



Hangar Soaring

May 2026

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WOMEN SOARING PILOTS
ASSOCIATION.

<https://womensoaring.org/>

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

Badges, Records, Achievements

President's Notes

From the Editor

PAGE 3

Moriarty Cross-Country Camp
2026 WSPA Seminar

PAGE 4

Highest International Honor for
Sarah Arnold

PAGE 5

M-ASA , SSA Cross Country
Camp
3rd Women Friendship Meet
Uebersberg, Germany
Sarah will fly in 2026 WGC
in Poland
Membership Update on Mem-
bership Platform

PAGE 6

Kapala Chawla
Hexentreffen (Witches Meeting)
In Germany

Women's Meeting in

Slovenia

PAGE 7

German Regional Women's
Meeting 2026
WSPA scholarships recipients

PAGE 8

My Journey in Soaring

PAGE 10

From the National Soaring
Museum

PAGE 11

Introduction to SOFTE
(Simulation-based Online
Flight Training)



Kapala Chawla , first astronaut of Indian decent
(see page 6)

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

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President
president@womensoaring.org

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Anna Laura Geusen
International Director
international@womensoaring.org

Scholarship Chair
Cathy Keller
scholarships@womensoaring.org

HANGAR SOARING
Frauke Elber
editor@womensoaring.org

Badges, Records, Achievements

Recorded through April 2026

Silver Distance
Isabel Ulland, OR
Sara Stearns, CA

Bronze Badge
Isabel Ulland, OR

C Badge
Deborah L. Ings, CO
Jessica Holland, CO
Sophia Ann Westbrook, TX

B Badge
Sophia Taylor, WA
Pierce Simpson, CO

A Badge
Leah Sainz, IL
Andrea Scott, IL
Bella Wilson, OK
Katelyn Dahlgre, OK

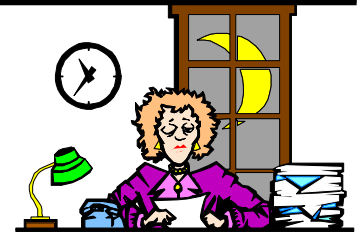
NATIONAL RECORDS APPROVED

Rita Edris
Feminine 13.5 m
Triangle Distance; 205.16 mi
Triangle 300; 35.455 mph

Feminine 13.5 m
Free Out and Return Distance;
221.32 m

ACHIEVEMENTS

Jennifer Hunt, WA CFI-G
Ansley Johns, AZ, PPL-G
Brianna Sizemore, AZ 1st solo
Elaine Yoon, CA 1st solo
Charlie Mallory, FL 1st solo
Candida Dawn Duncan, IN PPL_G
Maya Moore, FL PPL-G
Emma Kisselev, TX 1st solo



From the Editor

I am deeply honored being the recipient of the 2025 Bertha Ryan Sustained Service Award which was awarded to me for my longtime commitment to WSPA and soaring in general. But for me it even has a different meaning: I am now officially connected to Bertha Ryan; my name appears beside hers. Bertha had been a friend and mentor to me for over 50 years. We first connected (via snail mail) in 1970, when Bertha sent out a questionnaire trying to find out how many women soaring pilots were in the US. That questionnaire led to what is now Hangar Soaring, a small newsletter then sent out infrequently to connect the far spread women pilots. Due to my European (soaring) roots, we exchanged views on the differences. In the mid seventies, Bertha, Nancy Evans and BG Holden were the initiators of the annual women seminar, which preceded WSPA by several years. Bertha and I met for the first time in person during the 1995 seminar in Vermont. Bertha lived in California, while my home was in Virginia. With the advent of e-mail, our connection drew closer. When I started to write articles for SOARING and Hangar Soaring, Bertha did the editing since I did not yet feel secure in English.

Then in 2001, when WSPA needed a new editor for Hangar Soaring, it was Bertha who encouraged me to take over the newsletter. At first, I hesitated, but Bertha insisted. And now 25 years later I am still at the helm of it and going strongly.

Strangely enough in 2018, Bertha and I found ourselves in the same retirement community here in Newport News, VA. I think her niece, who lived in the area and was also at the local LifeLong-Learning Society, knew that I was a glider pilot and that I knew Bertha. Bertha had no family beside

President's Note



Women Soaring Pilot Relief Systems

To those of you who find yourselves waddling like Donald Duck to the pilot's meeting, feeling more like the Michelin Boy than a competition glider pilot, fear not. Those brave women who have gone before you (no pun intended) have much to share with you regarding their pilot relief system trials and errors. Perhaps some of you gentlemen have been looking for a solution for your significant other to go cross country with you more frequently. The newest and latest inventions and a plethora of "I'll never do that again" are documented here.

It wasn't until the 2020 WWGC in Lake Keepit, Australia that our three stellar representatives, Sarah Arnold, Kathy Fosha and Sylvia Grandstaff attempted to make a "dry run" using the new "Easy Peesy" women's relief system designed by the amazing Katrin Senne from Germany, <https://www.frauenurinal.de/english/>. That having been said, each attest that they continue to wear a "back-up" diaper system to avoid a \$250 parachute cleaning bill and the search for a new, more understanding rigger.

