

Steve Sweeney, Howie Applegate, Don Rousseau, and Bert Sniffen are the LISF club members most engaged in free flight. Your editor asked Steve for input on what's going on with our club members and free flight. Steve graciously took time out from renovating his daughter's bedroom to give us a quick rundown of what he and Don have been up to.

It's February of 2015 and time for an article recapping LISF member activities in free flight for 2014 and also what to look forward to in the next season of rubber powered flight.

How strong is [free-flight](#)? To get an idea you could read through the [Great Grape Gathering 2014 report](#). It has forty-one free-flight contest categories listed showing a lot of diversity and a lot of small events under the umbrella of one big event.

At the Hatchek International Challenge, held May 31 and June 1, our own Don Rousseau came in first in F1G (small rubber powered), second in Dawn Unlimited and second in P-30 (small rubber powered). Per Dave Acton, CD, "The weather was gorgeous Sunday (sunny, very calm, and mild temperature), but Saturday it was too windy for some of the fliers (e.g. Don Rousseau's first round F1G flight whisked off in a windy thermal and landed in a distant tree causing it to take awhile to extract)."

At the Skyscraper Annual, held June 21-24, 2014, in Wawayanda, NY, Don came in 1st in Dawn Unlimited Rubber, 3rd in Mullvihill, 4th in F1G and 4th in P-30. The weather for this event was sunny warm and calm both days with little drift.

At the Great Grape Gathering, Sept 12-14, 2014, in Geneseo, NY, Don came in 2nd in the Mulvihill / Unlimited Rubber. Per Roy E. Smith, "people came not only from Ontario and NY, but also from NJ, PA, DE, WV, MA, MI, OH, and FL". There were forty-one fliers in days that were, at times, windy, cold, and wet.

Congratulations go out to Don who is rated eighth nationally for this year's performance in the F1G Coupe d'Hiver category. F1G Coupe d'Hiver, is a FAI event which also falls under the contest rules of the AMA.



Don Rousseau maxed out in Coupe for the first time at the Wilbur and Orville contest September 12, 2009 at Barron Field, Wawayanda, NY

Don tells us, "It is a rubber powered airplane with a folding prop limited to 10 grams of rubber and five flights of 2 minutes. The trick is to pick good air and thermals to launch into which is easier said than done. There are 30 contests a year around the country. You can fly in as many as you want, but only the top four scores count. This past year, I ended up rated 8th out of 35 active flyers from around the country." Don says he will bring one down to the next club meeting.

This past year, I competed at the 10th Annual Cole and Rita Palen Memorial Free-Flight Scale Meet held last spring on May 24 at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. Sadly, fellow LISF member Howie Applegate, a regular at this meet, wasn't able to attend and was missed by many. Believe it or not we still haven't got any official results in writing as this contest is about as laid back as they come as it's more about having fun than outright competition. So it should come as no surprise that there is a bit of a mystery as to where I placed in one of the events.

My 24" Herr designed Fokker D.VII took home a first place award in the Fokker D.VII Mass Launch event. It was a pleasant surprise after having to shake it out of a tree in the previous year's event.



I'm not in this photo but my Herr Fokker D.VII can be seen climbing in the center right.



The Herr Fokker D.VII circling overhead

My Morane Saulnier Type N earned a third place in the "Guns of August" featured mass launch event. The article I wrote for the [July 2014 edition of the club newsletter](#) has details on the event.

I also flew it in the Mixed Mass Launch event and there is some confusion about where I finished. I thought I came in around fourth or so, but later during the summer (after I wrote the July, 2014 article) I was told that I actually won the event as it came out after the awards ceremony that some novice pilots inadvertently picked their planes up off the ground and re-launched them! I wouldn't

call it purposely cheating, but just confusing to the CDs and spotters. Personally, I don't think I won, but who am I to argue with the Contest Director? I'm still waiting to see this in writing before I believe it myself. If it's true then I would have won this event three years in a row! Hmm. Time to retire?



This is the only picture I have of the Morane flying at the event. It was at the start of the Mixed Mass Launch. It's the blue plane all the way on the left.



The Morane also picked up the "Pilot's Choice" trophy at the awards ceremony.

The last plane I flew at the meet was my copy of Howard Huntington's 1914 Clam. I took second in the Pioneer class. With its elliptical dihedral, it's one of the most absurd looking planes ever designed. It was built in Astoria, and flown right here on Long Island.



Over the last couple club meetings I've had some conversations with fellow club members on how to braid rubber motors for free flight airplane. When looking to increase flight duration, a longer rubber motor is usually installed. The drawback is as this longer motor unwinds, the extra rubber can bunch up and thrash around inside the fuselage changing the C/G and causing all kinds of unpredictable changes to the flight. Braiding the rubber motor eliminates most of these unwanted effects of an increased motor length. Look for an article taking the mystery out of braiding in an upcoming newsletter.



Also coming soon will be an article on building a free flight Avro 504K from plans. Built for this year's FF meet at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, it's a copy of one of my favorites from the Rhinebeck collection.



1914 Clam trimming flight at Stillwell field

The featured theme for the 2015 meet is the "Fokker Scourge". Any plane built and flown in 1915 is eligible for competition in the event. I fully expect to see a full squadron of Fokker Eindeckers take to the skies. I'm hoping to get my Nieuport II fully trimmed in time to beat back that horde of Fokkers and win one for the Allies!

Lastly, I'm happy to announce that someone had bought the rights to the Pecks Polymer line of FF kits, propellers and accessories. It caused quite a stir in the hobby when Pecks ceased operation last year as Pecks also supplied other manufacturers with propellers and hardware for their kits. It will be nice to once again be able to buy our favorite kits in those little orange boxes. In an email from Chuck Imbergamo, the new owner, he informed me that Pecks should be up and running within a month. <https://www.peck-polymers.com/>

Gaining an interest in free flight? I'd be more than happy to get you started in building and flying rubber powered airplanes. Just grab me at one of the meetings or shoot me an email at Stevie58@aol.com.

The following calendars that we link to from our free-flight webpage have been or are being updated:

[The National Free-Flight Society](#)

[Flying Aces contest calendar](#)

[Cole and Rita Palen Annual Memorial Free-Flight Meet](#)

