

# Airworthy

The Most Widely Read Soaring Newsletter in Elbert County

24566 David C. Johnson Loop  
Elbert, CO 80106



Volume 36 Number 4

April 2024

Club Web Page: [SoarBFSS.org](http://SoarBFSS.org)

Airworthy Archive: [SoarBFSS.org/Airworthy](http://SoarBFSS.org/Airworthy)

Facebook Group Page: [BFSS Member Only Page](#)

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Kelly AWOS Cam: [Weather Cams](#)

## FROM THE EDITOR

In Denver, the average snowfall in March is 11.4 inches and in April is 8.9 inches according to the National Weather Service. So it was really no surprise that the Front Range was the recipient of a major storm on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Kelly got between 1.5 feet and 2.0 feet unofficially. And we still have to get through April.

Please attend the club Safety Meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 AM in the clubhouse. Time to get some rust off and review safety topics. There will be a potluck after.

I had the opportunity this month to accompany **John Gillis** to Tennessee to pick up his JS-3 RES. What a ship! Check out the stories below.

This being April, there are a couple of Easter eggs within. See if you can find them.

Mark Palmer, Editor



*Thin Black Line. Kelly after the storm. 3/18/24  
Photo by Stan Bissell*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Becky Kinder

### Obligations and Unsung Heroes: "Volunteerism" in BFSS

Your Board of Directors' primary role is to keep the club running legally, which subsumes safety, financial obligations, and preserving the club while fulfilling our obligations as a 501c3 organization. It's a lot like playing a resource management game, but with real world liabilities and challenges. Behind the scenes, the Board deals with insurance and budgets, personnel conflicts, and neighbor complaints. It's more visible when we get to lead on something fun, such as purchasing a new towplane or establishing a scholarship.

We have a club of leaders. Pilots must be decisive and confident, but we train for situational awareness and must account for the potential actions of others. Those same skills make for a strong club. The club's toughest jobs require time, skill, and diplomacy patiently applied while looking at the interests of the entire membership. We have some terrific examples.

**Frank DeBacker** and **Gary Baker** have quietly handled major building projects such as the installation of new windows, remodeling, and repairs throughout the clubhouse.

Our Membership Committee (**Stan and Kaite Bissell, Deb Ings, Brandon Kolk, and Brian Price**) stands on the shoulders of YEARS of efforts by **Brandon Kolk, Zolt Silberer,** and others. Each brings unique perspectives and talents to the tasks at hand, communicating effectively with the Board, aware of the surprisingly strong interconnectivity among all club elements.

**Brandon Kolk**, also our newest CFI-G and former member of the Board, is currently working through the process of getting the pergola through the KAP Design and Review Committee. Like so many projects, it sounded simple, but has required an enormous amount of behind the scenes effort. It has gone slowly because it involves other people and organizations; Brandon is first a father and husband, businessman, and instructor.

Some of our framework comes from "stealth" efforts faithfully executed for years. **Dave Leonard** constantly provides us with fabulous weather resources. **Bill Gerblick** maintains the towplanes, recruits and screens prospective towpilots, and assists **Doug Curry**; he's also usually our hangar door repairman.

I hear occasional complaints about projects we all generally want that haven't been accomplished. There were many before I joined the club that still await someone willing to commit the time and energy to accomplish them. We need leaders committed to following through with projects, patiently integrating those efforts into their other ventures while playing well with others. If this is you, please consider stepping up.

Lift & blessings!  
Becky



*Curtain ladies – Shari and Aida Hughes installed new curtains in the clubhouse. THANK YOU!*

## CALENDAR

### Board of Directors Meetings

**April 9, 2024 6:30 – 9:00**

Via Zoom

**April 23, 2024 6:30 – 9:00**

Via Zoom

### Safety Meeting

**April 6, 2024 9:00 AM**

Discussion of safety issues followed by a potluck. Please attend!

