

CONVECTOR

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photo by Fred Mueller

NEWSLETTER OF
THE MID-ATLANTIC SOARING ASSOCIATION

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Letter of Agreement with the Potomac TRACON

By Rick Fuller

Undoubtedly you've seen the heavy metal people movers descending from north to south over Frederick on their way into Washington Dulles airport. Airliners depart MULRR intersection near Thurmont between 8000 and 10,000 feet, switch from New York center to Potomac Approach and are typically given radar vectors to their final approach course for runways 01 and 19 at IAD. Other low altitude airways cross Frederick serving the Baltimore-Washington Airport. Minimum enroute altitudes for these legs are as low as 3800 feet over Frederick. Add this mix the busy VFR traffic in the vicinity of FDK and it can be a crowded sky.

In 2007, The Region IV Director Jim Kellett asked M-ASA if the club was interested in establishing unique glider Mode 3/A transponder codes with the Potomac Consolidated TRACON (PCT). Renewed interest in the topic of using transponders in gliders was generated by the mid-air collision between an ASW-27 and a Hawker business jet near Reno, Nevada, in 2006. Fortunately, all pilots and passengers survived, but it clearly had the potential for a disastrous outcome.

The new TRACON has responsibility for arrival and departures from Washington Dulles, Reagan National, Baltimore-Washington, Andrews AFB, and Richmond, the fourth busiest airspace in the U.S. With more and more aircraft



The new Potomac Consolidated TRACON showing the central Operations Manager workstations and Air Traffic Controller positions in the background of the circular floor plan.

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sharing the shrinking Class E airspace in the mid-Atlantic region, the opportunity to increase the safety of flight for gliders operating from our two airfields was a classic “no-brainer”.

M-ASA formed a small group to establish the M-ASA position regarding the use of transponders in the club and to evaluate a draft Letter of Agreement offered by the Potomac TRACON. Glenn Collins, Dan Morris, Todd Wichman and Rick Fuller used the first draft to establish our position and, if necessary, to “dig in our heels” to counter any new rules the FAA may impose that might limit our flying.



Dan Morris, Glenn Collins, Rick Fuller and Mike Foster of the Potomac Consolidated TRACON compare M-ASA flying areas to the TRACON's area of responsibility at the 20 January meeting in Vint Hill, Virginia.

The “see and avoid” principal is the glider pilot’s primary method (and often the only method) for maintaining separation between aircraft. Expansion of “no fly” areas (e.g. the DC ADIZ, the P-40 TFR) and increased air traffic means that at some point in the future “see and avoid” will no longer play a viable role in air traffic control, even in Class E airspace. Hopefully this point is dozens of years away. It will be a long slow transition to new technologies such as ADS-B and probably longer for the avionics industry to adapt similar technologies for the glider community. However long that transition takes, M-ASA intends to stay out ahead of the issues and any FAA rulemaking that may impact soaring.

For any pilot considering installation of a Mode 3/A transponder, there is an article by Eric Greenwell entitled “A Guide to Transponders in Sailplanes” on the Soaring Safety Foundation web site at <http://www.soaringsafety.org/prevention/transponders.pdf>. The article covers recent developments in avionics, encoders, antennas, batteries, installation guidelines as well as alternatives to transponders.

With the M-ASA consensus set, the “transponder group” iterated seven drafts of the LOA with Fred Ninger, TRACON Support Specialist for Procedures, who was very cooperative and eager to educate his Controllers about our style of flight operations. At a meeting at the TRACON’s new facility in Vint Hill, Virginia, with Jim Kellett, the M-ASA transponder group and Fred Ninger, we agreed that this would be the first in a series of initiatives to reduce the likelihood of mid-air collisions between M-ASA aircraft and other aircraft in the Potomac region. Glenn Collins presented a brief on M-ASA’s glider operations and Fred Ninger gave the group a tour of the facility that included an informative discussion with the TRACON’s Operations Manager in Charge. The letter was signed on 15 February and will be effective on 14 March. This is only the second such agreement in the U.S. The high points of the letter include:

- Use of transponder code 1230 for all M-ASA transponder-equipped gliders operating from FDK or W73.
- Use of transponder code 0130 for tow planes operating within 10 nm of FDK. The discrete squawk will alert the TRACON controllers that there are gliders operating in the vicinity.
- Because of our TFR waiver at Fairfield, tow planes operating from W73 will squawk 1200 for VFR flights or the ATC-assigned transponder code during TFR operations.
- During glider events, these procedures may be extended to non-M-ASA event participants.
- The M-ASA Operations Director will notify the TRACON Operations Manager in Charge and advise him/her of the expected start/stop

times, approximate number of gliders, and area(s) of planned operations.

