

USHPA

PILOT

SUMMER 2022

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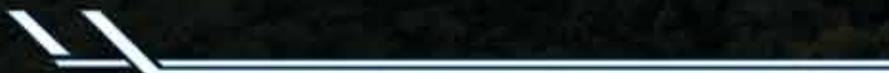


HANG GLIDING + PARAGLIDING + SPEEDFLYING



A QUANTUM LEAP

The Delta 4 offers the largest performance gain in the history of the series. With the strongest profile structure yet, it retains all of the comfort and ease of use that has made the Delta the best-selling sport class wing of all time.





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HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING ARE INHERENTLY DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES

USHPA recommends pilots complete a pilot training program under the direct supervision of a USHPA-certified instructor, using safe equipment suitable for your level of experience. Many of the articles and photographs in the magazine depict advanced maneuvers being performed by experienced, or expert, pilots. These maneuvers should not be attempted without the prerequisite instruction and experience.

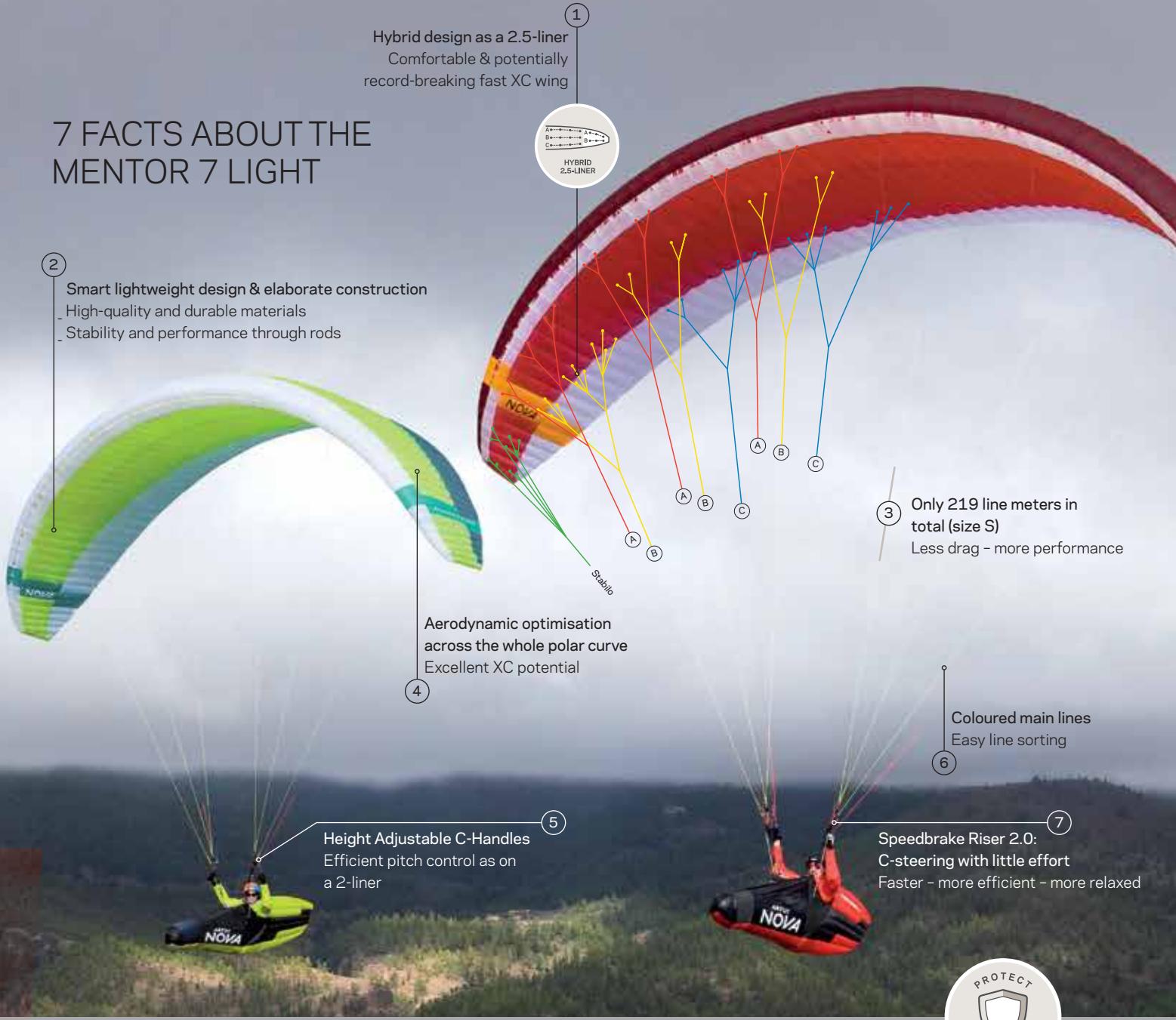
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7 FACTS ABOUT THE MENTOR 7 LIGHT



MENTOR 7 Light – Hybrid 2.5-liner

2.5-liner | Cells: 66 | Aspect ratio: 5.5 | Weight: 4.15 kg (size S) | EN/LTF B

The MENTOR 7 Light is characterised by its completely new design as a "hybrid 2.5-liner". This allows the same effective pitch control as 2-liners and ensures outstanding XC performance. With its smart lightweight design, it follows the trend of XC wings that are both light and durable. A cross-country paraglider that will inspire you for a long time.



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More info on the wing and your local NOVA dealer can be found here: www.nova.eu/mentor-7-light

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49^e Coupe Icare



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20-25 Septembre 2022

Toutes les infos sur www.coupe-icare.org

EDITOR > Liz Dengler

This spring, I spent a month in the French Alps learning to speedride. To prepare, I opted to ski hard over the winter and get my legs in shape instead of flying my big wing. While this was the correct choice for my speedriding trip, I worried about being rusty at the start of the upcoming paragliding season.

After speedriding in France, I immediately traveled to Mexico for an SIV course. I'd been wanting another SIV experience after taking one over three years prior, so when a group of friends organized a trip to Yelapa, I jumped at the opportunity. The problem was, I hadn't flown my full-sized wing in months and was coming off four weeks of flying a 10-meter speedwing. To ease my nerves at the transition to 22 meters of fabric, I nabbed a quick flight the evening I arrived in Yelapa. I wanted to feel the wing overhead before towing the next day.

After flying a 10-meter speedwing in the Alps for four weeks, the sensation of flying a full-sized paraglider at sea level was incredibly bizarre. It was the slowest flying has ever felt. As I was chatting with a friend after landing, she affectionately called my paraglider a sky turtle. The description couldn't have been more on point; weight shift, turning, and even launching was slow.

After that, much of my nervousness vanished, making going into maneuvers much more relaxing than I anticipated. To be clear, I still find full stalls to be a washing machine; however, for everything else, I felt that time moved slower, my reactions were more refined and intentional, my confidence was better, and I was more in tune with my wing.

It turned out that flying a speedwing for a month was the catalyst I needed to find some perspective and hone my skills. For me, flying and kiting a speedwing have marked a transition in my understanding wing control and flying. Though I have my M1 and had been flying my 14-meter mini wing for a while before speedriding, the size of a 10-meter wing forced me to dial in on my complacencies.

I believe that flying a speedwing has made me a better pilot and that for anyone keen, speedflying skills are a huge asset to have in your quiver. Now, with the new USHPA speedflying rating system, there is an official program for pilots interested in honing this new skill. The program provides an outlined progression for flying and downsizing for pilots looking to venture into this once outlier sport.




△ cover photo by
IAN RINEFORT

Carl Weiseth finds some air in celebration of the new speedflying rating system.

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Do you have questions about USHPA policies, programs, or other areas?

EMAIL US AT:
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Let us know what questions or topics you'd like to hear more about!

Interested in a more active role supporting our national organization? USHPA needs you! Have a skill or interest and some time available?

VOLUNTEER!
ushpa.org/volunteer

In June 1972, a Popular Science magazine article titled “Hang Gliders - Low and slow, and easy does it, with these far-out, fly-yourself aircraft” sparked the imagination of would-be pilots around the world. This article ignited the general public’s fascination with free flight aviation by introducing hang gliding. It demonstrated how accessible aviation could be for everyone. Anything was possible after sending humans to the moon.

Although the early hang gliders were only able to ground skim, as the magazine title inferred, early adopters were motivated to focus their energy on making the free flight experience better. Ultimately, hang gliders have seen amazing technological advancements, and hang glider pilots continue to break distance records regularly.

Fifty years after the birth of hang gliding, we’ve come full circle and returned to our roots. Proximity flying in the form of speedflying has captivated a growing number of pilots. It is fascinating to see how similar experiences in a different aircraft have inspired a new generation of pilots in free flight. I hope that all pilots have the opportunity to

experience all forms of free flight and even become bi-wingual. After all, adding an aircraft to your quiver can widen the spectrum of acceptable conditions and days for flying.

In recognition of the differences in these aircraft, speedflying instructor Carl Weiseth, along with a group of dedicated volunteers from around the U.S. and the world, developed a standalone training program to introduce speedflying to the next generation of pilots. As with hang gliding and paragliding, speedflying now has a full training program with special skills and ratings from student (S1) to advanced pilot (S4).

Experience has shown that these smaller wings have unique characteristics that differentiate them from standard-sized paragliders. With the introduction of speedflying, pilots can hike small, compact, and lightweight wings to nearly any launch point. These aspects of speedflying have drawn in a new pool of enthusiasts from the general public as well as the base jumping and skydiving communities. These pilots are solely interested in proficiency with smaller wings, which warranted this independent training program.



The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association Inc. (USHPA) is an air sports organization affiliated with the National Aeronautic Association (NAA), which is the official representative of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the world governing body for sport aviation. The

NAA, which represents the United States at FAI meetings, has delegated to the USHPA supervision of FAI-related hang gliding and paragliding activities such as record attempts and competition sanctions. The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, a division of the National Aeronautic Association, is a representative of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in the United States.



FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE BIRTH OF HANG GLIDING, WE'VE COME FULL CIRCLE AND RETURNED TO OUR ROOTS. PROXIMITY FLYING IN THE FORM OF SPEEDFLYING HAS CAPTIVATED A GROWING NUMBER OF PILOTS.

The Paragliding Training & Certification committee is continuing to develop the materials to fill in the program assets, so we can train the next generation of speedflying instructors. As those become available, interested parties can seek administrators to pursue speedflying instructor certification.

As is true for hang gliding and paragliding, more tools and materials are being developed for online integration. All ratings tests, including speedflying,

are available on the USHPA website.

To find speedflying instructors in your area, sort instructors by wing type on the map at: www.ushpa.org/page/find-a-school-or-instructor. More info on the speedflying program is available at www.ushpa.org/page/news-speedflying-program-launch.

We are excited to introduce this new program to the free flight community and look forward to helping pilots of all wing types share the skies. 



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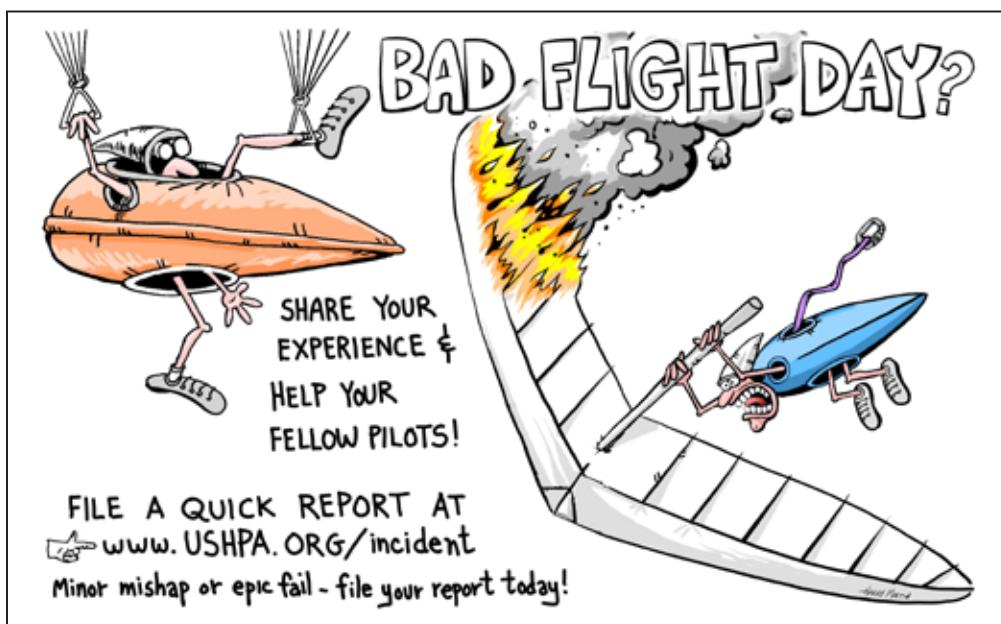
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What's your region? See page 63.



BGD EPIC 2

BGD announces the New EPIC 2, a fun and safe entry level EN-B wing, stable for low airtime pilots and XC capable. The original Epic earned a reputation as a good wing for starting out in freestyle, and the Epic 2 is even more so! The wing is per-

fect for soaring your local site, the B/C steering makes XC easier, or use it to try out first freestyle moves. The EPIC 2 has progressive stability, meaning this wing has more safety. The glider is fun to ground handle and is easy to launch, making it suitable for low-airtime pilots. For more information or for a demo, please contact BGD-USA at Dale@flybgd.com or (801) 699 1462.

GIN SWITCH 2 A lightweight reversible split-leg harness with an airbag and underseat rescue container. The Switch at 5.2 lbs is one size and adjusts to fit most pilots comfortably. Suitable for hike-and-fly, schooling, tandem passengers, mini wings, and traveling. Hooking into this harness is straightforward with two leg straps and a chest buckle. This harness is \$900 and comes in classic Gin colors.

Available through Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com 801.255.9595 or your local dealer.



SUPAIR RADICAL 4

A flexible and light hike-and-fly harness adapted specifically for mountain flights. The Radical 4 has a rescue container integrated into the harness seat and an optional attachable airbag-backpack for enhanced safety. The harness alone weighs 2 lbs and 4.8 lbs with the airbag-backpack attachment. The harness comes in sizes S, M, L for \$500 and the airbag attachment is \$450 through Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com 801.255.9595 or your local dealer.

FLARE MOUSTACHE & CONTOUR HARNESS

FLARE's premier glider, The Moustache, is a kite made for flying with its revolutionary FLARE pulley system. Available sizes 13, 15, 18, and 22 m in petrol/white colors. This new parakite technology gives the pilot a huge range of motion and lift control by changing the glide ratio using only the brake toggles. Move quickly away from terrain and toe drag with confidence knowing the wing's reflex profile keeps it stable at low angles of attack. Pair with the light and comfortable Contour loop strap harness with an LTF 91/09 certified Permair protector, this duo meets the demands of parakiting,



soaring, snowkiting, speedflying, and speedriding. Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com is a proud demo center for the Flare Moustache. Give us a call to try this new wing 801.255.9595.

NEO RESCUE BACKPACK

An innovative external rescue container backpack for tandem hike-and-fly that can adapt to any harness. The pilot simply puts the backpack on over their harness, connects the rescue bridles to the spreaders, and launches. The passenger can easily carry this EN-1651 lightweight Neo rescue backpack to the launch. These are one size fits all and available for \$465 through Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com

801.255.9595 or your local dealer.



CHARLY FIRE GLOVES

The Fire Basic gloves are an electrically heated thin glove that can be worn alone or as a liner. These gloves can be worn year-round and come in sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL.

Designed for paragliding and hang gliding the extra soft breathable fabric with windblocker softshell fabric

fits like a second skin and insulates and

protects the hands during any type of flight. The battery powered heating can be switched on at any time to promote blood circulation

to the fingers. The fabric is compatible with touch-screens, buttons, and flight instruments. Available for \$205 through Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com

801.255.9595 or your local dealer.



NOVA MENTOR 7 LIGHT

A lightweight and durable EN-B cross-country wing from Nova. Sizes XS, S, and M will be available mid to late May 2022 for \$4,900

through Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com 801.255.9595 or your local dealer. Sizes XXS and L as well as a standard version of the wing will come later in the year. The new Mentor 7 Light is characterized by performance, safety, and smooth flying. A completely new design features the hybrid 2.5 liner, 66 cell lightweight construction, height adjustable C-handles for pitch control, and more top speed than all previous models. Give us a call to check availability or get on the waitlist.



CHARLY UNILOCK ULTRALIGHT CARABINER

These universal paragliding carabiners are the lightest and also most loadable on the market. The Unilock carabiners weigh 45 g with a breaking load of 2,500 DaN, and 5 year replacement interval. These carabiners are

suitable for narrow and wide webbings, the snap gate opens at 45° for easy attachment to the harness, and the unique “3” shape provides stability against twisting. Available for \$30 each through Super Fly, Inc. www.superflyinc.com 801.255.9595 or your local dealer.



ACCIDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE > Sam Washburn

Tree landings are a fact of life for hang glider and paraglider pilots. They are like hangovers—no one wants to have one, but a combination of bad judgment and/or bad luck can mean we get one. And since a number of pilots land in trees every year, it's best to be prepared in case you find yourself tree landing at some point.

The good news is that tree landings are rarely fatal and often result in only minor injuries or a few scratches. The bad news is your equipment will take a beating, and recovering yourself and your gear will be difficult. You may not make it home in time for supper.

There are two types of tree landings: “planned” and “immediate.” In a “planned” tree landing, you realize you cannot make your LZ but still have enough time to look around and plan which tree you want to land in. “Planned” tree landings occur for a number of reasons: experiencing unexpected headwinds, getting too low behind a ridge, stumbling into strong sink on the way to the LZ, or miscalculating a cross-country flight.

