

# The Flight Line

## News about Sugarbush Soaring

SUGARBUSH SOARING ASSOCIATION, INC.

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## *From The President's Cockpit*

**Your Board of Directors met in January and March to analyze our status and plan for the 2007 season. I am pleased to report that 2006 saw improved finances despite a significant reduction in the number of tows by club members.**

Two new activities contributed to our financial health. First, the newly formed Flight Experience for Youth (FEfY) non-profit corporation brought in enough volunteer contributions to completely fund our program that provides a flight lesson for each day a young man or woman helps run the flight line. Second, the new LSA program contributed about \$4,000 profit in aircraft rental and Instructor fees without increasing instructor staffing.

Unfortunately, fixed costs such as fleet and field insurance continue to rise at a high rate. Even though we're doing our best to raise efficiency, we cannot starve our valuable staff, so this cost also goes up every year. Therefore, we voted unanimously to increase SSA member dues from \$675/year to \$725/year.

This year we have decided to open the field for club-member flying on the first of May, but to defer the official "Put-Together Weekend" until May 19. This keeps cost down while still encouraging the seriously addicted to enjoy strong spring thermals. We'll put a Blanik and perhaps the ASK-21 together early, however. You will be able to take required biennial flights as well as fly your own glider. Call ahead to arrange tows.



*Dave Ellis*

**Opening Day is 19 May.  
Safety Briefing in Airport Lounge  
Cocktail Hour & Opening Dinner  
(Location to be decided)**

# Winter Wanderings

by Rick Hanson

**The mountains are bigger, the wave is stronger, the runway is wider and longer, the air traffic is Cessna Citations, Dornier jets and the occasional P-51 Mustang(!), but it is Sugarbush Soaring on a different scale.**

I'm spending a couple of months at Soar Minden in the lee of the High Sierra Mountains, towing and instructing, dealing with the same issues, problems and rewards that we deal with at home, only on a larger scale.

The "Emerald Bay Excursion Ride" for one in one of the Grob 103's or for two in the Schweizer 232 tows up and over Daggett Pass and across Lake Tahoe to Emerald Bay on the west shore and then back over Heavenly Valley Ski Area or to Genoa Peak on the south-east side of the lake - glider release is between 11 and 12 thousand feet MSL - 30 minutes ontow and another 25 to 30 minutes soaring before turning East to Minden Tahoe Airport at 4700' MSL. It's the Mad River Valley and Green Mountains on steroids with Lake Champlain conveniently moved twenty-five miles closer. The scenery is breath-taking, the mountain wave powerful, the mix of traffic challenging.

It's easy to "get used to" one airport, one mountain range, one method of operation. It's easy to become complacent and stop thinking about all those important issues like safe altitudes, land-out areas, and traffic conflicts. These become more obvious issues at a new soaring site, especially one that has a wave that can take you to 40,000 feet over mountains that get (as the ski areas did last week) 14 feet of snow in six days.

When we start up operations in the spring at Sugarbush, I know that I, for one, will have a renewed appreciation of the fickleness of Mother Nature and the way the wading pool can easily become a bottomless ocean of challenge in which any one of us can quickly be in over his head.

Let's all be mindful of having spent the winter doing things other than flying, and aware that those skills we may have honed to perfection through last summer and fall, have lain dormant and unpracticed for six months. Let's also remember that it is easy to become comfortably complacent with our little valley. While the scale out here in the West may be more impressive and the risks more visibly evident, leaving the planet earth anywhere demands our full attention and respect.

I hope that we can all make an effort to learn something new every time we fly. Take instruction in an aircraft you've never flown before (Take a flight in the Light Sport CT!). Fly at a different airport. Earn that Bronze Badge. Go for your Silver Altitude. It's fun and learning something new makes us all better pilots.



*See you opening weekend!*

*Rick*

**The mandatory pilots safety briefing by Rick will be held in the Airport Lounge on 19 May at 10:30 AM. Be sure to attend.**

## Peter Dandridge.

Old time Sugarbush Soaring pilot Peter Dandridge passed away last October after a brief illness. Peter was one of our early pilots, and came to us with considerable experience already in hand. Peter was born in England, as anyone who heard him speak would know, and served during World War II as a member of the Combined Operations Force in the Royal Navy. He came to the U.S. in 1960. A metallurgist by trade, he and his wife, Peggy, owned and ran Atomic Limited in Cambridge, and did work for academic and government institutions.

Peter and Peggy gave unstintingly of their time for Club activities, and in the soaring world in general over many years, and produced for us a couple of memorable pig roasts as well as many other fine social events. Peter flew a Grob Astir with great skill. We will especially remember his wonderful subtle sense of humor. Tony Lauck passed on this comment that gives a good insight into Peggy and Peter..”I first met

Peter Dandridge at Franconia, NH in 1976. A few months earlier I had purchased a 1-26 and decided to go to the mountains to see if the flying was better than in the greater Boston area. I was staying at a lodging house that had been recommended by a soaring pilot. When I arrived at the lodging house the owner told me that I was free to use the kitchen to cook breakfast, but that proved not to be the case. Before I could barely barely turn the stove on the next morning, I was thrown out of the kitchen by a woman with an English accent, and told to sit down in the dining room and that breakfast would be served to all the glider people. That was how I met Peggy, and a minute later, Peter.”