### BFSS Annual Membership Meeting

**May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Elections and more, followed by a potluck

### Women's Cross Country Camp

**June 30 – July 5, 2024**

Moriarty, NM

### Kelly Airpark Annual Fly-In Pancake Breakfast

**July 6, 2024**

7:00 to 11:00 am

**Women's Soaring Seminar**  
**July 22 – 26, 2024**  
Yoder, KS

**1-26 Championships**  
**July 31 – August 8, 2024**  
Hamilton, TX

**Downhill Dash**  
**Summer, 2024**

**BFSS Saturday Potluck Barbeque (after flying)**  
Will begin again in the spring!

**SSA Convention**  
**October 24 – October 26, 2024**  
**FIRC October 22-23, 2024**  
Knoxville, TN

#### **OPS SHEETS**

**Don't Forget:** After you have finished flying, be sure to submit your flight information within 24 hours to [Carrie Commerford](#) via the flight ops app. After you submit your flight, if you do not receive a confirmation email, follow up with Carrie to confirm her receipt of the information. **Remember, submitting flight information is your responsibility!** Not only does it help keep the club finances in order, but this is how we track flight time for each club aircraft.



*Must be March...*

## **2024 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MAY 4 by Brian Price**

Mark your calendar for 9:00 AM the morning of Saturday, May 4, for our 2024 Annual Membership Meeting. This year, we are planning to present several graphics that can bring everyone up to speed on where the club's money comes from, and where it is spent each year. We also plan a process to get your thoughts concerning the club's longer-term aspirations and opportunities for steady improvement. All members will be heard, and all questions addressed. We'll follow the meeting with another of our famous potluck lunches!

This year, we have **three openings on the Board of Directors**. Please give thought to placing your name in nomination, or the name of another willing member (candidates must be Regular members). New members as well as veteran members are encouraged to offer their talents and energy to our efforts to move BFSS forward. Please send your nominations or questions to Brian Price, Secretary, at [brianprice47@comcast.net](mailto:brianprice47@comcast.net).

## **DON'T FORGET THE SAFETY MEETING!**

There will be a Spring Safety Meeting at the clubhouse on Saturday morning, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. **Participation is strongly encouraged.** Safety Officer **Todd Hahn** will conduct the meeting with the help of former SO **Mark Palmer**. There will be discussion on flight safety and airspace.

After the meeting, there will be a potluck, so be sure to bring something! Maybe **Clay** will try his mac and cheese again.

WINGS credit will be available for attending the class!

## OPS DUTY CALENDAR

Here is the Ops Duty schedule for April and early May . *[Note: If you have swapped duty dates with someone, please send a note to the editor so we can publish more accurate information. –Ed.]*

Price, Brian	04/05/2024
Crabb, David	04/06/2024
Leonard, David	04/07/2024
Baker, Gary	04/12/2024
<b>VOLUNTEER NEEDED</b>	04/13/2024
Dimick, Scott	04/17/2024
Boerner, Raul	04/19/2024
Silberer, Zsolt	04/20/2024
Gerner, Andy	04/21/2024
Boerner, Raul	04/26/2024
Hahn, Todd	04/27/2024
Hannon, Donald	04/28/2024
Franzmann, Mike	05/03/2024
McClain, Kip	05/04/2024
Hughes, Aida	05/05/2024

### PLEASE REVIEW THE LAUNCH PROCEDURES BEFORE YOUR DUTY DAY!

Every flying member (except tow pilots and instructors on a regular teaching schedule) is on the schedule for line duty. If you are either a pre-solo student or have never performed this duty, Joshua will pair you with someone who has experience. Please check this list carefully to see when you're on duty and if you're working with someone. **Reach out to Joshua if you feel you need to be paired with someone for more training. Be sure to go to the calendar page on the website and put yourself down in the Line Volunteer column for the day you're assigned.**

Remember, if you can't make your duty assignment, you must find a replacement. Once that is done, contact [Joshua Abbe](#) and let him

know so he is aware of the change. Include [Mark Palmer](#) so he can get it in *Airworthy!*

If you see **VOLUNTEER NEEDED** listed on the schedule, that indicates that no one is scheduled for that day and that volunteers are appreciated. Please contact Joshua if you are available.

