

# free flight fibre



2015/4



*Risk tolerance: The degree, amount, or volume of risk that an organization or individual will withstand.” – PMBoK® Guide, 5th Edition.*

**S**ITTING BESIDE ME on a flight to Portland, Maine was Jim, an avid mountain climber. He and his two climbing buddies have quite the list of summits. Our conversation led to the topic of risk management and I asked if he had ever found himself in need of rescue. “I haven’t, but my two buddies have when I was not there to temper them.”

In the world of risk management we often talk about risk tolerance, this is the amount of risk a person is willing to assume. We see this in the form of one pilot who is willing to take off into adverse conditions while another elects to stay on the ground. We also see this in the minimum height a pilot will descend to before committing to a landout. We recognize this within ourselves and even teach our students to identify their own risk tolerance by defining their personal minimums.

The PMBoK® Guide published by the Project Management Institute (PMI), “*A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*”, is a book which presents a set of standard terminology and guidelines for project management. If we take a look at the above definition it mentions organizations as well as individuals. Something we do not often consider is that while we each have our personal risk tolerance level, the organization has its own level of risk tolerance. This level is set collectively by the members of the organization and as such is dynamic, changing as members come and go, and can change on a daily basis. It is wise to periodically examine where we are personally and as an organization.

Too much tolerance for risk is bad for obvious reasons but being too risk averse also has its drawbacks. It can lead to holes in skills development, skills needed to deal with a situation as well as the potential for too timid a response to a given situation. Fear and avoidance of spin recovery training is a good example of how being timid would prevent a pilot from learning a very valuable skill. This leaves us searching for the happy middle ground, that sweet spot. The good news is that organizations naturally tend to be in the middle. Some members are naturally going to be more risk tolerant while others are more risk averse. The trick here is to listen to your peers and be aware of where you are on the spectrum and what effect you are having on the overall situation. In addition to noting what effect you have on others, you must decide if you are going to be more or less timid than some others. Know and respect your own risk tolerance level.

Okay, back to my new friend, Jim, or more precisely to his climbing buddies. The three climbers, as an organization, had a well-balanced risk tolerance profile. Take one out of the mix and the balance was lost. Jim was still a part of the organization, but he was not there on the day that the others required rescue. At our gliding clubs, although there is a larger organization, which is the club as a whole, or perhaps the Board of Directors setting club policy, the team on the field on any given day will set the risk tolerance for the day. I really want to emphasize that you do not have to be on the board, or be an instructor or tow-pilot to have an influence on the risk tolerance of the organization, in this case, a gliding club. Yes, people will be influenced by the overall culture of the club, but they are much like our mountain climbers; change the composition of the group on the field today, and you change the risk tolerance level.

Pause and think about a situation where you were suggesting a particular course of action for a club member. Was it outside that person’s risk tolerance level? Were you suggesting that it’s okay to proceed and were you potentially pushing someone outside of their comfort zone or more importantly, past their skill level? Were you properly reining them in, preventing a potentially dangerous situation from developing, effectively breaking the chain of events that could lead to an accident? The next time you are on the field, take a moment to consider your influence and how you personally are affecting the risk tolerance of your organization. Fly Safely. ❖

# free flight

Vol Libre



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Starting grid for the Club Class, 18m and Open Class the 2015 US Nationals, Hobbs, New Mexico. Photo ©Maria Szemplinska

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# The missing man formation

Doug Scott, SOSA

## Remembering Dugald Stewart

*The missing man formation is an aerial salute performed as part of a flypast of aircraft at a funeral or memorial event, typically in memory of a fallen pilot. As the formation passes overhead, one of the aircraft pulls up and flies skyward symbolizing the person who has been lost.*

WE HELD THE CLUBHOUSE EQUIVALENT OF A FLYPAST at SOSA in honour of Dugald Stewart, when we hosted the Ontario Provincial Contest over the Labour Day weekend. As we all held a beer in our hands, we observed a moment of silence, I pulled up my right hand, and held my beer skyward. Those of you who knew Dugald will appreciate this variation on the standard procedure.

His newspaper obit from October, 2014 says he was, "living out his passions of photography and navigating the clouds in his glider. He is now flying higher where the thermals never quit".



Dugald was a fixture at SOSA for many, many years, and had a deep interest in being a Contest Director at every opportunity, so it was appropriate that we mark his passing at our mandatory pilots meeting. Normally, he would have run that meeting, always wearing sunglasses inside, day or night. It is noteworthy that Ed Hollestelle, our CD, was using the clubhouse bar for his desk, because that is the very spot that Dugald occupied for the last few years, after he retired from flying.

Dugald worked as a researcher for the federal government, sort of like a librarian, and I think that's why he became what we used to call pedantic. One definition of that is "overly concerned with formal rules and trivial points of learning". He

used big words where small ones would normally do, and he packed a lot of them into his average sentence. At meetings, he would often invoke Roberts Rules of Order, a system first used in 1876 and long since replaced everywhere, except at SOSA. He was frequently elected to be the Secretary of the Board, and his minutes would include references to "telephonic conversation". I think you get the idea here, listening to him was always fun, but never easy. Much like gliding itself!

I first met Dugald about 1990, when I was taking glider ground school at Erin Soaring. They flew sort of like the Air Cadets, up and quickly down, so when the topic of cross-country came up, they invited Dugald, from SOSA, as an honoured guest to make the presentation. Knowing what I know now, I am very, very curious as to who made that decision and why. Instructors often note that the best preparation for early, or any cross-country glider flights, is the realization that sometime, somewhere, somehow, you are going to land out. I came from a twenty year background of power plane flying, and we used to call that "crashing". Well, Dugald's cross-country credentials seemed to be built upon his propensity for landing out. And enjoying it. At that time, he had maybe 163 landouts, more than the number of flying hours that I had logged. His Cirrus had poor dive brakes, and so he adopted a method of sneaking into fields that he referred to as stealth landings. He thought that if the trees knew that → p25



## SOARING ASSOCIATION of CANADA

is a non-profit organization of enthusiasts who seek to foster and promote all phases of gliding and soaring on a national and international basis. The association is a member of the Aero Club of Canada (ACC), the Canadian national organization representing Canada at the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the world sport aviation governing body composed of the national aero clubs. The ACC delegates to SAC the supervision of FAI-related soaring activities such as competition sanctions, processing FAI badge and record claims, and the selection of Canadian team pilots for world soaring championships.

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Material published in *free flight* is contributed by individuals or clubs for the enjoyment of Canadian soaring enthusiasts. Individuals and clubs are invited to contribute articles, reports, club activities, and photos of soaring interest.

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*free flight* also serves as a forum for opinion on soaring matters and will publish letters to the editor as space permits. Publication of ideas and opinion in *free flight* does not imply endorsement by SAC. Correspondents who wish formal action on their concerns should communicate with their Zone Director.

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est une organisation à but non lucratif formée d'enthousiastes et vouée à l'essor de cette activité sous toutes ses formes, sur le plan national et international. L'association est membre de l'Aéro-Club du Canada (ACC), qui représente le Canada au sein de la Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), laquelle est responsable des sports aériens à l'échelle mondiale et formée des aéroclubs nationaux. L'ACC a confié à l'ACVV la supervision des activités véliques aux normes de la FAI, telles les tentatives de record, la sanction des compétitions, la délivrance des insignes, et la sélection des membres de l'équipe nationale aux compétitions mondiales.

*free flight* est le journal officiel de l'ACVV publié trimestriellement.

Les articles publiés dans *free flight* proviennent d'individus ou de groupes de véliques bienveillants. Tous sont invités à participer à la réalisation du magazine, soit par des reportages, des échanges d'idées, des nouvelles des clubs, des photos pertinentes, etc.

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# Ridin' the wind

Joerg Stieber, SOSA

**A**MONG ALL MY FLIGHTS OF THE PAST 45 YEARS, two stand out as being the most memorable. I can still remember many details right down to the "feel of the thermals". However, a quarter century has passed since and with it came developments in technology that have fundamentally changed how we prepare and fly today. The differences are actually quite remarkable.

To prepare for a flight over unknown terrain today we would pull up Google Earth, "pre-fly" the intended route and look for landable areas. We would look up flights on the OLC to see what routes other pilots flying the area took. We would check general weather and soaring conditions along the route using *Dr. Jack* or *XC-Skies*. Well, back then the concept of the World Wide Web (www) was just taking shape in the minds of some smart people and Google Earth was still fifteen years in the future.

Today we typically fly with several (I count 5) GPS devices in the cockpit which provide data for navigation, flight recording, satellite trackers and emergency locators as well as collision avoidance. On-board computers with moving map displays fed by GPS data keep us out of airspace and calculate which airports we can reach from our present position and altitude. Back then civilian GPS receivers one could take into glider cockpit were not available. We used paper maps and compass.

Today when we land out, we take out a cell phone and call our crew or text them the landing coordinates. Back then, there were no cell phones, at least none that were affordable and would fit into a glider. I communicated with my crew Vicky via radio which was only possible at the beginning of the flight as the air to ground range is quite limited. After landing I would call her place of work and leave a voice mail, then a novel thing. Vicky checked for messages from public land line phones when she stopped at gas stations. Then she would pull out a paper map to find a route to the town closest to where I landed. From there she would follow instructions to the landing field which I left on the VM. Sounds complicated, doesn't it. Surprisingly crews always found their pilots but it could take several iterations and calls.

In July 1990 I was fortunate to be a member of the Canadian Team in Minden, Nevada for the Pre-Worlds or Ameriglide. The contest had started in a somewhat stable weather pattern, then some moisture from the Gulf added enough instability to provide "typical Minden soaring conditions" for the second half. This allowed speeds up to 162 km/h in Standard and 174 km/h in Open Class. They also produced severe thunderstorms, gust fronts and microbursts.

The idea to fly part of the way home was born during the long hours of driving west. After all, it is much better for the plane and the pilot to fly instead of being rattled over bad roads for thousands of miles – "Mad Downwind Dashes" of this nature had yielded quite spectacular flights in earlier years. Of course, these things require a very dedicated crew who is prepared to do a lot of driving and finally the derigging of the glider in the middle of the night and in the middle of nowhere. Again, I was fortunate to have found such a crew in Vicky Stamison who has proven to be a tremendously reliable help in many contests.

My plan was to follow Interstate 80 East then skirt the Salt Lake City area to the north in order to avoid lake effect and the various MOAs and Restricted Areas there and join up with I-80 again approximately 200 km east of Salt Lake City near Rock Springs, Wyoming. Unfortunately, I was unable to persuade any of the other team members to come along since they were all on tight schedules and had to make serious headway towards home right away. I talked to a number of local glider pilots who had flown to the east or knew others who had done so. The information I gathered revealed as a problem, the very limited number of glider operations along the intended route. The pilots who advised me only knew of Sun Valley and Driggs in Idaho and came up with a blank for



Wyoming. In retrospect, it would have been a good idea to put more homework effort into finding additional glider operations since both Sun Valley and Driggs are quite a bit off the route. I definitely wanted to continue the flight the following day and had therefore no choice but to fly to a place where I could get a tow. I also had difficulties getting all the maps I would have liked to take along. I had to settle for the 1:1,000,000 WAC CF16 US Northwest.

The closing ceremony for Ameriglide took place early in the morning after the last contest day. Vicky and I were in quite a hurry to rig, get oxygen, prepare maps and food and do a million other things. It was almost noon when we were ready to push out the LS-4 "JS". The airmass had been increasingly unstable over the past few days and had reached a point where big towering cu were already building over the Pine Nuts, the mountain range east of the airfield. Time was not on our side.

At the line, we met Bob Gladics from Sun Valley, who wanted to fly home in his Slingsby Vega, UX (Ugly X-Ray). Between getting hooked up and closing the canopy, we agreed to fly together at least for the first part of the trip. Bob launched first. When I came off tow at 6700 msl, Bob was already at 12,000 over the foothills of the Pine Nuts.

To catch up quickly, I didn't bother with the 6 knots or so I hit right after release but proceeded towards the hills where I was sure to find much stronger lift. Maybe I was too low to connect or it was simply too early for stronger thermals (during the contest, I had never launched before noon). Within minutes, I found myself barely scraping over the hill tops and I had to retreat to the field. At 700 ft over the field (5400 msl), overdevelopment shading off the southern part of the Carson Valley and a heavy rainshower approaching rapidly, I got lucky and hit strong, smooth lift. This time I didn't take any risks and climbed to over 10,000 ft before I set off in a northeasterly direction for the north end of the Pine Nuts.

