

# Freedom's Tales

Volume 12, No. 2, summer 2012

Are we there yet?



## President's Article:

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Freedom's Wings International (FWI) held a soaring event for persons with disabilities at the Philadelphia Glider Council (PGC) field in Hilltown, PA. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> year that the members of PGC have hosted our event and we are indebted to them for their continued enthusiastic support of our program.

With bright sunny skies on Saturday all flight operations went smoothly. On Sunday, however, rain showers developed in the early afternoon forcing cancellation of the remaining flights. Those rides were rescheduled and flown on the following Saturday.

Thank you to all who participated in our event ... from those persons assisting in getting guests into and out of the gliders to those who retrieved the gliders after landing; from the tow pilots to the field managers who assured a smooth safe flow of traffic; from the ride pilots to those who transited the gliders and equipment. The event's success was the result of an extraordinary team effort.

As an aviation enthusiast I recommend you check out [www.solarimpulse.com](http://www.solarimpulse.com). Solar Impulse is a solar-powered airplane which can fly day or night using no fuel. Its aim is to prove that progress is possible using clean forms of energy. The next challenge for Solar Impulse is to fly around the world to promote renewable energies.

Pilot Bertrand Piccard on Rekindling the Pioneer Spirit ... "In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, exploration of the planet, from the ocean depths to far out into space, held the world spellbound. Today, the quest must continue, but no longer to conquer Earth, but to protect it. Only a revival of the pioneer spirit and a different vision of the impossible will enable us to find solutions to the energy, financial, environmental and humanitarian challenges that face us today. The abandonment of fossil fuels, development of renewable energy and the preservation of natural resources – this is our common adventure."

Pilot Andre Borschberg on Innovation ... "Between the vision and its implementation, there are any number of challenges to be met. To fly with solar energy only, we must be ultra-light, but with no loss of structural integrity. The last unnecessary gram has been tracked down and every part tested to its limit. Five years of intensive development, lots of pressure for the team, but what excitement to see it finally flying! This is beyond anything we dared to imagine."



## 2012 FREEDOM'S WINGS CALENDAR

Board Meeting	July 21st
WINGS Safety Seminar	August 4th
Mount Sinai Event	September 7th
Annual Picnic	September 8th Rain date September 15th
Adaptive Sports Group Event	September 21st Rain date September 28th
Adirondack Soaring Club Event	October 13th & 14th Rain dates October 20th & 21st
Board Meeting	October 27th
Holiday Celebration	December 10th

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### Diana Dade's recollections of Freedom's Wings...

The concept of Freedom's Wings started in 1980 by Mary and Irv Soble at Sky Manor (NJ) Airport.

Their first glider was a Schweizer 2-33 that was donated by someone from Sky Manor, I believe. A small group of Aero Club Albatross members, including your truly, who had spent the day flying at Somerset (NJ) Airport, were recruited by another ACA member, Larry Spencer to go to Sky Manor to disassemble the 2-33. Larry had been a WWII glider pilot.

The idea was to put the glider on a trailer to take it to be checked over and painted. It was still daylight when we arrived. By the time we removed all the bolts and managed to go through a whopping amount of WD-40, the sun was no longer shining in the time zone. By flashlight we were able to locate the dropped bolts and fit the 2-33 on its trailer. A simple 20-minute task? Hah!

The 2-33, awkward as it was, was a start. Along the way there were 2 or 3 single-place gliders donated. They along with the 2-33 were sold and the proceeds parlayed into the first brand new Grob.

The Grob was delivered to the 1986 SSA convention at Valley Forge, PA, hosted by the Philadelphia Glider Council. It had front cockpit hand controls factory-installed.

Danny McManis (sp?) was the first club president; he also designed FWI's logo.

Bill McMakin was one of our major financial backers who also donated a few planes over the years. He and his wife Martha were very active in many club activities.

