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Hangar Soaring

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WOMEN SOARING PILOTS
ASSOCIATION.

<https://womentoosoaring.org/>

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WINGS by Wolf Elber
In Memoriam of his death Jan. 12, 2019



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

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Badges and Achievements

Recorded through January 2026

Gold Badge

Rita Harris

Gold Altitude

Rita Edriss, WA
Isabel Ulland, OR
Sara Stearns, CA

Bronze Badge

Isabel Ulland, OR

C Badge

Deborah L. Ings, CO
Anastasia Mitsky, OR
Amanda Pray, OH

B Badge

Sophia Taylor, WA
Debra S. DeBroux, MD
Mya Sheller, MN
Luisa Rosa, TX
Cindy Lawyer, VA
Amanda Pray, OH

A Badge

Anastasia Mitsky, OR
Makayla Shane, IL

Mya Sheller, MN
Sophia Conn, MN
Lauren Johnes, IL
Rachel Moscona, KY
Cole Delabar, OH
Amanda Pray, OH
Sage Platter, FL

NATIONAL RECORDS APPROVED

Rita Edris
Female 13.5 m
Free Triangle 287 mi;
Free Distance up to 3 Turn-points 294.6 mi

STATE RECORDS APPROVED

Washington
Rita Edris
General 13.5 m
Free Distance; 120.6 mi
Female Open Singleplace
Free Distance; 120.6 mi
Female Sports
Free Distance 113 mi
General Open Singleplace
Absolute Altitude; 14,282.5 ft
Gain of Height; 11,860.3 ft
(Badges on page 3)

President's note



Soaring season is almost upon us. Some lucky souls might be trying their luck at wave soaring on occasion through the winter months...and we have had one heck of a winter so far....

It's also time to apply for WSPA's wonderful scholarships (whatever your age or soaring level). We have something for everyone. Quick reminder, most of our scholarships are due by March 15th. All nine of WSPA's scholarships are on our website: womensoaring.org.

One other link that I might refer you to is that of scholarships available through SSA (the Soaring Society of America). That link is: SSA.org/soaring-scholarship/.

If any of our younger members need help finding financial assistance for any of their avionic dreams, I further want to refer you to our new "Youth Representative", Ishitha Arakepudi, ishithaarekupadi@gmail.com.

Ishitha has published a book on finding such assistance. She is ultra-prepared to render assistance.

Also, we are pleased to announce that this year's 48th Annual Women's Soaring Society Seminar will be held July 12-17th in Waller, Texas. Preliminary information on this incredible venue can be found contacting our seminar coordinator (and Vice President) Leah Condon, leah.n.condon@gmail.com or our seminar host contact, Tony Smol-



From the Editor

"Nothing so liberalizes a man and expands the kindly instincts that nature puts in him as travel and contact with many kind of people (Mark Twain)

At a time when the US is seen as a Pariah amongst nations, it is important to prove otherwise, by nurturing our international contacts.

WSPA has been thriving in that respect (since we added an International Category to the membership set-up). I will never forget the comments our original Slovenian friends made after attending the 2004 WSPA Seminar at Harris Hill, where the generosity of the Americans was on full display. When, after the seminar they stayed with me for a few days, the comment was "we never thought the Americans were that kind" In a book they gave me as a hostess gift they wrote: "Life is not measured by the number of breaths but by the number of moments that takes your breath away. That has definitely happened to us at Harris Hill. Thank You Very much." They hosted the 2009 WSPA seminar in their country.

WSPA is a very small organization, but we have done a great job fostering international connections and thus working for peace and understanding.

Twice a month, I am standing with a handful of friends (no organization) at a local intersection waving peace signs. Mine reads: "War is Hell, work for Peace" (I know, I was born during a bombing raid and grew up during a war).

Let's keep reaching out

Frauke



der at:

tsmolder@att.net.

This year promises to be an outstanding opportunity to reach out to a welcoming community of similar women aviatix honing their skills at cross country and general soaring skills. We are waiting for you to reach out. We will meet you halfway. Please don't hesitate. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: Lyndaleelaberge@gmail.com ANYTIME

See you at the airport

Lynda

(Badges from page 2)

Idaho

Rita Edris

General 13.5 m

Free Triangle Distance; 164.83 mi
Free Distance up to 3 Turnpoints
219.65 mi

Free Out and Return Distance;
111.32 mi

Female open Singleplace

Free Triangle Distance; 164.83 mi
Free Out and Return Distance;
111.32 mi

Free Distance up to 3 Turnpoints;
219.65 mi

Female 15 m

Free Triangle Distance; 164.83 mi
Free Out and Return Distance;
111.32 mi

Free Distance up to 3 Turnpoints
219.65 mi

Female 13.5 m

Free Triangle Distance; 164.83 mi
Free Out and Return Distance;
104.64 mi

Free Distance up to 3 Turnpoints;
206.47 mi

Female Sports

Free Triangle Distance; 154.94 mi
Free Out and return Distance;
104.64 mi
Free Distance up to 3 Turnpoints;
206.47 mi

PPL-G

Alexandra Buman, CA
Shona May Fenio, TN

(Badges on page 4)

2026 WSPA Seminar By Leah Condon

The 2026 WSPA Seminar will be hosted from July 12-17, 206 by the Soaring Club of Houston , TX
We will make good use of the club's 5-two seat gliders: two 2-33s, one L-23 and two ASK-21s which are all equipped with FLARM. Flights of 300km to 500km are common and flights of 500km to 800km are possible. Maximum heights are typically 5000ft to 7000ft, with heights over 9000ft possible to the NW. Lift is normally well marked by cu's with frequent well developed cloud streets. SCOH is one of the top WeGlide clubs and has a motto of "if the flight's not on WeGlide it didn't happen." Part of the focus of this year's seminar will be to familiarize participants with how to utilize WeGlide. We are planning on having four tracks available to participants based on your experience level. The tracks include: pre-solo, solo to private, private to x-country and task flying. Registration this year will be through the SSA's website with more information to follow once registration is live. Our local host this year is Tony Smolder. SCOH owns the 80-acre airport (89TA) and features grass runways, an airconditioned club house complete with showers and a kitchen. SCOH's RV park has 20-sites available with 30 and 50 amp hook-ups with water but no sewer. (www.scoh.org)

