



NSM

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Hanna Reitsch in her Cirrus, preparing to launch at the Union-Alpine Segelflughschule, Aigen, Austria, May 30, 1970. Photo by John Seymour, Brookfield Center, CT., who flew with her in the Alpine Mountains, on the South side of the Inns Valley.

HANNA REITSCH, ON THE APPALACHIAN RIDGE, 1979 — “THE MOST FANTASTIC FLIGHT I EVER HAD.”

It's 8 A.M., Saturday, April 8th, 1979, at Karl Striedieck's Eagle Ridge Field, Port Matilda, PA.

Karl, Wil Schuemann, Carson City, NV, and Roy McMaster, Canandaigua, NY, are going to try it again.

The previous day, Striedieck and McMaster rifled along 1,000 kilometers of the challenging and sometimes treacherous Appalachian Ridge, a sharktooth series of mountains and crests that form the northeast-southwest spine of Eastern United States.

..... Only today, someone else will join them — Hanna Reitsch. Americans strain to place the name of Hanna Reitsch in the pantheon of aero greats. In Europe and the rest of the world, however, her name is synonymous with some of the most sensational and daring glider, helicopter and rocket plane exploits in aero history. In 1937, she was the first woman to cross the Alps in a sailplane. She was an international stunt pilot. She tested WWII German rocket planes, and was the first woman to become a Lufthansa Captain (Flugkapitan). She was the only woman to be awarded the German Iron Cross during WWII. She was one of the last persons to see Adolph Hitler alive, after a near miraculous flight in, and escape from, a Berlin, that was surrounded and under siege.

Post-war she continued to demonstrate and instruct in Africa and India. She was a close friend of Ghana's president Kwame Nkrumah and India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Then, at age 67, when most seniors are content with playing Bingo, watching TV, and talking about their grandchildren, Hanna Reitsch went to America to try for yet another woman's out-and-return world sailplane record. This type of cross country ridge-running along the Allegheny Mountains was a new and exciting flying experience for her.

Just a slip of a woman, Hanna Reitsch would probably have to inhale deeply to reach an altitude of 5 feet and then she wouldn't tip the scales at over 90 pounds. She exuded a vortex of energy that engulfed and captivated nearly everyone she came to know.

Striedieck met her at a 1978 contest in France and invited her to visit him and his wife, Suzanne, at their farm/airfield in Port Matilda, PA. Reitsch was writing her fifth book at the time and needed the privacy and to be away from the attention of the press and the aviation community limelight. Striedieck remembered what a great raconteur and story teller she was. "Suzanne, Hanna and I would be sitting at the breakfast table very early in the morning, and Hanna would still be telling stories at 11 o'clock."

He said Reitsch had trouble reaching the ASW-20's landing gear handle because of her diminutive size. This was the sailplane that she was going to fly on the record try. "Every day she practiced stretching and exercising so that she could deploy the landing gear efficiently."

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"That's the way she was," Striedieck said. "She was a complete fanatic about everything that she did. She was in excellent physical condition, and practiced yoga every day. She was the most amazing person I've ever met."

While later recognized as a brilliant pilot, her beginnings at the School of Gliding, in the 30's at Grunau, in Silesia, Germany, were something less than impressive.

On her first flight in a Grunau-9, she disobeyed her instructors orders and on an orientation bungee launch "... I pulled the stick back, not far, at most 6 or 7 inches," according to her book, *FLYING IS MY LIFE* (Putnam's & Sons - 1954).

In a dizzying sequence, she looked straight ahead into the sky, then looked straight ahead again to the ground ... The exercise was supposed to be a modest ground slide to get the student accustomed to the method of controlling the glider ... but Hanna couldn't wait.

Her instructor reported the incident to Wolf Hirth (1900-1959), patriarch of gliding in Germany and head of Grunau Training School. "We must get rid of that girl. We don't want any corpses," Hirth said calmly when he heard the story.