- In-flight pilot communications to the TRACON is encouraged to communicate location and extent of glider operations.
- Notes to educate the PCT Controllers describing the areas in which M-ASA pilots fly and the uniqueness of our operations.

The full Letter of Agreement is posted on the M-ASA web site. We will review this further at the Annual Safety Meeting and listen to the TRACON’s procedures when advised that gliders are airborne.

From the Board

by Mike Higgins

501(c)(3) Ballot. A ballot is now before the membership that will lead to changing our corporation from a non-profit social club status to a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization. Other soaring clubs have successfully done this in recent years. The key advantage of the switch is to allow individuals to make tax-deductible donations to the organization (gilders, equipment, ..., valued at the current market price). As I see it, the switch will have a very minimal impact on how we operate. To meet the intent of the charter, we must focus on promoting and advancing the sport of soaring, and educating our members and the public on the art and science of soaring. This is a large part of what we do every weekend.

So, is there a potential down side to this corporate status change? The only controversial item appears to be: if M-ASA is ever dissolved, the net assets (those left over after all the bills are paid) must transfer to another IRS-approval charitable organization (another 501(c)(3) soaring club, or the SSA, or...). To me, this is a reasonable requirement and, in fact, might be the best strategy should M-ASA ever cease to exist.

Voting "yes" on the ballot authorizes the club's Directors and Officers to proceed down the path toward the corporate change. It does not make the change itself. For the change to happen, the State of Maryland and the IRS must approve the revised bylaws/charter. If we vote to proceed, the Officers and Directors will continue to critically evaluate the situation during the application process, and if anything appears that might change our understanding of a 501C3 soaring club, we will stop the process and come back to the membership for discussion.

Transponders. M-ASA now has signed Letter-of-Agreement (LOA) with Potomac Tracon/FAA that assigns a special transponder code to M-ASA gliders (at both op sites), and to FDK towplanes. Rick Fuller, assisted by Glenn Collins, Dan Morris, and Todd Wichman, negotiated the letter with the FAA over the past few months. The intent is to give the Potomac controllers better visibility and awareness of gliders in our busy operating area, helping to avoid mid-air conflicts. Beginning March 14th, gliders operating from Frederick and Fairfield will squawk 1230. The FDK tugs will squawk 0130. And the Fairfield tugs will remain on 1200 or the TFR waiver assigned code. We'll talk more about this at the annual meeting. Thanks to Rick and his team for making this happen. I'm pleased that we have a good working relationship with the FAA with the common goal to reduce collision risk in our airspace. And over time, this LOA might well evolve into a nationwide unique code for gliders, which would be a very positive move for the glider community.

Of course, having the special glider transponder code is great, but the fact is we have very few transponders installed in gliders at M-ASA. To help correct that situation, last month the Board voted to go ahead and install a Mode-C transponder in the Grob Twin Astir based at FDK. This will be a trial program. We'll review how it goes after a year of operation and then consider if we should install transponders in other club gliders. When the Grob TA is above FDK this season, it will be advertising to Potomac Tracon and the passing commercial traffic that we're here and flying.

The start of the soaring season is fast approaching and a lot of other work is also underway to prepare the fleet.

Towplanes. The two Pawnees currently based at Fairfield (58L and 99Z) are being annualled now. 99Z is about done as I write this, and 58L should start the process this coming week. Both are expected to be ready for action by March 15. The Frederick Super Cub will be annualled over the next few weeks, and some fabric repair work done as well. The Frederick Pawnee (09P), however, needs some significant and necessary improvements/repairs, to be completed over the next few weeks, and might or might not be available by March 15. (The jobs for 09P include repairing or replacing a contaminated fuel tank, adjusting the control cables, and refinishing the landing gear). Dave Schober is doing both the Pawnee and Super Cub work and annuals in-house at FDK. If we find ourselves short of a towplane at FDK when the season starts, we'll move one of the Fairfield Pawnees down to help out.

