

Great Grape Gathering 2015 – Report

by
Roy E. Smith

Well the 45th edition of the Great Grape Gathering has come and gone. It was held at the Geneseo, NY, airfield of the National Warplane Museum on September 11th, 12th, and 13th. Mother Nature was unkind to us again this year, for two of the three days.

Friday was a nearly picture-perfect day for the flying of unpowered small aircraft. The temperature was warm, the skies clear, and the winds were light. Headquarters was set up in the centre of the field because it has been our experience that, in the Genesee valley, when winds are light they are almost always extremely variable. By locating in the centre there was room to make a 2-minute max whichever direction the drift decided to take.



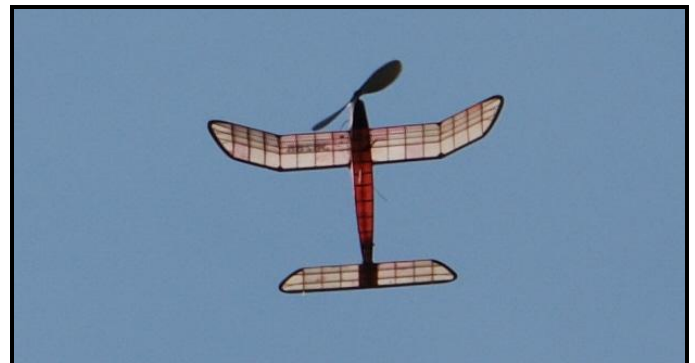
Paul Nelson readies his Pylonair.
Photo: Jim Mayes

With such favourable conditions on Friday a great deal of flying took place. Almost all events

scheduled for that day were flown. 23 fliers completed 164 official flights in 11 events.



Jim Moseley winds, Richard Barlow helps.
Photo: Jim Mayes



Jim's Senator in flight. Photo: Jim Mayes

Probably the most remarkable flight of the day was made by Bob Morris – a single flight of 511 seconds with a Cloud Tramp (yes – 8 minutes and 31 seconds!). Considering the diminutive size of a Cloud Tramp, and its sheet balsa construction, with a free-wheeling prop, and wheels, this feat demonstrates how good the air was, and how negligible the drift – as well (of course) as showing how skilful Bob is at building and flying.

Most unfortunately for Bob, the rule in Cloud Tramp is that the highest and the lowest score out of 5 flights are discarded, so this epic score didn't contribute to his total. He still did very well in the placings for the event. By the way, if anyone reading this hasn't had a chance to read Bob's technical treatise on how to calculate the maximum turns for a rubber motor – it is well worth the read. Look in the November-December 2014 issue of the NFFS Digest pp26-28. Bob also has an addendum to the article describing a technique of constant energy winding.



Has anyone got it? A group attempts to keep track of a flight that has headed into the sun.
Photo: Jim Mayes



Bob Morris kneels at the feet of the Guru – Dave Acton, during Friday's action. Photo: Miriam Morris

The model on the ground in the picture above is Dave Acton's Lola, designed by Vic Smeed and powered by the new .020 Lola Diesel from Pal Model Products. I imagine that it is no coincidence that Dave picked that design for that engine. A low wing monoplane with only moderate dihedral, the model flew well – a testament to Dave's trimming capabilities. Unfortunately, it wasn't entered in either the Vic Smeed event or the diesel duration event.



Rod and Ruth Mogle display the quilt made for them by their daughter.
Photo: Mark Rzacca

On Friday evening a group of about twenty enjoyed an informal 'Fish Fry' dinner at Leisures restaurant in Lakeville. Over the years this has

become a fixture at the GGG. The staff there treated us well and the camaraderie added to what had been a very good day. Much of the conversation turned around flying in our glory days, of course, and the old adage ‘the older I get, the better I used to be’ was very much in evidence. I can only get away with that when out of the earshot of Jim Moseley – he has been witness to my lack of abilities since I first met him, 65 yrs ago, so I have to be careful about my claims. Several fliers who couldn’t make it to Geneseo for the flying on Friday, because of other commitments, were able to join us for the dinner that evening in anticipation of joining in the fun the following day.

