

# NSM NEWS

SUMMER  
2018

Official Newsletter of the National Soaring Museum

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Wolf Hirth book	3
Winch Launch	4
Memorials	6
Calendar of Events	7
Tommy Flies Again	8

## MUSEUM STAFF

**Trafford L-M. Doherty**  
Executive Director / Curator

**Mary Flaspahler**  
Bookkeeper / Museum  
Services

**Lisa Bartlett**  
Gift Shop Manager / Visitor  
Services

**Jean Doherty**  
Administrative Assistant  
Newsletter Editor  
Membership Coordinator

**T. Curran Sekella**  
Archivist

## New Museum Exhibits - Trafford Doherty

We're in the process of renewing the several display kiosks here at the museum. You may recall that we finished the Early Champions this past spring as a stepping stone towards an in-depth treatise on Hawley Bowlus. Well, I ran into another snag; the German soaring kiosk contained (for some reason) material on Charles Lindbergh. This needed to be removed, because he is a significant player in the story of Hawley Bowlus (Hawley was plant manager at Ryan Airlines and supervised the construction of the Spirit of St. Louis, resulting in a strong friendship between the two men).

And then I noticed a couple more things that didn't fit, so we redid the whole German Soaring exhibit; might as well do it right! That having been said, for me, the truly neat part is that I learn so much along the way; things like the fact that Wolfgang Klemperer invented the shock cord launch in 1920, because the "hand-launching" method of the day would absolutely not work with the *Schwarze Teufel* and *Blaue Maus*.

"Klemp" was a clever guy who was heavily involved in the advancement of soaring in Germany and, after emigrating to the U.S. in 1924, he became a key figure in the advancement of soaring in America. The purpose of this exhibit is to highlight the development of German soaring and how it influenced soaring efforts in America. I think this new presentation accomplishes that in a way that visitors can readily follow.



Hawley Bowlus, B.F. Mahoney (owner of Ryan Airlines) and Charles Lindbergh



Klemperer being congratulated by Anthony Fokker, following his 5.5-km flight in 1921



On a side note, while researching this, I discovered a really cool “selfie” taken in 1932 by Gus Scheurer on a winch launch in a primary glider (Gus started the famous *Aero Club Albatross* where this was taken at Lyons, NJ). It’s a great shot that’s very similar to the one taken by Norman Bruce that appeared in the last Journal. These people were truly intrepid – and incredibly dedicated to the sport. Speaking of primary gliders, whenever I take people through the museum, I stop for minute under our 1928 Zögling Primary and tell the folks about Cloyd Artman’s 1933, thirteen and a half-hour flight – and his after-dark landing, guided by auto headlights (apparently for him, a fairly common occurrence). Relating this never fails to get a strong reaction from my audience – and rightfully so; he did amazing things in his homemade primary. Among soaring enthusiasts, there has been a long-standing interest in the exploits of Cloyd Artman and, with that in mind we will to do an in-depth exhibit on Cloyd in the near future. I’d like to include a diorama of Cloyd’s famous car top launch off a cliff. Wait until our visitors see that! We’re not going to run out of projects right away. Waiting in queue are exhibits on Women in Soaring, John Robinson and Paul MacCready, Ralph Barnaby, etc. This is exciting stuff!



For some news on another subject, our Archives area is getting some long overdue attention. Thanks to my wife, Jean, and our new Archives Volunteer, Curran Sekella, things are starting to happen. (Curran has a bit of a soaring pedigree - his dad, Youston Sekella, was a “mover and shaker” in the Elmira soaring movement, starting in the early 1930’s). There’s a lot to do in there, but the first thing is to stabilize our large collection of 16mm movie film. We’ve been advised by an expert in this area, that aging film becomes chemically unstable and could become a fire hazard. The way to safely store this material is to freeze it and with that in mind, we bought a new frost-free freezer. (thanks to Curren’s securing a grant). We greatly appreciate the generosity of the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes for providing us with the funds for this important project. The reels will be stored in there for the foreseeable future. We plan to digitize them as time (and financing) permit, but this way, we can keep the originals indefinitely. We also need more overall storage space, so we purchased additional shelving units. The fun job will be making room for them!



We’re managing to keep busy!

Photo at right shows Curren’s work station on the left and the new freezer on the far right in the archives.

