

NATSNEWS



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July 23



Hand Launch Thermal Soaring.
Jenni Alderman photo.

Hand-Launch Thermal

Text by Karen Strenk; photos by Jenni Alderman

A day of crazy weather led to great times on the flying field. What started out as a day full of clouds and wind, ended up as a day of sunshine and smiles.

There are 16 rounds that will be completed by the end of competition on Sunday. The first eight were completed Saturday. Many of the rounds were competitions in themselves. What this means is that there were timed flights in each round that the fliers would try to accomplish.

In Hand-Launch Thermal Soaring, the flier takes his or her Sailplane, spins around in a circle, and launches the plane, just like a discus.

Round six was the “poker” round, in which case the pilot calls a certain target of how long he or she can stay up in the air for and cannot call another time until he or she achieves the first time he or she has called.

These competitors fly year-round in any kind of weather conditions.

Whether it be windy, rainy, or really bad conditions, these pilots are out on the field Soaring.

They certainly didn't let the wind stop them on Saturday. Even though the wind was blowing around 14 mph, the competitors kept flying, even when the possibility of having to call the competition for a little bit seemed imminent and daunting.

Owen, who is the emcee for this event, spoke of the camaraderie that surrounds it. “The friendships that are made will last forever. It's amazing how I've been friends with someone on Facebook for years and have only just met them in real life.”

Owen also spoke of how this event is more of a spectator sport than most, but it is also one of the more athletic events. There is a lot of strength that goes into flying these airplanes and getting them up in the air.

If you're interested in Soaring, come and check out this event or any local event in your area. More excitement to come tomorrow. 🛩️





On Saturday, unless you were a very sound sleeper, you awakened around 4 in the morning with lightning and thunder. According to the weather guessers, we were afraid that we might not be able to start until early afternoon. Fortunately, it cleared off before the normal starting time. I am glad that, for once, the weather guessers goofed again!

We actually had several events going on at one time on Saturday. We had the main event, which was the top five flyoff to determine the 2017 National Champion and we had two other flyoffs. One was to determine the 2017 Junior Champion, which is kids 13 years old and younger. The other was the 2017 Senior Champion, which is youth ages 14 through 17. The “old geezers” class is 18 and older and that one is called Open.

In the Juniors event we actually had two competing and they were brothers. Steven and Joseph Daley competed in the Junior event, while Samantha Hines and Ben Mills competed in the Senior event. Unfortunately, Ben had a mishap on his first flight. His father did not know just how far his handle was out of adjustment and when he tried to pull out of the first maneuver, a wingover, he skidded his plane across the asphalt.

It hit in such a way that it knocked the propeller loose but not so loose that it came

all of the way off. The motor kept running, which put a lot of load on the motor. When this happened, the ESC overheated and actually caught on fire. His father did get to the plane quickly and disconnected the ESC fast enough so the rest of the aircraft did not catch fire and tossed it into the *very* wet grass to douse the flames. The rest of the plane managed to escape with just a few scrapes on the nose and rudder.

They, unfortunately, still had a little trouble with the second flight and Ben was not able to complete it either. However, with some help from Paul Walker, who took some time out from competing in the top five, they got Ben a full flight on his third attempt. Even though Paul was in the middle of one of the biggest contests of the year, he still managed to help out a Junior. This is at the heart of what model aviation should be about—helping everyone when needed.

When the dust settled for the Juniors and Seniors, it was Samantha Hines winning Senior and Steven Daley winning Junior. It was good to see a little competition this year. In the past, we have many times only had one contestant.

The top five format is a little different than the others throughout the week. This time, the pilots get three flights, with the best two flights getting added together to determine the winner. Things actually

started off a little early this time around.

We were afraid of two things. One was another round of rain coming in, which if the weather guessers were correct this could be an all-day event. The other was that the wind could also come up. So the decision was made to start a half-hour early. It was a good decision because although the rain never came, the wind was starting to pick up after we completed everything.

On the way to my parents’ house after the contest, I noticed it really picking up. So in this case, it really was a good decision because everyone had an equal opportunity to do his or her best and could not complain that he or she had bad weather and someone else got good weather.

When all of the dust settled, it was Chris Rudd in his first top-five appearance at number five, Paul Walker came in fourth position, Orestes Hernandez came in third, Derek Berry narrowly missed first coming in second, and our new repeating National Champion for 2017 is none other than David Fitzgerald!

Congratulations to everyone involved! And a job well done.

I want to again publicly thank all of the volunteers who donated their time, and in some cases money, so this event could run with such efficiency. Thank you! 🚁



Joseph Daley flies an official flight in Junior against his brother.



Samantha Hines during an official flight in the Senior event.



Ben Mills gets an assist from his dad, James.



Steven Daley flies during his Junior event.



David Fitzgerald had a linkage come loose just before an official flight. A quick drop of CA fixed it.



This is what sportsmanship is all about. Paul Walker takes time out from flying top five to help Ben Mills fix his son's plane so he can fly in the Senior Division.



Steven Daley receives his trophy for the Junior event.



Samantha Hines holds her trophy after winning the Senior event.



David Fitzgerald hoists one of the most coveted trophies in CL Aerobatics, the Walker Cup. And yes it got heavy after the short time he had to hold it while everyone got pictures taken.



Our 2017 Champions (L-R): Steven Daley, Junior; David Fitzgerald, Open; and Samantha Hines, Senior.



