



Chicago Land Glider Council Newsletter

Chicago Land Glider Council

Volume 2, Issue 2
December 2003

Voggasser's Debut Presentation Draws Praise

Dave Voggasser was the keynote speaker at the November CLGC meeting. He drew an ovation from the audience on his Powerpoint-assisted presentation on airspace through the eyes of ATC. Dave is an FAA Approach Control supervisor in Elgin. Among his topics were:

- The near invisibility to ATC radar of glass gliders without transponders
- TCAS and airborne transponder visibility systems
- VOR's as "airplane magnets"
- IFR traffic patterns near area gliderports
- Traffic routing along extended runway centerlines
- TFR's and the need to check with FSS frequently

Bolting for the door in order to make his late shift in Elgin, Dave was unable to complete his pres-

entation. We are all looking forward to Part II at the December meeting.

Jim Short and Gene Hammond led a discussion on growing the SSA and the sport of soaring. With only 12K SSA members out of 25K+ glider pilots and 800K licensed pilots, there is clearly room for growth, despite shrinking SSA resources. We need to promote and advertise the benefits of SSA advocacy—relief from inappropriate FAA regulation, group insurance, safety and the support of gliderports.

Jim and Gene invited ideas from members on how to increase growth and what our local gliderports were doing to bring in new and dormant pilots.

- Sky Soaring mentioned its need just to survive, CAP hosting and its CFIG shortage.
- CGC described its activities as a chapter of SSA and

support of CLGC.

- Hinckley Soaring discussed its role as a commercial operator with diverse skills and the need for succession as it closes its doors this season.
- Windy City shared its objectives resulting from a new mission statement, outreach goals and additional equipment. plans
- Sylvania talked about controlling size and its emphasis on transition pilots.

A proposal to form a CLGC committee for strategic growth was offered for consideration.

The American-Polish Club expressed thanks for help provided in the Region 7 contest, and CLGC thanked the club.

Windy City reported its Chilifest has been cited for global warming.

Inside this issue:

November CLGC meeting in review 1

Feature: Sequachie Ridge Flying, by John Harrison 2

Map to Herrick School for CLGC meetings 4

Classifieds 3

CLGC Officers 4

CLGC newsletter contacts 4

Map to Herrick School 4

Classic Corner

The Schweizer 1-23, introduced in 1948, 15 m, all metal, 29:1, 2.2 fps, held two altitude records: 46,267' absolute and 42,42,303' gain. Piloted by Paul MacCready, placed 4th in the 1954 World Championships.

CLGC Plans Gangbuster Meeting Schedule!

Tentative Events (subject to change)

- Oct 14, 2003** —Celebrating the 2003 Season and the Cubs' Victory! (Revised Oct 15, 9:00 PM)
- Nov 18, 2003** —Dave Voggasser discusses airspace and TFR. Is Class G "Glider Only?"
- Dec 16, 2003** —Dave Voggasser returns! Part II of "Skies Through the Eyes of ATC"
- Jan 13, 2004** —Sky Soaring presentation on "Retiring Early On Your Real Estate Investments."
- Feb 10, 2004** —Al Freedy reads excerpts from his book, "Slack Line Recovery Techniques," 820 pages, \$69.95, cash only, signed copies available for slight additional charge.
- Mar 09, 2004** —Panel discussion on whether it's better to box the wake clockwise or counter-clockwise. Results of a vote will be announced at the 2004 SSA Convention.
- Apr 13, 2004**—Hot topic! Modifying the SGS 2-33 for water ballast...race with the pros!

Door prizes at every meeting! Plan to attend!!



Sequachie Ridge Flying
(or: *Bob and John's Excellent Adventure*)
by John Harrison

What the heck am I doing a hundred feet over the trees zooming along at one hundred knots. Am I crazy? Those were my thoughts during my first ridge flying experience. Earlier in the season Bob Quas had told me that he was thinking about going back to Sequachie in Tennessee for some ridge flying. I had read about those lunatics that fly right down over the trees at the top of a ridge at speeds near red line. Bob convinced me that it didn't have to be that intense an experience and that when the conditions were right ridge flying could be a lot of fun. He told me that the best conditions occur during October and April each year. Bob also told me that he had been to just about all the ridge flying places and that Sequachie was the best place for a beginner like me. There is no getting around doing something for the first time so I told him that I wanted to go with him.

The ideal situation would have been to spend a couple of weeks at the right time of year in Sequachie to try to catch the best days, but Bob and I didn't have that kind of time. If your time is limited you at least have to be flexible. I started watching the weather in Sequachie about the second week in October. I was looking for strong winds out of the west or northwest which produce the best ridge flying. On Wednesday, October 15th, I told Bob that the following Wednesday was predicted to have the best winds and we set our plans to leave Tuesday the 21st. By the time the weekend painting project at CGC got underway the forecast called for those winds on Tuesday. So we committed to leaving on Monday. Sunday night I checked one last time and the predicted winds were back to Wednesday.