Another new system on the market, the "FRE" (Female Range Extender) Relief System has been designed by Diane Dandeneau, of Colorado. The system has received positive reports. For photos, information and instructions on how to use this system go to Diane@Dandeneau.com. The difference between FRE and the many other female urination devices on the market is that it is made of soft silicone. You can sit on it, and it is comfortable without collapsing. Current options are the V-1 Gravity Alone or the V-2 Gravity Assist Relief System models. The V-2 design addresses the more supine sailplane seat configurations. Diane's system was designed from her personal experiences with these long-standing issues of women pilots. Diane continues to make improvements, however current reviews from willing "test pilots" have reported extreme success and satisfaction.

In addition to these devices for women, Gnara.com /GoFly Technology

(Continued on page 4)

the niece and a nephew here on the East Coast. And thus, I think, the connection was made. At **Bertha's death in 2023, I inherited** some of her archival collection on women in soaring.

And therefore, this award that bears her name means so much to me.

Frauke



Bertha and Frauke 2018

2026 Moriarty Women Cross Country Camp

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 Women's Cross Country Camp in Moriarty, NM, still has a few open spots. 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.

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

If interested, please send an email to info@xcwomen.org. We look forward to seeing you in Moriarty, NM, in late June this year.

CarolAnn Garratt



By Leah Condon

WSPA is excited to be heading to the Soaring Club of Houston (SCOH) for our Seminar July 12-17,

SCOH is located NW of Houston, TX approximately 9 miles North of Waller, TX. They have around 170 members. The club does about 3,000 tows a year with a normal weekend day having 30+ tows. SCOH owns an 80-acre airport (89TA), grass runways with nice clubhouse. OGN Tracking is installed at SCOH and sister club GHSA, 45 miles to the South. Those interested in camping may be happy to learn that the size of their RV Park was doubled in 2021. SCOH has six club gliders available for use during the seminar: two 2-33s, one L-23, two ASK-21s, one L-33, two LS-3 project gliders. Ken Sorenson volunteered to fly X-country in his Arcus with WSPA Seminar participants as well. All club gliders are equipped with FLARM and the towplanes have ADSB (1090).

WSPA Seminars focus on building community, learning, gaining skills and having fun. This seminar provides an opportunity for pilots to fly at a new location and work with different instructors and mentors than at your home gliderport. Opportunities for learning will be offered both on the ground and in the air. One exciting aspect is SCOH's use of WeGlide. Pilots will learn and/or refine their use of WeGlide in flight, post flight analysis and sharing flights with friends

The seminar offers flying tracks for student pilots, private pilots with less experience or those needing a refresher, and an intermediate cross-country track. Non-flying registration is also available for those who prefer to keep their feet on the ground. Registration is open to both women and our allies, all are welcome to attend!

The seminar offers flying tracks for student pilots, private pilots with less experience or those needing a refresher, and an intermediate cross-country track. Non-flying registration is also available for those who prefer to keep their feet on the ground. Registration is open to both women and our allies, all are welcome to attend!

The minimum number of total participants for the seminar is twenty, or the seminar will be cancelled. So we appreciate your help spreading the word!

Important !!! (this is different from previous years)

Flying or non-flying participants register for the Seminar via the Soaring Society of America's "SSA" website. There is a detailed, step by step registration guide on WSPA's website, link is below:

<https://womensoaring.org/home/women-soaring-pilots-association-seminar/>

Key Details:

Registration Deadline – June 14, 2026

Participants need to be current members of:

Women Soaring Pilots Association "WSPA"

Soaring Society of America "SSA"

For those flying SCOH gliders total fees = \$680

Glider Credits = \$120 (this is 4 blocks in the 2-33 or 3 in the Blanik's)

Tow Credits = \$210 (this is 3 tows to 3,000')

WSPA Registration = \$25

5 days of Meals = \$175

Temporary SCOH membership = \$125 if flying or \$50 if not flying

T-Shirt = \$25

Own Glider total fees = \$560

Tow Credits = \$210 (this is 3 tows to 3,000')

WSPA Registration = \$25

5 days of Meals = \$175

Temporary SCOH membership = \$125 if flying or \$50 if not flying

T-Shirt = \$25

Non-Flying Total registration fees = \$275

WSPA Registration = \$25

5 days of Meals = \$175

Temporary SCOH membership = \$50

T-Shirt = \$25

SCOH Website - www.scoh.org

WSPA Seminar Coordinator – Leah Condon leah.n.condon@gmail.com

Local Host- Tony Smolder tsmolder@att.net

(Continued from page 2)

Pants are extremely helpful. This practical, comfortable pants with **Patented Pee Zipper Technology** allows everyone to answer nature's calls without removing clothing! A second zipper extends from beneath the first zipper to the back of the waistband. Internal fabric shield is a custom flap on the interior or the bottoms made from 100% recycled polyester. It has a soft hand-feel and is double layered to ensure comfort. The external fabric flap is made from the same fabric of the bottoms, completely covering the GoFly Zipper making it discrete and totally undetectable. It is designed to allow you to unzip only as far as you need to maximize privacy.

