to the US, we happened to be on the same plane as Uli Schwenk one of Germany's top competition pilots, who flies in a neighboring club and is a friend of ours, and who was on his way to the Grand Prix Race in Santiago de Chile. Shortly afterwards, we met him again in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the then annual SSA convention (SSA: Soaring Society of America) at the end of January. He was the first guest in our new home in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Together with Uli, we explored different airfields in our nearer area and found one of the only four clubs in Alabama, the Central Alabama Soaring Association (CASA) which was located in Sylacauga, in the center of Alabama an hour and a half drive from our home. Five members of that club gave us an extremely friendly welcome. They were also excited to welcome as a visitor to their club such an internationally known glider pilot as Uli Schwenk.

The following spring, we became members of the Central Alabama Soaring Association (CASA) <http://casasoaring.com>. From then on, we regularly spent our weekends in Sylacauga, where we explored the surrounding area from the air, usually together in the club's Blanik. Winch launches are very rare in the USA. Aerotows are the usual mode of launching usually with a Piper-Pawnee, a robust crop duster. Almost every one of the few club members was also a tow pilot. In addition to the Blanik, the club owned a Schweizer 1-26, a very popular small single-seater in the USA, with 13m wingspan, metal construction, perhaps remotely comparable to Spatz or Ka8, with which nevertheless - along the Appalachian Mountains- a few one-thousand-kilometer flights have been flown. Even more important to us than gliding itself was the regular contact with our kind club members, who decisively improved our English knowledge and cultural peculiari-

ties of the "Southerners". The reason for so few glider clubs in Alabama may be the fact that this sport is not nearly as popular and widespread in the USA as in Germany, but mainly also due to the sheer geography of the country: Alabama is about half the size of Germany but has just under 5 million inhabitants. It is dominated by forests, agriculture and many lakes and rivers.

Another highlight in terms of gliding in the south of the USA was a place called Chilhowee Gliderport in the town of Benton, Tennessee, north of Chattanooga, a frequent destination for us from Tuscaloosa. An about four-hour drive, we made the trip two to three times a year. The small privately operated flight school with a grass runway, Chilhowee is run by the passionate and professional glider pilot, Sarah Arnold. Sarah Arnold, 2020 world champion in the Standard Class of the Women World Championships and inductee into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame in 2018 and the United States Soaring Hall of Fame in 2020, became at age 23 owner of the commercial operation in 2003 and has since instructed, towed and maintained the entire aircraft fleet there. We were regular guests at their annual Oktoberfest, a favorite event throughout the South-East United States. This very scenic place on the edge of the Appalachian Mountains offers wonderful ridge soaring possibilities, which we were able to use extensively. We especially enjoyed the opportunity to sail along the beautiful mountains with a vintage Ka7, a glider we still knew from many years back in our Reutlingen glider club.

My first American off-field landing in the summer of 2013 happened in Chilhowee during a flight with an ASW15, when surprised by a thunderstorm could not make it back to the airport. This landing will always remain unforgettable. It was certainly the most adventurous landing I have ever experienced: in the middle of the very hilly terrain, on a small, short, fortunately slightly ascending meadow next to a farmstead, where, after climbing over a fence, I was very friendly received by the farmer living there. Sarah and her husband Jason were both very relieved that I was in good spirits and that their ASW15 was still in one piece. Since the meadow was in a different county, the two congratulated me on my special, "Inter-County-nental flight".

The 2010 WSPA seminar was held at Air Sailing near Reno, Nevada, one of the best thermal soaring areas in the world where we experienced desert soaring, an unforgettable experience. In 2012, I attended the WSPA seminar at Chilhowee and had a great time. In 2014 we traveled to York, Ontario, Canada, where we were visiting the seminar for only two days. There we were able to experience a flight in a Slingsby T21, an antique, open cockpit, side-by-side glider of British origin. The 2018 seminar took place at Truckee, near Lake Tahoe, California where we had a chance of high mountain soaring which was spectacular (and where we experienced a snow/ hailstorm in July). In the years 2015 and 2016 we were back in Reutlingen again and - fittingly - the second WSPA overseas seminar took place during this time in the northern Italian town of Varese, not far from the Alps edge organized by the longtime WSPA member Margherita "Margot" Acquaderni a

record- holding glider pilot and since 2013 president of the Aero Club Adele and Giorgio Orsi (ACAO). There too, we had a wonderful time with an international group of participants, together with my glider friend Britta Schlenker from Hahnweide who spontaneously had decided to come to Varese with me.