"For the rest of that course I was known as the 'Stratosphere' ". Again, from her book: "Of course, my instructor had been right, a thousand times over! In flying, disobedience of a definite instruction was as bad, almost, as a capital offense. Even the smallest underestimation of the danger involved could have terrible consequences, of which one's own death need not necessarily be the worst. I told myself again and again, 'til the thought became etched in my mind — that in gliding the strict adherence to rules and regulations, even the smallest, was the one unbreakable law. It is thanks to this principle which I opted for myself that I am still alive today." (1954).

With characteristic zeal, Reitsch learned fast and became recognized, especially by Hirth, as an outstanding pilot. In 1933, Hirth was appointed to head a new gliding school near the Hornberg, at Gmund in Swabia. He obtained Reitsch's parents permission for her to join the staff as an instructor.

At a gliding contest later that year at the Wasserkuppe, the German Mecca of gliding, she met Professor Walter Georgii, one of the soaring movement's leading theoreticians and scientists. He was so impressed with Reitsch's soaring talent, that he invited her to join a South American expedition to study meteorological and thermal conditions there.

On the 1934 South American expedition she joined Wolf Hirth with his Moatzagotl sailplane, Peter Riedel with a Fafnir and Heini Dittmar with his Condor.

While flying her Baby Grunau in Brazil, she was caught in serious sink over the city of Sao Paulo, and was desperate for a place to land. She spotted a football field; the only problem was that a game was in progress. Throngs of spectators surrounded the grounds, but with no alternate landing site, she started her approach. Too late, she noticed a high tension wire slicing across her glide path. Swooping under the wire and over the heads of the stunned watchers, she yelled the only warning she knew, "Cuidado ... Cuidado ..." (Beware). She slithered past the goal posts. The footballers, at last seeing the weird whistling shape about to mash them, hurled themselves to the ground.

In the mob scene that followed, both glider and pilot were almost overrun. Fortunately, there was no damage to participants, but it took the police to extricate Reitsch and her glider from the melee. In Brazil, no one interrupts a football game.

Back in Germany, Professor Georgii persuaded her to join the German Institute of Glider Research. She did exhibition flying in Finland and Portugal, tested the first high-performance seaplane glider, the Sea Eagle (See Adler) and also tested terminal velocity dive brakes on sailplanes (dives from 18,000 feet with pullout at 600-700 feet).

Her exploits came to the attention of the great WWI ace, Ernst Udet, who was head of the Technical Branch of the Ministry of Aviation. She was given the title Flugkapitan, heretofore reserved only for pilots of the German Lufthansa, the civil airways.



Right to left: Karl Striedieck, Hanna Reitsch and Karl's father, Werner F. Striedieck, at Eagle Field, Port Matilda, PA. April 1979.

In May, 1937, newspaper headlines boasted, "German Pilots Triumphant Success — 5 Germans First Ever To Cross Alps By Sailplane." Reitsch, one of the 5, describes the exhilaration and terror of the flight in her book. "The plane (a Sperber Junior) reached the Watzmann and continued circling 8,300 - 8,400 - 8,700 - 9,000 feet! ... But hardly was the Watzmann behind me than I began to drop fast, twelve to fifteen feet per second. The downwind was unrelenting; every second heightened the suspense. Pride in my hard won height collapsed as I sank now below the ridge of the Sea of Stone, and saw the great rock faces rear up closer and closer. And still my bird went nosing down toward those scarred and windgrieved crags, that massy, lowering, finality of rocks. Was this then to be the end—a cry—a crackle of sticks?

"As fear was scorching in my throat, I saw less than thirty yards away, a pair of jackdaws (European Crows) hovering against the mountainside. I flew up close to them, so close, I almost brushed the wall of rock with my wing. Then I too could feel the lift and I very cautiously began to circle like the birds, ready at any moment to shear off in a steep turn if the wind carried me too close in ... After circling laboriously for half an hour, I soared at last over the glittering snow-capped ridge of the Sea of Stone ..."

She made it! Reaching altitudes of sometimes 13,000 feet, she flew 100 miles over the Alps and Dolomites from Salzburg, Austria to Pieve di Cadore, Italy.

