

# NSM NEWS

SPRING  
2019

Official Newsletter of the National Soaring Museum

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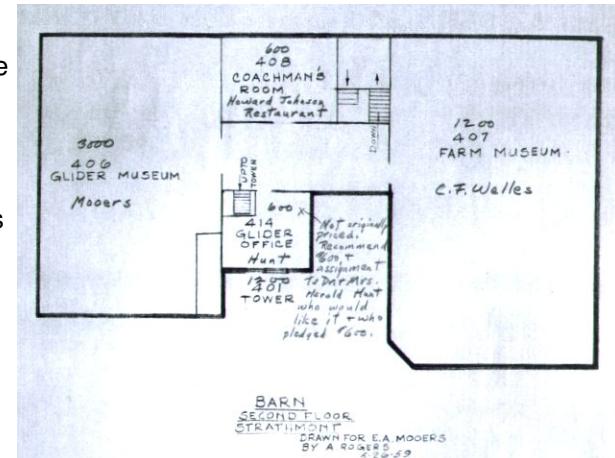
**T. Curran Sekella**  
Archivist

## The National Soaring Museum Turns 50

- Stu Schweizer

The journey leading to the establishment of the National Soaring Museum was interesting, challenging, and rewarding, as has been its progress over the fifty years since its founding. The NSM and those in the American soaring community are indebted to the visionaries who, through their hard work, dedication and financial support, have allowed the NSM to become the fine institution that it is today.

Serious thought about a museum dedicated to the history of soaring in America began to percolate after World War II. In 1952, Sherman Voorhees, an Elmira resident and one of the SSA's founders, proposed that a soaring museum be established at Harris Hill because of the important role that the Elmira area had played in the growth of the American soaring movement. This idea moved on and off the "radar screen" until 1958. In that year, the local soaring club, the Elmira Area Soaring Corp (EASC), elected to take advantage of space that had been offered in Elmira's Strathmont Estate which was being converted into a local history museum. Under the leadership of its president, Howard Burr, EASC members created a soaring history exhibit in the estate's carriage house which opened in the summer of 1959. The collection included the historic, restored Arnot-Chanute-Herring glider and the Fred Loomis photographs of early national soaring contests held at Harris Hill. Sadly, the history museum quickly ran into financial difficulties and was forced to close after being open for only a short time. As a result, the EASC had no place to exhibit the soaring artifacts and displays it had worked so hard to assemble.



The next major evolutionary step toward a national soaring museum occurred in 1968. The EASC, which had been renamed the Harris Hill Soaring Corp (HHSC), elected to take advantage of space offered by Chemung County in Harris Hill's Administration Building to house a soaring museum. Once again HHSC volunteers rose to the challenge and created the exhibits and oversaw museum operations.



Concurrent with these activities, HHSC leaders drafted a proposal to the SSA's Board for the creation of the SSA's National Soaring Museum. After being discussed at several prior SSA Board meetings, Paul A. Schweizer presented the HHSC's proposal to the SSA Board at its summer meeting in 1969. The HHSC's proposal to locate the SSA's National Soaring Museum, library, and archives at Harris Hill had the strong support of New York State, Chemung County, and other local organizations. Under the leadership of SSA president, Bernald S. Smith, a resolution accepting the proposal was unanimously agreed to by the SSA Board on July 4, 1969. The NSM opened its doors to the public on July 22, 1969.

### THE EARLY YEARS:

What had been the HHSC's museum of soaring history, housed in the cramped and aging Administration Building, became the NSM. To obtain badly needed space, HHSC leaders obtained Chemung County's approval to locate some NSM exhibits in the Merrill House, a large county-owned building about 1/2 mile away from Harris Hill's airfield. Although the NSM had been operating on a shoestring budget, the admission fee that was initiated, the additional revenue it was collecting from the film library rentals, and the strong volunteer support enabled it to operate in the black.

The NSM's official dedication was held on May 13, 1972, coinciding with the SSA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On that date, the HHSC formally transferred the assets of its museum to the NSM and the NSM's Board was installed with Paul A. Schweizer as its first president. Of the Board's 18 members, 9 were at-large members and three members each were appointed by the SSA, the HHSC, and Chemung County. The relationship with these three organizations continues today, serving as the foundation for the NSM's success.