The Soaring Club of Houston (SCOH) is located NW of Houston, TX approximately 9 miles North of Waller, TX. Membership is around 170 members. The club does about 3,000 tows a year with a normal weekend day having 30+ tows. The club owns our 80-acre airport (89TA), grass runways with nice clubhouse. Eight Club gliders: two 2-33, one L-23, two ASK-21, one L-33, two LS-3 project gliders. Four tow planes owned by the club. 27 privately owned hangars with over 50 privately owned gliders. The club has a very active training program including many youths. Very active XC training and racing program. One of the top WeGlide clubs for several years – "if the flight's not on WeGlide it didn't happen". The club does have a tow pilot only membership program that does attract tail wheel pilots. Good discovery ride program. ADSB (1090) in tow planes and an increasing number of privately owned gliders. FLARM in all club gliders and most privately owned gliders. OGN Tracking installed at SCOH and our sister club GHSA, 45 miles to the South. The size of our RV Park was doubled in 2021 for future contests. SCOH has an excellent year-long XC "race" series which has generated lots of XC enthusiasm among club members – contact Tony Smolder tsmolder@att.net for more info if interested. SCOH normally hosts an SSA sanctioned contest each year. www.scoh.org.

Women's Cross Country Camp in Moriarty, NM June 28– July 3, 2026

Hello women glider pilots. Do you want to fly away from your home airport but haven't learned how to cut the apron strings? The XC Women's Cross Country Camp, in Moriarty, NM, is open for registration. Our dates this year are June 28 – July 3, 2026. It's best to arrive a day or two early for acclimatization. We will take care of crew and retrieve needs. Just bring your glider or a club glider with insurance. We have two dual ships with instructors and several single-place ships for those who qualify.

We started in 2021 and have had five very successful camps with women from all over the US and a few from Canada. You will receive three and a half hours of morning lectures and guided afternoon soaring with increasing task difficulty. You choose your task based on your progress. The building block approach increases your confidence with each step and you will be in a very supportive environment.

This is designed for women who have been thermaling around their local airport for several years. Completing the requirements for your Bronze Badge and working on your Silver Duration is highly recommended.

For those who are members of the Women's Soaring Pilots Association (WSPA), check out the Maria Faber Scholarship at womentosoaring.org/scholarships. You can apply for that scholarship to help defray your registration and flying costs at the Camp. Act quickly—the deadline for scholarship applications is March 15.

CarolAnn Garratt

2026 Scholarships

Time to start your application for a **WSPA scholarship**. Completed applications are due midnight, March 15, 2026. But I strongly suggest that applicants get in their applications early so that there is time for me to look and see if requirements are satisfied and for the applicant to amend if something is amiss. Please spread the word to any woman in your club or that you know who might be eligible to apply for a **WSPA Scholarship**.

The Deadline for the Briegleb Scholarship, that helps a woman student pilot taking glider lessons to attend the Seminar, is May 15, 2026. This gives potential applicants more time to think about attending the seminar. All other scholarships have a strict March 15, 2026 deadline.

Cathy Keller

WSPA Scholarship Updates

Cathy Keller, WSPA Scholarship Committee Chair

The [November 2025 issue of Soaring](#), starting on Page 6, has an article with updates on our 2025 scholarship recipients, with many of their goals accomplished already. Congratulations for all of your progress! If you haven't seen the article, please take a look.

Two of our 2024 scholarship recipients have recently accomplished their goals. Congratulations to Ashleigh Andrews, a Glider Girl recipient from the Hamilton Soaring Club, TX, for completing her Commercial Certificate for gliders on Dec 8, 2025. And congratulations to Jennifer Hunt, a Monique's scholarship recipient from Evergreen Soaring, WA, for completing her CFIG Certificate at Seminole Lake, FL, on January 10, 2026. Well done, ladies!

Jennifer Hunt reports

Earning My CFIG with the Support of WSPA

I am grateful to WSPA for awarding me Monique's Scholarship in support of my CFIG training. I pursued the CFIG to encourage more women glider pilots, to help pilots develop strong fundamental hand-flying skills, and to deepen my knowledge.

The path to completing my CFIG was not linear. Job changes, unexpected work commitments, and other circumstances led to several starts and stops along the way. I also struggled with self-doubt—questioning whether I was good enough or knew enough to be an instructor. During those periods, my mentor, Alice Palmer, provided steady encouragement, guidance, and advice and helped me to keep moving forward when my confidence wavered, for which I am deeply appreciative. Alice also clarified that CFIG candidates are not expected to know everything, nor is a newly minted CFIG expected to jump right into low altitude rope brakes and spin training!

With my written exams nearing expiration, I took a few weeks off work to see if I could finish the rating. I trained with Jan Driessen, an experienced CFIG at Seminole Lake Gliderport. Over a ten-day period, I was able to observe first solos, check-ride endorsements, his teaching approach, and his interaction with students. That exposure was an important part of my own instructor development. I also learned a lot by creating lesson plans and practicing teaching ground instruction as well as flight maneuvers. Through this process, I began to build situational awareness of common student errors and develop judgment about when to allow a student to continue flying versus when to intervene—particularly during unusual attitudes and when out of position on tow.

On January 10th, I successfully completed the CFIG checkride with DPE Franklin Burbank. I appreciate the support from WSPA and from the instructors and mentors who helped me complete this rating, and I look forward to using the CFIG at my club Evergreen Soaring. Thank you!



DPE Franklin Burbank, Jennifer, Jan Driessen (instructor)

All WSPA Scholarship recipients are paired with a mentor. Jennifer Hunt's mentor was **Alice Palmer**. Here is what she wrote:

I was thrilled to hear that Jennifer Hunt passed her CFIG checkride! I am so proud of her and have always been impressed with her dedication and determination to achieve this goal despite a number of challenges she faced the past few years.

I started as Jennifer's mentor when she began her journey to earn her Commercial certificate with a Flying Montagues Scholarship from WSPA in 2022. She achieved that goal despite a couple of temporary transfers for work, one of them overseas. Still, she found a way to carve out time to study and fly to achieve that goal. Then in 2024 she began her CFIG journey with the Monique's Scholarship. She had additional challenges, including extensive work travel that made it hard for her to dedicate the time needed to feel ready for the big step of becoming a CFIG. Through it all, I saw Jennifer's perseverance and strong desire to achieve her goals. Together we discussed options for her continued progress. The intensive trip to Florida to finish up had worked well for her Commercial and it was also a good choice for her CFIG.