Before I discuss the top winners of the diaper competition, allow me to share invaluable advice from our representatives, Sarah Arnold, Sylvia Grandstaff and Kathy Fosha.

Drink before, during and after flight.

Practice with the devices in the bathtub, shower or supine positioned chair.

Use a good bed pad between you and the parachute/seat cushions. <http://www.idiaper.com/Prevailreg-Disposable-underpads-p-17315.html>

When using the Easy Peesy Vaseline is the preferred viscosity for placement.

A strong seal against the skin with some of these devices is of paramount importance to maintain uphill pee. You **might want to consider "trimming the bush"** (Note: a more detailed description of usage can be found in the **next issue of the Women's Soaring Pilots Association, Hangar Soaring**).

"Ops check" the Easy Peesy or "FRE" on the ground before take-off. Emotionally, you will feel more confident in the cockpit.

Clean the device with Chlorohexidine Gluconate 4% from pharmacy afterwards.

Do NOT route your urine through a tube or any other device out the bottom of the aircraft. Undetected corrosion will develop causing enormous damage to your sailplane. **DON'T DO IT!!!**

Our three contest champions, and several other WeGlide competitors maintain the importance of the **"just-in-case" diaper**. The above-mentioned devices can be finicky and require finesse and may require a learning curve. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of...well, you get the idea.

Who would have known that diapers had such a wide range of efficacy. Below are the personally endorsed preferences of our top female competitors:

The most absorbent product on the market is the Abri-form line. You can look at the comparison here:

<http://www.xpmedical.com/dtest.html>. Although the most absorbent are Abena Abri-form X-plus, the DeltaForm M3 is more comfortable.

"Depends" are NOT dependable.

Diapers are not usually enough if you are not using Easy Peesy or other devices. Get booster pads. Two that work well are: <http://www.xpmedical.com/abrillet.html> (a little bulky). And these: <http://www.parentgiving.com/shop/index.php?productID=563>. Dignity is a very good and highly absorbent brand.

Don't forget the rubber pants!!! These are soft, washable and don't feel "rubbery" at all. They are a life saver. <http://www.parentgiving.com/shop/index.php?productID=853>.

When one first starts cross country flying, it may seem logical to

drink 2-3 liters before flying and carry with you another gallon to chug at every opportunity. Most women, however, will not require as much as the prescribed amount for men. The most absorption you can hope for even with the diapers and two booster pads is about 2.5 liters.

One other observation of an accomplished cross country female pilot, is that through much research she found that our kidneys will process fluid as fast as we put fluid in up to a maximum of about a liters per hour for healthy kidneys. We can't "get ahead" by drinking excess amounts of water. Staying hydrated the night before and the morning of your flight to avoid dehydration is sufficient. She slows down to around 400-500 mls of water or sports drink (the equivalent of one bottle of water per hour) the last couple of hours before she launches to maintain a healthy level of hydration rather than drink (and pee) more than necessary.

A point of interest is to avoid beverages with caffeine. These will dehydrate the body. Our gold medalist, Sarah Arnold believes that she makes more tactical errors in contest flying in the last third of the flight. She attributes this to low blood sugar. So, to keep her mind functioning optimally she now makes herself eat an energy bar within the first third of the flight maintaining optimal brain function throughout the task.

It stands to reason that each of us will have personal modifications of each of these flight urination solutions. After all, each of us has a different face, I assume we each have a different bottom as well capable or incapable of utilizing the devices and systems recommended here. Your significant other, who has always wanted to go on a cross-country flight with you may appreciate your empathy and concern by mentioning some of these solutions for her comfort level. We all share the dreaded wet diaper/parachute discomfort and embarrassment. So, if you devise a marketable improvement for the rest of us, please share your experiences. Some of us are too shy to ask!

Blue skies,
Lynda LaBerge

Highest International Honor for Sarah Arnold



On March 8, WSPA was informed that Sarah Arnold was awarded the highest international award for a woman gliderpilot, the Pelagia Majewska Medal, for her remarkable career in soaring and her service for the sport..

This award was created in 1989 by the FAI in memory of the outstanding Polish pilot, Pelagia Majewska who lost her life in an airplane accident in 1988. The Medal is offered to the FAI

by Aero Club of Poland and may be awarded annually when a worthy recipient is nominated. In the 36 years of this prestigious award, only 20 women received the honor.