# What's the Use of Gliding?

Fred Slingsby, the well-known sailplane designer, was once asked "What's the use of gliding?". He gave the answer, "Have you ever stood on the edge of a cliff and felt the urge to spread out your arms and soar gracefully over the country below?" Receiving an affirmative from his questioner he continued, "Well, gliding allows you to do it more than once!"

*Fred Slingsby, about to shock cord launch in his Falcon*



## New Book on Wolf Hirth

German author, Karl Buck, has assembled a fabulous biography on Wolf Hirth, loaded with never-before-seen photos of the legendary aviator. Karl was kind enough to send us a copy, and although it is written in German, we have nonetheless been enjoying paging through the history and pictures. If anyone is interested in purchasing this book in German, Karl will send us a shipment of no less than 12 copies, due to shipping expense. Let us know and we will collect names until we have the required number for the shipment. Karl hopes to have it translated into English at some point.



*Photo courtesy of Akaflieg TH-Stuttgart*



← *Wolf Hirth with a Harth-Messerschmitt primary glider at the Wasserkuppe in 1922*

---

## HARRIS HILL SAILPLANE WINCH LAUNCH LESSON - Duane Sprague

Prior to my summer employment as an "instructor and visitor rides pilot" at Harris Hill, Elmira, NY while attending Penn State University, I visited Harris Hill one summer with a friend, Donald Brockhurst. We each brought a 1-26 sailplane with us from Cincinnati for our soaring vacation with the anticipation of somehow managing the initiation of cross-country flights from Harris Hill with our respective 1-26s during the mid-week days. However, we belatedly found out that there would not necessarily be anyone to help us launch during the mid-week days, because during the mid-week, for the time period of 1957-59, there were very few people on Harris Hill, and probably they wouldn't be soaring club members who might have assisted us in using the winch for launching our sailplanes.

However, since the club was willing to allow us to use their winch on our own, it evolved that I was verbally checked out on using the winch on a late Sun. afternoon, without observing its actual running or use while launching! The soaring club president was my verbal winch checkout instructor (what a compliment for me to have him trust me with the club's winch) who informed me, along with many other details, that the winch didn't have a muffler and its radiator leaked profusely. Consequently, there was a winch-running prerequisite to fill a pail with water to have ready to dump into the winch radiator just prior to starting the winch engine for a launch. Well.....that all sounded manageable....so after his detailed instructions, what possibly could go wrong?

Of course, this was the early era when Harris Hill's landing strip was not level and one could not see the glider to be launched from the winch's down-hill location. Don and I flipped a coin to determine who would be launched on our first attempt for a launch using the winch. It turned out that I was the lucky one....err, yeah, I sure was lucky! Unfortunately, Don wasn't around when I was verbally checked out to run the winch, so I had to reiterate the procedure as I had been instructed about what had to transpire for a launch and to add "grace-notes" to accommodate Don's perfectionist attitude! (Don and I worked for the Cincinnati Milling Machine Co. and Don was an exceptional Mechanical Engineer who undertook all procedures very slowly and carefully.) Therefore, I had to instruct Don to be aware that the winch's engine was going to make a lot of noise that he would have to ignore (even if the engine would sound like it was missing on a cylinder, etc.) and that it was important to let the clutch all the way out and really floor the gas pedal to cause a fast acceleration..... or, I would be coming into his view over the hump in the strip merely rolling on the ground, rather than being in the air like I would need to be for a launch to happen. Also, this negative on-the-ground disposition, caused by under-energy-generation, would require a lot of faith in the 1-26's "spoon-wheel-brake" to stop after an aborted ground release would leave it rolling down hill..... and perhaps before it ended up mangled on the guard-posts at the road edge at the end of the strip! We stretched out the winch wire and positioned my 1-26 and returned to the winch. I again told Don to not pussy-foot around with the running of the winch, and to push the S-O-B's gas pedal down! We set our watches and established a time to launch for 5 minutes later. **(Use the radio?..... Heck no, we didn't have a radio for the winch!)** I dumped the pail of water into the radiator and drove back up the hill to my 1-26, hooked the tow wire up and got into the sailplane. I then waited in dead silence (watching a calm unsuspecting butterfly slowly flutter by the nose of the 1-26) for the wire to get tight. At approximately the established time, I heard a loud snarly engine roar that got increasingly louder & higher in pitch until the wire jerked tight and I got pushed back into the head rest & almost instantly I was yanked into the air..... analogously like it would have been for a marble being launched from a sling-shot **(Oops...too much verbal prep for Don)** and I shot up to a very good launch height over the hill at a very fast speed before I released the wire under tension, to further climb another 100+ ft. after release!

