



Sugarbush
SOARING
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The Flight Line

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Frank Koneski over Mt. Abraham
Photo: Jim Roettger

A Trip to North Adams

It is a nice late August day at Sugarbush and I decide to pull Y6 out of the barn for some aviation. After completing my preflight inspection, the tow rope is hooked up, I wag the rudder, and Y6 is rolling on 04. Shortly after takeoff we hit a strong thermal at about 750 feet but I am too low let go. Dave, the tow pilot, continues to fly a while and then circles back for the kill, he hits thermal on the money, and I am off. The lift is good, I focus on the air speed and crank Y6 up into a steep turn. A few turns later the vario gives me a positive feedback and life is good. Before I know it I am up to cloud base and thinking that this could be a good day! There is a cloud street forming along the East Ridge so I head over there to get a taste. I have a tendency to go north because I am more familiar with the route but this time I force myself to go south. I hope to convince Tony Lauck, TL, to show me the “the way”. So I call him up and convince him that he wants to go to North Adams, after all, it’s only a few inches away on my moving map display, and it can’t be that far away. Tony agrees and we make our way south along the cloud street. Down by Granville the cloud street starts to break up and TL gives me my first lesson of the day. He is flying a line to the west of me and I am slowly losing height relative to him.

Lesson 1; work hard at staying out of the sink during the cruise – no sightseeing! We fill up with gas a few times on our way down to Stockbridge and we come up to the first major hurdle of the flight. The ridge line of Killington Mt is right on the lay line to North Adams and there is a no landable terrain between here and there. So my strategy is to get high and stay high. Tango finds some lift just up ahead and I join the party. Before long he’s well ahead of me, but the good news is he is doing an excellent job of marking the thermals.

Lesson 2; move on as the thermal decays. I am staying in these thermals to long. The lift is OK as we make our way to Killington but I’m still uneasy. I dial up Rutland on my fancy computer and it reports back that I am above glide slope but the Killington ridge is still in the way. With time, I can start to see over the ridge, and relax a bit. Tango is now well ahead of me and I am back on my own. The next stop is the rock pile on the East Ridge just to the south of Rutland, and it’s working well. The trip down to Manchester is easy and I am flying along the East Ridge over the Lye Brook wilderness area. The valley floor has plenty of landing

spots and my seat in Y6 has a nice view. We have been flying for a while and I get Tony on the horn and ask him how much longer to North Adams. Tony reports back the airport is right at the base of the mountain on the horizon. I can only see one mountain and it is a long way off! What have I gotten myself into? Maybe I am looking at the wrong mountain? I press on, but the lift is getting weaker and moving further to the east over the wilderness area, way from the safety of the valley. I finally get to the Massachusetts boarder but I am low and in weak lift. I struggle for a while trying to get some altitude so I can make the turn point and back. Tony has made the turn point reports back that the lift is weak. I continue to struggle to gain altitude and finally decide to head out for the turn

point but I find no lift along the way. I make the turn and head back to my last thermal. I arrive low but the lift is OK and I can start my way back home. The trip north is a lot of work and I am starting to lose my focus. Tony is well ahead of me but has slowed down and the lift is moving further to the west away from the valley. Then Tony delivers Lesson number 3; he reminds me that the sun sets earlier this time year and we have better get moving! The lift picks up a bit and I make my way back to Rutland. Rutland is dead, I fly around aimlessly looking for lift with no

luck and no plan. The runway at Rutland is getting closer and closer. I finally decide to head for Killington hoping to find some lift on the high ground along the way. I get lucky and gain about 2000 feet and head north for the top of Killington and again find some more lift just before the ridge. I finally get over the ridge and run to Stockbridge. I arrive at the East Ridge above Stockbridge low but OK. I am tired now and am looking to get back up to cloud base so I will have a relaxing ride home but that didn’t happen. The lift was fragmented and hard to center. I decide to run along the ridge and “bump it”, lesson number 4 from a previous flight with TL, the sun is getting low but hitting the west side of the ridge squarely. This method increases my tension level but it may get me home quickly. I fly along for a while still trying to sneak in a few turns every now and then. I can now see Sugarbush and the runway starting to pass under my nose. After landing, I partake in a little “hanger flying” with my friends back at the Bush, one of the best parts of the day.

