

WFC Flyer

Bristol Mountain photographed from an Archer II, February 2021 (Ed Ciolkowski)

Important Dates:

Annual Meeting and Elections

February 11, 2021
Hangar 17, KSDC

Board Meeting

March 4, 2021
WFC Clubhouse

General Meeting

March 11, 2021
WFC Clubhouse

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Williamson Flying Club Newsletter

February 2021

From the President's Desk by Randy Christian

This is an exciting time for the membership of the Williamson flying club. It is once again time for the WFC elections. We will be holding elections next Thursday 2/11/21. We had many hurdles to clear in 2020 primarily due to the pandemic. The start of 2021 will be no different, our biggest hurdle in this new year will be holding the election. As stated in our by-laws, the elections must be held at the February membership annual meeting.

You must be in attendance to cast your vote and a quorum of 10% voting-eligible members (active, permanent, and military) must attend in order for the election to proceed. This offers up our latest hurdle, the logistics of managing an annual meeting during the pandemic.

The meeting will take place in hangar 17, known to many members as the former Pace hangar. We will preheat the hangar right up to the start of the meeting and do our best to offer as much comfort as we can. I suggest that everyone dress accordingly and please keep small talk to a minimum so that we execute the meeting as quickly as possible.

Social distancing rules will be followed. This includes chairs arranged with appropriate spacing (please do not move them) and mandatory facemasks during the entirety of the meeting.

We will lay out the agenda before the meeting starts so that everyone has an

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Williamson Flying Club

Williamson-Sodus Airport (KSDC)
5502 State Route 104
Williamson, NY 14589

Find us on the web at:
www.williamsonflyingclub.com

Board of Directors

President:	Randy Christian	Director, 2018:	Dick Swingly
Vice President:	Brad Roehrig	Director, 2019:	Paula Sippel
Treasurer:	Bob Herloski	Director, 2020:	Lesly Jean-Louis
Secretary:	Bob Clark		

Contact: bod@williamsonflyingclub.com

Medical Advisor: Dr. Pam Tarkington

“Finally, I want thank everyone for your help and support during these difficult times as we take on 2021. I wish good health, happiness, and a prosperous 2021 to all!”

Aviation Quote

“I take the paraglider to the mountain or I roll Daisy out of her hangar and I pick the prettiest part of the sky and I melt into the wing and then into the air, till I’m just soul on a sunbeam.”

- Richard Bach
Running from Safety: An Adventure of the Spirit
Daisy is Bach’s Cessna 337

From the President’s Desk by Randy Christian

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understanding of the flow for this unique meeting. A key topic for this will be Bob Herloski’s presentation of the end of year financial report and a budget summary for 2021. This is important information for the membership to see for understanding of the Club’s financial obligations.

As always, your Board of Directors will be happy to answer any questions as time allows. If more time is required, I encourage you to attend an upcoming meeting.

This year’s candidates are: Randy Christian (President), Bob Fratangelo

and Brad Roehrig (Vice-President), Steven Murray (Secretary), Bob Herloski (Treasurer), and Dick Swingly (Director)

Despite the inconvenience of COVID protocols, I encourage you to addend the annual meeting and cast your vote! This is an important part of the operation of our Club.

Finally, I want thank everyone for your help and support during these difficult times as we take on 2021. I wish good health, happiness, and a prosperous 2021 to all!

Blue skies,
Randy

Cool Places To Fly by Chris Houston

Destination: Fulton County Airport, Johnstown, NY (NYO)

Distance: 123 nautical miles, direct

Why it’s Cool:

When I first started flying longer cross country flights circa 2005, I was surprised by the many unique things that could be found at otherwise unassuming little airports. Whether it’s a pilot’s lounge made from a Lockheed Constellation ([Greenwood Lake Airport](#), West Milford, NJ) or a hangar full of demilitarized Bell Cobra attack helicopters (Perry-Foley Airport, Perry, FL), many small airports across the country harbor hidden gems.

Johnstown’s Fulton County Airport, located 25 miles northwest of Albany, is just such a place. At first glance, it is a typical county airport with a single

4,000 asphalt runway (10-28), a self serve fuel pump, and a defunct on-field restaurant. But the name of the FBO is intriguing: The 195 Factory.