Seminar from page 3)

WSPA 2026 SEMINAR HOTELS
WALLER, TEXAS
(All serve breakfasts)

Comfort Inn and Suites 39502 US Hwy 290 Waller, Texas 77484 936-372-5854	\$91-93
Holiday Inn Express Suites. FM 2920 , Waller, Texas 77484 936-372-3700	\$93.00
Best Western Plus 19720 Stokes Road, Waller, Tx. 936-372-7570	\$95.00
Americas Best Value Inn & Suites. 19777 Stokes Road, Waller, Tx. 979-826-4200	\$64.00
Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites 35527 US Hwy 290, Waller, Tx 936-310-0501	\$128.00

M-ASA SSA Cross Country Camp , June 28- July 4, 2026

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 ,Cathy Williams clsoar2@gmail.com or Tony Smolder ismolder@att.net with any questions.
Cathy Williams

3rd Women Friendship Meet July 18-25, 2026
at Uebersberg Gliderport, Germany
This now yearly women's gathering in Germany is a highly popular offspring of the 2023 WSPA seminar at the same gliderport, organized by WSPA member Ulrike Franz eule@ulrikefranz.de
Ulrike Franz

Fresh from the Press: Sarah wins another Contest

Sarah, together with Karl Striedieck, won the Sport Class in the Region 5 North contest in Perry, SC flying a Duo Discus.

In the same contest, Katia van Horn finished 12th in the FAI Handicap Class flying a Discus B.

Sarah Arnold will fly in the 2026 WGC

The 40th World Gliding Championships in Open, 20m Multi-seat and 18 m Cashed will take place in Poland this summer. As of now, the following are listed as competitors from the US

18m Class: Sarah Arnold, (Ventus 3E), Sean Fidler (AS33ES)
20m Multi -seat Class: Pete Alexander, Keith Baugh (Arcus).

Please support Sarah. Donations can be made to

WSPA, c/o Margaret Roy,
PO box 1197
Central Islip, NY 11722-0950
Subject line WGC

Membership Update on Web Platform:

The board has recently dedicated funds to help resolve some bugs with our online membership platform. As some members are aware the Join and Renew membership functions on our website **have developed some unstable behavior. I'm working with a developer to fix the issues.** Currently the Join WSPA issues seem to be resolved. We are still working on the issues with the Renew Membership activity from the Your Profile page.

Further, we are starting to look at moving our membership records, join and renew activity to a new platform. We are looking at options that would make membership activities and gift memberships easier to complete and to track for our administration.

For the time being we will remain on our current platform, Paid Membership Pro. Please report any issues to membership@womensoaring.org and thank you for your patience while we work towards a better user experience.

Gail Schipper
Membership



Pat Valdata's new book is out



Famous Woman Glider Pilot

Kalpna Chawla: First Female Astronaut of East Indian Heritage
STS-87 Launched November 19, 1997

By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D., Grit and Lace substack post
<https://GritAndLace.substack.com>



Kalpna, born in India, was always fascinated by aviation. She begged her father to take her to the local airport to watch planes flying. She carefully studied as the aircraft climbed into the sky. As a young Indian woman, Kalpana broke barriers in her home country earning her degree in aeronautical engineering. In 1982, she set off on

her own to the United States to seek more education and opportunity to follow her sky dream.

In 1984, she earned her University of Texas Master's in Aerospace Engineering. In 1988, her doctorate was next earned from the University of Colorado. In 1991, her NASA career began at Ames Research Center. Chawla became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Along the way, Kalpana also earned advanced ratings in airplanes, gliders, seaplanes, with commercial and multi-engine licenses. She was a Certified Flight Instructor for airplanes and gliders. She applied to join our Astronaut Corps.

Kalpna flew twice on Shuttle Columbia first in 1997 and then on the ill-fated Columbia flight in January 2002.

Kalpna died in the tragic Shuttle Columbia accident on February 1, 2003 when the shuttle disintegrated over Texas on landing approach to Florida.

(more information on the Internet)

(Ed. note) In 1997, on a flight to San Francisco, I was seated next to a woman of Indian decent. We never got into a conversation. When shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas and pictures of the 7 astronauts killed were all over the newspapers and TV, I recognized Kapala as the woman who was seated next to me on that flight west.



Hexentreffen (Whitches' Gathering) in Germany,

Jan, 31-Feb.1, 2026 in Germany

(WSPA member Ulrike Frantz, front row, far right)

This annual meeting of German female aviators celebrated its 50th anniversary and honoring Ingrid Blecher, its initiator. In the 1970 Ingrid was one of the dominant women glider pilots in Germany not only in the air but also what she did for women in aviation. She was a competition glider pilot and held several national records.

Ingrid sent HS the following note: *"In 1975, I organized a meeting with*

representatives of the German Aero Club (DAeC), the head organization of all aviation branches in Germany, to petition for women's equal representation in aero sports. I succeeded and therefore, after a second meeting, there was no reason for further meetings anymore.

But the women pilots from the city of Trier considered it a good idea to continue these gatherings and organized further annual meetings. It continued from there on and there were always women aviators in Germany willing to organize the next meetings which now have gone on for 50 years."

These annual weekend meetings are a combination of lectures and just fun get-togethers.

