



**Sugarbush**  
**SOARING**  
www.sugarbushsoaring.com

# *The Flight Line*

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## ***From the President***

***Hello, Everyone,***

Those record-breaking temperatures in March had us wondering if we should open the club early this year, but since April turned out to be what March should have been in terms of temperatures and weather in general, we were probably wise to avoid that temptation. In any case, on Saturday, May 19, we will have our Opening Work Day and Dinner. Rick Hanson will be hosting the mandatory Saturday Morning Safety Briefing for all members, line crew and instructors. We shall then finish preparing the clubhouse and grounds and assembling the gliders for the 2012 season. Speaking for the Board of Directors and I hope to see you all there!

***- Fritz***

### **OPENING WEEKEND**

**Saturday, May 19**

**9.00 am Safety briefing - mandatory for all pilots.  
Sugarbush Soaring clubhouse.**

**10.00 am Club glider assembly - all club members are asked  
to participate.**

**5.30 pm Opening dinner. Timbers restaurant. Call the  
office for details.**

**Sunday, May 20**

**9.00 am Club glider assembly - all club members are asked  
to participate.**

**Sugarbush Soaring Association Board of Directors**

<b>Fritz Horton</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>Tom Emory</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>Tim Larsen,</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>Graham Ramsden</b>	<b>Webmaster &amp; Marketing</b>
<b>Rick Gehlert</b>	<b>Tow Ops</b>
<b>Ron Webster</b>	<b>Tow Ops</b>
<b>Bob Messner</b>	
<b>Carl Johnson</b>	

**Newsletter Editor John Daniell**

# The Wisdom of Ignorance

Socrates said “I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing”. Good place to start, right? Maybe that is where we should end up after a lot of thought. It seems a wise thing to

admit (especially after the fall and winter we’ve had) that we really don’t know a lot about the weather.

Looking up before flying is a good idea, asking others who have just landed is a great way to get some first hand information, but checking

out the weather by researching the NOAA, Weather Underground, NWS, or any of the many great weather sites available by computer, iPad, or smart phone would be a great way to at least find out how little we know. I’ll read anything, admittedly, but I read all I can get my hands on about flying - because I’m interested in the topic, of course, but, more than that, I’m always sure that someone out there has a lot more knowledge about something than I do. Have you read the FARs, lately? Do you know what they are? Do you know that they aren’t called that any more? The Combined Federal Regulations Title 14 (no longer the Federal Aviation Regulations or ‘FARs’ any more - I know - that would be too simple) have all kinds of good stuff in them Most of the regulations are so designed and written to put the most dedicated,

caffeine - juiced insomniac to sleep in a nanosecond. But, like me, admit that wisdom starts with an admission of ignorance, and peruse this time-tested tome of sleepinducement for the purpose of attaining a higher level of



understanding of how much there is to not know or to forget in the pursuit of perfection in flying. Read the manual for the aircraft or glider you’re flying. Sure, there is a lot of extraneous information in the POH

(Pilot’s Operating Handbook), but there are many important performance, maintenance, and operating limit facts in there that just can’t be passed on with a casual, ‘Hey, you can’t solo that from the back seat’ - especially with the wings off’. Read the manual for the aircraft or glider

you’re flying. Careful study of this document might eliminate those embarrassing ‘What does this handle do?’ questions. Asking, ‘Has this glider been flown today?’ is not an FAA approved pre flight. I know that on those days when we

**Read the glider manual**

are busy, and the lift conditions are seemingly good enough to thermal one of the golf-carts, it is tempting to just jump in and fly - a little wisdom might help here too. Is there ballast weight in the glider? Is there air in the tires? Is the tail dolly off? Is the rudder lock off? Is there a radio battery in the glider? Is the rear canopy down and locked? Any one of these questions would have been answered with a preflight inspection, if not a problem on a given flight (and each of these has been at one time or another), the habit pattern of flying the glider without first giving it a preflight and the distraction of the problem that suddenly remembering that the weighted seat is not in could certainly lead to problems in flight. Please, let’s all set our sights on being the wisest pilots alive by admitting we know nothing and then setting out to find out as much as we can before we fly to keep the sport fun and safe.