Frequent readers know that I have a

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A beautiful polished aluminum Cessna 195 inside the shop



It was a cold wait for a ground loop victim to see the 195 doctor

Cool Places To Fly by Chris Houston

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love of vintage aircraft. While my absolute favorite mid-twentieth century executive airplane is the Beech Model 17 Staggerwing, the Cessna 195 is right up there. Produced from 1947 to 1954, the 195 is a burly, radial engine, conventional geared work of flying art deco elegance. So tightly cowled that bump-outs were required to accommodate the radial engine's valve covers, the 195 epitomizes a 1947 vision of what a rocket ship should look like.

The 195 Factory at Fulton County Airport specializes in 195 restoration. When WFC member Matt Palmer and I visited in January of 2021, there were at least eight examples inside the main hangar in various stages of repair and restoration, including one airframe being rebuilt piece by piece using an original Cessna factory jig. This is tooling that the facility is justifiably proud to possess. At seventy years old, it is a working artifact, a tangible link to the past, and a guarantee that new restorations

will conform to the aircraft's original mid-twentieth century design. In the rear of the shop near equipment for working sheet metal, a large shelf holds original Cessna 195 parts still in their wooden crates and all carefully numbered for reference.

While the shop is well-equipped for rebuilding airframes, general maintenance, and minor engine work — one aircraft was awaiting a new cylinder — complete overhaul jobs are outsourced to Radial Engines Limited in Guthrie, OK. (Small world moment: I bought my airplane in Guthrie.)

While the staff were actively working on various projects, they were friendly and not only willing to let

us look around, but actually provided us with a brief tour. In the end, we tried to stay out of their hair and thanked them profusely for their time before returning to the air.

Our visit to The 195 Factory was a brief diversion on a mission otherwise intended to visit a new place (Fulton County was my 217th air-

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Cessna 195 firewalls are contoured to fit engine accessories



This 195 example had the optional emergency exit



Original Cessna 195 and Jacobs radial components



This example positively gleamed under the shop lights



195 engine mounts are hinged for rear of engine access



This 195 was receiving a firewall-mounted battery



Some 195s were farther along than others



The 195 Factory lobby features vintage Cessna artwork

Cool Places To Fly by Chris Houston

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port visited) and to circulate some warm engine oil on a cold winter day. Not only was the mission accomplished, but The 195 Factory completely exceeded my expectations. It was a genuine pleasure to not only see those vintage works of art, but to visit a place that positively exuded pride in workmanship.

Tips:

- The restaurant that was once open on the airport is no longer in operation.
- If the FBO is locked, the door combination is the UNICOM frequency.
- Self-serve fuel is available, currently priced at \$4.90/gal.

Contribute to the Newsletter!

Do you have anything that you want to share with the WFC membership?

- Destinations?
- Favorite flying photos?
- Trip reports?
- Great experiences?
- Opinions?

Submit your photos and stories, to the newsletter by emailing:

Newsletter@williamsonflyingclub.com

Images

Our members are always ready to demonstrate that cold weather and a little bit of snow are no problem for dedicated aviators! Thanks to Alicia, Tom, Paula, Thomas, and Dan for bringing everyone along on your adventures!



Mother and son flight in 94R! (Thomas Sippel)



Hunt Hollow (Thomas Sippel)



Has winter come to Tatooine? (Thomas Sippel)



Looking south over Owasco Lake (Dan Probst)



Lining up on runway 28 at Sidney (Alicia Carter)



The Carters launching in 6ES from Sidney (Dan Probst)



55W at Sidney (Dan Probst)



Alicia and Tom Carter (Alicia Carter)

In Memoriam: Gail and Gary Verbridge



On January 28, 2021, long time Williamson Flying Club member and former Director R. Gary Verbridge passed away at the age of 85. His passing came just eleven days after losing Gail, his wife of nearly 65 years. As a Club, we pause to reflect on this loss to our WFC family. Gary not only learned to fly here, but was a prime mover in building airport infrastructure and the first of two generations of Verbridge aviators at KSDC.

Gary and Gail both had deep roots in farming. Gail was raised on a vegetable farm, Gary on a fruit farm. Around 1956, Gail was hired as the first female office worker at the “new” Mott’s facility on NY-104. Gary bought successively larger trucks to haul produce to urban centers of New York City and Philadelphia. Their lives changed in the fall of 1969 when they purchased the property that would become G&G Farms. The farm, specializing in apples, celebrated

its 50th anniversary in the summer of 2020. Gail managed the operation’s books until the fall of 2020.