On the other hand, in an “immediate” tree landing, you have no time to plan because something suddenly goes wrong. “Immediate” tree landings tend to happen because of issues like blown launches, unexpected stalls near the terrain, equipment problems, partial paraglider collapses that recover too late, etc.

“Planning” a tree landing

A scenario: You've been busy trying to find a thermal that will get you above the ridge, but you find yourself very low, so you turn towards the LZ. Sadly, the wind coming from that direction has increased and reduced your glide ratio dramatically. You realize there is no way you will make the LZ. Even worse, you look around and realize there is nothing but forest within your current

glide radius. So, you gulp and start planning a tree landing. Here's what to do:

Look for a tall, wide leafy tree that you can easily reach. Ideally, it should be surrounded by other smaller leafy trees that you can land in if you miss the big one.

Choose a tree that is on flatter terrain and within a quarter-mile of a road or trail to facilitate rescue, but NOT right next to the road. Make note of any identifiable landmarks near the tree so you can call it in later if you need help.

Now think of your target tree as the bullseye on your favorite LZ and fly a landing pattern to it appropriate for your altitude relative to the tree. In most cases, this will mean flying downwind of the tree and then turning upwind towards it. Landing into the wind is just as important now as in any other landing, and maybe even more so. One exception to this might be if the tree is on a steep slope with an upslope wind, in which case you may want to fly into it in the uphill direction in spite of having a tailwind.

In a hang glider, round out before the tree, keep your wings level, and then flare hard and hold it just as you get to the edge of the target tree's canopy. You want to stall the wing to limit any forward velocity allowing you to drop into the center of the tree. If you're lucky, you will settle into the middle of the tree's foliage.

In a paraglider, visualize a final approach that will drape your wing and lines over the crown of the tree and fly that line. If possible, flare before impact or right as your feet touch the highest leaves to slow your speed.

Trees can be a soft landing, but not always. It's best to stay in your harness for added protection. If your legs are out, keep your feet and knees held tightly together to protect your groin, and tuck your chin down to protect your neck from getting speared by sharp sticks.

TREE LANDING KIT

- Drinking water
- 100 yards of dental floss for pulling up the rescue line
- Extra carabiners
- Several nylon or spectra rock climbing loop-slings, at least one large one for adding additional support or for use as a tourniquet
- Flashlight
- Whistle
- Radio
- Phone
- Hook knife for cutting away hang straps

Secure all of the above items to your harness using skinny bungee or rope. This will prevent you from inadvertently dropping them when you pull them out high up in a tree. If you fly XC or fly alone in inaccessible places with poor cell phone coverage, bring all of the above plus:

- 70-100 feet of rescue rope strong enough to support double your weight
- Abrasion-resistant gloves
- Rock climbing carabiner and brake device for slowly lowering yourself (and know how to use it)

Cover your eyes with one hand to protect them, and grab your reserve parachute handle with the other. If the tree does not slow your fall, throw the chute so that it will snag on a branch and break your fall.

At this point, hopefully, you are precariously suspended in the tree's canopy because your glider or wing is snagged on one or more branches. You may or may not be injured. Do the following:

Add additional support to prevent falling:

-  Grab a nearby strong branch.
-  Throw your chute over a branch or V in the trunk, or, better yet, wrap the reserve bridle around a limb a couple of times if you are able.
-  Attach any climbing loops in your emergency kit to nearby branches.

Assess your injuries:

-  Stop any excessive bleeding using pressure. If that does not work, use any cord or loops in your harness pockets as a tourniquet.

Call for help:

-  Use your phone or vario to determine your exact location coordinates.
-  Call for help on your mobile phone or radio. Inform the other party of the extent of your injuries, and get an estimate for how quickly they can send help. Then wait for the rescue team to arrive.
-  If you need it, activate your emergency location device if you have one. These are very helpful for rescue especially when you are out of range of cell or radio reception.

Now, wait 10 minutes for your adrenaline rush to abate. Adrenaline masks pain. Then reassess your injury situation as described above.

 If you find that most of your weight is supported by your leg loops, you need to rig up some way to take the

weight off the leg loops. This pressure from the harness leg loops can compress your femoral arteries and cause you to eventually pass out or even die after a short time. This is called Harness Hang Syndrome or Suspension Trauma. If you are unable to get the weight off your leg loops, then at least try to shift your weight from one leg to another and wiggle around a lot. Do not accept a "sack of potatoes" position while hanging in a harness!

 While waiting for rescuers, locate your dental floss, whistle, and flashlight (you should be carrying these on every flight). You will need these to help the rescuers

find you and get a rope up to you. Be extra careful not to drop any of these.

You have probably noticed that I have mentioned nothing about rescuing yourself by attempting to climb down the tree or lower yourself with a rope you may have stashed in your harness. That's because in most cases, you shouldn't. There are a bunch of good reasons for not doing this:

- 👉 You are traumatized from the tree landing.
- 👉 You may be injured.
- 👉 Your adrenaline is surging.
- 👉 You are scared.
- 👉 Your judgment is impaired.
- 👉 It's been years since you've done a pull-up.
- 👉 It is highly unlikely that you have recently practiced rescuing yourself with your emergency rope and gear.

However, there are some situations where you must consider self-rescue:

- 👉 No one knows that you have crashed (you were flying alone or got separated during XC).
- 👉 You cannot reach anyone by phone or radio (no cell service, dead battery).
- 👉 The rescue team will take too long to get there or cannot reach your location.

In these scenarios, you must either climb down the tree (very dangerous) or lower yourself to the ground using a rescue rope, climbing loops, carabiners, and brake devices you hopefully have stashed in your harness. A note on self-rescue: If a remote tree landing is a real possibility for you, you MUST practice using all this gear to lower yourself from a low branch in your backyard at least once a year. It's not a good idea to try to figure it out for the first time after a tree landing.

To maximize your chances of rescue, consider using a mobile app such as CAIRN. The app lets you enter your planned target LZ location and expected time of arrival and sends this information to your chosen contacts.

Then, it tracks the flight path and your location throughout the day. If you don't check in by the expected arrival time, it notifies your contacts and sends them your last

location and flight path. If you're hanging unconscious in a tree somewhere, they may still be able to find you. Obviously, this only works in areas with cell coverage.

Avoiding the trees altogether

Finally, the best way to survive a tree landing is to never do one in the first place by following these best practices:

- 👉 Always know the required glide ratio to the nearest LZ and make sure your current glide ratio exceeds the requirement. Modern varios with waypoint navigation can show you this in real time graphically. All you need to do is to create a waypoint 300 feet above the center of the LZ before you fly, and set the vario to fly to that waypoint before launch. One of the vario's navigation pages will show you the required glide ratio to reach the LZ as well as your current glide ratio. It usually also has a graphic indicating if you can make the LZ with your current glide ratio. Always keep this information in the forefront of your mind as you're flying.

- 👉 Set up your landing approach with plenty of altitude to clear any treeline close to the LZ.

- 👉 Don't get too far behind the ridge when soaring, especially in a paraglider or single surface hang glider with low penetration, and stay above the rotor behind the ridge. Before you fly, check the wind speed forecast for the air well above the ridge. If you soar up into much faster air, you could get blown back quickly.

When flying below and close to the ridge, don't do 360s, do figure eights instead.

- 👉 Fly fast, well above trim speed.

- 👉 Don't fly just above the trees. Allow some height for unexpected turbulence. React quickly to turbulence and thermals that could turn or stall your glider.

- 👉 Reduce VG (in a hang glider) for maximum maneuverability.

• **Tree landings are traumatic.** But with some forethought and planning, you can greatly improve your odds of surviving one. 



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New to the Club

A journey into flying paragliding competitions

by Pam Kinnaird

In April 2021, I decided to leave my day job for various reasons, but chasing airtime under (and sometimes over) my wing was near the top of that list. How else was I going to find the time to escape to the mountains for local league meets, participate in my first national paragliding competitions (Applegate Sprint and Ozone Chelan Open), and volunteer for the U.S. Open of Chelan with just two weeks of vacation time and a work/life/Zoom balance that left me mentally and emotionally drained by 5 p.m. most weekdays? Like many others, over the years I'd passed up many opportunities to explore what excites me, and I decided it was time for a change.

As the news spread among my friends and family, the constant refrain of, "What's next for you, Pam?" followed

me everywhere. As unsettling as it was to hear that question when the plan was to have no plan for a while, I recognized that a bit of structure could be a good thing. After careful consideration, my answer was, "I'm going to paragliding school! My first course is Competition Flying 101." I formalized my plans into a personalized course curriculum that I laid out during those first few weeks. The local league meets would be like "pop quizzes," the Applegate Sprint could be my "mid-term," and the Ozone Chelan Open would be a "capstone project." I assigned readings (books, magazines, etc.), scheduled as much flying as I could, studied old tracklogs, and worked on finding a few mentors.

◀ Applegate pilots getting ready on launch.

First tasks

I was hooked on task flying the moment I heard my instrument play a celebratory tone as I crossed into the goal on a 19 km task at one of the first NorCal Sprint League events. This annual league, organized by Jugdeep Agarwal, is characterized by 15-30 km fishbowl tasks and ample mentorship opportunities. It targets pilots flying EN-A and EN-B paragliders who are interested in learning to fly competitions. In addition, it is a great excuse to spend some time with friends away from everyday routines while sharing skies and stories. The Sprint League happens, on average, one weekend a month, starting in early March and running through October.

Before each task, I gave myself some homework assignments inspired by the course reading materials. First, I worked on pre-flight analysis reports. This homework included capturing a detailed snapshot of the weather forecast and using historical tasks, tracklogs, and terrain maps to identify potential thermal triggers and cruxes. My second assignment was to set one to three process-oriented goals for each flight. For example, drink more than two liters of electrolyte water starting the night before the task, launch at least 45 minutes before start time, and make a mental note of the pilots around me at each turn-point. Focusing on these goals reduced (but did not eliminate) the pressure to perform well relative to other pilots.

Mid-terms: Applegate

With three league meets under my wing, I entered the Applegate Sprint at Woodrat, Oregon, in June. This race, which ran in parallel with the Applegate Open, was geared toward pilots flying wings rated EN-C and lower. At the 2021 event, there was a mix of experience levels and a fantastic group of eight lady pilots who would also be flying the Sprint race that year. The tasks for the Sprint ranged between 25 to 40 km and typically avoided the worst of the long crossings and upwind legs that the Applegate Open race competitors had to face.

I made a simple goal for day 1: fly as long as possible. I also established certain altitude thresholds for each crossing. Super light conditions inside the start cylinder filled with 30+ gliders made it challenging to climb high enough to make the next valley crossing. After spending 45 minutes cycling between mediocre thermals, I took what little altitude I had and pushed over the valley to try at least one or two triggers before surrendering. It worked! When I landed in an empty goal field two hours later, I wondered if I had done something wrong. Did the leaders already drink the goal beers and leave?

Surprisingly, I was the only pilot to finish the Sprint task that day. “This must be a fluke,” I thought. The overwhelming sense of being an imposter invaded my psyche that evening, and the scoring algorithm seemed to agree. The task was granted 9% validity (since only three pilots made more than the minimum distance) which meant I got only 90 points as the top scorer for the day. For reference, the top scorer for a task with 100% validity typically receives 1,000 points.

Although I was encouraged to appeal to the score-keepers to adjust the task validity, I stubbornly declined. This situation brought up some deeply-held limiting beliefs about not being worthy. It is interesting to reflect on how the story I told myself that day turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Over the next few days, I made several rookie mistakes, such as leaving thermals too early (or too late), programming tasks incorrectly, following a pilot flying a different task, and going on a death-glide hoping to get lucky. Every misstep seemed to confirm my beliefs that my day 1 success had been by chance.

“When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.” This adage is the opening quote from the chapter on managing emotions and thoughts in “Finding Your Zone” by Michael Lardon, which happened to be my reading assignment for the week. Talk about perfect timing! By the last day of the competition, I was finally in a place to start changing my story with a relaxed yet determined focus. I even made goal! Some of the most helpful lessons from that chapter include: substitute curiosity for frustration, remember positive past experiences, it isn’t over until it’s



over, and visualize placing the negative thought or emotion on a leaf in the river and letting it float downstream.

As a side note, this experience motivated me to study the CIVL GAP scoring guide used for cross country paragliding and hang gliding competitions. One of the coolest things I learned is that, before 2000, competitions were scored using photographic evidence. To this day, I still don't relish taking my hands off the toggles even for a bite to eat, so I can't imagine having to work a 1990's-era camera while in the air!

Capstone Project: Ozone Chelan Open 2021

By the time the Ozone Chelan Open rolled around in mid-July, I was averaging a respectable (self-assessed) B minus in my competition flying course. Not an A since I tended to skip some of the reading and writing assignments in favor of flying, adjusting gear, or spending time with friends. I figured the professor (me) wouldn't mind as long as I was learning and having fun!

The AirTribune website (a site that hosts signups, tracking, and results of worldwide free flight competitions) describes the Ozone Chelan Open as “an EN-C and lower event where XC pilots new to competitions get to race alongside and learn from some of the best pilots in the USA. The competition will follow the same format as other FAI Cat 2 events and include daily briefings.” This sounded like a perfect way to finish my summer freshman-level course on competition flying!

Study session #1

Given my early arrival on launch on Day 1 and a 13:30 task start gate, I had plenty of time for my first study session led by Nick Greece and a fantastic group of mentors. Here are a few notes I took while still trying to wrap my head around the task for the day (pssst ... this stuff WILL be on the test):

- Even the top pilots experience fear and nervousness while they fly. Many spoke of using various breathing techniques to tap into different parts of the nervous system to relax in times of irrational fear or to ramp up their focus.
 - When in doubt, think “upwind.” Glide upwind of others to take advantage of the wind in case the downwind pilot finds the next climb. Widen circles upwind to search for stronger cores.
 - Look for non-downwind dust movement on the ground—this could indicate air being sucked into a thermal.
 - Even though flying in smoke is not ideal, it can make haze domes at the top of the lift easier. Glide toward these to find climbs.
 - Because this was Chelan, no discussion would be complete without mention of dust devils. The mentors were in consensus about two things. 1) Fly against the rotation of the dust devil, which puts you into the wind and requires less bank angle. 2) Don’t mess with dust devils unless you have significant height AGL. What height is that? It depends on pilot skill, currency, prior

◀ (L to R) Applegate Sprint task board; a gaggle at Applegate; Sprint League pilot meeting.

experience, and current conditions.

Since this was the first time a sport class competition had been hosted in Chelan, I had no idea what kind of tasks to expect. I figured they would have us flying local triangles or easy downwinders, maybe 30-60 km max. My mind was blown when the task committee revealed a 70 km triangle on the task board for day 1! That was 50 km bigger than any “assignments” I’d been able to complete so far in my course.

“What have I signed up for this time?” I thought as I stumbled around in a dust-induced brain fog, searching for my sanity. My friends were busy getting their gear and instruments ready for the race. The dust devils on launch were just starting to inspire bystanders to call warnings of “DUSTY!” and dive on any unsecured pieces of nylon. It was time to launch with the help of an excellent crew of launch fluffers!

One thing of note about this task was the huge 8 km ESS (end of speed) cylinder which expanded out over the flats. Given that some instruments may not account for terrain when calculating glide to goal, the mentors warned us to be careful about pushing too hard for ESS and not having enough height to make it over the rim and across the river to land in the goal field. I (and about 30 other pilots who made ESS but not goal) stubbornly found out how challenging it can be to find lift along the rim between the flats and the river.

The frustration of landing less than 2 km from goal paled when compared to the feelings of joy and excitement from spending over four hours in the air with so many other pilots over the endless flatlands. On top of that, this flight was my personal best FAI triangle!

When the task committee revealed an even bigger task on day 2, I felt my stomach churn with unease and fear. This 100 km task would take us into the mountains, northwest across the river, then over the rim for a tour around the flats, ending again at the soccer field in Chelan Falls. I felt like a high school student auditing a college graduate-level course—way out of my league.

With some encouragement from my mentor Jug, my partner Tristan, and other friends, I pulled myself together and had one of the best days ever! Not only did I make goal and have another personal best flight (airtime, flat triangle), I managed to eat for the first time while flying. I also learned that trail mix with chocolatey bits is an inappropriate in-flight snack. I couldn’t stop smiling for hours and felt so inspired that I signed up for the XRedRocks hike-and-fly race the next morning! Taking that leap was both frightening (I’m no mountaineer nor athlete) and invigorating (there’s no reason I couldn’t train to be).

The most important lesson I learned over the 2021 season of flying competitions has little to do with flying technique or strategy. It’s the ability to recognize and embrace feelings of unease as signposts for opportunities to



△ Figure 1: Track logs from Chelan Task 3 showing my (less than ideal) line (orange) next to a few of the leaders of the day.



Figure 2: Track logs from Chelan Task 4 showing my few turns (orange) in a small bubble, that was ignored by the leaders. △



MENTOR SESSION | COMPETITION

TIP> Identify pilots with their glider and helmet colors before launching to know who to follow (or not) in the air later.

TIP> Before the start, make a note of how high the various house thermals are going. Use this information to work on positioning yourself at the top just as the start cylinder opens.

TIP> When high, stay on course line on full bar. When low, turn cross-wind in desperation since areas of lift and sink elongate with the wind.

MENTOR SESSION | GLIDING

TIP> Convert little bumps to height. Keep the glider overhead, not shooting forward or pitching. When it pitches, push a little more bar, and later, you'll be able to convert that speed to lift.

TIP> Feeling out lift lines is a little like walking a tightrope or sitting on a beach ball in the water. With little bumps, think about which side of the glider felt more lift. Turn slightly in that direction, and feel the lift move toward the center.

TIP> Figure out where the polar curve of your specific glider drops off, and don't push beyond that.

TIP> Bias toward using weight shift for minor adjustments and only use rears if a correction is needed.

TIP> When pushing out front, look behind you. If other pilots are peeling away, move off that sinky line!