At this year's meeting, Ingrid was honored with the Golden Honorary Plaque of the AEROCLUB|NRW: the association's highest distinction and recognizes outstanding contributions to air sports in North Rhine-Westphalia and beyond .



Nika Cizerl, WSPA member from Slovenia reports



In Slovenia, we have the Slovenian Women Pilots Association, and last year Sonja Stegovec wrote a book to mark the 35th anniversary of the association. In this book, I

found some very interesting photos, showing WSPA members in Slovenia at a meeting in Lesce (2009 Seminar), as well as Slovenian women pilots in Nevada (2010 Seminar).

This year, I organized a meeting in Ptuj, together with two younger colleagues. We had a meeting followed by flying—despite not having the best weather, our strong desire to fly kept us going, and we flew with two ASK-13 gliders using a winch launch, which gave some participants the opportunity to experience this type of takeoff for the first time. We were generously supported by instructors on the ground, who helped us both with flying and winch operations. In the evening, we also had a picnic and spent some enjoyable time together.

I'm truly happy that every year we women pilots come together, reconnect, and share what we genuinely love—flying. These gatherings are always special, as they give us the chance not only to fly, but also to support each other, exchange experiences, and strengthen our passion

for aviation.

This year, from June 5th to 7th, the annual meeting of FEWP (Federation of European Women Pilots) will take place in Celje. This is a gathering of European women pilots that is held every year in a different location.

Regional Hexentreffen in Germany



On February 28, the German State of Baden Wuerttemberg, home State of WSPA member Ulrike Franz, held its own "Hexentreffen" at the Uebersberg gliderport (WSPA seminar 2023). 43 participants, male and female, came to the gathering. One of the featured presentations of the day was a lecture "Insight into a normal day of a woman air traffic controller at Stuttgart Airport" talking about the training and how the flexibility of the job is attractive for women.

The women pilots of Uebersberg are looking forward to this year's (the third) Frauen Freundschafts Fliegen- a spin-off the 2023 WSPA seminar at this gliderport- from July 18-25, 2026

For Sale

This DSK Duster sailplane is looking for a good home. Its builder and current owner is known as "Der Liftmeister" for good reason, but the owner is retiring. Maximum pilot weight 195 lb. It comes with a trailer. And it has been always hangard Location: Shepherdsville, KY. For more information, contact Maggie Hettinger,



WSPA Scholarship Awards 2026

Cathy Keller, WSPA Scholarship Committee

This year, WSPA received 26 soaring scholarship applications for six of our scholarship categories, which is more than ever before, a clear sign that we are getting the word out. The quality of applications made the decisions especially difficult, as all of the applicants demonstrated remarkable dedication and promise. We want to encourage all these extraordinary 2026 scholarship applicants to continue to pursue their soaring goals.

I would like to sincerely thank the scholarship committee Alice Palmer, Elaine Ernewein, and Judith Galbraith, and our Scholarship Director Kristin Farry, for their thoughtful and thorough work in making the selections. From an exceptionally strong pool of candidates, we are happy to congratulate the ten women selected as our 2026 WSPA scholarship recipients:



Ellory Bernard, who flies with the Minnesota Soaring Club, in Stanton MN, is the winner of our Skyghost Scholarship. She volunteers annually at a local Girls-in-Aviation event where girls sit in a glider to obtain a "flight lesson" on how to use the controls. Ellory passed her written FAA Glider Exam last year and is a solo glider student. She is working on achieving her Private Glider Pilot License with the help of this scholarship.



Rachel Consolini, who flies with the Grand Teton Soaring Club in Driggs, ID, is a winner of one of our Mid Kolstad Scholarships. She helped restart the Eastern Idaho chapter of the Ninety-Nines and serves as its Vice-Chairperson. Aviation is a family pursuit for Rachel and she earned her Private Pilot Certificate in powered aircraft in 2023. She plans to pursue her Private Glider add-on rating with the scholarship and continue building her experience in soaring.



Jordan Anna King, who flies with the Greater Houston Soaring Association in Wallis, TX, is a winner of one of our Mid Kolstad Scholarships. She is an active advocate for aviation, volunteering at Girls in Aviation Day and encouraging students who are interested in flying. When Jordan applied for this scholarship, she held a Commercial Pilot certificate in powered aircraft with extensive flight experience and had already begun her journey in gliders, including solo flights, towards her Commercial add-on rating. In late April, she already accomplished the scholarship goal by passing her Commercial Glider Practical Exam. She is now working on becoming a CFIG at her home club.

(Continued on page 9)

One Moment that changed Everything: My Journey into Soaring

By Emily Peelar, Canada

A Life-Changing Moment

All it takes is one moment. A single instant can change the course of your life. For me, that moment arrived in the fall of 2023. I remember hearing the ping of my phone and reading an email that would alter my path forever. As an aerospace engineering student from Ontario, Canada, I knew **little about the sport of soaring, and I certainly didn't anticipate that it would become so significant in my life.**

Discovering Gliding

The University Soaring Society (USS) offered students at Toronto Metropolitan University a unique chance to experience gliding firsthand. This was an opportunity unlike any other, and not long after, I found myself taking to the skies on my first glider flight in October.