In 1937 Professor Heinrich Focke designed one of the world's first practical helicopters, and Reitsch was the first to fly it in an untethered configuration. She demonstrated it to Charles Lindbergh, who was visiting Germany, and who later called it the most striking aeronautical development that he had ever seen.

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DATE 1978	NATURE OF FLIGHT	TIME THIS FLIGHT	TOTAL TIME	TOT. SINCE 100 HR.	SIGNATURE & NO. OF PILOT
12 APR	Thermal	1 00	1 00		
		4 00	15 00		
1979					
15 MAR	Ridge, Wave, Thermal		176 00		
27 MAR	Ridge, Thermal	4 00	180 00		
5 APR	Ridge	1 00	181 00		
8 APR	Ridge Thermal	8 00	189 00		
5 MAY	Thermal	3 00	192 00		
TOT. TIME FWD TO NEXT PAGE					



Roy McMaster in his ASW-20, took this shot around Blue Grass, VA. of Hanna Reitsch on her world record-breaking flight. She was returning north at about 100 MPH along the Appalachian Ridge.

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Then, at the behest of Udet, she flew the twin-rotored, conventional propped helicopter indoors, over the heads of an estimated 16,000 people, at the Berlin Deutschlandhalle Auto Show of 1938.

Later that year, she went to America to put on an aerobatic performance at the Cleveland Air Races in a German Habicht sailplane. This ship was the first capable of all normal aerobatic maneuvers. It was designed by the pioneer sailplane builder, Hans Jacobs.

She went to Tripoli, in Africa, with Professor Georgii's group to study North African wind currents as they had done earlier in South America.

In one hilarious episode, Reitsch landed her sailplane out in the desert and was quickly discovered by a pair of Italian Carabinieri, who, judging from events that followed, may have been in the

desert a little too long. The ship could not be retrieved until the following morning, so Reitsch was forced to spend the night in the policemen's stone hut. As the desert night settled, it became increasingly obvious that these two armoured guardians of Mussolini's African Empire had something other than scientific pursuits on their minds. As they were sitting on makeshift chairs, first one then the other tried to put his arm around the downed sailplane pilot.

Thinking fast, the ever resourceful Reitsch convinced them that she was on a special mission to Marshal Italo Balbo, Libyan Governor, and himself a world famous pilot. She explained that unquestionably the Marshal would wish to be informed of their courtesy and consideration. She would recommend, and no doubt the Marshall, would agree, that they were worthy — yes, she was sure, of a decoration!

The ruse worked, and the policemen's hopes for a romantic interlude were replaced by a dream of military honors, maybe even promotion. At any rate, with daylight came Otto Fuchs, director of the German expedition, and grateful retrieval.

As WWII progressed Reitsch became involved with ever more risky tests; pilotless glider refueling tankers, landing a glider on slanted longitudinally-arranged cables and piloting a barrage balloon cable cutting device attached to the nose of a Dornier 17 bomber. For her accomplishments, Hitler himself awarded her the Iron Cross II. Reitsch was the only woman to receive that honor in WW II, and only the second since its institution in 1813. (The other woman was a nursing sister, Johanna Kruger.)

Then came the near-fatal crash while testing the desperately innovative Messerschmitt Me 163b interceptor rocket plane. This aircraft could reach 500 miles per hour and 30,000 feet in a matter of seconds, but when its fuel was expended, it landed as a glider, with an approach speed of 150 miles per hour!

During Reitsch's test, the 163b was to be aero-towed and then released to deploy its rocket motors. This time its jetisonable take-off dolly failed to release and the whole aircraft began to shudder violently. Reitsch hung on until the combination reached 10,500 feet, then after release, she executed a series of snap maneuvers to try and shake the parasite dolly free; all to no avail.

