

FLIGHT LINE



The publication of the Wings Of Rogallo Northern California Hang Gliding Association
Volume-124,Number 2 February 2006



It's a bird... No, it's a plane .. No, it's Carmzilla launching her BIG wing.
Photo by Wrecks Runyon

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ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO EAT !!

2006 Northern California Cross Country League

The Northern California Cross Country League will start March 18 & 19. This is open to all hang gliders and paragliders. There will be presentation at the March BAPA meeting on the format for the league and some instruction on how to use your GPS and how to compete.

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Feb 2006 WOR Meeting Minutes

NEW MEMBERS, GUESTS

Tessa wants to fly
Clemens paragliding student.
Lynn and Bruce from Sylmar; fly Aeros; like to fly the Owens Valley
Judy Steve Pittman's fiancée

Great Flights

A PG pilot flew 3 hrs at Mission
Doug Defenderfer had several flights in the previous week.
Dave flew the east side of Mission on Sunday.

President's Report

None, Juan Laos was not present.

Vice President's Report Wayne Michelson Presided at the meeting.

Treasurer's Report Don Herrick Income exceeded expenses this past month due to renewals being processed.

Membership Services No report.

Flight Director's Report None

Ed Levin Committee Report Steve Pittman The gate combinations have been changed.

Mission Peak Committee Report Steve Rodrigues

Keyholder apps are due at the end of February; keys will be distributed at the March meeting.

Mt. Diablo Committee Report Steve Delayo It has been soarable. Another Diablo 101 site intro is planned for this spring. Contact Steve or Robert Moore if you are interested.

Site Acquisition Jim Woodward, Gene Pflifer, Ben Rogers

Goat and Wildass have not been flown much lately due to the weather.

There will be a Parks board of directors meeting to discuss Coyote Lake. The flying protocols will probably be similar to this past year. The stream that must be crossed to get to launch is still too high. A bridge is needed to give all weather access.

Old Business None.

New Business

Ben Rogers is planning a Cerro Gordo fly-in for the second week in May.

Lynn from Sylmar announced a trip to

Hurricane Ridge and Dinosaur in July in conjunction with the Sylmar club.

Paul Gazis announced that the USHGA spring BOD meeting will take place in 3 weeks.

Anyone with issues to be raised with USHGA should contact Paul.

The fall BOD meeting will be in the Bay Area. The issue of including powered aircraft in USHGA will be debated.

There will be another name change poll. A proxy letter will be distributed.

Urs Kellenberger reported that Windy Hill has been good some days this winter.

Steve Rodrigues had Funston site stickers and reported on a photo clinic to be held this Sunday.

Jim Woodward reported that he is in the centerfold in the latest issue of the USHGA magazine.

Doug Defenderfer proposed a site intro to Mission and Diablo for H3 pilots.

Don Herrick proposed that he and the site committee chairs meet to discuss the sticker/fee system for the various sites.

END OF MEETING MINUTES

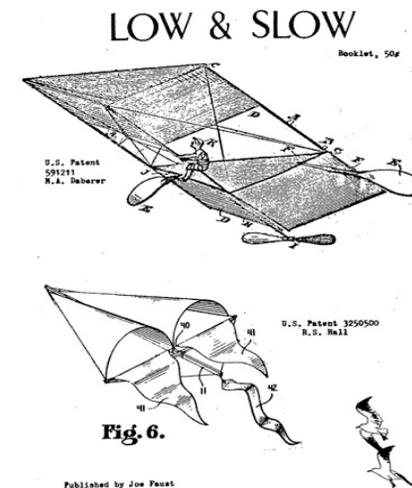
Editor's Turn

Hi kids! It's me again, your jolly old uncle Colin here with yet another exciting issue of your favorite flying mag. I am pleased to report that we actually have one non-obligatory submission for this month, yet again from our regular contributor Robert Moore. I am beginning to think that he would like some of us Mission regulars occasionally drive up 680 to fly with him, perhaps I might even do that myself when I return from my solar eclipse tour.

I am certain however that there are plenty of other members who have been having some flying fun who are keeping it secret and not sharing their adventures with the rest of us by submitting some cards or letters for me

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to publish. Please don't be shy, as I have my ways of making you talk. And thanks to all you diligent folks who, although you don't have any fun stories to share, take your precious time to point out the typos and mistakes that I have made in each issue. To quote my good buddy Gary Birdman Glendenning "To air is human", and I shall endeavor to air as often as weather and schedule permit (and also to err as infrequently as possible).



