

# Sleepy Eye ONLINE

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## One Stop Hometown Information Center

This story sponsored by Sleepy Eye Medical Center

Palmer Hittesdorf got the thrill of a lifetime when the Members of the Minnesota Soaring Club took him gliding in a non-motorized sailplane



# I glide through the air with the greatest of ease. . .

By Shari Hittesdorf

When Palmer Hittesdorf headed out to the airport with his Uncle Dave (McDowell) Saturday morning (7/9) he hoped to see some gliders floating through the air. Instead he was disappointed to find out the Minnesota Soaring Club, which makes an annual trip



When the gliders were grounded on Saturday, Palmer got a personal tour of the inside of one of the units

the Sleepy Eye Airport, was grounded for the day because of the weather.

The guys hanging out in the hangars at the airport must have saw Palmer's disappointment. They took the time to give him a tour of one of the grounded units. The club knew, based on weather reports, conditions would be ideal the following day. So when they saw Palmer's interest, they asked if he wanted to come back the next day and actually fly in one of the gliders. Silly question for an adventuresome 11-year-old.

Condition were ideal for flying, but not so ideal for the eyes.



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Palmer could barely sleep that evening (trust me, I know, he's my son!) He was antsy in church Sunday morning, to the point of being mischievous. Finally Uncle Dave arrived back to pick Palmer up.

The guys were waiting for their arrival at the airport.

Jay Biggs, a career Sun Country pilot, was the pilot of the tow plane on this adventure. Dick Andrews had controls of the two-seater sailplane.

The front seat of Dick's glider is normally manned by an adult. Weight was added to make up the difference for the 60-pound boy who would be sitting in the nose of this non-motorized flying machine.

It didn't take long for Palmer to figure out it was going to be really bright where he was sitting. The guys were prepared, plopping a floppy hat on his head.

And the trip began. The tow plane pulled the sailplane down the runway and up into the sky. Pretty cool for a kid who had his feet firmly planted on the ground for his entire life. Palmer admitted there was a little fear but mostly amazement. And soon he had the camera out and was snapping photos.

"Sleepy Eye looked like a bunch of toy buildings," he said.

He was able to spot his house from the air. And there were hundreds and hundreds of farms.



Floppy hat in position, Palmer and Dick were now ready to fly.

This was like the twilight zone," said Palmer.

The landing went smoothly although Palmer admitted his stomach felt funny on the way down. The boy's head, however, remained in the clouds for quite some time, might even still be there.

An experience of lifetime, that's for sure.

(Palmer's mom says THANK YOU! To the guys based out of Stanton, MN, which is located about 35 miles south of St. Paul between Northfield and Cannon Falls.

[www.mnsoaringclub.com/](http://www.mnsoaringclub.com/))



Palmer described Sleepy Eye as a bunch of toy buildings.



The first time this 11-year-old has ever flown. And the only thing between him and clouds was a glass cover.



Landing went smoothly, except for the feeling in Palmer's stomach.