

## The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Empire State Free Flight Championships. July 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019

This year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the Western New York Free Flight Society's annual contest – the Empire State Free Flight Championships. To mark this Quinquagenary (golden anniversary) every entrant received a pair of glass tankards emblazoned with the name of the contest. The tankards contained chocolate wrapped in gold foil and a gold-coloured record card on which to attach the stickers commemorating events that the entrant placed in.



This year's contest suffered from having its date changed a couple of times, causing headaches for its organizers. It has normally, in recent years, been held around the second weekend in August but this year the United States Open Championships (the NATS) was moved from the last week of July to the first week of August. This made it too close to have the ESFFC at its usual time, and pushing it back a week then put

it too close to the Pirate's Challenge – also put on by members of the WNYFFS at Geneseo in August. It was decided to have an earlier date – May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>. There was concern, of course, that the change of date could affect attendance, up or down, but it was decided upon and everything was arranged for that weekend. At the last moment it had to be postponed because that part of New York (and much of the North East) had an exceptionally wet spring and the field was utterly inundated. A new sanction was arranged with AMA and the date of July 5-8 was settled upon. It wasn't clear whether people would find this more convenient, because they were already taking the time off work for the Independence Day celebrations anyway, or less convenient, because it was so close to the holiday. There wasn't a lot of choice in availability of the field – the museum's air show was booked for the following weekend, so that is how it came about. The organizers waited with bated breath to find out what the weather would bring us, and what the turnout would be like.

As it turned out there was very little actual standing water left on the field, though the ground was soft enough that my retrieve bike fell over several times because the stand just slowly sank into the sod. Smith Lake, which has been a nuisance in previous years, wasn't present – I think that the weeping tile that has been installed in some areas might have eliminated that particular hazard, although there are still tall weeds in that area. Farmers had clearly brought heavy equipment out onto the field earlier in the season, to get to their growing areas, well before the ground could support the weight, and there were a number of deep ruts. Riding a chase bike could be challenging but we heard of no calamities.

Friday saw us assembled along the edge of the field adjacent to the access road on the south side, the winds being from the south. Registration was handled quickly and effectively and we were soon preparing to fly. While the breeze was fairly fresh, 2 minute maxes were well within the confines of the field. Given the circumstances explained above, the number of entrants (16) was quite good and we settled into a day of flying. FAC participation was lower than usual this year – no doubt in part because the FAC Nationals were to be held beginning less than two weeks later, and the FAC Pirates' Challenge two weeks after that, on the same field. This was particularly true on this first day, probably contributed to by the fact that some of the usual FAC suspects were engaged in non-FAC events.

There was a short period of rain in the afternoon but this didn't cut into the activities very much and, after a period of chatting under various shelters, we were soon back out flying – albeit with our 'wellies' on.



**Mark Whalen launches his Wisp, 2Bit + 1, model from the table.**

On Saturday morning the winds were still from the South but were forecast to veer to the West. We started the morning's flying from the same spot as on Friday but by mid-morning the forecast was borne out and the flight line was

moved to the West side of the field. This still provided a good 2-minute flight path and much flying progressed. There was an area that had been mowed short, as an airplane parking area, in preparation for the NWM Air Show the following weekend, and that provided a very civilized flight line. At around midday the skies became rather ominous, a few of us decided that discretion was the better part of valour and began to put away the flight paraphernalia. The weather beat us to it, however, and a fairly violent storm seemed to almost erupt. Most people stayed on the field for a while, deciding to eat lunch in their cars, but the rain didn't abate and so a contingent decided to visit the local 'Tim Horton's' restaurant to chat and partake of their hot beverages. By 2:30 the rain was clearly stopping so we all high-tailed back to the field to continue the contest. After the storm, the winds became quite calm and I have to say that my 650 sq in, B Nostalgia Gas, Dixielander then provided one of the more entertaining flights of the day.



