The Soaring Times

***A Loft of Fort Wayne Publication***

May 15, 2024

The 2024 Flying season is upon us and hopes of great thermal soaring lies ahead. It officially begins Saturday May 18th the 1st loft contest of 2024 is scheduled from 9:30 am till 2:30 pm. And a long awaited Thermal Thursday is scheduled for May 30th 11:30 till 3:30pm. Pilots planning to fly need to call or text each other ahead to get the max out of the events.

I’m excited about what worked well in 2023 and what could be improved in 2024. An area mentioned for improvement is communications that is what the club is doing from month to month. This is to be improved by website updating, email and text messaging. Scott Black and John Lawyer stepped up to the plate to tackle website maintenance and improvements. I have contacted Darwin for his assistance and have begun to use Wordpress the software for website development. I will update Loft.org Asap as long as life doesn’t get in the way. Also, the new contest format introduced at the October contest seemed to work well where the emphasis will be on making flight times and landing points as opposed to strict wingspan limitations. The new focus being on launch category instead of wingspan should make for a more interesting competition and attract more pilots. New contest score cards were used that reflect the change to ***launch category*** and will be available at future contest.

The ***Category’s are*** : WL (Winch launch) HS (Hi-Start) EL (Electric Launch) & HL (Hand Launch) Planes can fly and compete by **matching the launch type** regardless of wingspan! ***It was suggested a points handicap could be applied as needed where smaller wing spans compete against larger wingspans in the same category!!!*** We discussed how to attract more pilots and ideas presented were add signs while using the field to invite the public. Have a club sailplane available for anyone wanting to fly a sailplane. Visit other soaring events in Indiana or Ohio and develop relationships with other soaring pilots and encourage reciprocal action (invite them to our events)!!!!

The 2024 flying schedule was decided and includes the much sought after ***Thermal Thursdays!***

***May 18th Saturday Contest\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_May 30th Thermal Thursday***

***June 15th Saturday Contest\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_June 6th Thermal Thursday***

***July 13th Saturday Contest\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ July\_18th Thermal Thursday***

***Aug 17th Saturday Contest\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Aug 29th Thermal Thursday***

***Sept 14th Saturday Contest\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Sept 26th Thermal Thursday***

***OCT 5th Proposed Joint Contest with Circuits***

***Note: It is recommended that at least 2 or more pilots be available for Thermal Thursday’s for safety !! Please coordinate in advance with other pilots before using the field!!!!!***

***Last but not least all pilots need the “TRUST” Certificate in their possession while flying and is obtained by visiting the FAA website and taking the free test. Additionally, pilots need to label each aircraft weighing over 0.55 lbs with an FAA registration number and the cost is $5.00.***

Lastly, FRIA sites were mentioned both Loft and the Circuits club sites are FRIA approved

And the question was raised about the property owner of the sites being notified of their property’s designation of a FRIA site.