

# THE FLIGHT LINE BULLETIN

## SUGARBUSH SOARING

Welcome to **The Flight Line Bulletin!** This new communication to Sugarbush Soaring compliments the seasonal newsletter **The Flight Line**.

The intent is more communication of our club and sport. The Bulletin will be less glitz, vary in length, possibly of more member and operational contribution and a concept in progress. This issue touches on much of last year's news and offers a couple member soaring articles.

**The Flight Line** is planned for April and we need content for both publications. Send your pictures, soaring stories and accomplishments, rumors and half truths. Please submit to Rob Buck at [moe1990@aol.com](mailto:moe1990@aol.com)

Welcome!

### *THE SUN SETS IN THE WEST...A FINE 2010 SEASON*

#### **SUGARBUSH SOARING SUMMER OF 2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

by Rick Hanson

Right after we opened in May, Myndy Woodruff, one of the major motivating forces of the airport and Sugarbush Soaring, again became current in sailplanes and as a valued addition rejoined our talented and very experienced tow pilot staff in the Pawnees. (Which also included John Tracy, Dave Agneta, Chuck Perkins, Dave Bahnsen, Bill Martin and Rick Hanson...ed.)

Also returning to the Sugarbush fold after long absence was Ron Spangler, who quickly re-qualified in the Blaniks, ASK-21 and the Grob 102, and his son, Owen, looks forward to becoming an official line crew member next summer. Jim Dowdle, whose family property,

still called Great Lake's Carbon, has generously offered an off-field landing site, returned to fly with us. Ken Andrews added "glider" to his power rating, became a club member and has one of the longest commutes to the Mad River Valley to soar – from Michigan! He flies at Adrian, Michigan and is a partner with Johann Finklemeier in the Yak 52 and "commutes" with a Piper Aerostar – beats highway travel every time! He checked out in the ASK-21 and Grob 102, having some great flights in a variety of conditions – including one dramatic flight in a rainbow – we're still looking for the pot of gold! Bill Newell soloed a few days after the Air Show and the Fourth of July weekend – his first solo.

We hosted another Youth Soaring Camp from July 11-17 with a full compliment of eight eager young pilots. Drew McCalmont joined the camp this year having flown with Bill Stinson last summer. He soloed July 15, successfully

working some light thermals on this first solo!



Our part-time summer line chief, A.J. Dayvie, famous for his long (but remember Ken Andrews!) commute from Colchester, where the weather is often sooo different from the weather in the valley - "But, it wasn't raining when you called this morning – really!" - got infinitely close to solo only to have to head back in early August to college in Bozeman, Montana. Amos Gaylord, Dan Lee, Parker Sheinfeld, and, toward the end of the summer, Luke Hammer, all played a valuable roll in golf cart - towing, launching, recording, and securing gliders as line crew members – we expect to see a lot more of these invaluable assistants next year and hope they don't make us look too bad by comparison with their enthusiasm and ability to rapidly acquire challenging new skills.

Quincy McDougall, a line crew member for several years, returned this fall to requalify in the ASK-21 and is applying to the US Naval Academy for admission after this, his senior year at Hotchkiss. Cody Long, line chief two years ago, returned from school in Nashua, NH to get current in the ASK 21 and give family members rides. Marty Johnson came back from the west coast for his annual visit and to get current again in the ASK-21 – a perfect flight with a perfect landing.

Riley Kissenberth, a soaring camp participant from two years ago, returned to solo in 2009 and came back in 2010 timing it well to fly in

strong wave on September 4. He also returned to Ohio Earlier in the summer he traveled to Ohio, becoming victorious for a second year as national champion in radio control airplane aerobatics!

One of our newer students, Ross Altman, hooked on soaring from a couple of rides over the last few years, worked hard and soloed on October 10<sup>th</sup>... His dad, Bob, is now hooked as well and enrolled as a student! The Altmans work in New York, but spend a lot of time at their house at the base of the east ridge, where, on almost any give day, they could look up and see red tail hawks and gliders silently climbing in thermals or cruising the lift on the upwind side of the ridge.