**It is tempting to just jump in and fly**

-Rick Hanson

## Sugarbush BOD Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2012

**Present were:** Fritz Horton, Bob Messner, Ron Webster, Tom Emory, Buddy Duncan, Carl Johnson, Pierre Swick, Tim Larsen, Rick Hanson, and Mary Webster.

### MINUTES:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Overall, 2011 was about the same as 2010

Number of flights 1209 vs 1204 in '10

Instruction was up by only 9 flights at 438

Rides were up by 14 at 256

Cash is up by \$12,700 compared to the time a year ago; however there are 500 fewer gallons of fuel in the ground compared to the same time last year. Estimated net income is \$14,000. Up \$7,000 from a year ago. Concerns going forward in 2012 include increasing maintenance costs, with little reserve set aside; and a further need for new members. Some members still owe on accounts. Some checks have been misplaced by the post office and have been delayed. Most of these are being resent. Members remaining in arrears will be notified in accordance membership policies. Buddy congratulated Rick for his efforts yielding good results in spite of a lack of advertising.

**Equipment/Maintenance:** Monty Sullivan has admitted there is a problem with the 102, but is unsure as to the cause. In any case, he will be repairing it, hopefully in time for opening. Both Blaniks require their annuals in May. These will be our last inspections by Ron Collins. *Maybe*, if the private owners find another inspector for their ships, Ron could be convinced to continue inspecting the club fleet. This is only speculation at the moment. Otherwise Steve in Montpelier will perform our inspections going forward. This will be less convenient for the club (especially Rick), and more expensive. Ron suggested that Jim Proft and John Hazard, two former mechanics from Heritage, may be available for private, or club inspections. Rick Hanson will contact John Hazard about working with us.

**Fleet Upgrades:** The 1-26 is very under utilized and will be needing expensive maintenance. The 102 is also under utilized, is generally uncomfortable, and has a barely serviceable trailer. Rick suggested it is time to upgrade to newer single seat glass ship and to sell the 1-26 and 102 to partially finance it.

. A used LS-4, ASW-19, or equivalent would be affordable and have good enough performance to make it attractive to pilots.

A useable trailer would be a big bonus and aid in cross country flying. Rick mentioned that new members have already brought up the possibility of a lease back as well. The BOD needs to come up with a plan to make this happen. The membership needs to be informed that they may asked to help with financing, if needed. The immediate concept would be to go ahead and list the 1-26 and keep the 102 for now. Rick stressed we cannot be without one single seater on the line. It was noted during this discussion that the hull insurance on the 102 is excessive and needs to be adjusted. Tom will run current valuations for the rest of the fleet past Rick Hanson for any further adjustments.

The club will purchase an LX Nano data logger, to make badge leg records easier. It can also be rented out to private owners.

**Youth Camp:** The 2012 camp is virtually booked up with 8 campers, but not yet finalized. The dates will be July 8 – 14. Ken and Fran Blair will be available once again to help out. Rick tossed out the idea of a second smaller camp for the those who couldn't make it in to the main camp. Ken and Fran probably wouldn't be available again. The concept was not pursued.

**Ground School:** Rick would like to do another ground school over several weekends. It would be open to members and non-members. Members would pay a nominal fee.

**FEFY:** The fund is starting the year with about \$7000 in the bank. Bob reports it is functioning well and there are enough funds for another camp scholarship.

**Youth Membership:** Bob and Tom have been working hard on the new Youth Membership category in order to solve the issues of solo students or young renters needing supplemental insurance. They have developed a graduated share purchase plan.



**Spring is  
just around  
the corner...**



**Marfa Memories. Photos by Rob Buck  
Rob's article is on Page 10**

**Nice Ka6 at Soaring Convention  
Photo: Rob Buck**



**RB, plus owners Fritz Hortorn and Dave Ellis, wintered in Arizona at the Tucson Soaring Club. See Article on Page 11.  
Photos: Fritz Horton**

## GLIDER FOR SALE

I plan to sell my glider this spring . I would like to offer it to club members first. Let's keep "2HI" here at Sugarbush. Call me for details. Ron Webster 802-496-7734 or my cell 203-245-5701 or email me at rwebster@gmavt.net