Gliders. A lot of work has been done on the club glider fleet this winter and work will continue into the spring. The FDK Grob TA

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had the gear repaired late last year, and more recently the seats have been reupholstered. And as mentioned above, a transponder will be installed in the TA this spring. New interior cockpit side panels are being installed in the FDK 2-33. The Fairfield 2-33 now has a repaired and recovered elevator and rudder. The K-8 now has new seatbelts, and soon a new vario. The 1-36 trailer has been completely overhauled (new paint/tires/lights). The Pilatus B-4 will have its new Microair radio installed in the next few weeks. And finally, the project 2-33 overhaul is showing good progress – the wings have been repaired and are going to the paint shop this week, the fuselage is now ready for fabric, a new Microair radio will be installed, and we should see the “as-new” ship reassembled again in a month or so. Thanks to all the club members who have put their valuable time into these various projects.

Private Glider Insurance. Please remember that starting on 15 March all private gliders operating at M-ASA (launching with M-ASA towplanes) must carry liability insurance. This policy decision was made last year, with the effective date being the start of the 2008 season. The policy is documented with a revision of the club’s Operation Manual (Section 9), which can be downloaded from the M-ASA website. (If you can’t download this document, we’ll have some copies available at the annual meeting.) Also note that there is some new language concerning hangar leases in Section 8.

Annual Meeting. The club’s annual meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 14th, starting at 7:30pm. The location is the same as last year – the Lynnfield Event Complex, just off of Rt 15 north of Frederick. This is a mandatory meeting for all members. If you can’t make it that night, you’ll have to arrange to watch a videotape of the meeting at one of the clubhouses prior to flying with the club this season. It should be an interesting evening – we have four speakers arranged to cover the safety side of the agenda (three of our own members, plus Fred Ninger from the FAA to discuss the new transponder code and local airspace issues). I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Regional Ramblings

by Jim Kellett

*Regional Director for Region IV
Soaring Society of America*

“Be A Pilot” at the Udvar-Hazy

“Natalie, Margy” <NatalieM@si.edu>, the Docent Program Manager at the National Air and Space Museum’s Udvar-Hazy Center, once again invites gliders/hang gliders to display their craft at their June 14, 2008 “Be A Pilot” day.

Last year, we had three gliders (Paul Dawson’s G-103, Frank Banas’ LS-4, and the Freytag/Kellett/Garrison ASW-20C) and one motorglider (Jan Scott’s Scheibe SF-25) displayed in a really prime spot - right next to the door where every visitor who left the building to see the fly-in aircraft had to exit.

If you’re interested, applications will be accepted online on the web www.nasm.si.edu/becomeapilot <<http://www.nasm.si.edu/becomeapilot>>

*—Luck will do for skill, but not consistently
unknown*

Task Day

by Chris O'Callaghan (OC)



Racing officially resumes on Saturday March 15th. I am currently revamping the Task Day site, but the CD list is already up for March, and I'll have all other items resolved before posting the first scores on Thursday, March 20th.

Because we've received so much positive feedback on Grand Prix tasking, we are going to add GP to our standard tasking options of AST, MAT, and TAT. CDs may now use the GP anytime they like. I will add a few paragraphs to the Task Day Rules to further clarify the intent and scoring of the GP. They will be based on the following observations:

Start: We will use start line rather than a cylinder. The line will be two miles long, centered on the start point at Fairfield or Gettysburg Airports and oriented perpendicular to the first leg of the task.

The CD will assign a start time based on predicted weather and with sufficient time to allow all participating pilots to stage themselves in close proximity to the start line at 5,000 feet AGL or at the top of lift, whichever is lower.

We will use a staggered start based on pilot Category. Category 3 and higher (or uncategorized) pilots will start at the assigned time. Category 2 pilots will start 5 minutes after the assigned start time, and Category 1 pilots will start 10 minutes after the assigned start time.

Course: The course shall be no less than 70 and no more than 110 statute miles. CDs should plan the course and distance so that the winning pilot crosses the finish line 1 hour and 45 minutes after the assigned start time. Turn points will use 1-mile radius cylinders; however, only one data point within each cylinder is required. All legs will be measured to the turnpoint itself to determine average speed for the task. The CD shall assign no less than 2 and no more than 5 turnpoints.

Scoring: Each pilot's speed shall be based on the elapsed time between the assigned start time and piercing the finish cylinder, divided by the glider's handicap factor. Pilots who start earlier than the assigned start time (or handicapped time) will be penalized. Starting 1s to 1m early will cost 100 points. Pilots who start more than 1 full minute early will be disqualified from the day's task.

The GP seems especially well suited to weaker days with Cus, where speeds of 40 to 55 mph are likely over a short course. Keep this in mind when choosing among task options.

