

Message to Sky Soaring Membership

June 13, 2022

Dear Sky Soaring Members,

This is an important, and critical, year for Sky Soaring in many ways.

First, this year is the 50th anniversary of our club. Three of our current members were there at the very beginning in 1972 at a small grass strip known as Aavang field. We have grown and prospered since then. And we continue to add new members every year.

Second, we are starting the flying season with a powerful tow plane sporting a freshly overhauled engine. This costly upgrade was made possible through the contributions from the membership and the Club's debt restructuring (also supported by Club members). Thanks to all who supported the Club financially. Also, this year the Club received a beautiful vintage 1-26C donated by Charlie Gries. This gift provides more options for our single seat glider fleet.

Third, we are pleased to announce the lawsuit associated with the Lark accident has been settled. Fortunately, the settlement reached with our insurance company does not directly impact the Club financially. However, there is an indirect financial impact. As a result of this accident, our fleet insurance costs have increased significantly, but remain manageable. Fortunately, the Lark was covered by insurance and Sky Soaring will be receiving \$21,000 for the hull.

Fourth, the Club has worked hard to develop a safe winch launch operation but there are issues with the Sky Soaring airfield which simply cannot be resolved. Field length limits, launch altitudes, and field width with a single runway, limits the pilot's options in an emergency. In addition, use of the winch declined rapidly after its first year of operation. Its use continued to decline prior to the accident. The Board anticipates that use of the winch will likely continue to be low.

With the settlement of the lawsuit the Board has reviewed the issue of the continued use of the winch. While the Lark accident was not directly

attributable to the winch, it was a significant factor in the claims of the lawsuit.

For these and other reasons, the Board has voted unanimously to sell the winch. It is hoped that another soaring operation, with a more suitable environment, can more effectively use this launch system.

Finally, this year the Club now has some new and exciting opportunities:

1. Glider Fleet – We currently own four single place ships and three two place ships. Some are underutilized. Which ships should be kept and which sold?
2. Tow Plane – Our operation's life blood is the tow plane. Should funds be used to buy a second tow plane?
3. Modern Gliders – For many years the ageing status of our glider fleet has been discussed. There is clearly a need to modernize our fleet. Should we sell some of the old glider fleet and buy a high performance two-place glass ship (ASK 21 or Grob G 103A)? If so, how do we store it?
4. Hanger Storage – Should the Club revisit the possibility of building an additional hanger or expand the current hanger? Would members with private ships invest in additional hanger storage?

The Board is forming a “working group” to consider these issues. Input from members is certainly welcomed.

What this all means to us is that Sky Soaring is entering a “new era” starting on this 50th year. The primary focus of this new era must be safety above all. All eyes are on us to remain a healthy, viable, organization and safety is the most important element for our next 50 years.

We firmly feel that this is a great time to be a member of Sky Soaring and it is a truly pivotal year for everyone.

Have fun! Stay Safe!

Sky Soaring Board of Directors