

# Freedom's Tales

Volume 11, No. 2, June 2011

...some Bach, some Clapton, some Pink Floyd



from Richard Fucci, President of Freedom's Wings Int'l:

## Soaring for Silver

On Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, I arrived at Blairstown Airport (1N7) around noon in hope of making my Silver Distance flight to Van Sant Airport (9N1) 34 miles to the southwest. In the gliding community the Federation Aeronautique International (FAI) recognizes gliding achievements one of which is the attainment of the FAI Silver Badge. Completing this award involves three required elements: Silver Altitude is a 1000 meter (3281 foot) altitude gain above an in flight low point; Silver Duration is a five hour flight time after tow release and Silver Distance is a 50 km (31.07 mile) cross country flight.

The day was sunny and warm with the forecast of blue skies but good lift. I would have preferred a sky filled with billowing cumulus clouds which would serve as signposts as to where the lift was located. A blue sky day would make the task challenging but also more rewarding.



I have never seen so many gliders in line waiting to get into the air. Finally at 3:00 after 13 other gliders preceded me I was launched and wondered aloud if I was going to be able to complete the flight with such a late start.

I released northeast of Blairstown and crossed the airport at 3000 feet as the Colibri flight recorder chirped indicating I was over my start point. Soon I was down to 2500 feet 3 nautical miles (nm) southwest of the field thermalling in weak lift. The lift picked up and I did too ... all the way up to 4500 feet so I set off on my 200\* course.

South of I-80 I found another thermal again climbing to 4500 feet ... all the while a favorable tailwind of about 12 knots (kts) was drifting me down my intended course.

The go ahead decision was made about 10 nm out when I found a strong thermal over a quarry which took me to 6000 feet ... it was time to make a commitment ... to break the apron strings to 1N7 and set out. I had found workable thermals to this point and I felt confident that I would find more on the course ahead.

I flew straight and level aiming east of Merrill Creek Reservoir and into the valley on the other side. I found little lift there and so continued on over the next ridge. I was down to 3500 feet ... it was time to find workable lift. At this point I was north of I-78 about 12 nm from Van Sant. I could clearly see the bridge at Frenchtown spanning the Delaware River and could barely make out my destination in the distance. Hartung Airport ... a private grass strip ... was off to my right about 5 nm. This would be my divert field if I could not find lift.

Nothing sharpens your senses like needing a thermal! I found some weak lift and just worked it while probing around for stronger updrafts. The lift became better and I climbed to 4500 feet. There was now no question that I could make Van Sant Airport. I resumed course and headed directly there ... slowing to 60-65 kts in lift and speeding to 75 knots kts in sink. I whizzed across 9N1 at 3000 feet accompanied again by the warble of the Colibri. I had accomplished the Silver Distance ... exactly 10 years and 10 months after attaining the Silver Climb and the Silver Duration.

### Badge History

Silver Badge	US Number: 6802	Earned: 4/30/2011
Bronze Badge	US Number: 1877	Earned: Oct-2007
C Badge	US Number: 17041	Earned: unknown
B Badge	Earned: May-1999	
A Badge	Earned: Apr-1999	

\*\* C Badge earned May 2000

FINALLY I had earned the Silver Badge.

I landed at Van Sant and was greeted with the news that their tow plane was down. I called back to Blairstown Airport and the Yards Creek Soaring tow plane was dispatched to retrieve me.

...concluded next page



It was a memorable flight inspired in part by the pilots of Aero Club Albatross also based at Blairstown Airport who routinely fly 500 – 1000 kilometers. My flight of 50 kilometers to them would be like crossing the street. But we all have to start somewhere ... and I have started!

Fooch



### 2011 FREEDOM'S WINGS CALENDAR

Adaptive Rowing Open House	July 19
New York ( <a href="http://www.rownewyork.org">www.rownewyork.org</a> )	
Board Meeting	July 30
Aero Club Albatross picnic	August 6
Mount Sinai Event	September 9
<b>Annual Picnic/30th Anniversary</b>	<b>September 10 &amp; 11</b>
Rain dates	September 17 & 18
PGC 70th Anniversary Celebration	September 17
Global Abilities Rec Fest	September 17
Philadelphia	
World Congress on Disabilities	September 23 & 24
Atlantic City Conv. Cntr.	
Disabilities Awareness Fair	October 6
Carlisle Barracks/USA War Coll.	
<b>Adirondack Soaring Club Event</b>	<b>October 8 &amp; 9</b>
Rain dates	October 15 & 16
Board Meeting	October 22



### **The Coastal Migration of N2779Z**



Most of you out there are probably not even aware that there has been a third glider/sailplane in the FWI fleet for a long time, and if you've never seen it, now you'll have to journey to California for a look.