I look forward to seeing you all on opening day. The spring is the best time of year and I hope we will get plenty of flying.

*- Buddy
Y6*



Buddy & Pam Duncan

Spring Thoughts

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness...” Dickens could have been describing life in our 21st century world of financial boom and bust, geopolitical upheaval and moral uncertainty just as well as the turbulent times of the French Revolution about which he was writing in ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ or the first part of the industrial revolution in which he lived.

We live in an exciting time of microchip technology. GPS navigation, cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, instant messaging and social networking have been the best – and the worst things to happen to us. We have all become used to instant answers (just “Google” it!), effortless navigation (Garmin, Tomtom, apps on your cell phone), and uninterrupted access to our friends, family, contacts – no matter where they are (Facebook, MySpace, text messaging). Learn a new sport, get some exercise? Why get inconvenienced with practice and sweat? Wii will make you an instant bowler, skier, marathon runner – or pilot.

It has become all too easy to participate vicariously in life through technology. It’s way easier to plug in your current position and desired destination in a GPS and have it tell you what you haven’t the time or inclination to work out on your own. It’s effortless to set that three-axis autopilot and watch the aircraft fly for you. It’s

‘It has become all too easy to participate vicariously in life through technology’

time efficient and convenient to stay in touch with friends with a quick text message or a poke on their Facebook page. But - Master a skill like flying – not a Flightsim 3.0, but an actual aircraft that doesn’t just imitate life – and it is the best of times.



There have been tremendous advances in technology in aircraft design and sport. There must be a commensurate increase in piloting skills to utilize these advances rather than depending on them to take the place of training, practice, and acquiring additional skills to deal with an increasingly complex, crowded, and regulated sky. Flying is still a act of defiance of gravity – taking a contrivance of metal, fiberglass, fabric and whatever else off the planet earth knowing full well that it can’t, won’t stay up there indefinitely. This act needs to be learned, practiced, and repeated enough under a variety of conditions to have a predictable outcome – every time. All the GPS signals, emails, and tweets in the world can’t make the aircraft fly itself. Even a remotely - piloted vehicle needs a remote pilot. Let’s make it a goal to welcome technology, but give it its rightful place – in the role of supporting finely-honed piloting skills, not substituting for them.

- Rick Hanson

Ground School

I plan to do a ground school again this summer for all who want to prepare for the private pilot glider, airplane, or sport pilot ratings or who

would just like to review - classes meet every Saturday morning in June and July (except July 2) from 8:00am to 10:00am - I need a minimum of five to make it worthwhile and to ensure a lively (at 8 am on Saturday?) exchange of ideas. Cost will be \$225 plus books and materials (around \$65) - topics will include: Flight planning and navigation, General flight rules, Weight and balance, Mechanics, Airspace, Aviation Weather, FAA Regulations, and whatever comes up in class. I will have a full schedule available and on the website later in the spring. I had three sign up last year, but after the weekend when it was to begin, so the the class never happened. I hope to get the word out early and have members help spread the word so that we can get a class going again this summer