Our top 5 contestants (L-R): Chris Rudd, fifth; Orestes Hernandez, third; David Fitzgerald, first; Derek Berry, second; and Paul Walker, fourth.

And in a blink, this year's Indoor Nats was over, everyone was packed up, and the banner was taken down. (More on the banner later.)

Saturday started with a bit of light rain and rather cool, but ended hot and humid again. Inside of the hangar was again 74° F or so in the morning and 81° F or so in the afternoon. It was humid, but much more comfortable than last year.

In the morning, the great glider battle was still ongoing. I know it was difficult for those directly underneath to see just how close to the ceiling they were, so I tried to help by calling distances from the ceiling panel.

Jim Buxton threw one and I told him "4 feet." He remarked with a sheepish grin that he was tossing his son Ben's glider just to see if he could get it up as high as Ben. That just wasn't looking good. I watched Ben's aircraft hit the ceiling last year and he was doing the same this year. There is another "arm like Buxton's," just on another Buxton!

The turnout for this year's P-18 build event was lower than we would have liked, however, one positive is that we had nearly a one-to-one student/supervisor ratio. The models produced were very good and flew very well. Yours truly was just barely able to

eke out a "win," until I was disqualified for not being a Junior or Senior. Joking aside, the kids' times were, I believe, north of two minutes.

The LPP battle continued until late afternoon. If I understood Carol correctly, the final flight that was submitted broke a tie and cemented the 1-2-3 order. That is down to the wire!

Thanks have to go out to Bill Gowen for helping with the scoring this year, as well as our many volunteers processing models and helping with that load. Also thank you to those who helped set up the tables and chairs, then took them down this afternoon, and to Bud Layne for helping make all of this possible.

Now about that pesky lift. I was all packed up and ready to go. The last thing to do was pull down the AMA banner. I drove the lift over, went up and untied the banner, easy peasy. As I went to lower the basket, nothing happened. I decided to turn it off and on again. It works for computers, right? What could possibly go wrong? I tried to start the engine and got nothing.

Now I'm 20 feet up in the air thinking "worst lift ever!" After some help from my wife and daughter below, and a few times switching between base control and basket control, my controls finally worked and I was able to get down. 🚁



Bill Silin releases his Electric Duration model.



One of the Team Layne models up near the ceiling. Note the curved propeller tips.



Bill attaches the rubber to his son's P-18 model.



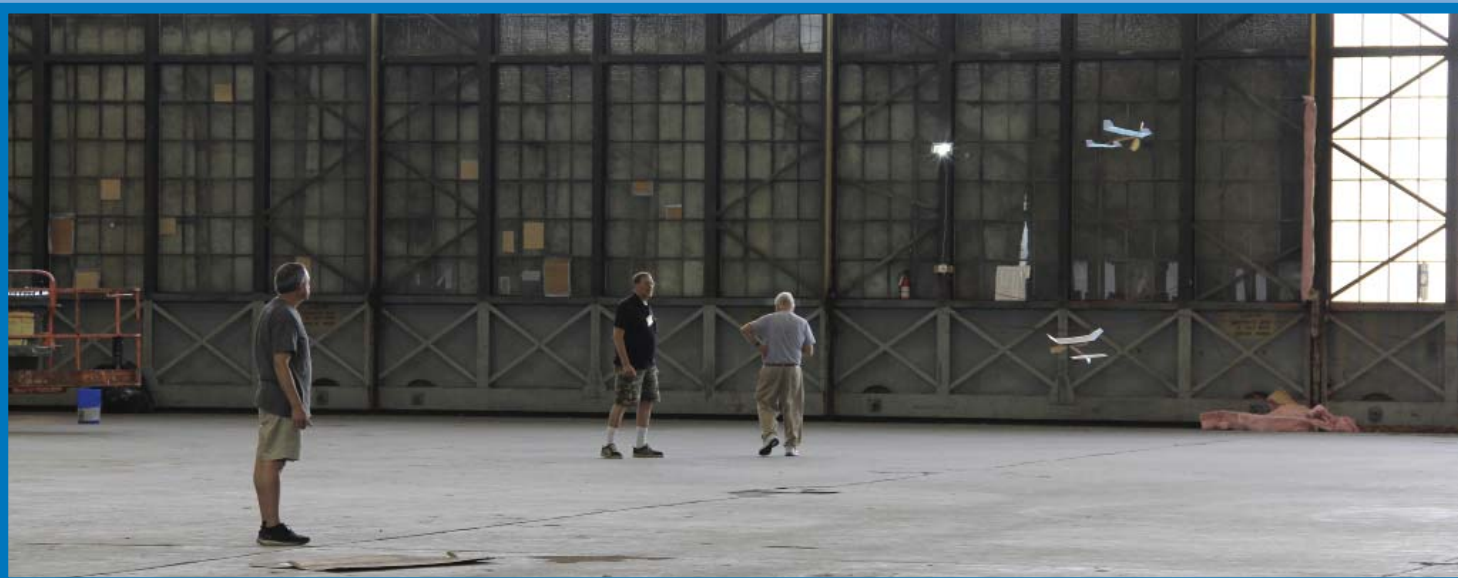
Alex's P-18 climbs out.



Team Buxton gets ready in P-18.



Team Buxton's P-18 climbing out.



A bit of the LPP action.



P-18 group shot.

P-18 Mass Launch series.



Two-Meter Thermal

Photos by Jenni Alderman







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