The fun, however, wasn’t to be. Saturday morning dawned as forecast, with steady rain falling. Fliers convened at the field at 9:00 am but it was clear that flying would not be possible. By mid-morning it was accepted that the forecast was likely to be borne out and the rain would continue unabated all day. Flying was cancelled and all of Saturday’s events were rolled over into Sunday with the exception that two-day events in which participants had already flown on Friday were declared closed – any that had not been flown were rolled over.

Saturday evening saw 35 sit down for a Chicken Barbecue in Swanson Hall on the airfield. The meal was once again organised by Heather Mollendorf and was a great success, as always. The Crest Hill Motel in Avon provided magnums of red and white wine for the delectation of all, which was much appreciated – especially by those who hadn’t yet won a bottle of their own.

In addition to the dessert goodies provided by Heather, a celebration cake was provided by Richard and Pat Barlow to mark Carol Crawmer’s birthday (her 29th I believe) and also the 49th Anniversary of Jim and Cindy DeTar’s first date.

Two door prizes were won – insulated travel mugs went to Dave Pishnery and Paul Nelson.



Jack and Sue Barker select their repast while Heather Mollendorf checks things out. Photo: Mark Rzacca

Sunday morning saw a rather discouraged group of fliers congregate at the field to watch the rain continue falling. It was decided to ‘wait and see’ before calling a cancellation. This turned out to be the right decision because by 11:00 am the rain had reduced to scattered light showers and flying could begin. The skies remained heavily overcast and the wind was strong but, amazingly, there was strong thermal activity around. We set up at the furthest point West on the field that we could get and 2-minute flights were ending up in the corn or the soybeans that adjoin the Eastern edge – a distance of about 8-900 yds. This corresponds to an average ground speed of around 15 mph. A very large number of events remained to be flown,

but there was only 5 hours left in the day, and a much-reduced contingent of fliers left to compete in them. 14 fliers, out of the total of 28 who signed up, competed in 7 events and made a total of 33 official flights.

As a result of missing 1-1/2 days of a 3 day contest only about half of the scheduled events were flown. This is disappointing for the organisers and the fliers alike, of course, but that is the nature of the hobby/sport that we engage in.

As usual at the GGG, award plaques were presented, along with stickers to define which events and which placing was being recognised, as well as bottles of wine and some other special prizes. Texas Timers donated a Micro Max timer for first place in 1/2A Classic Gas, Richard and Pat Barlow donated coffee mugs carrying appropriate graphics for first place in Cloud Tramp and Vic Smeed Design. These are bound to become valuable collector's items as they are unique to the GGG and aficionados of Charles Grant or Vic Smeed will obviously covet them. BMJR products provided a Fortastrop kit and some discount certificates for their products, as prizes for the 1/2A Old Favourites event.



Roy Smith and Jim Moseley prepare to present plaques, bottles of wine and other goodies to winners. The “wellies” attest to the field conditions. Photo: Miriam Morris



Mark Rzdca and Jim DeTar (Mark's straight man) conduct the monologue prior to handing out FAC prizes. Photo: Miriam Morris

The awards for Friday's non-FAC events were handed out on Saturday morning in the Swanson Hall at the museum – there being no flying taking place. The prizes for all of the FAC events and the remainder of the non-FAC events were distributed after the conclusion of flying on Sunday.

The final act before closing this year's events was to present the Trophies. This year the Don Reid Trophy (for highest placing Gollywock) wasn't awarded – no-one flew a Gollywock. The resurrected Dave Andrew Trophy wasn't contested for because of the lack of time to organise and hold the single unlimited flight event.