Martha & Bill McMakin donated a Schweizer SGS 2-32 to FWI in 1991. Although there were controls in both the front and back (bench) seats, it proved impractical to adapt or install hand controls to train disabled students, so the ship was used primarily to simply give rides. At some point (prior to my involvement with FWI) N2779Z was leased to Sport Aviation at Van Sant for commercial (sightseeing) flights for a number of years. After Azur retired N2779Z was leased to Vintage Aerosports and operated by Jay Hohola for part of the 2010 season.

Although the SGS 2-32 provided FWI with a modest annual income from the lease, the economy indicated that it was time to find a new owner for it. After a complicated, and often frustrating, process N2779Z was purchased by the Lake Elsinore Soaring Club in California — and by an even more unlikely set of circumstances, transported by members of Cleveland Soaring Society. The trip was a success, and CSS returned with its own purchase.







## For the Record(s)

{ Achieving personal goals and recognition from peers and the SSA./FAI, whether climbing through the levels of pilot proficiency or setting/breaking records, may enhance the reputation of FWI's pilots and FWI. Our focus and dedication to safety has already earned respect from those who've attended or participated in FWI events; now we're working on getting the attention of the soaring community in general. }

This edition opens with Fooch's account of his Silver Distance flight, completing the requirements to earn that badge. (Hey! He used to land on aircraft carriers; the man is a pilot of considerable skill.) In the March 2011 edition I mentioned that FWI was waiting for confirmation of another achievement: }



I planned that day as every training day. I needed to improve my ridge-flying skills and I met our FWI instructor Bob Cook early that morning. It was a windy day wind from northwest, perfect for northwest ridge-flying along the beautiful Delaware River. To my surprise Bob informed me that we [would] try to break the New Jersey record in straight flight in two-seat glider.

I did some ridge-flying before and I felt up to the challenge. The whole trick was to fly to [the] northeast at least [a] mile or two past the ridge line and have [my] starting point there. Most pilots start their run right above [the] upper [Blairstown] reservoir and head to the southwest. If their finish point is Hawk Mountain, because there is not much ridge lift after this point and most pilots do not continue past that point, they do not have much opportunity to break straight flight record if they start over upper reservoir. The only way to extend our route and break the record was to choose starting point much to [the] northeast.

We took off at 10-10:30 am and our excitement started right after take-off at 200 feet. It was so turbulent that my legs left the floor of our cockpit. It was similar probably what astronauts feel during training on [the] Vomit Comet. If anybody does not know, Vomit Comet is [a] passenger plane accommodated to train astronauts in Zero-G environment.

After the release [from tow] we headed northeast along the river. Soon, we had to trade our ridge lift for thermals. Terrain changes at that point and there is no way to fly low. We increased our altitude and slowly moved along the river. Beeping of our Colibri flight computer informed us that we reached our starting point. Our flight

route was programmed beforehand. Colibri informed us of [arrival at] our starting point, our progress and when we reach our finish point where we can break the record.

After we reached our starting point we made 180 degree turn, increased our speed and then we started our run. After couple minutes we again traded thermal for ridge lift. Increased turbulence, shaking of controls is a good indication that ridge is working. Also [the] pilot must observe waves on the reservoirs, movement of trees and other indication of wind. Ridge can work only if wind is strong enough, constant and coming from the same direction. Ridge flying is low and fast. In case wind dissipates we lose lift. Being low and losing lift means big trouble.

Soon we had to increase our altitude again and switch to thermaling to jump over Delaware Water Gap where terrain shape does not produce ridge lift. This is the biggest jump without lift during our flight so we must have higher altitude. After passing the Gap shaking was indication of ridge lift, which always brings some relief to [the] pilot. Remember that gliders do not have an engine. Losing lift means terminating flight.

So far we proceeded to the Southwest. It was nice flight. Sun was high and warmed our cockpit. Bob, very experience pilot and instructor, also has very good skills as tour guide. He explained different fields where he made off-field landing, towns along our route of flight. He told interesting stories about people he met during his emergency landing.

We were progressing steadily and soon reached Allentown airspace. We did not want to enter their [controlled] airspace so we stayed lower. We switched from ridge lift to thermals couple times to jump over terrain gaps.