The good lift Bob had reported earlier was still there and I had another good climb to a comfortable altitude of 15,000 feet. With the Pine Nuts, I also left behind the overdevelopment which covered the Carson Valley and stretched to the south. To the northeast, on course, conditions were blue and I proceeded cautiously. We planned to cross I-80 approximately 50 km east of Reno and to stay a couple of miles north of the Interstate to keep

a safe distance from the so-called Carson Sink, a large semi-dry lake which is said to produce extensive lake effect. As I crossed the highway, little Cu sprang up over hilltops and ten minutes later the sky had developed beautifully. Bob who was still 20 km ahead had complained about weak thermals in the blue earlier.

I caught up to Bob in Lovelock, in time for a joint tactical decision. The Interstate here swings north to Winnemucca then comes back in a southeasterly direction to Battle Mountain. The plan had called for cutting off the loop and heading directly to Battle Mountain from Lovelock. However, this turned out to be impossible due to a line of overdeveloped cu on course which was slowly moving north.

#### These were my options

- Fly along the northwest side of the highway under heavily developed cloud streets and stay in landable terrain with assured navigation but accept a big detour and the risk of the cloud street becoming overdeveloped.
- Detour to the south, try to sneak around the southern edge of the overdevelopment which was moving north and fly on a fairly direct course to Battle Mountain. However, this also meant crossing three mountain ranges and fairly inaccessible valleys that offer only dry lakes as landing possibilities.

Bob who had gotten low had crossed the highway at Lovelock already in search for a thermal. This tipped the scales to the second option, and I followed heading for a 10,000 foot mountain range southeast of the highway. Carefully I tiptoed at the base of the overdevelopment up to the mountains, trying to avoid the areas of precipitation and severe downdrafts. The valley on the other side of the range did not look overly inviting – a big dry lake on the bottom and nothing else. It would probably take days to find a phone if we had to land there. Since the valley was not unlandable, I decided to cross and fly to the next mountain range 25 km ahead which again was topped by a towering cu producing precipitation.

I advised Bob of my plans and he agreed to come along after he had gained sufficient altitude. I had good lift and approached the range, determined not to cross until I was satisfied with the landing opportunities in the valley on the other side. We kept jumping from range to range this way always carefully inspecting the terrain ahead to ensure we wouldn't be caught in a valley without landing opportunities until we could see Battle Mountain ahead of us. Having it in sight, I decided to take the direct way under a tcu with clear signs of precipitation at cloud base instead of detouring around it. The stuff falling out of the cloud turned out to be pea-sized ice pellets which first bounced harmlessly off the glider but as I got lower they started to stick to the leading edges of the wings. I could clearly feel and hear the turbulence caused by the ice buildup and noticed the vario going a couple of notches down. Fortunately, the airfoil of the LS-4 is designed to tolerate a fairly high degree of contamination without severe loss of performance. For a glider with a different airfoil this would have been a disaster. I stopped in a blue thermal in which I intended to wait in the sunshine until the ice had melted. It never melted – it simply dissipated.

Past Battle Mountain the conditions ahead looked perfect. There was no sign of overdevelopment on course and the sky was dotted with solid looking cu. The lift under the clouds was so strong that we had no problem staying in our height band of 13–15,000 feet msl by just pulling up under the clouds – there was no need to turn. With a little more than 100 kg ballast in the wings, the LS-4 handled just beautifully in these conditions. Here we had the opportunity to make up some of the time we lost doing all the tiptoeing.

As we were passing Elko, UX went on a more northerly heading towards Idaho while I decided to continue along I-80 because there was a band of cultivated fields along the highway. I came up on Wells around 4 pm and I could see the lake effect created by the Great Salt Lake ahead in the form of a large blue hole. It was certainly not advisable to fly further towards the lake so I followed a small highway north towards Twin Falls, Idaho.

Still under the impression of the excellent conditions I had enjoyed over the past hour, I headed fairly aggressively to a cloud 15 km north. The cloud fell apart just as I reached it and left me uncomfortably low in the middle of nowhere with nothing but rocks below. The next possibility to land on course was the airport of Jackpot at the Nevada/Idaho state line, still 70 km ahead. I had no choice but to backtrack 30 km to Wells where I climbed with 10 knots from 9000 ft (3000 agl) with the comfort of an airport nearby. Having become more cautious, I took the thermal all the way up to cloud base at 15,500 and proceeded north, utilizing a cloud street that had built over a line of hills paralleling the road.

As I approached Jackpot, which is nothing but a bunch of casinos on the Nevada side of the state line, it was clear that I had lost too much time over Wells to continue on to Driggs, still 300 km ahead. My chart showed the Twin Falls – Sun Valley Regional Airport in final glide range, 50 km ahead. North of Jackpot, the high desert slopes gently down into the Snake River Valley, which is approximately 100 km wide at this point. At 6 pm the hills in the desert south of the valley were still producing thermals up to 12,000 feet but the air over the valley seemed already dead.

I contacted UX and informed him of my decision to go into Sun Valley. I was quite surprised when Bob replied that he couldn't make it to Sun Valley and had to land short. It seemed odd since I had flown quite a detour and also lost all the time over Wells. I asked Bob to confirm what airport he was heading for. The reply was: "Sun Valley, Idaho – it is marked blue on the chart". I checked my chart again and, yes, Twin Falls – Sun Valley Regional Airport was marked in blue.

As I came closer to the airport I noticed quite a bit of jet traffic on the ground and in the vicinity and again it seemed odd that such a busy regional airport would be used as a glider base. I called up Bob again and questioned him and this time it became clear that he was referring to an airport marked as Hailey County in the mountains on the north side of the valley, still about 100 km away. As expected, thermal activity had ended in the Snake River valley and it was impossible to reach Hailey County from where I was. Since I still had a bit of altitude to spare and I didn't want to land between the jets at Twin Falls Airport, I picked a small airfield north of the city, Jerome, ID, as my destination.

Flying over Twin Falls I enjoyed a spectacular view down into the Snake River Canyon. It was good to see trees and green fields again.

After a 6 hour flight that had covered 600 km and one time zone, the wheel touched gently the runway of Jerome airport. I phoned home immediately and left a message for Vicky. As it turned out later, Vicky had driven quite a bit past the turn-off in Wells before she got the message of my landing and had to backtrack on I-80.

I estimated a four hour wait and went back out to my glider which had attracted a little crowd of local power pilots who had never seen a glider and were marveling over the aerodynamic perfection of JS. They didn't quite believe that somebody could fly in all the way from Nevada without an engine. I became friends with Fred and Hank and pretty soon I found myself riding to town in the back of a pick-up truck with a beer in my hand, as it is the local custom. Over pizza and beer we traded flying stories for hours. Hank was a bit depressed because his brand new \$120,000 spray plane had just been "eaten up by an embankment", as he put it.

My ETCA (Estimated Time of Crew Arrival) was pretty close and I didn't have to wait long for Vicky after I had gotten back to the airport. We had just put the glider in the box around midnight when Bob and his wife pulled up. As it turned out, Bob had landed at an airfield nearby. We were quick to accept their invitation to stay overnight at their house up in the mountains near the airport with the gliding operation we had been aiming for.

*Ed. I would pay dearly for a picture to accompany this, not of the mountains (see Grand Teton below), but of Joerg, beer in hand, with a borrowed cowboy hat, in the back of a pickup.*



**PART 2** *the remainder of this article – the leg from Sun Valley – was first published in Free Flight 2/93*

The next morning, we were awed by our surroundings. Twelve thousand foot tall peaks gleaming in the bright sunlight under a spotless dark blue sky. The mountains here were very different, very steep and rough like the Canadian Rockies with narrow valleys cut in deep. In Nevada I had flown over mountains shaped like round hills although many of them were over 10,000 feet tall.

When we went to town with our hosts for breakfast I realized that this was actually the well known ski resort

Sun Valley, ID. The town was surprisingly busy for a ski resort in summer. During the skiing season it must be a zoo. Over breakfast we discussed the plans for the day. Bob wanted to take advantage of the weather and try a record 500 km speed triangle.

We went to the airport together to rig the ships. The runway of Hailey County airport is in the center of the valley with steep flanks to either side and has a noticeable grade. Larger planes (from twins up) don't have a lot of room to fly a circuit. A missed approach must be interesting because the pilot has to climb straight out until he finds enough room to turn. I counted a handful of business jets (the larger variety) and was told they belonged to the Los Angeles crowd who have their weekend chalets here. Wondering if I would find it difficult to get used to that kind of life I watered up JS to max take-off weight. It was not easy to convince the rather posh service outfit at the field that we needed oxygen and we needed it right away. I had the feeling that unless one had a ten million dollar plane parked on the tarmac, one's wishes and desires ranked somewhat low on their priorities list.

Since he was trying for a record Bob took off first. At 1 pm JS finally left the ground, unfortunately a bit late. Climbing out, the glider danced behind the Cessna as the strong gusts coming off the rocks hit the wings. Bob reported good lift and I released at the edge of a steep ridge where he had climbed to 12,000 ft in 13 minutes. To the north there were snow covered peaks as far as I could see. Good cu hovered over many of them. To the south and east was the Snake River Valley, all blue and too wide (100 km) to cross. It was clear that I would have to cross the valley eventually since it runs from NE to SW and my intended track was roughly ESE. I decided to stay in the mountains for the time being, flying parallel to the valley in a north easterly direction until thermal development would allow a safe crossing.

Although I had to jump from ridge to ridge rather than following them, I made good progress. There was no problem to maintain a safe working band of 12,000 to 15,000 feet.

A good two hours after take-off and about 200 km on course, the valley started to curve more and more to the north and I had no choice but to cross. The valley was still blue but it had narrowed to about 80 km and my new course indicated a perpendicular crossing. I crossed via Rexburg, north of Idaho Falls, and aimed for the nearest mountains on the other side. Surprisingly the air over the valley was not as dead as it looked and I lost much less altitude than expected.

To the east the distinctive peaks of the Tetons dominated the scenery. Admiring this unique formation from my vantage point, I knew then that this flight would be among the handful of flights I will always remember. All the efforts of becoming a glider pilot and the frustrations of early cross-country flying seem insignificant in the face of such a flight.

I passed up a mediocre thermal in the foothills on the south-east side of the valley and continued on towards the higher mountains. Minutes later I had to regret this decision.

I was hit by very strong sink, losing altitude at the rate of 1000 fpm and was forced into a narrow valley (Swan

Valley) with the mountains to both sides towering high above now. The spectre of an unscheduled landing loomed larger by the minute and JS' shadow jumped along the rock faces as I was searching for the saving thermal. The gusts indicated strong activity but they were too broken up to be of any use. At last, passing over a shoulder, the vario peaked and stayed there for a moment – this had to be it. The thermal was at least ten knots in the core but extremely narrow and rough. The fully loaded glider was sluggish in the controls and I could stay in the core only over a fraction of the turn. The averager showed a disappointing 2 kts. One hand on the dump valve, I was prepared to let the ballast go as soon as the average lift would decline. Precious time was lost as the altimeter wound itself up ever so slowly. However, things improved, as with increasing altitude the thermal got wider and smoother and cloud base was eventually reached – phew!

In a more conservative mood I proceeded along high ridges in an easterly direction, passing to the south of Jackson, WY and enjoying another spectacular view of the Tetons, this time from the SW side.

A good looking cloud fell apart just as I approached and served as a reminder that the day would weaken soon and I would have to find a suitable place to put JS down within the next 1.5–2 hours. To the south stretched a grassy plateau at an elevation of 7500 feet. There were no signs of cultivation and although it looked smooth from my altitude I suspected that a landing would be very rough. To the west there was the Wind River Range, an impressive mountain range and part of the Continental Divide, running NW to SE, 13,000 ft high and 40 to 50 km wide. I decided to head for the NW end of the range and picked up a beautifully developed cloud street that ran its entire length

#### **The options were:**

- land at the Lander, WY airport on the far side of the range, distance approximately 140 km. (My chart ended right after Lander.)
- land at Wenz airport on this side of the range (in case a crossing was impossible), distance 60 km.
- keep going along the range and get closer to I-80.

I had lost radio contact with Vicky and also Bob quite a while ago. Bob had run into difficulties and given up on his record attempt. As I learned later, Vicky had a difficult time following the route we had planned before departure. She drove for hours on end following lonely back roads over seemingly endless empty plains.

The Wind River Range rises out of the prairie in three terrace-like levels. The forests with lakes covering the first level are quite a contrast to the surrounding flat brush land. I saw four boats on the lakes and cottages around the shores. Next up is hilly grassland, carrying no other vegetation with trails visible. Ice and rocks form the top level, the highest summit being 13,804 feet.

