

## **YOUTH & SKY SAILING**

We are proud to be a part of *the National Congress on Aviation & Space Education*, and welcome you to **SKY SAILING, Inc.** at Warner Springs Airport and the world of *SOARING*. We are one of the largest soaring centers in the U.S. We hope you enjoy our friendly and easygoing atmosphere. Learning to fly in sailplanes is by far the safest and best way to learn the basics of flight. Even the U.S. Air Force Academy does its primary instruction in sailplanes. Our great year round weather is particularly well suited for student instruction.

The sport of Soaring is flying in SAILPLANES. SAILPLANES are often called GLIDERS. SOARING is a thrilling yet peaceful sport, which involves the entire family.

**SOARING** as a youth activity is tremendous, it involves the youth in a sport which is both exciting and character building. SOARING requires dedication to learning and advancing. It develops good attitudes and builds respect. This respect for moving objects remains and applies to other areas, (i.e. driving and a more positive attitude towards life). *With proper instruction and motivation, You can solo at 14!*

*SOARING is FREEDOM. SOARING is FUN, it is RELAXING, SAFE, and reduces daily STRESS.*

**EDUCATIONAL:** We are staffed with people who care and would like to help you to teach the pilots of the future. We have material as well as video presentations that we would be happy to do at your school. If possible we will even bring the Grobus demonstrator on the trailer. It allows kids as well as adults to sit in the cockpit of a real sailplane. It demonstrates the controls with hands on. We would also be very happy to discuss the misconceptions about gliders. Most people who do not understand aerodynamics, might be afraid of gliders. This is due to lack of education and being afraid of the unknown. We

hope that you take the effort to learn more about this sport, it will be well worth your time.

**FIELD TRIPS:** *Sky Sailing* is excellent for a destination trip or even better a combined trip. As an example a field trip to Palomar Observatory or Borrego Springs etc combined with an hour at Warner Springs Airport. There are many educational ideas in the Back Country just give us a call.

We are proud to offer the highest quality instruction at **SKY SAILING** since 1959. We have individual courses for the first time flyer directed towards SOLO LICENSE, ADVANCED COURSES aimed at PRIVATE, COMMERCIAL, and INSTRUCTOR RATINGS, and TRANSITION COURSES & SPECIAL 1/2 DAY SAFETY COURSE for power pilots. WE SOAR YEAR ROUND!

We are open 7 days a week, 9am to Dusk. RESERVATIONS: needed for weekdays; however no reservations needed on weekends. THE BEST WAY TO LEARN TO FLY IS IN A SAILPLANE. SKY SAILING IS ONE OF THE PREMIER GLIDERPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES, WITH ONE OF THE BEST SAFETY & TRAINING RECORDS TO BE FOUND.

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 04/18/99**

#### ***14 year old breaks World records in sailplanes and Soars from California to New Mexico.***

Warner Springs CA. **Garret Willat** made history on his fourteenth birthday by soloing 18 different sailplanes of 9 different makes/models. Flying Saturday, September 9th, from 9 am to sunset, Garret flew 22 flights. The first flight was with his dad who is also his instructor. Then off he went, without anyone on board. Garret let his heart soar into the sky. By evening he had flown 4 hrs 25 mins solo. He even made two formation air-to-air photo flights and on one other flight, he made two loops! The minimum legal age to solo a sailplane, also known as a glider, is fourteen. Most people when they solo do it one time on their first day. And most pilots will never make 22 flights in one day!

Garret lives on the Warner Springs Airport where his parents own/operate Sky Sailing. Garret has lived on airports his entire life, so soloing on his birthday was only natural. Flying in aircraft since birth he wanted to do something out of the ordinary when he soloed. Since friends hold records in powered aircraft on their 16th birthday, Garret decided to Soar into the record books. But his flying blood also wanted to do more, so Garret and his dad, Bret, chose to fly cross-country.

Cross country soaring is perhaps the most complicated and demanding of all flying, requiring skill and determination. Garret began intensive training for this goal amassing numerous cross country training flights. His longest flight being 4 hrs 42 min, flying about 120 miles with altitude flights of up to 17,000'. And, yes, it was done all without an engine. Garret began doing all the navigation and flying in the family's powered plane, a Cessna 180, with simulated landings into fields and other airports. Most people solo between 30-40 flights and youngsters do even better. Since Garret was preparing for the record he had extensive preparation and ended up soloing on his 100th logged glider flight in basic two seat trainers to advanced single seat competitive sailplanes.

Soaring is a family sport. Many students solo on their fourteenth birthday. The oldest student to solo at Sky Sailing was 82 years young. As a youth activity, soaring promotes goal setting, math & science education, it's exciting and is anti-drug. There are hundreds of schools and clubs across the country, ready to teach the best way to learn to fly, in a glider. Gliders teach basic flight in a quick, easy, inexpensive and focused way. Soaring is a technical outdoor sport based on teamwork and a respect for the environment.