Peter was also known for the creation of two trophies, beautiful metal sculptures of birds, that are still in active use in U.S. Soaring. In unfortunate accidents

during soaring contests, two pilots were killed. In honor of these pilots, Peter made two trophies. The David Shapiro trophy is awarded for the best overall performance in the Region One Contest and the Ron Hatcher trophy for the best overall performance in the U.S. National Championships.

Peter is survived by his wife Peggy, his daughter Lori Cunningham, his sons Jonathan and Peter, and six grandchildren.



Shapiro Trophy



Hatcher Trophy

**We are planning a member-run cookout on Saturday, June 16, in memory of Peter. I hope you will all mark this down on your calendars.**

**-Bob Messner**

# Soaring Safari to South Africa

by Raouf Ismail

**Roy Bourgeois and I had been thinking about soaring some other parts of the world for a while. Roy had spent some time in 2005 soaring in South Africa, and had a wonderful time, doing flights he normally would not have done around here.**

For myself, I had done serious cross-country flying in the UK, Australia, Austria, France, and of course my home area, the US. But, it needs also to be said that I was not that into serious cross-country anymore. No matter ....!

Anyhow, I signed up for a week in December at Soaring Safaris, in Bloemfontein, and duly made my way there. Roy was already there and flying a Nimbus 3. I was presented with a nearly new ASW-28, for the week, and told to get on with it. It was also great that help on the ground, and for potential retrieves, was readily on hand.

The location is the New Tempe airfield, Bloemfontein, which is in the High Veld region in the Orange Free State. The area is around 4500 ft. asl, and generally quite flat. It is an intensely agricultural area, with easy out-landings. Thermals generally go up to and past 15000 ft., but we were mostly limited to 14500 ft. by airspace rules. The air was very dry, so



bases usually were well above 10000ft by the afternoon. Storms are common. Oxygen use was a necessity. GPS navigation is hugely helpful, since there are few features, roads, or towns to navigate by. Besides, my compass in the ship always pointed resolutely north, regardless. Moderate to strong winds were a constant factor, along with dust devils.

The flying was wonderful, although I only flew on 5 days. One day I lost to very high winds (no one flew), and another to an excess of good wine the evening before. My flying was much less ambitious than Roy's, mostly in the 100 to 200 mile distances. Roy did a personal best of 660 kms (the furthest that day was 850 km, which should put things in perspective).

There was the SA Grand Prix also going on that week.

This is a type of racing, where everyone goes through the window as soon as it is declared open, and the winner is the first over the finish line. It is quite exciting to watch. But the other great factor is the social life there. Most evenings dinner is available at the restaurant/bar. There are pilots from all over, such as the UK, France, Italy, Germany, etc. I met people I had last seen at contests in the UK some 40 years ago (which says much about how long I have been at it). And surprise, on the last day, none other than Errol Drew showed up.

I would like to go back again. South Africa is a beautiful and rich land with a deeply troubled history, but with so much going for it. The Apartheid museum in Johannesburg is a sobering experience. But there seemed to be a sense of real optimism for the future, sadly missing elsewhere. I cannot thank Dick Bradley and his people enough who made all this possible.

# Share the Experience

by Rick Hanson

About twenty years ago, Chris Cartwright talked me into coming over to Sugarbush Airport from Middlebury. I had just gotten back from flying a spray plane in southwest Kansas and he saw the “groundsick” (his term) look I had knowing I was facing another long fall and winter without flying. On Chris’s advice, I talked to Myndy about flying towplanes - and I did, but (and Chris knew this, I’m sure) the gliders were svelt and shimmering sirens whose call would quickly turn my head. Since then, I’ve tried my best to return the favor by addicting as many people as I can to aviation in its purest form - soaring. We have one of the best youth line-crew programs going, and our youth soaring weeks in the summer introduce a lot of young people to the sport. There are active flying schools, airports, and clubs all over the country, but, over all, it seemsthat numbers of trainees and new pilots are falling. While

in creased cost is, most likely, the main reason for a nation-wide decline in the number of new flight students, there is another factor involved here. Pilots don’t share well. Okay - they do talk a lot. What they don’t do well is share the experience of flight with the relatively uninitiated. In any airport lounge at the end of the day or at cookouts after a day of flying, the hands wave in rough imitation of flight, and the “There I was...” stories begin. Nonpilots tend to duck the flying hands and gravitate to the hor’s d’oeuvres table. Visitors may get trampled at the door if someone calls in and says there is a ten-knot wave over the parking lot. My hope is that we can all take a few minutes to talk to that confused camera-toting visitor or do what Chris did for me twenty years ago and bring someone to the airport for the adventure of a lifetime. We need to share!