**Roy Smith launches his 650 Dixielander.**

Everything went according to plan initially, the model climbed well, transitioned into its glide, and then settled into a nice 'piece of air' and began to float majestically upwards. Sally had her eye on the watch and let me know when the 2 minutes had been reached. Seconds ticked on and the model still did not DT. I ran for the trailer and grabbed my binoculars and my tracker receiver, convinced that I was going to be embarking on a long chase. (Yes – I actually did run, the artificial knee is that good.) The model continued to rise, as my heart continued to sink. After some time, however, I was relieved to see that it did not appear to be getting any higher and then, gradually, it became clear that it was actually getting lower – it had released itself from the clutches of the thermal. After more than 7 minutes it was back on *terra firma* – well within the confines of the field. There were cheers, and a few comments (some ribald, some not) from the gallery of spectators that had gathered, no doubt to watch the model disappear. More than one spectator opined that this would never have happened if I had RDT fitted, a position with which I could not argue. Upon bringing the model back to home base I discovered that the timer had stuck, with the DT release lever about halfway up the scroll. I shut off the trip switch and then opened it again and the clockwork immediately started to turn again – a small piece of debris, probably. I changed out the timer and the offending one will get a good ultrasonic bath. I thought that a single flight of that duration should give me a pass for the three 2-minute qualifiers but our CD, Ruth Ann Bane, didn't agree. Two high-powered machines battled for glory in the C/D Classic Gas event – Jim Hack's Pilfered Pearl and Simon Blake's Satellite. Simon recorded his third max on the stroke of 5:00 pm so the two agreed to decide it by coin toss rather than in a fly-off the next day. Simon won the toss.

Saturday evening saw a large number of the participants gathering at the Yard of Ale restaurant nearby the field, for an evening of festivities, where stickers were handed out to those who had placed in events on Friday and Saturday. The food, as always, was excellent and the company convivial.

Sunday was forecast to be a day of clear skies and moderate winds from the Northeast, so headquarters and the flight line were set up at an appropriate point near the edge of the cropped area at the North of the field. Just as we were getting set up, at 9 am, a huge tractor lumbered noisily in our direction. A quick conversation with the very polite driver of the machine elicited the information that he was setting up to mow the whole airfield, ready for their Air Show. He mowed behind our vehicles and then we all moved onto the part that he had mowed and he continued to do several passes in front of us to give us an area to set up a flight line again and then he carried on his usual pattern of mowing the field. He promised not to shred any aircraft, and as far as I know he remained true to his promise, though I know that my flights ended up just in front of him on more than one occasion as he passed to and fro on his mission.

The winds were moderate enough that maxes remained at 2 minutes and, for the most part, the aircraft stayed on the field. To the south side of the access road (where drift was taking our flights) there is a cropped area but the late planting season this year has meant that the beans there were hardly visible, so flights that got across the road were still not difficult to find and retrieve, though I believe that at least one of the FAC machines did languish there unfound.

The weather remained extremely flyable for the whole of the day and a very good time was had by those who stayed. Unfortunately, one or

two participants had to leave early due to other commitments.



**Joe Mollendorf with his very pretty 650 Dixielander, waiting for air.**

A battle of Dixielanders ensued when Joe Mollendorf and I both entered these machines in the 1/2A-D event. Both aircraft performed well, but Joe suffered an unlucky break, his first fly-off flight had an overrun. I put up mine, with a safe engine run. I thought I had reasonable air, but how wrong I was. The 'down' I was in was persistent and fast and the model was on the ground, after a quite respectable climb, in 57 seconds. Ignominious, to say the least, but a win nevertheless.

I must pass on a huge vote of thanks to Ruth Ann Bane, from all who participated. Not only did the contest have to be re-scheduled but, four days before the start of the contest Brad had vascular surgery and was forbidden to drive, lift anything heavier than 5 lbs, or do any of those things that he might have anticipated doing. Everyone was very pleased to see Brad at the field for a short time on both Friday and Saturday, and at the Saturday evening dinner. Heather and Joe Mollendorf stepped up to help, as did Priscilla and Lyle Whitford, which was much appreciated but, nevertheless, Ruth Ann carried a heavy part of the load. Congratulations to all, and especially to Ruth

Ann, for a job very well done and a contest that was thoroughly enjoyed.

