

Chicago Land Glider Council James S. Barna Memorial Scholarship Application

Name: Logan Weck

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Soaring Location: Sky Soaring (55LL)

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What Soaring Means to Me

Soaring to me, encompasses many elements that provide great enjoyment and satisfaction. I have been fortunate to experience many of these joys first hand, but others can only be imagined, and hopefully one day accomplished. Activities such as giving rides to friends, attempting long distance flights, and getting checked out in new and high performance sailplanes has captivated my interest and time for this past 2003 soaring season. Each season I try to build on what I left off on the previous season. This year I plan to continue attempting cross-country flights. Additionally, I will serve the club this year as a tow pilot, and toward the end of the season as a CFIG. I am sure each glider pilot has their own personal reason for flying, and what it is that keeps them coming to the airport every weekend.

My reason for flying extends back beyond my memory. I don't know of a time when I wasn't completely engrossed in aviation. It is really a part of who I am. Much of my childhood was spent at airports, air shows, and of course in airplanes. Soaring provided me a way to learn how to fly at an early age, and taught me many of the finer facets of airmanship, long forgotten in other aviation communities. It basically laid the groundwork for my aviation goals and career. At the same time, I was having a lot of fun. Early solo flights were exciting and pure bliss. Even making turns and climbs were a renewed discovery, because I was the one in complete control. I often look back on those early flights and remember how I felt, the way the cockpit smelled, and the view of the Northern Illinois countryside lazily rolling under the crazed canopy of the Schweizer 2-33.

Of course many are attracted to the sport, but something must keep people returning to the airport. For some it could be for social reasons. For others, they never tire of 20 minute flights around the airport. And maybe some like the science and art required to succeed. I am attracted to the challenge. No matter what ones experience level is, challenge can be found. Whether it's predicting the best entry to a mountain wave, or learning the finer points of aero-tow, there is challenge. As I mentioned before, cross-country flying is my challenge, and this season I plan to answer to the test of endurance. It never fails to amaze me how far a sailplane can actually go. After my first relatively short attempt from Sky Soaring to Dacy Airport, I didn't realize how far I'd come, until the aero-tow home. To be able to harness nature's forces, and convert that into distance is a continual battle and victory fought only by the sailplane pilot.

Soaring provides freedom like nothing else I have ever known. Being able to choose where you want to go with a minor movement of ones hand, effortlessly changes the craft's direction within its three dimensional realm. I remember zooming around at cloud base when the cumulus clouds were lit up so brilliantly white against the deep blue sky on a late spring day and the visibility is unlimited. The thermals are picking pieces of debris from the ground. I am looking down on airliners headed into O' Hare airport. The sound of wind rushing a few inches away from my ears is the only sound I hear because I have turned off my radio, and audio vario to get back to the basics, and lift is everywhere anyway. I can smell my own sweat, and as a result I'm a little lethargic and euphoric from dehydration and the heat. And below me are all of the sailplanes based at Sky Soaring capitalizing on the late May lift. These memories I cherish dearly and will carry to the grave. This is why I soar.

CFIG Recommendation

To the James S. Barna Scholarship Committee,

I have mentored Logan for the past few years and watched him go from zero time to his current status as a rated pilot. He has amazed me by his ability to set specific goals for himself and achieve those goals in a very short period of time.

Four years ago he was basically at zero time. I began flying with him at Hinckley and he soloed a 2-33 on his fourteenth birthday. Two years later, on his 16th birthday, he passed his Private Glider checkride in the afternoon and then soloed a Cessna 172 that evening. On his 17th birthday, he passed his Private Pilot Power checkride. A few days later, he started working on his Instrument Rating at American Flyers. Within five and one half weeks, he had completed the course and was Instrument Rated. He was able to pay for the Instrument Rating by working as a bank teller, in a carpet warehouse, mowing lawns, and cleaning pools for the past two years.

In this period of time, he has gotten checked out in the SGS 2-33, SGS 1-26, SGS 1-34, Blanik L-13, Blanik L-23, Krosno KR-3, Laister Nugget, Cessna 150, Cessna 172, and Aeronca Chief. He has a tailwheel endorsement and recently passed the Commercial Written test. He has accumulated 124 glider flights and a little over 305 hours of total flight time. He has received the A,B,C, and Bronze Badges.

Logan's immediate plans for this soaring season are to get checked out as a towpilot and to complete his Commercial and CFIG ratings as well as fly a few more cross-country flights.

As you can see by his accomplishments, Logan is very motivated and very involved in his pursuit of aviation. I think that he would be a very good candidate for receiving the James S. Barna Scholarship to help him achieve these additional goals. I may be a little biased, as I am also his very proud father besides being his CFIG/CFI.

Sincerely,
Geoff Weck