Without a fulltime staff, there were serious limitations on how fast the NSM could progress. A significant donation from Joseph Lincoln in 1972 provided the seed money so that its first executive director, Liam English, could be hired. This action permitted more effort to be directed at improving exhibits, strategic planning, and fundraising.

Using the Administration Building and the nearby Merrill House for exhibits turned out to be totally inadequate for the NSM's long term needs. It became apparent that a new, larger building was needed. As a result, architect and soaring pilot, Eliot Noyes, was engaged to design the original building. Fundraising became a major priority during the mid-1970s. Unfortunately, the price tag for the building as designed by Noyes proved to be out of reach for the fledgling museum.

### OUT OF THE ASHES:

On a cold, bleak winter morning in 1977, the 1930s wooden structure administration building, housing many of the NSM's exhibits and artifacts, burned to the ground. Exhibits destroyed included the Arnot-Chanute-Herring glider and the "Diamond C" Hall. The need for a permanent home on Harris Hill for the NSM, which had been a pressing priority, had suddenly become an absolute necessity.

Fundraising efforts were ramped up immediately. Further discussions with Elliot Noyes led to the design of a building of significantly lower cost to be located on the site formerly occupied by the Administration Building. Through the efforts of NSM trustee, Edward A. Mooers, Chemung County generously pledged to turn over to the NSM the insurance proceeds it received from the loss of the Administration Building. This provided the critical seed money needed to start the project. In addition, at the NSM's winter Board meeting in 1977, NSM directors collectively pledged a total equivalent to more than 20% of the building's cost and voted to commence construction once 70% of the building's cost had been raised. As a result of aggressive fundraising, including a significant grant from the Kresge Foundation, construction of the 16,000 sq. ft. facility began in August 1977. The building project moved forward rapidly, with the dedication taking place on September 9, 1978. The NSM now had a permanent home.



## THE PAST 50 YEARS:

**Facilities:** Since dedicating the new facility, the NSM has undergone two expansions. Today, floor area totals 39,000 sq. ft. Usage of this area is designated as follows: exhibits - 40%; storage and archives (temperature and humidity controlled) - 15%; restoration shop - 8%; large meeting room - 8%; and offices, gift shop, etc.- 29%. The expansions were made possible through generous donations (large and small) from members of the US soaring community.

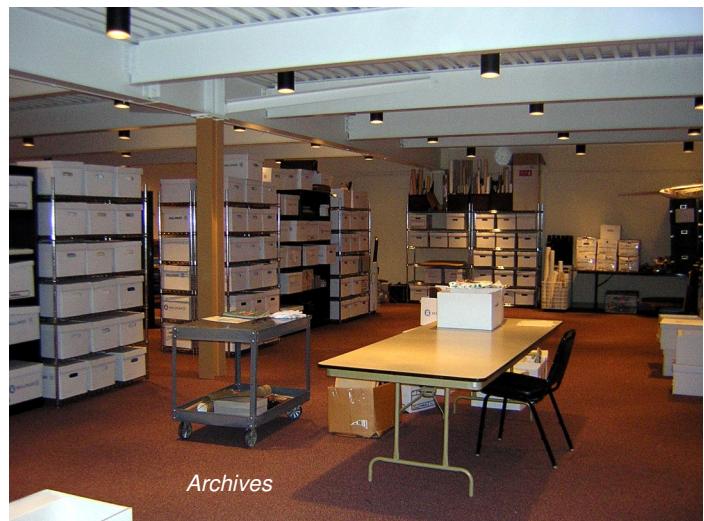
**Collection:** Included in the historical items owned by the NSM are over 100 sailplanes and gliders, 32 of which are currently on display. The NSM also houses the Soaring Hall of Fame, the SSA's collection of historic films and photos documenting early national contests, and the archives of the SSA - containing a treasure trove of information relating to the history of soaring in America, the personalities responsible for making it the outstanding sport that it is, and thousands of artifacts related to soaring contributed by many individuals.