Rather than bail out, she tried to save the ship, but on final approach the tiny glider rocketplane became completely unmanageable. In her words from, FLYING IS MY LIFE, "We plunged, striking the earth, then rending and cracking, the machine somersaulted over, lurched and sagged to a stop. . . . Then I noticed a stream of blood coursing down from the direction of my head. Feeling no pain, I started to track the stream to its source, and as my fingers moved upward, across my face, they

DATE 19	ENTER DATA REGARDS INSPECTIONS, ALTERATIONS, REPAIRS OR INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THE HISTORY OF THE AIRCRAFT. ALL ENTRIES MUST BEAR THE SIGNATURE, RATING AND CERTIFICATE NO. OF THE MAKER.
	Region 5 Contest
	CHAMPION DERBY
	Hanna Reitsch world record flight
	" " " world record flight
4/23/79	I have had inspection this glider and issued a FAA Form 8130-7 for purpose of Exhibition & Racing dated to expire April 23, 1980 by [signature] AEA-6ADU-10 Alic Schatz, Jr. (Airmaster)

came upon it — At the place where my nose had been, was now nothing but an open cleft. Each time I breathed, bubbles of air and blood formed along its edge."

Her convalescence was long and painful. The shortest car or train ride made her feel nauseous and giddy, and she found it difficult to concentrate. Months after the accident she eased back into flying. First gliders, then power planes, higher and higher, to see if she could tolerate the changes in air pressure; then steep turns, spins and finally aerobatics.

Paul Schweizer, National Soaring Museum Trustee, recalls the time decades later when he and wife, Ginny met Reitsch at the 1978 Chateaux, France International Soaring Competition. She had heard about Paul's sailplane accident in which he was quite seriously injured. Commiserating on their air mishaps, Reitsch quipped, "At least you have your own nose. . . ."

On her recovery, she became involved in one of the last reckless schemes to save Germany from complete annihilation; the so-called Suicide Plan. The idea was to develop a human piloted glider or rocket bomb to be used against shipping or heavily defended ground targets. At the urging of Otto Skorzeny, the famous commando who rescued Mussolini by whisking him off Gran Sasso Mountain, the Fieseler Fi 103, V-1 "Buzz Bomb" was chosen. Reitsch crashed twice while testing the new device and each time emerged without a scratch.

According to John Killken's, "A HISTORY OF THE LUFTWAFFE," (Doubleday & Co., p. 300) Hitler, who always had the last word, quashed the project, by rejecting all proposed suicide missions. "The German soldier must always have a chance to survive," he said.

Reitsch's most daring exploits were her wild flights into and out of a Berlin, that by April, 1945, was completely surrounded and had been pounded to rubble by Russian Artillery. By her own account she knew, "... every hole, every corner, every bomb-shattered roof on each of the approaches. . . . no matter what the conditions, by day or night, in fog or fire, I could find my way, with absolute certainty."

Some sections of the city had already fallen. Reitsch was ordered to accompany Colonel General Ritter von Greim from Munich to Hitler's Reich Chancellery bunker in besieged Berlin.

Reitsch said that she was stuffed, feet first, into the rear fuselage section of a Focke-Wulf 190 fighter plane. von Greim squeezed into the 190's luggage compartment and a Luftwaffe sergeant-pilot took off from Rechlin for Gatow airport on the city's outskirts, the only operative field still in German hands. At Gatow, the Fieseler Storch Fi 156, in which they were originally scheduled to fly into Berlin had been destroyed by shellfire and it was almost

Log of the ASW-20, N2KS, Reitsch used on her out and return world record flight, April 7, 1979. The present owner of this ship is John "Corky" Gill, Elmira, NY and it is redesignated N1301G.

6 PM before the only remaining Storch could take off.

Because Reitsch had no experience flying under fire, von Greim insisted that he pilot the tiny ship.

Again from her book, "We were almost brushing the treetops to avoid the enemy fighters now appearing everywhere above us. Suddenly from the ground out of the shadows, from the treetops themselves, leapt the very fires of Hell, concentrating from every quarter on us, seemingly on us alone. . . . Below Russian tanks and soldiers were swarming among the trees. I could clearly see the men's faces, as rifles, tommy guns and anti-tank weapons were raised and fired at us. We were haloed, flanked and underlined with innumerable and deadly little explosive puffs.