One day at Sky Manor I ran into Irv. He told me that Ray Temchus was just being launched for his second solo flight. I don't know who was more excited --- Ray or Irv. Ray went on to become the first glider instructor with disabilities, I believe, in the world. Then Bob Kessler came along and became the second (disabled) instructor.

I don't remember at what point FWI moved to Van Sant. There was some unrest at Sky Manor and their FBO was asked to leave, along with some groups such as gliders, skydivers, etc. For a while after that Sky Manor only had the attraction of the restaurant going for it. Things there are much better now.

Ray Temchus became the president for many years. Many people have come and gone, some as students, pilots, or able-bodied helpers. Much very hard work has gone into keeping this club alive and well. Now our pilots have flown in soaring competitions and have even made record flights. It just goes to show you, you can't keep a good person down! (pun intended)

### Organization helps disabled soar

Published: Thursday, June 24, 2010, in the Perkasie News Herald  
by Lily B. Gordon, Correspondent & FWI volunteer

Heavy winds and the threat of a storm couldn't dampen the spirits of participants at the fifth annual Glider Ride event June 5 at the Philadelphia Glider Council's 138-acre property in Hilltown.

The event, which had to be halted June 6 due to uncertain weather conditions, was hosted by the 69-year-old Philadelphia Glider Council (PGC) and Freedom's Wings International (FWI), a non-profit organization that trains and enables physically disabled people to pilot a small, two-person glider plane. Not only does the organization help members soar in the sky, but it also encourages them to try things that previously seemed unachievable.

On Saturday, June 5 and Sunday, June 6, the two organizations offered disabled, rookie pilots the opportunity to control gliders with the assistance of experienced, licensed pilots in the back seat. FWI members, as well as some staff pilots, had disabilities that included amputation, spinal cord injuries, neuromuscular disease, polio, and blindness.

FWI president Richard Fucci, a former carrier pilot for the Navy, sustained a spinal cord injury in 1977 and did not fly again until he was introduced to the organization in 1998.

"The goal of Freedom's Wings International is to show physically disabled people that they have 'soaring opportunities' and to encourage them to undertake experiences that they may have previously thought impossible," Fucci said.

"Each participant is accompanied by one pilot," Bruce Brown, a commercial pilot who volunteers for FWI, said. "Participants sit in the cockpit with a full, panoramic view, while licensed pilots sit behind them and control landing and take-off. Once we've cleared 1,000 feet, participants are asked if they want to control the plane. Having read and studied a manual explaining the different controls, participants are ready to take over. Pilots help to gently guide the plane."

Thirty-six participants had been scheduled to fly last weekend, but due to unsafe weather conditions on June 6, 15 of the participants were rescheduled for June 13.

One participant, Kenn Perry, a Philadelphia native who had polio as a child, learned about the Glider rides from the Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports, and attended for his first time.

"I am so pleased with my experience," Perry said. "The staff was great, respectful, and accommodating—there wasn't a moment I felt uncomfortable or unsafe. I want to schedule another ride for next Sunday."

To most of the participants' surprise, many of the pilots accompanying them in the air were also physically disabled.

One FWI pilot up in the air last weekend was Krzysztof Lapinski, who has been paralyzed since he broke his back in a skiing accident in 1999. He has been a pilot for FWI for four years, and was one of the pilots controlling the gliders for participants this weekend.

Lapinski revealed that becoming a part of the organization helped him to "become a much more active person" and "to do many different things that I never thought I would be able to do again."

FWI hopes that its events will raise awareness as to what persons with disabilities can achieve.

Persons with disabilities are encouraged to schedule a glider ride at Freedom's Wings International's base airport in Blairstown, N.J. at (800) 382-1197.

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## ***Freedom's Wings at Philadelphia Glider Council June 2012***



I wanted to thank you and the Freedom's Wings organization for such an amazing experience on Saturday!! Becca and I had so much fun and it was an experience that we will not forget anytime soon. Our pilot Chris was wonderful and very good at explaining the basics of gliding.