First Flight Experience



My first flight

As the tow plane climbed into the blue sky, I recall the instructor in the backseat releasing the rope with a gentle motion, marking the start of our soaring journey. My instructor guided me through each basic maneuver with care. The view of endless farm fields was breathtaking, and the gentle breeze through the small window created a soothing atmosphere. My short time in the air seemed to pass in an instant, and soon we were heading back to the airfield. Climbing out of the cockpit, I was ecstatic—I knew that soaring was something I wanted to pursue.

Training and Learning

Soon after, I was accepted into the USS training program. I began learning basic maneuvers using a flight simulator, meeting weekly with an instructor who guided me through various training modules. At the same time, I completed ground school, which deepened my understanding of the fundamental principles behind flight.

Progress and Milestones

My journey reached new heights in the spring as I began flying gliders at the Toronto Soaring Club. As the days grew longer and summer approached, I anticipated my first solo flight. To prepare, I completed a flight with my instructor remaining silent to test my decision-making skills. Flying from cloud to cloud, I wondered if I had made any mistakes, only to be applauded by my instructor after landing—an experience I will always cherish.

The Solo Flight



Prepping for 1st solo

Although no one told me that July 20, 2024 would be the day I would fly solo, I instinctively sensed it as I drove to the soaring club filled with anticipation. After completing a check-ride, I returned to CONN tower—the trailer where our radio and logbooks are kept—to await my next flight. Soon after, the instructor who had overseen my check-ride instructed me to get in the cockpit: it was time. Settling

into the glider that felt like a second home, I completed my pre-takeoff checks and fastened my straps for the flight ahead. As the instructor lifted my wing and the tow-plane began to move, I was soon airborne. With cumulus clouds still developing, the flight was brief, and before I knew it, I was making my pre-landing checks. I made my radio call and executed the landing circuit as I had many times before. After touching down and rolling to a stop, I was grinning from ear to ear—this was the first flight that was entirely my own.

Celebrating the Achievement

Shortly after, I was congratulated by many of the instructors who had supported me throughout my journey. I savored the moment as I shook their hands and participated in the tradition of soaking the solo pilot. Although I was left chilly and damp, the memory was truly unforgettable.

Continuing the Journey

Going solo was just the beginning of a journey that has already covered many miles. Soon after, I became a licensed pilot and began working towards new milestones, such as earning badges. I also discovered a passion for inspiring others, especially young women interested in aviation. Currently, I serve as President of the University Soaring Society, which allows me to give back to the community that supported me.

Reflections on Soaring

While gliding has given me the chance to soar through the air like a bird, it has provided me with much more. It has given me late nights around a bonfire, sharing stories about flights with fellow enthusiasts. It has blessed me with lifelong memories and places I look forward to visiting. Most importantly, it has equipped me with the tools to chase after my dreams and given me a second family. Without reading that email, this journey might never have begun. All it took was one moment.



Giving my dad his 1st ride in a glider

: see more on Emily on next page

Funnies

Some actual maintenance complains submitted to Qantas. (Pilot marked with P and solution recorded with S)

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside tire

P: Dead bugs on windshield

S: Live bugs on back-order

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear

S: Evidence removed



(Scholarships from page 7)



Refia Gunes, who flies with the Toronto Soaring Club in Southgate, Ontario, is a winner of the Glider Girl Scholarship. An aerospace engineering student, she is deeply involved in her club's operations and helps organize and mentor new students. Refia also supports the broader soaring community through volunteer work at events such as the Ontario Provincial Soaring Contest and outreach programs like Girls Take Flight. She plans to use the scholarship to continue her glider training, working toward her back-seat rating, which is equivalent to a Commercial rating in the US. She is also interested in achieving her C and Bronze badges.



Ashleigh Andrews, from the Hamilton Soaring Club in Hamilton, TX, is one of our Maria Faber Scholarship recipients. She received her Commercial Glider Rating in December, 2025 with the help of a 2024 WSPA Glider Girl Scholarship. She competed in her first contest on an all-female team at the 1-26 Nationals at her home club in Hamilton, TX, earning her Bronze Badge, completing her first solo task, and executing two safe outlandings. After this competition, she earned her SEL add-on rating and is a tow pilot at her club. With the help of this scholarship, Ashleigh will be working on her Silver Badge and furthering her cross-country (XC) experience for contests.



Rita Edris, who flies with the Seattle Glider Council in Ephrata, WA, is one of our Maria Faber Scholarship recipients. She crossed over to soaring after competing in hang-gliding competitions. She holds many national and state feminine soaring records and earned her Gold and Diamond Badge distance portions in 2025. Rita has mentored many other pilots in her club including a past WSPA scholarship recipient, served as the treasurer and bookkeeper of her club

for 20 years and is on their Board. With the help of the WSPA scholarship, her goals are to improve her XC speed and her mountain flying skills, including wave flying. She also plans to set new soaring records in the states of Washington, Idaho, and Montana.