"Then suddenly, there was a rending crash — I saw yellow-white flames streak up beside the engine and, at the same time von Greim shouted that he was hit — an armor piercing bullet had smashed through his right foot. I stretched over his shoulder, seized the throttle and stick and struggled to keep the machine twisting and turning to avoid the fire. Greim lay crumpled in his seat unconscious. . . . again and again we were hit. With a spasm of terror I caught sight of gasoline running from both wing tanks. An explosion, I thought, was inevitable and should have happened already. . . . And still the plane answered the controls. . . . and still I remained untouched."

Visibility was almost nil, but relying on her memory of landmarks, she found a broad highway running east and west. She knew that at the eastern end lay Brandenburg Gate, her destination. When she landed, there was hardly a drop of fuel in the Fiesler's tanks.

After lorry transport to the Hitler underground bunker, von Greim learned from a glassy-eyed, twitching Hitler that he had been appointed to head the Luftwaffe, in place of Goering, who Hitler thought had betrayed him.

Around midnight on April 28th, Hitler suddenly appeared in von Greim's sick room fumbling a map saying that 24 hours could be gained, which would enable General Wenk's army to break through Russian positions and relieve the situation. Reitsch said

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that Hitler was by that time in a world of illusion — no break through was possible. Hitler ordered von Greim and Reitsch to leave immediately in a light Arado 96 training plane that also managed to make it through the Russian barrage. It was flown in by the same sergeant-pilot who flew them in the F-W 190 to Gatow.

Requisitioning an armored car, they started for the makeshift runway amid a billowing sea of smoke, yellowy-red flame and a drumfire wailing and crashing of shells.

It was determined that the roadway was cleared of shell craters for four hundred yards, but the situation might change at any moment. "Though enemy searchlights were groping continually up and down, we managed to take off without being spotted and headed toward Brandenburg Gate. We flew on undisturbed by spasmodic tracer fire, and in about a mile reached the welcoming protection of a cloud bank and headed for Rechlin," Reitsch wrote.

Immediately after the sensational escape, the war ended, and Reitsch was held for interrogation in an American internment camp. As she said, "Legends had already begun to grow around my last flight into Berlin and it was thought that I might have hidden Hitler away somewhere . . . Perhaps I could be prevailed on to surrender the secret? Then, when it was learned that I had no secret to reveal, I was loaded onto a jeep and taken on a nine-hour journey at a furious speed and over atrocious roads to another internment camp . . . In August 1946 after fifteen months captivity, I was released."

After the war, Reitsch continued to fly, traveling and giving lectures in several countries, including the United States.

In 1962 she set up a National School of Gliding in Ghana, where she became a confidante of President Kwame Nkrumah, who was overthrown in 1966.

John Seymour, Brookfield Center, CT, remembers flying with Reitsch in 1968 at Aigen Austria, at the Alpine Gliding School. She was a good friend of Harro Wodl, who was world champion in 1968, and was chief of the school. "She was a ball of fire, . . . a little girl, just able to see over the canopy of the Cirrus she was flying at that time," Seymour said.

Roy McMaster, Canandaigua, NY, wrote about Reitsch's 1979 record flight in the April-May Harris Hill News, "This time it was a group of four, with Hanna Reitsch attempting to break her world's out and return record, with a flight from Eagle Field to Piper Memorial Airport at Lock Haven, PA, south to Mountain Grove, W. VA., and back to Piper Memorial. Karl (Striedieck) was flying the ASW-19 . . . Wil Schuemann was flying his modified ASW-12 and I had the ASW-20. None of us carried water for this flight since Hanna could not reach the valves to dump it in the (ASW-) 20. At take-off we were not aware that Doris Grove, State College, PA, had already started on a woman's out-and-return record from Ridge Soaring to Mountain Grove and return in an ASW-19. Tom Knauff, Julian, PA, had taken off in the two-place Lark for a two-place world out-and-return record attempt to Covington, VA, and back. Because of the later start, we passed Doris coming north while we were still headed south toward Mountain Grove.