After so many wonderful experiences with the American seminars, I was really motivated to give something back to the inspiring women's group and to organize this event at our home airfield Übersberg. Together with Britta Schlenker, Barbara Kaiser and The local's exposed location on the edge of the Alb and the hangar extension built in 2004, the experience with the Übersberg competitions and the youth airgames, make it an ideal place for the WSPA seminar.

Unfortunately, the Corona pandemic has now put an end to the planning for this year. But I am confident that we will be able to catch up on the meeting next year. Then, we are looking forward to many participants from the USA, Germany and other European countries, who can gain new experiences at the edge of the Swabian Alb by meeting international participants, combined with lectures and excursions into the surrounding area. Let's hope that this meeting will take place then!



Ulrike and Husband Heiner with Sarah Arnold in the front seat of the 2-32 at Chilhowee Gliderport



Over one of the dry lakes near Air Sailing in 2010

## In Memoriam

In recent months, the global soaring community lost three great pillars

### New Zealand: John Roake



John Roake, age 92, passed away on November 13, 2021.

John was internationally well known as the founder, editor and publisher of the international soaring magazine "GLIDING INTERNATIONAL". He was also the editor of "NZ GLIDING KIWI from 1965-2008".

Amongst his soaring credential were:

FAI Silver Badge and Diamond Altitude  
 Director and Task Setter for the 1967 New Zealand nationals  
 NZ Team Manager at the 1968 World Championships in Poland  
 Director of the World 1995 Championships in New Zealand  
 FAI Paul Tissander Diploma 1981  
 Lilienthal Gliding Medal 2002 (Highest honor for a gliderpilot)  
 Companion of Honor of the FAI  
 Gliding NZ President 2002 -2006  
 Life Member of Gliding NZ  
 And as the obituary states: "A genuinely good man"  
 Up to his death he was a member of the IGC History working group (of which this editor is also a member).  
 (Information: International Gliding Magazine)

### Germany: Richard Eppler



Richard Eppler passed away on November 25, 2021 at age 97. He was a pioneer in the fledgling fiber-glass construction method of gliders. He designed and built the sf24 "Phoenix" sailplane, the first composite aircraft in the world. Only a few of this type were built, but the improved "Phoebus" sailplane became popular in the late 50ies and early 60ies.

Later in life he became known for his involvement of the different Astir sailplanes which eventually gave rise to the Strat2c stratospheric research aircraft prototype and other research aircrafts and motorgliders.

On the flying side, he was a regular visitor at German gliderports and in the US (ed.note: he visited NASA Langley -and TSS-) and was one of our many soaring related house guests, here in Virginia.  
 (Information: various and personal sources)

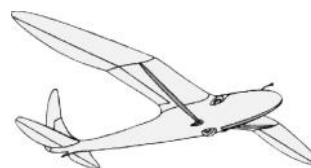
### Norway: Tor Johannessen



Tor Johannessen passed away on December 31, 2021, at age 92.

He was military and glider pilot and a SAS airline captain,  
 Former ICG (International Gliding Commission) President  
 President of the Jury at the World Championships in Riete, Italy  
 Recipient of the Lilienthal Medal

Record holder  
 World Cup Pilot and World Cup official  
 He too was until his death a member of the ICG historic committee  
 (information: Jens Trabol, Nordic Gliding Magazine)





## Famous Women Glider Pilots

Signe Skaftte Møller, Denmark

Hangar Soaring learned about this outside of Denmark little known pilot through WSPA member Peter Selinger in Germany. Here is what he wrote:

*"I am very happy I read this note from Niels Ebbe Gjörup, the most experienced historian of the Danish Gliding History. I have known him very well for some decades. When I read the short summary Niels sent, I'm enthusiastic enough to recommend to you, to take this as basis for an article in Hangar Soaring"*

*And the international merry-go-around started churning again (years back, I wrote a story how I often get articles of interest and that story was titled "The International Merry-go-around". I contacted Niels to ask permission to use the story and here*

*is what he answered (with many pictures attached):*

ing.

"Regarding [Signe Skaftte Møller](#) we actually keep her files in our archive. So here is a little extract about Signe and her life.