Gary had a strong entrepreneurial spirit and an inventive soul. He reconfigured existing buildings on the farm to make them more useful. In the early 1970s, he recognized a local need for apple storage and moved to provide that service as a way of increasing revenue. He constructed a double-fork truck to increase the farm’s efficiency in handling apple crates. He capitalized on his shipping experience and owned trucks to transport produce. When it came to apples, G&G Farms could grow them, harvest them, store them, and ship them.

Gary was also a talented mechanic, building a dune buggy in the mid 1960s from a Volkswagen Bug. He restored a Ford Model T and owned three antique Pierce Arrows built in 1929, 1930, and 1931. He enjoyed working on them as much as he enjoyed driving them.

Gail was a talented musician who enjoyed singing and instrumental music, including the piano, cello, and banjo.

Perhaps the best word describing the Verbridges is “inseparable”. In work and leisure—whether it was antique cars, music, or airplanes—they were always together.

Airplanes entered the picture circa 1970 shortly after the Verbridges established G&G Farms. Gary came to the Williamson Flying Club

in pursuit of a ticket to the sky, but he found much more than that. He found an extended family of aviators who shared his passion for flight. In time, Gary became a WFC Director. He and Jack Fuller were partners in infrastructure projects that included the construction of an open, multibay hangar and the Williamson Aeronautical Services hangar (colloquially known as “Jake’s hangar”).

Jack Fuller reflects that the WFC Board of the time was concerned about recovering their investment in building the open hangars. “If no one moves in, I’ll store apples in them,” Gary reputedly answered. The hangars were built and became the first of many on the field.

Gary learned to fly in a Piper Colt (N5111Z) with the Club’s first employee, instructor Vernon Tyrell. The Verbridges became a multi-generational flying family when Alan joined in 1978 and learned to fly in the same Colt with the same instructor. Alan remains an active WFC Pilot and flies a vintage Aer-onca Champ.

Becoming a pilot inspired Gary’s entrepreneurial creativity. With the purchase of a Bellanca Scout, the

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June 27, 1976: Gary with Colt N5111Z at KSDC

In Memoriam: Gail and Gary Verbridge

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senior Verbridge added aerial application to the offerings of G&G Farms. Alan would later earn his tailwheel endorsement in the Scout. Over time, Gary upgraded to a Piper Pawnee, then to a Grumman AgCat. He also owned a PT-17 Stearman, but rather than equip that for spraying, it was purely for fun flying. After Gary received some aerobatic training, Alan fondly recalls hearing his sister Brenda screaming from the open cockpit as Gary flew a loop with her over the farm.

The story of Gail and Gary Verbridge is one of soulmates. In the words of Carol Verbridge, they “were only separated from this earthly life for eleven days.” They were truly inseparable. Their love for each other and their family was a driving force in the Verbridge family. In characteristically self-deprecating manner, Alan adds, “If I’m screwed up in any way, it’s not

my parent’s fault.”

About his father, Alan says that he was, “Confident, but not arrogant. He accomplished what he set his mind to.” Gary’s many successes clearly speak for themselves.

While private services were held at the discretion of the family, a future gathering for others will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the [American Cancer Society](#) in Gail’s name or the Williamson Volunteer Ambulance Service (6334 Bennett Street, Williamson NY 14589 Tel: 1-315-589-8440) in Gary’s.



Gary's first spray plane was a modified Bellanca Scout



June 1980: the Pawnee spray plane at KSDC. Looking to the northwest, the original clubhouse is visible in the background



Gary fueling the Stearman at KSDC, July 3, 1980



Trying on an AgCat at the National Agricultural Aviation Association Convention, Las Vegas, Nov 27, 1978



Gary (middle) and Colleen (right) Stevens during a WFC fly-out to Elmira in 2017

In Memoriam: Colleen Stevens

The Williamson Flying Club extends deepest sympathies to long-time member Gary Stevens over the loss of his wife, Colleen on January 29, 2021.

Gary and Colleen were married for 41 years.

Services will be held at a later

date.

In lieu of flowers, please donate in Colleen’s name to [Lollypop Farm](#).

Member Spotlight: Bob Fratangelo by Chris Houston



Member: Bob Fratangelo
 Ratings: PP-SEL
 Hours: 3,400
 Past Roles: Buildings and Grounds Chair, Breakfast Chair, Secretary, Director
 Joined WFC: 1974
 Aircraft: Cessna 150
 Mooney M20F

[Editor's Note: Bob is one of two members running for WFC Vice President. This column is an opportunity for members to get to know him better.]