MENTOR SESSION | CLIMBING

TIP> Look for thermal triggers. Keep an eye out for thermals downwind of or at the end of dark color on the ground; look for smoke concentrated in one place; look downwind of the upwind edge of a body of water.

TIP> Keep track of the thermal strengths throughout the day, and don't waste time on the weaker climbs.

TIP> Develop a model of inversion altitudes, wind direction, and velocity at different altitudes.



expand personally. This task was just one of many examples of how leaning into the anxiety resulted in big leaps forward. Writing this article has been another journey through the fear of rejection into a place of self-discovery.

On day 3, I finally began to understand what it means to glide and climb well in a crosswind (or, in my case, not so well). About three hours into the task, due to my rather unideal flight track (Figure 1), I crossed paths with the lead gaggle as they were landing in goal. Some pilots even had the nerve to do perfect wingovers above the goal field. "How rude!" cried my inferiority complex. Realizing that I was 50 km behind the leaders was rather discouraging in the moment. It was also one of the most eye-opening examples of the potential for improvement, especially since the leaders were flying pretty much the same equipment as everyone else in this EN-C and lower competition.

The most obvious difference between my tracklog (Figure 1) and those of the leaders was how tightly the

leaders stuck to the optimized course line. I let myself get blown downwind with every climb I took. How did they do it? In addition to being able to magically (or methodically) core thermals quickly, the leaders were disciplined about extending the upwind leg of every 360 and leaving thermals early enough to glide into the wind before being dragged off course.

Even though I didn't make it to goal on this epic crosswind slog, my personal best streak continued: I flew an hour longer than my previous longest flight and joined the 100k club!

With strong wind in the forecast, the coordinators canceled the task for day 4. This was a much-needed day off for me after flying 15 hours over the previous three days. Funny, it wasn't that long ago that building up to the 20 hours I needed for the P3 rating seemed like it would take forever. In place of a task, mentors spent hours sharing their unique perspectives on what has made them suc-

- ◀ A pilot soaring at Applegate.
- ◀ Ozone Chelan ladies podium.

An aerial view of the LZ at Applegate. ▶

cessful competition pilots. The mentor session tips and tricks (left page) were immensely helpful.

On day 5, my goal was to be well-positioned for the start and keep up with the lead gaggle for as long as possible. I knew this might come at the expense of bombing out early, but I was willing to take that risk to see what I could learn. It was encouraging to be able to stick with the group during the start and for the first two big climbs out on the flats!

All it took to fall behind was taking four quick turns in mediocre lift (Figure 2). The leaders ignored my bubble, went on glide, and found a much better climb two minutes later. I'm not exactly sure what they saw that I missed since I don't recall anyone out ahead of us at that time. Maybe it was that tiny bit of terrain combined with



the road or the beginnings of a dusty. But for me, it was already too late by the time I noticed an altered course!

After that, I struggled to stay on course, given the stiff crosswind component. I landed out along a wheat field about halfway to goal. A local rancher who owns crop dusters and a nearby airstrip offered me a ride and friendly conversation. Though I didn't have any personal bests on that flight, it was still an amazing way to end the competition! 🇺🇸

COMPETITION FLYING 101: CURRICULUM

Author's disclaimer: I'm not a paragliding instructor. I pulled from a number of resources to build my curriculum. It is by no means comprehensive, but for me, it served as an excellent way to jump-start my journey into flying paragliders competitively. Perhaps it could help guide you in your ambitions. The course aims to build up a theoretical foundation alongside real-life task flying activities over the course of two to four months.

PREREQUISITES

- Thermals well with others
- Can assess landing options from the air
- Can safely land in tight spots and thermic conditions
- Has an instrument that can handle task flying

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- The student must find opportunities to fly at least six tasks over the two- to four-month period.
- The student should discuss competition flying with at least one more experienced pilot (mentor), at least one peer, and at least one pilot with less experience (mentee).

COURSE MATERIALS

- "Mastering Paragliding" - Kelly Farina
- "Advanced Paragliding" - Gavin McClurg
- "Finding Your Zone" - Michael Lardon
- "Performance Paragliding (Book 1)" - Maxime Bellemain
- Various articles from USHPA, XCMag, ParaglidingForum, etc.
- Podcasts/Videos
- Cloudbase Mayhem
- Various YouTube videos

COURSE STRUCTURE

- 25%** self-guided reading/watching/listening
- 35%** pre- and post-flight analysis reports
- 40%** flying tasks

COURSE ACTIVITIES

- Fly at least six tasks
- Complete reading assignments, pre-flight analysis, and goal reports before each task, and post-flight analysis log entries after each task
- Participate in discussions about setting tasks

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Enhanced ability to fly efficiently
- Greater capacity to assess forecasts, read the terrain, and tune in to real-time flying conditions
- Improved mental (mindset, task strategy, self-reflection) and physical (mobility, stamina, recovery) capabilities

AirVenture 2021

The legacy of Lilienthal

by William Vaughn

Faithful readers of this magazine may remember a short piece in the July/August 2020 issue about flying a replica 1895 weight shift Lilienthal glider side by side with the Wright Brothers iconic 1902 glider. Markus Raffel, an aeronautical engineer with Germany's DLR (their version of NASA), arranged to have his replica Lilienthal wing shipped to Kitty Hawk, and we were able to complete the parallel demonstration flights in December 2019.

Paul Glenshaw, a well-connected aviation writer and filmmaker, was in attendance. After texting images from that day to his friend Hal Bryan, senior editor with the Experimental Aviation Association, Glenshaw helped a plan take shape. We could take the Lilienthal glider to AirVenture, the EAA's annual epic fly-in in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in July and use this amazing replica to get hang gliding back on the radar of general aviation.



We wanted to do low demonstration flights with the Lilienthal glider using a ground-based stationary winch. We were also going to demonstrate entry hang gliding instruction using the innovative Wills Wing Stand Up Easy Flyer—a 235 Alpha rigged like a tandem aerotow wing, but for foot launching. Imagine being a new student and NOT having to manage balancing your wing and setting your angle of attack for your first flights. We would also showcase modern aerotowing, both for tandem flights and with a state-of-the-art competition-level glider.

Work began on the “Legacy of Lilienthal” project in early 2020. I made a preliminary inquiry with the Foundation for Free Flight about a possible grant, and we set a schedule for test flying the replica. The first ugly snag should have been resolved by some simple paperwork. Raffel's glider had been “temporarily imported” to the U.S., but no amount of bureaucratic wrangling could get us out of the issue: The glider would have to be shipped back to Germany by May to avoid prohibitive taxes and penalties. The bigger snag was the global pandemic. COVID-19 led to the cancellation of AirVenture 2020.

Fast forward to January 2021. The idea was still alive, and AirVenture planning for July was in full swing. The EAA was still enthusiastic about our idea. Rick Larsen, EAA's vice president of communities and member programming, was our real champion. He'd begun his flying career with many happy flights on his 1975 Chandelle and was eager for us to showcase hang gliding as “accessible aviation.”

▲ *Tethered flight on Jockey's Ridge. Markus Raffel piloting; JP Gagnon and Dalton Burkhalter assisting.*

◀ *Raffel showing Vorflugels in a pose based on an original Lilienthal photo.*

(L to R) Billy Vaughn, Martin Palmaz, Rick Larsen (EAA vice president, communities and member programming) with Rick's first aircraft: a Chandelle hang glider. ▶

Billy demonstrating "experimental" glider's lateral control systems. ▽

Raffel had used the year to build a new replica Lilienthal glider, the 1896 Vorflugel, and we'd use this new wing at Oshkosh. This remarkable aircraft features vertical spoilers and wing warping for lateral control, an articulated rudder, and the "Vorflugels"—a kind of automatic dive recovery slat at the leading edge. This complex aircraft would take time to learn to tow safely, and time was not on our side. Add to that shipping delays (the glider did not arrive until June), and the Lilienthal glider was relegated to static display only status for the Oshkosh event. We did some preliminary dune flights with the new wing, but there simply wasn't enough time to learn to tow it.

The Trip

The final pieces for the Legacy of Lilienthal project began to fall in place by mid-June. Our grant application was approved by the Foundation for Free Flight; Doyle Johnson from Blue Water Hang Gliding would bring his scooter tow system from Minnesota; Danny Lange, Karen Sommerfeldt, and Ric Bouwmeester from Hang Glide Wisconsin agreed to bring a Dragonfly, a tandem glider, and Bouwmeester's T2; and the RRRG approved our application for event insurance. It was really going to happen.

I had thought the DLR would cover the transportation of the Lilienthal glider, but that fell through, and Kitty Hawk Kites was able to provide a van with a 24-foot car trailer to haul the 1,000 lb. crate. I would drive the 1,200 miles by myself.

The only issue I had on the way was a bad tire on the trailer in Xenia, Ohio, at 7 p.m. on a Friday. Having posted an "I'm on my way to Oshkosh!" photo on Facebook, I got a call from Paul Glenshaw, wishing me luck with his regret that he wouldn't be able to make the trip. I told him about the bad wheel, and he went into problem-solving mode. Within two hours, I had four different



leads on ways to address my issue on a Saturday morning, including a pilot friend (already in Oshkosh) whose shop was 11 miles from me—he had a friend with a key and the know-how to replace a wheel bearing if I needed it. When you've got pilot friends, you're never at a loss! I got the wheel replaced and was back on the road by noon Saturday.

The Event

We were scheduled to do training demonstration flights every morning, both scooter towing and tandem aerotowing, and aerotowing demonstrations during the evening twilight shows. To have "coverage" at the tent for the

▼ Doyle Johnson with Lilienthal and Rogallo display boards.



(L to R) Doyle Johnson, Jonathan Leal, Markus Raffel, and Billy Vaughn with Foundation for Free Flight sponsorship banner. ▼



entire event, we'd need a lot of help, and we got it from a great team of volunteers. Martin Palmaz came to represent USHPA and brought a great VR headset to show people what flying at Yosemite is like (a great hit!). Randy Leggett agreed to come help for the whole event. Not only did he bring two long-time HG friends, Jonathan Leal and Gus Johnson, but also he was instrumental in keeping us all properly fed, thanks in part to his phenomenal traveling home-away-from-home Bluebird Wanderlodge. Kate West, Felipe Amunategui, Pete Lehmann, Doyle Johnson, and Markus Raffel filled out the cast of characters in the exhibition tent.

If you've never been to Oshkosh for the fly-in, it's huge, regularly drawing over 600,000 people. Something is almost always flying, making OSH the busiest airport in the world for that week.

I arrived Sunday morning, and after negotiating the maze of exhibitors, blocked roads, and helpful volunteers, I found our 20x40 ft. tent (graciously provided by the EAA) and began uncrating the precious cargo. I'd just started untying the tarp and backing screws out of the massive crate when I was approached by a soon-to-be friend, Lee Fischer, who immediately asked if I knew Raffel (small world) and if he could help me uncrate the glider. For the next sweltering hour, Fischer helped me carefully unload the various parts and begin assembly.

Did I mention the tremendous support of the general aviation community? The rest of our crew trickled in that afternoon, and the exhibition tent was ready for opening day on Monday.

The display tent was located on a busy corner at the entrance to the ultralight area and got quite a bit of traffic. We had the Standup Easy Flyer set up outside the main tent, and Lange, Sommerfeldt, and Bouwmeester had their tandem glider and T2 set up, along with a Hang Glide Wisconsin contact table. Palmaz brought a USHPA tent, printed on one side with cutouts for simulated hang gliding and paragliding photos.

We also had Ric Larsen's Chandelle anchored outside, and quite a few old pilots stopped by to share stories from their early hang gliding days. Raffel made two formal presentations about his work with Lilienthal's wings. I did a couple of scheduled talks on Francis Rogallo, and Palmaz did two presentations about the history of our national organization and the evolution of our sports.

The Flying

The short takeaway is that we didn't get to fly as much as we'd hoped—it was a windy week at Oshkosh. The first morning was sacrificed to the required "long briefing" for pilots—an in-depth explanation of FAA exemption rules, pattern protocols, and emergency procedures. None



airtribune.com/red-rocks-wide-open/info

A USHPA SANCTIONED US NATIONALS AND Cat 2 Pre PWC

would apply to our low and slow scooter towing, but attendance was mandatory. The briefing ran so long we missed our early morning flying window.

Lange and Bouwmeester demonstrated tandem aero-towing on a few days during the week, and Bouwmeester wowed the Twilight Airshow crowd with precision take-offs and landings on his T2. The Stand Up Easy Flyer only made one flight during the week. We were grounded by conditions too windy to demonstrate what first flights should look like.

Despite the lack of flying, the effort was wholly worthwhile. The replica Lilienthal glider is a visual show-stopper and drew hundreds of people into our display area—we even got some press in the daily Airventure newspaper. It is probably impossible to gauge the success of the project, but I'm more than pleased that hang gliding and paragliding were represented at the biggest airshow in North America.

The Legacy of Lilienthal project would not have happened without tremendous support. First and foremost, Markus Raffel's passion for reestablishing Lilienthal's place as a great precursor in the pantheon of human flight was key. Paul Glenshaw's vision and the support of his friends Hal Bryan and Rick Larsen, and all the helpful people at the EAA were also instrumental. Kitty Hawk Kites contributed to the effort in a myriad of ways, and it was a generous grant from the Foundation for Free Flight that made the entire trip possible. 

After a long week of talking in the display tent, I delivered the Lilienthal glider to a freight yard in Chicago, and the aircraft went to NASA Ames for wind tunnel evaluations. As of this writing, preliminary data indicate a glide ratio of 6:1 and that the Vorflugels worked as anticipated. Plans are now being finalized to do some free flying of the glider in California after the first of the year.



A Weekend with Soham Mehta

A new pilot friend visits Washington

by Luis Ramos

In a recent visit to the Bay Area, I had the opportunity to meet with local hang glider pilot Soham Mehta. He had sold his T2C to my friend Rick Lai, who then asked me if I could bring it to him on my way back to Seattle. I, of course, said yes. I met Mehta for breakfast, and after eating and mounting the glider on my truck, we said farewell to each other. Little did we know this would just be the beginning of a good friendship.

Having connected through Facebook, Mehta saw the videos that Rick and I posted every time we went flying and was particularly captivated by Rampart Ridge (a seasonal site located in the heart of the Snoqualmie Pass in Washington). He asked Rick if it was possible to come to Seattle to fly with us for a weekend; however, he would also need a loaner glider since he could only fly up for a weekend and couldn't put his glider on a plane. I own three gliders and live close to Rampart (only 30 minutes away), so I coordinated with Mehta to fly.

When Mehta texted, I was about to go on a week-long vacation overseas, so I told him I'd be in touch as soon as I made it back. On my return, I started checking the weather conditions to figure out the right weekend for him to come to visit, and a couple of weeks later, we were making it happen.

In preparation for his arrival, I wrote an introductory email to our local community about his visit and a tentative plan for the weekend, hoping to get everyone motivated to come out and fly with us.

FIRST DAY (FRIDAY)

Based on his scheduled arrival (around 11 a.m. on a Friday), I decided to take Mehta to Tiger Mountain, a site located in the town of Issaquah, only 15 minutes away from my place. Two other pilots (Russ Gelfan and Chi Tang) joined us, though Gelfan (who is bilingual) was planning on flying his paraglider given the light conditions for the day.

Mehta was ecstatic with the beauty of the site and its surroundings. He was particularly excited about flying above trees since this is a rare treat at the places where he glides in California. Unfortunately, there was a bit of an east component in the wind (which isn't favorable at Tiger), thus resulting in sledgers for all of us.

After packing the gliders, we went back to my place to get refreshed and go out with my wife (Ana Redondo) for a little tour of the neighborhood. We took Mehta to Snoqualmie Falls Park, which is only two miles from our house. He enjoyed the majestic views of the waterfalls. We continued to the neighboring town of North Bend to have dinner at an Italian restaurant and wrapped it up with a delicious ice cream in beautiful downtown Snoqualmie.



◀ The author, Ana Redondo and Soham Mehta visit Snoqualmie Falls.



SECOND DAY (SATURDAY)

Saturday was the day Mehta had been anxiously awaiting since we planned to fly at Rampart (the main reason for his trip). We started the day by having arepas, a typical Venezuelan breakfast, cooked by my wife. While we were eating, Rick and others had already been texting and emailing back and forth about the conditions at the Snoqualmie Pass, further building upon the excitement of the day—the weather was already looking quite promising.

We arrived at the LZ around 10:30 a.m. and met with Rick, who was there waiting for us. We showed Mehta the main LZ (we call it “The Carrier Deck” due to its shape) and alternate LZ’s (“The Gobi” to the north and “The Big Lot” to the south). Shortly after, Tim Bugge arrived, and we loaded our gliders on his Toyota Tacoma 4x4 which is well suited for the tough road

up to launch. Other pilots started to show—soon enough, we had a decent crowd of 12 pilots.

We arrived at launch around 12:30 p.m., and the wind was already pumping 10-15mph from the west—a perfect direction for Rampart. We quickly unloaded the gliders and proceeded to talk to Mehta about where the thermals are normally located and where to go once high enough. (At Rampart, there are two big walls to the north of the launch and a mountain called Alta beyond the Second Wall.)

We were all set up and ready to go around 1:30 p.m. The first one off was Jeff Beck, followed by Kurt Hartzog, Russ Gelfan, Robin Briejer, Soham Mehta, Rick Lai, Tim Bugge, Paul Dees, myself, Ron Barbera, Stas Zee, and Andrey Gusev. Climbing out was easy, and we all made it to Alta in super smooth conditions, quite an unusual treat at Rampart Ridge.

The scenery at Rampart is quite impressive, with plenty of alpine lakes and astonishing views of Mount Rainier, the surrounding mountain ranges from Snoqualmie Pass, and the neighboring areas, all dressed up in the beautiful red and yellow colors of fall. Such scenery excited me and being able to share it with 11 other pilots while having one of the best flights of my life was certainly the highlight of my day.