Signe was an extraordinary person in Danish gliding, whom regrettably, I personally did not have the opportunity to meet. She was born some distance north of Copenhagen in 1918, started gliding in 1947 and remained true to gliding until her untimely death in 1976 at the age of 57. She set up a few Danish Female Records and participated in the Danish Nationals in 1955 and 57. Signe never married and left no kids. I believe that her one and only love affair was gliding. She was always talking enthusiastically about gliding and she was active in building the Danish National Centre at Arnborg in the sixties. Since then, she did most of her flying from Arnborg but not limited to that: She would a few times go to Oerlinghausen in Northern Germany and take lessons with Chief Instructor Mr. Rademacher. (Ed. note: I knew him as "Father Rademacher", a very unconventional instructor. My own son flew two summers in the mid-eighties at the great soaring school in Oerlinghausen, which is state owned and operated) She even performed occasional cross-country flights from Oerlinghausen. Signe even participated in the first Women's Competitions in Leszno in 1973 and 1975. In 1974 she became the first Danish member of The Vintage Glider Club and participated in the 1974 Oldtimer Rally at the Wasserkuppe and in 1975 at Gruyères and Keiheuvel. Chris Wills had urged her to bring her 1939 Mü-13d (OY-MUX) which she first flew in 1948 and owned herself from 1968, but unfortunately the airworthiness could not be granted in time, so eventually she went without glider. Professionally she was working for the Danish Airforce as an accounting officer. Early on in 1956 she resided in, Farum, Allerød and Jonstrup (near Værløse AFB). In 1962 she moved to Jutland and lived in Aarestrup and Skibbild (not far from AFB Karup). She both flew gliders in the military clubs of Værløse and Karup and in a civil club called Landssvæveflyveklubben (from 1953 on onwards). Signe will be remembered for all her efforts in saving and keeping in flying condition the historical Mü-13d which is today one of our proud historical relics.

Here is an excerpt (excerpted by HS editor) of some of the dates and events in the life of Signe Skaftte Møller: (remember Europeans reverse dates)

**22-12-1918** Born in Lynge-Uggeløse

**13-04-1947** First launch in primary glider Gumpert G2 (OY-34) at V. Grum Schwensens Flyveklub, Høvelte.

**10-08-1947** A-diploma # 817

**11-04-1948** B-diploma # 555

**29-05-1948** C-diploma # (-)

**01-06-1948** First launch on the 2G prototype, OY-100.

**18-06-1948** First launch on the Mü-13d, OY-MUX. Personal experience: 6 hrs./110 launches.

**24-06-1948** First launch on the Schweizer TG-3A, LN-GAT. 17-07-1948 Glider Pilot's License # 126 (remained valid until 26-04-1976)

**16-08-1948** Gliding operation controller # 167

**23-07-1949** Silver C-diploma # 23 (Silver distance in Grunau Baby IIb, OY-BUX, Vandel-Madum, 82 km)

**17-3-1955** Participant in Danish Nationals, Vandel. Grunau Baby IIb. Placed 6th. of 8 participants.

**12-07-1956** Military Gliding Flight Instructor's License.

**18-01-1957** Civil Gliding Flight Instructor's License.

**25-05-1957** Danish Record in two-seater category for women: 86 km free distance, Værløse-Svendstrup (near Korsør).

**July 9-18, 1957** Participant in Danish Nationals, Vandel. EoN Olympia, OY-FUX. Placed 5th. of 14 participants. (set 4 Danish Records)

**15-07-1957** Danish Record in single seater category for women: 114 km triangle distance.

**16-07-1959** Danish Record in single seater category for women: 207 km triangle Vandel-Kirstinesminde-Skinderholm-Vandel. 32,1 km/h (and 164 km out-return on same flight).

**28-05-1966** Gold-distance flight + one diamond. Danish Record in category single seater for women: 515 km free distance from Arnborg to Hedemünden.K-8, Z-969.

**03-05-1968** Ownership of Mü-13d, OY-MUX.

**14-05-1968** First flight from Arnborg as the owner of Mü-13d, OY-MUX. (Flew plenty on OY-MUX in seasons 1968, 69, 70, 71 and 72). 1969 Membership of Karup Para Jump club.

**18-06-1973** Participated in the First International Contest for Women in Leszno. Pirat SP-2608. Period: June 18 - July 12. Many cross-country flights. (Also tried Cobra SP-2683, Bocian, Halny)

**25-05-1975** Co-pilot to Carsten Thomasen on a Danish Record flight around a203,5 km triangle, Arnborg-Vinge-Spøttrup-Arnborg. Bergfalke IV, OY-XEW.

**08-06-1975** Participated in the 2nd Women's Contest in Leszno. Flew Bocian SP-2535 sign. Janusz Centka. Cobra 15, SP-2673.