**Events:** Over the years the NSM has staged numerous events, both large and small, several of which are discussed below. To promote soaring and show off the history of soaring, the NSM sponsored Harris Hill's first International Vintage Sailplane Meet (IVSM) in 1995. Subsequently, five more IVSMs have been held at Harris Hill under the auspices of the NSM, Vintage Sailplane Association and Harris Hill Soaring Corporation. The next IVSM will take place from July 4-11, 2020. These extraordinary events bring together soaring enthusiasts and soaring history buffs from many parts of the US and a number of foreign countries. As the location of the SSA's Soaring Hall of Fame, the NSM stages the induction ceremonies and banquets honoring inductees. Each year a luncheon is hosted to express appreciation to Chemung County for its support of the NSM and the sport of soaring at Elmira. On a weekend each September, the very popular Community Soaring Day is celebrated, during which individuals are encouraged to visit Harris Hill and take advantage of free admission to the NSM. On October 5, 2019 the NSM will hold an evening banquet to commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Come to visit us during 2019 and help us celebrate the National Soaring Museum's first 50 years!



Main Exhibit Gallery



Archives



# FLYING AT HARRIS HILL - Guerry Howard

*Editor's note: We encourage visiting pilots to bring their glider and experience flying from Harris Hill.*

I remember wanting to fly since I was a kid. My first power flying lessons were in 1975. I loved it. We moved to Elmira in 1979. In 1980, I watched my first glider contest launch from Harris Hill as a spectator. Wow, I was hooked! I had to get my sailplane rating. The rest is history. A passenger, who owned an art shop in NYC, once said that looking down was "like looking at a patch work quilt, just beautiful." That really sums up flying around Harris Hill.

I have been flying as a commercial glider pilot and tow pilot at the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation (HHSC) since 1981. Yes, Harris Hill can be intimidating to some who have never flown here before, but with a few basic precautions, Harris Hill is both safe and a fun site to enjoy.

All visiting pilots must pass a check flight with a CFIG from Harris Hill before you fly solo. The CFIG will cover the unique aspects of flying off Harris Hill. Over the years, I have had a few experiences that illustrate some of the characteristics that pertain to flying off Harris Hill.

You need to keep the location of the field in mind, so you always know how to get back. A few years ago I gave a tow to an IVSM pilot who did not release until 4,000 feet AGL. I expected him to release at 2,000 feet, but for some reason he did not; so I gave him a nice steady tow, until he would release. At about 3,000 feet he not only had not released, but also was apparently trying to break the rope. That continued for another 1,000 feet, but I was reluctant to cut the rope; he fortunately did release at 4,000 agl. When he landed I asked if he had a problem with his release. "*No, I got lost. You kept towing me towards Elmira and Harris Hill was behind me. I did not want to release until I could see the field. I kept diving to get slack in the rope, so I could look and find the field.*" A slow turn back toward the field would have been a smarter move on my part, but the thought of his being lost did not even cross my mind.

HHSC's auxiliary field is in the valley just below Harris Hill. It can be used to practice off-field landings or as a place to land if you get too low to safely land back at Harris Hill. My son was flying HHSC's 1-34 during an IVSM. It was a nice day, with lots of sailplanes in the air. Then it began to rain gliders on the field. The lift was gone. No problem with a 1-34, just pick an open spot on the field and set it down. By the time he was set up to land, there were no good open spaces left. No problem, he put out the dive brakes and landed in the auxiliary field. When I asked him how that went, he said, "*Great. It was like the United Nations. Other pilots who had also landed there were so friendly. A lot of fun.*"

For many years the auxiliary field was called the "Emergency Field." But a couple years ago during a contest, one of the pilots contacted Elmira Tower and told them that he was going into the emergency field. A routine procedure, so he thought. However the word "emergency" triggered a 911 call from the tower. The fire department, state police and ambulance all responded to an "airplane crash." After that episode, we now always refer to it as our "Auxiliary Field."

Being aware of landing conditions in a south wind is especially important. South wind landing can be either one of the easiest or more precarious landings at Harris Hill. Just don't get out over the valley on a south wind day. There is a waterfall of sink into the Chemung Valley with a south wind. One day I was flying passengers, and for most of the day there was no problem getting over into the valley. On the last flight we apparently had a stronger gust, with a stronger headwind and more sink. On turning final, I was not sure that I had the altitude to make it back to the field. I continued my turn to final for another 180 degrees. I landed down in our auxiliary field, again without a problem. The only thing bruised was my ego. Fortunately for me the passenger loved the added adventure.