Finally, I'd like to offer some guidance on start cylinder altitude. 5,000 feet AGL is specified as the default maximum start altitude. On several occasions last seasons, CDs wanted to exercise their option to increase the altitude in response to unusually strong conditions. In principle, I am against this. There are two reasons: 1) we often only have one tow plane, and all contestants may not have the opportunity to climb to the new, higher start gate limit prior to gate opening; and 2) because we have the option to start "through the top," raising the gate altitude decreases the impact of a pilot's tactical decision to take advantage of a climb above the start cylinder rather than heading out on course from 5,000 AGL. I am not suggesting we do away with the option. However, keep in mind that the higher the gate, the more luck can influence outcomes, and the more likely that one or more pilots may feel they didn't get a fair chance to start.

Ground School

by Rob Sallada (Skyline Soaring)

Dave Weaver (Skyline Member and M-ASA member) has most graciously offered to provide an extensive ground school for Skyline Soaring (and all other interested persons) What wasn't known until very recently were the logistical details.

To that end:

Place: Heritage Hunt Country Club in Gainesville (the place the Anniversary Party was held in December '06). This location seems to offer a pretty good middle-ground for many members.

Dates:

Sat. March 8th

Sat. March 22nd

Sun. March 23rd

Sat. Mar. 29th

Each session will be, more or less, full day. There is a little 'flex' in this schedule if, for example, the weather for a course day is forecast to be a spectacular wave day.

Note that the date of March 15th was omitted to avoid conflict with the Seymour Course in the Dulles area and those who may want to attend both. Here's a 'take' on the similarities and differences in these two courses. The Seymour course is unquestionably a 'cram' course for the Private Pilot Knowledge Test. I'm told that it 'guarantees' a passing grade and has an excellent track record in achieving that objective.

Dave's course, which he has presented on numerous occasions, also has the Knowledge Test as its primary focus, but goes at it in a much broader way. As Jim said, it's 'learn' vs. 'cram'. So, a secondary purpose is directed at areas that may be discussed in the oral portion of the Practical flight check and as a refresher for stuff the rest of us should know but don't remember.

Even more broadly, Dave's approach lends itself to informal discussion among people of differing experience levels, all flying out of FRR, facilitated by a very respected ex-SSC CFI. I say all levels, because I certainly think it would benefit everyone. I've got dibs on one of the 15 or so seats in the room.

As far as cost goes - this will be close to being the proverbial 'free lunch' (although there may be a small fee to cover food, etc.) However, for those who desire a sign-off for Knowledge Test readiness, there will be several required items which will be promulgated to the attendance roster shortly (since some will need to be ordered very soon), homework assignments, and even a wrap-up test!

Please indicate your interest in attending this course to Dave, david.weaver@pentagon.af.mil or david.weaver@comcast.net, Jim Kellett, jim@kellett.com, and myself, RSallada@aol.com along with your own email address and phone number as soon as possible. March 8th is right around the corner. Details will be sent to the attendance roster.

SSA Eagle Fund Matching Challenge Grant

by *Janine Acee*

SSA Governor, Pennsylvania Region 2

SSA Chair Dianne Black-Nixon announced at the SSA convention general member meeting that she is offering a 'Matching Challenge Grant' for a total of up to \$25,000 for your donations to the SSA Eagle Fund.

How: Mark you tax deductible donation check with 'Matching Challenge Grant' or call the SSA office with your credit card number

Deadline: April 30th

For more information: <http://www.ssa.org/society/eaglefund.asp>

Two-Day Soaring Seminar

When: March 29-30 2008

Where: Ramada Conference Center, 1450 S Atherton St, State College PA

Cost: \$90

Speakers:

Jennifer Branda - Freedom's Wings, Lee Kuhlke - Beginning cross country., Lee Kuhlke - Using a PDA, Richard Kellerman - Weather, Dennise Layton - SSA office, Dianne Black - The future SSA, Dave Pixton - SSA Task Force., Dan Somers, Mark Maughmer - Answers to Your Aerodynamics Questions, Frank Pascale - ELT installations, Mark Keene - Advanced cross country., Dale and Carmen Kramer/ John Good - Surviving an accident., John Murray - Trailer maintenance / ASW-29, Stan Faust - FARs gone wild!, Sponsored by: Knauff and Grove Soaring Supplies

For more information: Email Tom Knauff tknauff@earthlink.net, Web <http://www.eglider.org> (click on "Soaring Seminar" in left column), Phone 814-355-2483

