



PHOTO PROVIDED

Chief flight instructor Prof. H. Paul Shuch surgically removes Dr. Steven Katz's shirt-tail, to commemorate the surgeon's first solo flight at AvSport of Lock Haven.

Local surgeon conquers the sky

LOCK HAVEN — Dr. Steven Katz, a surgeon at Jersey Shore Hospital, recently achieved his first solo flight at AvSport of Lock Haven, the sport aviation training center recently established at Piper Memorial Airport. Under the supervision of Prof. H. Paul Shuch, AvSport's chief flight instructor, Katz, 62, who began flight instruction in April, flew the school's Light Sport trainer aircraft three times around the Lock Haven traffic pattern as the

plane's sole occupant.

"Steve demonstrated the surgeon's exceptional fine motor skills," reported Shuch, "asserting mastery over the air in achieving this significant training milestone. One hopes his bedside manner is as polished as his flying skills."

The Sport Pilot license is the newest portal of entry into the world of aviation, allowing prospective pilots to become licensed in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional Private

Pilot license. Sport pilots fly for fun, and are restricted to flying simple, low-performance aircraft that comply with the Light Sport rule. They are allowed to fly in uncongested airspace, during daylight hours, and only in good weather conditions. The weather for today's solo flight was ideal, with clear skies, unlimited visibility, and a gentle breeze from the West.

Upon completion of the solo flight, Shuch cut off the tail of Dr. Katz's shirt, and autographed it to mark the occasion. This ritual dates back to the Golden Age of aviation, when barnstormers frequently had to patch rips in their fabric-covered aircraft with pieces of their own garments.

After reviewing basic flight maneuvers with his instructor, Katz will next embark on cross-country flight training, leading up to his venturing farther afield on his own. His training will culminate in preparations for his Federal Aviation Administration practical test, consisting of both oral exams and a checkride with an FAA designated pilot examiner, prior to receipt of his pilot's license.

Piper Memorial Airport is the ancestral home to the legendary Piper Cub, arguably the world's first sport plane. Modern Light Sport aircraft allow pilots to recapture the bygone fly-for-fun Cub era, with increased reliability and improved safety.