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Harris Hill is within the control zone of the Elmira Corning Regional Airport (KELM). We have a letter of agreement that allows us to fly, without radio contact with the tower, within the control zone. There is no problem as long as you keep the flight boundaries in mind. The controllers in the tower are accustomed to sailplanes flying in the area and they are glad to help in the unlikely case that you do need to contact them.

During a 1-26 contest, I flew cross-country in the Harris Hill owned 1-26. I was north of KELM on my way back from Watkins Glen. The tower had cleared me to proceed to Harris Hill. There was a fairly light south wind, and I probably had plenty of altitude to make it, but a thermal right over the radar tower was too tempting not to take. I was not used to flying cross-country without a flight computer, especially in a 1-26. Fate being what it is, however, I had to call the tower back, to let them know that I had stopped to climb in a thermal. They said that is fine. I called back again and told them I was in their downwind. With a smile in his voice, the controller on duty simply said *"Not a problem. We have you. If anyone comes in, we will just vector them around you."* A warm feeling on my part that I still remember.

Keeping in mind a few basics for flying off Harris Hill, which will be reviewed before flying, will make your visit to Harris Hill a fun and safe adventure.



## More HHSC Flight Center Progress

With the weather getting warmer, work progresses a little more comfortably! Lots of hard work by HHSC members!



# Harris Hill Soaring Corporation

## Flight Center Capital Campaign Pledge Form



### Donor Information

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

### Gift Pledge Information

I (we) pledge a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation Capital Campaign.  
Bronze \$100-\$999 Silver \$1,000-\$4,999 Gold \$5,000-\$9,999 Diamond \$10,000 or more

I (we) wish to pay this donation  now  monthly  annually over \_\_\_\_\_ years ( maximum 5 years)

Amount enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ Remainder pledged \$\_\_\_\_\_

I (we) plan to make my contribution by:  check  credit card  other  
Please contact us for securities transfer instructions

Please charge my  Visa  Master Card

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit card payments will be automatically charged per your billing preference above. Make checks payable to Harris Hill Soaring Corporation.

My gift will be matched by \_\_\_\_\_ Company/Foundation/Family.

form enclosed  form will be forwarded

### Acknowledgement and Recognition

Your Name(s) as you wish it (them) listed \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) wish to have our gift remain anonymous.

Donor Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*HHSC is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. According to current IRS regulations, donations qualify as tax-deductible charitable contributions.*



**Harris Hill Soaring Corporation P. O. Box 544 Horseheads, NY 14845**

Harris Hill will be hosting the Region 3 Soaring Contest July 13-20. Glider pilots from across our region will compete daily, weather permitting. Come and watch them launch from the runway (usually 12-1PM) and again as they return to land (anywhere between 3-4PM). Ride tickets will be sold on a limited basis during the contest. Please call ahead if you are planning a ride on these days because we may not be able to accommodate you. Flight Center office: 607-734-0641

# United States Soaring Hall of Fame

## Call for Nominations

Nominations for election to the United States Soaring Hall of Fame are currently being accepted.

The deadline for the current year consideration is June 30, 2019

Any member of the Soaring Society of America may submit an individual's name for consideration as a Hall of Fame candidate. Each nomination must be accompanied by a detailed statement providing information on the achievements or contributions of the nominee, justifying consideration for election to the Hall of Fame.

Please send nominating letters and support material to:

Trafford L. Doherty, Director  
National Soaring Museum  
51 Soaring Hill Dr.  
Elmira, NY 14903-9204

Questions? Please call (607) 734-3128 or e-mail:  
[director@soaringmuseum.org](mailto:director@soaringmuseum.org)



### NEW MEMBERS

#### Individual

Will Parker

#### Family

Ann Burt Hayes  
Patrice Maltais

#### HHSC

Ed Fenzl  
Karl Fenzl

### 50th ANNIVERSARY PATRONS

Stu & Lucy Schweizer

### MEMBER DONATION

Walter & Irene Cannon



## Sponsor A Glider

By sponsoring a glider for the annual donation of \$500, the National Soaring Museum will designate the glider of your choice as being sponsored by you for 2019 and will display near the glider a photo (if desired) of the sponsor and a brief biography. At the sponsor's option, the biography may include a reference to the particular glider and its importance to the sponsor.