It has definitely been a summer for returning friends and accomplishments. It was also a summer for great weather (even on weekends!), excellent food at the Airport Grill, and some fun times at cookouts, an auction, and an Air Show that benefited the families of our service men and women overseas. Thanks to all for contributing time and effort to making this all work, for contributing to the Flight Experience for Youth program, and thanks for keeping soaring alive.

(Editor Note: Many thanks to Rick and Ginny Hanson for their devotion to organizing and running these marvelous soaring youth camps!)

## A GREAT WAVE SEASON!

The October Wave Camp was a success with great weather and many flights well beyond 10,000 feet ...a couple near 17,000 feet! Quite a few visiting pilots and sailplanes made the event a lot of fun, many being Sugarbush veterans from the York Soaring Club near Toronto, Canada.



## HOW WE'RE DOIN'

Rick Hanson and helpers had the sailplane fleet ready and ticking smoothly for the whole season. Rick Gehlert, the towplane man, along with the clever and generous Ron Webster, saw the towing fleet through a great season with but two minor maintenance issues.

The club flew 1204 flights last year...actually a low point unfortunately. Rides were up...but more instruction and members flying is needed.

Although squeaking out a 5.7% profit of about \$9,000, such only covers the usual expenses and normal aircraft maintenance...if the same or better this year. Needed is more income to build up a reserve for looming costs such as a tow plane recovering, engine overhauls, sailplane maintenance and unfortunate surprises.

For example, this winter the Blanik's are

having some wing rivets replaced that are showing the signs of many flight hours...nothing serious.

And most importantly, please consider paying your FULL membership with Sugarbush Soaring well before the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, once the rates are announced which should be soon. Then when we open in May, come on out and fly! The club desperately needs more members...if you can help, please do!

## IN SUPPORT OF FEFY

FEFY is Sugarbush Soaring's "Flight Experience For Youth". It pays for the flight lessons that our young line crew earn from their hard work. Last year we flew about 100 of these well deserved flights. FEFY also offers local high school scholarship for the yearly Youth Camp...we already have one sponsored for 2011! FEFY is all donations, and anything you can offer is needed and appreciated. You can send donations: c/o Bob Messner; Flight Experience for Youth; P.O. Box 123; Warren, Vermont 05674.

## OF THANKS TO THE SEASON

Rick Hanson's article mentioned our tow pilots and line crews. Flight instructors included Rick Hanson, (he does everything!), Tim Larsen, Bill Martin, Pierre Swick and Mark Bigelow, plus numerous ride pilots. And Bill Stinson, whose devoted efforts as an FAA designated examiner are a real gift!

Business/Office manager Gail Webster, with assistants Jean Tracy and Ginny Hanson are not only the pleasant voices when we call, do the scheduling, etc., etc., but behind closed doors (!) do many of the endless tasks that keeps the operation going. Even now, with our beloved airport snow covered and host to Ole's X-C ski area, Gail is working with those year-round paperwork necessities. And we have some great husband/wife teamwork with Jean of chief tow pilot John Tracy, and of course Ginny with "The Chief" Rick Hanson.

Mary Davis...Instructor Mark Bigelow's wife and another devoted team...does a bit of everything in the doldrums before and after youthful line crews are in school.

A good restaurant makes a great country airport better. Chris Bordonaro, the proprietor and fine chef of the "Airport Grill", did so for

Sugarbush! Chris is planning to return this season...Thanks, Chris!

And of course all the club members that pitch in!

The closing banquet was at Terra Rossa and was first class! We hope you'll attend the opening dinner this May!

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## **OF SHOCKING RETROSPECT...BUT WE'RE LUCKY TO HAVE SUGARBUSH!**

by Rob Buck



When I started soaring in 1964 at the vague age of 15, the sport was entering a boom-time of growth, technology and leap-frogging record flights. The latter two easily took the lime light, but taken for granted were the many soaring operations all over the United States, quite a few were part of Schweizer Aircraft's dealership system. They kick-started a whole generation of soaring!