"I got separated from Karl, Wil and Hanna at Bedford Gap, PA, and didn't catch them until Mountain Grove. I was fortunate in connecting a (lenticular) wave near Cumberland, MD, and flew all the way to Mountain Grove at 8,000-9,000 feet and finally spotted them on the ridge coming home so I opened the dive brakes and came down to join them. The return flight went well and Wil and Karl landed at Eagle Ridge to get the Cessna to come up and retrieve Hanna. I accompanied her back to Lock Haven and after she landed safely, returned to Eagle Field on the ridge. Unfortunately, although Hanna had completed a new women's record flight, her ink barograph left no trace. This was good for Doris Grove, since her new record flight would have been shorter and Doris would have held the record for only an hour had Hanna been successful."



Right to left: Mrs. Suzanne Striedieck, Karl Striedieck and Hanna Reitsch, at Alan Seager Forest, PA., May 1979.

But Hanna had been successful; the F.A.I. (Federation Aeronautique Internationale) governing body of world aviation, recognized Hanna's 805 km goal-and-return flight on the basis of testimony given by the accompanying pilots. Reitsch said, "It was the most fantastic flight I ever had."

According to Striedieck, "When she broke the world record, the press did not find out about it until it was turned in to the F.A.I. and when the news services contacted her she was reluctant to talk with them. She just wanted privacy. She could have been the center of all sorts of important aviation/aerospace people, but she chose not to." He said that while staying at his Eagle Ridge home, Reitsch had a special room in which to do her work. Friends say that even today, when visiting the Striedieck's, they note the sign, "Hanna's Room" over its door.

John "Corky" Gill, Elmira, NY, now owns the ASW-20 (One Golf) in which Reitsch set her American record and has that flight entry in the ship's log.

In March of 1980, Doris Grove became the first woman to soar 1000 km from Julian, PA, south to Bluefield, VA, and return, to set a new woman's out-and-return world record.

Reitsch died 4½ months after her visit to the Appalachian Ridge, on August 30, 1979, at her home in Bonn, West Germany.

In her 47 years of flying she held 25 national and international records.

She is survived by a brother, Kurt Reitsch, Hamburg, West Germany.

Striedieck said that English author Judy Lomax is writing Reitsch's biography and that it will be published sometime next summer (1988).

Hanna Reitsch is buried in Salzburg, Austria.

ON THE COVER:

Hanna Reitsch, from a picture she gave to Karl and Suzanne Striedieck, with this notation on the reverse side, "To my dear friends Karl and Suzanne. Love, Hanna taken Spring 1945 2 April 1979."

FROM THE EDITOR:

Space limitations precluded the inclusion of this section in the Summer NSM, so here is a brief review of our Summer and Fall activities.

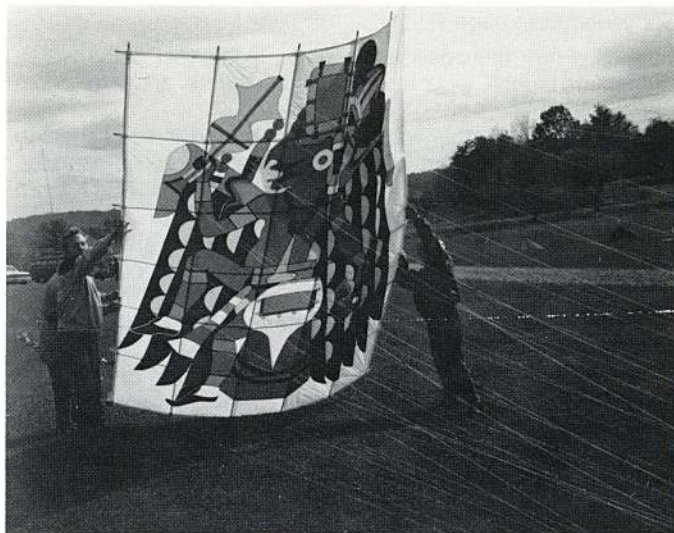
The National Soaring Museum was at the center of a swirl of activity here on Harris Hill. We had thousands of visitors and a surprising number of groups from overseas, including Brazil, Israel, Ireland, Kenya and West Germany. One visitor from N. Ireland even wrote, "Worth the 3,000 mile trip," in our guest book.