The John Magee Trophy

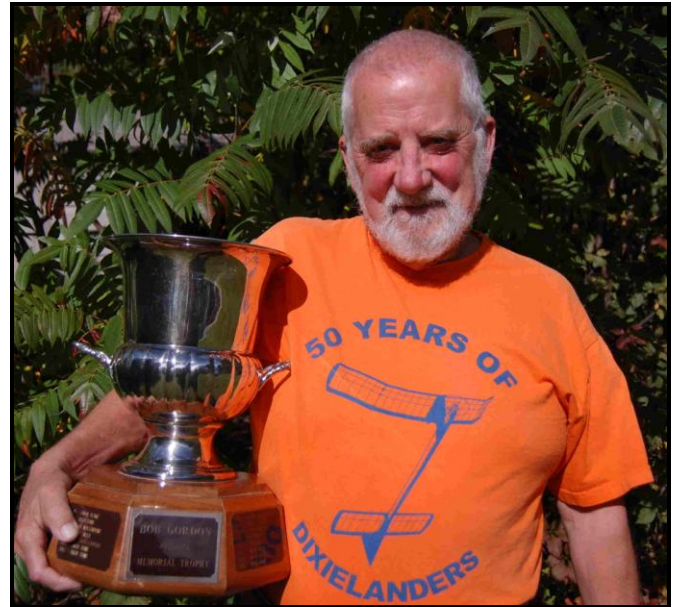
Photo: Roy Smith

The John Magee Memorial Trophy was presented to Jim DeTar – the winner of the WWII Mass Launch event. The trophy consists of a beautifully crafted Spitfire atop a wooden plinth. In addition to the trophy, a framed print, comprised of a picture of a spitfire in flight, as well as a picture of John Magee and the text of his well-loved sonnet “High Flight”, was presented as the prize for that event. Unfortunately, we don’t have a picture of Jim with the trophy and prize.

The Jack McGillivray Achievement Award, for highest points scored in FAC events, went to Mark Rzacca. Those with sharp eyes might notice that the aircraft atop the trophy is different from last year. There was a mishap involving the grandchild of last year’s winner (well, that’s his story anyway – sounds like a variation on the ‘dog ate my homework’ gambit to me!) so he had the trophy repaired and the ‘topper’ replaced. The replacement is actually more appropriate to FAC events than the original.



Mark Rzacca enjoys some of his winnings while displaying the Jack McGillivray Achievement Award



**Roy Smith holds the Bob Gordon Memorial Trophy
Photo: Sally Smith**

Jim Moseley won the Jim Anderson Memorial Trophy, for highest aggregate score in rubber (non-FAC) events.

The Bob Gordon Trophy, for highest aggregate score in power events, was won by Roy Smith.

Finally, the Grand Champion for the NWM Series, for the second year in a row, is Jim Moseley.



NWM Series Grand Champion Jim Moseley with the Jim Anderson Trophy and the MAAC Can-Am Free Flight Trophy. Photo: Richard Barlow

The Grand Champion is awarded the MAAC Can-Am Free Flight Trophy, which goes to the flier with the highest number of points from both of the NWM Series sanctioned events, flying at least two of the three categories (power, rubber, and glider). Jim flew six events at the ESFFC, five events at the GGG, and flew in all three categories, for a well-deserved win – the true all-rounder, and great competitor, that we all know Jim to be.

One matter of concern for the organisers is that we had hoped that the introduction of the Grand Champion award would encourage more people to attend and compete in both the ESFFC (in August) and the GGG. You have to fly in both to be eligible. Because of low attendance at the ESFFC (something we are still grappling with) only 10 fliers were forwarded from that contest to be eligible for the Championship and of those, only seven put in flights at the GGG to confirm that eligibility. None of this takes anything away from Jim's achievement in winning the championship – it was a great record of flying – but I think he

would feel even better about it if there were more people 'in the chase'.