On Saturday, you had asked me to e-mail you information about the foundation that I am affiliated with and received your information from. It is called the Challenged Athletes Foundation ([www.challengedathletes.org](http://www.challengedathletes.org)). I have received grants from them for the past four years. They are very active out west and they are just starting to branch out on the east coast.

Thank you once again for the amazing experience on Saturday!

Elizabeth Pigott



This is the third or forth time I have been part of the Freedom's Wings event and I always have had an awesome time. The anticipation of being hundreds of feet in the air is quite a feeling. I had the same pilot as last time which was cool. My favorite part is the take off because my stomach drops a lot and I love that feeling. I usually have the opportunity to fly the glider for a little bit but unfortunately not this time. This was due to not being as many lifts in the air and not giving us the altitude to stay up. It was a slight different experience but still so much fun. Can't wait to do it again next year! Thanks!

John Simko



As I was preparing to head to the airfield for my fifth or sixth experience riding in a glider with Freedom's Wings International, other than the seemingly standard response of "I cannot believe that you are flying in a plane with no engine," I also heard several exclamations of "Again? Isn't it the same every year?" Each experience is most definitely an individual one. This year was no exception. I was informed that my pilot would be Kris, and while I was aware that there were Freedom's Wings pilots who had physical disabilities, I never before had the opportunity to be in a glider with a pilot who was also physically disabled. After taking off and logging the experience of crosswinds into my book of new blighting experiences, we banked and went in never-ending circles due to lack of lift – despite how much we ended up talking. :-)) I was once again immersed in the beautiful world that only gliding can showcase. While haze limited visibility in the distance, a immediate visibility was crystal clear. I was surrounded by the solitude that I have come to expect only when gliding. After enjoying the view and sensations that are unique to gliding, Kris and I started to converse. For anyone who has been flying with Freedom's Wings in the past, the communication headsets are relatively new, and they are a wonderful addition. We were able to have clear conversation without screaming at the top of our lungs. We quickly came to learn that both of us had the need for an adrenaline and adventure. I found Kris's experiences to be remarkable. Not only is he originally from Poland, but he flies in gliding competitions and also is certified in flying small passenger jets [ed: misunderstanding], both in good weather and in inclement weather. While I don't know that I could stomach Kris's hobby of sailing, we share both an appreciation for the joy of gliding and an interest in scuba diving. On this particular glider ride, I was not only enveloped in the world of gliding, but I had the privilege of learning about someone else's experiences from around the world. It is an experience that I will cherish forever. I can't wait until next year!

<http://s187.photobucket.com/albums/x194/Speedie907/Gliding/?start=all>

This year's pictures are at the bottom – I'm wearing a gray sweatshirt. If you hold your mouse over each of the pictures, you'll see that the file name has a number. The first number for this year is 53. I think that 74 and 75 are really neat in-flight shots.

Lauren



### A Fun, Fantastic Flight Experience

Well it was June 2, of 2012 and I was scheduled to take a glider ride the next day at 11:00 AM with Freedom Wings International. I was never a daring individual, not a thrill seeker at the Amusement Parks, I am not really fond of flying (even in a plane with an engine), but I was bound and determined that I could do this. After all I had too, I had already told all my friends.

I arrived at the site at 10:13, still nervous about my ride. Those questions circling in my mind, could I get into the glider, ( I have MS and have difficulties with my left leg), will I have a nervous stomach, where is that special bag just in case, how do we stay up in the air, and after the landing, how will I get out? These questions were swirling through my brain as I walked toward the parked planes. Across the field I saw two individuals seated, and they waved me over. It was Richard and Beth. I had spoken to Richard on the phone in 2010 and had received emails from him, but had never met him. He immediately made me feel at ease. He told me that the previous person canceled

and I could start my flight very soon and perhaps have a longer ride.