So why was our mentor-mentee relationship so fun, rewarding, and successful? I think it was because we both made efforts to stay in touch, first while she worked on her Commercial, then as she tackled the CFIG. We started out meeting by Zoom or phone to talk about how to approach the new certificate. Then, if we hadn't been in touch for a while, one of us would reach out by email or text and that would usually result in another phone call or Zoom. Working with Jennifer was a joy, and I look forward to hearing more as she steps into the world of instructing.

Alice has been a longtime CFIG and has shared her skills teaching at the Women's Cross Country Camp in the last few years.

(Badges from page 3)

Solo

Katelyn Dahlgren, OK
 Bella Wilson, OK
 Karen B (no last name), WA
 Taylor Tetley, VA
 Emily Paxton, OR
 Sophia Westbrook, TX
 Taylor Tetley, VA

WSPA SEMINAR 2025

The Limerick that did not make it into the Limerick contest at the Seminar

**Dansville was where we did head
 And we were all very well fed.
 With briefings and talks
 We all went aloft,
 Completing the tasks that we said.**

**"Today was a fabulous day",
 We heard all the WSPA gals say.
 Although there was smoke
 Ute's flight was no joke
 Five hours up, did she stay.**

Although this great week has to end.

Great soaring, warm wishes we send.

**To a club with great love,
 And blue skies above.
 We hope to be back here again.
 ~Elaine Ernewein**



In the News

The 2025 season was a stellar season for women flying competitions

Sylvia Grandstaff flew in 2 World Championships (see articles in Hangar Soaring Nov. 2025 and Feb. 2026).

Jenna Cooper	National Sport Class, Waller, TX	5th
	National Club Class, Harris Hill, NY	10th
	Region 9 Sport Class, Moriarty, NM	9th
	Region 10 Sport Class, Yoder, KS	4th

After recently graduating with an engineering degree, Jenna moved to Southern CA to work as a flight instructor at Sky Sailing to build up flying time for a future aviation career.

Sarah Arnold	National 18m Class, Cordele, GA	3rd
	Region 5, North Sport Class, Perry, SC	6th

(with Karl Striediek)

Katja van Horn	Region 9, Sport Class, Hobbs, NM	5th
	Region 10, Sport Class, Yoder, KS	7th

Isabel Ulland	Region 8, Sport Class, Ephrata, WA	7th
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Allison Inge	Region 9, Sport Class, Hobbs, NM	10th
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Angeline Barber Petroff	Region 10, Sport Class, Yoder, KS	10th.
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From SSA "Milestones"

Yulia Krasnikova (PPL-G)

Katie Woodard (PPL-G)

Debra DeBroux (PPL-G)

Olive Grantham (PPL-G)

Katja van Horn was the winner of the 2025 Richard Collins Writing Prize for Young Pilots.

First place winner is awarded a \$5000 check. Deadline for 2026 submission is February 28, 2026.

New books

"On a Mission", History of US Women Astronauts (published by the Smithsonian)

WSPA member **Pat Valdata's** latest novel, **Everyday Courage**, will be published in early 2026 by Wind Canyon Books. The novel follows a Martin B-26 bomber as it is built and then flown during WWII. Here's what one early reviewer says about the book:

This meticulously researched new book by Pat Valdata is told through the eyes of three different characters. Rose Santoro, the skilled riveter at the Maryland factory, has a special reason to make sure this Martin B-26 Marauder stays in one piece. Lillian Armstrong, a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, proves the vital role women played in the war effort, and just maybe, one flight in this plane will change the course of her own life. Billy Wyatt, the bombing crew skipper, considers this airplane his lucky charm. The battered Marauder becomes more than rivets and wings; it emerges as a symbol of endurance, binding Rose, Lillian, and Billy in a shared legacy celebrating the quiet, everyday courage that shines in the darkest hours and can change the course of history.

M-ASA SSA X-country camp

Are you an east coast pilot who wants a supportive environment to begin or progress your cross country adventures but can not make the long drive to the Women's XC Soaring Camp in Moriarty? Please consider joining us for the M-ASA SSA XC Camp being offered June 28 through July 4 at Fairfield, PA. The Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association (M-ASA) is located in a cross-country friendly area near Baltimore, Washington DC and Gettysburg. You will find a large gliderport with onsite camping, ample tie down space, friendly ground support and plenty of local lodging. The camp offers daily morning classes, 3 levels of scored tasks in the afternoon, and individualized pre and post flight coaching with your assigned mentor. Participants should bring a sailplane and have logged several 2 hour flights. M-ASA would welcome your participation! Full information and registration are on the SSA racing and event web page. Please feel free to contact me or Tony Smolder with any questions.

Tony Smolder: TSMOLDER@att.net, 346 244 3681

Cathy Williams: CLSOAR2@gmail.com, 717 253 1764

Wishing you an awesome 2026 soaring season,

Cathy Williams

2025 WSPA Awards

by Kristin Farry

2025 Betsy Woodward Cross-County Participation Award:



Isabel and DPE Robin Reid

The 2025 Betsy Woodward Cross-Country Award goes to Isabel Ulland of Hood River Soaring. She had 18 cross-country flights scoring 50 points or more on WeGlide in the 2025 season (October 1st, 2024-September 30th, 2025). Isabel just turned 16 during the 2025 season and completed her private on her birthday with WSPA scholarship help. We've enjoyed her company and her hard work at two WSPA seminars. A week after her Private-Glider check ride, Isabel placed 7th in the Region 8 contest (Sports Class) in a borrowed L33. She's had four land outs, too. Her club colleagues are calling her Ulland-Out now. Among her near-term goals is representing the US on the Junior team.

Close behind Isabel with 17 flights was international member Elke Fuglsang-Petersen. Cathy Williams (Mid-Atlantic Soaring and Minden Soaring) came in third with 15 cross-country flights.

This award recognizes the WSPA member who flies and uploads the most flights that earn at least 50 points in OLC-Plus or WeGlide-Free distance. This award promotes growth in soaring and frequent attempts at achieving soaring distance. Note that you must be a WSPA member to be considered. You also must either nominate yourself or be nominated by someone. We are in the 2026 season already, so be sure to upload your flights.

We named this award for Betsy Woodward because she was the first woman to earn a Gold Badge and participated in the original Sierra Wave Project. She was one of the first six recipients of the Lennie and held National and World records including altitude (1955). When she wasn't in the cockpit, she aided Paul MacCready in researching convective storms and became known around the world as a meteorologist. She also wrote a book (Flight Measurements of Isolated Thermals) and many OSTIV reports, and she also contributed to others. Her research and writing are still valuable to pilots. Check out a sample of Betsy's work: [A theory of thermal soaring | OSTIV Publications](#).