We still haven't determined why the ESFFC attendance is dwindling – it is a great meet, has almost the same events as the GGG, at the same venue, and is held in August, around four weeks before the GGG. If anyone has any suggestions as to how attendance can be increased at the ESFFC and/or the GGG please contact Brad Bane, Mark Rzdaca, Jim DeTar, Jim Moseley, or me.

Attendance at the GGG was down from previous years, but I am aware of unusual conditions that kept six of our 'regulars' away – which hopefully won't be repeated in future years. I am also aware of a number of others who had conflicts this year, that I hope won't keep them from future participation. Finally, I believe that the dismal weather, which had been predicted, kept others away. All of those factors considered, I think that this year's attendance was good.

It remains for me to thank all of the people who helped to put on this year's GGG, it was a true hands-across-the-border effort. Lyle Whitford was our CD and handled all of the paperwork with the AMA. Heather Mollendorf organised the Saturday barbecue. Mark Rzdaca and Jim DeTar ran all of the FAC events. Jim Moseley acted as Event Director for the non-FAC events. My best friend, Sally Smith, did stalwart service at the registration desk and scoreboard. Richard and Pat Barlow assisted in myriads of ways – at the scoreboard, the barbecue, and the raffle. Without the contributions that you all make, the contest could not take place.

I would like to mention one very special act of selflessness. On Saturday morning the headquarters shelter, which had been lowered as far as possible on Friday, to protect it from the anticipated rainstorm, was filling up with water. On his own initiative, upon seeing this situation, Mark Rzdaca walked out to the middle of the field and released the attachments that were allowing

the water to collect in the cover, thereby preventing the shelter from becoming severely damaged by the weight of the liquid sunshine that was accumulating. He then walked back – getting completely soaked in the process. It seems that FAC fliers, unlike their models, are quite waterproof. My heartfelt thanks to Mark for this act of great kindness.

Despite the less than clement weather which we all had to suffer through this year I believe that most, if not all, had a good time and I hope that we will see you all again next year, together with many

more. The dates are September 9-11 and the location is unchanged. If anyone has any influence with the weather gods, please use it to bring us three days of warm, calm, weather. On that subject – in recent years we have had a number of occasions when one day was lost, or partially lost, to inclement weather (wind or rain) but I can't recall an occasion when we have lost so much flying time over the course of the three days. We have sometimes enjoyed three consecutive days of gorgeous flying conditions. Let's hope that we will return to those halcyon days next year.

Results

| | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1/2A Nostalgia Gas | | Dave Pishnery | 215 | Dave Pishnery | 225 |
| Roy Smith | 332 | Don Myers | 196 | Dom Algieri | 189 |
| Paul Nelson | 83 | Bob Morris | 94 | Bob Morris | 114 |
| | | Lyle Whitford | 88 | Bob Clemens | 61 |
| .020 Replica/1/4A Nostalgia Gas | | Jim Moseley | 83 | | |
| Mike Cook | 303 | Bob Clemens | 50 | FAC Dime Scale | |
| Paul Nelson | 277 | | | Mark Rzdca | 345 |
| Jack Barker | 137 | | | Jim DeTar | 240 |
| | | Senator | | Dave Acton | 208 |
| | | Richard Barlow | 310 | Mark Houck | 167 |
| | | Ed Smith | 307 | John Houck | 146 |
| P-30 | | Sam Burke | 120 | Vic Nippert | 131 |
| Ed Smith | 356 | Jim Moseley | 120 | | |
| Jim Moseley | 327 | 36" Bungee Launched Glider | | FAC WWII Mass Launch | |
| Jim Mayes | 320 | Jim Moseley | 171 | John Magee Memorial Trophy | |
| Dom Algieri | 303 | Vic Nippert | 150 | Jim DeTar | 1 |
| Dave Acton | 276 | Roy Smith | 115 | Jerry Crawmer | 2 |
| Lyle Whitford | 258 | Dave Pishnery | 100 | Mark Rzdca | 3 |
| Mark Houck | 156 | | | John Houck | 4 |
| Lynn Miller | 149 | FAC No-Cal Scale | | Mark Houck | 5 |
| Jim DeTar | 120 | John Houck | 326 | Vic Nippert | 6 |
| | | Mark Rzdca | 318 | | |
| Cloud Tramp | | Mark Houck | 234 | Vic Smeed Design | |
| Vic Nippert | 252 | Vic Nippert | 220 | Campbell Blair | 68 |
| Richard Barlow | 217 | Jerry Crawmer | 70 | | |
| Bob Morris | 178 | FAC Embryo Endurance | | 1/2A Classic Gas | |
| Dave Pishnery | 158 | Mark Houck | 341 | Joe Mollendorf | 360 |
| Jim Moseley | 147 | Jerry Crawmer | 321 | Roy Smith | 42 |
| Sam Burke | 0 | Mark Rzdca | 303 | | |
| Mark Rzdca | 0 | John Houck | 279 | | |
| HL/CL Glider Combined | | | | | |
| Vic Nippert | 253 | | | | |