#### FRIENDLY REMINDER

The spring snow and mud season is here. Please, **DO NOT** drive the golf carts on the grass. Driving on the grass could result in deep ruts and a lot of headaches for the club and airpark users. Also, please be careful of the runway shoulders while the new grass is taking hold.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**John Gillis** – First flight in his JS-3 RES, *Juliet Golf*, at Tullahoma, TN.

**Mia Gonzalez** – Commercial written passed

**Ethan Hitz** – Private power written passed

**Becky Kinder, Chris Dunmall, Chris Hiner, Zach Paluch**– First Flights with **Quay Snyder**

## THANK YOU!

**Alice Palmer** – For removing, repairing, and replacing interior panels in 840 (assisted by **Mark Palmer**)

**Shari and Aida Hughes** – For new curtains in the clubhouse

**Todd and Alex Hahn, Mark Palmer** – For work on the simulator

**Patrick Mendonca, Mark Palmer, Shari Hughes, Chris Hiner** – For extra GOD duty

**Bill Gerblick** – For snow plowing



**Bill Gerblich, Doug Curry, and Roland Laning** – For towplane maintenance

**John Gillis** – For ramp work with his tractor

**Everyone who helped reassemble 77** – See article below.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We introduced **Shari Hughes** last month. Shari and her daughter **Aida** have already been busy selecting and installing curtains for the clubhouse! She's also been active working on ground duty before and after her instructional flights.



*Shari Hughes*

**Chris Hiner** is a new Limited member. He's awaiting an instruction slot, at which time he'll become a Regular member. While he's waiting Chris has been helping on the line and got a flight in with **Quay Snyder** in the ASK-21. He also jumped in to help rig 77!



*Chris Hiner*

**Rich Helmich** is one of our new towpilots and has already towed a few days in between wind and snow. Welcome Rich!



*Rich Helmich, new towpilot*

## ASK-21 IS BACK!

The ASK-21, 77, was returned to the club on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> from its overhaul at Schaeffer Aviation in Williams, CA. Among other things, the horizontal tail and ailerons were repaired, the dive brakes adjusted, the rudder pedal assembly repaired, and the nose was refinished.

On Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, a big crew gathered to reassemble it. Big thanks to **Colin Mead, Doug Houston, Mark Palmer, Todd Hahn, Vitaliy Aksyonov, Brian Price, Harold Wood, Wojtek Tomanek, Chris Hiner, David Crabb, Raul Boerner, and Gary Baker.**



*Prepping the wing pins*

77 is now available for club members to schedule. Reports from the field say she flies great!



*The drag spar pins took a bit of fiddling.  
Photo by Todd Hahn*

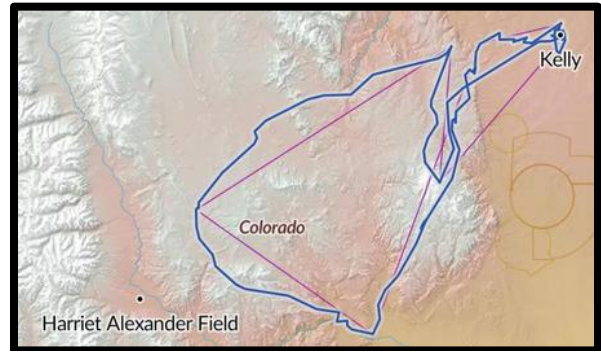
## WEGLIDE COMPETITION THIS SUMMER by Brian Price

**Dave Rolley** and I are planning a 6-week competition among all our pilots, at every level, to encourage safe and experience-appropriate cross-country flying. The idea, which is still germinating, is to set a time period – 6 weeks, probably starting in mid-July – during which our pilots can fly one of three tasks as many times as they wish. Each pilot will post flights in WeGlide, and we'll score them and share them there.

The Racetrack likely will be the shortest task. The Proving Ground triangle, Kelly—Perry Park—Calhan—Kelly, could be the intermediate task. The most challenging task will be devised in consultation with our most experienced pilots, and could be a doozy. We can also incorporate a Downhill Dash into the competition. Pilots can sort themselves into the experience groups they feel best about, or we will get the help of our expert instructors to advise them. The basic idea is like a short OLC competition, using the features of WeGlide.

We expect that every pilot could find several really great flying days during those six weeks.