Brad Roehrig is also running for the VP role as the incumbent. To learn more about Brad, please see the Member Spotlight column in the March 2020 edition of the WFC Flyer available at [this link](#).]

Airplanes fill many different roles and needs for WFC members. They are time machines for expedited travel, business tools, photographic platforms, challenges to be mastered, and vehicles for therapeutic recreation. For member Bob Fratangelo, aviation fills a patriotic

void. For much of his 47 years of flying, Bob has put himself and his aircraft at the disposal of the Coast Guard Auxiliary by flying aerial observation missions such as search and rescue (SAR). "Serving your country is just huge," says Bob. "We find people. It's very rewarding."

Like many of us, Bob did not initially realize that the dream of flight was within his grasp. He recalls lying atop Proseus' Bluff (near the intersection of Lake and North Geneva Roads), gazing up at a beautiful blue sky when a low wing airplane flew past. He thought, "I wonder what it looks like from up there?" But for a lower middle class kid in Sodus, was that a realistic dream?

Everyone has that key moment when they cross the threshold. Bob's came at age 15 while cleaning the windshield of WFC member Bob Diver's car at Ray's Mobil in Sodus. Knowing that Diver was a pilot, Bob expressed his yearning to fly, but feared that he did not have the income or the connections necessary for such a thing. Diver encouraged him to join the WFC, pointing out that the job at Ray's would be enough to support flying lessons. At the time, three members needed to sign a prospective member's petition to join. Diver was the only pilot Bob knew...or so he thought. Through some directed questioning from Diver, Bob came to realize that his former Scout Master, Jim Oathout, was a member and that the husband of his English teacher, Mrs. Malchoff, was a member. Bob con-

fesses that he was not her strongest student, but she nonetheless connected Bob with Doc Malchoff to gain his third signature.

Bob joined the club at the age of 15 in September 1974. While it was a financial stretch—it took Bob six months of pumping gas to pay off the \$300 initiation fee—he was flying! Like many members of the era, Bob spent \$8/hour to fly a WFC Colt with instructor Vern Tyrrell. He earned his private pilot certificate in 1984 in a Colt.

"The Club changed my life," Bob says. "It taught me that I could do anything."

Bob fondly recalls an afternoon lesson with Tyrrell that made him late for his high school Physics class. When his teacher demanded to know why he was tardy, Bob's

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1977: In a Schweizer 2-33A at Para-Tech w/ Debbie Young



1995: Skydiving over AZ from a Twin Otter at 12,500'

Member Spotlight: Bob Fratangelo by Chris Houston

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explanation captured the teacher's imagination, which is how Wes Sommerville came to the WFC.

As a teenager, Bob had many interests. In addition to taking flying lessons with the WFC, he also learned to scuba dive at the age of 17 and went skydiving (at [Para-Tech](#)) at 18. He soloed in a Schweitzer 2-33A glider at Para-Tech, though he never completed the rating. He has also been a member of the Penn Yan Flying Club to fly some different aircraft including a J3 Cub and a Super Cub on floats. (PYFC sold the Super Cub right after his first flight!)

Bob has filled many roles at the Club over the years. He started off parking cars at the annual pancake breakfast before moving up to sausage roller, parking airplanes, and serving as a ride pilot. He served on the Building and Grounds Committee (chairman for 10 years), the Breakfast Committee (chairman for 5 years, then recruited Billy Bach to the role, managed the food for 30+ years), and the Finance Committee. He has been a member of the WFC Board of Directors as Secretary and Director.

Outside of the Club, Bob has been an FAA Lead Safety Representative for the FAAST team for over 17 years.

Bob bought his first airplane, a 1964 Cessna 150D in 1994 as a "time builder". He must still be building time, because N4443U still serves as his trusty aerial

steed. The airplane was bought from an owner on Martha's Vineyard, and Bob cites the cross country flight to bring the airplane home as one of his most memorable. Bob has flown the 150 to Oshkosh about seven times.

In 2015, Bob bought a second Cessna 150 (N4109U) already based at KSDC that was in need of a new engine. *[Editor's note: does anyone have one to sell? Bob might be interested!]*

More recently, Bob and WFC member Dave Lowry purchased Billy Bach's 1969 Mooney M20F (N27MC). A Mooney is a faster time machine for longer flights.