My family joined the Philadelphia Glider Council, which despite its then modest fleet, had a big membership. More like a family, it made the sport a lot more fun. We were also fortunate to have our own gliders-a Schweizer 1-23 then an H-301b Libelle-which we flew nationwide, both for competition and companionship. We benefited from the many soaring sites throughout the country, usually having a place to get a tow, sponsors of contests, or when on travels rent gliders .

Last winter, remembering these days, my son and I were thinking about a soaring trip somewhere in the spring, before things were up to speed at Sugarbush. We looked for places mostly East of the Mississippi where we could take our 1-23, buy a tow, and maybe rent another glider.

We checked the Soaring Society of America website [www.ssa.org](http://www.ssa.org) (one of the many offerings of the SSA and well worth becoming a member if not already), and considering the size of the United States was surprised of how few soaring facilities offered full service, seven day a week operations as we have at Sugarbush! Many were clubs, some closed to non membership, with few if any open seven days a week.

This fact pushes Sugarbush way up the scale for being a very unique operation...full service, seven days a week, beautiful location, great facilities, nice sailplanes, instructors and line staff, tow planes, office staff, restaurant, etc., etc. If Sugarbush can stay full-service, it remains a gift to not just those of us who fly here now, but a nationwide soaring asset of valid potential!

**DAWN ON THE HORIZON...2011****THE 2011 CLUB DIRECTORS AND DUTIES**

Buddy Duncan – President

Fritz Horton – Vice President

Tom Emory – Treasurer

Tim Larsen – Secretary

Graham Ramsden – Marketing/Web Site

Ron Webster – Tow Plane Committee

Rick Gehlert – Tow Plane Committee

Bob Messner

Pierre Swick

*Director Dave Ellis has stepped down as a club director and former multiple-term President. Many thanks for his devoted tasks and concerns to the club.*

**PLANS AND OTHER THINGS**

Our 2011 season's calendar of events is still being finalized. Here is what is known for now.

Opening Day .....May 14

Memorial Day Cookout .....May 28

Soaring Encampment.....June 18-30 \*

Sugarbush Airshow.....July 3

Youth Camp.....July 10-16

Fall Wave Camp.....October

\*The Soaring Encampment is to attract soaring enthusiasts...new students, sailplane owners or not...for a social soaring gathering. It's also a great time for club members to meet new soaring enthusiasts. More will come forth as the season approaches.

## NEW WEB SITE FOR SUGARBUSH SOARING!

by Graham Ramsden

Last August, the Sugarbush Soaring board of directors decided that it was time to update the club's website. I volunteered to take that on. Being a newly converted Apple junkie, I was eager to try out iWeb - Apple's web page maker. iWeb had to be easier than Frontpage or Dreamweaver, and it definitely was. The results are at [sugarbushsoaring.com](http://sugarbushsoaring.com) and [sugarbushsoaring.org](http://sugarbushsoaring.org). Check it out!



You'll note that there is an "Upcoming Events & News" box on the homepage. I intend to update that constantly as the soaring season progresses. Check it regularly for updates on what's going on at Sugarbush Soaring. There is also a separate "Events" page with a detailed calendar for the entire season.

If you have any pictures that you'd like to share, there is also a page for that. Send me your stuff, and I'll make it available for the world to see. And definitely let me know if you have any suggestions or recommendations for the page itself.

See you in May!

## STORIES OF THE SKY

### OPEN COCKPIT by Fritz Horton

On a hot day in mid-July, I arrived at the airport with the hope of being able to add an hour or two to my very sparse log in whatever I could fly. The sky was blue again after a week of rain, but the soils were still sodden; the air was still and hot. Chat on the radio mentioned a few mini-bubbles working over East Ridge but not much else. The Airport Grill had served lunch to everyone, and the time had come for the lift to show up if it was going to do so at all that day. But so far, it had been just a smooth day's glide for paying passengers on their rides and more than a challenge for pilots trying to stay up.