The first pilots started to land around 4:30 p.m. Usually, there is a lot of turbulence directly above the LZ, which makes for a pretty good roller coaster ride while you’re killing altitude, but thanks to the smooth conditions of the day, we were also treated to an easy landing. All 12 pilots flew for at least two hours, and almost everyone landed at

Tim Bugge, Soham Mehta, Jeff Beck and Ron Barbera getting ready to launch at Rampart setup area. Photo by Luis Ramos. ▶



▼ On my way from the Second Wall to Alta. Photo by Luis Ramos



the carrier deck, except for three of us that chose the south field due to the crosswind at the time of landing.

It was my first time making it to Alta (since it's normally quite rowdy after passing the Second Wall). I enjoyed sharing its beautiful airspace and powerful thermals with so many pilots at once. It was particularly satisfying hearing from a couple of them that what inspired them to come out and play that day was my message to the group earlier in the week. It was a truly spectacular day that was rewarding to all of us, and particularly to Mehta, who was able to experience the magic of Rampart (which we normally refer to as "getting a good dose of Vitamin R") during his short visit to the area.

As if this overdose of Vitamin R wasn't enough, my wife and a couple of friends were already waiting

for us at home, with some fine wine and a most delicious dinner. Quite a perfect way of ending a most fabulous day celebrating the epic flight that we just had.



△ (L to R): Soham Mehta, Stas Zee, Russ Gelfan, Kurt Hartzog, Ron Barbera, Rick Lai, Robin Briejer, Paul Dees, Tim Bugge, Luis Ramos.

Photo by Glenn Duval.

THIRD DAY (SUNDAY)

The Sunday plan was quite simple: play it by ear based on the weather. The two options I had in mind were either Dog Mountain (probably the most consistent and reliable site that we have in Washington) or Blanchard (a site farther north, in an area known as "The Rain Shadow"). In the end, the choice was simple: we went to Dog, not only because it had the best fore-

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cast (light winds and no rain till later in the evening) but also because Rick had decided to go there too. And since misery loves company ...

We arrived at Dog around 12:30 p.m., where Rick was already waiting for us at the LZ. He threw his glider in my truck while I gave Mehta the site intro, and we then headed up to launch to assess the conditions. It was dead calm when we arrived at 1 p.m., though it was supposed to get better by 2 p.m., so we unloaded the gliders and started setting up. As time went by, some breeze was developing, and we saw a few birds climbing up in front of launch—we became more hopeful, yet we decided to wait longer for stronger conditions. This was a mistake since the wind died down again and even became light east after 4 p.m. (the ideal wind direction for Dog is west).

Rick decided to take off from the north launch in the light crosswind around 4:30 p.m. before conditions deteriorated further. He sank faster than the Titanic and went straight to the LZ, so neither Mehta nor I felt inspired and decided to break down and head to the airport to catch his flight before the rain arrived.

Despite getting skunked on the last day at Dog Mountain, the main goal of the trip—having an epic flight at Rampart—was accomplished (with an even better flight and involvement from the local community of pilots than what I had originally anticipated). No doubt, Mehta acquired a lot of stories to tell once back in the Bay Area.

As for me, besides the satisfaction of having had one of my best flights ever in all of my years practicing the sport, I had the privilege of hosting a great friend and pilot from California. 🇺🇸

Hang Checks and Check Lists: A case for hard copy

When I learned to fly hang gliders, my instructor required me to follow several checklists. In the beginning, I used a physical list until I could do all my checklists from memory. Several thousand flights later, I was still doing checklists from memory, as were pretty much all the other pilots around me.

But the question is, how well has memory been working for us? Once in a while, we hear stories of a pilot who flew with a helmet unfastened, legs out of the leg loops, the main sail zipper unzipped, or the harness not connected to the glider properly.

Most of the time, when a pilot misses a step, they can work around these problems in flight; however, that is not always the case. Sometimes pilots get hurt or killed from what seems like a simple misstep.

So far our solution to this occasional forgetfulness has been to tell ourselves to remember better going forward. It's not a super inspired method if you stop to think about it. This flawed reasoning likely explains why we in the community keep experiencing forgetfulness, easily preventable accidents, and the occasional death.

Pilots are human and subject to forgetting things. Paper, however, never forgets, is always on, and does not need batteries. In 1935, two crew members died flying the first Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress because the crew forgot to remove gust locks from the controls before takeoff. Since then, the airplane industry has been using mandatory written checklists.

If written checklists can help reduce pilot error, why

A group of hang gliders packing up after a nice autumn evening of soaring Crawfords near Randolph, Utah. ▽





aren't most free flight pilots in the U.S. using them? I think there are several reasons: Pilots are comfortable with occasional forgetfulness or don't think the effort is worth it, and there is no governing body (in the U.S.) requiring pilots to use printed checklists. But pilots have a responsibility to others, not just themselves, to use available tools and methods to minimize the likelihood of incidents, injuries, and death.

I had a flight recently that convinced me to go back to using printed checklists. I was pro towing on my T2C, and I knew I was hooked in hanging on the cart, but for whatever reason, I failed to look up to verify everything was as it should be.

The tow plane started off, and immediately I knew something was wrong. Instead of following the tow

CHECKLISTS

You'll need to make and use your own lists, of course, but I've provided several checklists I use to help you get started. Checklist items are easier to use on paper if kept short, but not too short. I have made some items longer than they appear on my checklists for clarification.

WEATHER (keep checklist in wallet)

- No TFRs (temporary flight restrictions)
- Two forecasts agree
- Wide area radar OK (wind, precipitation, fires, etc.)
- Make sure a site is flyable before traveling there

LEAVING HOME (keep checklist in wallet)

- Wallet, keys, phone
- Glider, battens, control bar, harness
- Helmet, sunglasses, etc.
- Make sure you take everything you need to fly with you

GLIDER (keep checklist with glider)

- Nose plates snug. Nose batten in. Nose cone ready, etc.
- Make sure your glider is set up correctly

EQUIPMENT (keep checklist with glider)

- Harness straps, lines, hardware good
- Parachute snug and ready
- Straps, bags, muted phone in harness, pockets zipped, etc.
- Make sure equipment is ready to fly

PREFLIGHT (keep checklist with glider)

- Leg loops snug, back strap snug
- Carabiner locked in two hang straps
- All harness lines, hang straps straight, etc.
- Make sure you're ready to fly

PRE-LAND* (keep checklist on control bar or down tube)

- Feet free to exit harness
- VG set for landing
- Visor up (my visor distorts ground distance)
- Make sure you're ready to start landing

**This is not a landing checklist but a list of things you want to get done before starting to land*

PACK UP (keep checklist in wallet)

- Glider bagged
- Small things back in vehicle
- Glider strapped twice on vehicle
- Make sure all your things get home

GET HOME (keep checklist in wallet)

- Empty vehicle, put everything away
- Recharge camera, vario, radio
- Process video, log flights, etc.
- Put things away to be ready for next time

plane, I was shooting up and to the right. I released as quickly as possible and then went along for the ride, nose-diving toward the ground from 100 feet in the air. I gave my glider a couple of hard shoves to get the wings level and the nose up. My glider recovered 10

IF I HAD FOLLOWED A PRINTED CHECKLIST, I WOULD HAVE LOOKED UP, SEEN MY HANG STRAPS WERE WRAPPED AROUND MY RIGHT DOWN TUBE, AND AVOIDED NEARLY GETTING MYSELF KILLED.

feet above the ground, wings level doing 55 mph, and then shot up again, still stuck in a right-hand turn. I ended up landing prone with a nasty bruise to my left forearm.

If I had followed a printed checklist, I would have looked up, seen my hang straps were wrapped around my right down tube, and avoided nearly getting myself killed.

Is it worth using printed checklists for thousands of flights that would have been fine without them if they save you from just one flight like this one? I think so. In addition to helping prevent accidents, printed checklists help save us from many other things that, if forgotten, inconvenience us. How often do we hear ourselves and others say things like, “My camera is not charged” or “I forgot to bring it”?

Creating printed checklists is not difficult, but because they naturally evolve, it helps to have your checklists saved on a computer so you can easily make the changes you want and then reprint the list. Also, laminated checklists are nice, but you might consider waiting to laminate them until they are how you want them. For lists I keep in my wallet, it has worked well for me to make them the size of credit cards and use both sides.

There are two easy ways to use checklists. The first

way is to go down the printed checklist doing each item as you get to it. This is great for beginner pilots who have not yet memorized their checklists.

The second, more efficient way is to do the checklist from memory as most pilots do now, and then as the

last step, look at the printed checklist to make sure you completed every step.

I do not recommend using a phone to house your checklists. Phones can be a distraction when you should be focusing on your preflight. Checklists should be kept where they’re used—some are best kept in your wallet, the rest are best kept with your gear.

You can tape checklists to your glider—right where you will be when you need them—so you don’t even have to remember to pull them out. You can also keep them in a pouch on a down tube or keel within easy reach when you are hooked in and in a place where the pouch will not interfere with anything during flight.

Another idea is to store your checklists on a tether that you can let hang down for use and then tuck away before flying, such as in your nose cone or above your glider’s main zipper. However, your pre-land checklist needs to be attached to your glider where you can see it in flight to verify you are ready to start landing. An ideal spot is either on your control bar or a down tube.

Your life, safety, and the peace of mind and ease of your family and friends are worth the minimal effort it takes to use printed checklists. 

CHECKLIST TIPS

TIP> The most critical checklists are Glider, Equipment, Preflight, and Pre-land (see previous sidebar). You could avoid doing the others as printed lists, but why? It's no fun driving hours to a destination and discovering you can't fly because you forgot to pack your battens. If even the glider can be forgotten, which I have seen, anything can be forgotten. Let the checklists help with the little things too.

TIP> Launching and landing procedures can easily be written out as checklists for learning and review. Keep these in your wallet or on your glider. Learn and review them on the ground before going out to launch. After you land, review them to see how well you remembered each individual item on the list.

TIP> Launching and landing happen so fast you need to be in your body in flying mode so you can respond instantly to what is happening in the air and with your glider. You cannot be in your head in checklist mode reciting or reading checklists during these times. Your responses will be too slow, and you will risk hurting yourself unnecessarily.

TIP> If somehow you end up on launch and know you skipped a checklist, get off launch out of the wind and finish getting yourself ready to fly before returning to launch. Always redo your Preflight checklist before going back out to launch.

TIP> Focus on your checklists when you do them. Do not let other people distract you. Know you've done your checklists, so you don't have to second guess yourself later at launch. At the same time, learn to recognize when other pilots are doing their checklists and do not interrupt them. Let them focus and finish.

TIP> Even though pilots are responsible for their own safety, do other pilots a favor and look over their gliders and equipment if they pass you on their way to launch. Several times, I've seen a pilot launch unhooked even with six other pilots standing around the glider. If you do spot an issue, call the pilot's attention to the possible problem and let the pilot figure out what's wrong. This helps the pilot learn.

2022 USHPA AWARDS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Every year, USHPA gives awards and commendations to those making "above-and-beyond" contributions to our sport. You know who's worthy of recognition in your community; please let us know, too.

MAKE YOUR NOMINATION AT:
ushpa.org/page/award-nomination-form
NOMINATIONS ARE DUE OCTOBER 1.

PRESIDENTIAL CITATION - USHPA's highest award.

ROB KELLS MEMORIAL AWARD - Recognizes a pilot, group, chapter or other entity that has provided continuous service, over a period of 15 years or more.

USHPA EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD - Outstanding service to the association by any member or non-member.

NAA SAFETY AWARD - The NAA presents this award to an individual, recommended by USHPA, who has promoted safety.

FAI HANG GLIDING DIPLOMA - For outstanding contribution by initiative, work, or leadership in flight achievement.

FAI PEPE LOPEZ MEDAL - For outstanding contributions to sportsmanship or international understanding.

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR - For conducting successful programs that reflect positively upon the chapter and the sport.

NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE OF THE YEAR (print or web-based).

INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD - Nominations should include letters of support from three students and the local Regional Director. One award per sport per year may be given.

RECOGNITION FOR SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION - For volunteer work by non-members and organizations.

COMMENDATIONS - For USHPA members who have contributed to hang gliding and/or paragliding on a volunteer basis.

BETTINA GRAY AWARD - For the photographer whose work (three examples needed for review) is judged best by the committee in aesthetics, originality, and a positive portrayal.

BEST PROMOTIONAL FILM - For the videographer whose work is judged best by the committee in consideration of aesthetics, originality, and a positive portrayal.

Northern California Leagues

Impressive pilot turnout in the 2021 season

by Jugdeep Aggarwal

Well, if 2020 was a bit of a non-event for competitions and the leagues, 2021 was the antithesis. We had record turnouts at the Sprint League, so much so that at Potato Hill there was not enough space for pilots to get their gear sorted. Thanks to all for making it so successful.

The season was not without issues, with the now seasonal fires shutting down sites in August and September leading to the cancellation of the annual Owens Valley finale for the Cross Country League.

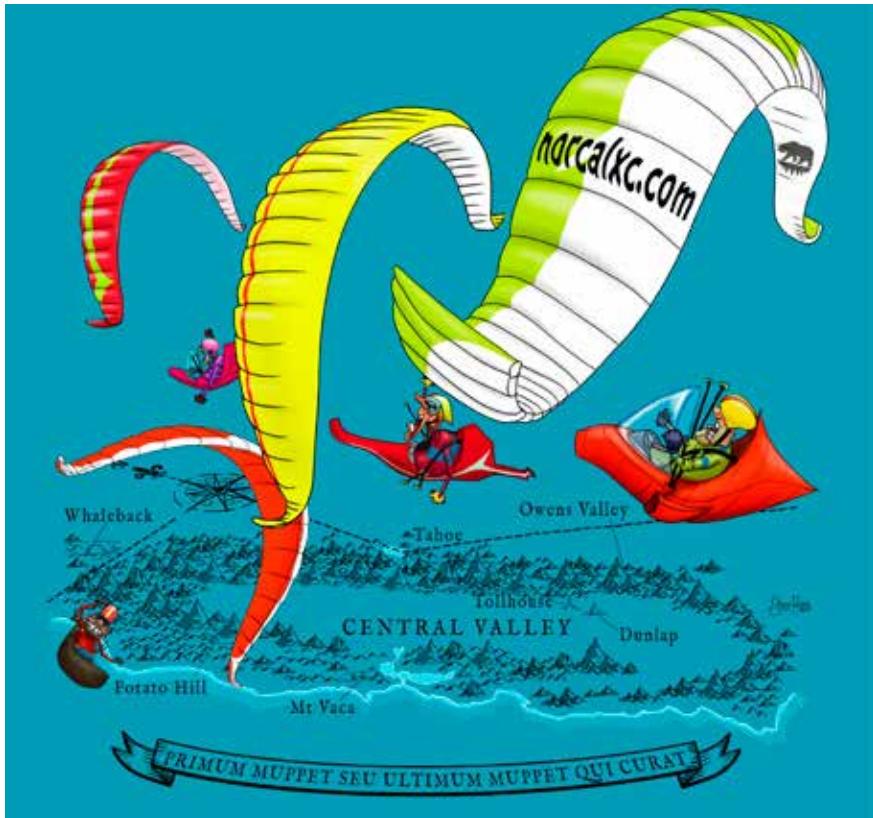
Despite these challenges, the Sprint League was lucky to get in 10 tasks during the year, which was a record. We had a total of 109 pilots register for the Sprint League with 167 tracklogs recorded. Not bad as a season.

The Cross Country League was similarly great, with nine tasks being scored. Events were held at Tollhouse, Dunlap, Potato Hill, and the Owens Valley, resulting in 188 tracklog submissions from 86 pilots.

2021 really was a fantastic year with stunning participation rates, probably as a result of folks being cooped up in 2020 from the pandemic.

Although the Sprint League's setup is similar to the Cross Country League's, it better serves the lower airtime pilot who has had limited cross-country experience. The Sprint is designed to fill in the gap between P3/P4 pilots who have just learned to thermal and seasoned pilots who are familiar with cross-country flying. It serves as a training ground for future XC league pilots who fly EN-A and EN-B gliders with no





requirements for satellite trackers or HAM licenses.

So why are the leagues so successful? Some unquantifiable aspects of the league, such as the mentoring program, the online tutorials, and additional web pages help increase the satisfaction of participants. And the warm camaraderie at the events maintains a high level of positive energy amongst participants. Whatever the source, the format works, and pilots are having a good time while improving their skills.

Our pilot community definitely wants fly-ins to help push pilot skills and explore the local areas of our flying sites. How better to do this than with friends? It seems that once pilots have found the league meets, they continue to return. The camaraderie, the flying, the informal learning environment, as well as bettering personal distances, all contribute to keeping folks coming. With a goal of “a fly-in with a mission,” these league meets also provide a forum for training for larger sanctioned competitions.

With two different leagues, it is easier to cater tasks to the differing pilot abilities. The Sprint League constructs more modest tasks, with distances of less than 35km, normally around the 20km mark. The Cross Country League devises more demanding tasks, with distances typically around 60km but sometimes up to 120km.

Attendees get into the swing of things quickly, substantially reducing the task load of the organizer. Pilots can download waypoints from the web-

◀ (left) Dunlap launch pilot briefing. (right) Ben Wedlock joining the launch queue.

DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE who is motivated to help with the protection and growth of free flight? Someone who can create and communicate goals and then follow through on them?

Please nominate him or her for the **BOARD of DIRECTORS of USHPA**
You may also nominate yourself!
(Sitting directors needn't be re-nominated)

Directors are the cornerstone of USHPA.
They develop policy to support USHPA's mission while representing our members in the sports of hang gliding and paragliding. We're seeking individuals who can see the big picture, are willing to try new things, and have the ability to understand and work for all our pilots, regardless of any individual affiliations.