**Schleicher ASW-24 with Cobra trailer. Sr # 24010 - N244RW - 42:1 Glide Ratio - Total Time 1480 hours. A really nice performing glider with factory winglets, O2 system, Dittel FSG70 radio, Sage pneumatic vario, Cambridge vario, Cambridge L Nav and Cambridge GPS plus a new Strong Parachute. Everything you need to fly cross country or just fly locally.**



## Flight Experience for Youth

"FEFY" enjoyed another good year in 2011. Our kids made 66 flights, including those made by Luke Hammer during the Youth Week that FEFY sponsored him to. Luke went on to solo before the season ended. Some of our Line Crew kids have achieved quite a few accomplishments since they left the program. Perhaps most notable is USAF (recently

promoted) Major Kenda Blair who currently is flying C-130's out of Bagram in Afghanistan. After leaving our program, Kenda attended the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, where she earned her glider instructor's rating in addition to her gold bar. More recent graduate Cody Long has earned his FAA Airframe and Power Plant rating. In the six years since FEFY, a recognized 501c3 program, was created as an instructional program for youth, it has paid for over 500 instructional and solo flights for our kids, including two scholarships for the Youth Week. FEFY needs about \$12,000 each year to pay for these programs. This is raised from members through contributions, and usually two dinners that Rick and Ginny Hanson put on (with the famous auction and 50-50 raffle) each season put on by Club members. We also get quite a few donations from "Friends of Sugarbush Soaring", people who are not, or no longer are, members who appreciate the worth of this program.



Please consider contributing again to this very worthwhile program. Donations should be made payable to Flight Experience for Youth, or simply FEFY, and brought to the office or mailed to Flight Experience for Youth, PO Box 123, Warren, VT 05674.

**The FEFY Board - Ken Blair, Ginny Hanson, Bob Holden, and Bob Messner**

## SUMMER SOARING CAMP

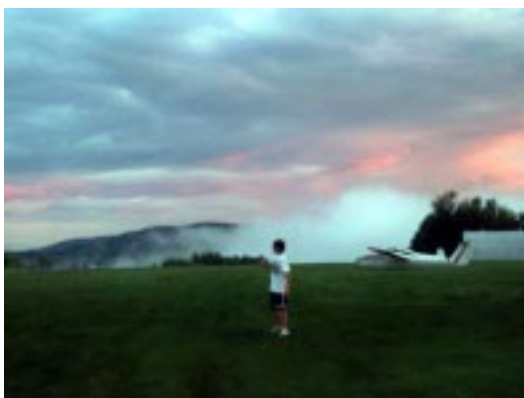
We had a busy and fun Youth Soaring Camp last summer with a full house of eight campers. Bradley, Justin, Chris, Payton, Colin, Austin, Nate, and Luke all got in ten flights, swam, kayaked, camped on the field, went to Burlington Airport for a visit to the tower and approach control facility, and made us all more than a little envious of how quickly they learn to fly! Ken and Fran Blair were again a great addition to the staff for the week, with meal planning and preparation, transportation and supervision of extra events (trips to the river for swimming, movies and meals) and Ken generously gave everyone a chance to fly in the Liberty. Tim Larsen, Bill Martin, Pierre Swick, and Frank Waller all put in a lot of time with instruction, while John Tracy towed us to lift, and the gods of weather were kind to us for the week! This year we have two camps planned and are excited that Graham Ramsden and John Tracy will be joining the instructional staff! The first



youth camp is scheduled for July 8 -14 and again is full with eight young pilots, five of whom are returning from last year. The second camp is scheduled for July 22-28 and is also full with 6 campers enrolled. Most of these campers will be attending for the first time and will be starting off fresh with their soaring experience. The camp weeks are active, fun weeks of flying, learning, and getting to know one another. We have, over the

years, been host to some talented, bright, enthusiastic young people, many of whom have gone on to pursue aviation careers. Chris Gubetta first soloed at soaring camp and is now helicopter, multi-engine, instrument rated, type-rated in

Regional Jets and is currently instructing in power aircraft. Billy Fredericks, another soloed youth camper, is an officer in the Marine Corps, has his multiengine and instrument ratings, and is currently serving at the Pentagon. Debbie Sperling soloed in gliders, went home and soloed in Cessnas and then went on to get her private



Bradley exploring the 'Mistructional' staff

power rating and was working on her instrument rating. These are just a few examples of what the soaring camps have started for these young people. If you get a chance, come and join us for the opening cookout on the Sunday night that opens the camps or come around when the campers are flying and meet some of these young future pilots - and get an uplifting look at the future of aviation

- Rick Hanson.