*A PZL-104 Wilga towplane at Lillienthal
Glide, Luesse, Germany 2007*

photo by Fred Mueller



Duty Schedule

by Ray Watson

<i>Date</i>	<i>Field</i>	<i>Operations Director (OD)</i>	<i>Tow Pilot</i>	<i>Assistant Ops Director (AOD)</i>
3/15/08	FDK	Jack Goehring III	Glenn Collins	Erik Nelson
3/15/08	FRF	Rick Fuller	Bob Jackson	
3/16/08	FDK	Bill Whelan	Dick Bernstein	Paul Jessop
3/16/08	FRF	Richard Latoff	Jim Chick	
3/22/08	FDK	Peter Kern	Dee Torgerson	Andreas Schliessler
3/22/08	FRF	Jim Homer	Pete Welles	
3/23/08	FDK	Chris Williams	Dan Morris	Benjamin Mwendwa
3/23/08	FRF	John Mitchell	David Pixton	
3/29/08	FDK	Mark Segall	Lance Nuckolls	Neal Drobenare
3/29/08	FRF	Guy Pfeffermann	Bill Savory	
3/30/08	FDK	Dick Mott	Bill Judge	Jeff Rose
3/30/08	FRF	Manfred Beutgen	Hans Jorgensen	
4/5/08	FDK	Jack Goehring III	Mark Mercer	Steve Bates
4/5/08	FRF	Todd Wichman	Rich Horigan	
4/6/08	FDK	Steve Kidd	Bob Andrew	Nick Costanzo
4/6/08	FRF	John Hearn	Buddy Denham	
4/12/08	FDK	Dan Meyer	Glenn Collins	Jerry White
4/12/08	FRF	Luis Fernandez	Bob Jackson	
4/13/08	FDK	Luis Fernandez	Dick Bernstein	Stanley Faust
4/13/08	FRF	Bob Kryzstan	Jim Chick	
4/19/08	FDK	Gary Cassell	Dee Torgerson	Bob Bigler
4/19/08	FRF	Dave Weaver	Pete Welles	
4/20/08	FDK	Bill Whelan	Dan Morris	Benjamin Mwendwa
4/20/08	FRF	Rick Fuller	David Pixton	
4/26/08	FDK	Bob Ball	Olin Kinney	Andreas Schliessler
4/26/08	FRF	Richard Latoff	Bill Savory	
4/27/08	FDK	Peter Kern	Bill Judge	Jeff Rose
4/27/08	FRF	John Mitchell	Hans Jorgensen	

M-ASA Duty Notes: Members assigned to operations duty must be on site in enough time to start operations by 10:00 a.m. and stay at the field until operations are concluded. Each person listed on the duty roster is responsible for that day's assignment. In the case of "no-shows," the person acting as OD should indicate this fact on the flight sheet. "No-shows" will be fined \$100. Every effort will be made to accommodate the new member's stated duty preference whenever possible. M-ASA Scheduler: Ray Watson 410-484-0333.

FOR SALE: Security Seat Pack Parachute, highest offer over \$650 will take it, free shipping, contact ex-M-ASA member John Brent at 601-796-4932 or jtbrent@bellsouth.net.

FOR SALE: 1/5 memberships offered in '47 Luscombe 8E, all metal, 30 gal fuel, good looking interior, new glass, Cessna seats, GPS, Com+transponder, low-time engine, hydraulic breaks, wheel pants. Based at FDK, well run LLC, 3 year operation. Put the fun back in flying basic stick and rudder, plus tail wheel endorsement. All at a cost that is really affordable. Call me for a demo. Dick Bernstein 240-446-5827

FOR SALE: SGS 1-26B-#338, recent museum quality restoration-Army Air Corp color scheme, with trailer and many accessories. may be one of the best 1-26's around. Located: M-ASA Frederick \$7300 Call Jack Goehring, Cell 703-727-8941, Office 703-821-8222

FOR SALE: Ventus 2b 2001, S/N 111, t approx 425 tt only, ndh, tinted canopy, Filser 5000, 7007 upgrade, Borgelt B40, Becker AR4201 with boom mike, Pegasus compass, Winpilot pda, oxygen fittings, towout gear, Cobra fibreglass trailer with easy rig fittings and heavy duty spec, availability by arrangement. More photos if desired, any inspection welcome, \$95000

Contact George 1-717-642-5018, gdagreen@yahoo.com



See ya later...



Jean Posbic in 2ET flying over Frederick.
photo by Jim Furlong