Approaching and climbing up the Wind River Range I was awed by its massiveness and diversity. ⇒ p24

# Crew make it possible

Vicky Stamison

*In the 1960s there was a TV show called "This Is Your Life" where an unsuspecting celebrity would be lured into a studio to endure a live broadcast of his life story. The relevant part is that the producers would find some obscure old acquaintance such as the guy's Sunday School teacher, who would tell embarrassing stories. In the previous article, Joerg says, "Again, I was fortunate to have found such a crew in Vicky who has proven to be a tremendously reliable help in many contests". Well, I too was fortunate in that I was able to locate Vicky who fondly recalls the trip, and many like it, from so long ago. Joerg, she tells a great story and I hope that when you see this, that you are as surprised as those TV guests must have been. The Editor.*

**A**MERIGLIDE, Minden, Nevada was in 1990. It was a precursor to the 1991 World Gliding Championships in Uvalde, Texas. Uvalde was the last gliding contest I crewed at. Just a few weeks before the Worlds, the Canadian Nationals were held at Gatineau Gliding Club where I flew for the first time in a national level competition, and it was also the last time I flew my glider, an ASW-19, "Sierra Quebec". Gatineau Gliding Club was (and still is) my home club and during the time I crewed for Joerg, I considered SOSA my second home.

I have given quite some thought to how I should present my side of the story of a two-day flight Joerg undertook after Ameriglide, and I have decided I want to take this in a totally different direction rather than detail oft-repeated crews' tales of self-reliance and travelogue. For reasons I will outline below, crewing was much more than that for me. In any event, this particular fun chase-and-retrieve took place 25 years ago, and most of the incidents that occurred have sort of slid into the area of personal reflection and impressions rather than the kind of technical details I would pass on to others.

The *only* reason I ever crewed was to learn *everything* I possibly could about soaring from experts. To that end, I crewed for and trained with only the most current cross-country and club competition pilots at Gatineau, Doug Tetu, and Wolfgang Weichert. I also crewed for and trained with Canadian National and International competition pilots who, at that time, were at the top of their game: Ulli Werneburg – multiple Canadian 15m Class Champion, Frank Vaughan, and Joerg – Canadian Standard Class Champion.

The one exception I made to this rule was that I crewed for Andrew Jackson of the Regina Gliding Club at a Nationals in Chipman, Alberta, and I also crewed for him at another contest in Claresholm. All I recall of that contest was flying into Calgary and, because I usually camped out in a tent at most competitions, the guys there who lived in all-metal trailers (and for good reason) very chivalrously surrounded my tent with their vehicles so it wouldn't blow away while I was sleeping! Andrew paid for me to fly in from Ottawa and crew for him. He didn't have a very good contest and was totally depressed

about it. So to brighten his spirits and following in Joerg's and my long-standing tradition of saving the glider from an onerous haul in the trailer and to unstress the pilot from the contest, I suggested that he fly home to Regina. Which he did. With a friend. I Ooed both flights – and Andrew's 640 km "dirty downwind dash" completed his Diamond badge and I think he would agree that I earned my pay that day.

In my own way, I tried to elevate my position of crew. The deal I made with all my pilots was this: I would crew for them in exchange for detailed briefings of their flights, and they paid for my dinners. With rare exception, I always paid my own travel expenses and generally camped out at the competition sites and quite frequently took Leave Without Pay from my job to attend the longer contests. Mostly I journeyed with Joerg across Canada, into the States and on to Europe. Through him, I met the best of the best (Ingo Renner, Justin Wills, to name a couple of soooo many). And I learned a lot – more than I could ever possibly have experienced on my own.

A question periodically arose: could crewing for competition pilots successfully transfer over into practical flying? Just about everyone said "No way". I disagreed. When my turn came to fly competitively, I was so comfortable and so at ease with all aspects of contest flying that it was just a natural step up to fly the Nationals. I did not feel out of place or that it was anything new – just a job to get done and have fun doing it. According to my logbook, on Day 1 of the Nationals I had logged a total of 316 flights and less than 200 hours of flying. I landed out once, making the rookie mistake of leaving early and not flying quickly enough, but for the rest of the contest I completed all the tasks. I had achieved my long range goal and proved a point. Overall, I felt I had a successful contest.

And I would also like to think I impressed the two people who mattered the most to my flying: Ulli and Joerg. In fact, I know I did. At a Provincial contest held at Hawkesbury, myself and Richard Longhurst from Air Sailing, hooked up and team flew a leg from Rigaud to Hawkesbury. Not very far and no big deal you say? Except we leapfrogged the entire distance between 500 and 1000 agl. ⇒ **p23**

# Ist PanAmerican Gliding Championships

Jerzy Szemplinski, SOSA

## *Winning contests is not simple*

**T**HIS HAS BEEN A HISTORIC YEAR for soaring in North America. After a lot of lobbying and hard work, the First PanAmerican Championships were organized in Chilhowee, TN by Sarah Arnold and a small group of supporters of major championships in North America. Originally the contest was supposed to be just Club Class, but they were able to offer two classes, 15m Class and Club Class. Adding 15m Class attracted pilots from the USA and Canada with experience at the Worlds level. The PanAm contest started on April 6 but at the last moment the organizers had to change to another airport because the recently seeded Chilhowee runway was too wet.

The Canadian Team was excited to compete at this FAI sanctioned contest as it provided practice flying with the same rules as followed at the Worlds. The North American teams have to switch strategies at the Worlds because tactics and strategies are influenced by rules. Changing strategy is not easy. The main difference in rules is the start. It's a line, not a circle. Assigned Speed Tasks and Area Tasks are also used equally in FAI contests, while North America contests have no such requirement. I prefer to use FAI rules as it gives proper practice for the Worlds, but it puts a lot of pressure on the CD and task setters. In the US and Canada we have very limited opportunities to fly true racing tasks around specified turnpoints used with Assigned Speed Tasks. We don't have these tasks in Canada, and the Modified Assigned Task is not the same. The cost of speed points lost and landouts is very high in FAI rules. In addition the metric system is used in FAI rules and communication between team members is allowed.



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The Canadian team included me, Sergei Morozov and Luke Szczepaniak in the 15m Class and Bill Cole, Roger Hildesheim, Joerg Stieber and Krzysztof Wiercioch in Club Class. Our Team Manager Jarek Twardowski was ready after his experience at the last Worlds in Poland and took great

care of the whole team. This article will concentrate on what was going on in my class.

The beginning of April, according to local pilots, is one of the best times for good soaring weather in Tennessee because air masses from the Gulf of Mexico are good, and if the air masses come from Canada, then soaring is excellent. The problem this year was those two air masses were in conflict over the contest area, giving plenty of rain.

I didn't have an opportunity to fly before the contest started as the weather didn't cooperate at home. The US team was very strong and two of their pilots were local pilots having good local weather and area knowledge. The US team had a strategy of dividing pilots into small two pilot teams who worked together in addition to working as a whole team. Their plan looked perfect and beating them seemed almost impossible. They had numbers and local knowledge on their side. Juan Mandelbaum, the sole pilot representing Argentina, has very good contest experience in the US since he lives there.

After the opening ceremony with FAI and IGC representatives, we had to wait two days for the first flying.

**Day One** A 3:15 hour Area Task with five areas was set and the first day of racing looked promising. Start line roulette began, and a strong wind from the southwest wasn't helping. The first leg was upwind, but most pilots stayed downwind from the start line forcing them to lose some altitude to cross the start gate. After joining Sergei and Luke in a thermal, we moved upwind of the start line with the opportunity to see the first of the US team start.

We started with a larger group of pilots but, after 10 km and a blue hole ahead, I decided that the timing was not perfect and returned to the start gate along with Sergei and Luke, and six minutes later clouds lined up a little better and we started after the group. Luke was 200 feet lower but kept going with us. After 50 km we caught the first group, already gaining six minutes on them. After the first turn area Luke got separated from us and we could only exchange information by radio instead of actually seeing each other.

All was going fairly good until the third area; the clouds looked good but the decision was, how deep to go as the fourth area looked blue and coming home too early could be costly. I went deep into the third area under plenty of clouds which weren't working, then coming back upwind under the same decaying clouds wasn't fun. Soon I was down to 2000 feet agl and Luke reported a



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low save 10 km upwind of me. I deviated 5 km towards the sun where I was able to connect with a weak thermal, which soon improved and I was able to gain altitude.

Touching the last two areas wasn't a problem. I arrived almost 20 minutes overtime, but other pilots had problems as well and they arrived even later. I won the day with 30 points more than the second place pilot. Sergei finished fifth and Luke was eighth. Three other pilots from our class landed out.

**Day Two** We had very strong southwest winds again, and the main ridge was useless as the wind was parallel to it. Take-off was postponed a couple of times as cloud base was very low and the strong wind didn't help. From the ground I could see that wisps over the ridge were higher, but it was evident that there was a lot of turbulence above the ridge and the lift could likely be broken.

After release I was able to climb to 3000 ft agl and moved slowly 12 km to the ridge area. I was surprised that no one went with me. I hit a strong turbulent thermal and reported to Luke and Sergei. Sergei could not connect with the clouds to get to the ridge, but Luke joined me above the ridge. I started as soon as the gate opened because we could see bad weather coming from the west. Luke started a minute behind me. Because of altitude limitations we had to start low and then climb. I was able to connect with a very strong, turbulent thermal.

I flew upwind without thermaling to the first gap in the ridge, Luke had a little better street and joined me. We moved forward, but each turn in lift less than 4 kts was pushing us back due to the headwind. We moved to the next ridge where I was able to connect with a thermal, but Luke was 500 ft lower and could not go over the ridge to where the lift was and was forced to find thermals on lower ground. I was able to climb to cloud base and go upwind to the first turn area without thermaling.

The clouds were working, but overcast and overdevelopment was around and it was just a matter of time when all would fall apart. The wind was above 25 kts so I knew that coming back will be fast, but I had to avoid finishing under time. When I was at the far end of the first cylinder, my computer was showing that I was under time more than 20 minutes, very expensive in lost points, but there was no other choice. At the same time I heard that Luke landed out and that a large number of pilots from my class landed in Chilhowee. (We needed four pilots to do a minimum 100 km to have a valid task.)

Coming back downwind was easy but the clouds fell apart and I had to do a 50 km glide back to the sun that was close to the second turn area. I went just 100 m inside the area and kept going towards the sun which was close to the ridge but when I arrived at around 1000 ft there was no lift. With a landout field picked I switch to

survival mode. Zero sink was good enough as the wind was pushing me closer to the finish line and the ridge. Finally I gained an extra 500 ft and moved to the ridge where I connected with a nice thermal and gained enough altitude for final glide. I won the day but only one other pilot, Sean Fidler (US) finished the task. After starting, a whole group of the US team pushed hard to the ridge, all ending up in a field next to Chilhowee. Luke was 17.5 km short of the minimum 100 km and François Pin flew only 57 km. All that work for nothing – the day didn't count.

**Day 2 (again)** Now two days later, cirrus from the west, weak lift, and because of the rules we needed an Assigned Task, so a 298 km task was set to the southwest for FAI Class. Club Class left first to the northeast with some sun.

I started with Sergei and Luke at the same time, trying to use any trace of lift. From the beginning it looked like a race to a landout field, the question was who will fly the farthest. We joined several US pilots and moved slowly towards the ridge hoping for some lift trigger.

The cirrus was thicker and thicker, and the first pilots landed in fields. I was able to struggle 5 minutes longer and landed in a field as well. Twenty minutes later an ASW-19 pilot from Club Class arrived over my field and climbed out to fly 20 km more. Most of the pilots reached the minimum 100 km, Erick Nielson of the USA won the day with 127 km. He had enough extra altitude to go an additional 15 km, but unlandable terrain ahead of him forced him to land from 2000 ft agl. With 119 km I took third place. Luke placed fourth and Sergei was tenth. I was still first place overall.

**Day 3** It was again an Assigned Speed Task, just 147 km as the weather didn't look good. In a short task all could be easily lost – any error is very costly. Eric was only seven points behind me and he was flying well with his teammate, Sean Murphy. Being in first place identifies you as somebody to watch and some US pilots were reporting my position to each other.

Luke was with Sean and Eric and they have a hard time connecting with the clouds before the start gate opened. I moved over to the ridge where I was able to climb to cloud base. As soon as I got altitude I met Sergei and decided to start, as there was a cloud street right on course and the chance for another cycle was very slim. As soon as we started, several US pilots followed us and the race began, we were in the lead half way up the second leg. Sergei lost a little altitude and I was in front, but because of blue conditions ahead near the next turnpoint, it was risky to be alone. A group of six gliders joined me and we continued together for most of the task. The group had two minutes lead on me but Eric wasn't in that group so I had hope. I finished a minute ahead of the group, 1.5 minutes behind the winner of the day. This was enough to extend my lead to 146 points over Eric, and Sean Fidler, who was in second position, was 78 points behind me.