The results for the weekend follow:-

**ESFFC RESULTS**

**Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>**

**.020 Replica**

Mark Rzadca	62	66	78	206
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**E-20**

Mark Rzadca	90	90	90	270
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Jim DeTar	90	50	64	204
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Dave Pishnery	90			90
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**A/B Classic Gas**

Joe Mollendorf	120	120	110	350
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Jim Hack Sr.	86	120	120	326
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**A Nostalgia Gas**

Roy Smith	120	120	120	360
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Simon Blake	120	120	90	330
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**Classic Towline**

Jim Moseley	96			96
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**Nostalgia Rubber/Wakefield**

Dave Pishnery	65	55	120	236
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**1/2A Old Favourites**

Jim Hack Sr	120	96	120	336
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**FAC Jet Catapult Scale**

Mark Rzadca, HE 179				96
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Mark Rzadca, He 176				72
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Jim DeTar, F-89 Scorpion				39
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**Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Cloud Tramp**

Lynn Miller 64 35 46 46

**HL Glider**Lynn Miller 26 22 36 28  
90**OT Rubber Stick**

Dave Pishnery 80 101 119 300

Mark Rzadca 120 120

Robert Blair 65 65

**B Nostalgia Gas**Roy Smith 120 120 120 120  
480Simon Blake 120 120 120 93  
453

Joe Mollendorf 120 117 120 357

Jim Hack Sr 117 120 237

**1/2A Classic Gas**

Joe Mollendorf 120 120 120 360

Jim Hack Sr 40 56 120 216

**C/D Classic Gas**

Simon Blake 120 120 120 360

Jim Hack Sr 120 120 120 360

(Decided by coin toss as the time had run out.)

**Diesel Duration**

Roy Smith 120 120 120 360

**FAC 2Bit + 1 OT Rubber**

Jim DeTar, King Harry 273

Mark Rzadca, Flying Aces Moth 267

Bob Clemens, Ranger 69

**FAC Half Wakefield**

Jim DeTar, Canadian Winner 189

Lynn Miller, Half Korda 60

**FAC WWII Mass Launch**Mark Rzadca, Zero 1<sup>st</sup>Jim DeTar, Ki-61 2<sup>nd</sup>Robert Blair, He 100 3<sup>rd</sup>**Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>****1/2A-D Gas**Roy Smith 120 120 120 57  
417Joe Mollendorf 120 120 120 O/R  
360**P-30**

Jim DeTar 108 120 100 328

Dave Pishnery 90 107 120 317

Jim Moseley 62 120 120 302

Mark Rzadca 120 79 92 291

Robert Blair 57 75 104 236

**36" Bungee Launch Glider**

Dave Pishnery 36 53 20 109

**Catapult Glider**Joe Mollendorf 28 42 46 42  
41 70 158**OT Gas**

Simon Blake 59 43 84 186

**1/2A Nostalgia Gas**

Simon Blake 79 120 120 319

**C Nostalgia Gas**

Simon Blake	120	120	120	74
				434

**OT Rubber Fuselage**

Jim Moseley	120	89	69	278
Robert Blair	35	63	72	170
Campbell Blair	30	35	50	115

**FAC Golden Age Scale**

Jim DeTar, Collier Ambassador	244
Bob Clemens, Porterfield	50
Mark Rządca, Cessna C-34	48

**FAC Embryo Endurance**

Jim DeTar, Debut	298
Dave Pishnery, Embryonic Elf	265

**FAC OT Rubber Fuselage**

Mark Whalen, King Harry	339
Mark Rządca, Miss Canada	271

All of the fliers at this event who flew in non-FAC events qualify to compete for the Can-Am

Trophy, which will be decided upon when the results from the GGG are added. The scores at present are:-

Dave Pishnery	10
Simon Blake	9
Roy Smith	9
Joe Mollendorf	8
Mark Rządca	8
Jim DeTar	7
Jim Moseley	7
Jim Hack Sr	5
Robert Blair	4
Campbell Blair	1
Lynn Miller	1

It is fairly remarkable that two of the most prolific FAC fliers are quite high in these standings, and the current leader also flies some FAC events. Congratulations guys, you are obviously very busy all-rounders.

Roy Smith, MAAC# 7759