It was too late to change plans so I left Monday morning at 4:45. It is about a 600 mile drive to Sequachie and it went pretty smoothly until I got about 20 miles from my destination. A moving van coming down a steep stretch of road had used his brakes too much and the brakes got so hot that his truck caught on fire. He wasn't hurt but the cab of his truck was a melted mess and the firemen were still pouring water into his load which was also on fire. I figured that my one hour delay wasn't bad compared to the news that the people who were shipping their worldly possessions were about to get.

After checking into the motel I drove to the airport to drop off my plane. At the airport I was warmly welcomed by Art Matthews and John Laughton. Art had sold the airport to John about a year ago and as part of the agreement has stayed on to run the place until John learns all the ropes. The facilities at the airport are excellent. Campers can stay on the airport for a small fee and electricity and a washroom with shower are available. Art sat me at a big table in his hanger which had a large topographic map of the area and proceeded to tell me the basics of flying the ridge.

The airport is located in the center of the 6-8 mile wide Sequachie valley. It is a beautiful place. There are ridges on both sides rising 1500-2000 feet. The east ridge runs northeast to southwest for approximately 45 miles. Art told me to expect a turbulent tow to the ridge and that if the ridge was working well I would probably want to stay there until later in the day when the winds calmed down before attempting a landing back at the field. He quizzed me on right of way questions and was satisfied with my answers. He told me that keeping your speed up was important and that 65knots was about as slow as I should get. He also told me that I should explore the lift at the top of the ridge so that I could determine where it was strongest. He advised me that I could fly fast down at tree top level if I enjoyed being beat up by turbulence or a little slower higher up and much less turbulence. That was an easy decision to make. I asked what happens if the wind quits? He answered that as long as you don't get caught on the back side of the ridge that all you have to do is turn out into the valley and pick out one of several out landing fields or the best of many farmer's fields.

Art offered a book describing different tasks for the area and asked what I wanted to attempt. I told him that since it was my first time I would be happy to just learn to fly the ridge. He then asked me what I was going to do after the first five minutes? I told him that I was going to fly along with Bob until I got comfortable with the ridge. Art said that since Bob was flying his 1-26 and I was flying an ASW20 that I should let Bob fly low and I should try to stay a couple of hundred feet high so that I could match his speed. He also told me that I would probably get ahead of him and that I could just keep circling back to get behind him. He reminded me that all turns should be away from the ridge. He offered to let me study his books and maps but after a 10 hour drive I said that I would return to study them the next morning when I was rested.

The next morning Bob arrived at about 10 AM. We both assembled our planes and waited for the winds to switch from the south to the west as predicted. At 2PM we finally got the winds we were looking for. Bob launched first and Art warned me to be ready because it doesn't take him very long to make the tow. Before we started he asked if I had ever towed through a lot of turbulence before and I answered no. He told me to do my best to stay at his level and on his left wing to help him with rudder authority. The first couple of hundred feet were the wildest and I did my best to stay in position and then it got better as we gained altitude. Art had explained that he would tow me right into the lift if it was working and tell me when to release. It was pretty easy to tell it was working when the vario suddenly jumps up 2-300 feet a minute higher. Art told me that I should release and not take the usual right turn but keep flying straight ahead.

Bob had been waiting for me and I fell in behind and 100 feet above him as we headed north on the ridge. Bob informed me that these were perfect ridge flying conditions and I soon learned what he meant. My computer told me that the winds were from the west at 18 to 24 kts. At the level I was flying there was little or no turbulence and the lift was strong and smooth. The only problem I had was with speed control - not getting too slow but getting too fast. With every surge of lift my plane would put its nose down and want to run. I found myself having to constantly slow down so that I wouldn't get ahead of Bob. Bob was flying probably 70-90 but I found myself doing 80-100. Eventually I would fall into a pattern of passing Bob and then circling back to fall in behind him.

It was certainly a strange sensation for a flatlander to be flying straight ahead at high speed without having to look for thermals. Bob pointed out that if you watch for the tree tops that were being tossed around by the wind you could find where the lift was strong. The edge of the ridge is not a straight line and Bob showed me how to fly into the cut outs until lift weakened and then cut straight across to the other side. In a large cut out we would work the ridge to gain altitude before we crossed. We continued north to the end of the ridge and then turned and flew to the south end of the ridge. By this time I was feeling pretty comfortable and Bob and I didn't worry about staying together and would check with each other on the radio.