I used my walker to walk the short distance to the glider, with my husband at my side to encourage me. Now it was that time, to answer my first question. I met my soft spoken Pilot, Bruce. he told me what parts of the glider I could and could not hold on to assist me into the glider. With assistance from 2 others, I was able to get into the cockpit and was buckled into the elaborate seat belt system, (now I know how it feels to be in child's car seat). It was obvious that they were skilled at helping disabled, which made me feel comfortable. Once I was situated, Bruce got into his official Pilot mode and reviewed his check list to make sure we were safe for the ride. He reviewed the information that I had read that was previously provided in an email from Richard. I was fitted with radio head gear so I could speak with Bruce and hear the plane's radio.

The glider was towed into the air with the help of a small plane. The tow rope was attached to the front of the glider and pulled on twice to make sure of the attachment. The tow plane took off and before you know it, we are up in the air and getting higher. I am anticipating the release of the tow rope now. Amazing, it is released and we are floating in the air. Bruce pointed out the sights to me as we soared and also told me when we had lift and what I may feel in the process. I was able to soar for 25 minutes. The weather turned out to be absolutely perfect for our ride this day.

We began our decent (I said a quick Hail Mary) and before I knew it, we were on the ground where we started. It was a smooth landing. I was presented my official certificate from Richard. I met another gentleman, Carl, who is the editor of the newsletters. He had also spoken with me prior to my flight and was very kind and reassuring as well. Pictures were snapped. Of course, I was having a bad hair day and forgot to brush before the snap of the camera. Now, the final question, how do I get out? I was told what would work best. I followed their instructions on where to put my legs, they gave me help to move them into the position and with my husband on my left side, another gentleman on my right side and Bruce at the rear; I was standing up and ready to grab my walker. These people know what they are doing.

I had officially done it! It was so beautiful in the air, and so peaceful. I am so happy that I was able to do this. Thank you for making me feel so special. This is a wonderful opportunity and I encourage everyone to try it. Since 2010 I have told several of my MS friends about your organization. So far you have met, Elaine, Laura, Lorraine and my brother Bob. They have all enjoyed their ride. This is a wonderful service you provide. Next year it is my hope to be able to soar on Saturday and enjoy the picnic. I promise to provide a wonderful dessert. Thank you all again!

Sincerely, Fearless Patti Dille

### Links

[www.freedomswings.org/](http://www.freedomswings.org/)

[www.pgcsoaring.org/index.php](http://www.pgcsoaring.org/index.php)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Freedoms-Wings-International-disabled-sports-flying/178598432159648?v=wall](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Freedoms-Wings-International-disabled-sports-flying/178598432159648?v=wall)

\*\*\* keep in touch via FWI's new Facebook page (above)

[www.866mustfly.com](http://www.866mustfly.com)

[www.wurtsboroairport.com](http://www.wurtsboroairport.com)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1265891/>

[Hold-think-youre-going-Skydiver-grabs-gliders-tail-fin-fly-2-100-metres-100mph.html](http://Hold-think-youre-going-Skydiver-grabs-gliders-tail-fin-fly-2-100-metres-100mph.html)

[www.adleraphasiacenter.org](http://www.adleraphasiacenter.org)

[http://racing.ussailing.org/Disabled\\_Sailing/Where\\_to\\_sail.htm](http://racing.ussailing.org/Disabled_Sailing/Where_to_sail.htm)

<https://picasaweb.google.com/lh/sredir?uname=100019155084693266669&target=ALBUM&id=5744640383624937777&authkey=Gv1sRgCPzMkLjRqsfK2gE&feat=email> --- Avi & company/NYC Outdoors Disability visit to Nyack Boat Club





Thank you to everyone for making it possible for me to go soaring. I enjoyed the whole experience from watching others go up in the air and then getting my turn with Bruce as the pilot. This was my first soaring. I would definitely go again if I got the chance. The volunteers from Freedom Wings and the PGC were all so generous and helpful. They made me feel very welcome.

Enjoy the photos. We will send more in another email.