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| E36 Electric | |
| Paul Nelson | 178 |
| Mark Rzdaca | 94 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| SAM Small Rubber Stick | |
| Jim Moseley | 315 |

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| A Nostalgia Gas | |
| Roy Smith | 360 |
| Jim Smith | 71 |

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| FAC 2 Bit + 1 | |
| Mark Rzdaca | 312 |
| Bob Morris | 188 |
| Jim DeTar | 120 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| FAC Simplified Scale | |
| Jim DeTar | 162 |
| Jack Barker | 108 |
| Jerry Crawmer | 33 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Jack McGillivray Achievement Award | |
| Mark Rzdaca | 18 |
| Mark Houck | 14 |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Jim DeTar | 13 |
| Jerry Crawmer | 10 |
| John Houck | 9 |
| Bob Morris | 3 |
| Dave Acton | 3 |
| Jack Barker | 2 |
| Vic Nippert | 2 |
| Dave Pishnery | 1 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Jim Anderson Memorial Trophy | |
| Jim Moseley | 909 |
| Ed Smith | 663 |
| Richard Barlow | 527 |
| Jim Mayes | 320 |
| Dom Algieri | 303 |
| Dave Acton | 276 |
| Lyle Whitford | 258 |
| Vic Nippert | 252 |
| Bob Morris | 178 |
| Mark Houck | 156 |
| Dave Pishnery | 155 |
| Lynn Miller | 149 |
| Bob Clemens | 140 |
| Sam Burke | 120 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Jim DeTar | 120 |
| Bob Gordon Memorial Trophy | |
| Roy Smith | 734 |
| Paul Nelson | 488 |
| Joe Mollendorf | 360 |
| Mike Cook | 308 |
| Jack Barker | 137 |
| Mark Rzdaca | 94 |
| Jim Smith | 71 |
| Campbell Blair | 68 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| NWM Grand Champion The MAAC Can-Am Free Flight Trophy | |
| Jim Moseley | 21 |
| Roy Smith | 16 |
| Dave Pishnery | 11 |
| Mark Rzdaca | 6 |
| Bob Clemens | 6-D |
| Jack Barker | 4 |
| Joe Mollendorf | 4-D |

D – disqualified – only one category flown



The Dave Andrew Trophy



Bob Morris retrieves from the corn. (He must have found some pigmy corn, most of it was over 8ft – or maybe he stands on the shoulders of giants!)



Bring on the Barbecue – Jim Smith and Don & Bonnie Myers are ready!



Paul Nelson receives a place sticker – Roy and Jim endeavour to find the right bottle of wine!



Dave Acton launches his Lola.



Roy Smith watches his 1/2A Nostalgia Dixielander climb.



Tom Juell prepares his model.



Mark Rzdca kibitzes with Mike Cook and Dom Algieri.