On Monday, September 13th, Garret and his dad embarked upon an adventure. They climbed in the local area with little lift for almost two hours, and then they soared out of range of the airport and climbed using only nature as their power. Garret flew a single seat hi-performance German made Grob G-102 IIIb sailplane while Bret flew a French made Pegase. They climbed sharing thermals to 12,000' over Toro Peak near Palm Springs and crossed the desert floor to the mountain range to the north. Losing altitude they almost landed at Chiriaco Summit Airport,

but Garret's determination and will power got him back up and on course. Soon they soared over Desert Center and found lift enough to make it to Blythe California, located near the Colorado River. Garret flew 115 miles straight distance but with diversions for soaring and stopping to climb in lift he flew some 270 miles. Landing in formation at Blythe and rolling right up to his mom, Karen and little 4 year old brother Boyd, after flying for 5 hours 20 minutes. Truly a dream and an accomplishment, never done before. The thrill and pride burst from his parents.

Tuesday found the Willat family aero towing the sailplanes to Gila Bend Arizona for the next leg. Launching around 11:30 they found no lift and had to relaunch. They did double tows, which is when both sailplanes are connected to the same towplane, flown by Karen. Soon they flew the skies over the Maricopa Mountains cruising over Estrella Sailport south of Phoenix and down Hwy 10. Once again the challenges of soaring almost forced them to land in Casa Grande, & Eloy, but they used the rising currents of warm air called thermals to gain the altitude to continue. With sunset closing, Garret landed in a small dirt runway unsuitable to tow out of. The trailer being driven by his Grandparents Elfi & Julius Korherr, with cousin Shane as navigator, arrived. Shane soloed on September 8th. The sailplane was disassembled and trailered it out of Twin Hawks to Avra Valley Airport northwest of Tucson Az. Garret had flown for 4 hr 25 min and covered 92 miles.

Wednesday, after assembling the "Baby" Grob, the trip proceeded. Climbing to 14,000' under cloud base they cruised east. Thunderstorms forced the sleek sailplanes to go north over unlandable fields. Finding himself low, Garret told dad he needed to find somewhere to land. Garret flew between the hills and glided across a valley in hopes of making an airport. But the skies blocked the sun and lift was not to be found. Bret watched his son struggling with the weather. Garret had to locate a field, circle and look for obstacles, make a pattern and precision landing. By now Bret was also too low to make the airport and landed in a field only a few miles away. Bret heard the concerned words from Garret over the radio "This field looks too skinny, Dad." Bret was worried but trusted to his son's judgment. He reminded Garret not to change to another field and

to do his best. His best was good enough. The field which was indeed too skinny for the long graceful wings of the sailplane, but the bushes were short and Garret landed without any damage. Karen soon arrived in the Cessna and talked with pride to her son alone in a field. Garret's field was too short and skinny to tow out of, so she landed in the other field and towed Bret's sailplane to Safford only a few miles away. The trailer crew found Garret tired but pleased at flying for 4 hrs 45 min and a tough 85 miles. The farm owner did not hear the glider and was surprised to find a 14 year old boy and glider in his field.

Thursday, after a junk food breakfast, looked to be the first day of really good soaring conditions with cloud streets. The double tow taking them 2,000' above the ground. Finding strong lift to over 11,000' they embarked upon the last day of this adventure. Strong lift supported the father/son team to altitudes of 15,100' using supplemental oxygen to breath the thin air. Radio communication was difficult as Garret's battery failed and he had to use a back up hand held transceiver. Using the latest in technology they were able to keep exact track of their location, distances to the next airport and their heading over the ground by the **Trimble Flightmate Pro GPS**. This small handheld unit looks like it came from Star Trek. The GPS was one of the most useful tools they had. The Flightmate uses satellites in orbit above the earth to pinpoint with great accuracy their exact location. This easy to use instrument gave them confidence and needed information. "*Beam me some lift, Scotty!*"

Once again they were forced to fly a more northern route than they had planned, but the strong lift worked great until the mountain range ended west of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. Garret found himself only a few hundred feet over mountains reaching up to 10,000' with no visible landing sites. They flew down the hills to a small town with only one landable area, a driveway! By use of the GPS Flightmate, Karen was able to locate the struggling sailplanes and look ahead for landable fields in the towplane. Working hard for every foot of altitude, Garret climbed back up and on to more hospitable landing sites. But now the weather turned against them with strong headwinds reducing their ground speeds to a slow pace. But even more trouble was a hurricane bringing these winds causing over developed skies

which cut the lift to almost nothing. Bret was in the higher performing sailplane and now had enough trust in his son to find his own way. Bret glided to an airport in Hatch New Mexico, but Garret would come up short. Mom looked on desperately as her son went on alone. She knew that Garret had to make his own choices, but it is always hard to stop being mom. Garret barely made it to some beautiful farm lands and chose the best one. He found that the freshly plowed and seeded alfalfa field was very soft. His wing tip wheels dug in causing the sailplane to ground loop while mom could only watch with concern from above.

