

NSM NEWS

FALL 2024

Official Newsletter of the National Soaring Museum

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Director	3
Geoff Steele	6
SSA Convention	7

MUSEUM STAFF

Trafford L-M. Doherty
Executive Director
Curator

Jean Doherty
Operations Manager
Newsletter & Journal Editor
Membership Coordinator

Don Rumsey
Facilities Manager

T. Curran Sekella
Archivist

Kennedy Parker
Sarah McMaster
Rocky Peters
Charles Patterson
Gift Shop Staff



51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

607-734-3128

info@soaringmuseum.org
www.soaringmuseum.org



Sarah Arnold and Karl Striedieck win Gold at Uvalde

Sarah and Karl were 1st place winners in the 20 Meter Multi-Seat Class with a total of 9,616 points.

Stefan Langer of Germany placed 1st in the 18 Meter Class with 9,843 points and Felipe Levin of Germany placed 1st in the Open Class with 10,887 points.

The World Gliding Championships (WGC) is a gliding competition held roughly every two years by the FAI Gliding Commission. The dates are not always exactly two years apart, often because the contests are always held in the summer in either the southern or northern hemisphere.



Sarah Arnold & Karl Striedieck



photo by Paul Remde

This year, the competition was held in Uvalde, Texas, in the midst of some remarkably hot weather. In the photos of the airfield, the grass looks pretty dried up - not like the lush green lawns we have experienced here in New York State this summer. Contestants and crew were well-supplied with bottles of water and sun umbrellas and coverings for arms and necks were added to the usual hats and caps. But the heat did not dim the enthusiasm.

In addition to Sarah Arnold and Karl Striedieck, Sean Murphy from our own Harris Hill Soaring Corp. competed in the 18-Meter Class. As always, volunteers are a very important part of soaring competitions, and HHSC and NSM members were there to help: Heinz Weissenbuehler & Karin Schlosser, Steve Leonard, Monty & Janell Sullivan, and Paul Remde. We can also thank Paul for the many fabulous photos he took during the week, including the photos used in this article.



Karl Striedieck & Sarah Arnold when they first realized they had the gold



Heinz Weissenbuehler & Karin Schlosser

Sarah Arnold: "For years I've dreamed of becoming the first woman to earn gold in the unrestricted World Gliding Championships, and superstitiously refused to say it aloud, afraid that perhaps it was just too big of a goal.

Along the way I've learned how to earn points in glider racing, and a LOT of ways to lose them. I've learned that it takes a special set of circumstances to win and not all factors are in anyone's control. I've felt the thrills of victory and agonies of defeat. I've learned that in glider racing there are more hard lessons to learn than easy ones. I've been buoyed by countless

kindnesses and felt the pressure at the top, being hunted by the best in the world. These experiences of mine have come over but a fourth of the time that Karl has been on his own quest. It seemed like such a fairy tale to wish for us to win, for Karl to get his gold, and finally have USA world champions from a contest hosted inside the United States.

When we took the lead early on we both fought hard to keep thoughts of a potential win out of our heads, and just took one day at a time. We couldn't believe it would happen until we crossed the finish ring yesterday afternoon. Thank you to all who have worked tirelessly over many years to give us this opportunity. Words aren't enough, my heart is full."



Tow planes are ready!

The winners L-R: Rubaj & Matkowski from Poland 9552 points, Arnold & Striedieck 9616 points, Lutz & Janowitsch from Austria 9599 points. →



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj9sutqUCRg>

From the Director – “Full Circle” - Traff Doherty

As I write this, Jean and I are anticipating retirement in about two months. I occurred to me that almost 70 years have gone by since my first visit to Harris Hill. In the mid-50s, my dad, Tony Doherty, brought us here to see the sailplanes. I remember looking up from the car window and seeing one being towed by a yellow and blue biplane. Upon arrival, I got a close look at a pair of very distinctive-looking sailplanes parked in front of the hanger. Later on – after gaining some knowledge - I learned that I had seen an LK being towed by a Stearman (a.k.a. – a Boeing PT-17 Kaydet) and, in front of the hanger, two Pratt Reads. These images exist in my mind to this day. My dad had some history with Harris Hill; he was a pilot in WWII and, in 1948, he bought an LK from Bill Frutchy. He put about 60 hours on it before giving it to family and job demands – and selling it (at that time, he was VP of the Pleasant Valley Wine Co. in Hammondsport, NY).