**20-07-1975** 3. Int. VGC Rally Gruyères (Flew Grunau Baby IIb, BGA-578) and ..

**14-08-1975** Keiheuvel (flew Ka-7 OO-ZMD). Signe's very last flight.



Restored Mü13d (one of three still existing)

## US Women in Soaring and the Women Soaring Pilots Association

Frauke Elber

*The following was a (2011) presentation at the National Soaring Museum's History Symposium. Since then, several things have changed. Liz Geiger, nee Schwenkler, left soaring all together. Sylvia Szafarczik became Sylvia Grandstaff and Sarah Kelly, Sarah Arnold. Sarah now has participated in 3 Women World Championships and came home with a Bronze, Silver and Gold Medal respectively. Sylvia Grandstaff and Kathy Fosha were Sarah's teammates in the 2020 World Championships in Australia where Sarah won the Gold Medal. Sylvia, instead of becoming a doctor became an Army helicopter test pilot. Sarah has been inducted into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame, the Soaring Hall of Fame and has been included in the Soaring Museum's Women's Wall of Fame.*

*Sadly, Kathy Taylor has passed away.*

The Wright Brothers started their flight experiments in gliders in 1901, Orville setting a world endurance record in 1911 that stood until the early 20ies, when it was broken by Wolfgang Klemperer in Germany. Once the brothers successfully flew a powered aircraft and turned the flying machine into a new mode of transportation, motorless flight was put on the back burner. Because of the harsh World War I conditions imposed on Germany that forbade flying airplanes, motorless flight found a revival which soon caught on here in this country.



Anne Lindbergh

Five women are credited with being the first five women glider pilots in the US. They are: Anne Lindbergh, wife of Charles Lindbergh, Guinevere Kotter, Maxine Dunlap, Peaches Wallace and Ruth Alexander. These five created so much enthusiasm that in 1929 a women's glider club, the Anne Lindbergh Club, formed. In the 1930s, women started to participate in contests. In 1947, Virginia Schweizer

became the first American woman awarded the Silver C badge. In the 1950s, at a time when the whole US had only a thousand registered glider pilots, women's participation in the sport reached its highest percentage and performance level. The 1970s saw a decline in women participation reflected in the percentage of women Silver Badge holders which had dropped from 2.3% in 1954 to 2% in 1972. The Gold Badge holder statistic was even more telling. In 1954, 2.4% of the Gold Badge holders were women. In 1972 that number had shrunk to only 1%. Early in the 1950s, Betsy Woodward participated in the Sierra Wave Research project, claimed an altitude record during the project and in 1952 became the first US woman Gold Badge holder. In 1967, the first woman awarded a Diamond Badge was Helen Dick. In 1979 and 1980 two women moved to the forefront again: Sabrina Jackintell flew a new feminine world altitude record of over 42 000 ft, which stands to this day. Doris Grove became the first woman worldwide to break the 1000km barrier (as of this writing three American women have done so)

In the early to mid 1970s, American women pilots participated in international women's contests in Europe. In 1989, Karol Hines became the last US participant who flew as a guest in the then-renamed European Women Championships in Orel, Russia.

Since 2001, after a 33 year long struggle with the FAI, the European international women competitions were recognized as Women's World Championships. In the six contests flown so far no American woman ever participated.

It wasn't until the late 90s that an American woman again participated in a gender neutral international contest: In 1999, Liz Schwenkler represented the US on the Junior Team in Holland. Later, she made history when she won as the first US woman ever a national contest, the U.S. Open Class Nationals in

Hobbs in 2006, and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in that class in 2007. The same year Kathy Fosha earned a berth on the U.S. Junior Team, flying in the Junior Worlds in Rieti, Italy. These are the exceptions. Very few women in the US are presently participating in Regional and National contests.

Liz and Kathy have raised new hopes for the future of US women participation in international and national soaring competitions. We have several promising women pilots whose names might one day show up on international competition rosters: Liz Schwenkler, now Liz Geiger, Kathy Fosha, Sylvia Szafarczik, Sarah Kelly and Jayne Reid. Sarah and Jayne are owners and operators of commercial soaring operations and finish in the top half of the score sheet in most of the contest they fly in. Both are also instructors and tow pilots who tow frequently in contests in the East. Sylvia is a med student from Texas, owns a Libelle and is also an instructor and a tow pilot. Kathy, an aerospace engineer, flies in California and also owns a Libelle.