- Rick Hanson



**Frank Rodgers
Memorial Gathering
May 2010
Some Memories**

Hangar Talk

Treasurer's Corner As incoming treasurer, I am pleased to report that 2010 was a good year for Sugarbush Soaring. Generally the weather cooperated, we had no surprise expenses and a great safety record. We added the Youth Camp back into the program. Also, as a result of the increased interest surrounding the July 3 Air Show on the field, we added a new, \$90 ride • The Ridge Runner. This was so popular that we continued to offer it for the remainder of the season and it accounted for 67 of the 242 rides for the year. All of this gave us a year much like 2009 from a numbers point of view. We go into this year's season with about the same level of cash as we did last year and about the same level of fuel in the ground. In the longer view, year to year trends have become a bit more stable than prior years but still are trending downward. The number of members continued to decrease with 36 active and 53 inactive in 2010 vs. 41 active and 52 inactive in 2009. The number of total flights decreased slightly from 1226 in 2009 to 1204 in 2010. However, since the number of rides increased from 176 in 2009 to 242 in 2010 and we had the 80 flights of the camp, it appears that the total number of flights of members continues to decrease significantly. Your club needs to work hard in 2011 to reverse these negative trends. All members are encouraged to get to the airport and do some flying. Administratively, the integration of both operational and account tracking into QuickBooks has gone well and has given your staff the ability to see the details of day to day activities and members accounts on a near real time basis. Your club continues to operate with positive cash flow and there are no loans outstanding.

- **Tom Emory**

Tow Plane Status 14L and 84P are ready for the 2011 season only needing regular maintenance and their scheduled annual inspections. For those that don't know annuals run in the \$4 to 5,000 range for each plane. The nitty gritty: like last year we will fly 84P as our primary tug with 14L as backup. Here is why. 14L is nearing the point where it will need major work. This involves engine rebuild plus fabric and horizontal stabilizer structure replaced per an existing AD. The total cost involved could run \$50,000. 84P's engine and fabric are in good shape, but it is subject to the same horizontal stabilizer AD. This AD requires continual inspections at 100 hour intervals with the requirement that that section of the fuselage be replaced immediately if inspection finds certain problems. The guestimate is this repair could cost in the order of \$10,000. On either tow plane this could come upon us at any time and tie the aircraft up for a month or more; unlikely but it could happen. The AD also requires it to be done after so many hours regardless. 14L is getting close to that time but 84P is several years from the requirement. The Board of Directors has created an account that needs funding of \$50,000 to cover the rebuild of 14L a couple of years from now.

- **Ron Webster**

OPENING WEEKEND

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY 14 & 15 MAY

Welcome back to Sugarbush Soaring – Spring 2011. Opening day is Saturday, May 14. There will be an opening day dinner – time and place to be announced. We have another full and exciting year planned. The Club will continue to be a full 7 day/week operation this summer. Two Pawnees, two Blaniks, the Ask 21, Grob 102, and the SGS 126 are being readied. Also planned are a Spring Fling Glider Encampment, One week Youth Camp, a Charity Air Show, and of course, a week emphasizing wave flying in October. Check our new web pages for more details on our web site at www.sugarbushsoaring.com.

Membership dues for 2011 will remain at \$725 for full members and \$50 for inactive members. Please consider this letter to be an invoice and remit your payment by May 1st 2011. Send payment to:

Sugarbush Soaring
PO Box 123
Warren, Vermont 05674

Encampments

Yes, that's plural... actually three! There will be the youth encampment July 10-16. It's already booked full and eagerly awaited. These gatherings are well honed and successful opportunities coached by Rick and Ginny Hanson, with membership help. There will be the usual fall wave camp in later October that is so enthusiastically enjoyed by not only locals but also by our friends from Canada, Michigan, etc.

Then, the other encampment, a "soaring camp", is June 18-30. Of same spirit as the wave encampment, without cold, the event invites other soaring folks and clubs to visit Sugarbush Soaring and share some hopefully great early summer weather. Along with any sort of soaring interest or level of ability, coupled with social events, activities for family and non-fliers, and support to flying goals whether pre-solo instruction to long distance flights, the camp is modeled after those often held in the 1960's and early '70's. It is for members and visiting pilots alike, and a great chance to meet new folks and see how they enjoy soaring. This is a new effort for Sugarbush Soaring, so it may take a few years to develop momentum. We'll learn as this event takes on legs.