## A Soaring Memoir

**Bob Messner**

**So....,there I was,** tooling along in my MG-B on a super day when a shadow crosses the car. I looked up, a low-flying glider was passing overhead. I knew what it was because I had made airplane models as a kid. “Low” meant it needed to land soon. I followed it out of town a few kilometers where it landed in a farmer’s field, which also happened to be the local gliderport. They said they gave rides, so I paid my five Deutschmarks (did I say this was 1963 and I was living in Germany?), or about \$1.25. A few minutes later I was rocketed up (a winch launch) in a Bergfalke (club-built from a kit – common in Germany in those days) to the glorious altitude of 1200 feet; four minutes later, back on the ground. I was hooked. I joined the club (Bensheim Segelflug Gruppe) early the next season, and soloed that summer’s end after 8 hours and 39 minutes (Yay!!) in 45 flights (ugh). Not counting three about-hour-long flights, my average flight time to then was six minutes and 42 seconds. Altitudes not recorded, but the typical winch tow got the two-seater to about that 1200 feet; not much time to find a thermal, so I got used to low saves.



A wonderful bunch of people in that club. Very supportive. They taught me to set goals; there was more to soaring than just circling endlessly over the field, never mind the 1200-1400 foot winch tows. Early the next season, I got my German license (“Luftfuhrerschein Eins”), the 1,000-meter Silver C altitude gain and the monotonous 5-hour duration flight. They encouraged me to get

the 50-kilometer distance leg to complete the Silver badge. The navigation instructions for the flight were straightforward. (Charts? What are those?) “Get off tow, climb and head southwest until you see the Frankfurt-Mannheim autobahn. Fly

south following the highway until you come to the Heidelberg clover-leaf exit. Land in the field next to the Aral gas station and tell the owner. He knows what to do.” The weather never cooperated before I was transferred back to the US, so the flight had to wait.

Back home, I found that the nearest glider operation was in Connecticut, the Nutmeg Club. The first person I met was Rudi Opitz, well-known glider pilot here, but also a famous German test pilot in WW II. So I first learned about soaring in the US speaking German with a former Luftwaffe pilot.

Soaring Society of Dayton in Ohio. Learned aero-tows to 2,000 feet! Unbelievable!!

Shared a 1-26 with 7 other guys. On a business trip, got my US private glider rating at Fremont, California. Ditto business trips, got the Gold altitude gain at Black Forest, Colorado, and the Diamond altitude gain the next year there also

First cross-country flight in the 1-26, landed seven miles out. Hmm, more to this than I thought. Got the commercial and CFI glider ratings, private pilot airplane rating, and polished off the 50-Km Silver badge leg before buying a Ka -6 and moving back to New York City. At Wurtsboro, NY, got the 300-Km Gold distance/Diamond goal legs on the ridge down to Pennsylvania. Taught my son Bill and my daughter Patty to fly there. Had one memorable flight when I was with a student in a Schweizer 2-22, sharing the thermal with Bill in our Ka-6 and Patty in a 1-26. One summer, Bill and I towed the Ka-6 to Odessa, Texas, for a week. I tried for my Diamond 500-Km flight (257 miles wasn’t quite enough), but Bill got his 50-Km leg. His flight was a dirty downwind dash starting at about 12,000 feet AGL and following a highway (again) to an airport. From that starting altitude, I don’t think he needed to thermal again en route. I do know that his comment later was something to the effect of “So, this cross-country stuff – no big deal.” Kids! Exchanged the Ka-6 for a Schweizer 1-35 and finally got the 500-Km Diamond goal flight on the Pennsylvania ridge flying out of Tom and Doris Knauff’s Ridge Soaring field. I met Bill Martin and John Daniell in this era.

