

# Freedom's Tales

Volume 12, No. 3, autumn-winter 2012

"Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful." - Joshua J. Marine



## President's Article:



...damage at Van Sant, Bucks County, PA

As I write this the devastation of hurricane Sandy in CT, NY, NJ and PA and the resulting hardship is fresh in all our minds. Our concern, prayers and support go out to all affected in those communities.

Freedom's Wings International (**FWI**) had a noteworthy 31<sup>st</sup> year. Not only did we hold three events to introduce persons with disabilities to soaring flight but we also participated in the Region 2 North Soaring Competition held in late June at Wurtsboro Airport in NY. Chris Lynch, a **FWI** pilot with a disability, flew with Bill Thar and placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Two Seater Class on day 3 of the contest. Congratulations to Chris and Bill on their accomplishment ... and for demonstrating the skills of **FWI** pilots with disabilities.

Our season began in late March as we joined Aero Club Albatross (**ACA**) at their annual banquet. We are fortunate to share Blairstown Airport with **ACA** whose members willingly and cheerfully assist us in so many ways from glider assembly/disassembly to ground support ... especially at our home events. Thank you to **ACA** President Paul Harris and his colleagues for their support.

In early June we made our 7<sup>th</sup> visit to the Philadelphia Glider Council (**PGC**) and as always had a full schedule of rides for the weekend. Saturday was sunny and breezy; however rain moved in on Sunday afternoon forcing us to reschedule those flights for the following Saturday. Thank you to Bob Lacovara, **PGC** President, and their members for graciously hosting our event each year.

In August **FWI** and **ACA** sponsored our 2<sup>nd</sup> FAA Wings Soaring Safety Seminar which focused on Cross Country Safety to include off field landings and emergency equipment. Thanks to Bill Thar, **FWI** Safety Officer, for organizing this educational event.

In September persons with disabilities with the Adaptive Sports Group from Helen Hayes Hospital made their first trip to Blairstown Airport to experience the joy of soaring flight. Dolores who flew with us commented: "What a wonderful day you and other members of Freedom's Wings provided us on Friday. It was terrific! Your patience, excellent pilots and planning made the day a total success. After having the opportunity to be in a glider and soar, I can now fully understand why people like it so much. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! You are engaged in good work."

In mid-October we made our 3<sup>rd</sup> trip to Saratoga County airport in Ballston Spa, NY as guests of the Adirondack Soaring Club (**ASC**). Our dedicated crew arrived on Friday afternoon and was assisted by **ASC** members in assembling our glider and readying it for the weekend flights. Afterwards we adjourned to Davidsons Brothers Brew Pub in Glenn Falls to quaff the local brew, enjoy dinner and visit with our **ASC** friends. A **FWI** Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Tom MacJarrett and **ASC** members for their commitment to **FWI's** mission of providing soaring opportunities to persons with disabilities. The weather for Saturday's participants was perfect ... sunny and cool with the fall colors at their peak. Unfortunately rain and strong winds moved in Sunday necessitating cancellation of those flights. Thank you to all the **ASC** members for hosting **FWI** and for assisting us in a full day of flights on Saturday.

Looking back I think you will agree that it was another busy year for **FWI**. I am continually amazed how such a small group of dedicated volunteers, about a dozen in all, accomplished so much. Thank you for your commitment to **FWI**!

In Dolores's earlier comment she concluded with ... "You (**FWI**) are engaged in great work." We are...and if **FWI** is to continue to build on its success we need your help in two



areas: volunteers and funding. Volunteers are at the very heart of our club. All of us work tirelessly. We need more men and women to assist in “our great work”. Please contact me at [rrfucci@earthlink.net](mailto:rrfucci@earthlink.net) if you are interested in joining us. Funding ... **FWI** is organized as a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization so that contributions to **FWI** are tax deductible to donors. During the past four years, which have been a challenging time for our country economically, we have seen donations to support our cause decline. Every cent contributed to **FWI** goes into our program from insurance and maintenance on our two gliders to the cost of tows at our events. If we are to continue to offer persons with disabilities the experience of soaring flight we need your financial support! Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to **FWI**.

Finally, this is my last President’s Article for Freedom’s Tales. In January after four years of serving as **FWI**’s President, I will be stepping down. Much has been accomplished over that time and I thank all my **FWI** colleagues for their dedication and support.