Bob and I were the only two gliders on the ridge that afternoon and it was especially perfect for my first experience. We were not entirely alone though. Sequachie has a large group of hang glider pilots. About 10 miles north of the airport they have constructed a large wooden ramp at the top of the ridge to run off of and launch themselves. The first day I only saw one or two. I lost count of the

number of hawks and buzzards that I passed close to. The hawks would be right over the top of the ridge just hanging in the air with their heads lowered looking down in the valley. I would come up on them pretty quickly and they would react by folding their wings and flipping upside down to fall away from me. Art had been in contact with us periodically to let us know what the conditions were at the field. When he called later in the afternoon as the sun was starting to sink behind the ridge with the ok for landing back at the field I headed back and landed even though the ridge was still going strong. When Bob came down an hour and a half later I realized that I could have stayed up longer. For \$5 a night you could use the T hangers on the field so Bob and I didn't have to disassemble. When I looked at my flight later that night on SeeYou I found that I had flown for 2 hours and 38 minutes at an average speed of 80kts and covered 240 miles. I can count on no fingers how many times I have flown like that before. WOW! I think I could get to like this ridge stuff.

We crossed our fingers and hoped for the winds to continue blowing from the northwest. Bob encouraged me to think about trying a 500k if we got started earlier the second day. The problem with a 500k is that you have to have both ridge and thermals so that you can make the transition from one ridge to another. It turned out that we didn't have strong enough thermals for a 500k so I would have to plan on coming back in April when conditions are usually more promising.

We got an earlier start the second day taking off around 1:30. I was buoyed with confidence from the day before and did a much better job following the tow plane and got off in strong lift. I soon found that conditions were not like the day before. The wind was just as strong but because the wind was more north than the day before it was like a whole new experience. It was much more turbulent and harder to stay high above the ridge. At one point I hit a violent downdraft and in spite of being cinched in as tight as I could I managed to bang my head on the canopy-luckily without damaging either.

I also had trouble judging when to follow the ridge and when to make a jump across a cut out. At one point I followed the ridge into a cut out and hit strong sink. My only choice was to dart across a short hill in the cut out to try to make it back to the main ridge. I traded all my extra speed for altitude and just barely cleared the trees back over to the valley. To say I scared myself with that piece of bad judgement would be a gross understatement. It took a couple hours of conservative flying on the best part of the ridge before I felt comfortable again.

The hang gliders were out in mass this day. At one time I counted 12 hang gliders around the jump off and several more flying the ridge. I had to keep my head on a swivel every time I passed them because they were hanging in the air and I was going through them pretty quickly. After about four and a half hours I decided to try thermalling for awhile. I managed to get about a thousand feet over the ridge and just relaxed and enjoyed the scenery for an hour. I could see all of the way from one end of the valley to the other. By the time I came in to land the sun was behind the ridge and the runway lights were on. While I waited for Bob to land I took a picture of a beautiful sunset and contemplated how lucky I was to be able to experience this.

According to SeeYou the stats for the second day are that I flew for five and a half hours at an average of 79kts and covered a total of 454 miles. And that includes the last hour I spent thermalling. It is not unheard of to wait a week for conditions to be right and end up being disappointed. We had been lucky enough to time our visit for the two best ridge flying days. We had hopes for a third day of ridge flying but the weather gods didn't cooperate. So on Thursday we packed our ships up and started back home.

For someone who has never flown the ridge some of the things I have related could be viewed as reasons to not go to Sequachie. But I think they are things that will build your confidence and make you a better pilot. I know that I am a better pilot for the experience and that I will be returning in the spring. I want to thank Bob Quas for getting me to go to Sequachie. I am writing this in the hopes that it will encourage you to stretch your wings and consider a new experience flying your glider.

Classified Ads

L33 Solo, 1995, 350TT, excellent condition, stored in trailer, radio, audio vario, full tow-out gear, more... \$25,000. Chicago. IL

Email: CurtL33@aol.com

Website: www.hometown.aol.com/curtl33/myhomepage/l33.html



L33 Solo...Contact Curt Lewis



...where the rubber meets the grass

President: Scott Wolf
Vice-president: John Harrison
Treasurer: John DeRosa
Secretary: Don Berk

For submissions and to place classified ads
Phone: 630-466-0741
Fax: 775-218-4738
donaldberk@hotmail.com

CLGC Meeting Schedule

- Oct 14, 2003
- Nov 18, 2003
- Dec 16, 2003
- Jan 13, 2004
- Feb 10, 2004
- Mar 09, 2004
- Apr 13, 2004

**Door prizes at every meeting!
Plan to attend!!**