(Contd. on next page)



## Messner Contd.

Then the international stuff began. Another corporate move, this time to Venezuela. An interesting glider club there, all European-born folk who had emigrated. Winch operation with somewhat shabby aircraft. Instructed. One memorable flight in their 1-26 thermalling over a bullfight. Strong thermal coming out of that arena made the flight easy. Returned to the US again, traded the 1-35 for a Ventus B.

Much corporate travel gave many occasions to fly in different countries. A great weekend in in Narromine, Australia, where I rented a Ventus for the weekend. When I asked how to arrange for the customary check flight, they said, "We thought you said you had a Ventus in the US." "Yes." "Then what do you want a check flight for?" Love the Aussies! Asked the tow pilot if he minded if I did a high-position tow, rather than the normal for-them low-position one. Did a 186-mile out-and-back. A super flight in Israel in a Lark.

At one point the instructor said "your god is speaking to you". "Huh?" "Where is this thermal coming from?" "Probably that town down there." "What is that town?" "Dunno." "Nazareth." "Oh." A day outside Johannesburg. Check flight in a Grob 103; then they gave me a Grob 102 and said "Go!" Did a short X-C flight. The next week, a local flight in a Pegasus (French-built ASW-15) up near the Botswana border and the Kalahari desert. A wonderful flight in an old British Slingsby T-21 at Eskilstuna, Sweden. A winch slingshot in a Bocian outside Warsaw, Poland. A Jantar flight outside Athens past a mountain with a fancy hotel on top. Guests at the outdoor pool waved to us as we flew by at their altitude. A flight in a Chilean air force Janus outside Santiago that eventually took us past the ski resort Portillo before a looong final glide all the way back across Santiago to the gliderport.

And the best; a week at St. Auban in southeast France in 2000.

Also there with us were Margaret Roy, Bill Martin, Harvey Howell, and Marty Johnson. After the requisite check flights in a Nimbus 4D, they gave me a new Ventus 2a to fly cross-country in the foothills of the Alps. When I landed, I told Louise that was the most expensive glider flight I ever had; I just HAD to have this new Ventus 2. Hence the ship I have now.

On to Sugarbush. The first flight was a check ride with John Macone in 1966 during a visit. Many visits to 0B7 over the next eight years, including flying regionals in the Ka-6 and, in 1984, in the Ventus, but not here permanently until 1987. I have flown many contests, but never did particularly well. But cross-country flying itself has given me the most enjoyment in soaring, I have been doing this since my third year. Last November. I added up all my X-C flights over the 46 years of doing them; the total is 39,700 miles. Hope to crack the 40,000 number shortly. Lots of time left.

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## Wanted: Birdbrains

by Nigel Moll

It's more an insult to our feathered brethren than to the human deemed short on intellect. Even if you have never been fortunate enough to watch at close quarters as a peregrine falcon does the avian equivalent of a transonic dive, seen a bald eagle just yards away somehow propel itself back into the sky after topping its tanks on a carcass, marveled at a hummingbird sipping nectar or watched a hawk pursue its winged prey through the woods without poking an eye out and snapping a wing off, it's clear that even the lowly starling or pigeon has mastered skills that eluded man until the dawn of the last century. Troublingly, as Matt Thurber's special report on pilot training examines elsewhere in this issue, these innate skills elude some allegedly trained pilots even to this day. Broadly speaking, ab initio training has withered under the spectacular advances in technology that have given the inanimate airplane itself more innate intuition than possessed in some cases by the pilot, thanks to fly-by-wire and the positional awareness of modern avionics displays. The concern has frequently been voiced that modern professional pilots are more steeped in systems operation than in the fine print of using the laws of aerodynamics to defeat the laws of gravity. Two birdbrain airline pilots who (in 1983 and 2009) spectacularly pulled off deadstick landings in people-packed jetliners symbolize the payoff of putting early emphasis on solid stick-and-rudder skills as the foundation for all that follows. Their feats stand in contrast to two recent airline disasters that cast doubt on modern pilot stick-and-rudder skill. The two birdbrain heroes each had experience in gliders. learning to fly at the age of 15 taught me at the outset how to recognize and nurture every knot of speed and every foot of altitude. There is a case to be made for all aspiring pilots, even in 2012, to start laying the foundations with this rawest form of flying and energy management.