### 2013 FREEDOM’S WINGS CALENDAR

|                             |                                                          |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan. 26                     | Gen. Membership, Board Meeting,<br>Glider Racing Seminar |
| Jan. 26, Feb. 9,<br>Feb. 23 | PGC Ground School                                        |
| Feb. 16, 17                 | PGC Flight Instructors<br>Revalidation Clinic            |
| Apr. 6                      | Helen Hayes Expo                                         |
| May 3-5                     | NY Abilities Expo                                        |

June 1,2

FWI at PGC

### “The Real Joy of Soaring”

By Bruce Francis Brown

During the summer of 1972 I landed with a student Pilot in a Cessna 150 at the Van Sant Airport, Erwinna, Pennsylvania for the soft field take-off and landing experience. As we taxied to park near the office (the Van Sant Airport has not changed 2% since '72) we were fascinated by the active glider operations. I signed up for my first glider lesson the very next week, my first glider training book was *The Joy of Soaring* by Carle Conway.

The FAA requirements for transition from ASEL- Airplane Single Engine Land (Powered Airplanes) to glider in those days was pretty basic; I soloed the day I started training and soon had the Glider Commercial and CFGI Certified Flight Instructor Glider Certificates.

As I continued building flight hours and experience in powered aircraft pursuant to an airline career, I always managed to arrange a place for my passion for Soaring! While flying for TRA Flight Service 1973-74 (flying charters in light twin engine planes and teaching aerobatics in a Belanca Decathlon) we also started a commercial glider operation. While flying for Chautauqua Airlines 1974-1979 we started the “Chautauqua Soaring Society” with a Schweizer 2-22 and an old Ford Torino Tow Car for Auto Tows donated by the Chautauqua County Airport. 1979-1988, Eastern Air Lines, based in New York, I flew gliders with the Central Jersey Soaring Club from Colts Neck, New Jersey.

Around 1983 one of the fellow Central Jersey Soaring Club glider instructors told me about volunteer instructing he was doing from the Van Sant airport with a new group called Freedom’s Wings (FWI); that sounded interesting and I wanted to volunteer also but somehow something always took priority.

Until one day returning home from church in 2005, I stopped at a convenience store, while waiting in the queue of about a half dozen, I thought I saw a woman’s wig supported by a Styrofoam bust on the floor next to someone... THE WIG MOVED!!! Of course I was startled, it was a young man about seventeen years old, and he had neither waist nor torso below where the waist should be! He supported himself on one hand, placed the items he wanted on the counter, the clerk bagged them with his change and receipt, the young man attached the plastic bag to a “fanny pack” about his “waist” returned his wallet to the fanny pack, walked out on his hands to the awaiting car! (I learned latter from my Pastor that the young man was born with no body below the rib cage, that he had raced in the Pittsburgh Marathon on a skate board propelling himself with his hands protected by leather gloves!)

At that moment, I vowed to not let a day go by without trying to start a “Western Pennsylvania Chapter of Freedom’s Wings”. The FWI President advised me to assemble an interested group, get a glider and then get back in touch with FWI. I got an LCD Projector and an eight foot by eight foot



screen and I also got Soaring DVD's. Over the following year we contacted local Soaring Clubs and Commercial Glider Flight Schools and hosted a few Soaring Film Shows to able-bodied persons and a number of persons with a disability. Our "Chapter" was slowly forming when US Airways transferred me to Philadelphia in May 2006. I signed on with Freedom's Wings in July and began flight lessons with the Flight School at the Van Sant Airport to reinstate my CFIG Certified Glider Flight Instructor Certificate.

August 2006, CFIG reinstated, FWI Check ride completed, now a Freedom's Wings Member and Volunteer Glider Flight Instructor! ...I had so much to learn! Each Individual with a disability was an "Individual" having unique requirements. After my first student Lea and I were off tow, I stated 'OK Lea, place your right hand on the control stick and your left hand on the rudder control handle and follow me through as I make a turn and you feel the control inputs' ...Lea said: 'Bruce, my right hand is already on the stick...my husband attached it with Velcro when I got in, as I don't have the strength to grip the stick! ...Oh..., OK follow me though then...

It has been six years now, so many rich experiences with so many students and persons with a disability taking a glider ride at a Freedom's Wings Event, so many Summer Picnics and Winter Celebrations and dinners after a good day of Soaring. The Joy of Soaring a Person with a disability experiences and shares with his or her Pilot or Instructor is indeed "The Real Joy of Soaring"!



## NOTEBOOKS OF A STUDENT PILOT

(What Now, part II, by Robert Reuter)

The thrill of the first flight is wearing off and the learning of the skills needed to fly safely are practiced and practiced. Take offs and Landings are important, can't fly if you can't take off and land.

Weather was not my friend this spring as several lessons were canceled at the last minute, but pilots don't control the weather, the weather controls the pilot, especially a glider pilot, and the restrictions on the inexperienced student pilot even more so.