- Rob Buck

Thanks, Rob, for bird dogging everyone to get their contributions for May Flight Line in on time.

- Editor



Our Flight Experience for Youth (FEFY) program has been up and running now for five years, and has provided some three hundred fifty flights for our Line Crew youngsters during this period. FEFY also sponsored two students in our 2007 Youth Week program, and will sponsor one again this coming summer. Many of our crew have soloed over this period, and in 2009, we helped two (Cody Long and Quincy McDougal) to earn their private glider certificates.

FEFY is a registered IRS Section 501c3 (tax-deductible) program, and is dependent on contributions from Club members and friends to fund our Line Crew program and our other youth programs. In the past five years, FEFY has paid \$50,416 for lesson flights, solo flights, and licensing fees for these talented kids. We feel this is a wonderful accomplishment. Flying has become so expensive that it is very difficult for youth to participate in it. Programs like ours help make this possible for deserving kids. The contributions have come from many of our membership, as well as a few foundations and also several individuals who are not even members but who appreciate the value of our program.

We sincerely hope that even more of our members will realize the importance of this part of Sugarbush Soaring and will make even just a modest contribution this year. Contributions should be made to Flight Experience for Youth (or just FEFY) and mailed to PO Box 123, Warren, VT 05674.

The FEFY Board (Ken Blair, Ginny Hanson, Bob Holden, and Bob Messner)

SSA Conference Notes

By Fritz Horton

I attended the annual conference this January in Philadelphia and took a few notes that may be of interest to you. In the OSTIV seminar “SDP Safety Pays”, Eric de Boers and Helmut Fendt proposed changes now the works to competition rules to promote use of safety devices by applying “rewards” against competition scores. The idea is to encourage even the best pilots to add the most effective devices to their aircraft without effectively reducing chances for winning. Credits are skewed somewhat to favor least expensive changes (e.g. side-mounted stall warning yarns, anticollision paint, etc), thereby reducing chances of an expensive “arms race” to install the most expensive devices, though often the most effective devices (rocket-propelled aircraft parachutes, pilot extraction devices, etc.) are also the costliest. Below is the cheapest device of all and, in view of the high incidence of accidents due to low-altitude turning stalls in the landing pattern, the most needed device – a visual stall warning yarn on each side of the canopy.

Go to the Soaring Safety foundation page on the OSTIV website and download the pdfs for the Powerpoint shows to see this and other safety-related seminars:

- “Why You Hate Your Flight Review (and what to do about it)”
- “Ten Things Your Instructor Told You (that you forgot)” from the 2009 convention – both by Richard Carlson, and
- “Proficiency vs Currency” by Ron Ridenour.

Dan Johnson’s “How the Pilot Works” was very informative and humorous. His central point involved our capacity to see & avoid others. I paraphrase his points as follows:

Our eyes are the critical sensory instruments in see & avoid instances, but they are flawed in all of us. We have blindspots (fovea) covering approximately 1% of the retina in each eye – about the size of a glider one mile away. Each blindspot is “filled in” by the brain and cannot be noticed easily. Aircraft on collision courses with you do not appear to “move”.



Powerflarm



Angle of Attack Indicator (Yarn)

Our mountains often camouflage “stationary” objects. Finally, a glider approaching you head on, say, on the East Ridge, has a tiny profile. And by the way, according to the charts presented, **you have a maximum of 12 seconds to notice and avoid a glider a mile away on a head-on collision course.** So the question is how to find one or more aircraft on collision courses with you?