Children's school and day campers were always a delight, their eyes wide with incredulity when told about pioneer bungee shock cord glider launches of the 1920's and 30's, and the giant wartime cargo and assault gliders.

Area Summer Cohesion and Day Camp kids had a lot of fun with the Museum's "Dynamics and Aerodynamics of Paper Gliders" program. All sorts of wild designs took to air. Some of them flew very well, with one nine year old's "floater" staying aloft indoors for 8 seconds. (The 1985 Second Great International Paper Airplane Contest duration record is 16.06 seconds; Tatuo Yoshida of Yokohama, Japan, designer.) Watch out, Mr. Yoshida, our playground hotshots will be gunning for you in '88.

The 1987 U. S. National Sports Class National Soaring Championships were held right outside the Museum's main

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Launching Bill Connors 12 foot "Shirone" kite during the NSM's second annual KITECITEMENT kite fly, last October. The elaborate representation, structure and bridle system was designed and built by Connors, of Horseheads, NY.

1988 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Date to Come	Dedication of the Soaring Capital of America Monument	Rt. 17
March-April Dates to be announced	Kite Construction Workshop	To be announced
May 18	International Museum Day	NSM
May 27, 28, 29	1988 Exhibit Opening — "Youth in Soaring" "Motorgliders" & "U.S. Sailplane Designers and Builders - Richard Schreder." United States Soaring Hall of Fame NSM Trustees Annual Meeting	NSM
May 28, 29, 30	Vintage Sailplane Regatta VSA Annual Meeting	Harris Hill/NSM
June 6 - 12	National Soaring Week	NSM
Aug. 11	Twin Tier Hangarfest, Pilots Outing	Harris Hill Park
Sept. 3, 4, 5	Labor Day Weekend - Informal Sailplane Regatta.	Harris Hill
Oct. 1, 2, 8, 9	Fall Foliage Weekends	Harris Hill/NSM
Oct. 8	The National Soaring Museum's 3rd Annual "Kitecitement" Kite Fly	Harris Hill/NSM
Dates to be announced	15th Annual Ralph S. Barnaby Lecture	To be announced
Nov. 25, 26	45th Annual Snowbird Regatta	Harris Hill/NSM
Dec. 9	Community Soaring Committee Luncheon	NSM

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entrance. From the observation deck, sightseers could watch contestants launch, whiz through the start gate, and later zoom over the finish line.

While contest weather was somewhat erratic, it didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of pilots, crews and fence-hangers. Saturday evening, July 4th, entertainer/sailplane pilot Ed Kilborn and his guitar charmed contest picnickers with a delightful program of song and wit. A couple of Sundays later the New Jersey Antique Auto Club chugged up the hill for an outing and a visit to the NSM. You can imagine the contrast, a rattling Model T bumping toward the runway with a state-of-the-art ASW slicing silently overhead.

On Monday, August 31st, the "Soaring Capital of America" sculpture was erected near the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport on NY I-Route 17. You may recall its description in the Spring, 1987, NSM; a 25-foot wingspan, stainless steel sailplane replica mounted atop of a 45-foot mast. The project was sponsored by the National Soaring Museum Community Soaring Committee, in conjunction with the Southern Tier (NY) Economic Growth, Inc., and will be dedicated in 1988.

In July and August, the NSM presented several slide/lectures on, "The Wright Brothers and the Beginnings of Soaring." This program, along with two new additions, "A History of Soaring," and, "The Glider War, 1940-45," were delivered to an Elderhostel study group in November.