Overseas the question is frequently asked why no American women participate in World Championships especially the Women's World Championships. This topic has been extensively discussed. One reason is that percentage wise there are fewer women glider pilots in the US than in most European countries and these few are thinly spread over a very big country. Some of the States don't even have glider clubs. Amongst these relatively few, only a very small number ever flies in any contest, be it on the regional or national level. Geography plays a roll. The distance between East and West Coast is about 5,000 km. Therefore, the few women glider pilots very seldom get a chance to meet, interact or train together, since the biggest concentration of clubs can be found along the two coasts. In contrast, the soaring powerhouse nations of Europe have a well-structured support and training systems in place for male and female competition pilots. In addition, the surprising observation was made that since the women's liberation movement started, the number of women in soaring declined. The probable reason for this trend is that many joined the work force and because vacation time in the US is much less than in European countries, they did not want to invest their diminished free time into time consuming competition soaring. *(Note the age of our men's team. Most members are already retired or in some cases self-employed and therefore more flexible in the use of their time. Some could be age-wise the grandfathers of European competition pilots).*

In 1972, to start more interaction among the US women glider pilots, Bertha Ryan, a glider pilot herself, and later the recipient of the Majewska Medal, the highest international honor for a woman glider pilot, distributed amongst the clubs a survey to find out how many women glider pilots were in the US. Fifty-seven women

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

responded. Encouraged by the response, Bertha started a small newsletter that later evolved into the now quarterly newsletter, *Hangar Soaring*, which became a sounding board for new ideas and communication amongst the women here in this country and overseas.

Bertha's initiative led in 1978 to the first week-long women soaring seminar at which the decision was made to hold this seminar annually and each time in a different part of the US, to enable as many women as possible to attend over the years. Out of these seminars grew the idea of forming a Women Soaring Pilots Association, which happened in 1986 and whose intended mission it was to encourage and support the women glider pilots.

Over the years, private donations and grants made it possible to establish scholarships to support young pilots (and recently not so young pilots) and help defray the costs of the seminars and training. Through the years the organization has grown to over 200 members (women and men) in 10 countries. Several have come across the Atlantic for the seminars, especially then when the seminars were held in the Western States.



The Pelagia Majewska Medal

In 1996, Bertha Ryan was honored with the Pelagia Majewska Medal, the highest award globally, for her service to soaring. And the same year, she received the prestigious Warren E. Eaton Memorial Trophy, the highest SSA award.

Early in 2009, the FAI honored Doris Grove for her dedication and achievements in soaring with the Pelagia Majewska Medal, the international

honor bestowed on an American woman pilot only for the second time in its history.

In the summer of the same year, for the first time since the seminars were established, the seminar took place in Europe, in Lesce/Bled, Slovenia. Of the 48 participants, 21 came from the US, 11 from Germany, 2 from Switzerland and 2 stopped by on the way to the Women's World Championships in Hungary: Margot Aquademi from Italy and Gill van den Broeck from Belgium. This seminar was extremely well organized and created a lot of enthusiasm. Support and sponsorship from private and official sources in this tiny country was amazing, at least to the participants from the US who are not used to corporate and public sponsorship.

The connection to the Slovenian women glider pilots goes back to 2004, when WSPA was informed that through an anonymous donor \$750 were available in case the organization was able to bring a woman glider pilot from one of the former East Block countries to the 2004 seminar at Harris Hill. Through Andrej Kolar, the creator of the "SeeYou" program, who had attended several SSA conventions, the connection to the Slovenian women glider pilots was made and three in addition to one from Germany and one from Switzerland joined us at the Harris Hill seminar. In the following years two American members visited Lesce/ Bled airport and were impressed by the facility and the beauty of its location. After 4 years in the planning the first out-of the US seminar became reality.

At the 2010 Soaring Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, women reached a high level of visibility: Dianne Black-Nixon was

awarded the Warren E. Eaton Memorial Trophy. WSPA became the first organization ever honored with the Exceptional Service Award for promoting soaring and its international work. Kathy Fosha had 6 National records awarded, Cindy Brickner and Valeria Paget each one. Val's record also was recognized as a World record in the World Class category. What made this flight so remarkable was that it was not flown at any exotic soaring site but in the coastal area of South Texas in a PW5.

Kathy Taylor was recognized for scanning countless back-issues of the SOARING magazine which are now posted on the SSA web page.

Hopefully this wide array of honors encourages more US women to advance and thrive in the world of soaring..



US Team at the 1973 International Women Competition in Leszno/ Poland. L to R: Mr. Floden, team captain, Gun-Britt Floden, ???, Henriette Freese



US Team 1920, Lake Keepit/ Australia  
L to R: Sylvia Grandstaff, Sarah Arnold, Kathy Fosha



## International Merry-Go-Around

Frauke Elber

**From the Editor: This story was published a couple of years ago in Hangar Soaring. Since on Page 6 of this issue I mentioned that the international carousel is churning again, I thought to let our readers see the original story.**

I'm often asked, "How do you find some of the stories that are published in Hangar Soaring?" The answer: "Often it is tedious detective work. Often it is pure luck.