Director requirements include:

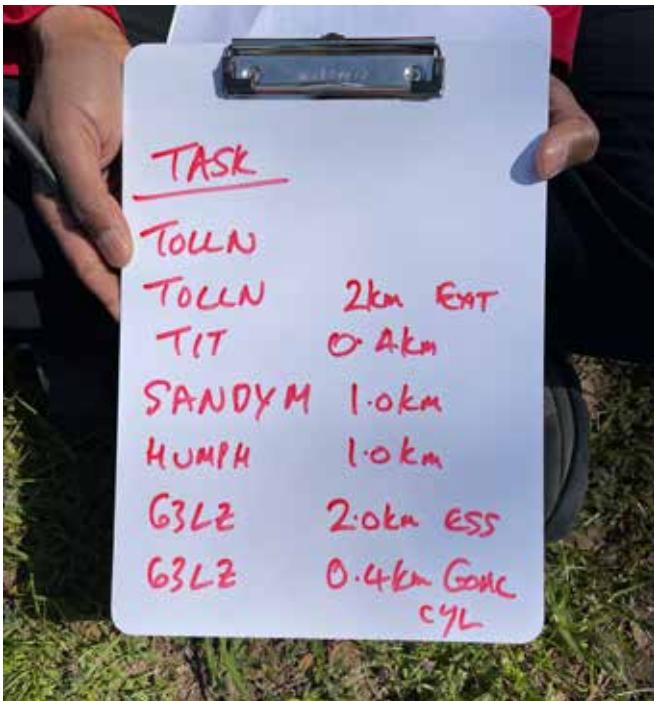
- *Participate in bi-monthly board meetings via teleconference.*
- *Actively collaborate with committees.*
- *Represent USHPA members, both regionally and nationally.*

Submit your nomination
BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1st
at ushpa.org/page/call-for-nominations

USHPA welcomes and encourages your participation in this process. We also encourage members with unique viewpoints (such as women pilots, younger or college-age pilots, instructors, etc.) to run and contribute their valuable perspective to the organization.



- ◀ **Dan Z looking happy at Tollhouse.**
- ▼ **XC League task from Tollhouse.**
- ▼ **All the info you need for the task at Tollhouse.**



site before the weekends. Participants sign in and pay by PayPal before the event and submit their tracklogs via XC Demon in order to be scored. This procedure has run really well, providing a smoother experience for all. Keeping track of the large number of pilots is difficult; however, the buddy system has proven to be a success, allowing pilots to verify the safety of their buddies.

The dedicated website containing all information for the league has proven to be a useful resource for keeping pilots informed throughout the season: <https://norcalxc.com/> Several additions to the website—online pilot registration using a Google form, a page directed at “first-timers” about what to expect, and several pages on strategies and tips—have helped everyone (<https://norcalxc.com/strategies.html>).

Aaron Price, who runs the SoCal league, has been working on a software package called XC Demon to help with various aspects of the league, including pilot registration, event signup, scoring, pilot tracklog submission, and verification. This is a fantastic platform, and I encourage those who want to run any type of race-to-goal event to use it.

I have been running this league for over ten years. Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects is watching the progression of pilots over the years. The league meets definitely take over where formalized training stops by providing pilots a chance to fly with, and learn from, very skilled pilots.

I look forward to more leagues being organized around the country to help pilot quality continue to improve and reduce pilot attrition. With the 2022 season kicking off, I hope to see new pilots coming out to the league to learn what they've been missing! Keep it fun, and see you in the air. 



The perfect partner for playing locally,
exploring cross-country
or starting out in freestyle.

Fun for everyone!

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info@bgd-usa.com

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 2021 WINNERS

OPEN CLASS

Winner : **William DeLey**
Second : **Chris Pak**
Third : **Jugdeep Aggarwal**

SPORT CLASS

Winner : **Jugdeep Aggarwal**
Second : **Chuck Leathers**
Third : **Guido Zavagli**

SPRINT LEAGUE

Winner : **Ismo Karali**
Second : **Dzmitry Vadalazhski**
Third : **Pamela Kinnaird**



TOWASIS CAROLINA TOW CLUB

A club's unique solution to active safety

by Koen Vancampenhoudt



Towasis tow training weekend at Laney's Airfield, NC. Photo by Jared Yates. △

■ No matter how conservative you are in your decision-making, you cannot be a safe and confident pilot if you are not trained in controlling and managing your wing throughout its full normal flying range—and outside of it. This muscle-memory training is called active safety, and the best way to develop it is by SIV training over water.

With the desire to create a safe environment for such training in the Carolinas, as well as establish a local flying community, three years ago we set up a non-profit called the “Carolina Tow Club”—soon rebaptized “Towasis.”





▲ Koen Vancampenhoudt setting up for landing. Photo by Denis Soverini.

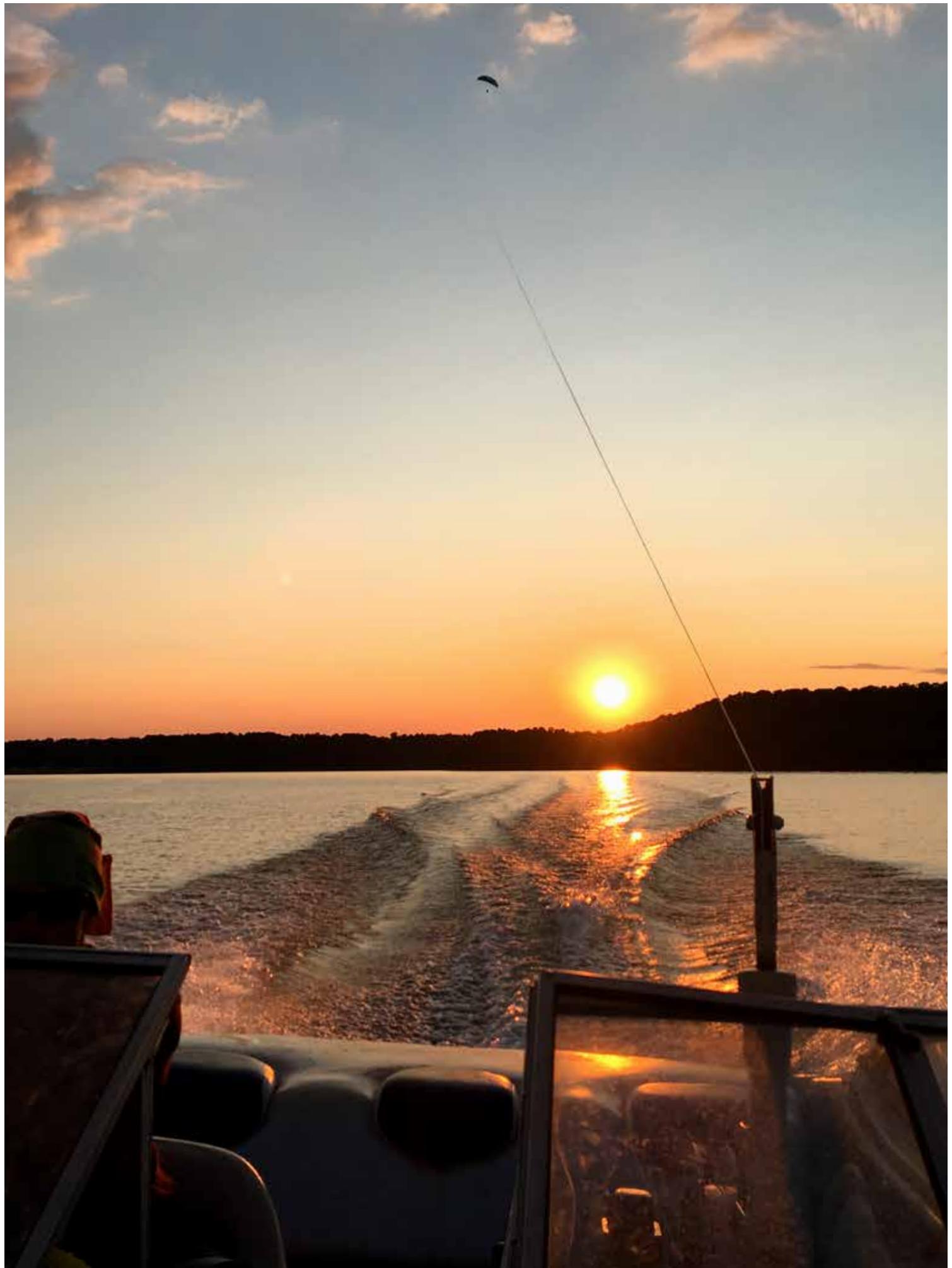
A pilot towing into the sunset above Lake Hartwell. Photo by Koen Vancampenhoudt. ▶

Our 15 members are co-owners of a boat and a Cloudstreet winch, which contains enough line to tow us up to 4,000 feet above Lake Hartwell (located on the South Carolina/Georgia border). Amongst our members, we have a few acro-aficionados, some XC junkies, recreational free-flyers, and even paramotor pilots, all with a wide range of experience levels with various goals. Woody and I were competing to be the first to perform an Infinite Tumble (Woody won with three full turns). Ryan, Jared, and Subodh sweated through their first full stalls. Blake has been mastering SATs and wingovers. Robert pulled his first full frontals, and more to boot. One thing we all have in common—we've all progressed and become better, safer pilots. Goal #1: check!

Throughout the club's existence, the benefits of the formula have been amply proven, and it's provided some of the most memorable paragliding experiences for many of us. For me, paragliding, in general, is such a solitary activity. We drive to the hill, prepare our gear, focus on the conditions, make a mental flight plan, launch ASAP, and fly off to land somewhere who knows how far away. The next concern is the retrieve, and then back home for dinner with the family. There is very little room for interaction with other pilots.

Towing, however, is a team sport. We all take turns at driving and towing (if rated) and piloting, so we all have equal flying opportunities. We are all responsible for the safety of the pilot on the line and for making the tow as high and efficient as possible in a variety of conditions, ideally dropping the pilot off "in the box." This requires training, cooperation, patience, feedback, and listening to and otherwise respecting each other. Yes, things can and do heat up sometimes, and it's been a learning curve, but I can genuinely say that among our members, we have developed a mutual trust and friendship that extends beyond the mere tow club. Check goal #2!

Goal #3 (developing the immense XC potential in the surrounding flatlands) is still an undeveloped gold mine. My personal goal is to fly 100+ miles from Lake Hartwell. This is perfectly doable on a good spring day. Also on my bucket list is a "tour of the lake" (50-80 mile triangle). This hasn't happened yet because, surprisingly, out of a group of 15 people, it's tough to





4,000 feet above Lake Hartwell. Photo by Koen Vancampenhoudt. ▲

get enough people to come out so that a few of us can fly off into the horizon while others continue towing.

The first three years of operation have been an interesting experience, a blend of solid pilot progress with some frustrating mechanical setbacks. Boats really do spell B-O-A-T (Break Out Another Thousand), but the good thing is, sharing a \$1,500 repair bill among 15 members is not as painful.

In the end, the truth is even if you live a six to eight hour drive away as several of our members do, if you tow just two to three times a year, the cost of your Towasis co-ownership will be much lower than getting the equivalent training at a commercial SIV operator. Plus, the friendships and trust developed within the group have been an essential component to our success.

TESTIMONIALS

Jared Yates, Towasis Treasurer: “As a long-time airplane pilot, I started flying paragliders to better learn how the air moves. What makes paragliding special is that it’s not something I can do on just any day. Everything has to be right: the wind strength, wind direction, lapse rate, retrieve logistics. It’s magical when it all comes together, but it doesn’t come together very often in my life.

The first time I met Koen, he was already brainstorming about the benefits and obstacles of forming a tow club. Tow launching appealed to me as a way to open up more flying opportunities. Boat launching scratches off several of the limitations above. Wind direction doesn’t matter as much

▼ Our equipment: an old 18-foot inboard/outboard boat, and a brand new Cloudstreet Superwinch.

▼ A pilot getting towed up. Photos by Koen Vancampenhoudt.



because the lake drives a micro-climate at launch. When we formed the club, I was a very inexperienced P2 pilot with one SIV under my belt. I wasn't thinking about "acro progression" or making big XC flights. I just wanted to fly and do paraglider things with other paragliding people.

Forming the club required some organizational and administrative work, which come easy for me. I was excited to help the club get going. I knew it would be an excellent way to meet other pilots but underestimated the bond that forms between pilots when undertaking activities that put us at risk. We need to be able to trust each other, and that creates a special kind of friendship.

As a tow tech, I've learned about the dynamics of towing, how to operate a boat and winch, how to deliver good, safe tows, and how to fix some of the inevitable crises that pop up when we push the equipment hard all day. As a pilot, the tow club has enabled learning opportunities in wing control like intentional collapses, stalls, wingovers, and spirals. If I get a new wing, I can take it to the lake and get acquainted with it, inspiring confidence before taking it to the mountains.

The best benefit of the club has been spending time with qualified pilots, receiving feedback on how I'm flying and how I can progress. I'm still working on fundamentals that will enable future progression, like maintaining control through the stall entry and exit, energy management entering and exiting spirals, and not getting airsick

"The first three years of operation have been an interesting experience, a blend of solid pilot progress with some frustrating mechanical setbacks."



- ◀ Oh-ow! Reserve!! Rhythmic SAT gone awry. Photo by Koen Vancampenhoudt.
- ▼ The Towasis group.

so easily. I'm glad that the tow club is a part of my life, and I appreciate that someone with Koen's optimism and drive is available to help keep it running."

Robert Lee, the newest member of Towasis: "I joined the Tow Club in 2021. I'd heard the call for potential new members and jumped at the opportunity. I live close to the lake, and this would be the closest thing to a home site for me. I admit I was pretty enthusiastic about the Tow Club. I got a Tow Operator rating from Jaro Krupa in Chicago and became one of the club's most active members. All too soon, though, the last towing session of 2021 arrived. Woody and Koen towed me up to over 3,000 feet. I did the elementary maneuvers and wing management that are my current place in this journey of progression—small steps into deeper spirals and good exits, patient in teaching my 63-year-old body new tricks. My turn gets no less focus and enthusiasm than any other! Now I'm already looking forward to an early start to the 2022 season!" 

Towasis is not yet an official USHPA chapter. However, they are exploring the option to gain the chapter benefit of coverage for tow devices. If you or your club are looking to start your own towing program, link up with USHPA to explore your options!



A Hang Gliding Memoir

The final segment > Part 6

by John Armstrong

I'm not a writer, but I am writing. I kept detailed logbooks for all my flights from which I can review my 42 years of flying hang gliders. Lately, I have been putting my experiences down on paper. It has been a chore to do. Often, when I am not sleeping well and wake in the middle of the night, I'll get up, go to my computer, open my old, worn, and ratty logbooks, start typing (I'm not good at that either), and I'll add some more words to another draft segment, like the one below. I am very proud of my flying and adventurous years, as I am sure you are of yours. Wow ... what a trip.

■ The renowned Sugarbush Soaring Association

in mountainous Warren, Vermont, was only about 20 miles from my Montpelier home. This area of Vermont's Green Mountain Range, which runs north and south along the entire length of the state, is excellent for soaring. I joined the SSA in the early 1990s, took flying lessons, became a member of the Board of Directors (secretary), passed the FAA sailplane written exam and flight test, and proudly became a licensed sailplane pilot. The club had nine sailplanes for members to use, from slow beginner ones to high-performance single and double fiberglass ships. Sailplanes use ridge lift and thermals to stay aloft, and they can cover a lot of ground; however, everything is much more formal and strict about abiding by tight FAA rules.

Another new form of aviation for me was flying a motorized hang glider, a model called the BrightStar SWIFT. SWIFT stood for Swept Wing with Inboard Flap for Trim. Flying it did not require a pilot medical exam as it was classified as an ultralight. The SWIFT was dif-

ferent from hang gliders; it was a rigid-winged, tailless, foot launchable, ultralight sailplane. No FAA license was required, and it could be motorized. It was not controlled by weight-shift but rather by moveable surfaces on the wings. It had a glide ratio of around 25:1. Also, the SWIFT I flew had a 3-cylinder Konig 25HP engine that could be shut down when soaring and restarted in the air when desired. Boy, oh boy, did I have big plans.

My first flights in the SWIFT had a lot of "new stuff" for my brain to absorb like watching the airspeed indicator, tachometer, and engine temperature gauge, but I learned quickly. In my first season of powered hang gliding, I accumulated 3 hours and 50 minutes of flight time over 13 flights. I flew my TRX hang glider only twice that year.

On April 24, 1997, I got the SWIFT out of the hangar, having left it set up all winter. I did a little prep work, cleaned it, fixed a loose wire so the fuel gauge would work, put air in the tires, filled it with gasoline, and started the engine. The next day, I took it up for my first flight of the year. I set it up very carefully, but I forgot to preflight using my written checklist. I had failed to install the tabulators onto the leading edges of each wing. The instructions warn to never fly without them since they help the glider recover from a spin. I didn't realize until landing that I had forgotten the tabulators. Luckily, I'd flown without incident!

My overall goal with this particular flying machine was to use it to its full potential as a thermalling XC sailplane, with an engine for getting airborne and available for thrust if necessary to maintain flight. I wanted to do XC soaring flights, set some personal records, and have fun doing it. Late June of that year was my first flight departing one airstrip (Knapp Airport) and landing at another (Warren). But July 5, a pleasant 45-minute journey, turned out to be my last ever SWIFT flight. I had made 22 flights total, for 9 hours of flight time, when, after a few weeks of not feeling well, I was diagnosed with acute

lymphocytic leukemia.

The cancer put a stop to most of my activities—all forms of flying, hiking, skiing, boating, water skiing, mowing the lawn, working, everything. I was immediately admitted to the hospital for 30 days, and I started chemotherapy, which would continue for two years. Over that period, I was in and out of the hospital and almost died a couple of times. But, by gosh, I was lucky. I beat the odds and became a cancer survivor!

