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Greetings!

I'm writing in an attempt to revive an old tradition, and perhaps get a bit of help along the way. When I bought my Commonwealth Skyranger (NC33395, serial #1616), I acquired along with it a file of assorted papers that had followed it through its past few owners. Among those papers were some old mimeographed pages from the early 70's, coming from a loose-knit organization called "SPARS - the Society for Preservation And Restoration of Skyrangers."

SPARS seemed to be mostly an address list; a forum for Skyranger owners to send out queries to others, and to offer parts and advice that they'd come across in their efforts to maintain their planes. As I read through the old newsletters, I thought what a great resource it must've been. In the four years I've owned '395, I've only ever seen two other Skyrangers, and then only in passing, with not nearly enough time to take proper note of the panel layout, the pitot static head, the trim wheel, or any of the other things that aren't quite properly restored on my plane. I would've loved to have had the time to ask about the landing light installation, how people comply with the new night-lighting requirements, and whether anyone, anywhere, has a spare right-side cowling.

I realized that I did have access to quite a few other Skyranger owners, through the scraps of paper I'd accumulated with the names of friends of friends, through the FAA aircraft database, and through the fine folks at the Antique Airplane Association. I realized that I could probably send a note out to all these people asking the answers to my thousand and one questions. I also realized that other owners must have similar needs, and thus began toying with the idea of reviving the SPARS list (presuming, of course, that it is defunct - if it does still exist, I'd love to know about it!)

My thoughts are these: I'd like to get a response from anyone and everyone who has an interest in restoring, preserving, and flying Skyrangers. I'd like us to exchange contact information. I'm attaching an information sheet to this letter; I'll collate everyone's responses and send them out to everyone who's responded. So please fill in addresses, email, phone numbers, whatever - however you're willing to be contacted by other Skyranger owners in search of advice.

I'd also like us to try and set up some sort of a newsletter to exchange questions, advice, and lists of parts needed or parts offered. I'm mailing this out to people who own a Skyranger, who've once owned a Skyranger, or who have told me they're thinking about buying one. If you're not interested in an address exchange or newsletter, no problem -- I'm just casting a wide net in the hopes that I don't miss anyone.

I don't know how many of us Commonwealth/Rearwin Skyrangers pilots there are out there. By the records, there could be a dozen of us, or there could be as many as 150. I'm willing to foot the photocopying and postage for the first round or two. If there are only a few of us, we can just manage the photocopying etc. out of pocket change. If there are a bunch of us, we may want to resort to the umbrella of the AAA for the newsletter. Let me know your thoughts.

Many thanks,

David Cohn

That being said, let me begin with a bit of history on my Skyranger, and tell you a bit about what I've learned and what I'm looking for.

## **NC33395**

My wife Devon and I bought '395 from our good friend Tom Scott, of Seattle. Tom and his father Ardell had found the plane in a garage in Moscow, Idaho, apparently on its way to the scrapyard. They bought the pieces and spent the next three years restoring it to show condition in their garage. Tom and Ardell's handiwork brought in a few trophies at flyins from Arlington to Watsonville. Eventually Tom decided that he'd rather be building a boat, and in early 1992 agreed to sell us the Skyranger. I flew it out to Boston, where we had moved, and kept it at Hanscom field for three years. Parked among the Gulfstreams and Learjets, '395 got its fair share of attention, especially from jet jockeys who had fond memories of learning to fly in Skyrangers. I still owe a few rides to folks out there.

Last fall, I took advantage of an offer to transfer out to my company's California office, so Devon and I had the opportunity to take the Skyranger cross country again - this time while Devon was eight months pregnant! I'd offered to send her out on the airlines, but she said she wouldn't miss the adventure for the world. We're now based at Palo Alto, which seems to have had its share of Skyrangers in the past; we seem to be the only one around these days, though.

## **The Wish List**

As I mentioned, one of my motivations for starting SPARS up again was to try to locate a few spare parts and maybe get a few questions answered. So let me start up with my personal wish list:

### **Parts I'm looking for:**

- Right-side cowling, or anyone with experience building one on an English wheel
- Someone who can overhaul the grandfather-clock engine cluster
- A drop-down Grimes landing light (model 250, I believe)
- Trim-position indicator hardware
- Some good photos of the original 1946 panel
- Any factory, publicity or engineering documents

### **Questions I have:**

My doors have attachments for strut-mounted doorstops, but it looks like the strut-mounted attachment would have to rise about 6-7" about the lift strut to match them. Does anyone have these on their plane?