Continued Awards page 10

Season of the Potato (and Castles, too)

Part two

(part one in HS Nov.2025)

By Sylvia Grandstaff

The Women World Championships 2025

"Potato"

noun: a delicious, starchy, vegetable, generally included as standard in every Czech meal, to everyone's delight.

verb: to land out, to descend rapidly, to drop from the sky like a flightless tuber.

In my closest circle of glider friends, "potato" is a verb. An ongoing inside joke with now-forgotten provenance, "to potato" means to land out. One can imagine the metaphor of a spud attempting to aviate- like the flightless kiwi bird, which at least has wings, the equally brown and round vegetable is hardly capable of soaring. Despite its best efforts at slipping the surly bonds, it falls from the sky and gently plops (ideally) in a not-too-soft, expansive, dirt field with an exasperated "umph."

The hope for better weather was not to be. In late July I returned to Czechia for the Women's Worlds, ready to give racing another go, albeit already missing having a teammate. I'd be racing WWGC on my own, without another US team pilot to share in the highs and lows and tactical practicalities of "sampling the air" and "solving the sky-puzzle." I arrived in rain, and the following weeks of weather would continue to test the full length of the contest. A persistent, stationary polar front churned over our heads for the entirety of the race. The stationary front brought rain, wind shear, rapidly cycling lift, overcast, and low ceilings. I'd face the most consistently challenging and weak flying weather I have ever endured throughout a race- difficult in any scenario, but also the worst-case scenario when racing internationally without a teammate.

I had been able to stage my rental LS4 on site, since the WWGC site (Zbraslavice) was only a couple hours from the WGC site (Tábor). Veteran WGC pilot and my team captain, Tim Taylor, and I immediately got to work finishing off lingering glider issues. I had flown all of WGC with partially-open landing gear doors and a 3 kg weight imbalance in the wings. Throughout WGC, I could tell the glider was descending in glides more than it should next to Tony's LS4 and other comparable-performance sailplanes. Simple fixes had no effect, and we eventually had run out of time and gumption in Tábor to fix these nagging issues. Now, revisiting these fixes at WWGC, Tim and I were grateful to have the help of an on-site HpH mechanic (gliders, racing equipment, and glider professionals seem to grow on trees in Europe!). He removed and re-shaped the fiber-glass gear doors, adjusted spacers, replaced springs, sanded portions of the fuselage, and, finally, was able to reinstall the doors so they would both close fully and sit flush with the glider's belly. Tim and I spent another day pulling a water ballast bag out of a wing to correct the weight imbalance in the wings. Maybe, finally, the glider was ready to go.

And then there was the problem of not having a teammate. The strongest teams (Czech, Germany, France, Poland, and the UK) each had three experienced team pilots racing in Club Class. Glider challenges aside, I felt (and was) vastly outnumbered. Given the difficulty of the weak and rapidly-changing weather, these robust teams had a massive advantage in finding and utilizing lift, making decisions, and helping each other make it across the course, as quickly as possible. My only reasonable option was to create an alliance of "onesies," compatible pilots with compatible gliders, who also needed a buddy. Christina Solberg Hansen (Denmark) and Anne Soltow (UK) and I coalesced into a rag-tag group



L to R: Dawn Weigel (crew) Tim Taylor (team Captain),
Sylvia Grandstaff (pilot) Sam Weigel (crew)

and began to try to brief, plan, fly, and race together. Building a team mid-Worlds race is hardly ideal, and early fumbles with miscommunication, decision-making, tactics, and coordination between ourselves or with our ground teams were costly. There were many potato-plops in fields for the three of us: all safe, with some more heart-breaking or frustrating than others. For two full race weeks, the conditions were an overwhelming, sometimes defeating struggle. Emotional and physical fatigue was in high supply for pilots and crew. The weather was unrelenting and uncompromising. Yet, despite low scores, team-growing-

pains, and plenty of off-field retrieves, I was

flying the best I had ever flown. I felt mentally dialed in, with an intimate comfort with my glider, with my ability to core and climb and run, with my instruments and settings and workflows, and with my daily routines and processes. As the drudgery of relentlessly tough flying days piled on, I was so proud of Christina, Anne, and me, Team Captain Tim Taylor, and crew Sam and Dawn Weigel, for putting our best effort into each difficult day in less-than-ideal circumstances, over and over again. Despite the weather gauntlet, day-by-day our team flying improved. Mistakes piled up but so did lessons-learned and successes, and eventually the successes started to outpace our frustrations. By the last race day, our confidence had improved too, and so had that of our Team Captains and ground crew.

The tension of the last race day was palpable. Everyone was worn down by the weather and successive days of racing, and the top podium contenders and teams were ready to defend their positions one final time. Christina, Anne, and I were ready to give it a last collective effort, full of heart. Based on another fickle forecast with a high likelihood of rain in the early afternoon, our Team Captains suggested an early start. Christina, Anne, and I had been briefing and planning flights together for weeks, and we felt confident with the plan in place. Hours later, the three of us gracefully crossed the start line as a coordinated pack, together, into a completely blue sky. As in previous days, the weather was weak and the sky overwhelmingly still, with few burbles. We had only found a few thermals after takeoff, struggling to stay aloft, and we knew it would be another challenging first glide out onto course. Most of the competitors remained behind the start line, churning, and waiting, with the top pilots hoping to start as late as reasonably possible, with plenty of pilots ahead to mark thermals and catch.

I led the glide into the first turn area, across still air, to a small wrinkle in the earth- a low, forested ridgeline, and we arrived not much above 1400 feet AGL. We stayed together but dispersed just enough to search for lift. I headed to the ridge's south-facing peak, dotted with a red and white antenna. I could feel a low simmer burbling in the atmosphere above the ridge. I felt a wing lift, turned, called my teammates, and waited as the glider made one circle, two, three. Soon, the climb organized around me, with half-knot bumps turning into a consistent, cored three. Anne, then Christina, joined a few hundred feet below me, searching to connect with the climb. As in previous days, the lift seemed broken, forming in elusive, fickle, and transient "bubbles" rather than predictable "columns." Anne found my "bubble," but it evaded Christina, who was slightly lower- the lift that had been there a moment before wasn't there for her. Soon, Anne and I found ourselves over 2000 feet higher than Christina, and when the lift topped out, it broke our hearts, but we had to go.

