

CHALLENGE YOUR SOARING!

By Rob "Speedbrake" Buck

In just a handful of weeks, we'll all be flailing controls and straining our brains as Rick Hanson and his team help us clean out our flying cobwebs. It's been eight months out of the cockpit! And maybe it's time for some new soaring challenges!

Last year, chatting with some members left me the hunch some wanted to flap harder and fly beyond the nest, but were in a quandary of how. We're lucky to have Sugarbush, but it is kind of isolated, so how can we, like Ron Webster starts his bikes with manly vigor, "kick start" our interests? You can start at home in your favorite chair. A Soaring Society of America membership, with Soaring Magazine, keeps us current with the sport everywhere. The magazine's articles and columns give us "recurrent training", as well as ideas and goals. The SSA website www.ssa.org offers gobs of information as well as pictures and videos. Another great publication is bimonthly "Sailplane and Gliding" from the British Gliding Association. Beautifully produced, I find it personally indispensable. A zillion soaring books are out there, of both technique and story. With limited space here, I'll make a list for the near future.

Advancements to soaring might include ratings, badge and cross country flying. Ratings are good, and we'll leave that to the pros...Rick and his instructors. Badge and cross country flying help us dispel reluctance from mystery, and more fully use the sport. Maybe we can churn up a little seminar on the very basics, (my brain works on simple). Let me know if you are interested! You don't have to hang yourself out with cross country...you don't have to do it at all! But using limits derived from knowledge and commonsense can keep it conservative and fun, as it has for thousands before us.

Soaring has a lot of affiliates, and one I find really fun is The Vintage Soaring Association, (VSA). It's a great bunch of folks, who enjoy relaxed soaring with fine classic and vintage sailplanes. A lot of VSA folks are also fiberglass types, but find these events and friends as the sport used to be! VSA also produces an excellent little quarterly magazine called "Bungee Cord". And there is a surprise! Properly inspected and maintained '50's and '60's gliders can offer Blanik and K-21 performance for often under \$10000!

How about a side trip to other gliding events or sites? From June 27th thru July 4th, son Christian and I hope to be attending The International Vintage Soaring Meet (IVSM), at historic Harris Hill near Elmira, New York. It's also the location of the excellent National Soaring Museum. The museum is a must, being extremely well done! And when you've traumatized your significant other with gliders, or have to do something different yourself, you are close to the Corning Glass Museum, Watkins Glen Racing, Glenn Curtis Museum in Hammondsport, then up the Finger Lakes to the "smashing" New York State wine country! If you're still standing there are lots of other things to do.

Hopefully some of you might visit IVSM. I'd be happy to show you around and meet the crowd. You might get the bug! And as to expanding and challenging your soaring interests? It can only make you a better pilot and the sport more fun!