I found out about this when club member Bill Thar invited me to fly second seat during a contest at Wurtsboro NY. Crosswinds were a bit high and takeoffs and landing were "tricky", and this is what I have to learn, but when we were "flying the ridge" (there are three major ways to gain altitude, thermal, wave, and ridge) which is getting the updraft as the wind hits hills and mountains and goes up over them.

I was handed the controls on the ridge and it was a totally different experience from the Thermal soaring I had been learning, kinda strange flying sideways a bit while going straight ahead and climbing. But it was really exciting and got the blood moving, but thank goodness one of the best ridge soaring pilots was in the back seat.

The Wind failed and we only completed about 2/3 of the "tasks" for the day so we didn't get any points for the day but it was really interesting watching and experiencing a truly skilled contest pilot work thermals and ridges where I probably wouldn't have been able to stay in the air.

Later while on a training flight out of Van Sant airport (where we keep one aircraft during the summer) I was getting ready to enter the pattern for landing when I found a really great thermal, instructor said, "you found it, it's yours, work it" round and round I went and climbed and climbed, finally had to stop when I got to the clouds and well, gliders are not licensed to fly in the clouds. But it was the first true climb of over a thousand feet and done entirely without the instructor saying anything.

After we reached the cloud and looked around a bit, this is the highest I've ever piloted, the instructor took the time to teach me some of the skills that we needed to be a bit higher to do safely, is really strange to get the plane to "Stall" and then have to recover. But with a good instructor in the back seat it turned out to be less difficult than I had imagined and it is key skill for safely flying, and in getting a license.





Of course during this time there was a lot of “hitting the books” to learn the rules of the road and the various skills needed. One of the things that I got to help out was a software program that had an identical aircraft as Freedom’s Wings and it can be easily set up to work with two joysticks like the hand controls in our glider (Silentwings.no) this software runs on windows, macs and linux computers and has Internet links where you can compete with other pilots. (another program is Condor, which only runs on Windows computers but is more popular in the US, both programs are similar and cost about the same)

The advantage of software training programs is one can practice things that would be expensive to do over and over or even dangerous to do in the real aircraft. Not to mention one can do it anytime/anyplace.

Well the aircraft are being prepped for winter and I will be working the books and flying the computer until next spring.

See you on the grid.



## 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)

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

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

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

<http://ableflight.org>

<http://letszogliding.com/> and don't forget to click on "WATCH THIS!"

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOzYtZ\\_ddI4&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOzYtZ_ddI4&feature=plcp) Fooch's flight 08/21 with Glenn

<http://soaringcafe.com/2012/10/sailplane-winch-launching-practice-at-karl-striediecks-eagle-field/>

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151278837636563.522158.729241562&type=1&l=44bf1becda>

<https://plus.google.com/photos/100019155084693266669/albums/5791398115513866481?banner=pwa&gpsrc=pwr1#photos/100019155084693266669/albums/5791398115513866481?banner=pwa&gpsrc=pwr1> Avi's album 9/21/12

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1\\_aUAGvWK4&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1_aUAGvWK4&feature=related) Matt's rugby link

<https://plus.google.com/photos/100019155084693266669/albums/5802076905466870257?banner=pwa&gpsrc=pwr1#photos/100019155084693266669/albums/5802076905466870257?banner=pwa&gpsrc=pwr1> over the Hudson album

<https://picasaweb.google.com/100019155084693266669/20121027DisabilityPaintball> really, Avi? Paintball?

<https://picasaweb.google.com/100019155084693266669/20120808FiddlerOnTheRoofPlay>

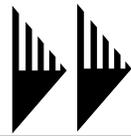
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_gb5poTdUMg&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gb5poTdUMg&feature=youtu.be)

<http://www.returnflight.org/> heli flying for disabled

<http://www.leapsofffaithwaterskiers.com/> and <http://www.testaverdefund.org/>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apEZpYnN\\_1g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apEZpYnN_1g)

Dr Horrible's Sing Along



(ed: from June 22 through June 29 FWI participated for the first time in the Region 2 North soaring competition held in Wurtsboro, NY)

**Dispatches from Wurtsboro R2N**



Sent: Sat 6/23/12 9:37 PM

It was a great first day at Wurtsboro! The weather was soarable even though the clouds were not always as advertised. Lacking an FWI member for the second seat of the Grob I offered the ride to a student pilot from Middletown who said that he really enjoyed the flight. It was quite a sight to see six two place gliders on the grid and together in thermals.