**Day 4** The next four days we had rain; we tried to fly but the weather didn't cooperate. Saturday, the last day of the contest, was supposed to be the closing ceremony day. During the Worlds, the last day is reserved as a day to fly in case another day was needed to have a valid contest. The PanAm

organizers didn't put it in the rules before the contest, but after consultation with the FAI and IGC representatives, the last day was used to fly.

The weather looked almost impossible, cirrus everywhere, but some blue holes in it, and a front from the west was approaching fast. After almost two hours of waiting we were launched for a 2-hour Area Task, zero sink and sometimes 1 knot lift was all we could find.

The gate was opened and some gliders started right away much higher than me, and Sergei and Luke went on course. As I was low I had to fly back to the airport for a potential relight. Just when I was ready to enter downwind I connected with 2-3 knot lift and slowly climbed to cloud base. I made a new start and slowly went on course. I met several gliders from my class, thinking that they were returning from the first turn area. To my surprise they were still on the first leg. After speaking with Luke he convinced me that I had caught the whole group. We flew together with Luke and Sergei for some time, then Sergei connected with better lift and went deep into the third area. Jarek informed us about approaching rain from the west and I could see a heavy dark band of frontal rain.

The last turn area was already under the influence of rain, but I was able to climb from 1000 feet just in front of the rain, to claim the last turn area and finish with the first drops of rain. I was first to finish and was hoping that at least three other pilots will finish to have a valid task and contest. The contest was valid and I won the 15m Class.

Four other pilots finished the task including Sergei who finished overall in fourth place. Luke had gone a little deeper into the last area and rain forced him to land out and he finished the contest in ninth place.

The first PanAm contest ended with great achievements by Canadian pilots as Canada won the Team Cup against a strong and large US Team. We had one of the best teams in Canadian soaring history. Flying consistency paid off. All this was made possible with the help from our Manager Jarek and dedicated crews: Lucile Hildesheim, Maria Szemplinska, Dan Daly, Kerry Kirby, Ray and Pat Wood and Gary Baker. Jarek took excellent care not only of administrative duties but with the help of Kerry and others, fixed the axle of Luke's trailer and helped in retrieves out of very soft fields.

The Soaring Association of Canada supported the team by covering the cost of entry fees which was a great help, especially for the younger pilots. This was the greatest and most public achievement in Canadian soaring history to date. Canada is the current Team Soaring leader in the Americas. Contest flying is the engine of progress for our sport, and is needed to stimulate interest in soaring all across our country. We take great pride in being Canadians and being good in this highly competitive and environmentally friendly sport. ❖

*Editor's note: Our congratulations to Jerzy and the rest of the Canadian Team, and especially to the crews who helped make this possible.*

# the 2015 Ontario Provincials

Dave Cole, TSC & Rafael Bravo, SOSA

## Dave Cole 1st place, Club Class

**N**OW THAT WE ARE ALL BACK from our selected landout field, it was a tough day, my final thoughts about the 2015 Ontario Provincials are – let's do this again!

The goals were to be safe, have fun, and get more cross-country/racing experience. The weekend was a great success – not because we had 8 knot thermals to 10,000 feet (that only happens in our dreams) but largely due to the seasoned and dedicated organizers. A big thank you to Ed, Doug, Diane, Dave, Virginia, Rob, line crew, towpilots, beer fridge manager, and all the others who made this weekend run smoothly. In some ways Ed Hollestelle, as Contest Director, had a harder job than the pilots did, because he had to decide, “should we stay or should we go”, and the weather and soaring conditions were hard to predict.

**Day 0** We all struggled to get 3000 feet agl and the lift was cycling quickly. A good training day in trying to stay aloft, we chose an early happy hour rather than a mass landout. To show you how bad it was, there was one land-out while we decided whether or not to open the gate. Luke Szczepaniak and Sean Fidler, our two pirates, actually made it around the course in their usual swashbuckling style.

**Day 1** The first 10 km to the Grand River was a struggle – but things got a lot easier after that. We were all looking for thunderstorms – but they didn't happen and we had a fine day.

**Day 2** Higher cloud bases, windy and a cold front was approaching. The lift was broken up until about 4000 feet and then it became solid up to over 5000 feet. Enroute to Tavistock I heard some of the FAI Class returning without finishing – hmm. I found incredible lift under a dark cloud with a beautiful dark street headed past our turnpoint. After running this and returning, more and more landout calls were coming across the radio.

I got the Brantford turnpoint and then started a slow quiet descent towards Woodstock. Not “to Woodstock”, but “towards Woodstock”. But, I went farther than the other guys before I landed out. A great training day for retrieve crew!

Long weekend contests like this are great because they are local and easy to attend, great for new pilots to learn about contest flying, great for new pilots to learn about contest flying, add lots of energy to your club, and they are fun!

If your club has some interest – plan a weekend next year! You can often adopt experienced help and equipment from other clubs if needed. Also note that SAC provides funds to help promote contests too.



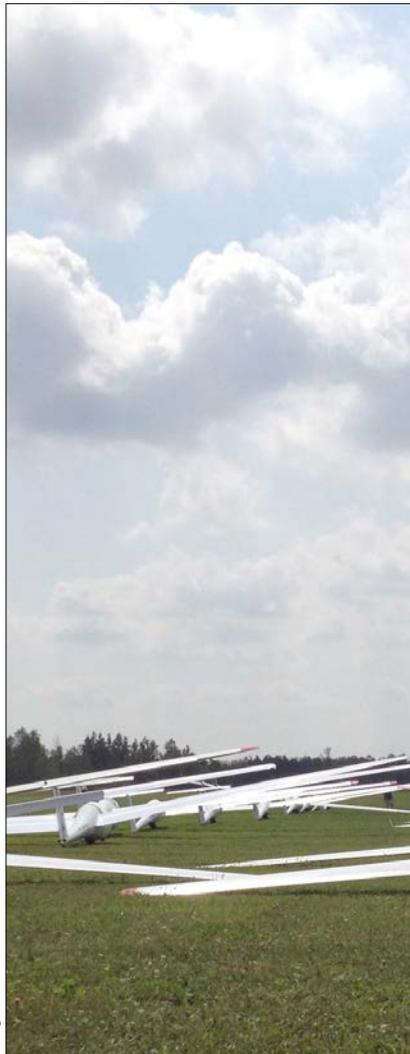
## Rafael Bravo

*Editor: Rafael was the breakout star of Club Class. Day 0 he was the only landout, but Day 1, flying a SOSA ASK-21, he was frequently observed to be much higher than guys flying better-performing single seat gliders. We awarded him the “Most Improved Pilot” award.*

This was my first contest after many years of hesitating due to family obligations. It is hard to tell your wife and two girls that they can't go to the cottage because I have to spend days waiting to see if we'll be able to fly for a total of two hours over four days in marginal conditions. I have been flying cross-country for a few years and I have been around for a few nationals and provincials at SOSA, sometimes even grabbing one of our club gliders and joining the competitors around the course. Finally this year I decided to join in with the plan of going in a two-seater and taking a different club member as P2 each day. I have been an instructor at SOSA's cross-country clinic several times and I found it very rewarding and fun to fly dual cross-country with new pilots. (Note that SOSA hosts two clinics each year, one advanced clinic led by Dave Springford et al for those who want to fly at 90+ km/h average, and one led by John Brennan et al for those who want to fly at 50 km/h average; I help in the latter). I requested a K-21 from SOSA's fleet and it was granted to me! Turns out the two club LS-4s were available and unflown during the contest. Had I known... I'm proud of having flown the lowest performing glider in the contest, with the possible exception of Ray's PW-5.

The weather forecast for the weekend was dominated by a stagnant high southeast of SOSA, which had brought hot, humid and hazy conditions for most of the week and was expected to linger until after the contest.

**Day 0** Grid is launched after the sniffer managed to stay up and climb to 3000 agl. I launched towards the end of the grid with Rob Russell as P2. My first flight as



2015 ONTARIO PROVINCIAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIP				6 Sept				7 Sept				Total
				DAY 1				DAY 2				pts
CLUB CLASS				2.5 hour TAT				1.5 hour TAT				
pos	kph	km	pts	pos	kph	km	pts	pos	kph	km	pts	pts
1	David Cole	SZD 55-1	AFI	2	58.95	155.5	933	1	–	88.57	480	1413
2	Krzysztof Wiercioch	SZD-48-2	MF	1	63.20	174.8	1000	3	–	69.95	379	1379
3	Stan Martin	Mini-Nimbus	ZY	3	57.85	146.3	915	2	–	77.02	417	1332
4	Bill Cole	Mosquito	BC	4	57.39	152.4	908	6	–	60.06	325	1233
5	Rafael Nunes	SZD 55-1	RN	7	48.44	134.9	766	4	–	66.87	362	1128
6	Chris Wilson	Mosquito	2J	6	50.54	126.2	mt800	8	–	58.69	318	1118
7	Ed Hollestelle Jr.	HP-18	TZ	5	51.96	131.6	822	9	–	54.60	296	1118
8	David Gossen	ASW-20	GW	8	45.90	126.7	726	10	–	–	f0	726
9	Mike Morgulis	SZD-48-2	69	11	–	94.3	343	7	–	59.57	323	666
10	Martin Brassard	LS-6	KC	9	40.19	100.0	mt636	10	–	–	f0	636
11	Ray Wood	PW-5	VS	10	–	138.7	505	10	–	–	f0	505
12	Rafael Bravo	DG-505	505	12	–	–	f0	5	–	63.36	343	343
13	John Brennan	DG-505	GLP	12	–	–	f0	10	–	–	f0	0
13	Chris Razl	LS-4B	4B	12	–	–	f0	10	–	–	f0	0
13	Robert Zachemski	SZD-55-1	Z	12	–	–	f0	10	–	–	f0	0
13	Hans Juergensen	ASW-20B	J3	12	–	–	dnc0	10	–	–	f0	0
FAI CLASS				3 hour TAT				2 hour TAT				
1	Sean Fidler	ASG-29-15	7T	2	76.75	229.91	mt995	1	68.24	170.54	mt683	1678
2	Luke Szczepaniak	ASW-27	2W	4	73.51	252.24	953	2	–	157.48	484	1437
3	Dave Springford	ASG-29-15	FI	1	77.11	234.99	1000	5	–	113.31	348	1348
4	Sergei Morozov	ASG-29-15	MS	3	74.58	223.37	mt967	3	–	122.15	375	1342
5	Joerg Stieber	LS-8-15	JS	5	68.07	219.80	883	4	–	119.42	367	1250
6	Nick Bonnière	LAK-17B	FES	6	65.39	209.82	848	6	–	95.42	293	1141

Handicapped values shown (–) task not completed, no speed points (f) no file submitted; no or bad start (dnc) did not compete (mt) below minimum time

a competition pilot! Not the greatest of starts. Off tow, downwind, struggling for half an hour to stay aloft while being blown further away from the club. The day cancelled and we ended up in a "voluptuous" field seven kilometres away from SOSA. Rob termed the field "voluptuous" because we touched down at the top of the first hill and stopped at the top of the second.

*Editor Rob doesn't get out much. Interestingly, the August 2015 issue of Soaring, the SSA magazine, has an article by none other than Steve DuPont on the subject of off-field landings on unlevel ground. According to Steve, Raphael and Rob did it right.*

Not the most auspicious start. Lessons learned: beware of tunnel vision and mission fixation. We were doomed ten minutes after release, and I should have cut our losses and return for a relight.

**Day 1** Task was Rockton-Ingersoll-Oshweken-Ernewein Field-Rockton, with 20 km cylinders around the intermediate turnpoints. My trusting P2 Andrzej Cholewinski and I launched into slightly better air than forecast the previous day, with less wind. I immediately connected with a two knot thermal and went to cloud base (4100 ft) and waited for the gate to open. The first leg to Ingersoll was a slog against the headwind, which tested the polar

of the K-21. We made good progress by staying high most of the time, even overtaking some of the sleek single seaters on the way. North of Woodstock we hit a rough stretch, got down to ~1000 agl and had to labour for 15 minutes to get out of the hole. On the way to Oshweken, another hole, but out of it after a little while and ending up in really good skies over Brantford. Booming thermal, highest point of the flight and easy last two legs back to the club to complete the task slightly above the minimum time of 2.5 hours.