## WEST TEXAS STARRY NIGHTS, FIVE DOLLARS, AND OLDIES BUT GOODIES

By Rob Buck

### After Sugarbush Soaring closed

last fall, our season kept ticking with a November trip to far West Texas – Marfa! It was a small reunion with a few West Texas soaring buddies from decades ago and to do some flying with Burt Compton’s “Marfa Soaring”.

The first day was too windy, making you wonder if it is no joke that Texas is so windy they use log-chains for windsocks! But day two was a go, helping Burt Compton with his small but well run operation and learning how he did things. Burt is an FAA examiner, head of the SSA’s Soaring Safety Foundation and the SSA instructor-at-large.. He comes from an aviation family, his late father, Fritz, an organizer in much of SSA’s post WW II growth and safety issues, including development of the now standard hand and flight signals. On the theory that occasionally flying at other soaring sites is a learned good, this was a fine opportunity. An afternoon checkout in the their shiny new K-21 ended with flogging a zero-sink thermal near downwind, but amidst the seriousness of the checkout, there were the fleeting glances of landmarks and distant sky that brought memories from over 40 years ago.

You see, Marfa was a field of dreams, where my father and I pulled together an enjoyable, mostly contained parent-teenager experience of driving there, with glider, in 1967, where he then crewed for and sweated-out his naïve somewhat autocratic but well-meaning 18 year old son’s first national contest. Father Buck’s gutsy hands-off mentorship, considering Marfa’s

E-ticket weather, was a heck of a confidence builder! Day three brought a morning flight in Marfa Soaring’s Schweizer 1-36, kind of similar to the 1-23 of 1967. The November thermals of 1-2 knots were far different from those summer twisted up to a bit over 10,000 feet, which is deceiving with the desert floor already 4,900 feet above sea level. Wandering a bit dug up long ago thoughts of heading out on-course, as did staring at that point on the road north out of town where I’d made that first road landing in 1967, so decided to stay close to home. Besides, there was no trailer for the 1-36! Then the visual pilgrimage, squinting 11 miles southeast, laid the dark clumps of the now overgrown ramp and long runways from the old WW II training airbase, where three nationals and one world competition made Marfa a soaring legend. It was one of those deep gut, spooky, spooky, lonely, long ago wanting’s, where you reach for an indelible memory of your life’s foundation, but it will forever be past. You see the people, hear them speak, miss them and thank them. Then staring long enough at that old base, you imagine the light tan color of the huge cement ramp and runways, where you would glue your eyes hoping your final glider was high enough for a worm burning zoom across the finish line, after another long, draining, but worth-every-penny West Texas day of flying! So it was to drag the heart back to reality and land at today’s Marfa Airport, north of town. The real deal of day three was to fly with one of my long ago friends, recommending him for his commercial rating.

We agreed that we’d make this event tight and thorough, but he made it easy, being of sharp mind and flying ability. By the last flight, his tasks were complete, so we again flogged that weak evening thermal, pointing out the canopy at places of memories past, then finally in silence sharing the stark beauty of evening light over the high desert Marfa plateau. One last evening on the town, Marfa today is still sleepy and pleasantly dusty, but little remains of its cow-town heritage. Instead, a more eclectic, relaxed art community hides about the same neighborhoods but spruced up Main Street. My favorite became the great little NPR affiliated public radio station on Main Street, which you can stream via computer way back here in Vermont. “KRTS Marfa Radio, Marfa, Texas”...it has a cool ring when said on the air! Their late night – all night – music is anything but the same or boring! There was one last traditional trip I had to make, before heading home the next day.

After saying goodnight to my companions, drove a bit out of town, away from the lights of Marfa and where it is as dark as West Texas carbon black, then park along the lonely road. Looking up into that dark sky, the stars just about drilled holes in the eyeballs, as they blasted through the clear air, even if the humming power lines and even darker something’s out in the adjacent prairie spooked the heck out of me. The constellation Orion seemed close enough to climb upon, and there was the usually hard to see Little Dipper tailing off the North Star! Yup, the stars ARE big and bright over Texas!