**Jordan Milne of Waterbury Center, VT, was an excellent addition to the line crew in 2006. We look forward to his return in 2007**



**Pat Hickey passed his commercial glider checkride in 2006. He was a great help during the busy ride season in the Fall.**



**Andy Olson, who received his private pilot certificate in 2005, got checked out in the ASK 21 and soloed in the Taylorcraft in 2006..**

**Photos and captions by Jen Stamp**



**Felix Krowinski of Rutland, VT, became a member in 2006. He got his private pilot glider add-on during the summer.**

## Soaring at the Farmer's Market

As most of you know, there's a farmer's market conducted every Saturday during the summer and fall on the village green in Waitsfield. Actually there isn't much in the way of farm produce on offer; most of the booths are given over to artists, book sellers, bakers, etc. So why not soaring?

I've been told that Sugarbush had tried this before – years before yours truly appeared on the scene. I'd mentioned that it would be fun to do it again, but the guy who really took the idea and ran with it was Frank Rodgers. I was wandering across the airfield last June, when Frank appeared and beckoned me into his hangar. Inside was a table with a few brochures on it, but more impressively, there was also this tall telescoping pole with a model glider perched on top (it was the same model that Sal DeFrancesco had kindly donated for display at the



Williston rest stop on I-89). Frank was full of glee at the prospect of bringing said pole – and glider – to the next farmer's market. So that Saturday, he recruited me and Ray Madeiros to accompany him. When we first appeared on the village green, we had a bit of trouble persuading the organizers that we were deserving of a spot, but they soon relented. So out came the table, and up went the pole. The pole had this interesting feature whereby when you attached a compressor, the pole would rise dramatically up into the air (to the accompaniment of a lot of racket from the compressor). But it was worth it, because the glider was visible to everyone at the market. In no time, our little Sugarbush

Soaring booth was surrounded by throngs of people (mostly little kids). Ray, of course, was a master at schmoozing with all the folks who stopped by. Frank had printed out these little cards that entitled the holder to \$10 off the cost of a ride, and soon he was handing them out with wild abandon. Everything was going swimmingly until the heavens opened, and it started bucketing down with rain.

In preparation for the next weekend, Frank made some serious investments. He bought a flat screen monitor, a DVD player, some additional tables, AND a tent under which to put this all. So now we had a serious looking operation. Once everything was set up, we put Frank Konesky's soaring DVD in the player and made it run continuously (more or less) for the benefit of all the patrons of the market. The only tricky part was finding somewhere to plug in our extension cord (we also had to make sure that no old ladies tripped over it). Once again, the intrepid trio of Rodgers, Ramsden, and Madeiros was on hand to field questions.

Was it worth it? We ran it several more times, and we handed out LOTS of discounted ride cards. Quite a few of those were redeemed up at the airfield. We also spoke to a lot of folks who had "always wanted" to learn to fly, but so far hadn't. I did see several of them show up at the airport for a few lessons. Just as importantly, however, was the public relations benefit of our presence at the market. Several people who live in the vicinity of the airport stopped by, and we had some fun conversations. Given that we depend on their tolerance of our tow plane noise, that might have helped our operation as much as did the rides and instruction that we attracted.

No doubt we will have the booth at the market again this summer. Stop by! If you'd like to volunteer to participate, that would be great too. Finally, thanks to Frank Rodgers, whose financial support made the booth possible.

- Graham Ramsden

## Update on Light Sport Aviation at Sugarbush Soaring

Our shiny new Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) [www.flightdesignusa.com](http://www.flightdesignusa.com) flew about 130 hours during its short 2006 introductory season. It is leased to Sugarbush Soaring, but owners can fly it before and after the official gliding season.

Scheduling and billing for the LSA is handled by the SSA office. Rental and Instruction are available for non-members as well as SSA members. As expected, LSA instruction early and late in the day meshes well with mid-day gliding instruction.

At 670 lbs empty weight and sporting a cantilever wing, our LSA, nicknamed "the CT" is very efficient. Its carefully measured 2.6 gallons/hour fuel consumption last season was a pleasant surprise. With 300 ft takeoff roll and 900 fpm climb rate, Rick Hanson says "The CT feels like a Mazda Miata. By comparison, a Cessna 152 feels like a Chevrolet Sedan".

A busy airport is a happy airport. If you show up at the field and it turns into a non-soaring day, consider taking an instructional flight in this new power plane. If you have not attempted the standard 50 Km Badge flight to Morrisville, take the CT with an experienced X-C pilot and explore the route. The CT is so quiet that you will be able to do simulated approaches to popular land out fields. You'll have fun and help SSA at the same time.



*Please pay your dues early if possible. This helps the club finances at start-up time. Also, just a reminder that the bylaws say dues must be paid by May 1 in order to use club facilities and equipment.*

## Things we didn't have room for:

**Sugarbush Soaring Calendar for 2007.**

See all the planned fixtures for the 2007 flying season at the 'bush

**"Final Glides" by Doug Jacobs**

That final glide is all important when it comes to clipping some time off the task.

Read the insights of a world champion.

**See these on our website at [www.sugarbush.org](http://www.sugarbush.org)**



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