Lessons learned: maybe started a bit too early, should have taken advantage of the good skies over Brantford/Oshweken and Ernewein Field to make more distance/speed. And think more about strategy before taking off. On the way back and over the field 1000 ft over minimum height. Speed and distance thrown away. Rookie mistakes.

<http://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-2.0/gliding/flightinfo.html?flightId=-1534577911>

After landing, everyone was asking whether the K-21 had made it back. When I replied, I noticed some incredulity. I was not sure whether to be flattered or offended... I suppose the landout the previous day had set the expectations pretty low. At the end of the day, 5th place out of 14 participants at 83% of winning score. ⇒ p16

# 7T at the Ontario Provincials

Sean Fidler, Ionia, MI

## a visitors-eye view of the Provincials

**D**OUG SCOTT, THE CONTEST MANAGER, invited me to attend the Ontario Provincial Soaring Championships. I wanted to get another contest in if possible and this one, over the Labour Day weekend, could not have been better scheduled given my limited time available.

SOSA is one of the largest clubs in Canada, and is the sole operator at the airport, with three grass runways, three towplanes, a winch, extensive camping facilities, and a great clubhouse and viewing area of the airfield. The drive through African Lion Safari park is next door for entertainment on a no-fly day, and you can use the lion's roaring as an early morning alarm clock. The club always puts on some great social events and dinners, and this year was no different with a cook-your-own-steak meal that always draws a crowd. Canadian contest rules are similar to the USA ones, making for an easy transition for me. The flying area is generally flat with farm fields, with the possibility of sea breeze fronts and convergences along the shores of Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario.

SOSA is home to some truly gifted soaring talent. Many past, current, and likely future Canadian Soaring Team members are based there: Jerzy Szemplinski (XG), Dave Springford (F1), Luke Szczepaniak (2W), Sergei Morozov (MS), and Joerg Stieber (JS). Nick Bonnière (ST) arrived from Gatineau. There are also a number of outstanding pilots flying in Club Class. The Canadian Soaring Team is a highly impressive group when one considers Canada's relative population compared to other, far larger soaring countries. SOSA club members are among the most welcoming and fun crowds in soaring! They are also great friends. With that, I was excited by the prospect of taking the usual beating I receive when flying against them!

I have always said that the best way to improve is to compete against those better than you! I recently had qualified for the US Soaring Team and the 2017 World Championships (18 metre in Benalla, Australia) and needed to keep practicing as much as possible. It's quite an honour to fly with the Canadian Team pilots again at their beautiful home field. It has a special place in my heart as it was my first-ever travel contest in 2011. The fact that SOSA is only four hours from my house in Michigan doesn't hurt either. The process of securing a Transport Canada permit to fly my US experimental glider in Canada was as simple as an email and a \$100 fee per season.

We arrived at SOSA Friday early afternoon, which was a practice day. The practice day was cancelled for weather, but the forecast still looked excellent for flying all three scheduled contest days! Two classes were formed: FAI and Club. The FAI Class was mostly 18m gliders, but the

competitors all agreed to fly in the 15m configuration to accommodate Luke Szczepaniak in his ASW-27, which is a 15m-only ship. This gesture was very gracious of Nick, who was flying his new LAK17b-FES that had 15/18 and 21m wingtip options. Nick was going to have a fairly high wing loading compared to the rest of the field, and this turned out to be a slight disadvantage over the weekend. He deserves great credit for his sportsmanship. The idea of flying a "one-design" class was very appealing to us all, and it made the FAI Class more fun.

### Saturday (task abandoned):

The day turned out to be fairly weak but was flyable. The task was ultimately canceled after some pilots had difficulty staying up, and several landouts occurred even before the gate had opened. This was the right call, especially for the Club Class. Although the weather was too weak for a fair contest day, Luke and I ended up being bold and flew the task. We had some great fun along the way (see zoom video link below). On course (a 2-hour AAT) we found mainly 1-2 knot climbs with an occasional 2.5 kts. Luke pulled ahead early but I was able to catch up. We then flew together the rest of the way at quite a good average speed. It was a good call to abandon this day, but it turned into a very nice practice day for Luke and me.

Luke's "zoom" videos: <https://youtu.be/DBqo3neAUqY>  
<http://youtu.be/9m5C8cCPkjs>

### Sunday – Day 1

Saturday was a fantastic soaring day for Ontario, in September! Climbs of 2-4 kts and average speeds of nearly 90 km/h. Clouds were ample on course, but hexagonal holes formed and expanded late in the day requiring careful deviation strategy. Dave Springford (F1) won the day with 1000 points, but only barely. I was second, only 5 points behind Dave with 995 and Sergei (MS) was third with 967.

### Monday – Day 2

Monday was an incredibly tricky soaring day. What looked like a carbon copy of Sunday turned into a nail biter, and breezier with a 15-20 mi/h WSW wind. There was also a thunderstorm risk later in the afternoon. A 3-hour AAT was called. Nick and I were the sniffers. After tow, I was able to find a bubble and climb 1500 feet. Nick struggled for 15 minutes, and the CD held the remainder of the launch until Nick was climbing well. In the meantime, I was able to get to cloud base (5300 msl) and work to the upwind quadrant of the start cylinder. That position was a key advantage for me. When the launch was re-opened and completed, I was in a perfect starting position. The 15-minute countdown began and I worked very hard to be ready to go immediately upon the gate opening. Most of the FAI Class struggled to get above 3500 feet during this time. Only Joerg was nearby when the gate opened. I started immediately at 5300 feet, and Joerg followed, although he was roughly 500 feet below. He decided to go back and restart shortly after. This whole scenario gave me a 16 km head-start and it turned out to be a huge advantage in the end.



David Cole

Luke explains how to soar like a pirate vs. a honey badger.

On task, conditions were excellent with good cumulus and climbs of 2-3 knots with an occasional 5. The pivotal period of the task was going into the final turn area centred on Ingersoll. As I approached from the east, I could see that the entire area had been washed out blue by what appeared to be a sea breeze front from Lake Erie. This looked very bleak! The last available clouds of any meaningful sort were 15-20 km away from the closest point in the turn area. Ingersoll was also directly into a 20 mph wind! The only hope was to get as high as possible and set out on a completely dead glide. I left the last

available cloud from 4300 feet (3300 agl) and arrived at the Ingersoll turn at around 2000 agl. From that altitude, I was barely able to make it back to lift, a tiny bump over a dark plowed field and saved from 800 agl to squeak home. I was still 5-10 km short of the clouds when I found this. Lucky! One great thing about the SOSA flying area is that 70% of the surface is landable fields, so it was no big deal to give it a shot. It turned out that I would be the only one in FAI to make it around the course. Nonetheless, my wife Tiffany was very happy that I had made it as we had a 4-hour drive home and both had to work the next morning!

Luke made the most miraculous flight of the day (link below). He faced the same challenging scenario I had, but 10 minutes later in the day. The line of clouds along the sea breeze front was now 5 km farther away from the Ingersoll turn area. When he finally touched the turn area, he was only 1000 feet! He then fought like a honey badger to hold on for 20 km, drifting downwind (and towards the finish) in literally a 0.001 knot climb. All he needed was about 1200 to make it home, but it never materialized for him (Arrrg!). Luke landed out at an airport, but had accumulated more than enough points over the rest of the gang to move up into second place overall. No other pilot in this strong field was able to make the Ingersoll turn. Congrats to David Cole (AF1) in Club Class! ❖

Link to contest page and results and a *SeeYou* analysis

- <http://www.sosaglidingclub.com/2015-ontario-provincial-championships.html>
- <https://youtu.be/qWdWefQ1s9U>

the 2015 Ontario Provincials

from page 14

**Day 2** Task was Rockton-Tavistock-Brantford-Ingersoll-return, with 15 km cylinders around the intermediate turnpoints. John Brennan had to pass on this day, so I get the club DG-505! Even though that will invalidate my first day score due to changing planes, I take it. It is a much iffier day than Day 1 due to higher winds and the chance of high cover later in the day, so chances are we wouldn't be able to go anywhere with the K-21.

There is a long wait for conditions to develop, so we launch late and minimum time is shortened to 2 hours. Cloud base is much higher today, up to ~5000 ft at the start with steady thermals even in the high winds. My P2 is Youssef Chaoui, who is having fun getting some nice *GoPro* shots of the gaggle flying around.

Progress is slow but steady against a 20+ kt headwind on the first leg. Much easier than yesterday, steadily climbing on the way to the first turnpoint. As much as I enjoyed flying the K-21 yesterday, it is really nice to have the better performance of the 505 today. Debate with P2 on whether to take the good conditions to go deep into the zone or just nick it and make sure we hit all turnpoints, given the short day. At the end, go in about 5 km and turn around towards Brantford with more than 1200 ft above final glide to SOSA for insurance. The view towards the turnpoint is suspicious, with lower cloud

bases and milky skies. As we go through, the suspicion is confirmed, the sky is dead and the decision is whether to even try for the last turnpoint. We explore the ugly looking clouds while approaching zero final glide. At the end, nick the Brantford turnpoint and reluctantly turn home to let John's record as the only person to land out SOSA's 505 stand. He did it twice in one day, so his record will stand for a long time.

*Editor: I was the towpilot on the retrieve for John's first landout that day, and he blames the second landout on a bad tow by me.*

No Club Class plane was able to complete the task, and only one FAI Class pilot was able to go around a similar task.

Lessons learned: take what you have now instead of what you think you could get later. We would have won the day if we had gone further on the first turnpoint. Again fifth place out of 12 pilots on a heavily devalued day.

<http://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-2.0/gliding/flightinfo.html?flightId=-1446090628>

All-in-all, a lot of fun and camaraderie to cap off a nice season. Bitten by the competition bug, so next chance, get a single seater and try to beat everyone. ❖

# Winning the 2015 USA 18m Nationals

Jerzy Szemplinski, SOSA

I HAD A BUSY START to the 2015 contest season. Directly after winning the PanAmerican contest, I went to the Region 5 contest in Perry, SC, one of the most competitive contests in the USA. We had four days of good flying in blue conditions and I finished second behind Ken Sorenson. After a three week break, I went to the Region 2 Contest at Mifflin PA where I finished second, losing my lead on the last day due to a very low and slow save at Lock Haven. Because of timing and distance, I was not able to fly the Canadian Nationals in Alberta.

However, at the last minute my schedule changed and I was able to sign up for a very competitive 18m USA National Championship in Hobbs, NM. This contest attracted current US World Team members in addition to recent US champions. Maria and I arrived in Hobbs after two days of driving. The last time I flew there was the 2006 Standard Class Nationals. The town has changed substantially since then, with plenty of hotels and very good shopping centres and restaurants.

The practice days were challenging due to poor weather, blue skies or low cloudbases. I had the opportunity to fly only two days and I was a little concerned about the short time for practice in totally different weather conditions and over unfriendly places to land. Hobbs is a very specific and difficult place to fly. West and north from there are very limited numbers of places to land but good soaring conditions. East and southeast is farmland with huge fields but weaker conditions and lower cloud bases. It is an excellent place to practice for the 2016 Worlds in Australia as conditions could be very similar. I was the only Canadian in the 18m Class. Another Canadian, Brian Milner, was flying Open Class, and they and Club Class had their Nationals there as well.

The first two days we started with Assigned Speed Tasks, a very positive surprise because in recent years Assigned Tasks have been forgotten in the US and Canada. The Modified Assigned Task used in Canada is not the same as an Assigned Task, it is a different game with different tactics and strategy.

After a very competitive 254 mile race on Day One, I finished in fourth, 12 points behind Garry Ittner. Day Two again was an Assigned Task of 296 miles. I started with a small group of gliders but later was alone until the second turnpoint, then met several gliders but somehow I lost them and most of the time I was again alone. I finished first, taking the overall lead. Ittner landed out after pushing very hard on the third leg. When in the lead, your strategy changes from attacking to preserving and advancing your lead over the next competitor.

Day Three was a 4:30 hour Area Task, with a nominal distance of 369 miles. I started through the top of the cylinder with a small group of gliders. After the second area, the group separated and I was alone, conditions were different every 50 km and shifting gears was a must. To my surprise I won this day again. I thought that I was slow, but others had some problems as well.

After one day of rest due to weather we raced again, Day Four, an Area Task of 289 miles and 4 hours. I finished in third place, 34 points behind the day winner Ken Sorenson who moved to second place overall, and was behind me by 59 points. Ken has won contests twice when I was in Perry and I know that he is a very consistent pilot, which kept me alert all through the contest.