October 10th, the National Soaring Museum held the second annual Kite-citement kite contest. It attracted participants from as far away as Long Island, thanks to a listing in the American Kiteflyers calendar of events. NSM kite advisors, Bill Connors, Horseheads, NY, and Arthur Jewitt, Lawrenceville, PA, were on hand with helpful hints to contestants. Bill gave a flight demonstration of his giant 9 x 12 foot Japanese-style kite, the "Shirone". The kite was named after a river in Japan where kite flights are staged. Opponents on opposite sides of the river entangle their kites and attempt to break the others lines in a tug-of-war.

How about participating in the 1988 "Kite-citement" Kite fly? It's always held on the second Saturday in October, the 8th in 1988. Don't worry if you can't attend personally; just mail us your kite (with return postage if you want it back) and we'll have one of our kite-suosos fly it for you. . . Won't be as much fun as if you were here, but you just might win in one of several categories. (No entrants before September, 1988, please - storage limitations. More details will be published in subsequent NSMs.)

On Columbus Day, Jack Laister and his wife Helen visited the NSM. Jack Laister is the pioneering designer of such historic ships as the pre-WWII "Yankee Doodle", the Wartime L-K TG-4A trainer and the largest cargo glider ever built in the United States, the Laister-Kauffman CG-10A "Trojan", which had a 105-foot wingspan, and could carry 5 tons. He stopped in to take a few shots of the "Nugget" exhibit. This is a ship that he and his son, Bill, designed in 1974.

While the Laisters were here, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Sampson, Stafford, VA, stopped in. Bill was the first military glider pilot to receive the famous "G" silver wings in 1942. There is a famous picture of Bill in uniform standing alongside a glider with movie star Marlene Dietrich sitting in the cockpit. Museum Trustee, Paul Schweizer, then joined the group. It was like an eavesdropper's dream to hear these three reaching back almost a half century, and speaking with first hand knowledge of events and people that later generations would read about in history books.

On November 7th, Steven Bussolari, Charles Draper Asst. Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at M.I.T., delivered the National Soaring Museum's 14th Annual Ralph Stanton Barnaby Lecture in Seattle, WA. Professor Bussolari's talk was entitled, "From Myth to Reality: The Daedalus Human Powered Flight Project", and will be reviewed in Winter '87-88 NSM.

While in Seattle for their Fall meeting and the Barnaby Lecture, the Museum's Board of Directors okayed the Exhibit Committee's proposal for the 1988 Exhibit Focus.

It will be: Youth and Soaring - U.S. Sailplane Designers and



New Soaring Capital of America monument along I-Route 17 at the base of Harris Hill, Elmira, NY. The stainless steel sailplane with a 25 foot wingspan is mounted atop a 45 foot mast and weathercocks with the wind.

Builders: Dick Schreder and A Motorglider Photo Exhibit.

Hope that you have had a chance to see the Museum's 1987 Exhibit Focus "50th Anniversary of Soaring Magazine" and the Laister "Nugget", the first and only U.S. designed and built sailplane ever to win a STANDARD CLASS National Championship. (1975, Minden, NV) It will be on display through April, 1988.

On Friday, December 18th, the NSM Community Soaring Committee Luncheon honored volunteers who have assisted in 1987 with various Museum projects. Several speakers reviewed this year's accomplishments and discussed the exciting prospects for 1988 and beyond. . . And so our 1987 activity calendar wound down on a very interesting and productive year.

Buy a brick and you or your club can be a part of one aspect of soaring history for succeeding generations. It will be laser engraved with your or your club's name and be placed in the permanent wall display of the newly expanded NSM, or, you may wish to be recognized on the Museum's special Diamond Plaque. Let's talk about it. Address or call: National Soaring Museum, Harris Hill RD #3, Elmira, NY 14903: Phone: (607) 734-3128.

You can help in preserving our soaring heritage.

If you have historic memorabilia and excess or duplicate publications, send them to the National Soaring Museum for cataloging and archiving.

Share your collection of soaring artifacts and reminiscences with people who would not otherwise have an opportunity to appreciate them.

Address: Shirley Sliwa, Director
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