My father, Tony Doherty, with the Schweizer 1-30



In 1957, the winery was sold to a New York City outfit, and Dad was forced out after about 20 years of service. During his soaring days, he got to know Paul Schweizer, and in 1959, he asked him for a job at Schweizer Aircraft. He was placed in the position of Manager of Sailplane Sales and he served his new employer very well for the next 23 years. His responsibilities also included taking part in the operation of the Schweizer Soaring School. Towing, giving rides, and teaching ground school were among his various duties. For me, anything and everything about the Schweizer Soaring School was a dream come true, and in 1961 - when I was 13, I became a line boy. I really loved every minute of it! It was my gateway to flying. At that time, we (the other line boys and I) were working for flying time. I didn't actually get paid in currency until I was 16 and that was fine with me. At that point, they started charging us by the hour for a 1-26 (I think it was \$6/hr). I tended to fly my paychecks down to almost nothing; in fact, one time (to the accounting department's great delight), I actually overflowed my paycheck by \$0.06. By the way – back then, a demo ride – with a **2500'** tow – cost **\$7.50!** I soloed a 2-22C on my 14th birthday in 1962 and for me, going on to the 1-26 was breathtaking (I still love the 1-26). I was a line boy for over 4 years before I got my Commercial Glider Rating when I was 18. I immediately became a *demo ride specialist* – imagine getting paid to fly a sailplane! At 19, I got my CFIG and, for the next 10 years I did a lot of back-seat flying. In those days, I (as a school student) worked every weekend in the spring and fall – and 6 days a week during the summer.

*Traff on Harris Hill
with his favorite sailplane*



In the fall of 1976, I reached my *instructing threshold* and decided to start working in the Schweizer plant year-around (as opposed to winters). After a while, I wound up in Production Control, working for Don Semski - a delightful person, who possessed great patience. I didn't share his patience, and ultimately, after dealing with certain union members on a daily basis, I left Schweizer Aircraft in 1980 and moved my family to Lititz, PA (near Lancaster) to work for a friend in his furniture manufacturing business. We were down there for 23 years when I got wind of the fact that the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum in Hammondsport, NY, was in need of a director. My father had been heavily involved with this museum since its inception in 1961 and served as director for a time following his retirement from Schweizer. To give the reader some background, his father, my grandfather, William E. "Gink" Doherty, was taught to fly by Glenn Curtiss in 1911 (at Hammondsport) and went on to work for Curtiss as a test pilot. His main claim to fame was his successful flying of the *Langley Aerodrome* in October 1914 - so Dad had a "baked-in" interest in Glenn Curtiss and the Curtiss Museum. It had always been a dream of mine to work at that Museum - and having found out that they were in the market for a director, I applied for the job, and to my great amazement, I was accepted! I had no previous museum experience and very little management experience, for that matter; but what could possibly go wrong?



My grandfather, William E. "Gink" Doherty, flies the Langley Aerodrome over Keuka Lake at Hammondsport



Traff gives a school tour at NSM



It turned that I had a lot to learn! But, we - Jean and I (we came as a "set") wound up being there for almost 14 years and saw a great number of improvements. I'm very proud of what we were able to accomplish there during my tenure. My only regret is that my dad passed away in 1996 and was never aware of my role there. I like to think that he would have been very pleased. By the latter part of 2014, it was becoming increasingly obvious that certain (dominant) members of the Curtiss Museum board wanted to move the museum in a different direction and were hell-bent on doing it.

MUSEUM OFFICERS

William Batesole
President

Michael Koerner
Vice-President

Dr. William G. Howard
Secretary / Treasurer

Trafford L-M. Doherty
Executive Director

TRUSTEES

Aaron Alsheimer
Jennifer Bauman
Dianne Black-Nixon
Tom Freeman
Doug Fronius
Josh Knerr
Ann Lafford
Steve Leonard
Mark Margeson
Neal Pfeiffer
Karin Schlosser
W. Stuart Schweizer
Jan van den Blink
Dr. Richard Welles
Phil Westcott

NEW MEMBERS

Individual

Gino DiNucci
Graham Saw
Todd Harvey
John Buchanan
Matthew Cote
Chip Bearden
Sean Sujko

Family

John H. Fleckenstein
James & Eden French
Mitch & Kimmie Hudson

Bronze

James & Linda Morzillo

HHSC Senior

John Booth, III
Brenda Plate
J. Rankin Tippins
Brent Pryslopski
Brian Jones
Patrick Conrad