Emily Peelar, who flies with the Toronto Soaring Club in Southgate, Ontario, is a winner of one of our Maria Faber Scholarships. She is an aerospace engineering student at the Toronto Metropolitan University and is VP of Operations and President of the University Soaring Society. She has published articles in *Toronto Life Magazine*, *AOPA*, *Segelfliegen Magazin* and has been on the LoveFly Podcast. Emily achieved the B and C

badges in the summer of 2025. Her goals, with the help of this scholarship, are to earn her Bronze Badge, become a simulator instructor, and train for XC flights in the club's Jantar.



Sophie Cole, flying with the Edmonton Soaring Club in Chipman, Alberta, is one of this year's Monique's Scholarship recipients. She has been soaring for four years, completing her Private Glider License and XC requirements, and has started to fly XC. She achieved her Gold Altitude Gain with a maximum height of 20,000 ft at one of the Cowley Soaring Camps last fall. She studied for her Glider Instructor rating with the club this past winter and plans to achieve a CFG rating.

With the help of this scholarship, Sophie plans to earn her Gold Badge. When the Canadian Soaring Season ends, she is planning a trip to New Zealand to fly at Omarama.



Kathryn Krapes, who flies with the Grand Teton Soaring Club in Driggs, ID, is one of the Monique's Scholarship recipients. As a US Navy pilot, while stationed in different locations, she sought out and trained in the local glider clubs: soloed in Texas, earned her Commercial Rating in Virginia, had her first wave flying and first land out in California, and did some ridge flying in Hawaii. She is the Treasurer and Secretary of her current club. She is

active in the Eastern Idaho 99s, has been involved in community outreach, and encourages girls and women to follow their aviation dreams. With the help of this scholarship, Kathryn plans to earn her CFG rating and instruct in her club.



Isabel Ulland, flying with Hood River Soaring at Hood River, OR, is this year's winner of the Karl Striedieck Competition Scholarship. With the help of a 2024 WSPA Skyghost Scholarship, Isabel earned her Glider Private Glider Rating at age 16. She was awarded the WSPA 2025 Briegleb scholarship to attend the Women's Soaring Seminar at Finger Lakes Soaring.

Last year, Isabel completed her Silver Badge and earned her Gold Altitude Gain. In June of 2025, she entered her first glider race. With the help of this scholarship, Isabel plans to compete in XC soaring contests, so far signing up for a Junior Race in Avenal, CA, and the Region 8 Race in Ephrata, WA. She dreams of gaining the expertise to earn a place on the Junior Racing Team and compete at the Junior Worlds Gliding Championships.

Congratulations to all our WSPA Scholarship recipients and thank you to everyone who applied. We will submit an article with updates on the scholarship recipients in *Soaring* later this summer. I am still in the process of assigning mentors to our 2026 scholarship recipients. If you can volunteer to become a mentor, please email me, Cathy Keller, at scholarships@womensoaring.org. It is very fun and rewarding to help encourage another glider pilot to achieve their goals and very often the scholarship recipient helps inspire the mentor!

If you, or women you know, are interested in WSPA scholarships, please read the information available on the WSPA website at: <https://womensoaring.org/scholarships/>. The deadline for the 2026 Briegleb Scholarship for a student pilot to attend the seminar is May 15, 2026 and the deadline for the 2027 scholarship cycle is March 15, 2027. Be sure and read all requirements for the scholarship you are interested in well ahead of the deadline so you can be sure to meet all prerequisites. Please contact me, Cathy Keller, Scholarship Committee Chair, at scholarships@womensoaring.org, if you have questions about any of the scholarships.

National Soaring Museum moves ahead with Soaring to the Future Campaign



These are exciting times at the National Soaring Museum! Under leadership of NSM's new museum director, Adam Smith, we are re-imagining the museum's exhibits and positioning the NSM for a future as the premier research facility on US soaring history.

For more than 50 years, the NSM, perched atop beautiful and historic Harris Hill in upstate New York, has dedicated itself to preserving the history of motorless flight and honoring soaring legacy. This has resulted in one of the largest collections of historical and vintage gliders and sailplanes, a vast array of artifacts, photographs, letters, interviews, logbooks and many reels of B&W film. Each of them tells a story of innovation, courage, and the pursuit of the skies. It is our goal to ensure that these stories not only endure but continue to inspire in fresh and meaningful ways.

That is why we have embarked on a journey to modernize how this history of soaring is experienced, accessed and shared with a global audience.

Over the coming years, we plan on revitalizing our exhibits with modern, interactive gallery updates that will bring the stories behind our **gliders and the pilots who flew them vividly to life**. In addition, we'll work on **expanding access through careful digitization** of our archives, creating searchable, engaging online experiences available to the global soaring community.