There are a series of holes in the forward fuselage sheeting where the edge of the cowling rests. One friend has suggested that these were originally laced with leather straps to cushion and damp vibration of the cowling. Was he right? Any guidance on how to redo this?

If you've got a line on any of these, or have a wish list of your own, please let me know, by mail, phone or email (I'm online every day, so email is the quickest, most reliable way to get ahold of me).

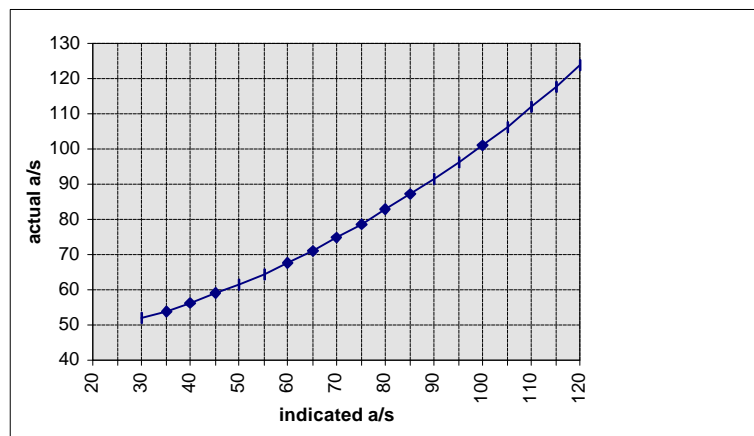
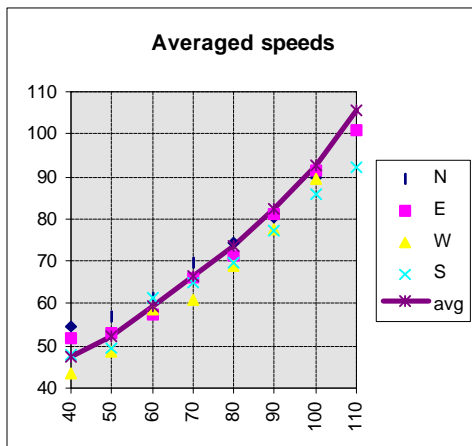
## V-speeds for the 185 Skyranger

While I'm asking for things, I thought I'd share what little I know about my own Skyranger. I couldn't find any documentation on what the true  $V_x$  and  $V_y$  speeds were, so I eyeballed some speeds and figured they were good enough. A few months ago, preparing for my commercial exam, I decided it was time to compute them for myself. A friend and I found ourselves as close to a standard day as we could, cleaned '395 up, loaded up to gross weight and set off with a handheld GPS.

I'll start out by summarizing the results I found, and then go into a bit greater detail for anyone interested. [Disclaimer: Please remember that these numbers were derived by a complete amateur for own private use. They seem to work for my airplane, but I have no idea how they generalize. Do *not* trust your life or airplane to these numbers.]