After about one hour we reach our finish point. Again beeping of Colibri informed us that we just break NJ state record. Now we needed to make 180 degree turn and head home. So far was nice flight. The scariest moment came on our return leg. Just before Delaware Water Gap we increased our altitude to safely reach the ridge to the other side and started our jump. To my surprise we experienced heavy sink. Slowly passing the river I started [to] realizes that we may not reach that ridge lift on the other side. I started looking for a field to land. Being over the Gap there is not much choice there. The only field was the golf course, which really is difficult to land. We were lucky. Sink disappeared and in just last seconds we felt again stress-relieving beautiful ridge turbulence. Now we can increase our airspeed, bring the glider's nose down knowing that we do not lose our precious altitude.

After about 10 minutes we jumped over the ridge heading home. On southwestern side of the ridge we experienced sink but our airport was close and entering landing pattern and landing was uneventful. Thanks so much to Bob Cook for his ridge training; FWI members can now participate in record-breaking flight.

Kris Lapinski

**CORRECTION -**  
THIS WAS INCORRECTLY LISTED AS  
A NEW YORK STATE RECORD  
**NEW JERSEY**  
**STATE RECORD**  
Open, Multi-Place Distance to a Goal  
Krzysztof Lapinski, Grub 103; 62.9 MI.  
Robert Cook, Passenger



## ...and we ain't done:

April is reputed to be one of the best months for soaring and cross-country flights from Blairstown (1N7). Another brace (!) of records is awaiting confirmation & acknowledgement:

Open Class Multiplace			
NJ	Free Triangle Distance	<a href="#">Christopher Lynch</a>	<a href="#">65.5mi</a> 4/30/2011
NJ	Triangle Distance	<a href="#">Christopher Lynch</a>	<a href="#">62.5mi</a> 4/30/2011
NJ	Triangle Speed 100km	<a href="#">Christopher Lynch</a>	<a href="#">27.9mph</a> 4/30/2011



Chris was accompanied (chaperoned?) on this flight by Bob Cook, FWI's Chief Instructor — Cookie always knows when to hitch a ride, doesn't he?



## Rejuvenation of N217BG

The sale of FWI's venerable SGS 2-32 facilitated significant refurbishment of both of our Grob 103's. N217BG spent most of the winter in the barn getting a facelift:



Looking good! Thanks, Jack, and thank you to all who generously contributed to restoring N217BG.

## Links

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

[www.pgcs soaring.org/index.php](http://www.pgcs soaring.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.globalabilities.org/recfest.html](http://www.globalabilities.org/recfest.html)

<http://vimeo.com/channels/handiflight#9837012>

[https://picasaweb.google.com/Alcindy138/TeamGene?authkey=Gv1sRgCle5rY\\_TyLL7NA&feat=email#](https://picasaweb.google.com/Alcindy138/TeamGene?authkey=Gv1sRgCle5rY_TyLL7NA&feat=email#)

<https://picasaweb.google.com/avigolden/20110605NYCOudorsDisabilityPhiladelphiaGliderCouncil?feat=email#>

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

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





**... from some of FWI's guests at the PGC event:**

From: Bob Foyder Sent: Jun 6, 2011 11:55 AM

A round of applause should be given to the team of Pilots & Ground Crew to make everything work.

My flight this year was a lesson in understanding about lift & thermals, my pilot in the rear seat explained about the pedals, stick, brake.

Like most flights, it is never long enough ...I will look forward to the next opportunity to Soar.

Two thumbs -Up

From: Brigitte Woods Sent: Jun 6, 2011 12:10 PM

What a program, the opportunity to fly is the greatest thing that I could ever achieve in my life time. I have big plans thanks to everyone that made this happen hopefully I'll be able to give back one day, thanks again.

From: Richard Beardsley Sent: Jun 6, 2011 12:16 PM

I'm paralyzed from my chest down. But, getting into the plane was quite easy.

The flying was very smooth. Being early in the day, there was no lift. At one point, we turned sharply to the right. Then I looked straight down at the lush Bucks County landscape. I enjoyed that.

As we began to prepare for landing, the pilot [Chris Lynch] (I forget the pilot's name) asked me to help him. I controlled the spoiler (which affects lift) doing my best to follow his instructions. Being part of the landing process made for a memorable first time soaring. I laughed when [Chris] referred to us as gimps as he talked to the landing crew.

From: Ash Ahuja Sent: Jun 6, 2011 6:38 PM

I loved the experience and meeting everyone at the club. Bruce my flight instructor/pilot was extremely helpful in explaining the nuances, the differences and after the flight all the things I should consider if I wanted to take training at the club. I am really excited to have signed up as a member, and look forward to my instruction as a glider pilot after my current sport pilot license. I really liked the clockwork with which the flights were scheduled and the amazing BBQ and food! thank you again for the amazing experience!