Day Five, a 4 hour Modified Assigned Task with 208 miles of compulsory distance and approximately 1.5 hours to do whatever you want afterwards. We needed to get one more task done to have a valid contest. There was less wind, plenty of clouds, no streets. It was very confusing which cloud to pick because many clouds weren't working. Since it was a long task I was one of the first to start without any consideration about what other pilots might do. The main group started eight minutes after me and I knew that it could be costly if they caught up. The first leg was a challenge as the clouds didn't work, I was fairly low, 2000 feet agl, moving from cloud to cloud without finding good lift. I noticed several gliders passing above me, which increased my frustration. After the first turnpoint, I was again below 2000 agl when I hit an 8 knot thermal. This took me to cloudbase and allowed me to get back into the working band.

After reaching the second turnpoint I met Mark Keen in his ASW-27, who had started ten minutes after me. It was obvious that I was slow as he had caught up to me in a lower performing glider – I fly an ASG-29. We flew together for 30 km and ended up low again under spread-out cloud. Mark went into the centre of the cloud and I tried its northwest corner where I got 8 to 9 knots. I gained at least 1000 feet over Mark and went alone to the last compulsory turnpoint at Lovington, which was close to Hobbs. I met several gliders in my class and I knew that I was still slow.

MAT have a maximum of eleven turnpoints. If we want to be brave we pick a turnpoint which is far away and try to make it work, or we can play a different game and pick close-in points using them to maximize distance. I picked option two as it was a task that would be won by whoever covers the most distance at the highest speed. I decided to use a turnpoint in no-man's land west of Hobbs, on high ground with no place to land. It paid off because I gained speed and made up for my earlier slow legs and I used all eleven turnpoints. I finished second, 2 points behind the day winner. Sorenson lost his second position overall to Nichols flying a JS1. My overall lead increased to 91 points.



© Maria Szemplinska

Day Six was a 3.5 hour Area Task with a nominal distance of 304 miles. I started as soon as the gate was opened, and I was alone for most of the task. Clouds were drying out and the cu were disappearing. The general rule is not to be alone in the blue, but because I started early, some wisps were visible giving me an idea where lift could be. The group didn't catch me and I won the day, extending my lead to 153 points.

Day Seven was an Assigned Task of 247 miles. As soon as the gate opened I started and joined some Open Class gliders in a race to the first turnpoint and I was able to gain on them. They had different TPs after the first one and we split up. A group of 18m gliders started around five minutes after me and they were not able to gain on me. Being alone in the blue is not fun, but I was able to find good thermals up to the third turnpoint where new clouds were forming. To my surprise they didn't work as a different air mass was in that area and I struggled for some time trying to stay high. After reaching the third turnpoint I slowly moved to the last one and met Ray Gimmey, 7V, who was much higher. After the last turnpoint I was able to do the last leg without turning, finishing second for the

day, losing 18 points to Ray, and extending my lead to 243 points over Sorenson in second place. It was the last day of our contest because the planned last day was cancelled due to a thunderstorm building up north of Hobbs. It was my second win of a US Nationals, having won in the 15m Nationals in Mifflin, PA in 2012.

Flying at Hobbs was all about changing gears as needed, keeping in the working band and being consistent. I recovered all the points that I lost to Ken Sorenson in the last couple of years.

The contest was very competitive, the point spread between pilots was very small, all the pilots were flying very well and there was absolutely no room for any mistakes. I was able to claim 99.42% of the maximum points available for the contest. Looking back, it may seem easy, but in fact it was very hard work starting from the practice days, preparing the glider in hot weather, strategizing and executing a game plan. A super crew is also a must during such demanding contests.

Thank you, Maria, for being there for me. ❖

# A perfect day in the wave

Phil Stade, Cu Nim



Phil Stade

**A**UGUST 31, 2015 WAS ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN A glider pilot's heart aches to get in the air. The sky was seemingly perfect. The Chinook Arch soared above our home in Black Diamond and the rotors to the west called us aloft. But it wasn't to be. No towpilot. No crew. So... maybe the next day might be wonderful too?

I contacted Allan Wood to see if he would be interested in sharing a flight in the club DG-1000 and found that Chester Fitchett and Mike Newman would also like to have a flight Tuesday in the K-21. Matt Swain kindly agreed to run wing (or fly if Allan didn't make it out) and Soren Christian-son was willing to tow. Tuesday at about 3 am I went out on my deck to check on conditions... it was calm and the sky was clear. Not what I was looking for. I got up again about 4:30 and found the same conditions but I could see little rotors forming in the moonlight.

At 6:20 I sent this message to the club: "The air is a lot less moist today and the wave almost invisible. Rotors are showing in their usual places but the well marked wave conditions of yesterday are not present. My reading of this is that the wave is there but will be a lot harder to follow on a cross-country task. I would still like to give it a go but success is less assured. XC-Skies is showing that the wave-related clouds will develop during the morning and hopefully that will allow for easier navigation. I'll be at the field shortly."

Now some have called me optimistic but at this point I was wondering. When I got to the field a few minutes after 7, and Soren, Chester and Mike were already there. I had charged up the DG-1000 batteries the night before so by about 8 we were almost ready to launch. Mike and Chester were ready and they took a 4000 foot tow to the southwest of Black Diamond and Soren was soon back to launch us. For an extra \$10 each we decided during the tow to take an extra 1000 feet since we were able to see that Chester and Mike were seeming to struggle after the 4000

foot tow. Suffice to say we saw them several times only 3-4000 feet below us and we were at 15,000.

It wasn't long before we were up to about 11,000 with no cloud around and it was time to head for the rotor clouds just east of the mountains. SeeYou shows that we hit over 24 knots down before started a run for Highway 22 just south of Longview where we quickly got back up to altitude in 15 knot lift and we were asking for clearance to go to 15,000 while using the transponder. No problem. "Just don't go over 15,000 feet... and you have an aircraft at 16,000 nearby." We got below 12,500 several times on the way south, and a number of times Edmonton Centre asked if we still needed the clearance. We held it until in the vicinity of Centre Peak to the west of Cowley when we were down to about 8300 by the Gap at the north end of the Livingstone Range. But we again asked for clearance to cross Victor 300 no higher than 15,000. Once south of the airway we were able to climb to 16,000 without the need of the transponder and then 18,000 as we got close to Waterton. I had my iGlide program so we were able to fly right up to the border (just northwest of the Chief Mountain border crossing) and then headed west toward Waterton Park.

The flight north for home was incredible! Edmonton Centre asked us to turn our transponder on again so we requested clearance back up to 15,000 for the ride north. About halfway between the Gap and Hwy 40 we got a call from Edmonton. He was busy by the time I got back to him but eventually he told us that there was a PIREPS of severe lee wave turbulence. We advised that we were using and enjoying it and he said that's what he thought. At that point we were flying at 100-120 knots to stay below 15,000. Our track was right over Plateau Mountain and to just north of Hwy 40. Edmonton asked us to descend at that point or turn 180° so we headed south a bit and then over to High River. Well, what's a pilot to do when there are rotor clouds all along the west of Highway 2? ⇨ p23

# training & safety

## Regarding Glider Integrity

### Good advice from the British Gliding Association

This letter from Tom Knauff appeared in the July 2015 issue of SOARING magazine. It is a good reminder for all of us, and timely because of an incident which happened this summer at a Canadian gliding club, involving one of the glider types noted here.

Twelve months ago the BGA circulated advice on correctly preparing a glider for flight. The message begins:

- Pilot parachuted from the top of a winch launch.
- Glider on a trial lesson crashed in a field shortly after aerotow take-off.
- Wing flutter –flight test after major repair.

### What do these accidents and incidents have in common?

These events were a direct consequence of shortcomings in rigging, daily inspection, or preflight checks. Accidents of this kind continued in 2014. The most serious were three gliders being flown with unconnected elevators, one with an unconnected airbrake, and one without the main pin installed (!) where the wings stayed on during flight but fell off during landing.

### To avoid flying with an incompletely prepared glider:

- Rigging should be directed by a person experienced on the type, in accordance with the flight manual, without interruption or distraction.
- The DI should be conducted by a person experienced on the type, without interruption or distraction.
- The pilot should carry out proper preflight checks, again without interruption or distraction.

Rigging and other errors and omissions in preparing a glider for flight are frequently caused by interruption, distraction, forgetfulness, and making unwarranted assumptions. As a bystander, do not interrupt people who are rigging, carrying out a DI, or conducting their preflight checks. If you are engaged in these activities and someone speaks to you, send them away.

As an instructor or as a club official, try to develop a culture which makes everyone aware of the crucial importance of conscientious rigging, DIs, and preflight checks.

Some glider types are particularly prone to control connection deficiencies. There are over 150 glider types on the BGA register, but over half the unconnected elevators since 1974 have occurred to the ASW-19/20, Pegase,

Pik-20B/D design configuration. Forty percent of the unconnected ailerons have occurred to the Kestrel and Libelle types. If you fly an ASW-19/20, Pegase, or Pik-20B/D, please give special attention to the elevator connection. If you fly a Kestrel or Libelle, beware of unconnected ailerons. Whatever type you fly, please ensure you avoid glider integrity problems.

### Dan Cook, chairman of the Flight Training & Safety committee writes:

The FT&SC was aware of the (Canadian) tow-plane upset caused by a disconnected elevator L'Hotellier connector. See figure 1 and URL of the BGA flyer posted on the SAC website.

It pretty much covers it all. There are too many of these incidents and we all need to work together as Tom Knauff points out to make it less likely to happen. One barrier to the accident chain is not enough, we need multiple safety barriers such as cockpit checks, positive control checks, and critical assembly checks, on top of a good DI. Minimize distractions, but they will continue to happen so we have to be disciplined to do the rest. Too many pilots have died.

The BGA has just produced a safety brochure on this topic and I have permission to use it in Canada. I have asked David Donaldson, our SAC Safety Officer, to circulate the e-file to club pilots through club Safety Officers and it will be posted on the SAC web site. Everyone should read this BGA safety briefing

<https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/safety/is-your-glider-fit-for-flight/> ❖

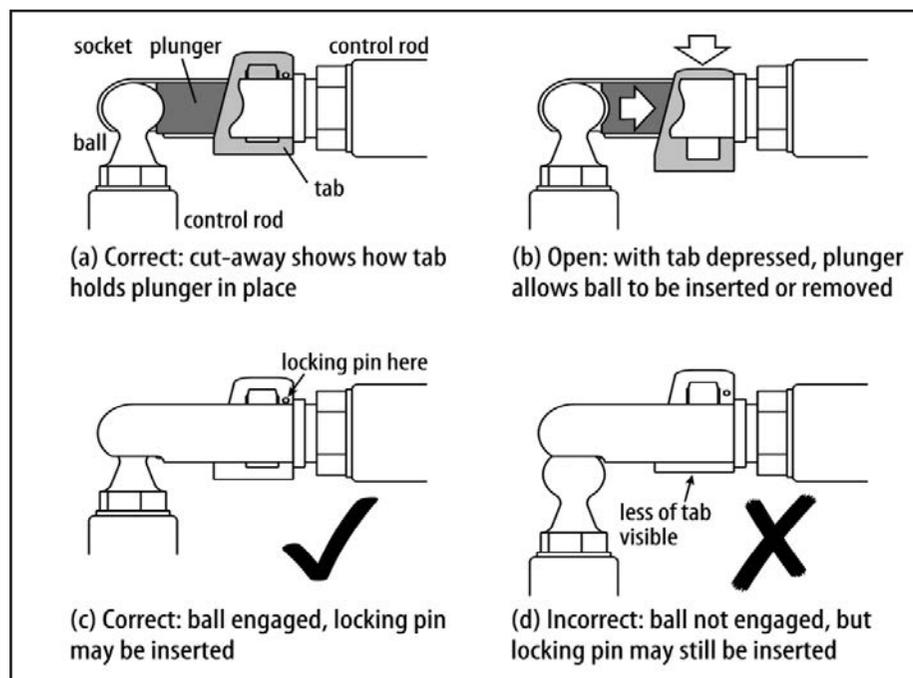
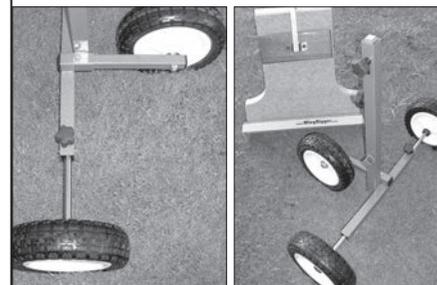


Figure 1. from BGA *Is Your Glider Fit for Flight?* flyer (see link at the end of article)

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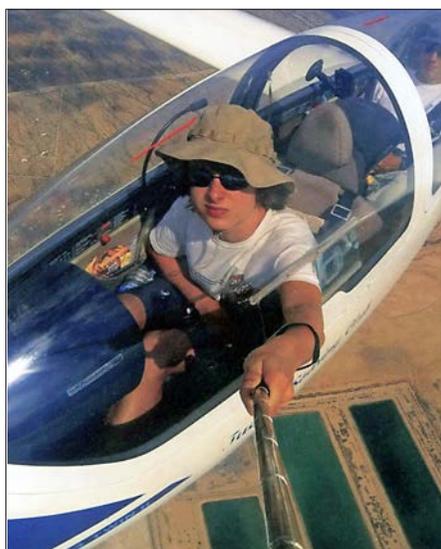


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## Promoting Thoughtful Discussion

Doug Scott, Co-editor, SOSA

Bill Cole and I are new at editing this magazine. After having a very long run editing *Free Flight*, Tony Burton has asked us to try to fill his shoes, and it takes two of us to attempt this. I am going to gather and edit the stories that are submitted, and Bill, with his superior layout skills, will prepare the copy for printing. We both enjoy soaring, and the camaraderie that comes along with the club atmosphere. (read: beer fridge). The number of people required to get a glider out of the hangar, or trailer, then to the flight line, then launched is indicative of the group nature of our clubs.