For example, the story of the Russian pilot Olga Klepikova, which appeared simultaneously in "Hangar Soaring" in November 2001 and at the same time in SOARING magazine.

When I became editor of "Hangar Soaring" in 2001, I decided to give the publication a more international face. I still had contacts in the "Old Country" and wanted to use them.

Deep in my memory (the one of my brain, not the computer), I remembered hearing about a spectacular flight in the thirties flown by a Russian female pilot, and that the flight had caused some controversy. Now, at the helm of Hangar Soaring, I was determined to find out more about it, hoping that some of my older contacts in Europe would know the story firsthand. That's why I wrote to Fred Weinholtz, an old friend in Germany who was a teenager when the flight in question took place. I asked if he knew who the pilot was and if he knew any details of the flight. His answer was negative, but he gave me the address of a couple living in the former East Germany who might be able to help me in my quest. The couple were Winfried and Irmgard Morgner and they turned out to be a treasure trove of information. Both had studied engineering in Moscow, both were glider pilots, Irmgard a champion pilot and... both knew personally the Russian pilot Olga Klepikova, who had flown the record flight and they still had contact with her. Incredibly, Olga, now in her eighties, was still alive and living in the capital of the newly independent state of Ukraine. The Morgners were in possession of a letter that Olga had written to them, in which she described in detail the world record flight. They were kindly willing to share the letter with me. The problem was that it was written in Russian. The Morgners translated the letter into German for me. I translated it into English. The letter is now published in the above publications.

The story doesn't end there. I sent the two publications to Olga, through another glider pilot, the Ukrainian champion Valentina Toporova, who had frequent contact with Olga. Here too, language problems got in the way. Valentina speaks some German, but no English (we met at the Women's World Championships in 2005). What I had sent her in English now had to be translated back into Russian so that Olga knew what it was all about.

Olga had almost been forgotten in her home country and somehow in this global carousel the articles I sent found their way to the local newspaper in Kiev. Suddenly, the editors of the newspaper were made aware of the famous but forgotten pilot in their midst and the newspaper was determined to correct this and published a multi-page article about Olga in the Kiev local daily.

The next round in the carousel: I was in Germany in summer of 2002 and met the Morgners at Stendal Airport near Berlin at a women's gliding camp. There I learned that my search for the history of Olga Klepikova brought her back into the memory of international glider pilots. I got a Xerox copy of the Kiev newspaper article, but since it's written in Russian, I can't read it. (I had it translated by someone at the NATO school in Norfolk, VA)

At the 2005 Women's World Championships, where Valentina Toporova was sponsored by the Morgners' home club making her participation financially possible, all pilots, crews and officials sent Olga a greeting card. Later that year, a German delegation, including Irmgard and Winfried, followed the invitation of the Kiev club and met Olga, a lively, headstrong ninety-year-old. (I got a film from that meeting).

In the summer of 2010, I received the news that Olga Klepikova had passed away at the age of ninety-five. Olga's death did not stop this international carousel. In 2011, I received an email from Winfried Morgner with an attached photo of Olga's tombstone. The black polished granite tombstone depicts an image of Olga, her dates of birth and death, and an epitaph. I can't read the latter because it's in Russian. A white fence surrounding the tomb caused many disturbing reflections in the tombstone. I didn't want to ask if the picture could be taken again without the reflections. So, I sat down and laboriously tried to improve the image in a photo editing program. I also asked for permission through the Morgners to use it in the Hangar Soaring and added my now edited version to the email. I was not aware at the time that Winfried had already asked Olga's daughter if they could take the photo again, and she considered taking down the white fence that surrounds the tomb to get a better picture.

Now, in the last round of the saga, my edited picture made it to Kiev, and Olga's family decided that even a new photo could not get a better image. Since the Russian inscription on the tombstone in its entirety is difficult to read, Valentina sent the full text in Russian to the Morgners, who in turn sent it to me in German and here it is now in English;



1938

Olga Vasilyeva Klepikova  
10.10. 1915-27.07. 2010  
Test pilot  
Gliding World Record Holder  
We love you and are proud of you  
You will live forever in our thoughts

The Carousel now has come to a hold.



2005

My first discovery flight was on my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in a Cessna 172 and before we could leave the parking lot, I asked my parents to sign me up for my next lesson! I knew from that moment that I wanted to be a pilot. A mutual friend introduced me to the Treasure Coast Soaring Club in Vero Beach, Florida. I joined the club just after my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday and officially started my training. I did have some experience with powered flight and at that time I had roughly forty hours of total logged flight time.