- First and foremost, of course, is to assume at every moment that you are on a collision course with someone at all times! Taking that assumption to heart should keep your head out of the cockpit and eyes in motion at all times actively scanning the sky ahead.
- Know where your blindspots are and consciously adjust your scanning pattern to account for them. A slight move of the eye away from your “focus” is often all that is needed to become aware of an object you would not otherwise see.
- Use one or more electronic devices to inform others of you and to assist you in your search. We are familiar with the various transponders, but new to us is ADS-B-In/Out devices like the newly ICC-certified “Powerflarm”. (go to <http://www.gliderpilot.org/FLARM-Tech-Overview>. Dave Nadler and, in another seminar on new instruments, Paul Remde gave an interesting presentation on “Powerflarm”, which can be ordered now for delivery in a month or so. This device, available as a portable or fixed instrument, visually and audibly alerts you to other aircraft carrying ADS-B devices of their location, altitude, rate of climb, and, most importantly in this discussion, the chance of colliding with them based on the types and performance capabilities of the aircraft involved (yours and theirs). At \$1,500 each, they are within reach of most of us. Many attendees ordered them at the conference. Presumably, current coverage in the Northeast is shown here: http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/enroute/surveillance_broadcast/coverage/media/coverage01.png

See you at Sugarbush!

FAI Badges

The ABC program, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Diamond C awards. Are they just something to flaunt, or what do they do for us ? The badge award program is not new, having been developed well before WW II. Yes, part of it was and is fraternal, and you can argue a marketing tool, for motivation or maybe think club revenue! But they also set goals, encouraging organized progression of competence for soaring pilots. While the efforts can be initially challenging, they are teaching lessons that once learned, like banking a glider, become subconscious. The efforts can be as exciting as you do or don't want them, but either way attempts, let alone successes, can be very rewarding.

Today's gliders, sailplanes or whatever you call them are obviously much better than decades past, but arguably the challenges and discipline to properly fly them is the same. Interestingly, the more experienced and successful an aviator, the more they seem to modestly seek more knowledge and ability. Back in the 1960's there was a lot of momentum to the sport, with a great surge in new enthusiasts, and in those days most everyone joined the SSA, reasons still valid today. The type of folks was diverse and interesting, and the aviation experience many was amazing. Some were decorated WW II and Korean War pilots, (although you'd have to do some detective work to pull it out of them), test pilots on the famous "X" aircraft including the X-15, (a guy by the name of Neil Armstrong vaguely rings a bell), grizzly pioneer airline types, accomplished engineers who did weird stuff they couldn't tell you...usually, other professional occupations, teenagers excited about aviation and folks who were hard working and clever craftsmen.

Most of these folks dove into the badge program, including Commander Armstrong, adding to the already long list of noted folks who had been in the sport and and eagerly earned badge awards. They saw the badge program as a methodical way to set goals, learn this new phase of aviation, and do it well. It was not the badge they were getting, but instead the experience and education from gaining the badge. Seeing that Armstrong took over the first Moon Landing manually, concerned of sketchy landing spots and low on fuel, some say it was the greatest off-field landing ever.

My decision to chase the badge program came after a third solo at the Schweizer Soaring School, landing from 40 minutes of clinging to a few thermals and trying not to drift downwind with a Schweizer 2-22. In a 2-22 on a breezy day, downwind was pretty much not over the airport. School chief Bernie Carris met with the words: "Congratulations, you just earned your C badge", and handed me a little enameled blue pin with three silver birds. I was dumfounded that at 15 naïve years old there was aviation accomplishment worthy of achievement.

So what really happens with this badge thing? There are 12 flying segments, or "legs" from the "A" badge for soloing through the completion of the Diamond Badge with it's 311 mile (500 km) minimum distance flight, etc. The initial six legs short of the "Silver" 50 kilometer distance flight...ABC, Bronze and Silver duration and altitude legs...do not entail cross country flying. They are initially flights of modest duration...read learning how to soar a glider...then specific ground school, spot landings and progressively longer duration flights to PREPARE one for cross country when and if they want to do it.

Precluding a lengthy list of what each step requires, slide over on the computer and go on to the Soaring Society of America website at www.SSA.org. The badge award details are at <http://www.ssa.org/myhome.asp?mbr=5361749529>

- Rob Buck



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