SOARING cover photo (cropped)

The flight may be flown totally alone, but there is a greater number of fellow club members, on the ground, cutting grass, dealing with issues on the Board of Directors, or just hanging around the flight line.

We want to appeal to all of these groups, and we are asking you to submit articles and pictures, and to read and comment on what we print. This is your magazine.

The Soaring Society of America has SOARING magazine, which also has a new editor, Eric Bick. That magazine is printed monthly, so it is set up for timely discussions, with give and take on many subjects. At four issues a year, *Free Flight* is not a proper venue for this, yet we would still like to encourage thoughtful discussions that may be carried on at the club levels, and perhaps on the SAC website discussion group. At *Free Flight*, letters to the

editor or comments on past articles were always welcome but due to the delay between issues, we are not the best place to continue a discussion that is time sensitive. We do, however, hope that SAC members with points of view on new, developing or contentious issues will write to us in order to get their messages out to all Canadian soaring pilots.

Having said that, below are some excerpts from the July 2015 issue of SOARING, in which the editor explains what he knew was going to be a controversial cover photo, and then three letters from readers giving different responses to seeing the cover. Basically, on the cover photo (see above), a young person was in the front seat of a two-place glider, in flight, and he undid his shoulder belts and reached a "selfie stick" out the canopy vent and took a great picture.

The letters dealt with various issues such as encouraging young people to fly, removing straps in flight, and safe policies about camera use while in a glider. All of these issues are relevant and timely to us in Canada, especially as GoPro devices are becoming more common. I also found it interesting that later on in the same issue, there is an article on how to build a camera mount and duct tape it to the nose of your glider (see photo below). There is no mention of any approvals for this device.

The cover photo of SOARING generated responses both pro and con, including chastising us for printing it because the son's shoulder belts were undone, his arm was out the side window, and he was using a selfie stick. While con comments were in the minority, I think it worthwhile to use this cover as a discussion point.

Eric Bick said: I have written before, as editor, that this magazine will take on controversial topics to open them to thoughtful discussion.



Know that the printing of that cover photo was intentional and had a number of purposes.

**First**, it is a great photo, framing the glider, its occupants and the overall joy of soaring camaraderie in a single shot.

**Second**, the manner in which it was obtained demonstrates an exploding trend – photos and videos in flight, from hand-held cameras, to mounts of all sorts, internal and external to the airframe.

**Third**, it raises a photo technique question that is better discussed than ignored due to its blossoming use. Selfies aren't the only photographic technique, and each approach raises legal and safety of flight questions.

**Fourth**, it addresses an important aspect of youth in soaring.

Thanks to digital media, in-flight photos are a growing phenomenon. Using a camera in the air has legal and safety aspects. The FARs requires the PiC to be wearing a seat belt, and passengers and crew have the option based upon the judgment of the PiC regarding safety of flight. The photo shows the PiC exercised that option and judgment. What about safety? Upon seeing a picture such as this, some focus on all that could go wrong. But, what about it?

When we see a photo that contains potential safety issues, why do some viewers assume the PiC is safety unaware? The photo mentions nothing of the preflight and in-flight discussions, or the guidelines the PiC laid down for the taking of the photo and the use and storage of the selfie stick – and when it was and wasn't safe to undo shoulder belts. I have flown, as PiC, without seatbelts under conditions where the situational assessment made it obvious that it was safer to fly without than

with. I have also flown as PiC with passengers when some need necessitated the passenger taking off the seatbelts for a short period.

I also know pilots and passengers who have extended their arms out the window to capture that special photo. Certainly there is always some risk associated with this, but again, there is judgment that enters in. Despite what some might opine, this can be done safely, even in the turbulent high desert atmosphere of California and other locations – with no crashes, no heads through the canopy and no bruises. And I know others who have done the same.

Have I and they been unsafe? Not if you know the thought and procedures that preceded the action.

As a side note, and for those that aren't aware, thanks to photo editing software, every day we are looking at soaring photos where elements have been removed or altered by software editing. I have seen other nose-on shots that are taken identical in method to the cover photo, but the selfie pole, and the hand and arm holding it, have been removed through photo editing software. This is not unique to the USA.

This cover photo was also about youth in soaring – a key question to the SSA and most every club and FBO supporting the sport. Every day I hear questions about what does it take to get more youthful pilots into our sport. Is the sport dying? These questions are of vital interest to the SSA and its members.

Here is a specific example: There are two glider clubs down under (New Zealand) I've been told of which have directly addressed the May cover photo situation. One has decided that members are to be encouraged to use their cameras to take selfies, including using selfie sticks. Additionally, the young glider pilots in this club are very heavy into selfies and social media, and they have a huge following, which promotes soaring to the younger generation. The older club members recognize this and encourage the kids to attract more young people to the club using social media as free marketing. This club is thriving and has many younger members. In the other club, having banned the use of selfie sticks (though not selfies), has very few young members.

Independent of safety questions, there is a message here. Perhaps we have to ask the question whether we, as members of the SSA, are in some ways turning our backs on the younger generation and their interests, and thereby discouraging their participation?

So, safety is always a high priority consideration, but judgment is allowed. And if the SSA membership and leaders, soaring clubs, and FBOs really want to get younger pilots into the sport, we'll need to acknowledge that there is a 21st century way of doing things, especially in the use of today's technology and social media, that is vital to the younger generation. We want the new generation to enjoy the sport and do so safely. Let's discuss what is necessary for safety, and how to ensure risk is minimized given the new technologies and how they are being used. Our future might depend on it.

Finally, should SOARING print photos that some members might think controversial? How can we not? My opinion is that the SSA membership puts safety at risk if it thinks we can ignore the bigger picture and not present it in this magazine.

**Response 1** It was a delight to see the May cover! We've been trying for years to capture a few people under 50, and finally we've got incontrovertible evidence of crossing that generational boundary, with the first Soaring-Mag glider-selfie taken with an Official Young Person's Selfie Stick. (There have been a lot of prior glider-driver selfies, but typically using a wingtip camera; at least one used a nose-mounted boom, and the boom Photo-Shopped out). So someone has caught a young squirrel in the soaring live-trap. Congratulations to us, and may there be many more!

**Dr. Dan Johnson**

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**Response 2** I hope I am one of many glider pilots that are unsettled with the cover picture and make a comment of the cover picture on the May issue. Where to begin?

This picture has so many safety issues and you allowed it on your cover. Is this becoming a contest to get on the cover with selfies that the safety issue has been pushed too far? First of all, the lad is not wearing his shoulder belts; is he wearing his seat belt? Then sticking the camera out the window with his hand half way out the window on a rod/cane/stick, with a lanyard around his wrist. Okay, maybe they were doing slow flight, oh, approximately 45 mi/h. What would have happened if the glider got into thermal or turbulence and the camera was jarred loose? Arm broken, canopy cracks, camera falls to the ground, camera and stick comes back and hits the canopy or the glider or the tail section?

Then comes the question, after the picture is taken the stick is brought back in, where would he put [it] safely to get his belts back on? Oh! Did he get his belts back on?

**Mike Jaworski**, concerned glider pilot

**Response 3** The latest cover of SOARING will no doubt prompt comments and feedback regarding the use of selfie sticks in gliders, and those comments will stand as intended. The following is the output of last night's Harris Hill Soaring Corporation Board meeting as we addressed the use of video cameras and selfie sticks in our aircraft. This is our attempt to strike a balance between safety and being able to document exciting aspects of soaring flight.

- 1 No external camera or cameras may be fastened or affixed to the exterior of HHSC aircraft without board approval.
- 2 No selfie sticks are allowed in HHSC aircraft, there are no exceptions.
- 3 An internally mounted (inside the cockpit) video camera is allowed in HHSC aircraft as long as one person in the aircraft holds the Private Glider Pilot Certificate (Board approval is not required).
- 4 At all times once the canopy is locked, 100% of the PiC's attention must be directed to safely flying the aircraft, 0% of the PiC's attention must be directed to the video camera.

We will be interested in hearing how other soaring organizations deal with these topics.

**Ed Funk**, HHSC President



After catching his wingtip on rolling out at many contests, at Hawkesbury I looked over at my own wingtip only to grin and watch Ulli catch mine. How cool and special was that!

After a fun-filled and sometimes dramatic cross-country clinic hosted by SOSA, the same clinic where Doug Scott mentioned in his 2013 National Contest blog about a certain glider landing at the African Lion Safari – that was the guy following me on final into SOSA! I had taken a quick turn in a bump of a thermal to gain a few feet and to be assured of some extra height over those trees. But the guy following didn't and he landed short!

I reserve my best and happiest thoughts about moments in flying for my mentor. During the debriefing after the flight, Joerg felt I was being overly cautious and he was probably right – I came in with a bit more height than necessary for a final glide if it was a contest. On the last day before driving home, Joerg signed and presented to me a most cherished item, *Cross-Country Soaring* by Helmut Reichmann. Not long after that he offered me a flight in "Juliet Sierra" at the World Championships in Uvalde. A very uneventful and very typical reward – pilots giving their crews a turn to fly on mandatory rest days at international contests. But for me, it was the highest compliment ever paid to me as a pilot.

You are probably now wondering why I quit as it is very apparent that I was passionate about what I did as well as making some significant contributions to the sport, for example, the concept of cross-country clinics and competition pilots giving back to the sport. I had casually tossed the idea around with Ulli from time to time and he picked up on it. He, Robert di Pietro, Ed Hollestelle and others went on to flesh out and form the Canadian Advanced Soaring Group (CASG). It was a very difficult sell for them at the time.

I had many, many emotionally charged moments with different cross-country and competition pilots that I got to know who unconsciously and unwittingly shared their absolute love for soaring. But there are aspects to gliding that haven't changed over time and that I find frustrating. My background is in Equestrian Sport (Dressage specifically). It is the only Olympic discipline (Dressage, Jumping, 3-Day Event, Endurance, Reining, Vaulting and Driving) in which:

- men and women compete comfortably on an equal footing,
- the concepts of mentorship, discipline, training with recognized coaches and international riders on a regular basis or in clinics and giving back to the sport are accepted as the norm.

In the soaring world, I was told that I should stand as a role model for other women. For me, I found this to be an unnecessary and unacceptable burden. I just wanted to fly and to compete with my peers without any pressures – only maintaining the desire to please those mentors who took the time out of their day to educate, support and guide me to a higher standard. I decided after the Uvalde Worlds I can have all of that outside of flying, so I made the decision to let gliding go and return to my original and lifelong pursuit of excellence that can be found in the deep tradition of riding and training horses to the highest level.

That was what *all* my crewing was about. Sure, it was an adventure, being resourceful and having fun – travel always is – but it wasn't *why* I did it. I was first and foremost a hardworking glider pilot who just wanted to fly cross-country well and competitively. I'm proud to have crewed for *G-INY, Oscar Romeo, Mike Zulu, and Juliet Sierra.* ❖

We headed south to about Stavelly, then, with over 500 kilometres in the bag, we headed home to land just after 2 pm.

What did I learn? Radio phraseology needs to be perfected when flying with clearance. The good thing was the fellow at Edmonton Centre was very generous in working with what I had to say. Don't be afraid to use the transponder if you have one – it greatly enhances the opportunities for getting places. It gets colder than one might expect at 18,000. Wear warm footwear and jacket. Dehydration tires one out, drink more while flying. But most of all, you've got to be there to see if conditions will be good... and plan to take off early. Sunrise would be preferable and on a good wave day it will be easy for a well-prepared pilot to declare a 1000 km flight along the eastern slopes of the Rockies.