Leaving the thermal, I turned onto course towards the next turn-point. Anne and I, now a team of two, would have a tailwind on this run, and I deliberately aligned my nose with the wind line hoping to connect

with more lift on my exit. To my delight and surprise, I found a river of streaming, streeting lift. And, for the rest of the day, Anne and I bounded between organized climbs and beautiful invisible streets, seamlessly strung together on an otherwise cloudless day. I finally had a racing day where it, all of it, felt dialed in. My brain was bathed in the rare state of both focused flow and playful joy. Not a turn felt wasted, centering thermals was effortless, and connecting thermals with streets felt like the creative, graceful sweep of a paintbrush. I flew hard, and Anne followed, with us working together to find the strongest cores and keep a quick pace. Christina had separated from us, but we checked in by radio, and she was able to connect with others and continue her flight. I realized that this was my first flight in Czechia where I could stay high and fly fast, and it would end up being one of my happiest, flowiest racing flights ever.

Yet, as Czechia would have it, the consistently good weather would have its limit, and as we approached the last turnpoint, Tim called and warned us that rain was approaching the airfield. The sky in front of, and around us, was sunlit blue, and if not for Tim's call, we couldn't have known about impending shift in weather. I had plenty of altitude with just a little more needed for final glide home, but I still needed to fly more to meet the minimum 3 hours of task time. If I headed home now, I'd arrive a few minutes under-time, losing both speed and points. However, if I stayed out on course any longer than necessary, I'd increase my chances of another landout, which felt like the greater risk, and I was plenty tired of potatoes by now. As I got to the edge of the last turnpoint area, Tim radioed again- it was now raining at Zbraslavice. I chose to nick the edge of the last cylinder, I found one last climb, and with some reluctance, headed for home. Of course, I had a buoyant, bubbly, fast glide all the way back to the airfield, with minimal impacts from the quickly deteriorating weather, and finished with plenty of altitude and a couple of minutes under time. I landed as rain pitter-pattered on my canopy, with Anne happily touching down soon thereafter. The next day would be my first time on the Worlds day-win podium, with Anne's handicap bringing her to 1st place, mine to a close 2nd, and 3rd place shared with Olena Yakymchuk of Ukraine. This time, finally, for once, and with great gratitude for the help of my friends and teammates and crew, the only potatoes would be the ones in my dinner's goulash.

(Sometimes, despite the greatest planning efforts and the biggest of dreams, things don't line up in our favor- at least as far as the scoresheet goes, anyway. I wanted to express my deepest, heartfelt thanks to all of the many, many supporters who offered gliders, resources, knowledge, time, effort, facilities, donations, and kind words in support of my lead-up and participation in WGC and WWGC 2025. Donations and funding through the Women Soaring Pilot's Association and the Soaring Society of America and US Team were a tremendous, generous gift. A massive thanks also goes to my teammates, crew, Team Captains, and husband Hugh, for weathering all the highs and lows, the many shared morale ice-creams, and all the times they put my dang heart back together.)



Team Sylvia Grandstaff: Christina Solberg Hanson, (Team Denmark)
Anne Soltow (Team UK)

Finding my Way back to the Skies A new Journey into Cross-country Soaring

Amanda Vella, Canada



Armanda in Moriarty

hesitant to push beyond familiar boundaries.

That changed thanks to Gary Hill, who offered to take me on a cross-country flight. Just the day before, I had endured a rather monotonous two-hour Bronze badge flight circling close to the airport. But with Gary, we tackled the largest triangle on the Proving Grounds course. Even though we clocked the slowest time on the board, I was quickly becoming hooked.

So when Mel Paradis, our Chief Flight Instructor, reached out to me in May about the Women's Cross-Country Camp in Moriarty, New Mexico, I jumped at the chance. The camp provided the opportunity to build the confidence and knowledge I needed for cross-country soaring. The Albuquerque Soaring Club, which hosts the camp, offered incredible support – including rental gliders for participants. Since I didn't have time to get an FAA licence, I flew dual the entire time, which allowed me to focus fully on learning.

Moriarty, I quickly discovered, might be one of the happiest places on earth – at least for glider pilots. With more than 80 gliders based on the airfield, many stored in hangars that include apartments, the community practically revolves around soaring. They even have a carousel hangar that provides easy access to any one of the six gliders stored there. I could have done without the rattlesnakes, but no place is perfect. I was fortunate to stay in a newly-built AirBnB right at the airfield at the end of some T-hangars.

Arriving early, I took time to adjust to Moriarty's 6220 foot elevation. While visiting the soaring club, I snagged a back seat in a Perkoz with Rick Kohler, an exceptionally experienced pilot. We climbed to 16,000 feet in the desert heat, me in shorts and using oxygen for the first time. Rick shared his decision-making process, thermaling techniques, and gliding stories that were as instructive as they were inspiring. That flight set an amazing tone for the week.

To my delight, I learned that I'd be flying the Perkoz during the camp with my instructor, Colleen Koenig, one of its co-owners. ESC has a Perkoz as well, so I felt at home in the aircraft, though I was surprised to learn it's still considered "experimental" in the U.S.

The camp was led by an extraordinary team – Colleen, CarolAnn Garratt, and Alice Palmer – all accomplished XC pilots who generously volunteered their time to teach and mentor. Their passion for getting more women confident in cross-country soaring was contagious. The camp is supported by the Women's Soaring Pilot Association, which I just recently joined and would recommend to other women in soaring as they have many scholarships and other support available. The Moriarty camp runs every year the week of the 4 July holiday. More information on WSPA can be found on their website <https://womensoaring.org>. Scholarships applications are due 15 March and on top of the financial aid, they come with amazing mentor support.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Flying in Moriarty is quite different from Edmonton. At home, we're blessed with endless landable fields. In New Mexico, careful planning is essential: you must always remain within gliding distance of safe off-field landing sites, most of which come with challenges like rutted irrigation circles. The experience forced me to sharpen my flight planning and decision-making skills.

The camp followed a full schedule: morning lectures and task planning at the Soaring Museum, afternoon flights, and evening debriefs over beer. We covered everything from thermaling techniques and glider polars to using flight analysis tools like WeGlide and SeeYou. Guest speakers, including Rick, shared invaluable lessons from decades of soaring. No topic was off limits – even the practical challenges unique to women pilots, such as in-flight bathroom solutions. (I even came home with a prototype to test!)