A list of gliders currently in our collection can be found on our website. The Zanonia, Baby Albatross, Schweizer 1-26, Schweizer 1-35, Orlik, Schweizer 1-7, Pratt Read LNE-1 and the Gross Skyghost were all under sponsorship for 2018. Please call the museum 607-734-3128 with any questions

## SPONSOR A GLIDER 2019

My name(s) as it is to appear in printed matter : \_\_\_\_\_

GLIDER being sponsored: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

My check for \$500 is enclosed

Please bill my Credit Card# \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

(MasterCard-Visa-Discover-American Express) V-code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



### SPONSOR A GLIDER

Peter & Joyce Daniel  
Gross Family  
Doug Bauer

Stu & Lucy Schweizer  
Jan van den Blink  
Hank Nixon

Dianne Black-Nixon

Dr. Norbert Wethington  
Dr. Walter Cannon

# New “Canadians in Flight” stamp issue

*Honoring pilots, designers and aircraft that made aviation history  
An ace, a bush pilot, the Queen of the Hurricanes, an ultralight  
and the Avro Arrow all soar again on stamps*



Canada Post has issued five stamps that celebrate legendary examples of Canadian ingenuity, technological prowess and courage in civilian and military aviation. Developed with the support of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, the stamps commemorate:

- First World War pilot, **William George Barker, VC**, who remains the most decorated member of the military in the history of Canada and the British Empire. Barker flew more than 900 combat hours between 1916 and 1918 and is credited with 50 victories over enemy aircraft.
- Aviation pioneer and bush pilot **C.H. “Punch” Dickins**, who logged more than 1.6 million kilometers flying over northern Canada. The First World War flying ace and Distinguished Flying Cross recipient made the first reconnaissance flight across the unmapped Barren Lands of the Northwest Territories.
- **Elizabeth “Elsie” MacGill**, who was the first woman in Canada to receive a degree in electrical engineering, and first in the world to hold a master’s degree in aeronautical engineering and to work as a professional aircraft designer. She was dubbed “Queen of the Hurricanes” in a wartime comic book for her work in overseeing design refinements and production of Hawker Hurricanes. The fighter plane was a stalwart workhorse in the Second World War, and especially the Battle of Britain.
- The **Lazair**, a family of twin-engine, high-wing ultralight monoplanes designed by **Dale Kramer** of Port Colborne, Ontario. Manufactured as kits in Canada between 1979 and 1985, the Lazair is still considered one of the best light aircraft ever made. Kramer received the Roméo Vachon Award in 1983 for outstanding contribution to the development of aeronautics in Canada. NSM members Dale & Carmen Kramer attended the unveiling ceremony at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum.
- The twin-engine, supersonic **Avro CF-105 Arrow** interceptor, which could fly at more than twice the speed of sound. It is considered one of the greatest technological achievements in Canadian aviation history. Some of its innovative technologies are still in use today.

## NATIONAL SOARING MUSEUM OFFICERS

**W. Stuart Schweizer**  
President

**William Batesole**  
Vice-President

**Steven Leonard**  
Secretary

**Dr. William G. Howard**  
Treasurer

**Trafford L-M. Doherty**  
Executive Director

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Gary Adams

Robert Briggs

Dianne Black-Nixon

Dr. Walter Cannon

Kevin Christner

Warren Cramer

Michael Koerner

Mark Margeson

James McDaniel

Tom Sweet

David Welles

Phil Westcott

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

*In Memory of*  
**William Feldbaumer**  
by  
Diana Dade

*In Memory of*  
**Han & Nelson van den Blink**  
by  
Stan & Nikki Welles  
James & Jane Marshall

## In Memoriam

Norman Brush  
Mary Esther Hintz

## IVSM 2020 - Bill Batesole, IVSM 2020 Chairman

As we begin the spring soaring season, I am also looking beyond to the International Vintage Sailplane Meet in July 2020. I hope you are also thinking about the fun we will have gathering at the National Soaring Museum (NSM) and the Harris Hill gliderport. Also, 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the first IVSM, originally organized in 1995 by Jan Scott and Paul A. Schweizer. Prior IVSM gatherings have been highly successful, hosting a variety of international participants and sailplanes at our historic soaring location. We are poised for another successful gathering in 2020 with the support of the VSA, the NSM and the flight operations efforts of the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation (HHSC).