Fortunately, our launches did not break the winch tow-wire or the winch anymore than it already was broken before we tested it. Incidentally, I did make a nice 100+ mile cross-country flight that day and sure appreciated the generosity of the glider club. (I was later told that my launch might have been a record high winch launch for Harris Hill!)

**INCIDENTAL NOTE:** While visiting my friend, Karl Striedieck, at his PA ridge-top air strip home last year, Karl informed me about his winch launch classes he has been teaching from his beautiful hill top air strip and that discussed activity prompted me to relate my above Harris Hill winch launch learning history to him....whereby Karl then informed me that a similar early winch, in some state of disrepair, was located on his property for repairs relatively near where we were standing. Just think what these old winches would say if they could talk?

**DIRECTOR'S NOTE:** I remember standing in front of a winch on Harris Hill in the early 60s (probably the same one) - my job was to level wind the rope onto the drum - going back and forth - with a stick! The operator had a protective screen, but the guy with the stick had no protection. It was very frightening, very noisy, and very memorable!

- *Traff Doherty*



Shown above on Harris Hill is an early 1930s pick-up truck winch from Massachusetts.

At left is Gus Scheurer's 1933 winch made from a Jewett automobile. Note the hand-operated level winder.



1960s winch, similar to the one described by Duane Sprague in his article on the facing page.

Photo contributed by Karl Striedieck - that's Karl at the controls!



## NEW MEMBERS

### Gold

Marilyn Meline

### Bronze

Robin & Marici Reid

### Family

Norbert & Helen Binkowski

Carol Ruth

Matthew Meritt

Christina & Damian Sonsire

### Individual

Etoral Guernsey

Jon W. Van Derhoof

Joyce Merletti

### HHSC Senior

Michael Depue

Richard Stone

Ashley Shaloo

Walter Beach

Fiona Harnischfegar

### HHSC Junior

Eric Shelhamer

Kaleb Cole

Teddie Robbins

Aaron Canfield

Paul Jennings

Tyler Stone

## MEMBERSHIP UPGRADES

### Bronze

Martha Treichler

Bruce Bottoms

## ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Collection of photos and memorabilia in memory of

**David W. Lester**

by Jan Lester



## IN MEMORIAM

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron D. Panken**  
1964 – 2018

Rabbi Aaron Panken, president of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and a leading figure in Reform Judaism, was killed May 5, 2018 in the crash of a J-3 Cub at Randall Airport, Middletown, NY, during a routine flight check with an instructor.

Aaron was a Valley Soaring Club member, and NSM member who flew a Pegasus, and also flew power planes. The J-3 Cub was owned by several members from Valley Soaring Club. He flew his glider often, and had become a member of the J-3 Club so he would have something else to fly.

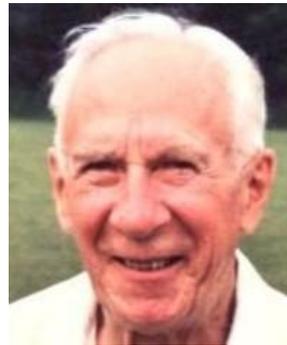
Ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1991, Rabbi Panken joined the HUC-JIR faculty in 1995, and served as Dean of Students (1996-1998), Dean of the New York Campus (1998-2007), and Vice President for Strategic Initiatives (2007-2010), before being becoming the 12th President in HUC-JIR's 143-year history on January 1, 2014.



## IN MEMORIAM

**HOWARD F. TRAMPENAU**  
1916-2018

Howard F. Trampenau, age 102. of Erie, PA, passed away on Monday, June 18, 2018. Howard was born in Erie on February 2, 1916 the son of the late Frederick and Monica Martz Trampenau. Howard attended Academy High School and completed an apprenticeship as a printer for the International Typographical Union. He worked for the Erie Dispatch Herald and the Elmira Star-Gazette in the composing room, laying out the pages of the newspaper and operating the Linotype machine. Howard enlisted in the Army Air Corps during WWII; serving as a pilot and achieving the rank of Lieutenant. Besides family and work, his life-long passion was flying and aviation. During the war, he was an advanced flight instructor; flying the AT-6 "Texan". Howard continued flying after the war as a hobby; mainly sailplanes at Harris Hill. Howie, as he was known by everyone at Harris Hill, served as treasurer, board member, and summer operations manager, along with many years instructing in the junior membership program. Over the years he built his own high-performance sailplane and two different 2-seater powered aircraft. He had over 7,000 hours flight time as a pilot. Other hobbies included (of course) building and flying model airplanes, photography, woodworking, and gardening. Howard is survived by his wife, Mary Lorraine Hannon Trampenau; sons Robert and Timothy; and sisters, Vera and Jean.