Unfortunately, the weather wasn't always cooperative. My first flight was cut short when a storm moved in, and the second was Colleen Koenig a modest task by using a wide cylinder radius. Still, both gave me opportunities to practise task flying and use navigation tools in real-world conditions. When we couldn't fly, we maximized the time by setting up flight computers, analyzing past flights, and even driving out to inspect potential landout fields.

What stood out most was the generosity of the soaring community. With more volunteers than students, we never lacked for support, mentorship, or encouragement. The spirit of collaboration created an environment where all we had to focus on was flying and learning. I really enjoyed the conversations around the end of the day beer in the airport office.

I really appreciated hearing the stories from women who had completed the course in previous years and seeing how their cross-country journeys evolved. It was inspiring to understand what's possible and to remember that they, too, once stood where I am now. Tools like WeGlide make it easy to look back and see that progression unfold, which adds even more motivation.

The Soaring Museum is definitely worth a visit if you are near Moriarty. They display an impressive fleet of gliders throughout history. I thought the stories of triple glider tows were impressive until I saw the picture there of nine Blanik L-13s on tow!

Moriarty now holds a special place in my heart. I follow my new gliding family closely on WeGlide and can't wait to return. For any woman aspiring to earn her Silver badge or simply gain confidence in cross-country flying, I can't recommend this camp highly enough. The experience was transformative. In fact, while I was still in New Mexico, I decided I wanted to buy my own glider. I told my husband, and I mentioned it to the local AME to keep me in mind when he heard of good gliders for sale, knowing the search could take years. Amazingly, the very next day, Trevor Finney listed his ASW-20 for sale. By the time I landed back in Edmonton, I had already arranged a test flight. Within days, I was the proud new owner of a glider – a dream sparked by one incredible week in Moriarty.



Armando in her ASW20

Famous Women Glider Pilots

Ingrid Blecher, Germany

(the following is extracted from the "Deutscher Aero Club" website from August 26, 2024 honoring Ingrid Blecher at her 80th birthday)

On January 30 and 31, 2026 the traditional Hexentreffen (witches meeting), a gathering of not only women gliderpilots but women pilots of all branches of aviation will take place in the city of Siegen/ Germany. This year the gathering will celebrate its 50th anniversary. (HS hopes to get a report).

The Hexentreffen is the brainchild of one woman, Ingrid Blecher. Ingrid began her glider training in 1961 at the age of 16 near the city of Siegen. By early Spring 1962 she had earned her glider license. Since 1974, she has taken numerous podium places at championships, flown various distance, speed and altitude records and diligently collected international glider performance badges.

But Ingrid's passion did not stop there. She also wanted to help other female pilots to achieve success. She realized that the few female glider pilots at the time would have to join forces to promote women in air sports. In 1975, she invited 26 female glider pilots to the Siegerland airport. One result of that meeting was the first women's gliding competition in Germany.

From the Second International Women's Gliding Competition in Leszno/ Poland in 1975 in which she participated, Ingrid brought back the idea of a regular "witches" meeting, in Poland called "Babajaga" (the Polish word for witches). In addition, she saw, that female pilots also needed coaches and training camps in order to survive in international competition. Together with other women and men who supported women's gliding, she campaigned to create the structures for women's sports as well. The commitment gradually paid off, as the German glider pilots became increasingly successful on the international scene. Today, they rank as the world's elite.

To this day Ingrid is committed to women's air sports. It makes her one of the important pioneers of generations of female pilots. She has made a decisive contribution to the fact that German female glider pilots fly at the top of international standards.

(Editor's note: I met Ingrid at the 2005 WWGC in Klix, Germany, where I acted as one of the officials. Because of my extended workday, I was given a room with four beds in the gliderport's clubhouse. One night we had a severe storm blowing through that took down several tents and tore a Piper Cup from its tie-downs flipping it over. I offered the 3 unused beds in my room to anybody who needed one. Ingrid Blecher accepted the offer. And that's how we met).



Ingrid Blecher 2022, photo Gesa Walkoff

News from Australia (and Germany)

German Women Soar: All-Female Team Leads Gliding Operations in Benalla, Australia

The German Aero Club e.V. (the head organization of all Aero Sports in Germany) supports an international project to promote women in aviation at the Gliding Club of Victoria. Located in Benalla, it is the largest and the oldest continuously operating gliding club in the Southern Hemisphere, having started flying in 1929, and is also the largest club in Australia with over 230 members.

This year, for the first time, an all-German women's team will be taking over the organization of weekly flight operations at the renowned **Gliding Club of Victoria** in Benalla, Australia. The **Deutscher Aero Club e.V. (DAeC)** is actively supporting the project – thereby setting a strong example for increased visibility, equal opportunities, and international exchange in aviation.

During the Australian summer months, six dedicated female pilots from Germany, will be organizing regular flight operations during the week – as **flight instructors, tow pilots, and duty pilots**. The aim of the initiative is to **specifically promote women in aviation**, strengthen international exchange, and open up new perspectives, especially for young female pilots.

The idea for this pilot project came from the Gliding Club of Victoria. The DAEc supported the selection of suitable participants from its network – from experienced flight instructors to committed young talents. "Such international collaborations demonstrate how open, diverse, and forward-looking our sport is," says Claus Cordes, President of the DAEc. "We need visible role models to encourage young women to pursue their passion for flying – not only in Germany, but worldwide."

Strong international cooperation

The German team is supported locally in Benalla by **George Ross** (Scotland) as Midweek Operations Manager and local tow pilot **Alison Swart**. Both contribute valuable local experience and ensure smooth flight operations.

"We see this initiative as an important contribution to the development of an aviation culture in which everyone feels welcome and supported," says Sybille Krummacher, Chair of the Federal Committee for Women Flying (BAFF) within the DAEc.

"The project shows that when we offer young people – especially young women – real roles in aviation, enthusiasm, competence, and long-term commitment emerge."

"For all women who have ever looked up to the sky and asked themselves: 'What if?' – now is your time: Dream it. Believe it. Achieve it." The Gliding Club of Victoria encourages and welcomes all women and girls to learn to fly with us as a pathway to a career in aviation or just learn to fly!

REFERENCES:

- **Blog of the German Midweek Crew:**
Personal impressions, reports, and photos directly from Benalla – regularly updated by the participants.
<https://aircrew.rocks/@gcvmidweekcrew>
- **Gliding Club of Victoria (Australia):**
<https://www.glidingclub.org.au/> - Meet Team Germany
- **German Aero Club e. V.:**
<https://www.daec.de/>

More News from Australia

First Ever Ladies' Day

By Dominique Brassier (from **Gliding Australia Magazine**, July 17, 2025)



The first ever Ladies' Day was held at Southern Cross GC, Camden 28 June. The day was sponsored by NSW Gliding and was a huge success. Thirty-six women attended, culminating in 23 flights for the day.