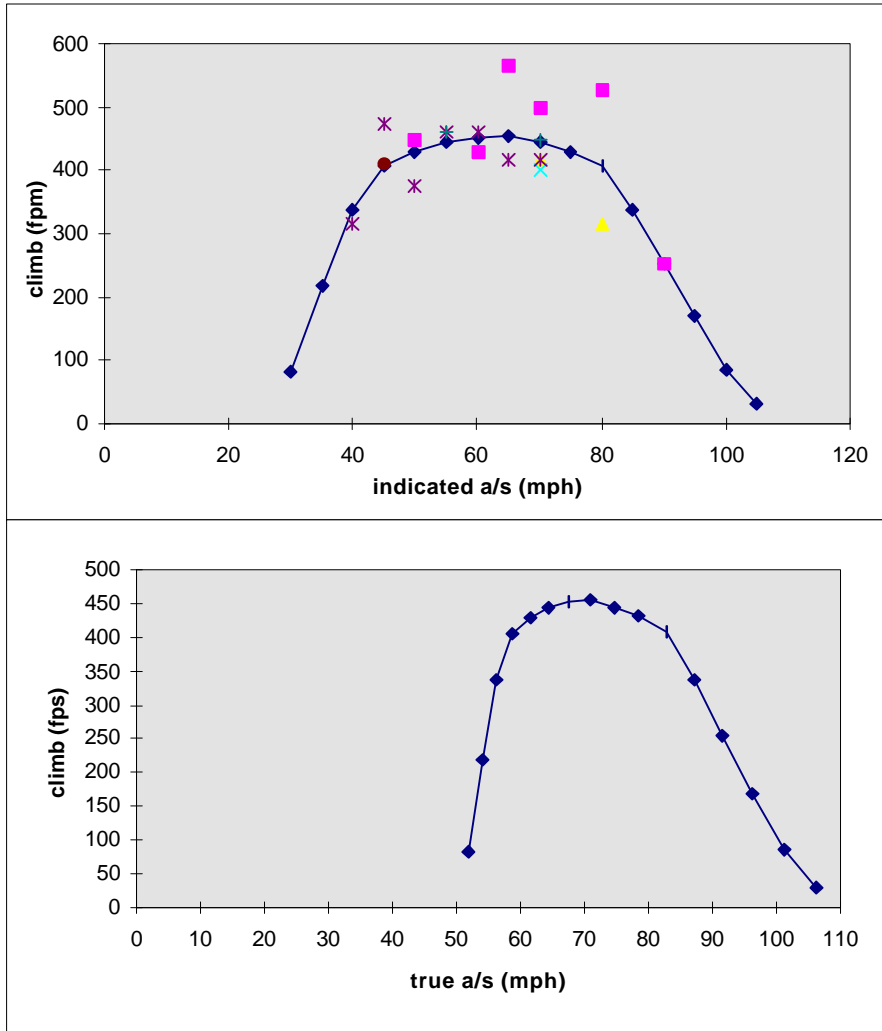
| Airspeeds |           |           |  |          |           |             |  |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|----------|-----------|-------------|--|
|           | actual    | indicated |  |          |           |             |  |
| $V_x$     | 61.5      | 50        |  |          |           |             |  |
| $V_y$     | 70        | 64        |  |          |           |             |  |
| glide     | 81        | 77        |  |          |           |             |  |
|           |           |           |  |          |           |             |  |
|           | stall     |           |  | $V_a$    |           |             |  |
|           | indicated | true      |  | true     | indicated |             |  |
| Power off | 35        | 54        |  | 105.2654 | 104       |             |  |
| Power on  | 30        | 52        |  | 101.3667 | 100       | 94 ind@1270 |  |

First task was calibrating the airspeed indicator, which has quite an effect on computed angle of climb. We flew a series of rectangular courses at different airspeed, and matched and averaged them to cancel out wind effects. We found that at high angles of attack, the a/s indicator effectively stalled, reading much lower than true airspeed:



Next were climbs. We sampled airspeeds from 30-120 indicated (52-123 true) and did some curve fitting. Best rate of climb came out as 64 indicated (70 true) and best angle was 50 indicated (61 true).

Power on stalls were at 30 indicated (a surprisingly high 52 true) and power off at 35 (54 true). Using the square root rule and the normal category limitations, this produces a maneuvering speed ( $V_a$ ) of 100 indicated at gross weight and 94 indicated at 1270 pounds.



Our best glide computations weren't as successful, but we came out with an estimated 77 indicated for a glide ratio of roughly 8.75:1. We'll be trying these again some day to get some better data.

If anyone else has done experiments like this, or better yet, has any of the original factory data, I'd **love** to see it. -David

**Skyranger information sheet - please return by September 1 to:**  
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**Getting involved**

- Yes, I'm interested
- Thanks, but I'll pass
- This is a really bad idea because.....

**Contact Information**

Here's how I'm willing to have other S kyranger owners contact me:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_

I currently

- ...own a S kyranger N\_\_\_\_\_ (flying? restoring?)
- ...am thinking about buying one
- ...used to own one N\_\_\_\_\_
- ...just think they're neat planes

S kyranger stuff/advice I'm looking for: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

S kyranger stuff I have/know about: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- I'm willing to put time/money into maintaining a SPARS newsletter

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Commonwealth/Rearwin Skyranger

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