We have lots of ideas, such as group planning sessions, group analysis of interesting flights, and of course, organized retrieval resources. All ideas are welcome, and we welcome your suggestions to make this a great learning and bonding event.



## SIMULATOR UPDATE by Mark Palmer

Good news! The simulator is back up and running. Many thanks to **Todd** and **Alex Hahn**. After diagnosing the problem with the rudder pedals, it was decided to remove the entire rudder pedal structure. This was replaced by a set of Thrustmaster pedals. You can adjust the distance with the wooden adjustment board behind the pedals. We are now good to go.



*Alex and Todd Hahn tracing connections on the simulator.*



## ARE YOU READY? IS YOUR EQUIPMENT READY?

by Mark Palmer

Soaring season is almost upon us, so it's time to wake up, shake off those cobwebs, and start preparing. This is the time of year where you need to be sure your databases and turnpoints are up to date on your computer. Has your FLARM been updated? Are your various loggers still current? (Check your last recalibration date.) Is your parachute current? Lots of little details to take care of now, so you're not rushed later.



*Remember to download the latest updates!*

## FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION!

by John Gillis

It may seem a bit intimidating to take your brand new, 2.5-year-in-waiting, very expensive glider for your first flight. And I would be lying

if I said I wasn't a wee bit apprehensive. It was also my first solo self-launch and my first flight in an 18-meter ship. I have been checked out in eight different gliders; four were single place. I also did the first flight of my experimental homebuilt Sonex, and of course the single place Pawnee. Flying unfamiliar airplanes solo isn't new to me.

The prep started 18 months ago when I got my self-launch endorsement at Williams Soaring in an ASK-21Mi. About 6 months ago, the JS-3 flight manual and supplemental RES manual were made available to me. Together they are 250 pages. I've read them cover to cover three or four times. I've had over 20 hours of ground school with the JS Agent and CFI **Leo Benetti-Longhini**.



*JS-3 RES panel*

*Photo by Leo Benetti-Longhini*

Weather delays and personal issues pushed the delivery to mid-March 2024. This time **Mark Palmer** and I drove out to Tennessee. We arrived at the airport about two hours before sunset on a Saturday to find JG assembled and sitting on the ramp. Leo wasted no time and had me get in the cockpit and go through a practice launch and actually run the motor. We pulled the wingtips off, put the glider in the hangar and went to the motel. Returning early the next day, we put the batteries on the charger and started going through the airframe systems. After lunch, it was time to fly. We did a tour of the airport via truck to get a lay of the land then towed the glider to one end of the runway.

I found myself at the end of a long runway, with Mark running my wing. I said something to myself I have always said prior to a first flight. "Failure is not an option, hope is not a plan, luck is not a factor."



*Preparing for takeoff*

A quick rescan of the cockpit from left to right, a stir of the controls, and an involuntary wag of the rudder, I dialed in the juice on the controller, releasing a billion angry pixies as they turned the prop on their way out of the batteries. Full back stick to keep the tailwheel on the ground, negative flaps to give aileron control, and we are rolling. Once I had wing control, ease back on the flaps to climb setting and release the stick pressure. She just hovered off the ground. Trim for 60 knots and scan the engine instruments. Monitoring temps is critical, motor, batteries and controller. LXNAV has a dedicated screen on the 9070 giving me the RES metrics, airspeed, and altitude, everything I need during the climbout. At 800 feet AGL, reduce power to 75% and retrim. Scan for traffic, scan instruments, head on a swivel. In the back of the mind, the nattering nabobs of negativity are reminding me to have an emergency plan. They quiet down once I'm 1500 AGL. I pull up the gear. At 3500 AGL, I reduce power to zero and stow the RES, noting the change in trim and airspeed.

Now I'm a glider and the JS-3 reveals itself as probably the finest and easiest I've ever flown.

Even at 18M, it was easy to thermal. Flap adjustment was smooth. It trimmed nicely. Tried some stalls, tight turns, slow flight, fast flight. At 2000 AGL, I relit the RES to climb up to 4500 AGL. Here I found some lift and just floated around, getting comfortable with my new toy. I had used 50% of the battery now and didn't have enough for a relaunch.