From: Lauren Ostrowski Sent: Jun 6, 2011 8:17 PM

Having been in the Freedom's Wings gliders six times now, I know that there is one thing about gliding that is always certain: every ride is different. This time, we had communication headsets in the cockpit, which made communicating with the pilot much easier. In addition to a wonderful ride looking at the scenery below without competing with bright sunshine, I learned quite a bit about the way gliders bank (or turn) and that they can even be flown upside down with special training. I loved the relaxing ride and felt as if I was floating the whole time. My pilot made controlling the glider seem effortless, leading me to think that I would love to stay up there for hours. It's always so much fun!

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Directions can be found at www.carouselhousepa.com/directions

**Carlisle Barracks & US Army War College**

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**DISABILITIES AWARENESS FAIR**  
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Hosted by the Equal Employment Office and Army Community Services

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Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013  
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Fax: 717-245-4243  
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**\*\* Wounded Warrior Guest Speaker \*\***  
**\*\* Lunch available to purchase for donations \*\***

6 ft table will be provided to display any informational pamphlets, brochures, catalogs and exhibits that your company can provide!



(..continued from previous page)



From: John Simko Sent: Jun 7, 2011 3:23 PM

I had a really exciting flight this year as always. From start to finish it was a roller coaster of a thrill ride. The feeling of being 3,000 feet in the air is indescribable. I would stay up there for hours and hours if I could. The clouds looked like big pieces of marshmallows and the houses looked like monopoly houses. This year I got the chance to fly the glider and be in control of where I was going. I loved it. The pilot was very nice and taught me about the different instruments on the glider and how to stay up in the air longer. When we came down to land it felt like a bumpy roller coaster and loved the feeling. Can't wait to do it again next year! Thanks.

From: Gene Levin Sent: Jun 7, 2011 6:03 PM

I woulda responded to your request yesterday when it arrived but I was still flying high & didn't land until late yesterday afternoon. Sorry about that but please know you shouldn't be annoyed with me as a result. Quite simply, I had a ball & cherished every moment of the flight & the brief time I had to chat with the ground crew hands that assisted me, comprising TEAM GENE. My local support group was informed of this adventure but no one expressed any interest at all & that left me mystified. I think it's partly due to my background being an athlete seeking physical thrills offset by many of the Physically Challenged who are just depressed about how they interpret their plight. I sent them other pics ...

...Please extend my complete & grateful thanks to Bill, my apprentice pilot who I was pleased to teach a few tricks to, & the guys that helped me slide into & lift out of the plane. They were all true gentlemen & I couldn't have done it without their generous help. I might like to offer some sggstns for the event that might make it even better than it is if you're open to me sharing them with you.

Thanks so much for making this amazing event possible for people like me.

Gene

From: AJ Nanayakkara Sent: Jun 14, 2011 12:31 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to soar with Freedom's Wings at the Philadelphia Glider Council. Flying 3,000 feet in the air was an amazing experience. I sustained a spinal cord injury seventeen years ago, and since then I have needed a wheelchair to get around. Although I am able to do much, my wheelchair limits me from going many places on the ground. But in the glider, I felt like an eagle soaring under the clouds, free to go wherever I wanted. The sense of independence I feel in the air was incredible. I look forward to soaring again soon. Thank you to Freedom's Wings, Philadelphia Glider Council, and my pilot Chris for this unforgettable experience!

AJ



From: Christina Profico Sent: Jun 15, 2011 9:08 AM

Thanks again to everyone at Freedom Wings for an incredible, unforgettable glider flight on June 4<sup>th</sup>! This was my second time participating, and since I had to miss it last year because of a prior commitment, I was really looking forward to getting back up in the air after my first experience in June of 2009. What an exhilarating experience it is for someone physically challenged to be able to leave the crutches, wheelchairs and prosthetics behind and just soar! Once the tow plane let the glider go, it is like floating on air! The feeling is beyond words and the view takes your breath away. I can't wait to do it again next year! I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to participate in this wonderful event. To everyone at Freedom Wings and the Philadelphia Glider Club who gave their time, talents, skills and hearts so generously, it was an unforgettable day!







From: Laura Young (snailmail sent June 27, 2011)

Dear Freedom's Wings, especially Richard & Ilona, Bill (the brave and patient pilot), Agnes [Agnieszka] (the photographer --- can't get the photos, our computer broke ☹. I have no proof ☹! --- Brad and Chris (the great answerers),

Congratulations on your great endeavor! Thank you for my chance of a lifetime. Even my jealous husband and children had a lot of fun.

You guys are great!!! I will never forget my glider experience, I hope I can do it again some day.



*...the scene of the crime(s)*

...the editorial office of Freedom's Tales

...the entire publication & distribution center



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