To accomplish this, we launched the *Soaring To The Future* campaign and hope to raise \$500,000 by the end of 2026. We already made significant progress towards this goal by reaching out to generous past donors and other friends of the museum and now ask the larger US soaring community to join our effort and invest in our vision. Why do we ask WSPA members? Because we know you share our love for the spirit of soaring, and care about preserving US soaring history for generations to come. Over the years, WSPA has grown into a forceful organization with strong stewardship for the sport through training, scholarships and an active online support network. Activities that show **commitment to future generations of soaring pilots**. In this, NSM's and WSPA's interests clearly align.



With this joint interest in mind, we ask you to partner with us and donate to our *Soaring To The Future* campaign. Please go to our [Soaring to the Future Campaign Webpage](#) or email info@soaringmuseum.org to donate. While there, you can also find information on Planned Giving through bequests, wills or charitable giving accounts.

Please come and visit the National Soaring Museum, we'll be happy to show you our collection and share our plans. And when in the beautiful Finger Lakes area, stay a while; there is much to do and see! Harris Hill Soaring club is hosting Region 3 contest this summer from July 13 -18, 2026 and on non-flying days, there are hiking trails, waterfalls, beautiful wineries, craft breweries, lakeside towns, good restaurants and more museums! We hope to see you soon at your National Soaring Museum.

Questions about your gift?

*Please contact Adam Smith, Director
director@soaringmuseum.org
(607) 734-3128.*

Payment Options for Future Giving

Checks payable to National Soaring Museum

Credit card donations accepted online at <https://www.soaringmuseum.org/make-a-donation.php>

Donor-advised funds and IRA charitable distributions

Ask us about including NSM in your will or estate plans

Introduction to SOFTE - Simulation-based Online Flight Training Experience

By Elaine, Ernewein

Have you ever found something so amazing that you had to share it with your friends? That is exactly what **happened to me this past winter after taking the SOFTE Webinar course offered by the "Condor Guy" himself, Scott Manley** CFGI. When I told Scott that I was publishing an article on SOFTE for WSPA, he granted his permission to share the links to the [SOFTE Course Resources](#) with WSPA members for free!

The SOFTE Courses will run again in the Fall 2026-27. See [SSA Safety & Training](#) page. In the meantime, SOFTE has been designed and implemented to support self-directed learning so that you can work through the series anytime. Scott highly recommends recruiting and working with a flight training mentor. He also provides a list of equipment, instructions to setup Condor and how to move the files into Condor for your lessons.

SOFTE - Simulation-based Online Flight Training Experience, combines video lessons and demonstrations covering basic flying skills and custom training tasks loaded into the Condor Simulator. The training is very detailed and by using a simulator, you need not feel rushed when making a decision. You can pause the flight and give yourself time to think, take a good look at the instruments or even ask your mentor a question. Then restart the flight with a better understanding of the situation.

One thing that I really liked was that the flight exercises start mid-air, so the focus is the lesson and not the take-off and landing.

Three members of our club took the course this winter: An instructor, a recently soloed student and me. We were so impressed that our club applied for a grant and bought a Simulator to make SOFTE part of our student training. The SOFTE program is provided in two parts with a total of 35 lessons covering everything from Speed Control to Ridge Soaring.

SOFTE is a fabulous tool that can enhance student practice and help experienced pilots sharpen their skills.

Scott wants you to know that you can contact him anytime via email for registration and information on SOFTE. smanley@wisc.edu

I would like to thank Scott Manley for offering this wonderful resource to our WSPA membership. Members can contact me if you have any questions. ~ [Elaine Ernewein](#) ernewein@execulink.com

[SSA Course Description](#) <https://www.ssa.org/simulation-based-online-flight-training-experience-softe-2/>

Click to visit Scott's Online [SOFTE Resources for the Course](#) Course Topics [PART 1](#) and [PART 2](#)

Artemis II

Congratulations to Christina Koch, becoming the first woman ever flying in outer space.. She had never flown any plane before she became an astronaut. Before the Artemis II mission she spent a long time on the International Space Station.

Listen to the following podcast

nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/ep420-artemis-ii-astronauts.mp3

This is an interview with the four Artemis crew members shortly after they were selected for this historic flight. When you want to listen only **to Christina's part of the interview pull the time slider to 44:04.**

Maybe this will encourage a young person (female) to follow his/her dreams.



Next Hangar Soaring deadline: July 31, 2016

Membership Dues Structure

[WSPA Membership Application & Renew](#)

WSPA ANNUAL DUES

Full Members & Associate Members (Mail In, Zelle) \$25.00
Full Members & Associate Members (PayPal) \$28.00
Youth Members (Under 19) (Mail In, Zelle) \$10.00
Youth Members (under 19) (PayPal) \$11.00
Life Members (Mail In, Zelle) \$350.00
Life Members (PayPal) \$365.00

WRITING A CHECK TO WSPA

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.

MAILING A CHECK OR DOCUMENT TO WSPA

Send correspondence to:

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