Thanks again – Ed, Bob and Rosemary Morgan



I would have sent my THANKS a few days ago but I hadn't come down yet from the HI I was on after my flight last Saturday afternoon. You, Rich & every volunteer gets my Thanx so please be sure they all are well aware of how much enjoyment they provide for the PC, Physically Challenged, community. Had I never received your flyer 2 years ago I never would have been a part of this very special event.

My only suggestions are that:

1. it NOT rain next year &
2. the pretzels handed out in flight by the stewardesses be fresh, not stale.

Other than this, I look forward to seeing lots of the pics & hope I can be more involved if possible.

You all receive a standing ovation from me. I hope to bump into pilot Gil around the neighborhood since we live only a few miles apart & would like to give him a few pointers on the loop we never did. Possibly next time.

Thanks so much, *Crash* /Gene Levin



I wanted to send my sincere thank you for the amazing dream you & all help come true. Please thank everyone for me especially the pilot. I sent some photos if you'd like to post them. Lori Costello







### Dateline Wurtsboro, NY, 26 June 2012:

It may not be a monumental achievement in the grand scheme of things, but it will hopefully be significant with respect to the soaring community, particularly in the U.S.: At the Region 2 North soaring competition in Wurtsboro, NY, a pilot from Freedom's Wings ( [www.freedomswing.org](http://www.freedomswing.org) ) placed first in the Two-Seater Class on Day 3 of competition on June 26, 2012. Well, somebody had to win, right? What's special about this? Christopher Lynch, flying one of FWI's Grob 103's with Bill Thar in the back seat as mentor/strategist, is the first (!) soaring pilot with a disability --- Chris is paraplegic as the result of a spinal cord injury --- to place first-in-class in a sanctioned US soaring competition.

Freedom's Wings celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, its purpose remains introducing the sport of soaring to individuals with disabilities. Chris has already set an official New Jersey state soaring record --- another FWI pilot holds another NJ record --- and other "disabled" FWI pilots have the skills and general soaring experience that can be developed into seriously competitive levels. While FWI has historically focused on providing physically challenged individuals with an initial soaring experience, and providing training through volunteer CFIG's, the recognition of performing well in a sanctioned competition is proof that FWI pilots --- and by extension, potentially many individuals with disabilities --- are to be taken seriously as skilled pilots and worthy competitors.

submitted by Carl A. Slegel, FWI Trustee, DirComms





## WINGS Soaring Safety Seminar - August 4

We are on for a Summer Wings Safety Seminar scheduled for Saturday, August 4, at the Warren County Blairstown Library Meeting Room starting at 10am. The program is co-sponsored between ACA and FWI.

Program Subject: Cross Country Soaring Safety

Program:

10:00 am - 10:15 am Opening and introductions

10:15 am - 10:45 am WINGS Program Overview. Speaker: William Vanartsdalen FAASTeam Program Manager Allentown FSDO

10:45 am - 11:15 am Emergency Tracking and Location Devices. Speaker: Terry Good, President of Avionics One. Inc.

11:15 am - 11:45 am Emergency Equipment and Preparation for a Cross Country Flight. Speaker TBA

11:45 am - 12:15 am Off Field Landings. Speaker TBA

12:15 am - 12:45 Q and A session

Coffee, Bagels and Doughnuts will be served

If you are interested in presenting on topics without speakers please contact Bill Thar [[wethar@gmail.com](mailto:wethar@gmail.com)] or Rob Dunning [[rdunning0823@yahoo.com](mailto:rdunning0823@yahoo.com)]

## STROKE AND APHASIA...

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**a•pha•sia** (uh-fay'-zhuh) n. A language disorder that impairs the expression and understanding of spoken language, reading, and writing. It occurs most often from a stroke or brain injury. This frustrating condition affects a person's ability to communicate, but does not affect his or her intellect.

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05.14.2010



05.14.2010

## GLOBAL ABILITIES REC FEST

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Directions can be found at [www.carouselhouse.com/directions.html](http://www.carouselhouse.com/directions.html)

visit us at [www.recfest.net](http://www.recfest.net)

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