It took years to fully regain my strength. Some of the chemo drugs caused other problems, such as avascular necrosis resulting in joint damage. I needed a full knee replacement, and I couldn't run afterward. According to the doctors, I could not "jump off them cliffs" anymore. Still, I wasn't done yet. After not hang gliding off mountains for 16 years, I eventually learned to tow into the sky instead.

In the late fall of 2013, my wife, Melly, and I decided to leave the upcoming cold Vermont winter and head to Florida for the season. We drove down and rented a condo for four months in Minneola. Wallaby Ranch, a year-round aerotow hang gliding flight park, was only about a 25-minute drive south. On the morning of December 3, 2013, I took a tandem flight with owner/instructor Malcolm Jones. We flew up to 2,200 feet AGL in my first towing experience in a hang glider. The following week I flew again; five aerotows total, and Malcolm okayed me to fly solo. I was 72 years young and happily back in the saddle!

Thermalling after the 16-year lapse came back surprisingly quickly. On February 4, on a rented Falcon 170 for my eleventh flight in Florida, I got a tow up to 2,200 feet, released in a nice thermal, and got up to cloudbase. I really enjoyed that flight. For that winter in Florida, my goal was to get to cloudbase, and I DID IT! There's no place like cloudbase, right?

I have numerous amazing memories from that winter:



circling at cloudbase with other pilots, eagles and hawks flying with me, flying over the famous Citrus Tower in Clermont, ducking sailplanes, and seeing the Green Swamp. I had done it—I returned to hang gliding in 2013 after 16 years with no flying. I very much enjoyed getting back into the sport. I renewed relationships with some pilot friends, and I met and flew with many new ones. Over that first Florida winter, I logged 21 flights, all aerotow. The Florida air is nice to fly—the thermal air is pretty gentle under those big, fluffy, mellow, low-elevation cumulus clouds. It was so good to be an active hang glider pilot once again!

In the summer of 2014, I bought my seventh hang glider: a used, bright red 195 Falcon. Then, I started buying all the other equipment, piece by piece: a WW Z5 harness, a 24-gore parachute, a Flytech 6015 vario (which, after one flight, I returned for the better 6030 model), MnM wheels, and a tow package.

On July 20, 2014, I drove to Morningside Flight Park to fly my new equipment; this was the first of many fun flights at Morningside that summer. I took a trip out to Colorado to visit my good friend Jake Schwaiger and attend the first Colorado Airmens Fly-in at Villa Grove. I didn't bring gear but had a wonderful time visiting with the 165 pilots in the dry, high desert at the valley edge of the 13,000-foot tall Sangre de Cristo mountain



range. On one of the several stage shows one evening after the day's flying, Jake and I, along with a handful of other pilots, were honored for having reached 17,999 feet during our flying careers.

Like that, I had completed a full year back hang gliding again. I re-learned a lot, and I enjoyed it all again. I learned to aerotow, towed at four top-notch air parks (30 tows), purchased my seventh hang glider, and accumulated ten flights in my Falcon 195 and one in a Falcon 4. Yes, I was back in the saddle again!

In 2014/15, Melly and I truly became "snowbirds," migrating south for the winters. On February 27, 2015, I purchased a new WW 155 Sport 2; I liked flying the Falcon 195, but wanted more performance, and on March 3, 2015, I had my first flight on my brand new, crinkly WW 155 Sport 2. It took me a little time to get used to the new glider. It was a pain to set up, and then after landing, tired from the work of thermalling, I found breaking the glider down in the hot sun was quite exhausting. Worth it, though!

On my 72nd birthday, on April 18, 2015, I had a 35-minute flight with about 20 other pilots at Wallaby Ranch; that was my last flight of the winter season. It was good to be there. Florida is a top-notch place to fly. Back in Vermont, I didn't do any flying during the summers.

Over the course of the winter of 2016, I became more and more familiar with the Sport 2. I found that I was relaxing in the harness more and had a less tight grip. However, this was also the season I had my first lockout

on tow! In another near-miss in late February, while flying about 2,000 feet over the LZ at Quest Flight Park, I heard a tug engine noise nearby. As I looked for it, the tug suddenly appeared from behind, 50 feet left and 50 feet below my location. Though we were going in the same direction, it was going at tow speed (faster) and climbing. It quickly climbed to my height and 200 feet ahead of me. As it passed, the glider it was towing appeared at my left. The pilot and I looked straight at each other. That was a very close brush with disaster! Later, I talked about the incident with the tug pilot who apparently didn't see me! Luck was on our side that day! That was a close miss.

That winter, after 20 flights and 11 hours of total airtime on the Sport 2, I felt like moving onward. On March 4, 2016, I left our house in Umatilla, Florida, and drove my VW Camper to Lookout Mountain Flight Park to pick up a new (to me) glider, a used Wills Wing U2 145. Unfortunately, it wasn't until the end of March that I, at last, got my first flight in my new U2 145. I had several flights over the next month, some rough and some smooth.

Then, on April 28, I had a great flight—right up until the end. I flew one hour and 35 minutes, flying 4,537 feet MSL at cloudbase; it was so cold I saw my breath. My vario indicated I gained 10,000 feet on the flight. After getting to cloudbase, I flew around the LZ and farther away from it than ever before. There was a ton of lift everywhere, and I was often using full VG. This U2 145 was opening up new territory for me. I hadn't flown XC at all in my four years in Florida. My age was a significant factor in keeping me always in range of the LZ, but I was getting somewhat eager to take a chance at it. I had been scoping out distant places for good landing locations.

After getting back to the LZ at Quest Air, I had a challenging time getting down. The thermals rising over the

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WILLS WING
Sport 2 155
Falcon 2 140
Falcon 4 170, 195

MOYES
Gecko 155 Pro Malibu2 166
Gecko 170 Pro Malibu2 188

AEROS
Target 13

AIRBORNE
Blade Race 152

FLY AT THE COTTON GIN, NC

MORNINGSIDE
A KITTYHAWK KITES FLIGHT PARK



THAT TURNED OUT TO BE THE LAST FLIGHT OF MY HANG GLIDING CAREER. I DIDN'T KNOW THAT AT THE TIME, BUT THAT'S HOW IT ALL CAME TO BE—WHAT A WAY TO END MY FLYING DAYS.

field were strong and plentiful. I was already tired and nearing exhausted. I fought to get down to approach altitude several times, but then I would get carried aloft again against my will. I was worried about running out of energy to fly in these strong conditions. Finally, I got low enough to make an approach. Starting from over the pond east of the field, I cleared the tall trees at the edge of the LZ by about 50 feet; then, crossing over the LZ, the lift still kept me from descending like I needed to. I ran out of field at the southwest end and was approaching the woods. My choices were to let the glider crash into the grass or fly it into the trees. I crashed into the grass.

My downtubes hit the ground, and the glider immediately flattened down over me with broken downtubes. I was lying prone, both arms straight back next to my sides. A flying wire was strung over my helmet, holding my head down to the ground. As I lay there, pinned to the ground, I began checking myself out. Was anything wrong? Broken? Slowly, I considered my legs, arms, torso, and head, but the way I was pinned down, I really couldn't move. I was about 800 feet away from the nearest person at the field, and I lay there for about five minutes while he ran to my aid. He lifted the glider off me so I could eventually rise and get out of my harness. I was all right! No injury.

That turned out to be the last flight of my hang gliding career. I didn't know that at the time, but that's how it all came to be—what a way to end my flying days. From 1975, the early Rogallo days, to 2016, I loved every minute. I would certainly do it the same way again if I could. Every flight you don't take is one you'll never get. Keep that in mind! 

Keeping the Dream Alive

Preserving Mt. Sentinel site access in Missoula, Montana

The voice in my head repeats: "Walk-Jog-Run. Wings level. Breathe!" With my mentors (Paul Roys and Karl Hallman) on my wires, I can't believe I'm about to fly over my town from a mountain I've been looking up at for 25 years. I'm humbled and feeling small but confident and certain of my purpose at the same time.

"CLEAR!" I shout. One step forward, and I know there is no going back now. My hang strap goes tight as I accelerate, and in a moment I'm thousands of feet over the Clark Fork River and Interstate 90. As I bank over Missoula, a city of 75,000 inhabitants, I wonder if anyone I know is looking up at me.

The flight is short, just a morning sled ride, and after a well-timed flare, I'm on the ground in the LZ, vibrating with excitement. I've done it—I've flown a hang glider off of Mt. Sentinel's iconic summit. I feel tears well up as

I think, "My dream has been realized, and I will never be the same."

■ Nearly 30 years ago I first laid eyes on what is now my home flying site: Mt. Sentinel. I had come to Missoula, Montana for college and remember picking up the university-published planner called Bear Facts. On the cover, the school mascot, Monte (a cartoon grizzly bear), appeared flying a hang glider high above the mountain with the M on it. Having arrived with still-potent childhood dreams of flight, when I saw that hang gliding bear, I knew I had come to the right place.

As fortune would have it, 24 years would pass before I first flew from the bald summit of Mt. Sentinel. And little did I know, I would be flying a paraglider at the time, my hang glider flight following a couple of years later.

Once I became part of the local free flight community, I learned that Mt. Sentinel possesses a long history of free flight, holding the title of the oldest registered inland hang glider launch in the United States. Bold Rogallo pilots launched from her flanks as early as the '60s.





Today, Missoula's convergent winds and large valley continue to offer smooth and consistent, almost coastal, conditions on the grassy, west-facing site.

Unlike many flying sites, the management of Mt. Sentinel is complicated by four agencies involved in overseeing its functionality: the City of Missoula, the University of Montana, the U.S. Forest Service, and Missoula International Airport Air Traffic Control (who pilots must call before heading up the mountain). Visiting pilots are often caught off-guard by the many rules and site protocols locals have grown accustomed to—but I guess it is the price we pay to fly such a legendary site at the edge of town, just minutes from our homes.

To fly a hang glider from the university-owned summit, a pilot must drive a truck (slowly, with a USFS Special Use Permit hardcopy on the dashboard) up Crazy Canyon Road, a gated, shared-use, dirt two-track, enjoyed by numerous dog walkers, hikers, runners, and mountain bikers.

In mid-summer, many a paraglider pilot will opt for the 30-minute ride up Crazy Canyon over the hour-long slog on the scorching treeless west face of Mt. Sentinel which is angled like a solar panel in the midday sun. The option of driving up to launch is necessary for any pilot with a disability or tandem passenger who would like to enjoy free flight in Missoula.

At the boundary between Forest Service and univer-

sity land, the road turns into a steep 4x4 jeep trail for the final half-mile ending with a 300-foot climb to the summit launch site. In the spring of 2020, university legal staff deemed this eroded and deeply rutted stretch as "unsafe for use" and closed it just as we were getting excited about driving our gliders to launch.

And so the effort began to rehabilitate the jeep trail and regain road access to the top of Mt. Sentinel. Club members Paul Roys and Karl Hallman proposed a project to the Foundation for Free Flight to not only rehabilitate the road but also restore the landing zone by removing an increasingly large dump site and dirt pile. These remnants from the construction of the University's softball field had greatly constricted the final approach window to about two hang glider widths, prompting an increase in rating requirement for hang glider pilots due to the new hazard in the landing zone.

Getting this project off the ground involved an incredible amount of time and energy invested by the above-mentioned pilots. Without their efforts and the generous funding from the Foundation for Free Flight, this project would not have come to fruition. The road-work and LZ restoration not only involved the costly expense of a heavy equipment contractor, but also pro bono time from both a local arborist (Emily Garlough of Missoula Tree Preservation) for tree removal and a civil engineer (Tom Anderson of Eli & Associates) for a design consultation. In addition to all of this, the

Happy volunteers. ▶

▼ *Road to launch before and after.*



final push to completion involved club members who volunteered hours of labor to install water bar erosion control on the road.

The road and LZ rehabilitation project was completed in spring of 2022, just in time to celebrate the 50th year of free flight on Mt. Sentinel! After allowing a couple of weeks of rain to mitigate dust and settle the newly graded road, I enjoyed a ride to the top in a truck stacked with gliders and full of smiling pilots, ready to realize our dreams again and fly from the top of Mt. Sentinel.

This project would not have been possible without the generous donation from the Foundation for Free Flight, and all of the past, present, and future pilots of Missoula. I can't thank you enough for helping reopen our home site.

Many newer pilots don't realize that "free flight" isn't really free. I was oblivious to what it takes to keep a site operational when I was a fledgling. Site preservation and maintenance take an incredible amount of time and effort, and the "heavy lifting" of site preservation is often performed by a small handful of dedicated pilots. These invaluable members of our flight community spend their free time dealing with local politics, bureaucracies, landowners, contracts, and funding; none of which any sane pilot would call fun.

One thing I've learned about free flight is that we are all connected through our common interests. Most pilots enjoy visiting new sites and connecting with locals for a site briefing or going to fly-ins or competitions

to experience other flying environments. So, how do you get involved in site preservation and maintenance without sacrificing all of your airtime? A donation to the Foundation for Free Flight is a great start! 🇺🇸



△ *The author launches from Mt. Sentinel.*



The Recreation Risk Retention Group was created by pilots for pilots. We got your back.





SKYDIVER "BOOBY TRAPS"

*An addendum to
speedflying instruction*

by Carl Weiseth

As speedflying continues to expand rapidly within the U.S., an increasing number of skydivers are transitioning into the free flight community with an interest in foot-launching speedwings. Although skydivers' canopy experience may accelerate components of their learning curve when it comes to speedwings, it can also contribute to bad habits and overconfidence which have led to their regrettable reputation of being especially accident-prone.

Speedflying mentors and instructors seeking to help skydivers transition into free flight should exercise heightened vigilance and be prepared to combat overconfident decision-making and overly assertive toggle inputs. Using anecdotes and examples, instructors should highlight the differences between the two sports and encourage prior skydivers to view speedflying as a truly unique discipline, albeit under a visually similar canopy.

Below is a list of six common “booby traps” often encountered by skydivers progressing into speedflying—as well as some examples of appropriate corrections to offer on each topic.

1. *Front riser inputs*

Skydivers (particularly “swoopers”) are often accustomed to pulling on their front risers to generate speed. On speedwings, this may result in frontal collapses with violent and unpredictable re-inflations. It is imperative to impart this knowledge early and often in prior skydivers’ speedflying progression. Make it clear to crossover students to never grasp the front risers while in flight on a speedwing. Speedwings are not designed for front riser input under any circumstances.

2. *Swoop landings*

Skydivers often approach speedflying with some level of

swooping experience, which can lead them, consciously or unconsciously, to presume that their speedwing will behave similarly to their smaller skydiving canopy. However, speedwings have very different dive and recovery arcs than skydiving canopies. The depth perception and muscle memory that a skydiver may have spent years assimilating on a skydiving canopy may prove misleading on a speedwing. Perhaps more specifically, the prior experience can prime skydivers learning to speedfly to come out too low on final turns into landing and subsequently pop up too high when providing over-eager brake inputs.



Dante Wardlaw preparing his landing swoop. ▶

◀ Carl Weiseth practices his South Side slide. Photo by Ian Rinefort.



3.



Mechanical turbulence

Given how and where most skydivers land (open fields), they often have little to no experience anticipating wind-rotor and mechanical turbulence caused by contours or obstacles in the landscape. When instructing on this point, it's critical to stress how differently the flow of wind may affect a canopy over a three-dimensional landscape in a mountain environment instead of in a flat, two-dimensional drop-zone. Encourage skydivers to approach the instructional topics on wind and rotor with a beginner's mindset, despite the fact they may have previous experience skydiving and landing in moderate headwinds.

4. Thermic conditions

Most drop zones run jumps through the heat of the day, often amid even the most unstable, thermic afternoons. This can create a false sense of perceived safety in midday flying and an incomprehension of the danger that strong thermals present when flying a small canopy close to the landscape. With the exception of winter speedriding, it is almost always advisable to avoid midday speed flights—particularly on thermic, unstable days with direct sunshine. The windows of acceptable flying time (generally morning and evening) vary widely from site to site. Visiting or new speedwing pilots should consult with experienced local pilots before

assuming it's safe to fly after the sun has begun to warm the landscape.

5. Flying/landing on rear risers

Many experienced skydivers are accustomed to piloting and landing their canopies using their rears or C's. Comfort with piloting a skydiving canopy on rears should NOT translate to comfort piloting a speedwing on rears. Skydive canopies are much more docile and deflation-resistant—typically exhibiting significantly greater passive safety. Ozone has released a video providing a comprehensive summary of the appropriate perspectives for rear-riser flying on speedwings, easily found with a quick YouTube search.

6. Heavy-handed piloting

Extensive experience skydiving can cause many new speedwing pilots to initially provide overly aggressive control inputs. This tendency stems from the lack of weight-shift sensitivity on most skydive harnesses and the greater pull-weights and significantly lesser brake-sensitivity of skydiving canopies. These aggressive inputs can result in stalling or spinning a speedwing or steep and dramatic turns back towards the hillside or the ground.

Comparable-sized speedwings are much more sensitive to weight shift and brake inputs than a skydiving



◀ **Skydiver Dante Wardlaw.**

Photos by Everett Schwartz.

canopy. This will necessitate deliberate work to retrain an experienced skydiver's muscle memory over an extended period of time. That way, in moments of stress or panic, a skydiver's reflexively heavy-handed muscle memory doesn't accidentally spin or stall the wing. All turns should be initiated with weight shift and accompanied by smooth, tapered, and sparing brake inputs.

This same tendency can also manifest as a cascade of repeating over-corrections in which a pilot constantly has to provide opposing inputs to counteract initially heavy-handed brake-pulls. Prior skydivers should practice initiating turns with weight-shift and providing the minimum amount of brake pressure needed to accomplish the desired directional change. Pilots should note if oscillations or directional changes exceed their initial intentions and attempt to scale back the pressure applied to brake toggles to match the desired trajectory without the need to counter-correct.

As an increasing number of skydivers continue to bump over to speedflying, the broader free flight community must provide positive encouragement towards formal instruction—even for highly experienced skydivers accustomed to swooping tiny canopies. It's also important that both formal instructors, as well as friends and mentors, continue to prioritize highlighting the differences between speedflying and skydive canopy

piloting and nudge transitioning skydivers to exercise caution applying their previous knowledge base to this rapidly evolving new sport. 

Carl Weiseth is the founder of Speedfly.com and has flown speedwings throughout the U.S. and internationally. He led the effort to define and develop the USHPA Speedflying Rating System and co-authored the accompanying speedflying-specific syllabus content for the U.S. It may potentially also be used for speedflying programs in Canada and other countries. He now resides in Utah at Point of the Mountain, where he teaches and promotes speedflying to the public.



Arizona Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association

by Amanda Winther

When winter arrives in the Northern Hemisphere, many USHPA pilots start looking to friendlier skies down south and along the coast. But there's another state you shouldn't skip over if you're looking for winter flying.

The Arizona Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (AZHPA) website describes Arizona as "both inhospitable and remote. Desert heat, mountain snow and cold, flash flooding, and dangerous wildlife are all possibilities."

Yes, Arizona is dry and dusty and can get truly nuclear. But, if you spend just a little bit of time there, you'll find something else. You'll discover a big state with a variety of high-quality thermaling, ridge soaring, and glass-off sites, nearly year-round flying, and a small, close-knit,

welcoming community. It's also home to some of the most incredible sunsets in the world.

Variety of sites and year-round flying

When it comes to flying, Arizona has something for everyone: from high altitude mountain launches with big XC potential, like Mingus Mountain and Mount Edden, to ridge soaring and glass-off sites like Apache Maid and Shaw Butte, to P2-friendly sites (you'll still need to get with the locals!) like Merriam Crater Flight Park and South Mountain. And, of course, the state has plenty of potential for towing in the flats. There's even a small speed and mini wing community.

While the flying does go year-round, September, October, November, February, March, and April tend to be



Group of pilots flying Apache Maid during Cinco de Flyo, 2019. Photo by Brad Balser. ▲

▼ (left) Hangie setup on Mingus Mountain launch. Photo by Brad Balser. (right) A group of AZHPA pilots in training kiting at a local park (Chris Brey, Doug Hale, Marc Leathan, and Blake Hupfner). Photo by Chandler Papas.



the most consistently flyable. But don't be surprised if you find yourself soaring for multiple hours in December or January, either.

Private camping at a world-class launch

When you think of Arizona, you might think of dusty, hot cactus land. And you're not entirely wrong. But there are mountains, too! Mingus Mountain, located about two hours from both Flagstaff and Phoenix in Prescott National Forest, is a world-class summertime mountain flying site (P3/H3) with an adjacent campground. The Forest Service has granted the AZHPA exclusive rights to the campground area!

What can you expect from this site? Think: separate paragliding and hang gliding launch areas (the latter with a poured cement ramp), with a 4,300 foot vertical. This is a high desert thermal flying site, with a fun (some describe it as spicy) launch and XC potential in pretty much any direction. You'll likely want to bring your oxygen.

The campground and launch sit at 7,818 feet ASL, so

when you're not flying, you can relax in the shade of the campgrounds' plentiful pine trees. Or, hop in your car and head down the mountain to Jerome, a historic mining town that's built along the hillside and reminded me of Colorado's gold rush mining towns. Continue down the hill, and you'll reach Sedona and Flagstaff.

A few nights of camping with friends and epic flights off Mingus are absolutely on my paragliding bucket list!

A close-knit, welcoming community

While Arizona doesn't have the highest number of active pilots in the U.S., it boasts a growing, close-knit community (or perhaps more accurately—communities in northern, central, and southern Arizona).

I can attest to AZHPA being one of the more welcoming clubs I've found in my travels. During our P2 to P3 progression, my partner Matt and I visited as many sites as possible during the long winter in our then home-site, Colorado. And we were lucky enough to end up in central and northern Arizona in April. What we found was a warm welcome from the locals who were stoked

Pilot flying over South Mountain. Photo by Brad Balser. ▼



▼ *Pilot soaring above Apache Maid. Photo by Brad Balser.*



Hangie launching off South Mountain. Photo by Brad Balser. ▲

to give us site intros and get us up and coring some of our first ever thermals (extra shout out to the Northern AZ Merriam Flight Park crew).

Reciprocal access to the entire state

Technically, southern AZ has a separate club that former AZHPA president, Chandler Papas, described as “like a little brother to the AZHPA,” which I took to hint at the reciprocal agreement that these two clubs established.

How does that reciprocal agreement work? If you have a Southern Arizona Hang Gliding Association (SAHGA) membership, you can fly Arizona Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (AZHPA) sites and vice versa (although you’ll still need to fill out relevant waivers for specific sites).

A solid winter flying destination

AZHPA is especially welcoming to winter pilots looking to stay current. It would be a great destination on its own or as a stop on the way to California or in between Valle and Colombia trips.

Visiting pilots will be thrilled by the often 80-degree temperatures and sunny conditions in December. And potentially even rewarded with 20+ mile XC’s, triangles, or multi-hour soaring flights. Papas recounted fond memories of Christmases past where pilots found themselves thermalling at 800-900 fpm.

AZHPA launched a shiny new website (www.azhpa.org) and Instagram account (@flyazhpa) in 2021. Combined with the GroupMe chats (separate chats for north-

ern, central, and southern), visiting pilots should be able to gather all the information, logistics, local connection, and stoke they'll need to have an incredible trip down to the dusty southwest.

Fly-Ins, fun comps, and events

AZHPA shut down all fly-ins and fun competitions due to COVID-19, but they're hoping that by the time this issue reaches your hands, they'll be starting to ramp things back up. Some past events of note include the Mingus Monster—a big event at their incredible mountain site, usually held in September over Labor Day weekend; Cinco de FlyO—at Apache Maid in May; the Dixon White Memorial Fly-in at Merriam Crater Flight Park; and other fun comps across the state throughout the year.

Closing thoughts

When I asked Papas how the AZHPA has maintained its success and access, he started with some existential

musings.

"Why do we fly?" he asked. "We fly for freedom. We fly to be away from politics. We fly to be away from people telling us what to do. Or to worry about what other people are doing. We fly to get away from some of the things that the club has to do ..." He was hinting at the many small things that go on behind the scenes to keep any local club running smoothly.

If you want to keep free flight thriving in your area, volunteer and plan a clean-up, join the local board, serve as a site liaison, and form a longer-term relationship with your local BLM, Forest Service, or city park representative. If you see a new face on launch, say hi and offer a site intro (after, of course, checking that they're all set with their local membership!).

And if you're looking to shake the dust off your skills this winter or experience world-class mountain and unique cinder cone flying during the summer in a harsh yet beautiful landscape, you could do a lot worse than aiming your sights on Arizona. 



▲ Pilots and friends of pilots camping at the campground on Mingus Mountain, 2017. Photo by Brad Balser.

Ratings Issued January & February 2022



Take your ratings and expiration date everywhere you fly. Download from the Members Area section of the USHPA website. Print, trim, and store in your wallet. Great for areas without cell coverage. Always available at www.USHPA.org. Save the PDF on your mobile device for easy reference.

RTG RGN NAME	STATE RATING OFFICIAL	RTG RGN NAME	STATE RATING OFFICIAL
H1 2 Kirill Vladimirov	CA Ryan Matthews	P2 1 Cody Clark	HI Paul Gurrieri
H1 2 Monice Wong	CA Anthony Tagliaferro	P2 1 Ian Curtis	OR Kelly A. Kellar
H1 3 Matthew Barlow	CA Josh Patrick Laufer	P2 1 Joseph Delaney	HI Jonathan Jefferies
H1 3 Joshua McQuay	CA Bob Steven Bendetson	P2 1 David Dellanave	MN Alex Peterson
H1 3 Andy Shields	NM Mel Glantz	P2 1 Michal Drannen	WA Rob Sporrer
H1 3 Emma Watts	CA Andrew T. Beem	P2 1 Nathaniel Geary	AK Rob Sporrer
H1 4 Nicholas Angle	VA William G. Vaughn	P2 1 Josh George	WA Patrick Kelly
H1 4 Paras Mainkar	VA William G. Vaughn	P2 1 Tanner Gonzalez	OR Kevin R. Lee
H1 4 Braden Yundak-Moran	NC William G. Vaughn	P2 1 Iurii Gribkov	WA Marc Chirico
H1 5 Alexander Austin	NJ William G. Vaughn	P2 1 Danis Gristiuc	WA Kelly A. Kellar
H2 1 Asa Cates	OR James W. Tibbs	P2 1 Shellie Habel	HI Christopher Grantham
H2 2 Richard Beadle	CA Michael Briganti	P2 1 Levi Helms	WA Kelly A. Kellar
H2 2 Jarred Bonaparte	CA John Simpson	P2 1 Jonathan Henckel	MN Steve Surrine
H2 2 Shane Easton	CA John Simpson	P2 1 James Henckel	MN Steve Surrine
H2 2 Paul Filin	CA Patrick J. Denevan	P2 1 Quinn Henckel	MN Steve Surrine
H2 2 Daniel Grimshaw	CA Ryan Matthews	P2 1 Rachel Huettiger	OR Kelly A. Kellar
H2 2 Bonita Hobson	CA John Simpson	P2 1 Damon Jordan	WA Maren Ludwig
H2 2 Hassan Saadaoui	CA Anthony Tagliaferro	P2 1 Tony Kim	WA Christopher Grantham
H2 2 Cherian Thomas	CA Patrick J. Denevan	P2 1 Nick Kinnan	WA Marc Chirico
H2 3 Natalie Graham	AZ Lj Omara	P2 1 Gregory Kopache	AK Chandler Papas
H2 4 Maria Barragan	TX James Prahl	P2 1 Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins	AK Rob Sporrer
H2 4 Shelley Fluke	NC Michael Pattishall	P2 1 Oleg Kuybeda	OR Maren Ludwig
H2 4 Carter Henne	FL Malcolm A. Jones	P2 1 Marc Leglise	OR Randolph Ruffin
H2 4 Lauren Tindle	FL James E. Tindle	P2 1 Clinton Lindsey	OR Kelly A. Kellar
H2 5 John Coukos	MA Robert J. Hastings	P2 1 Samantha Menendez	WA Marc Chirico
H2 5 Gavin Lupinski	IL Daniel Lange	P2 1 Justin Mestler	MN Robert Black
H2 5 William Pourcho	MI William C. Dydo	P2 1 Desmond Mills	OR Kelly A. Kellar
H3 2 Simon Cacy	CA Andrew T. Beem	P2 1 Don Nataros	WA Rob Sporrer
H3 2 Alex Jose	CA Richard Sibley	P2 1 Hudson Parker	AK Christopher Garcia
H3 2 Clemence Lepold	CA Masayo Miyauchi	P2 1 Adrian Peterson	AK Chris W. Santacroce
H3 2 Jonathan Toomim	CA Anthony Tagliaferro	P2 1 Erin Pollinger	OR Zion Susanno-Loddy
H3 3 Antony Davirro	CA Dan DeWeese	P2 1 Niccolo Porcella	HI Paul Gurrieri
H3 5 Daniel Johnston	IL Daniel Lange	P2 1 David Regula	WA Maren Ludwig
H3 5 PJ Marks	NJ James Prahl	P2 1 James Rishky	WA Rob Sporrer
H3 5 Loren White	SK Malcolm A. Jones	P2 1 Julian Rogmans	OR Kevin R. Lee
H4 2 Jim Meador	CA Patrick J. Denevan	P2 1 Josh Sauer	WA Marc Chirico
H4 4 Robin Hamilton	TX Tiki Mashy	P2 1 David Revel Sheets	OR Kelly A. Kellar
H4 5 John M. Fritsche	WI William C. Dydo	P2 1 Thomas Shelstad	OR Zion Susanno-Loddy
P1 1 Bailey Hernandez	OR Kevin R. Lee	P2 1 Max Stanley	AK Rob Sporrer
P1 1 Jason Motyka	AK Scott Alan Amy	P2 1 Charles Stenvall	OR Maren Ludwig
P1 2 Matthew Burnes	CA Jeffrey J. Greenbaum	P2 1 Pascal Wigert	HI Jeff Hedlund
P1 2 Tobin Fricke	CA Wallace K. Anderson	P2 1 Liu Yang	WA Marc Chirico
P1 2 Hrishikesh Mehendale	CA Jeffrey J. Greenbaum	P2 2 Scott Aldinger	CA Robert Black
P1 2 Jazzie Paskett	UT Chris W. Santacroce	P2 2 Douglas Anawalt	CA Jason Shapiro
P1 3 Troy Adams	AZ Chandler Papas	P2 2 Ronald Bourguignon	CA Rob Sporrer
P1 3 Benjamin Bartelle	AZ Chandler Papas	P2 2 Tristan Brotherton	CA Robert Black
P1 3 Norman Bloom	NM Charles (Chuck) Woods	P2 2 Asher Brown	UT Ben White
P1 3 Juan David Garcia Villalon	CA Luke Weaver	P2 2 Zhiwei Chen	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P1 3 Stephen Glenwalker	CA Emily Wallace	P2 2 Ted Chen	CA Robert Black
P1 3 Dana Hunt	CA William Purden-Jr	P2 2 Jean-Francois Clavreul	CA Robert Black
P1 3 Benjamin Huntley	CA Emily Wallace	P2 2 Jake Dean	UT Nathan Alex Taylor
P1 3 Jesse Littlejohn	AZ Chandler Papas	P2 2 Shannon DeJong	CA Robert Black
P1 3 Ryan Lucas	AZ Chandler Papas	P2 2 Arielle Dobrowolski	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P1 3 Matthew Mallon	AZ Chandler Papas	P2 2 John B. Dougherty	CA Robert Black
P1 3 Hunter Mayo	AZ Charles (Chuck) Woods	P2 2 Parker Downey	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P1 3 Matgorzata Murawska	CA William Purden-Jr	P2 2 Chester DuFour	UT Patrick Kelly
P1 3 Jacques Poirier	AZ Chandler Papas	P2 2 Jean-Jacques Dunyach	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P1 3 Michelle Ridley	CA Emily Wallace	P2 2 Heidi Esh	NV Patrick Kelly
P1 3 Sarron Simpson	NM Charles (Chuck) Woods	P2 2 Michael N. Evans	CA Jason Shapiro
P1 3 Alec Thilenius	CA Emily Wallace	P2 2 Diego Ferreiro Val	CA Rob Sporrer
P1 3 Stuart Tyson	CA William Purden-Jr	P2 2 Braxton Francis	UT Nathan Alex Taylor
P1 3 Deanna Urnezis	CA Emily Wallace	P2 2 Scott Garman	CA Robert Black
P1 4 Manyi Liana Lei	VA William Purden-Jr	P2 2 Michael Gasaway	UT Stephen J. Mayer
P1 4 Ryan O'Connor	FL Julio Vega	P2 2 David Grothaus	CA Robert Black
P1 4 Max Ortiz Jr	FL Julio Vega	P2 2 Dan Hardy	CA Robert Black
P1 5 Reto Frei	WI Mariyan Radev Ivanov	P2 2 Kelsey Hausman	UT Chris W. Santacroce
P1 5 Christian McLaren	NY Patrick Johnson	P2 2 Tugrul Ilter	CA Jason Shapiro
P2 1 Alexander Bayer	AK Grayson Brown	P2 2 Bryant Irawan	CA Robert Black
P2 1 Alexander James Beasley	AK Rob Sporrer	P2 2 Jeremy Knight	UT Gary Begley
P2 1 Ben Carrier	OR Rob Sporrer	P2 2 Richard Laub	NV Kelly A. Kellar

