



Lots of ultralight and light-sport aircraft fun

6th Annual Mohawk Valley Fly-In

The sixth annual Mohawk Valley Ultralight & Sport Plane Fly-In brought a total of 157 ultralights, homebuilts, powered parachutes, and other sport aircraft to the Plateau Sky Ranch Airport in the small town of Edinburg in northern New York on August 23-26. Pilots from as far away as Florida, Virginia, and Maine attended.

David Cederstrom

The view on final for Runway 24 from Scott Potter's Quicksilver Sport II.



Plateau Sky Ranch, home base of EAA Chapter 602, was a new location for this year's event. Co-directors Tony Romanazzi and Doug Sterling, who served as air boss, say the airport worked very well. Its two grass runways allowed separate flight patterns for rigid-wing aircraft and powered parachutes, which "really worked out very slick," Sterling says.

The fly-in was co-sponsored by EAA Chapter 602 and the Ultralight Flying Organization of New York, which is the combined United States Ultralight Association (USUA) Club 16/EAA Ultralight Chapter 90. Romanazzi, who flies a Buccaneer SX amphibian, is the past president of Club 16/Chapter 90 and a co-founder of the fly-in. Sterling is an ultralight instructor, general aviation pilot, and a member of Chapter 602.

Local response to the fly-in was "positive and upbeat," Sterling says, adding that many Edinburg townspeople have asked him whether it will return next year.

As always, the event was dedicated to the memory of ultralight flight instructor and fly-in co-founder Thomas L. Earl.

"Tom Earl was a great pilot, and



Ultralight flight instructor and Flightstar dealer Dave DeForest of Catskill Mountain Ultralights says it took about an hour to fly this Flightstar II to the fly-in from New York's Catskill Mountains. He describes the aircraft as "very stable, very forgiving, an excellent trainer."

a great guy, whose death in a flying accident four years ago was a tremendous blow to us," Romanazzi says.

The fourth annual Thomas L. Earl Memorial Trophy was awarded to Scott Potter, an ultralight flight school operator since 1983. He attended piloting a Quicksilver Sport II. He moved recently from Phoenix, Arizona, to Pitcher, New York.

In addition to the flying activities,

USUA Vice President Tom Gunnarson and USUA Board of Directors member Reggie DeLoach gave seminars on sport pilot and BFI (basic flight instructor) issues, while Phil Lockwood of Lockwood Aviation gave seminars on two-stroke engines. Other seminars were held on airport access and water flying.

Local FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) inspectors Mike Mahan and Robert Willette attended from the Albany, New York, FSDO. Romanazzi says they were favorably impressed: "We showed them the ultralight community can be as safe and as professional as anyone else, and maybe a tad more. We had a wonderful group of pilots."

Floatplanes were welcomed at Lanzi's on the Lake restaurant and marina on nearby Great Sacandaga Lake. The Edinburg Volunteer Fire Company and the Northville Civic Association provided the food concessions.

Romanazzi says the organizers are working on ironing out a few minor problems, but that all-in-all the new location worked out extremely well. Mohawk Valley's 2002 fly-in is scheduled for August 22-25. Mark your calendar to join in the fun.

-Nearby Great Sacandaga Lake from Scott's Quicksilver Sport II.



Thomas Luce of Perryville, Maryland, attended the fly-in in his 1995 Kitten IV. "I built it in my basement," in pieces, which he trucked to the airport for final assembly, he says. Building took a year and eight months. His Kitten is powered by a 100-hp Subaru EA81, modified for aviation use by NSI in Washington. "I run it on auto fuel most of the time," Luce says, describing the airplane as fairly fast, with a short takeoff roll, and very light on the controls.

Looking down the flight line.



Red Rutkiewicz of Ravena, New York, built this Zenair CH 701 "from scratch, from plans," he says. He describes it as "really easy to build" and a nice airplane to fly. Completed in 1994, it's the third airplane he's built. Construction took two years. The cost was \$4,600, not counting the 100-hp Continental engine, wheels, and instruments.



The Plateau Sky Ranch Airport in Edinburg, New York, is the home field for Bill Wade and his Russian Yak-52 military trainer.



Lou Ieronimo's Challenger II on PuddleJumper floats is "a good floatplane, a fun airplane," the Delmar, New York, resident says. He's on the left, with his two sons, Chris and Steve. His first airplane, a single-seat Challenger, was wrecked by a storm three years ago, so he sold the parts and some stock to buy this airplane. He has about 100 hours on it since completing his water flying lessons. After four years of flying, Ieronimo has also become an ultralight flight instructor.



"Everything is stock with the exception of the vortex generators on the wings, from the Continental 65 engine to the factory-standard orange-and-yellow paint scheme," Jim Jankiewicz says of his Aeronca Champ 7AC. An aircraft mechanic and 31-year pilot from Frankfurt Highland, near Utica, New York, Jankiewicz has owned the Champ for about 10 years and restored it himself.

"The best boat I ever owned" is how Mike Feint of Homer, New York, describes this Aventura II seaplane he completed last year. He has about 155 hours on the aircraft, powered by an 80-hp Rotax 912. A boat owner ever since he was a kid, Feint says he has been flying for about three years and earned his private pilot certificate flying Cessna 172s.



Mike Alexander, president of USUA Club 16, built this Rotax 447-powered Kolb FireStar and has been flying it for about five years. He's nearing completion of a 7/8-scale ultralight version of a World War I Nieuport fighter and expects to be flying it soon.





Viking Aircraft owner Charles Dozier of Panama City Beach, Florida, says he has more than 17,000 hours flying powered parachutes. He brought his company's side-by-side, dual-control powered parachute to the Mohawk Valley fly-in. He says they started out with a tandem unit in 1993, but that the side-by-side configuration, with its wide stance and low center of gravity, has greater stability and control in ground operations.



Scott Potter, shown here with his QuickSilver Sport II, was awarded the Mohawk Valley fly-in's fourth annual Thomas L. Earl Memorial Trophy. The operator of an ultralight flight school in Phoenix, Arizona, since 1983, he recently moved to Pitcher, New York. Potter has owned this Rotax 503-powered QuickSilver for three years. "For training, it's excellent," he says.



Powered parachutes from the Hudson Valley Powered Parachute Association await Saturday evening's sunset flight.



Chris Brown says it took him only 20 minutes to fly his single-place Challenger to the fly-in from Galway, New York. The Rotax 447-powered airplane has been rebuilt twice after storm damage. He became hooked on flying after attending the Mohawk Valley fly-in as a spectator three years ago. He now has about 70 hours on the Challenger.



Joe Mihaly, left, and his son, Joe Jr., flew his 135-hp Lycoming-powered, 1953 Piper Tri-Pacer in from Fort Edward, New York. "I've owned this now for five years," says Mihaly, a pilot since 1957. "It's a great airplane, cheap to fly, a nice easy airplane. It's an ideal little four-place." The Tri-Pacer spent 25 years in storage before Mihaly found it, and it has 2,000 hours total time.