The flight was a personal best for both Allan and me. Even more it was one of the most wonderful flights of my life. We have great ships and folks to fly with so why not plan to make the best of the fantastic conditions.

<http://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-2.0/gliding/flightinfo.html?dsId=4730508>

*(Editor: I've been to Phil's house – he lives at the end of civilization and he frequently shoots gophers from his deck. I can easily picture him on his deck, which affords him a great view of the developing Alberta skies. Also, I firmly believe that people like Phil only write stories like this to torment us guys who live in the east. He spends his days approaching red line trying desperately to stay below 15,000 feet. I spend my days hunched over my keyboard in the Free Flight office, dreaming of a climb to 3000 feet.)* ❖

### Donate Aeroplan Miles to the Canadian Soaring Team

The next World Gliding Championships in the Open, 18m and 15m classes is at the Gliding Club of Victoria, Benalla in January 2017. The Canadian Team is hoping to have four pilots represent Canada at the event.

The expense of fielding a team in Australia will be significant and we are hoping that through the generous donations of Aeroplan miles that we can reduce the expense of the airfare for the team.

Aeroplan Miles can be donated to the team by going to our Charitable Pooling page on the Aeroplan website located at the link below.

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While it may seem early to be planning for January 2017, it is difficult to book Aeroplan flights on the preferred travel dates if it is left too late. Ideally, we will book flights in February of 2016 while there are still seats available!

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One could probably tour the Range on horseback for months without ever coming back to the same spot.

The sun was getting lower and the thermals were weaker. It was now difficult to reach cloud base. I worked my way to the centre of the Range carefully, always making sure I could retreat safely if I would be ambushed by a sudden downdraft. I climbed as high as the weakening conditions allowed and still the mountain tops looked awfully close. It was clear, once the decision was made to go over the top, it would be final. No matter how strong a sink I would encounter on the other side, I would have to keep going.

I pondered this for a little, trying to figure out if I could get away from the mountain safely, even in a worst case scenario sink. I judged that the safety margin was sufficient, put the nose down and went. There were a couple of tense moments as JS sped through the pass, then the ground fell away and I was free and clear on the other side.

At 6:15 pm I looked down on Lander airport from 11,000 ft (5400 agl). There was a strong temptation to keep going although the terrain ahead looked pretty rough and rocky. If my chart would have extended past Lander

showing airports I would have continued, but failing that, I decided to call it a day and pulled the blue lever.

At 6:24, after a 5:24 hour flight, JS settled on the runway still trailing water and came to a halt at an intersection. The direct distance from Hailey to Sun Valley is a somewhat disappointing 460 km. If Dubois, ID were assumed to be a turnpoint, the dogleg distance would be 520 km.

Again, it didn't take long for an interested crowd to gather and to start firing questions at me ranging from "where do you come from?" to "is this fuel leaking out of the plane?" Meanwhile many helping hands pushed JS up to the apron. One fellow just wouldn't believe that I had just crossed over the Wind River Range, because everybody knew that "this couldn't be done without a turbocharger". It took a while for my explanation to sink in, that I didn't have a turbo because there was no engine to mount it on, and he walked away shaking his head.

After I had called home to report my position there was no reason to stay at the airport since it would take Vicky at least four hours to arrive. The head of the airport commission invited me to dinner at her ranch. I spent a lovely evening in the company of my host and her husband. Both were pilots and had

a Centurion at the airport. Listening to their stories while sitting on the veranda of the ranch house I got some idea of what life is like in Lander, Wyoming.

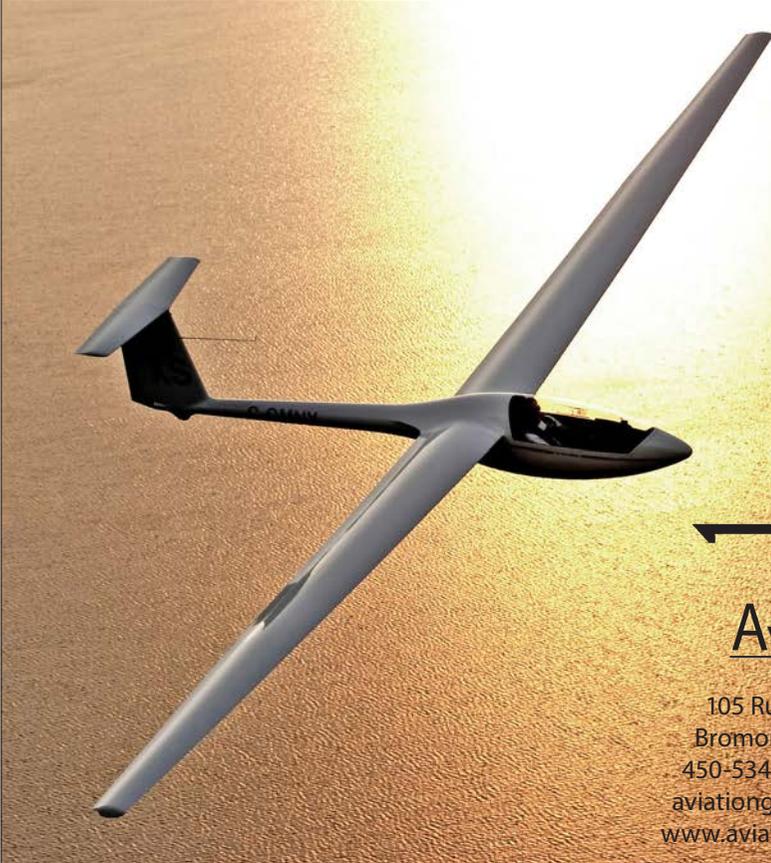
I would have liked to add another day's flying across Wyoming and Nebraska, but my family sent pretty clear signals that they wanted me home. Crew burnout was also a factor, so I decided to continue the trip on the road.

With the experience of this flight I would do some things differently the next time:

- Plan better in terms of charts, gliding fields on course etc.
- Take off earlier. On both days 60-90 minutes could have been gained
- Leaving from Minden, I would stay south of the Snake River Valley and try to reach Driggs (a gliding operation) on the first day.

Flying open distance like a migratory bird has always held a certain fascination for me. So much more terrain can be covered this way. Of course, the speeds achieved are usually not that exciting (unless there is a strong tail wind) because the unfamiliar terrain calls for fairly conservative decision making.

I am determined to go "ridin' the wind" again, hopefully with company. ❖



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missing man formation from page 4

he was coming in, they would snag him on his final approach. He would nonchalantly fly close to the field, as if he were doing a low pass, then suddenly, when the trees weren't looking, dive onto the ground.

In the Disney movie called Ducktales, modelled upon Indiana Jones, the ducks flee a rolling boulder and leap off a cliff into a river. Louie, one of the ducks, observes something like: "Now that I know you can survive that, I wouldn't mind trying it again." That seemed to be Dugald's attitude towards landing out.

We used to have Bronze badge students practice landing at a small strip a few kilometres away from SOSA, and one day as I was going back and forth with a towplane, I called in a position report. Joerg Stieber replied that he was in the area; at 3000 feet Dugald said that he was in the same area but



© Maria Szemplinska

1000 feet higher. I couldn't resist keying the mike and saying, "Now, there's something you don't hear every day." He didn't speak to me for weeks after that. One more thing. After he passed, a bunch of his new buddies

at SOSA wrote how sorry they were to see "Doogie" go. I knew the guy for 25 years, and I never heard him called anything but Dugald. How could someone who said "telephonic" want to be called "Doogie"? ❖



Chris Gough

Chris Gough at Canadian Nationals



Rafael Bravo

Rafael Bravo and Rob Russell after Rafael's landout at Ontario Provincials

## FAI awards

Walter Weir

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(905) 263-4374, <2waltweir@gmail.com>

These badges & badge legs were recorded in the Canadian Soaring Register during the period 13 June to 4 October 2015.

### DIAMOND BADGE

105	Dan Daly	Gatineau	World number 7441
106	Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	World number pending

### SILVER BADGE

1094	Jason Acker	Edmonton
1095	Nicolas Drolet	Quebec
1096	Patrick Kessler	Quebec
1097	Georges Boucher	Quebec
1098	Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge

### DIAMOND ALTITUDE (5000m height gain)

Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	6138	Libelle 201B	Cowley AB
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### DIAMOND DISTANCE (500 km distance flight)

Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	517.3	DG-400/17	Elko BC
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### DIAMOND GOAL (300 km goal flight)

Farid Ibrahim	SOSA	305.0	LS-4	Rockton ON
Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	517.3	DG-400/17	Elko BC

### GOLD DISTANCE (300 km distance flight)

Farid Ibrahim	SOSA	305.0	LS-4	Rockton ON
Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	517.3	DG-400/17	Elko BC

### SILVER DISTANCE (50 km distance flight)

Nicolas Drolet	Quebec	59.3	LS-4a	St Raymond QC
Patrick Kessler	Quebec	64.5	LS-4a	St Raymond QC
Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	258.6	DG-400/17	Elko BC
Ken Minchau	Montreal	54.0	ASW-24	Hawkesbury ON

### SILVER/GOLD DURATION (5 hour flight)

Jason Acker	Edmonton	5:02	ASW-15	Chipman AB
Nicolas Drolet	Quebec	5:14	LS-4a	St Raymond QC
Georges Boucher	Quebec	5:10	LS-4a	St Raymond QC
Jacques Rousseau	Quebec	5:04	Grob 102	St Raymond QC
Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	7:45	DG-400/17	Elko BC

### SILVER ALTITUDE (1000m height gain)

Nicolas Drolet	Quebec	1008	LS-4a	St Raymond QC
Donald Henry	Gatineau	1075	SZD-51 Junior	Pendleton ON
Sandrine Gressard	Gatineau	1306	ASK-13	Pendleton ON
Pierre Gaudreau	Quebec	1132	Grob 102	St Raymond QC
Pavan Kumar	Lethbridge	1198	DG-400/17	Elko BC

### C BADGE (1 hour flight)

3050	Nicolas Drolet	Quebec	2:24	LS-4a	St Raymond QC
3051	David Gagliardi	Albarni	2:06	PW-5	Port Albarni BC
3052	David Keleny	York	1:26	SGS 2-33	Arthur E ON
3053	Luciano Di Blasi	Edmonton	1:24	L-33 Solo	Chipman AB
3054	Victoria Cheng	York	1:14	SGS 1-34	Arthur E ON
3055	Ion Buzdugan	York	1:19	SGS 1-34	Arthur E ON
3056	Pavan Kumar	Lethb.	7:45	DG-400/17	Elko BC
3057	Denise Vanderkooi	Edmonton	1:23	L-23	Chipman AB
3058	Ken Minchau	Montreal	1:58	ASW-24	Hawkesbury ON

## FAI records

Roger Hildesheim

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The following record claims have been approved:

<b>Pilot</b>	<b>Christopher Gough</b>
<b>Date/place</b>	24 May 2015, Chipman, AB
<b>Sailplane</b>	Jantar SZD-41a, C-GXTS
<b>Record type</b>	Triangle Distance, Territorial, Club
<b>FAI category</b>	FAI 3.1.4h
<b>Distance:</b>	<b>750.2 km</b>
<b>Task</b>	Start/Finish Chipman, TP1 Senlac, TP2 Finnegan
<b>Previous record</b>	Bruce Friesen 599.2 km, 2011

<b>Pilot</b>	<b>Christopher Gough</b>
<b>Date/place</b>	24 May 2015, Chipman, AB
<b>Sailplane</b>	Jantar SZD-41a, C-GXTS
<b>Record type</b>	750 km Speed Triangle Distance, Territorial, Club
<b>FAI category</b>	3.1.4j
<b>Speed</b>	<b>98.4 km/h</b>
<b>Task</b>	Start/Finish Chipman, TP1 Senlac, TP2 Finnegan
<b>Previous record</b>	None

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## magazines

**GLIDING AUSTRALIA** – the bimonthly journal of the Gliding Federation of Australia. <www.soaring.org.au>. International rates for on-line access.

**SAILPLANE & GLIDING** – the bimonthly journal of the BGA. £41.50/yr airmail, £25.75 surface. <www.gliding.co.uk/sailplaneandgliding/subscriptions.htm>.

**SOARING** – the monthly journal of the Soaring Society of America. Subscriptions, US\$52. Credit cards accepted. Box 2100, Hobbs, NM 88241-2100. <feedback@ssa.org>. (505) 392-1177.

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Max Juergensen

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