

What Soaring Means to Me

By Trace Lewis

"When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward for there you have been, and there you will always long to return."
-Leonardo De Vinci-

That's what soaring means to me. I get goose bumps every time I read that because it relates so well to the obsession I have with soaring and aviation in general.

My aviation life first started in the fall of 1993 when I was only 2 years old. I was first introduced to soaring in the backseat of a Blanik L-23 with my dad at the controls. I vividly remember the thrill I had 12 years ago as the loud noises of the ground slipped away and was replaced by the soothing sound of air over our wings. Although I could only see out of the cockpit during turns, I was thrilled. Since then I have acquired 20 some hours in sailplanes with my dad (Curt Lewis) as my CFIG in various types of sailplanes.

My biggest moment in aviation so far, is definitely my first glider solo which took place on my 14th birthday (11/28/04) at the Hinckley airport aboard the Windy City Soaring SGS 2-33 registered 3613F. (This also happened to be the last operational day of the club's season.) Now I am in pursuit of a Private Glider License and hope to become a CFIG and/or towpilot for WCSA sometime down the road.



First few seconds airborne on my first solo

This summer, I hope to achieve my B, C, Bronze and Silver badges in my dad's Blanik L33 Solo. My dad and I have been doing cross country flying together in the club ASK-21 for a few years now. It takes a lot of skill to keep a sailplane in the air and travel/race cross country. That challenge makes it a great sport. I hope to eventually compete in the Blanik L33 with my dad (flying his Genesis 2) around the country as well as locally in the NISC program.

On top of my soaring experiences, I am working on my Instrument rating now in a Cessna 172 at Poplar Grove Airport. I have now logged around 30 hours power time. I plan on getting my Private Glider License, Student Power License and Drivers License (least important) on my 16th birthday. (I have many



Plotting an IFR XC with CFII Vince

friends that are waiting for me to turn 16 so they can have their glider rides.) I also plan to get my Private Power license on my 17th birthday with an Instrument Rating later that year. I want to fly powered aircraft for transportation purposes or glider towing and hope to go to an aviation college to become an airline or corporate pilot. I will need money to fly gliders more often and the airlines seem to be a good way to go!

As of right now, my parents pay for half of all my flying expenses except club dues (which they pay all of). In order for me to fund the other half, I have a few ways of making flight lesson money. A lawn mowing job in the summer helps a little, but that's no fun compared to the other income source. Whenever my dad goes to competitions, I take 10-12 rolls of film using a 35mm camera. Then I have my mom run me to the 1-hour photo to get the film developed and printed to sell back to the pilots for a profit. For some extra income, the really good pictures I put on my online store called, "I Want to Fly". (www.cafepress.com/iwanttofly)

While not working to earn flight funds, I have learned a lot from a real life racing substitute. I often compete in online sailplane races with a group called "SOAR". (www.virtualsoaring.org) We use Microsoft's line of Flight Simulators and have scale



races with a start, task and finish. Using a model of the Cambridge GPS datalogger system, I can review my .IGC files in a viewer like SeeYou. I finished 2nd in a group of 33 virtual pilots from all around the world in a ridge/wave race in the Alps flying an ASW-28. Just recently I won an online race in Tennessee using a DuoDiscus. I also do virtual online pylon racing, but it's not as much fun.

The simulators however, can't reproduce the friendly atmosphere of the airport. I love to volunteer around the club because I get to be a part of this great sport. Another thing I love doing, is not only flying the sailplanes, but sharing them and my knowledge of them with walk on public. Many times I see a couple with a few kids standing around having fun just watching the glider operations. A lot of times I walk over and help them and/or their kids sit in a glider and tell them a little about the glider, the club, and the sport it is based on. A lot of times I take pictures of the whole family around a glider with their camera for a souvenir. Many times, I have seen these families return and a few people have even started their soaring experience from a little 10 minute introduction I gave. The coolest part is that I love doing it all!

I will forever walk the earth with my eyes turned skyward, for there I have been and for there, I will always long to return.

That's what soaring means to me!

2005 James S. Barna Memorial Soaring Youth Scholarship
CFIG Recommendation for Curtis L. Lewis III (Trace) age 14

March 1, 2005

CLGC Board,

Trace is and always has been obsessed with flight and has acquired a broad knowledge of aviation and its history.

He has been involved with soaring since the age of 5, spending weekends at the airport “helping” dad fly his sailplane and occasionally getting a ride himself. After many plane and glider rides, Trace began taking official soaring lessons at the age of 10 when his father (me) became a CFIG specifically to teach him how to soar. Last fall on November 28th (his 14th birthday) Trace became my first student solo sign-off and flew solo for the first time. With over 50 hours of dual instruction (25 glider/25 power), he was very ready.

Trace began power flying lessons also at the age of 10 which allowed him to continue flying in the winter. He is now working on his Instrument Rating skills (seriously). He likes planning and flying instrument flights into larger airports (such as Midway) that require a lot of communication with ATC. He is now very comfortable with navigation and radio communications. (A chief flight instructor speaking before a large group of pilots on radio technique once stated, “Do it like Trace”... he was 12 years old at the time.)

Trace has a competitive spirit and has strong aspirations for racing as well as badge and record flying. He has flown a number of dual soaring cross-country flights and often shows the judgment of a much more experienced pilot. He has a lot of contest exposure crewing and photographing regional and national level events and has acquired a great deal of knowledge as a result. All of this will make him a racing cross-country pilot very soon.

He plans to be a corporate or commercial airline pilot but wants to be a glider pilot and a tow pilot first. I am sure he will do well in all of his flying endeavors.

In recognition of his flying efforts and accomplishments to date, I would like to provide my strongest recommendation for Trace in choosing the recipient of the 2005 James S. Barna Memorial Soaring Youth Scholarship.

Thank you,

Curt L Lewis Jr.

Curt Lewis – 95
ASEL/CFIG