## IN MEMORIAM

**Loris J. "Lorry" Charchian**

Lorry died on August 15, 2018, from complications following surgery in July. He was a longtime member of NSM, having joined in 1986.

## NATIONAL SOARING MUSEUM OFFICERS

**W. Stuart Schweizer**  
President

**William Batesole**  
Vice-President

**Steven Leonard**  
Secretary

**Dr. William G. Howard**  
Treasurer

**Trafford L-M. Doherty**  
Director

## TRUSTEES

Gary Adams  
Dianne Black-Nixon  
Dr. Walter Cannon  
Kevin Christner  
Warren Cramer  
Donna L. Draxler  
Michael Koerner  
David Manchester  
James McDaniel  
David Pixton  
Ann B. Richart  
David Welles  
Phil Westcott

## MEMORIALS

*In Memory of*  
**Howard Trampenau**  
Frederick R. Lawrence

*In Memory of*  
**Heinz Weissenbuehler**  
James & Jayne McMillen



*Nelson Hummingbird*

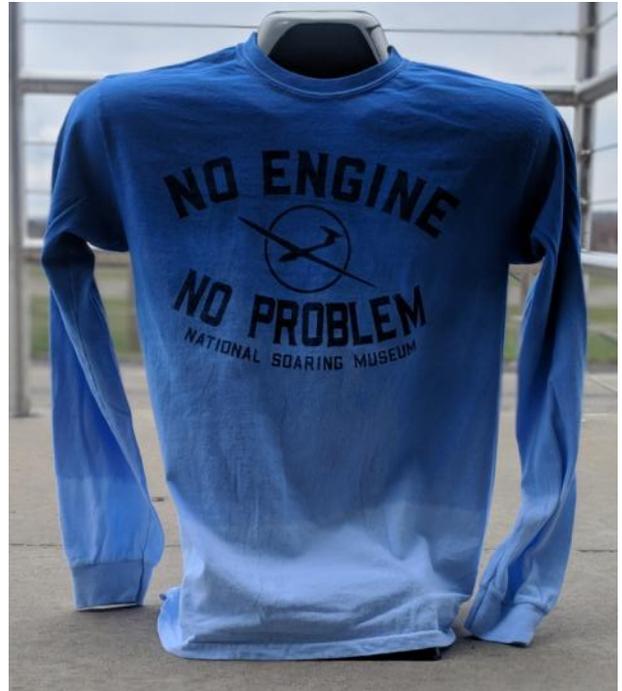
## New in the Gift Shop



**Blue NSM Ceramic "Solo" Cup \$14.99.** Round design on front; on the back, *Soaring Capital of America*.

**NSM Coaster Set,** 4 X 4 square coaster with NSM Logo, Round 2.5" coaster for the car. This absorbent stone is functional as well as beautiful. Set \$16.98

The famous **Fall at Harris Hill** postcard turned into a 10" x 12" puzzle. A great way to remember your flight! \$12.99



The newest NSM t-shirt, "**No Engine No Problem**", has become so popular that the line has been expanded to include:

**Short-sleeved Tees,** colors: Denim Blue, Brick, Sea Foam Green. Sizes S-XL \$22.99

**Regular Crew Sweatshirt** - Royal Blue, Forrest Green, S-XL \$26.99

**Hooded Pullover Sweatshirt** - Dark Heather, S-XL \$31.99

**Small Decal "No Engine No Problem"** \$3.99

**NSM "No Engine No Problem" Ornament.** A 3"-round porcelain ornament, made in the Finger Lakes, blends old with new. Soaring Capital of America with "**No Engine No Problem**". This is pretty enough for year 'round. \$12.99

These items are going fast!