Soaring is different. It is the extreme of energy conservation and aeronautical decision making. No additional power, no go-arounds to correct a bad landing, no second chances to fix a mistake. Every decision made has consequences; positive or negative. The domino effect of bad decisions has immediate results. Thankfully, soaring has the most amazing people who love to push themselves to be better than before and teach and train the rest of us. I had the pleasure of not only one, but four fantastic CFI-G's. Tommy Augustsson is a Swedish born glider pilot with over fifty years of aviation experience who continues to fly for the United States Coast Guard and holds a PhD in Aerospace Engineering. Erdam Bural is a Turkish national, CFI, CFII, MEI & CFI-G who lives in Vero and donates his time at the club to teach students. Randy Opat is a very accomplished pilot and has some of the most amazing skills I have ever witnessed. Scotty Bingham spent several afternoons talking with me at the glider club, willing to share all sorts of information about flying gliders. He reminded me several times that all the skills learned from flying gliders will make me a better pilot. We lost Scotty in August from an accident, but his words and encouragement were carried with me on my solo flight.

My glider training consisted of many weekends at the glider port, honing my skills and perfecting my craft. Simulated rope breaks, actual rope breaks, slack line and boxing the wake were practiced to perfection, giving all my instructors confidence in me to sign off for my upcoming solo. The last two months before my solo, the instructors and tow pilot turned the heat up on me and worked me through all the potential stressors that come with being 'Pilot in Command' of the aircraft. I know perfection doesn't exist, but excellence does. I try to be excellent in everything I do. Bob Youngblood, the tow pilot and one of the club founders, reminds me constantly that, "perfect practice makes perfect play".

The week before my solo, I was given the pre-solo test that is required by the FAA. My instructors signed off on IACRA so I can print the temporary airman certification and studied every free minute I had. The day finally arrived, January 21, 2022, my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. We arrived at the glider park to find the tow plane was already out of the hanger and warmed up. The tow rope was laid out and inspected and the cover was off the glider, ready for me to provide the preflight inspection as PIC. We planned on three flights that morning, two with the instructor and the final one solo.

The weather was perfect, 68 degrees with 1 mph winds from the east. The first tow was a pattern tow to the IP (Initial Point) with a smooth, normal landing. The second flight was a simulated rope break just over 200', with a quick turn and faster than normal descent. We landed safely and just before the threshold. Without much elaboration, Tommy exited the glider, handed me the radio, secured his belts and locked the canopy. The ground crew presented the tow rope and weak-link. I went over the pre-flight checklist and gave the thumbs up to the wing runner. I wiggled my tail and just like that, the tow plane darted

## My first solo

by

Ava Rian Shelly

down the grass strip. For the first time, I was alone, no support from inside and trusted to make all the appropriate decisions in command of this aircraft. Not having the instructor

inside of the aircraft is impossible to simulate, being 20% lighter than normal had a dramatic effect on tow and I popped up almost immediately. Gentle stick pressure forward kept me from climbing so the tow plane can gather speed in ground effect before his deliberate climb. A steady ascent and clearing 200' with ease, we started our first turn to the east about 500' AGL and I felt good. Hard focus on the tow plane was beaten into me during training so I didn't get a chance to look out the window and see the earth below me. Climbing to a safe release point, focusing on the tow plane was my only concern. I was right above the airfield so if an emergency occurred, I could land quickly. At 1,300' AGL the tow plane rocked his wings, signaling me to release. A hard right turn to clear my aircraft from his and I was free.