The just-completed poster for IVSM 2020 features the MU-1 Midwest Utility glider. Chad Wille's award-winning restoration of this 1943 glider will be on the hill for the meet and I look forward to seeing it and watching it fly. Ted Williams, a local artist famous for his aviation art, has created this fantastic poster. Ted recently presented his painting "Zani in the Clouds" which is on display next to the Zanonia sailplane at the NSM.

The NSM website will soon have a dedicated section for IVSM information, including a registration form and schedule of events. Information on hotels will be available this summer, as I plan to secure blocked rooms and hotel rates for IVSM participants.

So now is the time to think about sprucing up your sailplane, to hone your flying skills and to make plans to come to Elmira, 4-11 July, 2020. For more information feel free to contact me at [IVSM2020@aol.com](mailto:IVSM2020@aol.com), the NSM at [info@soaringmuseum.org](mailto:info@soaringmuseum.org) or visit the NSM website: [www.soaringmuseum.org](http://www.soaringmuseum.org).



### ON THE ROAD

Traff with Jeff Stringer and his very dignified French Poodle, Ciel.

Jeff was on his way, taking the Schreder HP8 to Kansas for restoration by Steve Leonard.



### MEMORIAL DONATIONS

*In Memory of Han van den Blink*

Jeff Streeter & Barbara Yunis  
Judith Merrill  
Richard & Linda Welles  
Robert & Barbara Russell  
David J. Sheen  
Jan & Clare van den Blink  
Gene & Deborah Ebbrecht

Roxanne & Philip Ragan  
Trudy & John Potter  
Les & Bonnie Schweizer  
Lake Wesauking Association  
Charles & Janna Lindsay  
Stan & Nikki Welles  
Steve & Janie Lindenbaum

J.A.H. & Kristina Cadwallader  
Lexa & J. Patterson Reuter  
Marjorie MacPherson  
Elizabeth Morgan Jones  
Richard Swan  
James & Jane Marshall  
Brown & Brown Empire State



51 Soaring Hill Drive  
Elmira, NY 14903  
[info@soaringmuseum.org](mailto:info@soaringmuseum.org)  
[www.soaringmuseum.org](http://www.soaringmuseum.org)  
607-734-3128

## SPRING 2019



### MUSEUM HOURS

**May 1 - Dec. 31**  
Open daily 10-5

**Jan. 2 - Apr. 30**  
Open daily 10-4

**Closed on Monday and  
Tuesday in January &  
February**

### **Museum closed on the following holidays:**

New Year's Day

Easter Sunday

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Now through September 2019

### **Icon Art of Joyce Merletti**

July 13-20, 2019

### **Region 3 Soaring Contest**

September 2019

### **Community Soaring Day**

October 5, 2019

### **NSM 50th Anniversary Gala**

July 4-11, 2020

### **International Vintage Sailplane Meet**

## NSM Membership Form

Please check the membership category of your choice and return to:

The National Soaring Museum, 51 Soaring Hill Dr., Elmira, NY 14903

Basic \$35     Family \$50     Bronze \$100     Silver \$250

Gold \$500     Diamond \$1000     Cayley Society \$2500

My name(s)

as it is to appear in printed matter : \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed

Please bill my Credit Card# \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

(MasterCard-Visa-Discover-American Express)

V-code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional tax-deductible donations will be used for museum improvements, including  
upgrading facilities, restoration shop and new exhibits.**

**My additional donation \_\_\_\_\_**

**Membership Benefits:** Unlimited free admission • Invitations to exhibit openings and receptions  
Guest passes • Subscription to the museum newsletter • Volunteer opportunities • Discounts on  
museum programs and events • Discounts in the museum shop