The club's Schweizer 1-26 had not been flown for some time and sat tethered in the grass just



waiting for someone to take her up. I had heard it has a open cockpit turtle deck for days like this. A turtle deck is simply a cover over the frame behind the pilot with a semi-circular fiberglass headrest behind the pilot's head. It looks like one of those old race car fairings behind a driver's head that presumably served the same purpose. When I asked Rick Hanson, our Chief Pilot, about trying it out, his eyebrows raised as he said, "Now that you mentioned it, Fritz, why don't you install it and try it out?"

Removal of the two canopy sections and installation of the deck was fairly simple, but the operation had to be done carefully to avoid damaging the tape holding the fuselage's fabric in place along the joints in places that have been marked for repair for years now. Most important was making sure the canopy sections were taken back to the hangar and stored safely.

I didn't have a leather flight cap for this adventure and didn't want one that day for

sure. Since I am bald, I used about a tube of sunscreen on all exposed skin. After a briefing with the tow pilot, I found a good cushion, pre-flighted the old bird, moved it over to the take-off point and strapped myself in. After the two rope was secured, I wagged the rudder and off we went.

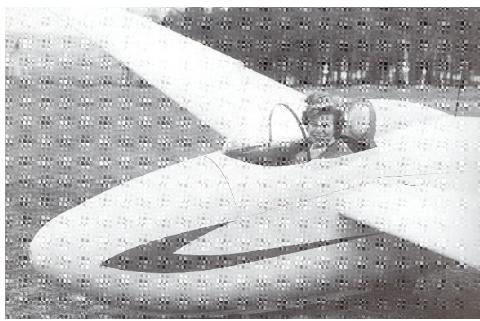
Our 1-26 has seen better days but is still a load of fun. Sure, non-structural tears in the fabric around the cockpit are taped to keep them from flapping, but the controls are lightly loaded and turning inside glass ships is a delight. Cosmetics really don't mean much in this ship.

Without the canopy on a hot day, the cockpit is heaven. I had expected to hear the wind in my ears, but heard only the wind on the fuselage and wings, along with the usual creaks the metal wings make at times.

The open cockpit adds about three inches to the height of the cockpit sides. Even though I'm not tall in the saddle, I was still able to stick my elbow out and rest it there like kids used to do when riding in cars on hot days and nights before seatbelts.

The tow was without turbulence at all, confirming all observations and warnings I had heard on the ground. To prolong the flight and give me ample opportunity to widen the glide cone in search for lift, I pulled the release high over our east ridge.

If nothing else, the 1-26 seems to know where the lift is, and it's easy to sense right away. Its vario is responsive confirming what you already know from your seat. After a minute or two we (At that point, the old bird and I were a couple.) entered an upwelling column of air,



*Not Fritz...1964 Schweizer factory photo*

rolled into a moderately tight circle and began to go up. The thermal's source appeared to be a well-known rocky building site on the side of the hill below. I didn't envy the workmen sweltering in the sun down there but thanked them for providing a nice heat source for us. The day definitely brightened at that point.

After gaining enough to feel we could go exploring, we rolled out of the column and went north. Radio chatter and a glance to the field below told me the white ships were gathering, and one was on tow already. We decided to try the air over the higher fields most likely to be dry and hot but found nothing and lost much of what we had gained. So it was back to the spot over the construction site, soon to be joined by one and then another glass ship below. Gradually, they rose until even, and then as we spun around at times I could hear them as they whistled nearby.

We followed them to another column of air over Scragg Mountain, where the lift was even better. Four of us were rotating counterclockwise in a 600 ft circle with moderate lift with me on the inside of the others. As he passed outside me, "VK" was especially successful in finding his own high road. His angle of attack appeared to be impossibly high as he rose at my 1:00. I started looking for a place to dive out of the way quickly if he suddenly lost control, but magically he just kept going up without slowing, as though he had an engine.

Eventually, the "White Fleet" left for parts to the north where we in our club ships are not allowed to go. We'd been up about an hour by that time, but the seat was still comfortable, the air still cool and the flying more than fun. We set out to the south along the ridge and found our original air shaft still working and proceeded on to Roxbury Gap. Nothing there because the air was still, so we floated over several fields and actually found one that produced enough to keep us up for another twenty minutes or so. Back to the construction site for another spin up, then an attempt to go west to find something with no luck again.