Garret radioed that all was okay. An inspection revealed that one wing-tip wheel was slightly bent and the other pulled off. Minor damage easily repaired. The adventure came to an end as the weather from Hurricane Ismeal dumped heavy rains over New Mexico causing a lot of flooding and damage. On Thursday, Garret had flown 139 miles in 5 hrs 22 min setting a State record. On the trip he flew 431 miles in 19 hrs 52 min. Garret is the youngest to earn his A B C, Bronze, Silver C, and Century I & II national and international badges. But more than the awards, the records, the achievement, Garret did something with his family that could never be repeated. The Willat family flies together, they stay together.

The Willat family acknowledges the numerous companies who assisted these great youth flights by their sponsorship; these include: **Willat Writing Instruments** makers of the **Sensa Pen** which has the grace & beauty of the sailplane, **EOM PZL** Variometers, **Eagle Eye Optics** makers of Eagle Eye Sun glasses which really assisted both pilots, and special assistance from the leader in GPS (Global Positional System) Technology, **TRIMBLE NAVIGATION**. "We talked to many companies but only these showed a caring and understanding about youth that was really appreciated and they assisted us when we needed it," says Bret.

If you would like more information about these flights, Garret, the sport of soaring, sailplane rides or instruction. Or for interviews, photos or video please contact Bret, Karen or Garret Willat at (760) 782-0404 Sky Sailing 31930 Hwy 79 Warner Springs CA. 92086 [www.skysailing.com](http://www.skysailing.com) or e-mail Garret

directly: [soar@skysailing.com](mailto:soar@skysailing.com)

For more information about the Sport of Soaring or schools/clubs in your area, please contact the Soaring Society of America, PO Box E Hobbs NM 88231 or call (505) 392-1177. [www.ssa.org](http://www.ssa.org)

## **GARRET IRVIN WILLAT**

### **SOLO DAY 9-9-95 *FOURTEENTH* BIRTHDAY**

22 flights, 2 dual, 2 Photo formation flights in G-10

18 different sailplanes soloed. World record

9 different makes/models. Basic Trainers - High Performance

#### SUMMARY OF AIRCRAFT SOLOED:

**Make/Model # Made in: Make/Model # Made in:**

SCHWEIZER 2-33 4 USA SCHWEIZER 1-36 1 USA

SCHWEIZER 2-33A 3 USA SCHWEIZER 2-32 3 USA

GROB G-103A 2 GERMANY GROB G-102 1 GERMANY

CENTRAIR 101A 1 FRANCE LIBELLE 201B 1 GERMANY

SCHWEIZER 1-26E 2 USA **Total time: 4 hrs 17 min Solo**

## **GARRET IRVIN WILLAT**

### **SOLO DAY 9-9-95 *FOURTEENTH* BIRTHDAY**

**22 flights, 2 dual, 2 Photo formation flights in G-102**

**18 different sailplanes soloed. World record**

**9 different makes/models.**

**Basic Trainers - High Performance**

**4 hrs 17 min Solo on 14<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

## **CROSS COUNTRY FLIGHTS- SOLO IN G-102**

**DAY 1 9-11-95 WARNER SPRINGS to BLYTHE 5 hrs 20 min.**

115 straight distance miles Earned **Silver C, duration, distance, height.**

**DAY 2 9-12-95 GILA BEND to TWIN HAWKS (Tucson AZ)**

4 hrs 25 min 92 miles

**DAY 3 9-13-95 AVRA to MARCO'S FARM Field (SAFFORD AZ)**

4 HRS 45 MIN 85 miles.

**DAY 4 9-14-95 SAFFORD to ALFALFA FIELD IN GARFIELD (HATCH NM)**

5 HRS 22 MIN Longest flight: 139 miles, highest altitude 15,100'.

**TOTALS: 19 HRS 52 MIN, 431 STRAIGHT OUT MILES,  
HIGHEST CLIMB 15,100'. Not too bad for 14 + one week old!**

**BADGES EARNED: A, B, C, BRONZE, SILVER C, CENTURY I & II.**

Winner of 1996 Kolstad Youth Scholarship.

Garret is currently a member of the USA Soaring Team and flew for the US in World Competitions on the US Junior Soaring team and now as a member of the US Team! When not soaring in competition, Garret is a Flight Instructor at Sky Sailing, Inc.

The Only person who could beat Garret's record is  
his younger Brother Boyd:

**BOYD J WILLAT**

**Boyd solo's 23 sailplanes on his 14th birthday!**

1st solo was around 8:45 May 18th, 2005

By lunch, 8 gliders, including the Stemme!

The last flight finished with a few loops in BG (G-103) at 1735

23 solo flights with 3 hrs 49 minutes

2 dual flights 10 minutes

16 different models:



