

Thanks to the Freedoms Wing's program and the professionalism of the York Soaring club I went gliding for the second time. The first adventure was two years ago, which I have never expected to experience again. This adventure gave me the most up-lifting sense of confidence in myself and made me feel that others saw abilities within me, not my disability of deafblindness. When professionals strive to provide a physically and intellectually exciting and challenging introduction to flight they do so with the belief that each person has the capacity to meet the challenges this experience entails. This is the basics of demonstrating respect for persons with disabilities. My thanks to this program for a physically and intellectually exciting and challenging introduction to flight.

With the professional assistance of an intervenor, Alvin Brown, I traveled to the air field, about an hour drive from my home. I had used an FM system last time, to hear the person with me in the glider; this time I just used the processor of the cochlear implant. I found that I heard most of what Charles said. My first impression was how I felt when Charles Petersen began his explanation of the instruments in front of me, detailed so that I felt he expected me to understand his understanding of the instrument panel, that certainly gave me the feeling that we were communicating, at an equal level, adult to adult. Most often, other adults tend to treat me as if I had mental disabilities and they simplify what they might otherwise communicate to someone who can see and hear. I was shown the release knob, this is what releases the glider, which is attached to the small plane. I pulled it, and Charles put the rope on, let go and it was locked in. Then pulled it again, to test that it was releasing perfectly, and pulled again, held to put the rope in and let go to lock the rope in place. Team work, we started with team work! What a thrill.

I noticed more about detail this time than last time out, because the first time I was so focused on trying to hear, that I didn't absorb as much about details of navigation and instruments. Charles put lead weighted bags, 50 pounds worth, behind my back to give more weight to the front of the glider. The glider needs to be balanced over the wings. I won't explain the glider and inside, because I had done this in my first report of this adventure. Before I got into the glider, I did walk around it, to refresh my memory. The length of the wings surprised me. Charles began a play-by-play of what he could see as we started our 17 minute adventure. We started forward, before long we were at 200 feet, Charles talking the whole time, either describing what was beneath us, to the right and left side. He kept me informed as to our air speed, height and which direction he planned to turn, before he actually began the turn. I had the feeling of seeing, it was incredible.

As we were towed upward, Charles explained that he was following the movement of the small plane, so if it turned he moved the control stick to place the wings in position to be sure we

followed the plane smoothly. I put my hand, lightly on the stick instrument to feel his movement as he informed me what he would do, always before he did the moves.

When we reached 3,000 feet, Charles asked me if I remembered where the release knob was, I said I did, he asked me to release us! I was so surprised that he had confidence in my doing anything, I was going to

release us! It may seem insignificant to you, but to me it was like as if someone had given me an extremely important task and knew I had the ability to do it.. I certainly had no difficulty in releasing us, but pulling on

that knob gave me such a thrill. I had done something important!

During This adventure Charles allowed me a few minutes of control, asked me to maneuver the glider by moving the control stick the way he did as he told me he was turning, and I felt my stick move as he turned with the use of his control stick. I moved mine a little too much, it is very sensitive and requires just a slight movement.

I learned more in such a short period of time about, physics, aerodynamics, and safety procedures. I have more appreciation, after today, of the skill required to glide and control where you are going, and how to get where you want to be. After all, you only have the elements of nature and your skill with the instruments to use. I am so impressed about all the components that come into play to achieve a planned flight, given the condition of the sky and all its elements. I know what I now understand is just the tip of the iceberg, compared to all that a person needs to know. Yet I am totally in awe of anyone who can successfully glide following a flight plan and return exactly to the runway! If we do large loops we lose height, so give and take of this to achieve the flight plan. This ride was not full of large loops but it was interesting because I was more into feeling the instruments and feeling what our position change felt like with the maneuvering of instruments.

When Charles told me he was near to landing he used the instrument that is like a brake, to slow us down, I felt that instrument when he moved it and its impact on our forward motion. His play-by-play continued as he gave me details of how close we were to the ground, Oh to see, for 17 minutes! Back on the ground, deaf and blind, but having been inspired because I learned

something about flying, not from a text book, but from an experience that challenged my body and mind.

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