HHSC Junior

Jacob Bohne
Ezra Henderson
Peter Maki
Marloe Laughlin
Carter VanPatten
Trinity Rose

I didn't agree with their vision, so, when I heard about Peter Smith's approaching retirement as NSM director, I decided to apply for the position. Jean, who had worked at the Curtiss Museum with me all along (and is greatly responsible for my success), was – shall we say – a great proponent of the idea! And, once again, I'm happy to say, I got the job. I left the Curtiss Museum on July 29, 2016 and started at NSM on August 1 – a two-day "retirement"! Jean - and our beagles – followed me in short order. This began what we will, without a doubt, consider to be our happiest working years. Believe me – I have enough perspective to safely say that.

So here we were – back with the sailplanes – and old friends: Dave Welles, Stu and Les Schweizer, Walter Cannon, Corky Gill, Jim Short and Bill Batesole (one of my Soaring School students). One thing that I did learn at the Curtiss Museum is that there is always room for improvement and NSM has proved to be no exception. Our efforts here have ranged from upgrading the lobby, to ensuring that our exhibits are protected by using chains and stanchions. In addition, all of the kiosks have been updated and our display descriptions have been brought up to museum standard. The restoration shop is now a functioning addition to our exhibit structure. A number of sailplane models are now (hanging) on display that were in storage and in addition, several new models have been added - including most recently, the *Lawrence Tech IV "Yankee Doodle"*. New exhibits include *Elmira's First Sailplane*, a barograph exhibit, two additional trophy displays, a sailplane trailer exhibit and the *Women in Soaring Wall of Fame*. This is a partial list, but you get the idea. We're still leaving plenty of "opportunities" for our successors.

We've been here eight years and I still wonder at the fact that we are really here. The amazing soaring history associated with Harris Hill and the wonderful collection of historically significant sailplanes that we have in our beautiful museum combine to make this place very special for me. And I'm sure, for many others as well.

Jean and I have considered it a great privilege to serve this museum and we are especially appreciative of the co-operation and friendship from so many of you who have worked with us for these last eight years – years that went by so quickly! We are looking forward to engaging in some long-neglected projects back home in Hammondsport during retirement, but we will miss our friends at NSM - so feel free to stay in touch: Traff - tmd14840@yahoo.com; Jean - jmd17601@yahoo.com.



Harris Hill c.1950. Note the biplanes used for towing, the long row of cabins going behind the museum/administration building and the additional visitor parking on the opposite side of the runway.

TRANSITION COURSE 1971 - Geoff Steele

I completed my private pilot's power license in VA in May, 1969 and came up to Elmira to do the glider rating transition course over Labor Day Weekend. Had Jonesy (Irwin Jones) as a tow pilot each day and "Dr. Carris" (Bernie Carris) as my instructor. I really enjoyed his jovial manner and excellent instruction.

On Sunday, we had a bit of a contest. I was with Bernie in a 2-33 and was returning to the field, landing to the southeast (downwind) to reposition for the next tow. At the north-western end of the grass area, there is a large round steel sewer lid covering (I guess) over an underground stormwater sewer. I aimed for a wheel contact on that sewer lid....and "BLANG !!"...*nailed it* before rolling out by the school fence.

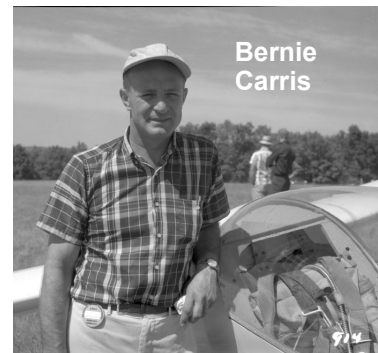
"Was that an *accident* -- hitting that sewer lid?" says Bernie. "Nope, I aimed for it," says I (a slightly white lie...that). "Well, we need to do some more stalls and slips, so let's go up again", says he.

OK, off we go, released at 3K and did the series of stalls and slips needed for that portion of the training. Coming back....down to 800 feet on downwind and then turning base for final...Bernie says from the back seat: "See if you can hit the lid again..." So I find the thing in my field of vision, make a few tickles on the rudder pedals, adjust the spoilers a tad....and...."BLANG !!"...scored #2. "DANG !!....that's pretty good", says the back-seater.