RTG RGN NAME	STATE RATING OFFICIAL
P2 2 Lydia Lloyd	CA Robert Black
P2 2 Benjamin Nagengast	UT Stephen J. Mayer
P2 2 John O'Byrne	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P2 2 Dragan Radusin	CA Robert Black
P2 2 Rory Schnyder	UT Patrick Kelly
P2 2 Maxwell Sensenbach	CA Patrick Kelly
P2 2 Kenny Shaughnessy	NV Mark Haase
P2 2 Jessie Smith	UT Jonathan Jefferies
P2 2 Zijian Tao	CA Wallace K. Anderson
P2 2 Matthew Titensor	UT Nathan Alex Taylor
P2 2 Darren Vega	NV Patrick Kelly
P2 2 Ken Ward	CA Jeffrey J. Greenbaum
P2 2 Justin Warren	CA Robert Black
P2 2 Loic WEI YU NENG	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P2 2 Pui Ying Sum	CA Robert Black
P2 3 Hunter Amsbaugh	CO Harry Sandoval
P2 3 Christopher Avery	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Zain Axe	CA Christopher Grantham
P2 3 Daniel Bayon	CA William Purden-Jr
P2 3 Hunter Becker	CA Jeremy Bishop
P2 3 Logan Bonn	AZ Stacy Whitmore
P2 3 Michael Bonomo	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Elliot Charobee	CO Johannes Rath
P2 3 Rafael Cosman	CA Jeremy Bishop
P2 3 Manuel Delaunay	NM David W. Prentice
P2 3 William Doolittle	CA Jeremy Bishop
P2 3 Heather Eves	CA William Purden-Jr
P2 3 Nick Fitzpatrick	CA Luke Weaver
P2 3 Joseph Franco	AZ Emily Wallace
P2 3 Jeremiah Frazier	CO Gregory Kelley
P2 3 Ken Funderburg	CA Stephen J. Mayer
P2 3 Christopher Gannon	CA Emily Wallace
P2 3 Tom Gengler	CA Emily Wallace
P2 3 Chris Golden	CA Jeremy Bishop
P2 3 Margaret Hayes	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Colby Helgerson	CA Jordan Neidinger
P2 3 Samuel Heydinger	AZ Robert Black
P2 3 Jason Hughes	CA Stephen Nowak
P2 3 William Blake Hupfer	AZ Chandler Papas
P2 3 Mike Jablonski	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Rhett Kamm	CO Chandler Papas
P2 3 Glacier Kane	CA Christopher Grantham
P2 3 Daniel Kratzer	CO Misha Banks
P2 3 Ronald Lee	CA Christopher Grantham
P2 3 Kevin Means	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Andrew Patrick Palma	CO Alejandro Palma
P2 3 Stephan Paternot	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Mike Perrin	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Chris Puga	CO Maren Ludwig
P2 3 Kate Radley	CA Jeff Shapiro
P2 3 Juan Ramos	CA Marcello M. DeBarros
P2 3 Scott Rights	CA Christopher Grantham
P2 3 Austin Riker	CO Nathan Alex Taylor
P2 3 Eric Roden	CA Emily Wallace
P2 3 Julia St Clair	CA Emily Wallace
P2 3 Abby Vandenberg	CA Jeremy Bishop
P2 3 Arthur Wu	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 David Zenor	CA Rob Sporrer
P2 3 Michael Zhou	CA William Purden-Jr
P2 4 Bruce Arrington	NC Grayson Brown
P2 4 Zachary Carpino	DC Zion Susanno-Lodddy
P2 4 Kealyb Draper	GA E. Scott Edwards
P2 4 Katrina Estrada	TX Dale Covington
P2 4 Jochen Fischer	NC Joe D. Hutton
P2 4 Malcolm Goodman	FL Zion Susanno-Lodddy
P2 4 Kimberly Holzknecht	TX Cynthia Currie
P2 4 CJ Jessett	TX Rob Sporrer
P2 4 Westley Kilpatrick	TX Jeremy Bishop
P2 4 Ricky Lawson	NC Gary Begley
P2 4 Daniel Martin	TN Zion Susanno-Lodddy

RTG RGN NAME	STATE RATING OFFICIAL
P2 4 Dan McElroy	KS Marc Noel Radloff
P2 4 Daniel Monda	GA Jonathan Jefferies
P2 4 David Prentice	SC Grayson Brown
P2 4 Jason Raiti	FL Grayson Brown
P2 4 Evan Robinson	FL Harry Sandoval
P2 4 Kendra Swetland	FL Harry Sandoval
P2 4 Brandon Weaver	VA George R. Huffman
P2 4 Carroll Wheeler	TN Grayson Brown
P2 4 Troy Wright	VA Joe D. Hutton
P2 5 Sassan Aria	ON Hadi Golian
P2 5 John M. Fritsche	WI Joseph B. Seitz
P2 5 Don George	Christopher Grantham
P2 5 Leo Glauber	NY Rob Sporrer
P2 5 Anthony Hadley	NY Rob Sporrer
P2 5 Myeong Lee	NY Esau Diaz Guerrero
P2 5 Ryan Mello	MA Christopher Grantham
P2 5 Rodrigo Mena Balseca	IL Mariyan Radev Ivanov
P2 5 Kevin Misamore	OH William Purden-Jr
P2 5 Yingqi Qin	PA Christopher Grantham
P2 5 David Schardt	WI Mariyan Radev Ivanov
P2 5 Christopher M. Toomey	NY Nathan Alex Taylor
P2 5 Micah Twombly	MA Grayson Brown
P2 5 Benjamin Wilcox	IL Rob Sporrer
P3 1 George Bristow	ID Randall Shane
P3 1 Justin Caprari	OR Kevin R. Lee
P3 1 Skylar Clark	AK Rob Sporrer
P3 1 Lewis England	MT Andy Macrae
P3 1 Madison Gorsh	MT Andy Macrae
P3 1 Kyle Haston	OR Randolph Ruffin
P3 1 Lorina Haxhaj	WA Roger Brock
P3 1 Joshua A. Heater	ID Jonathan Jefferies
P3 1 Gary Jagodzinski	MN Steve Sirrine
P3 1 Kim Keller	MT Rob Sporrer
P3 1 Chylo Laszloffy	MT Andy Macrae
P3 1 Caleb Laszloffy	MT Andy Macrae
P3 1 Yu Chen Lee	WA Marc Chirico
P3 1 Dustin Leslie	OR Randolph Ruffin
P3 1 Quinn Murphy	WA Emily Wallace
P3 1 Aaron Nash	WA Marc Chirico
P3 1 Richard Romano	HI Paul Gurrieri
P3 1 David Schiavone	OR Maren Ludwig
P3 1 Matthew Swanson	WA Christopher Garcia
P3 1 Rex Twitchel	OR Kevin R. Lee
P3 2 Mark Deem	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P3 2 Brian Duffy	CA John E. Cady III
P3 2 Guilhem Espuche	CA Robert Black
P3 2 Jochen Frey	CA Christopher Garcia
P3 2 Aritra Ghosh	UT Ben White
P3 2 Mark LeBlanc	UT Jonathan Jefferies
P3 2 Bill Muir	CA Robert Black
P3 2 Ajit Narayanan	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P3 2 Norah Olley	UT Ben White
P3 2 Jaron Piacitelli	UT Chris W. Santacroce
P3 2 Luke Rome	UT Chris W. Santacroce
P3 2 Zackary John Wambaugh	CA Jesse L. Meyer
P3 3 Kevin Armstrong	CA Jordan Neidinger
P3 3 Jimmy Baghestani	CA Marcello M. DeBarros
P3 3 Jeff Becker	CA Christopher Grantham
P3 3 Elizabeth Dickinson	CO Dustin Miller
P3 3 James DuPlain	NM Charles (Chuck) Woods
P3 3 Jason Evangelou	CA Emily Wallace
P3 3 Kayla Gibfried	CA Christopher Garcia
P3 3 Matthew Hayden	CA Max Leonard Marien
P3 3 Jeremy Hebert	NM Charles (Chuck) Woods
P3 3 Tomas Juozaitis	CA Max Leonard Marien
P3 3 Aaron Levy	CA Jeremy Bishop
P3 3 Estevan McCalley	CA Vito Michelangelo
P3 3 Greg McShane	CA Jeremy Bishop
P3 3 Matthews Pereira	CO Cynthia Currie
P3 3 Edward Reiter	CA Emily Wallace

REGION 1 NORTHWEST

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Iowa
Idaho
Minnesota
Montana
North Dakota
Nebraska
Oregon
South Dakota
Washington
Wyoming

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Northern California
Nevada
Utah

REGION 3 SOUTHWEST

Southern California
Arizona
Colorado
New Mexico

REGION 4 SOUTHEAST

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Arkansas
District of Columbia
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Georgia
Kansas
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Louisiana
Missouri
Mississippi
North Carolina
Oklahoma
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
West Virginia
Virginia

REGION 5 NORTHEAST and INTERNATIONAL

Connecticut
Delaware
Illinois
Indiana
Massachusetts
Maryland
Maine
Michigan
New Hampshire
New York
New Jersey
Ohio
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Vermont
Wisconsin

Ratings Issued January & February 2022 (continued)

RTG	RGN	NAME	STATE	RATING OFFICIAL	RTG	RGN	NAME	STATE	RATING OFFICIAL
P3	3	Jonathan Rudolph	CO	Misha Banks	P4	1	Alex Tenenbaum	MT	Andy Macrae
P3	3	Tanner Sachse	CO	Andy Macrae	P4	2	Todd Crowley	UT	Sebastien Kayrouz
P3	3	Karissa Sampson	CO	Johannes Rath	P4	2	Dwayne Dawson	CA	Cynthia Currie
P3	3	Chris Tearle	CA	William Purden-Jr	P4	2	George Fraser	UT	Jonathan Jefferies
P3	3	Riebeeck Van Niekerk	CA	Rob Sporrer	P4	2	Josh Holmstead	UT	Jonathan Jefferies
P3	4	Jason Arnold	AR	Hadley Robinson	P4	2	Alexander Honda	CA	Robert Posey
P3	4	Pat Bovine	OK	Kevin R. Lee	P4	2	Damion Zane Mitchell	UT	Dale Covington
P3	4	John Busigin	TN	Austin Kasserman	P4	3	Phill Bloom	CA	Rob Sporrer
P3	4	Karen Hualme	TX	Kevin McGinley	P4	3	Jay Drescher	CO	Christopher Grantham
P3	4	David G. Jones	KS	Marc Noel Radloff	P4	3	Kevin Jones	CO	Johannes Rath
P3	4	Nicholas Kenney	TN	Kevin McGinley	P4	3	Kevin Kohler	CO	Johannes Rath
P3	4	Edmond Nichols	NC	Zion Susanno-Lodddy	P4	3	Walker Mackey	CO	Kristen Zuraski
P3	4	Matthew Pardis	FL	Zion Susanno-Lodddy	P4	3	Rio Mackey	CO	Kristen Zuraski
P3	4	Carlos Pons	FL	David W. Prentice	P4	3	Dakota Rieb	CA	Christopher Garcia
P3	5	Martin Anhalzer	PA	Chris W. Santacroce	P4	3	Sarah Saturday	CA	Cynthia Currie
P3	5	Milton Rafael Cerri	NY	Marcus V. Santos	P4	3	Adam Sorensen	CA	Jordan Neidinger
P3	5	Phil Jacques	NJ	Cynthia Currie	P4	4	Gokcen Buyukbas	TN	Austin Kasserman
P3	5	Vineet Joseph	NY	Emily Wallace	P4	4	John Rountree	TN	Jeff Shapiro
P3	5	Rafael Lancelotta	OH	Dustin Miller	P4	5	Rico Chandra	CH	George R. Huffman
P4	1	Michael Coppock	WA	Brian Kerr	P4	5	Chad Charles	VT	Justin White
P4	1	Luke Danielson	OR	Kelly A. Kellar	P4	5	David L. Dalva III	NY	Marcus V. Santos
P4	1	Garrett Daybell	ID	Randall Shane	P4	5	Joshua Hallett	MD	Jeff Shapiro
P4	1	Gus Dupuis	WA	Marc Chirico	P4	5	Jeremy Hanen		Paul Gurrieri
P4	1	Brock Fehler	WA	Marc Chirico	P4	5	Jeff Hersh	MA	Rob Sporrer
P4	1	Robert Fitzgerald	WA	Rob Sporrer	P4	5	Gianlucche Lopes Ferreira	MA	Davidson Da-Silva
P4	1	Julian Harmon	WA	Kelly A. Kellar	P4	5	Paulo Milko	MA	Davidson Da-Silva
P4	1	Tyrus Leverich	OR	Kelly A. Kellar	P4	5	ALBEIRO TORRES	NY	Zion Susanno-Lodddy

CALENDAR

Submit listings online at ushpa.org/page/calendar.

A minimum 3-MONTH LEAD TIME is required on all submissions. Tentative events will not be published. **COVID reminder:** Please contact event organizers regarding the status of events and any local COVID requirements.

 **JUN 26 - JUL 2 > 2022 US OPEN OF PARAGLIDING CHELAN**
► Chelan Butte, Chelan, WA. USHPA Sanctioned PG Race To Goal Nationals Competition. Organizer: Matt Senior, mattySenior@yahoo.com | Website: www.airtribune.com/us-open-paragliding-2022

SEP 8-12 > 2022 HIGH LONESOME FLY-IN ► De Beque, CO | Join us for three days of mountain flying and inaugural vol biv competition on Colorado's beautiful western slope. The High Lonesome Fly-in features something for everyone. Morning and evening rides up to launch, retrieves provided, leader boards and prizes for the daily XC pilots, and the chance to be a part of pioneering vol biv competitions in the USA. Camping and RV spots included, guest houses and rooms available to rent. Organizer: Brian Greeson, brian.greeson@gmail.comcom | Website: <https://www.HighLonesomeFlyIn.com>

 **SEP 10-17 > 2022 RED ROCKS WIDE OPEN** ► Monroe, UT. USHPA Sanctioned PG Race To Goal Nationals Competition. Reliable weather. Big Air. Bigger vistas. 4 launches that take different wind directions. HUGE XC potential through some of Utah's most incredible natural wonders. Welcome to the Red Rocks Wide Open! This is a USHPA National Championship series AND Pre-PWC event that promises strong conditions and long tasks that take advantage of deep, tall mountain ranges and high-desert flatlands. Participants should be very comfortable with flying in strong thermals at high altitudes. Organizer: Gavin McClurg, gavin@cloudbasemayhem.com | Website: <https://airtribune.com/red-rocks-wide-open/info>

SEP 29 - OCT 1 > 2022 XREDROCKS ► Monroe, UT. The XRedRocks is a premiere hike and fly race in North America, organized in a similar way to the Eigertour, Vercofly and DolomitiSuperfly- multi-day hike and fly events that take participants into magnificent mountains to see what they're made of when we pair back free-flight to its most raw and exciting form. Travel is only allowed by wing or on foot. There are no supporters. It's just you and the elements for 3 days! Organizer: Gavin McClurg, gavin@cloudbasemayhem.com | Website: www.xredrocks.com

 **SEP 18-24 > 2022 SANTA CRUZ FLATS RACE** ► Francisco Grande Golf Resort, Casa Grande, AZ. USHPA Sanctioned HG Race To Goal Nationals Competition. Come on out and join us for some unique technical flying and loads of fun in the desert. Organizer: Jamie Shelden, naughtylawyer@gmail.com | Website: www.airtribune.com/santa-cruz-flats-race-2022

 **SEP 30 - OCT 2 > 2022 HSB ACCURACY CUP** ► Horseshoe Bend Flight Park, Horseshoe Bend, ID. USHPA Sanctioned PG Spot Landing Nationals Competition. Horseshoe Bend Flight Park is excited to be hosting our 4th annual international Accuracy competition. Visit our website for further details. Organizer: Scott Edwards, hsbflightpark@gmail.com | Website: www.hsbflightpark.com

 **OCT 7-9 > EAGLE PARAGLIDING OWENS VALLEY CLINIC** ► Bishop, CA | We fly the Owens in the spring and fall. The Owens Valley offers a variety of launch locations, and we will make a move to the launch which matches our forecast for the day. We can work as a group and team fly here as well. The area is world famous and worth a trip in the fall or spring for some classic flying, and XC opportunities. The Eagle Team will lead this 3 day clinic. Cost is \$1195. | www.paragliding.com or call 805.968.0980

HANG GLIDING ADVISORY Used hang gliders should always be disassembled before flying for the first time and inspected carefully for fatigued, bent or dented downtubes, ruined bushings, bent bolts (especially the heart bolt), re-used Nyloc nuts, loose thimbles, frayed or rusted cables, tangs with non-circular holes, and on flex wings, sails badly torn or torn loose from their anchor points front and back on the keel and leading edges.

PARAGLIDING ADVISORY: Used paragliders should always be thoroughly inspected before flying for the first time. Annual inspections on paragliders should include sailcloth strength tests. Simply performing a porosity check isn't sufficient. Some gliders pass porosity yet have very weak sailcloth.

BUYER BEWARE - If in doubt, many hang gliding and paragliding businesses will be happy to give an objective opinion on the condition of equipment you bring them to inspect. **BUYERS SHOULD SELECT EQUIPMENT THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR SKILL LEVEL OR RATING. NEW PILOTS SHOULD SEEK PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION FROM A USHPA CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR.**

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A Generational Dream

You might say that flying has always been in his blood. As a child, Paul Harris would spend long hours watching the birds in flight. He knew that someday he would join them in the air. He got his first glider at age 13 and would hike it up small hills just for the thrill of floating for a few seconds several feet off the ground.

It wasn't until he was in his 20s, married with one young son, that his dream really took flight. He took hang gliding lessons and learned to fly at Ed R. Levin while his wife and son watched from the landing zone. His son Josh would sit atop the fence post and watch the gliders as they soared high above and came in for a landing. His dad's love of flying had been passed on to him. He knew that one day he too would fly with the birds.

Through the years, Paul enjoyed flying often and earned an H3 rating. Then life got busy, time went by, and Joshua grew up. One day while Paul was recovering from shoulder surgery, Joshua, now in his 30s, walked into the house and announced to his dad that he had just signed up for hang gliding lessons.

"I'm going to learn to fly, and I'm going to get my H4 rating before you do," Joshua said.

The challenge had been set, and as Joshua took to the skies, it was now Paul's turn to watch from the landing zone as his son quickly earned his H3 and soared overhead. He was so proud (and maybe just a little jealous) of his son.

Just a few weeks later, Paul, not fully healed from surgery, was back in the air and quickly earned his H4. Josh was soon to catch up and got his H4 while flying at McClure with his dad.

With H4s under their belts, they could now realize their dream to fly Mission Peak, a Bay Area site with beautiful mountains, easy access to launch, and con-

sistent lift. Top landing was something that Paul, who had been flying now for 30 years, had always wanted to do and was feasible from Mission.

The weather was perfect the day they drove to Mission Peak, a bright sky filled with puffy cumulus clouds, perfect lift conditions. Side by side they set up their gliders. Josh took to the air first with his dad right on his tail. They flew. Up with the clouds, up with the birds, soaring together, chasing thermals, chasing each other, laughing, smiling, at peace, father and son. They top landed that day. They packed up their gliders and laughed and talked all the way home.

Later that evening, they watched the days' footage on the movie screen in their home theatre. As they laughed and reminisced about their adventure, Oliver, age five, Joshua's son, Paul's grandson, watched intently. He, like his dad before him, had been spending time at the landing zone watching his father learn to fly. Now, sitting between his dad and his grandpa, he spoke up, "I'm going to fly with you guys someday. But I have to get bigger first because I'm just a boy." 



PHOTO BY JOSH HARRIS



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