I floated around about two miles from the airport waiting for the skydivers to land, then planned my approach. I intentionally came in a bit high on downwind, as Leo told me the airbrakes are very effective and I wanted to experience that. They are. I set flaps, trimmed for a 60-knot approach, and did a wide pattern.

The wind was a bit up, but I was able to keep the wings level through the rollout. I had misjudged the touchdown spot and came up about 100 feet short of the exit ramp. So much for Commercial standards. I hopped out and pushed the glider to the ramp where Leo and Mark met me.

We spent the rest of the day derigging and adjusting the trailer for the drive home. Besides the noise and the systems management, a self-launch is perhaps easier than taking a tow. At least if all systems are nominal.

Mark and I spent two days driving back to Kelly. I still had to plow snow to make room for JG's trailer. It's now rigged and sitting in my hangar, waiting for the right moment to make its local debut.



*JG arrives at its new home.*



## OPERATION RES RETRIEVE, or, CYBER TRUCKS, SMART CARS, ELECTRIC GLIDERS, AND...KANSAS

by Mark Palmer

I had been following the journey of **John Gillis's** JS-3 RES electric self-launcher from the day he ordered it. It had shown up in country late last year, but due to weather and system modifications, it wasn't until early March that it looked like it was ready to go.

It made no sense to me for John to drive two days to Tullahoma, TN (where the ship was located), do a day of checkouts and first flight, and then drive two days back, all by himself. So I held up my hand and volunteered to ride shotgun. Surprisingly, he accepted.

Initially, the trip was scheduled for the second weekend in March, but weather in Tennessee prevented that. So it looked like Friday, March 15 would be our departure date. Of course, Mother Nature had other ideas.

As we all know, a major snowstorm hit the Front Range on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup>. **Alice** and I spent the entire day taking shifts shoveling snow to enable us to get out of the driveway. John couldn't keep up and by the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>, he had two feet of snow and couldn't get out. It was touch-and-go on whether we were leaving or not. Friday mid-morning, the Elbert County snow plow finally came by and he was able to break free. Alice drove me down to Franktown, where we hooked up with John. The two of us headed east late morning. By the time we got to Limon, the snow was gone and we were running free on I-70 eastbound. It was a long afternoon of Kansas. It seemed to go on forever. Because of our late start, we only got to Concordia, MO by 8:30 PM. We had dinner and crashed.



*Kansas*

On the road Saturday morning, we caught up with a car carrier with a couple of Tesla Cybertrucks on it. That helped to break the monotony. Later, we passed a load of Rivians. Electric propulsion seemed to be the theme of the trip. Through St. Louis, then Illinois and Kentucky before we got to TN. CarPlay had us in to Tullahoma early afternoon, but a series of traffic accidents outside of Nashville delayed us. While creeping along in traffic, we actually were passed by a clown bus. Really. A bus for clowns. With all the traffic we didn't get to Tullahoma until around 4:00 PM.



*Clown bus*

Even as we pulled up to the airport gate, we could see JG sitting on the ramp. The Jonkers agent, **Leo Benneti-Longhini**, was there to meet us and Leo didn't give us a moment to relax. Within a few minutes, John was in the cockpit while Leo reviewed systems and procedures. I had the honor of holding down the tail while

John deployed the motor and fired it up. We went well after nightfall as Leo continued to go over details with John. Finally, we had dinner at a local Greek restaurant and then it was to bed. Long day.



*Leo Benneti-Longhini*

The next morning we were there early. Leo showed up towing a trailer with an Alisport Silent 2 – I had mentioned that I was interested in them and Leo is also an Alisport agent. But John was the main focus and I followed along as the batteries were charged, more details on power management systems were discussed, weight and balance spreadsheets reviewed, FLARM was updated and more. I was impressed with the level of detail and engineering that went into the ship. The JS-3 RES is not only a step up in performance but also complexity. There is a reason that Leo’s checkout is so thorough and detailed. This is not a ship you’re going to jump into after 10 hours in the ASW-19 or LS-6. You have to know the systems and you really have to think and plan ahead.