Assorted gifts from Finger Lakes artist, "My Favorite Things" owner, Mary Nelson.

Mary recycles glass wine bottles into beautiful gifts, no two are alike. Choose from wind chimes, glass ornaments, lighted bottles, wine-scented candles: Chardonnay, Riesling, Vineyard

and Cabernet Sauvignon. All feature assorted designs of the Finger Lakes.

**Glass Ornaments** \$17.99

**Wine Scented Candles** \$23.99

**Lighted Bottles** \$26.99

**Wind Chimes** \$29.99

**NSM Stemless Wine Glass,** clear with etched NSM logo - \$8.99

Party fun: **Wine IQ Trivia Game** \$24.99

**Beer IQ Trivia Game** \$24.99





# 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY SOARING DAY

Saturday September 8, 2018

- Magician Tim Cleary
- Live Reindeer
- N-Trak Model Train Club
- Big Flats Fire Dept.
- Paper Airplanes
- Meet and greet w/the Grinch
- Food, Music and More!



Sponsored by: Simmons Rockwell, Wegmans,  
Terps, Streeter Associates, Culligan





## Meet the Bruce Family

Shown here are the two daughters and extended family of Norman Bruce, the subject of our winter edition of the NSM Journal. Page number limits prevented us from including the photos in the last Journal, but we would like to acknowledge here their enthusiasm and help with materials for the article on their father, Norman Bruce, the Father of Gliding in Western Canada.

Norm's daughter, Sylvia is standing 3rd from the left, and daughter, Edleen is seated in the front center. Catalyst for the article, Tamara Hughes, granddaughter, is standing at the far right with husband, Tim. Both sisters are shown at the right with the "Zephyr".



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

thru October 1, 2018 - **Art Exhibit - works of Fred Lawrenson**

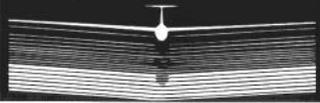
September 8, 2018 - **Community Soaring Day**

October 15, 2018 - January 1, 2019 - **Icon Art of Joyce Merletti**

November 17, 2018 - March 30, 2019 - **Dollhouse & Miniatures Exhibit**

April 26-28, 2019 - **Quilt Exhibit**

National Soaring Museum



51 Soaring Hill Drive  
Elmira, NY 14903

info@soaringmuseum.org

www.soaringmuseum.org

607-734-3128

**SUMMER 2018**



**MUSEUM HOURS**

**May.1 - Dec. 31**  
Open daily 10-5

**Jan. 2 - Apr. 30**  
Open daily 10-4

**Closed on Monday and  
Tuesday in January &  
February**

**Museum closed on the  
following holidays:**

- New Year's Day
- Easter Sunday
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

*Come See Tommy Fly!*

FREE & Open to the Public!

Food Vendors!  
Family-Friendly Activities

Stories about Tommy!

**Tommy's Centennial Flight**  
**2:00 PM - 5:00 PM**  
**SEPTEMBER 29**  
**ITHACA TOMPKINS REGIONAL AIRPORT**

\*weather dependent- alternate date 9/30/18\*

This project was made possible in part by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program

Tompkins County NY gov

William and Oliver Thomas, brothers who had worked for Glenn Curtiss in Hammondsport, were invited to Ithaca in 1914 to establish the Thomas Aeroplane Company. In 1916, the company won a government contract and the following year it merged with the Morse Chain Company to become the Thomas-Morse Aircraft Corp. It built planes used as "advanced trainers" for service members before they headed overseas. The S4-C Scout, called the "Tommy" by pilots who flew it, soon became the favorite single-seat training airplane produced in the U.S. during World War I. 600 of them were built in Ithaca. The Saturday, Sept. 29th event will be the centennial flight of this fully restored bi-plane. Plan to be there!

## NSM Membership Form

Please check the membership category of your choice and return to:

The National Soaring Museum, 51 Soaring Hill Dr., Elmira, NY 14903

Basic \$35   
  Family \$50   
  Bronze \$100   
  Silver \$250  
 Gold \$500   
  Diamond \$1000   
  Cayley Society \$2500

My name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
as it is to appear in printed matter :

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed  
 Please bill my Credit Card# \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_  
 (MasterCard-Visa-Discover-American Express)                      V-code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional tax-deductible donations will be used for museum improvements, including upgrading facilities, restoration shop and new exhibits.**