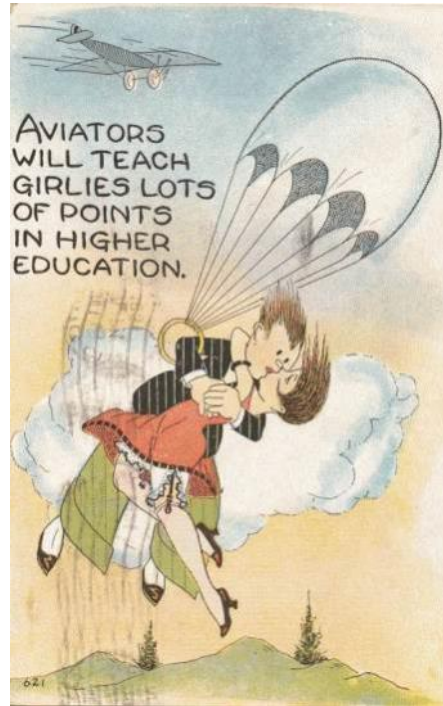
No tow plane, no rope, just me, alone in the airplane that I have been training in for a year straight and I was ready. I made a clearing turn, checking the large canopy windows for traffic and slowly entered the pattern, "Schweizer 2-33 entering downwind, New Hibiscus", chirped over the radio as I made my way to the next waypoint on my trip. Nine hundred feet and right where I needed to be, I started my base leg and had a clear view of the runway over the left side of my plane. My final turn was just as I had practiced, and I could make the necessary adjustments as needed without losing airspeed or altitude. I crossed the ditch and locked in on the barrels, at the advice of my instructors, I landed short. I used just enough spoilers to gradually descend until I was only a few feet off the ground. A gentle touch on the wheel and some more spoilers and front stick pressure brought the glider to a full stop. I did it! My first solo as pilot in command and I am a real pilot. It has been a fun journey and I'm just getting started, I have so many aviation goals to keep me busy over the next few years. But, for now, I am going to enjoy the freedom my hard work has earned me and continue soaring and conquering my next goals, one by one.



## Ava Shelly ~ Bio

My name is Ava Rian Shelly. I live in south Florida and attend a charter school where I maintain straight A's while enrolled in honors High School classes. I am a member of the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) and hold the rank of Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> class. I have earned several awards throughout my Sea Cadet career including a Citation award with distinction, Daughters of American Revolution award, Academic Achievement award, Marksmanship with two silver E's for qualifying expert in both rifle and pistol. I am a member of the Young Guns of Quail Creek SASP & SCTP competition team. Last year we finished 1<sup>st</sup> place at the state shoot and retained the title in Florida. At Nationals, I finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in Super Sport and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in 1911, earning a National Championship Medal for both leagues.

I am a staff writer for two different magazines and have been published multiple times. AviNation is a youth centered magazine about all things aviation. Junior Shooters Magazine is the official youth magazine for SASP & SCTP. I was also published in Flying Magazine (SEP 21) for an article I wrote about flight training that was released to coincide with Girls in Aviation Day. I am an avid Scuba diver and recently completed the requirements for Advanced Open Water Diver and currently working towards a Master Diver Certification. I am a green belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and studying Mandarin seven days a week. Aviation is my passion and has been a source of great fulfillment since I discovered my love for it. I have over 60 logged hours and have had the opportunity to fly with the best people all over the world. A few years ago, we were in Paris, and I was able to fly into Charles De Gaulle for a touch-and-go. I recently soloed in a glider on my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and earned my FAA Pilot License. I start helicopter training next month and anticipate soloing both a fixed wing, single engine land and rotary aircraft on my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday immediately following my private pilot check ride in gliders. If there is enough time left in the day, I can pass my part 107 for sUAS and earn my endorsement for drones as well.



An old Valentine Card

**Next Hangar Soaring Deadline:  
April 30, 2022**

### United States Soaring Hall of Fame Call for Nominations

Nominations for election to the United States Soaring Hall of Fame are currently being accepted. The deadline for the current year consideration is June 30, 2022.

Any member of the Soaring Society of America may submit an individual's name for consideration as a Hall of Fame candidate. Each nomination must be accompanied by a detailed statement setting out the achievements or contributions of the nominee, justifying consideration for election to the Hall of Fame.

Please send nominating letters and support material to:

Trafford L-M. Doherty, Director National Soaring Museum 51 Soaring Hill Dr. Elmira, NY 14903-9204

Questions? Please call (607) 734-3128 e-mail:

[director@soaringmuseum.org](mailto:director@soaringmuseum.org)

## WSPA DUES

WSPA Dues - Due Date: July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year (except for LIFE Members and Honorary Members)

Full Members (women) and Associate Members (men/ or women who are not pilots) = \$25/yr.

Youth (young women 18 yrs. and under) = \$10/yr.

Life Membership = \$350 (one-time)

### Can be paid:

By personal check written to “WSPA” and mailed to: Margaret Roy - Treasurer, PO Box 1197, Central Islip, NY 11722-0950

By Pay Pal on-line at our website [www.womensoaring.org](http://www.womensoaring.org) , or you can go to your own on-line PayPal Account and send us the dues amount plus extra \$2 for PP Fees to: [treasurer@womensoaring.org](mailto:treasurer@womensoaring.org)

Note: If you use your business PayPal account or another family member's account, please put a note on your electronic payment with your full name, so we will know who to credit.

**Hangar Soaring**  
1002 Old Denbigh Blvd. #206  
Newport News, VA 23602



**First Class Mail**