Finally, about noon we did an airport familiarization drive around the field. Then it was show time. We towed JG to the end of Runway 36. John took his time, got everything ready, ran his checklists, and then fired up the RES. I ran his wing and he was off and running. There was a bit of a crosswind, but John handled it without a problem. Leo and I watched him as he lifted off and climbed away.

When he started to disappear into the gray sky, Leo and I went back to the hangar.

We missed John’s landing (my fault – Leo and I were looking over the Silent 2) but got out to the runway and towed him back. John was pleased with his first flight and raved about the handling of the ship. All we had to do now was derig. That took some time as Leo wisely insisted we tweak the Cobra trailer to fit JG correctly. Leo’s knowledge of Cobra trailers is detailed. That took us into the evening again.

The next morning was Monday and we arrived early, hooked up the trailer and started home. But first we had to negotiate Nashville traffic and that took some time. While inching along at one point we were next to a jacked up SmartCar—lifted suspension and big wheels. We weren’t sure what the purpose of that was.

Once free of Nashville we retraced our steps—TN, KY, IL, MO. We drove straight through the maze of St. Louis and Kansas City freeways and stopped west of KC for the night. Then up and running early for the long, final drive to home.

Which meant more Kansas, of course. Hours and hours of Kansas....

But by mid-afternoon we were back at Kelly and Casa Gillis. We parked the trailer and John drove me home. Journey completed. It was a fun trip. John was a great companion. Leo was just fantastic to work with. I was happy we got JG (both of them) home safe and sound. I’m looking forward to witnessing the first flights.



*JS-3s awaiting delivery in Tullahoma, TN.  
JG is assembled and ready for checkout.*



## WEEDS by Jeanne Allen

*[Ed. Note: One of the most beautiful things on our Airpark is the wonderful smooth brome grass you see between the runways, in the common area, and our lots. It has been meticulously nurtured over the 35-plus years here. But to keep it looking good, we need to keep the weeds out. In order to get a jump on the weeds this year, here is a reprint of the August 2018 issue of Airworthy to help us identify the weed species we're dealing with.]*

**Kochia:** CSU Extension fact sheet No. 6.314 says that "Kochia has a shallow taproot and can be easily pulled or hoed out **at early growth stages**. But, if it has already started producing seed, it is best to collect the plants and dispose of them, preventing further soil infestation. Mowing or cutting are limited options and must be timed to prevent the plant from re-growing and producing seed. Kochia will continue to produce seed on branches below mowing levels."



*Kochia*

*[Kochia has especially been problematic on our club lot, so pulling plants as soon as they emerge is the best strategy.]*

**Common Mullein:** Easy to pull before flowering due to shallow taproot. If flowers are present, bag and dispose of plants to prevent spread of seeds.



*Common Mullein*

**Canada Thistle:** Hand-pulling is not an option, but mowing can be effective if done every 10 to 21 days during the growing season. Especially effective combined with fall herbicide treatment.



*Canada Thistle*



**Foxtail Barley:** Shallow-rooted grass that can be pulled.



*Foxtail Barley*

*[Let's all start pulling weeds as we see them appear! This will help us get ahead of the problem before it gets overwhelming.]*

### SHIPS FOR SALE

Have a ship you want to sell? Looking for a partnership? We can list it in *Airworthy*.

**FOR SALE: Ventus bT, \$45,000**

**Dave Rolley 303-809-2785**



### PHOTOS



*Promise of spring to come. Mark Palmer awaits launching in 182, while Tim Krantz and Kathy Peterman land in 840. Photo by Jon Stark*



*Deb Ings checks out the cockpit of her new ride, SGS 1-36, 4N.*



*Alice Palmer prepares for a re-familiarization flight in 9BA.*





*Road Warriors. Photo by Leo Benneti-Longhini*



*Bif also struggled to emerge from the storm.*



*Doug Curry stopped by to observe Bill Gerblick installing the skis on the Pawnee.  
Photo by Roland Laning*



*That's one HEAVY wing! Photo by Todd Hahn*



*Nice attention to detail from the JS folks.*



*The OTHER downside of a lot of snow—MUD!  
Photo by John Gillis*