The aim was a fun experience to foster camaraderie, establish-

ing connections and a sense of shared purpose among the minority group of women pilots, as well as to encourage a lively community that more women can and will want to join. After all, this is exactly how the Australian Women Pilots' Association (AWPA) continued to grow to its current success. AWPA was inducted into the HARS Aviation Hall of Fame in October 2024.

This day is part of an initiative to encourage more female leaders and participants in our sport. NSW Gliding is participating in the National Gender Equity in Sports Program that makes funding available to all state and national sporting organisations – not only gliding – who are working towards parity on their committee or board.

Increasing women's participation will also attract new members, both men and women, a growth our sport needs. I actually do believe we will attract new members as a result of this day, precisely because the participants have shared a day of fun and good spirits – word of mouth travels fast – as well as great instruction and flying. In fact, Melysha Turnbull, Women's representative on the NSW Gliding Committee and instructor at SCGC, has already received a request for a one-on-one session.

For the day, NSW Gliding offered free flights for our current women pilots and SCGC offered club rates for friends and family flights.

SCGC gliding club members were all on deck early in the morning to make sure all the gliders, tugs and equipment were online before the 9am briefing. Melysha did a fantastic job of organising the day. After SCGC President Steven Waller's welcome and Melysha's introduction, the head instructor for the day Rod Ferrier conducted the briefing.

I was honored to give the presentation of the day, which I called 'From Last on OLC to WeGlide Day Winner'.

In this presentation, I described my difficult journey through early gliding training and how slow my initial progress was (to the despair of my instructors as well as mine) all the way to my progress over last 6 years or so. I also related how I now use WeGlide competition statistics, scoring and badges to improve my flying, and to set and achieve my goals. Granted, I still have a long way to go. It seems everyone enjoyed the presentation – judging by the feedback, it was informative, funny and inspirational. Even better, I delivered all that in under 30 minutes. Mission accomplished.

Thereafter and throughout the day the women enjoyed flights non-stop. We had a diverse range of ages, background and experience, ranging from young Air Force cadets and high schoolers, to seasoned competition pilots. SCGC instructors, tuggies, ground crew and helpers worked tirelessly all day. Some cadets even got a second free flight at the end of the day, thinking Christmas had come early. Everyone had a big smile on their faces, especially them.

The simulator was also on offer for all to enjoy. Thank you, Ray! I need a bit more practice on the simulator as I am not sure the glider

survived my landing in Slovenia.

Many thanks to NSW Gliding, Southern Cross Gliding Club and their members who worked so hard on the day, and to Melysha Turnbull and Beryl Hartley.

Future ladies' events include a racing week in December for more advanced pilots, a women's cross country coaching week in February, as well an upcoming Air Experience Instructor course for women (date TBA) and another ladies' weekend (TBA). I can't wait!

(Ed. note: I flew in Camden in 1974 and in 1997. The gliderport is located in the approach of Sydney Airport and therefore height restrictions are in place).

Awards from page 5

2025 Bertha Ryan Sustained Service Award



Bertha and Frauke
at the 2004 Convention

The WSPA Board has awarded the Bertha Ryan Sustained Service Award to Frauke Elber.

Frauke Elber is a charter member of WSPA, from our formal founding in 1986. Frauke has been instrumental in making WSPA's key communications channel—*Hangar Soaring*—to the professional and entertaining newsmagazine it is today. She has edited WSPA's quarterly newsletter, *Hangar Soaring*, since 2001, publishing it four times a year for a quarter century.

She solicits articles and often writes articles for this publication, with each issue now running 12 pages. She tracks soaring milestones of women pilots and ensures they are recognized in *Hangar Soaring*.

Frauke has represented WSPA at Soaring Society of America Conventions many times since WSPA began, working the WSPA booth full time for days. She's also organized and promoted merchandise to raise money for our scholarships at the SSA Conventions and WSPA Seminars. She often administers raffles to raise money for our scholarships and to support US women competing internationally. She has built up WSPA's international membership over the years, personally reaching out to women soaring pilots around the world.

Beyond WSPA-centric activities, Frauke has compiled a wealth of history on women in soaring. She is a frequent speaker at SSA Conventions on the history of women in soaring and the evolution of women's gliding competitions.

About the Bertha Ryan Sustained Service Award:

This award recognizes WSPA members who have served WSPA and the soaring community for ten years or more. The emphasis in this award is service and promotion of women's participation in soaring beyond personal flying accomplishments. We named it in honor of Bertha Ryan, who was not only an outstanding pilot and engineering pioneer, but served the soaring community for decades in helping to build up the Soaring Society of America. WSPA traces its roots to Bertha Ryan's networking efforts to bring women soaring pilots together in the 1970s.

Anyone can nominate a WSPA member for the Bertha Ryan Sustained Service Award. It's simple: send an email to trophy@womensoaring.org with the name of your nominee and with a few sentences about your nominee's service and why you are nominating this member. We will help you polish the nomination.

First Solo

by Charlotte Wuensche



Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you then please share your story.

"Controls: free and clear. Straps: I'm strapped and the rear seatbelts are secure.

Wind: looking like a five knot tailwind on takeoff which means adjust for headwind on landing. Altimeter is set to five-seventy-five. Radio: on, volume's alright, set to one-twenty-three point three..."

It's a gorgeous fall day at the airport and I'm lined up behind the towplane in the club's Schweizer SGS 2-33. She's blue and white and "built like a tank" as my instructor says. She's not as sleek as the fiberglass gliders but she thermals like a dream.

I'm about to fly solo again and I'm running through my checklist out loud just like I do before every flight. Just a year ago I was doing the exact same thing before my first solo flight. Three years before that I was taking my very first ride. And about a month before that I was at the dinner table asking my parents, "What if I learned to fly gliders?"

I first brought up the idea when I was twelve. I'd been watching YouTube videos about RedBull glider pilots making low passes over a field. I thought it was the coolest thing ever. After doing some digging, I found out that you can fly solo in a glider at fourteen, which meant I could start my aviation career early! Luckily my parents were on board and in July of 2021, I took my first flight with an instructor. I'll never forget that day: the feeling in my stomach as the towplane accelerated; the way the glider lurched forward, picking up speed; the way the trees looked so close when we lifted off; the exhilaration as I watched everything shrink. I'd flown in big planes before but this was different. The distance from the ground was smaller. It felt more real, more tangible, in a way. When we reached altitude and released from the towplane, it was almost silent. The only noise came from the wings humming as they sliced through the air.