The most rewarding aspect of Bob's time as an aviator came about because of a snarky comment he made in 1994. Bob and a friend were preparing for a dive when they saw a group from the Coast Guard Auxiliary. "Wannabe heroes," Bob commented. His more knowledgeable friend encouraged Bob to learn what the Auxiliary was about and, by September, Bob joined the group as a pilot.

As an Auxiliarist, Bob flies search and rescue missions and performs maritime observation and environmental surveys (oil spills, flooding on Lake Ontario). When both pilot and aircraft (usually Bob's C-150) are under orders, the aircraft is designated as a public vessel of the United States and both plane and pilot become part of the Coast Guard. While under orders, Bob was exempt from the post-9/11



Oct 2001, 43U and USCG Rochester



Nov 2009: Air Station Detroit CO flies with Bob from KSDC



Bob with close friend and mentor VAAdm John Currier

grounding of General Aviation, despite well-meaning attempts by Jake DeGroot and Denny Ankrom to prevent him from taking off. Taking off would require "an act of Congress," Jake told him that day.

"I have one," Bob insisted — and rightfully so, referring to the portion of United States Code enacted by Congress in 1939 to establish the Auxiliary.

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Member Spotlight: Bob Fratangelo by Chris Houston

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Bob confesses that the requirement to wear a flight suit, leather boots, and Nomex gloves made him feel a little silly when climbing out of his Cessna 150. But finding his first person on a SAR mission helped him get over that. “We find people,” Bob asserts. And that is no laughing matter.

“Coast Guard 4443U” has inspired a few amusing moments. From a Niagara Falls controller who assumed that Bob was flying a helicopter and cleared him to land on the IAG ramp to another Coast Guard pilot who snarked over the radio, “I didn’t know that the Coast Guard flew 150s.”

“Budget cuts,” Bob responded with good humor.

Sometimes, even the Mooney gets no respect. After a flight to Selfridge ANG in Michigan (the local Auxiliary is part of the U.S. Coast Guard’s Ninth District and overseen by Air Station Detroit), Bob noticed base personnel gathering with an expectation of seeing the wayward GA pilot tossed to the ground by security. They seemed disappointed when that didn’t happen.



Caution! Grandfather at the controls!

Bob has many stories of flying with the Auxiliary and working together with his close friend and mentor, the late [Vice Admiral John Currier](#). There is more to tell than available space, but suffice to say that Bob finds his work with the Auxiliary to be incredibly rewarding and he places tremendous value on the strong relationships and friendships that he has made across the organization. We spoke for a long time about the Auxiliary and, beyond the details, what came through most clearly is a strong sense of personal accomplishment for his role as an Auxiliarist.

Outside of the Auxiliary, it is clear that Bob prizes another role: grandfather. He never knew his own grandparents and takes every moment he can to be with his five grandchildren. This definitely involves trips to the airport for rides in the Cessna. He laughs while telling the story of taking one grandchild to a grass strip for the first time. “Grandpa,” the child lectured him. “Airplanes aren’t supposed to land in somebody’s yard.”

Professionally, Bob has been in operations management his entire adult life, mostly in the food industry. He has worked at Heluva Good Cheese, Wayne County Eggs, and



2005: Bob meets WASP Dawn Seymour and Tuskegee Airman Col. Charles McGee at Oshkosh

the Bonduelle Bergen IQF Plant. In March of 2020, he successfully merged his professional and personal interests by joining the FBO AvFlight at Frederick Douglass—Greater Rochester International Airport as General Manager. On nice days, he flies to work; it’s 12 minutes in the Mooney, 20 in the Cessna 150. [Editor’s note: for those members ever needing to fly into ROC, AvFlight does not charge a ramp fee for single engine GA airplanes. There is still a \$3 landing fee charged by the county.]

Finally, under the category of “where does he find the time?”, Bob is also in his 17th year as a Town Justice for Sodus. It’s a lot of work, but Bob insists that it is, “Rewarding to do that for the community.”

My conversation with Bob was enlightening and highlighted a significant way that General Aviation pilots can serve their country. Bob’s experience as an Auxiliarist has clearly been a deeply rewarding part of his life, but it is a path that many pilots are unaware of.



Bob’s five “grand aviators” with 43U at KSDC