Sun Photos by Fern Chin

LOOK UP IN THE SKY: Counter-clockwise from upper left) Inside view of a soaring plane shows the simple controls; plane glides at approximately 2000 feet above local cornfields; Brad Donahue, Ithaca Soaring Club member, pushes the club's tow plane.

Local Soaring Enthusiasts Glide the Friendly Skies

By DAVID C. WROBEL

"If the air around us can go up faster than we're sinking then we can stay up." That is how David A. Kleinman '80 described the secret of soaring.

He is one of the 50 members of the Ithaca Soaring Club, located five miles west of Cornell on Route 79. On any nice afternoon you can find one of the club's members up in the sky seemingly defying gravity in one of the club's two sailplanes, also known as gliders.

There is no practical use for sailplanes. The members of the club fly just for their personal satisfaction. "When flying you can't beat a glider," Albert J. Henning, another of the club's charter members, said. "It's a challenge every second you're up there. So quiet, you can hear a slight breeze." Soaring works like this. A plane, with an engine towed an engineless sailplane into the air with a nylon cord. At two or three thousand feet the sailplane's pilot releases the rope and is left to glide. As long as he can stay up. Usually the plane is designed to keep going so that another club member is waiting to use the plane.

Henning says he once stayed aloft for five hours and 18 minutes.

The record distance ever flown in a sailplane is over a thousand miles. Members of the Ithaca Soaring Club are happy to go on much shorter trips; Kleinman once went to Elmira and back in two hours.

Soarters do not wear parachutes because they are flying in competition. Apparently the chances of an accident are very slight. "An airplane is safer than a car, and a glider is safer than an airplane," said Henning.

Sailplanes are 'very predictable, very doable,' Kleinman said, "they will fly themselves." Most of the people who join the Ithaca Soaring Club have done previous flying experience. After 40 lessons they may obtain their license and take passengers along. Then, with a little practice, they can learn to drop the loop if their stomachs can take them.

The costs involved are relatively low. Initial membership in the club costs $25 and monthly dues amount to $7. The tow ride costs $325 per hour. "It's one of the cheapest clubs I've seen in the country," Kleinman said, "if not the cheapest." "I don't mind the cost more than $300, and I have had more than 60 flights," he added.

"I'm a college student, and if I can afford it anyone can afford it," John Nordmann, grad student.

Flying a sailplane is easy, once you know how, according to Kleinman, "like driving a car," he said. Once you know how to soar, "you don't think about it any more," he added.

Side movement of the stick controls the aerocles for achieving banking turns. Forward and backward movement of the stick moves the elevator which controls the plane's altitude. Pressing the pedals controls the rudder which aids in coordinating turns.

Gaining speed is achieved by losing altitude. So speed is not a sailplane's major asset. Still, Kleinman said he has gone up to 125 miles per hour.

Sailplanes, contrary to popular belief, do not stay up because of the wind. The wind can actually hinder a plane's flight. What sustains them are the lift provided by hot air. These are one of its best-researched aspects.

There has only been one mishap since the club was founded 12 years ago, and that was only a minor one. A pilot overshot the landing field by about 40 feet and safely glided to a stop across the street.

Carson Will Not Leave 'Tonight Show' in 1979

Burbank, Calif. (AP) — Johnny Carson told a cheering "Tonight Show" audience last night he is one of the late-night television program in 1979, saying "I love the show . . . I would miss it."

But the NBC star said nothing that would indicate he intends to complete his contract — which expires in the spring of 1981.

We are still having discussions with NBC as to how long I will remain with the show. He had originally expressed an intention to leave at the end of our 17th year in 1979 but the problem of the year. I intend to stay past that time," Carson said during the taping of last night's show.

"I think I owe something to the show and I think I owe something to NBC also. I have terrific ambivalent feelings, I would probably miss the show terribly and may regret taking fun away from it. So all I can say is I will certainly continue through the 17th year and possibly on into next year. As to any other than that, I really can't tell you," the entertainer said.

"The news about two weeks ago that Carlin wanted to leave the "Tonight Show" shook NBC, which has been losing in the ratings. Carson is the network's biggest star, and "Tonight" is mass-transit in the New York City area.

The Republican from upstate Livingston County said the current energy crisis "finds us woefully unprepared with transportation alternatives."

"If people can no longer afford or economically obtain adequate supplies of goods or services, whether from their suburban homes to the city, the economic survival of the suburbs will be threatened and suburban housing values could plummet," he said.

But about 75 percent of the population of the state said the public transit would go to New York. They favor its subway, bus and rail systems.

According to Emery, Gov. Hugh Carey is considering asking for an additional 30 million rail system issue this year. A similar bond issue was approved by the voters in 1974.

"I talked to the governor this morning," Emery said, "I told him my proposal didn't go far enough." Besides providing more money for the subways, Emery's plan would bring back the inter-city trolley.

"It is ironic that years ago we systematically dismantled the very transportation system which might now provide significant relief to New York families faced with insufficient gasoline supplies," he said.

Emery's proposal also calls for increased bus service, creation of "slight" bus companies, more cars for commuters and the removal of the old Erie-Lackawanna freight tracks across the South Street Tier and more money for highway repairs.

Emery estimated that the mass transit improvements could increase ridership by 20 percent or 400 million persons.

His proposed bond include:

$325 million for cities to develop bus and bus facilities and increase the capacity of existing systems.

$400 million for the preservation and rehabilitation of existing mass transit systems, 60 percent of which are in New York City.

$125 million for high-speed improvements, most of which would be upstate.