This contest will become known for the participation of two place gliders and for the presence of FWI! An independent reporter was at the airfield all day and had a great deal of interest in FWI. Carl provided her with club information and our web address and we should see a couple of newspaper articles about FWI which Carl plans to put on the FWI Website.

Tomorrow looks like a marginal but flyable contest day...I'll have to see what the morning model runs show. Kris will be out and we plan to have a great flight. FWI placed fourth out of six gliders in the two place class. You can follow the results at:

<http://ssa.org/members/contestreports/ContestResultsFullDetail.asp?contestId=2190&ContestDetailId=6560&ContestName=Region+2+North>

Bill %%%%%%%%%%



Sent: Sun 6/24/12 5:08 PM

OK, sports fans today was the real thing. Great flying with Kris at the controls and nice looking skies to guide the way. We launched near the end of the grid and got off tow over the Wurtsboro ridge. The lift was good but spotty and after getting low we decided "to re-lite" and

get another tow. Things went well this time and we started out of top of the start cylinder when we climbed through 5K. We went on course and found good markers and lift on our way to the first turnpoint, High Point monument. We got a little low on our way to TP 2 Warwick but got a good save off of the ridge before heading out on course. For the next two turnpoints it was a piece of cake flying at or near cloud base and finding clouds lined up on course. One final climb off the ridge near Wurstboro and we were off on final glide to our last turnpoint and back to home base.

Kris did 90% of the flying so the trip was very relaxing for me. I still can't thermal these big heavy Grobs and his skill helped us get through the race. We made all of the turnpoints and flew 92 miles cross country just on the contest route. We both had a great time together and I hope that Kris learned a lot about racing and cross country soaring....what a day!

Bill T %%%%%%%%%%

Sent: Sun 6/24/12 7:15 PM

Today was great day at Wurtsboro. I really enjoyed my flight with Bill Thar. The weather was beautiful but in the beginning we had to return prematurely to the airport because we could not find really good lift. We probably would find the lift because there was plenty up there but Bill decided that better strategy is to land and take off again and do not waste much time. We flew to all our check points and returned soon after single seaters. I learned a lot today. Like my flight with Bob Cook and earlier with Bruce on the ridge, today I learned about strategy, rules of cross country competition. With advise of Bill I improved my thermals technics. I really encourage every one to try cross country flying as passenger with experience pilot like Bill. You will learn a lot. These 2 links Bill send us before you must read. There are rules how to compete. And again thrill of being away from the home airport and at low altitude. Once we were below 3000' and far away. This is my second cross country flight at FWI (first was with Bob Cook) but first when I took part in competition. I want to try this again.

Kris %%%%%%%%%%



Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2012 10:34 PM Subject: [fwi] Ridge Day at the Races!



This has to be a day for the record books..."glider pilot with disabilities wins the two place class contest day in an SSA sanctioned regional contest!" My hat is off to Chris Lynch for a day of great ridge soaring that bested the field by almost 10 mph! And what's more Chris's handicapped speed would have come in second by only 1.21 mph for all classes and pilots who flew today.

The day started with overcast skies, strong NW winds and weak blown over thermals, so a pure ridge task was called for both classes. Chris was set on "going for it" so I sat in the back seat and made a few comments from time to time and watched the ASI climb as we bounced down the ridge. With a little strategy and planning we came to the finish line just one minute under time for almost a perfect run. My only regret is that Chris will not be here tomorrow morning to talk about the flight at the morning pilots meeting.

Tomorrow looks like another ridge day with a hope for good thermals as well. The only problem may be that the winds are too strong for safe tows. We can only wait until the morning to know for sure.

You have to be here to feel the energy!

Bill %%%%%%%%%%

Sent: Tue 6/26/12 10:50 PM

Thanks Bill, but Bill leaves out that his understanding of the rules and strategy made a big difference in our near perfectly timed run and therefore maxed distance run.

Chris %%%%%%%%%%



Sent: Thu 6/28/12 9:17 PM

The forecast looked pretty good for the day but it turned out to be spotty and variable. Every pilot was tested even though the task was reduced and the two seater class had a degraded scoring day because of gliders not making minimum distance and time (including Bob and me!). It was a good day to practice thermalling and even though

our official task distance was short we must have flown five times the distance in searching for thermals and circling in thermals. Bob said he learned a great deal about thermalling and I learned to be persistent and patient. Afterwards we all sat around the picnic benches by the cabins across the road and laughed about the foibles of the day. And it was all worth it.

