

Harris Hill 1976

by Bob Crane



The scene above, besides showing the thrill of victory, is the view out of the pit area out over Harris. The shot below is the agony of defeat.



PHOTOGRAPHY: BOB CRANE

Two days of soaring, one in rain and the other in sun is just the thing to wring out the best planes and pilots.

It was Saturday morning, September 11, 1976 and we were in the calm before the storm. The weather forecast was for intermittent rain showers with 15 to 20 m.p.h. winds gusting frequently to 25. A number of times we heard the unforgettable sound of sailplane wings snapping both in the air and on tow. Dave Lear, the Contest Director, set the task for the day; three rounds of ten minute duration with a thirty meter ungraduated landing circle. The maximum possible points were 1950. Round one began as some showers hit the field, sending a few weak souls searching out adequate cover. As the round progressed, a few of our mechanical birds found weak nests on the ground.

During round two, what started out as a routine flight ended with one of the most

spectacular aerial maneuvers that we have witnessed to date with an R/C sailplane. The outer right wing panel of Mark Potkin's Glasflugel 604 sheared off and the ship came plummeting back to Harris Hill field. The wing panel made a spectacular landing about one and one half miles away. Mark now had a sailplane in the air minus two thirds of a wing and it's heading for the field. But Mark kept his cool and proceeded to land the ship—right next to the spot. The spectators loved it, the Harris Hill Lift over Drag Club made Mark an honorary member and he won the C.D.'s Field Day award.

With conditions being what they were on Saturday there was never a dull moment. Bill Johnson of Destill, N.Y., flying his original B.J. knocked the complete left side of his stab off on landing thereby placing his landing points in jeopardy. To prove that his aircraft is flyable, Bill launched B.J. again minus the left stab. He flew it and hit the spot on landing.

Al Precuil, the social manager, did a fine job of co-ordinating the Saturday night soaring banquet. This year, the

winner of the Schweitzer Sportsmanship Award, which was given at the banquet, was Warren Plohr of North Olmstead, Ohio. Warren is married and has three children and has been in modeling for over forty six years. Now a research engineer for the NASA Lewis research center in Cleveland, Warren also served as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. After WWII he pursued his modeling interest, changing from Free Flight to R/C in 1947. We asked Warren why he changed and he said, "I got tired of chasing F/F models." Our congratulations to Warren from all the pilots in the soaring fraternity.

The next day, Sunday, the Chemung Valley looked like a giant marshmallow from the top of Harris Hill. The sun was warming the hill, burning off the fog and starting to build the first thermals of the day. Dave Lear, the C.D., set the days task, one round of ten minute duration and two rounds of five minute duration (doubled score), one throw away round and a thirty meter graduated landing circle.

The air was all green and everybody



George Messettler of Congers, New York, is shown above launching his original "Glare." Glenn Nickey, Saturday's 3rd place winner, from Berlin, Pennsylvania (below) is holding his Windfree.



The Schweitzer Eagles (winners of the Schweitzer Award at Harris Hill) for the past three years are left to right above; Don Clark, 1974; Dan Pruss, 1975 and Warren Plohr, 1976. Below are Don Clark with his Kurwi 68, Bud Wallace with his Aquila and in front is Sean Crane with the author's Windsong 64.



was getting ten minute maxes. After round one the C.D. changed to five minute duration. It seems that there is a pattern to Harris Hill. Last year Saturday was also rainy and windy and Sunday was beautiful. At one point in the Sunday competition there was some speculation about changing from the winch launches to the toss it off the Hill method, but the winches prevailed. When it was over the Sunday scores were really close with only one point separating 2nd, 3rd and 4th.

After the contest each contestant was presented with an engraved Harris Hill Lift over Drag glass to commemorate his participation in the Fifth Annual HHL/D Soaring contest. The winners for both the Saturday and Sunday competitions were presented with etched bell jars on a wooden stand and places four through ten got sailplane rides.

Our many thanks to Dave Lear, Contest Director; Al Smith, Field Manager; Al Precuil, Social Manager; Don Jurusik, Registration; and all the members and wives of the Harris Hill Lift over Drag Club.

FLYING MODELS

Fifth Annual Harris Hill

Saturday results

1. W. Johnson	1809	B.J.
2. F. Meir	1772	Gulf Coaster
3. G. Nickey	1693	Windfree
4. M. Yothers	1682	Right On
5. C. McKinley	1640	Hobie Hawk
6. M. Potkin	1574	Glasflugel 604
7. D. Holley	1557	Maestro
8. G. Zeigenfuse	1545	Aquila
9. A. Marshall	1512	Dart
10. W. Good	1494	Kurwi

Sunday results

1. K. Hazen	1282	Challenger
2. D. Clark	1277	Kurwi
3. G. Messettler	1276	Glare (Orig.)
4. R. Nadolny	1275	Aquila
5. W. Meleske	1269	Aquila
6. D. Holly	1268	Maestro
7. R. Pfeiffer	1267	Pokey
8. P. Weigand	1267	Aquila
9. A. Precuil	1266	Nuajes (Orig.)
10. D. Lear	1264	Paragon