It was that moment I knew I was a goner.

Soaring has become the love of my life. It is my absolute favorite pastime and I can't imagine who I'd be without it. The thrill of defying gravity and staying aloft without an engine never gets old. In the air it's just me, my wings, and my wits.

I've come a long way. Soaring requires both skill and knowledge. It takes discipline, patience, and confident decision-making. If I could tell twelve-year-old me that in five years she'd easily circle with bald eagles, regularly out-climb her brother in his K-21, and even get compliments on her landings from the cranky retired F-15 pilot, I think she'd be really impressed.

And here I am now.

"...Trim: set full forward. Tow rope: big ring in, secure and free of knots or breakage. Air brakes: closed and locked. Canopy: closed and locked and rear door latched."

I'm finishing my checklist and I'm ready to take off. I give the thumbs up to the wing runner to begin taking out slack. I see the towplane waggle its rudder, and I waggle mine in return to let him know I'm ready. He guns the engine, the rope tightens, and the 2-33's nose leaps off the ground. A few seconds later I hear the main wheel stop rolling as I lift off the ground. The wind rises and I pull the stick back to ascend with the towplane.

Only God knows what the next four years of my life will look like. But I know anything worth doing is worth effort, dedication, and a preflight checklist.

I am the pilot of my life and I cannot wait to see where the wind takes me next.

Charlotte is a M-ASA member and 17 years old

Portrait Elena Fergnani

LA NENA BLUE“

Sometimes in the course of your life you meet extraordinary people and these people definitely inspire you to write about them. For me, one of these people was Elena Fergnani, who first attracted attention with her warm smile – and her mop of blue hair..

TEXT Andrea Venturini, PICTURES Andrea Venturini, FAI, privat



Elena started gliding at the age of 15 and soon received her license. She was lucky enough to fly with her father and brother (both pilots) at one of the most beautiful gliding clubs in Italy, in Ferrara. Every June, this club organizes a "Classic" race, which is known in Italy as the race with the largest number of participants. This is due to the location of this club: the thermals are great and, above all, there are a large number of landing sites for the safety of the pilots, because Ferrara is located in the middle of the famous Pianura Padana, the largest plain in Italy.

Elena competed in her first race as the second pilot in a two-seater with her father. She started competing in solo competitions in 2009 and eventually made the leap to the national level. Her career as a competition pilot reached its highlight so far at the Women's World Championship in Australia (Lake Keppel) in 2020: she brought home the gold medal for the Italian gliding team.

After her great successes, Elena has now reached a point where she is considering whether it would not be better to give up single-seat flying in the women's competitions and instead team up with her brother, who is currently enjoying the benefits of the two-seater with another pilot..

At the beginning of September, I was able to arrange a telephone interview with Elena. At first, I was very curious about her experiences in Australia, but in the end we talked more about her more recent experiences at the WWGC in the UK, where she tried out the not-so-easy PEV start procedure for the first time (The Pilot Event Start procedure is used in gliding competitions to increase safety and distribute the gaggles around the task. A pilot must press the Pilot Event (PEV) button before starting the task. Source: Naviter). According to Elena, after the British Championship it became clear that if you start with PEV under certain conditions, such as on blue days, you are definitely at a disadvantage if you don't have a larger team. So the choice of this rule leads 100 percent to an advantage for larger teams and nations, which only compete with a single pilot, and do not benefit from any team strategy. If this procedure is decisive for the start of the race, you basically know that you will never make it into the top positions.

"Having flown with my brother, I know exactly what it means to fly in formation with another pilot. You benefit from having someone from your team close by who can give you valuable information and data about the race track. I'm not a fan of following others at all, but every pilot who flies competitions at a high level knows that on some blue days there is no other option than to pull yourself together and fly with others. If you are flying solo or with a very small team, the gap between teams gets too big and it is definitely harder to get good results. One thing that also makes a huge difference is to have a very competent team captain during the event."

Ultimately, Elena was of the opinion that we are losing a little of our "sporting spirit" overall and that a team with only one or very few pilots is definitely at a disadvantage compared to teams with a great deal of support from their federation.

"Fourth place in the last WWGC was a bit bitter, because I really had a chance of being on the podium, but a series of bad luck with the weather has cost me a better position. Unfortunately, with 13 flyable days and only six flown days, bad luck with the weather plays a big role." Elena went on to explain that in marginal weather, a pilot's skills cannot be used to their full potential. "For example, you can be in the lead all day and then suddenly a huge thunderstorm blocks your way to the final approach. Then, 30 minutes later, the "pack" arrives and benefits from the dissipating clouds. Or the sun comes out again through the clouds and you find a very energy-efficient route between the precipitation areas and finish the task when other participants are landing in the fields."

Women are somehow doubly disadvantaged when it comes to our sport, says Elena, because they often have to take care of their children for several years, and economically speaking, women tend to have less disposable income to devote to our sport, so they can't invest as much time in training and hope to be able to compete one day.

"When you show up at the airfield, 99 percent of the pilots are men, and not everyone is understanding of you. The national associations should definitely create more incentives for recruiting young people, with a particular focus on young women. I noticed a positive signal in this direction at the last WGC in the United Kingdom, where all the positions needed to organize the championship were filled by women, which unfortunately is often a rarity. I remember that most other competitions are mainly run by men. To increase the number of female participants, the United Kingdom did such a good job that last year, in a club competition, about 30% of the participants were women."

Elena has had the great privilege of growing up around soaring, and I saw how great her family's presence is during the competition. Her father is an active and experienced glider pilot with a long history of racing, and he was the Italian team captain in the last UK WWGC. Her brother is also a member of the Italian national gliding team and Elena is looking forward to racing with him, possibly in international events. "Flying with my brother is really enjoyable, we know each other so well that everything works smoothly. The second pilot relieves the PIC of many small but important tasks, making flying more relaxed and enjoyable. When you're racing, it somehow allows you to better enjoy the experience."

We hope to see this unique crew in the air together soon!

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we have a scholarship for you.

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Checks to WSPA should be written *to the order of WOMEN's SOARING PILOTS ASSOCIATION*.
On the *Memo line* write the **purpose** of the check.

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**Fi
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