

## The Condor Cross Country Soaring Center

Frank Paynter (TA)

### Condor Cross Country Soaring Center

Resources for Condor and Soaring

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INSTRUCTORS WANTED

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Welcome

For years now, I have been bugging Scott Manley, my partner in crime in the ‘Condor Corner’ column, to collect, codify, and document his primary flight instruction techniques and philosophy in a book similar to my [Cross Country Soaring with Condor](#) tome (well, booklet). I thought I had him on the ropes a few months ago, when instead he dealt me a knockout blow by announcing that instead of a book, he has collaborated with website designer (and former student) Megan Strickland ([meganstrickland.com](http://meganstrickland.com)) to create a website titled ‘Simulation-based Glider Flight Education’ at <http://glidercfi.com/>. Here I am, a recognized uber-geek of gliding, and he had beaten (nay, pummeled!) me at my own game – rats!

This, boys and girls, was a really superb idea – and like Condor itself does a lot to transcend the space/time/weather barriers associated with traditional glider instruction. No longer does a student (or an instructor) have to dig around in the clubhouse filing cabinet for training materials or records – they can be all online. Standardized and consistent lesson plans can be created, with supporting multi-media material as close as the mouse button. Student/Instructor scheduling – all online – what a concept.

So, having retrieved my jaw from the floor and my body from where it had landed up in the cheap seats, I decided that Scott’s idea was just too good to pass up, and I too needed a website ‘home’ for Condor XC instruction. I didn’t let the fact that I knew next to nothing about website creation stop me –how hard could it be for an uber-geek, anyway (as it turns out – pretty darned hard)?

I had done some website creation in the past (I have a business website and I have helped create a number of contest websites), but these have all been done using either HomeStead or Google Sites, and this time I wanted to build something up that was a bit more customizable and scalable. I wound up going with a WordPress-based site, as the WordPress world is open-source, actively supported at WordPress.org, and has a very large community of users all of whom seem eager to help newbies like myself. I found a pretty decent (for someone starting from scratch) YouTube tutorial by James Stafford at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8o8u7OtuZY>, and from that I was able to bootstrap myself sufficiently so I wasn't too embarrassed with the results.

My intent for the website (other than to recover from the Scott Manley KO discussed earlier) was to create an online 'home' for students and instructors alike. It is clear to me that although I am very happy with what I have accomplished so far with XC instruction using Condor, a single person can only do so much. In order to reach more students and have a real chance at increasing the number of new and/or current glider pilots flying XC, we need more 'Condor-certified' instructors for the growing number of potential students. So, I had the following goals in mind:

- An online resource for students or potential students. A motivated pilot could potentially conduct their own self-taught XC soaring program using the provided materials and notes. This might not be the most efficient way of climbing the learning curve, but it would still be orders of magnitude quicker than trying to do it the 'good old way' in real-life.
- A way to connect 'Condor-certified' instructors and students for one-on-one training. The site will have an associated online scheduling system, similar to the one I have been using for years for my winter student training season. The scheduling system will allow students to schedule with any available instructor, and will allow the instructors to set up their own personalized availability calendars.
- A repository or knowledge base for all the stuff I have learned over the last decade of Condor experience, and things I find myself repeating with every new student. Now, instead of walking each student through the same Condor setup screens one-by-one, I can simply point them to the website and tell them 'set it up that way – tell me when you're done' ;-).
- A repository for all our (Scott's and mine) Condor Corner articles. In the past we have both relied on the good graces of Paul Remde to archive them all on his 'Cumulus Soaring' (<http://cumulus-soaring.com>) site (thanks Paul!) but there they were a bit buried in all the other stuff, so having them available via top-level menu is a lot nicer, IMHO.
- A place where new ideas and techniques can be discussed and tried out – with good documentation for the stuff that works. Scott's webcam-based instruction idea is a perfect example of a technique that is a great complement to 'traditional' (did I just use that word for Condor training?) Condor online training methodologies.
- Hopefully, the basis for a long-term 'Condor XC School' that can grow beyond just one not-so-sane Condor enthusiast into something that might have a real impact on cross-country gliding here in the U.S.A. (or other countries for that matter!).

I believe that the 'Condor Cross Country Soaring Center' at <http://condorxcsoaring.com> is the next step in a dream I have had since I started teaching cross-country using Condor many years ago. My dream is nothing less than the revitalization of XC soaring by eliminating the many and significant barriers to cross country soaring. Instead of a few cross country soaring pilots dribbling out of club training programs, I dream of much larger numbers of Condor cross country pilots **joining** clubs or buying XC capable ships so they can transfer their new-found skills and knowledge into the even richer and more challenging real-life environment. In order to make this possible, I need 'a few good men' (or women) who are willing to become 'Condor-certified' cross country soaring instructors. I'm looking for experienced real-life XC pilots who like the idea of passing on their skills to another generation, and maybe revitalizing the sport in the process. I'm looking for pilots who aren't afraid of using Condor as a serious cross country training tool. If you fit this description, drop me an email or give me a call and we'll work out a way of getting you trained up and certified. Then you too can be part of the dream!

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