Another hour had passed, so it was time to let someone else experience the fun before the day was lost. With a looooooong tug on the spoilers, we wasted no time getting down, into the pattern and onto the field. Sure enough, a few minutes later another member anxious to experience the open skies and a cool hour or so up there took off with high expectations. Unfortunately, he did not have my luck, soon returning to the field and throwing his hat on the ground as he stood up in the cockpit. Within an hour, the ship was in the hangar, where it remained until the canopy was reinstalled a week or so later. Another day of constantly changeable conditions at Sugarbush!

## THE DAY I KICKED THE AIRPORT HABIT by Christian Buck



Having flown for five years in the Mad River Valley, I had always wanted to venture to those big puffy clouds that

always seemed better just beyond the reach of the airport. As though a bungee cord was tied to my glider, the farther I wished to stray the faster I was pulled back to safety. It took a while to eventually break that bond, a step that was bigger than the uncertainty of a first solo. The difference is gliding compared to soaring. One can glide within boundaries, but I was never able to fully enjoy the sport to its fullest without taking the leap, and exploring the possibilities of flying cross country.

On a day in early August, my little yellow 1-23 and I, were off late, about two o'clock. Although encouraged to attempt a stab at my silver C distance, it was a secondary thought. I was fine enjoying the afternoon, although tempted to try and cover some distance from the airport. For 45 minutes we...my glider and

I...struggled as good thermals passed beyond the Mad River Valley's East Ridge, pushed by the usual brisk west wind. Looking for someway to find new lift when the old disappeared, an opportunity arose as a few puffy clouds came to life a mile away. We jumped North to the next cloud street past nearby Scragg Mountain, and a few minutes later, took that big leap separating our ties to the airport.

Every jump to a new cloud street became easier, the airport now far beyond our reach, but many landing fields were below, eliminating concern. Flying the gap between Moretown and Waterbury became the goal, which was not too difficult. Nearing cloud base, we were forced to open spoilers and push to nose over to avoid being sucked into the massively lifting cumulus cloud. At high speed, we plowed our way over the interstate. The next goal was Morrisville airport, another 15 miles north, but first we took the time to search for thermals over my house, near Mt. Hunger where hikers covered the rocky peak. While we found some lift, it soon became apparent the sky had rapidly changed, and the flight was struggling. The time was four in the afternoon to the minute, marking the late day shift and the clouds disappeared.

We looked for some hope of recovering over the town of Waterbury Center, then explored the rising smoke of a few bonfires around the valley. It didn't work and we slowly descended. A last attempt occurred over the Woodard farm, over a tractor bailing hay. A little bump gave hope, but a few turns later nothing had changed. Considered the possibility of landing along one of the freshly bailed rows, but the decision had already been made to turn a base leg into Steve and Ann Friede's airfield, just over the tree line. We made a few more hopeful circles and checked for unwanted landing obstructions. The approach was easier than landing at Sugarbush, and soon we were floating low over the airfield's clove flowers, aiming for smooth grass. The airspeed dropped to 30 mph just as the 1-23 settled, like a sinking boat, with a snare like "woosh" of grass

along the bottom of the wings, stopping in mere feet. Sitting in the cockpit, with the canopy open, the late afternoon was calm and there was a feeling of accomplishment.

Although having traveled only 25 miles, it was new and exciting, as though I had flown for the first time. Looking at the sky, it was suddenly intriguing to know we had just descended from such a massive blue abyss. This quick meditative moment brought into perspective how incredible aviation is, not to mention how fortunate we are to enjoy such an

opportunity.

A personal friend's father, living across the road, was more than willing to assist. He gave me a ride home so I could con a team into helping disassemble the notorious Schweizer.

The flight was well worth the task! There is no doubt that I will try for another longer cross country flight. The entire experience has opened a new path to soaring, and once begun there is no wishing to turn back.

