

## GEORGE B. MOFFAT (1963) (1927- )

George Moffat likes to fly sailplane competitions – mostly, he likes to win. As evidence of his success with this desire, he won two World competitions – 1970 in Marfa, TX and 1974 in Waikerie, Australia – both in Open class. He competed in three other World Contests --- 1968 Leszno, Poland placing 4<sup>th</sup> in the Standard class, again in 1972 in Vrsac, Yugoslavia placing 19 in Standard. In 1983 he competed again in Open class at Hobbs placing 4<sup>th</sup>.

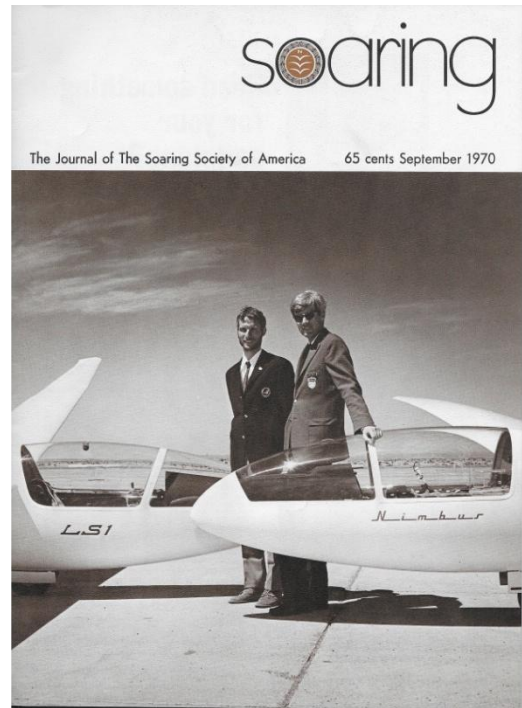
He also likes to win National contests and has done so five times – in open, standard and 15-Meter: 1969 at Marfa placing first out of 82 contestants in the Open class; 1970 at Elmira in the Standard class placing first out of 43; Liberal in 1973 placing first in Open class out of 70 competitors; again in 1978, this time in 15-Meter at Ephrata, first out of 65; then 1982 at Caddo Mills, Texas in the Open class, first out of 39.

George has flown at least 31 Nationals including Open, Standard, 15-Meter, 18-Meter and placed in the top ten 21 times (plus the five he won). His first Nationals was in 1962 at El Mirage where he placed 12 out of 32. However, he spent some time in the area setting world speed records – 100 KM triangle at 128.38 kph (79.77 mph) and a 300 km triangle at 108.12 kph (67.18 mph). Two years later he exceeded his 300 km triangular course mark with a flight of 119.87 kph (74.48 mph) in Odessa, TX – remarkable speeds for their time. The sailplane for all three records was the HP-8.

The Seniors Contests began in 1991 – first as a relaxed and fun contest for the older folks – pilots had to be age 55 or older. However, because competitive pilots like Moffat, Striedieck, Jacobs, etc., were participating, it soon turned into as competitive a gathering as the more conventional national competitions.

He was also chosen to be one of the few to fly the highly competitive but also fun and interesting cross-country Smirnoff Derby race twice, winning in 1975.

Moffat's competitive spirit was evident before he took up flying sailplanes – during the



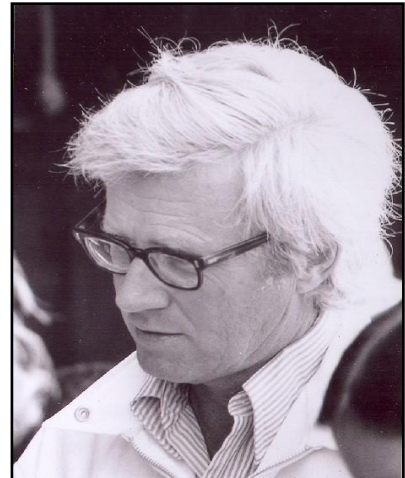
*Left: Helmut Reichmann 15-Meter Champion*  
*Right: George Moffat Open Champion*  
**Marfa 1970 World Contest**

1950s, he competed successfully in international 14-foot racing dinghies.

His first contact with soaring was as a child in the 1930s when he read the well-loved book by Terrence Horseley – *Soaring Flight*. However, the circumstances of his young age and the problems of the '30s combined with going through school, growing up, spending time in the Army and completing college delayed his entry into flight until 1953 when he took up power flying. He did not even see a glider until 1959. Then he soloed after brief instruction by a pilot who himself had only soloed the day before. The trainers of the day gave him no connection with his early dreams of flight.

Fortunately for the world of competitive soaring, he spent some time in Paris that summer and soon learned the cousin he was visiting lived only a mile from one of the largest flight training schools in France. After substantially more training than he had received for that first solo flight back in the States and with a little language help from a passing U.S. Air Force Captain, he was introduced to a single-seat glider – a well-used Grunau Baby. After still more effort, he discovered soaring and flew Silver distance. He did cause some confusion by deciding the best way to return home was to fly back rather than trailer – he landed out a few miles from home but eventually it was understood that he had made the distance. Thus began his life in competitive soaring.

George Moffat was instrumental in developing speed techniques to win contests. As the competition world transitioned from duration, spot landings, altitude gain to distance soaring – the early “*Get high and stay high concept*” utilized by Dick Johnson and Paul Bikle – Moffat was thinking of flying faster and competition was moving in this direction as soaring techniques matured. He perfected the racing concept in competition. Fortunately for what became the racing class, he was generous in sharing his ideas and published the book *Winning on the Wind* in 1974. He published an update, *Winning II*, in 2005. These books were and are best sellers in the soaring community.



Moffat was awarded the FAI Lilienthal Medal in 1977 and won the FAI Challenge Cup in 1970 and 1974 – the first American to do so. He received the Exceptional Service Award in 1999, the Exceptional Achievement Award in 1966, 1970 and 1973 and gave the Barnaby Lecture in 2001. He was awarded the du Pont Trophy in 1969, 1973, 1982, the Stroukoff Trophy in 1966 and 1982, the Standard Class trophy in 1970, and the Schreder 15-Meter Trophy in 1978. He earned Gold #127 in 1962 and Diamond #44 (Intl #449) in 1965. His French Silver badge, earned in 1959, is not recorded in the United States.