Bill %%%%%%%%%%

Sent: Sat 6/30/12 11:35 AM

It looked like a possible ridge day if the winds could pick up by 2:00pm and the ridges could pop off a few thermals. At 1:30pm 217 with Bob and me was sent up as the sniffer to check out the ridge. After a lap on the ridge we reported decent ridge lift and a few thermals, so the launch was started. The start gate for the two seater class was opened and we started on task, but, alas, it was not to be. The winds had started to weaken and the thermals were thinning out so the advisers decided to call off both the sports and two seater task. Bob and I continued on flying completing 70% of the task before finally falling off the ridge and into the landing pattern. It was Bob's first ridge flight and we were able to go through many of the basics of ridge flying so it certainly was a useful training flight even if it wasn't a contest day.

We packed up our things and got the ship ready for aerotow back to B'Town. Bob drove down and I flew 217 for the short trip, then we headed back to Wurtsboro to pick up my car and bring the trailer back to 1N7. Everything is back in place: battery in the shack equipment in the box and I have the parachute and a few cushions that I forgot to take out my car.

I was a great week for me and I hope all enjoyed their experience. Thanks for Carl and Terry for their help at Wurtsboro and for Terry's PDA cradle which allowed me to use my PDA flight computer in the contest. The Colibri worked well and provided files for each days flight to Rob Dunning the official contest scorer. We had six two place gliders at the contest with a total of 31 pilots as students or mentors in the contest. This is as many pilots as we have in total in a typical regional contest and we did it with just 6 gliders! The enthusiasm was apparent amount all of pilots new to contests and a real success for FWI. The only question that I have is: Who wants to sign up for next year?

Bill Thar G8 %%%%%%%%%%





(ed: reprinted, with permission, from SSA's Soaring Magazine)

by BRUCE MCGHIE

Specially equipped Schweizer 2-33



Bruce McGhie and his instructor, Don Vosseller, immediately after first solo on May 17, 1980.



Chip Friedman



Freedom's Wings with the new Grob "Special" April 1986.

.....from March 1989:



### Freedom's Wings Needs A Lift

As a non-profit corporation Freedom's Wings depends largely on public and private support to maintain its operation. If you would like to help keep this program aloft, please send a tax deductible donation of five dollars (or more) to Freedom's Wings.

We will send you our red, white and blue patch in appreciation of your support. Thanks.

Freedom's Wings International, Inc.  
1832 Lake Avenue  
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

Some things have changed: our address, club officers, the places where we fly most often, — and I have no idea if we still have any sew-on patches — but our goal has remained the same: to bring the joy of soaring to as many individuals with disabilities as we can.

We continue to make new friends and get re-acquainted with some we haven't seen for awhile. Events at PGC/Hilltown, ASC/Saratoga, and ACA/Blairstown account for over 70 guest rides during the 2012 season, and training and safety programs continue to evolve.

One thing certainly hasn't changed: we still need **your** support.

#### Bruce McGhie and Hand Controls Okayed

Readers of my article "Flying a Sailplane with Hands-Only Controls" (*Soaring*, Dec. '80) may be interested to know that in October I passed my flight test, which was given by Albany, N.Y., GADO chief, Chuck O'Neil. I was gratified that his limitation wording on the license was broad — not confined to my present controls and sailplane: "Glider (Aerotow only). Valid only in aircraft equipped with hand controls."

BRUCE MCGHIE

New York, N.Y.

#### Soaring for the Disabled

Thanks to *Soaring* for its December feature story about Bruce McGhie and his monumental achievement in becoming the first paraplegic (actually partial quadriplegic) to solo a sailplane. This example of the soaring community's awareness, concern, and willingness to help is most heartening. For me, the story of Bruce McGhie and Terry Frazier (the double amputee who was responsible for the design and building of the hand controls on Bruce's 2-33) is much more than the story of an individual's faith, courage, and determination. It also reveals the story, hitherto unknown or un-

told, of the desires and dreams of wheelchair people all over the world.

Several months ago, I wrote another letter which was published in *Soaring* asking for help in locating (or having designed) a "hands-only" controlled sailplane. The response was overwhelming. Letters of encouragement came from all over the U.S. and as far away as Canada and Israel. This outpouring of good will motivated people like Mary d'Angelo, my business partner and fiancée, and Jim McGowan, my first paraplegic sailplane student, to form Freedom's Wings, a non-profit organization. We were joined in our efforts by Airborne Arts, the fixed-base operator at Sky Manor Airport, New Jersey.

Our purpose, our cause, is simple — bring the world of soaring flight to the physically disabled, particularly those confined to wheelchairs. Freedom's Wings intends to provide the facilities, equipment, and training free of charge to any wheelchair person with the will to soar and the courage to try. Think what soaring freedom means to us. Just imagine what it could mean to those others, less mobile than ourselves.

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