We go up again...the time to 4K, for steep turns around a point to simulate thermaling, and to look for anything that might be 'cooking' now, because cu's are starting to form over the valley. We do shallow and steep turns -- 360s, 720s, etc. and since it's getting close to lunchtime (Bernie says he *never misses lunch!*), we start to head back. Downwind at 800 feet again....turning base for final, then 'backseat' says: "If you can hit that thing again, I'll buy us lunch !" I couldn't pass on THAT bet, so I engineered the approach probably following the exact same mildly-disturbed air molecules I used for landing #2. "BLANG !! " Bernie couldn't believe it...three for three !! Having lunch with him (on his tab) was a LOT of fun; I even had a piece of pie!

The next morning, after I'd completed final air work, I went in to take the written exam and after that, walked back out to the flightline where Bernie was hopping some other students. He came over to me, put out his hand, shook mine, and said "You passed...and I already signed your paperwork. You see that 1-26 over there -- the all-white one with red stripe? Take it and go have some fun...on us !!" Oh BOY !!! Jonesy pulled me up to 3,000' and I released. Found some thermals over the supermarket distribution center, then moseyed over to the Hill, but there was a contest that weekend and I didn't have a 'chute, so couldn't thermal about among the contest airplanes. I went back out over the valley, caught a NICE thermal and went up to just below cloud base at about 5,500 feet. It was a beautiful, glorious day....and I....was a GLIDER PILOT !!

I called Elmira tower on the radio to check on local traffic (none), so I pointed the nose almost straight down and pulled on full spoiler to get back to the school. It was nearing 4:00 p.m. and I had a 7-hour drive to get back to Arlington, VA. So....quickly down to 800 feet for downwind; turned base for final, and then looked for the sewer lid. "BLANG !! " I rolled out in front of the school and Bernie came over to take a pic of me in the cockpit after my solo (hanging in my office above my PC now as I look at it). He said he heard the sewer lid ring from the flightline and knew it was me... LOL !!



Geoff Steele in the Schweizer 1-26D at the Schweizer Soaring School - September 1971

SSA CONVENTION 2024

FIRC: October 22-23

Convention: October 24-26

**Join us for three days full
of soaring excitement!**

Over 50 excellent speakers and presentations on soaring. Stroll the convention floor to see sailplanes, equipment, and so much more with over 40 exhibitors. Be sure to get your ticket early for the SSA Awards Banquet. Bring the family as there is plenty to do in the area as well.



KNOXVILLE
Tennessee



ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Jeff Byard
Ginny Moffat
Bruce Bottoms
Luke Orrin
Thomas Cropper
Michael Shoen

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Rob Buck
Bill & Monica Barry
Herb & Elizabeth Spicer
Robert Hurni
Walter & Irene Cannon
Skip & Jackie Walls
Tad & Ruth Manske
Ron & Gabriele Martin
Maureen & David Watson
Steve & Nancy Sliwa
Robert Hurni
Dr. Neal Snebold
Stu & Lucy Schweizer
Roger Hess

MEMBERSHIP UPGRADE

Bronze

Charles & Nancy Bauder
Linda & Andrew Evenski
Ron & Gabriele Martin
Chris & Lianne Groshel
Robert Wister
Paul & Nancy Middlebrook
Michael & Nancy Opitz

Silver

Rob Buck
Robert Randall
Bo & Roman Michalowski
Elizabeth Pataki
Very Rev. John DeSocio
Paul Esser & Edith van
Breems

Gold

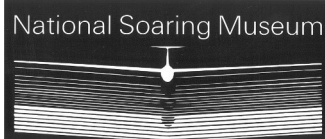
Rocky Peters

Diamond

Ken & Michelle Sorenson
Elise Eaton

SPONSOR A GLIDER

Gross Family
Hank Nixon
Dianne Black-Nixon
Jan van den Blink
Gregory Lincoln
J. R. Daniel
Dr. Norbert Wethington
Dr. Walter Cannon
Stu & Lucy Schweizer



51 Soaring Hill Drive
Elmira, NY 14903

info@soaringmuseum.org

www.soaringmuseum.org

607-734-3128

Fall 2024



MUSEUM HOURS

April 1 - Oct. 31
Open daily 10-5

Nov. 1 - Mar. 31
Open daily 10-4

Museum closed on the following holidays:

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

Airfield at Uvalde, TX - site of the World Gliding Championships 2024



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.**

My additional donation _____

Membership Benefits: Unlimited free admission • Invitations to exhibit openings and receptions
Guest passes • Subscription to the museum newsletter & journal • Volunteer opportunities
Discounts on museum programs and events • Discounts in the museum shop