## “Arizona Calling...”

**Fritz Horton**

Last year, Dave Ellis and I decided to take “RB” on a 2,650 mile road trip to Arizona for spring soaring. In late February, Maryann and I towed it to the Tucson Soaring Club (TCS). Dave and Barb are wintering in Patagonia, AZ, a little out-of-the-way paradise about 90 miles from the gliderport. TCS is at the end of El Tiro Road 25 mi NW of Tucson on federal land that was a WWII training base for B-17 pilots. The clubhouse is a 40x60 trailer complex elevated on concrete piers with a large covered deck overlooking the runway. Although the facility has no power, enough solar energy is captured to provide battery power to charge a long row of glider batteries and provide full-time wireless internet service; a generator can provide house power when needed.

Mike Danica, a day-time AP and night-time security officer maintains the club’s aircraft and oversees the property. Two hangar-workshops and an open “shade hangar” to secure 25 assembled gliders from direct sunlight are the only permanent structures. (Visit the club website, [www.tucsonsoaring.org](http://www.tucsonsoaring.org) for more information.)

Randy Acree, club president, shepherded us through the sign-in procedure which involved becoming “Guest Members” and paying nominal “dues” for that privilege. He gave me a check ride in a Grob 103 that began with a takeoff on the dirt runway into a thick dust cloud created by the tug ahead. His advice was, “Just follow the rope...” No problem. After release, he showed me where to find and how to fly the “house thermals”, pointing out nearby landout fields in case I needed them.

Randy soars often and scored tenth highest in the nation in 2011 on OLC (more about OLC later).

After his check flight and first flight of the season in “RB”, Dave returned to Patagonia and Maryann flew back to Burlington. I remained, staying in the TSC clubhouse bunkroom at \$5/night for almost three weeks. Usually, only Mike and I and the wildlife were on the field after hours. The desert’s cold nights, silence and bright stars were memorable indeed. I managed to read a lot and learned to have my oatmeal and coffee on exactly one bottle of water heated on the kitchen’s gas range.

Field activity began at about 10 am with rides and instruction, but most members don’t get in line for a tow until 1 or 2 when the lift is reliable. Though tow pilots are all volunteers, no shortage was apparent while I was there. In fact, on one day, two Pawnees became active when eight members decided to go up. Most had returned and were on the large covered clubhouse porch to open their first beers and load their flight logs into OLC by 5:30. After usually spectacular sunsets, several of us would adjourn to the nearby Circle “S” Saloon for large quantities of protein smeared with BBQ sauce. I met many fine folks there, several of whom were familiar with our club. Some of you may know Chuck Cramer and Randol Webb, both of whom live near us and may visit this summer.

High pressure generally dominated the weather for days at a time. I saw no cumulous on flyable days. The all-blue thermals were called “needles” or “spikes” for their narrowness and power, surrounded by significant downdrafts.

Cranking into a 45-degree turn became the norm, and it felt like being in a washing machine at times.

## OLC for You and Me!

**Fritz Horton**

In Arizona, Dave and I were introduced to OLC

([www.onlinecontest.org](http://www.onlinecontest.org)),

an online site where all flight logs in the world can be downloaded by glider pilots, scored and compared at any time. Scores are applied to your club’s daily record enabling clubs to compete with each other worldwide. You do not have to declare your task or even follow a course on your nav instrument. Just make sure your release height is less than 1,000 m above your landing altitude and the rest is up to you. OLC will automatically calculate a crosscountry course, throw in a FAI triangle if you extend your course laterally the required 28% off your longest leg and provide you with a score for the day for speed and distance. You can either view it immediately afterward or open the automatically generated email to see it. If you review my flights at <http://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-2.0/gliding/> you will see that I followed a set course on 3/13 but wandered around the sky aimlessly on most of the other days, yet all flights were scored with legs and triangles inserted automatically as if I had tried to go somewhere.

This year, Sugarbush Soaring Club will have a new “Nano” portable logger to record flights in our club ships. Uploading to OLC with the Nano is simple and almost instantaneous. Bottom line: Logging your flights on OLC is easy, fun and instructive. Let’s all try it at SSC this summer!