B.T.W. I recently took the opportunity to purchase the entire 1970 - 2004 USHGA Mag DVD collection for my personal enjoyment, something that I highly recommend to all true students of the art of aviation. The jpg above is the cover art from the first issue of Low&Slow dated March 1971, some 4 years prior to my first HG flight.

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Speak of the Devil

by Robert Moore

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My Favorite - and Least Favorite - Diablo Flights (Part 1)

Every pilot has a bunch of memorable flights, for better or worse. While I've had my share of adventures at other flying sites, Diablo has captured plenty of favorites and a few that ended up as Learning Experiences. For the next couple of months I will share some of my personal tales of joy and dread.

An Unusual XC Direction

While I have since made considerably longer XC flights from Diablo, one of my early XC's took me almost due south. Many XC flights send us toward the ESE and the San Joaquin Valley, but these cloud streets were lining up from just south of Diablo all the way to the south bay. Virtually all of the more-experienced Diablo Teamers had left the mountain and were above the San Ramon Valley when I finally caught my thermal out.

Flying over Blackhawk Ridge, then Danville and San Ramon, the tailwind had my groundspeed around 50 mph. I would have happily pulled on VG to make better use of the lift indicated by the cloudstreets, but my Super Sport didn't have one. While I knew in general where I was, the newness of my surroundings had me very alert. I found myself passing over cities, freeways, industrial parks - all at a fairly comfortable altitude, but constantly looking for possible landing sites. I got low only once, at the Sunol Valley, then got up enough to make it onto Mission Ridge.

From there, my focus changed. Now that I had made it into familiar territory, I decided that I had enough adventure for one day. I took my remaining altitude and zoomed along Mission Ridge. No one was flying at Mission as I buzzed down to Ed Levin. Because it was so northy, this site was also deserted, except for another of my fellow Diablo



No, That's not Florida. Looking down on Discovery Bay. Photo by R.Moore

pilots. He had landed just a few minutes before, and we congratulated each other on making the trek. Like many Bay Area pilots, my flying career had begun at Ed Levin. While Diablo and Ed Levin are at opposite ends of the hang gliding spectrum, it was really fun to connect them in one flight.

Caught in Mitchell Canyon

After flying Diablo for a number of years, I was naturally feeling pretty comfortable with my flying skills and knowledge of the site. On this particular day, the Devil was to remind me not to take too much for granted. On this rare day, my daughter agreed to be my driver, and I was pretty focused on showing her what the old man could do. The day was not particularly promising, with a summertime

high-pressure condition squelching much of the lift. I was soaring over Eagle Peak while my daughter drove my truck to the Mitchell Canyon LZ. I knew from experience that I needed to milk whatever lift I could in order to give her time to see me land.

After about 10 minutes, I noticed a decidedly west wind picking up. OK, I thought, maybe I can use the ridge lift to extend my flight. As I scratched the ridge, I was slowly sinking into the decidedly unlandable part of Mitchell Canyon; the part with nothing but steep embankments, trees and rocks. I maneuvered into an area that normally would be an easy glide to the LZ, but had one relatively small hill blocking a direct path out of the canyon. I was so focused on trying to stay up for my daughter that I wasn't thinking clearly about how the westerly

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Speak of the Devil ... continued

flow would affect my ability to escape to the LZ. Suddenly, the westerlies closed the jaws of the trap. I was quickly flushed by the rotor from the other side of the canyon, and forced behind the hill. Now, my only hope was to race around the hill, through the remaining canyon, and into more landable terrain. Down in the canyon the wind was stronger, and feeling like a venturie. Sinking fast, I could see open hillside ahead at the canyon mouth, but the trees were coming up around me. If I could make it past this last oak, I would at least not be making my first tree landing. As I wizzed about 10 feet over the last tree canopy, I realized that I had only seconds to get the glider turned 90 degrees to match the significant slope. Also, I had neither unzipped my harness nor pulled on flaps. Only time for one pull cord, so I got my feet out with one hand and quickly banked the glider as best I could with the other.

The wind was about 15 mph across the slope, and I had no sooner rounded out of the turn when it was time to flair. Although my groundspeed was plenty high, my maneuver left me with little airspeed, and the crosswind had me side-slipping across the hillside as I flaired. A thoroughly unimpressive connection with the earth ensued.

Needless to say, I didn't get to show my daughter my great flying skills. I had "landed" too soon, and about a quarter mile from the LZ. Shaking with adrenalin, I carried my damaged bird to the nearest accessible dirt road, then hiked out to the LZ with my tail between my legs. I realized that I had put myself in a potentially fatal position by letting outside influences cloud my judgment, and I vowed to remember this lesson.

My First Exposure to Alternate LZ's

I started flying Diablo in the fall. The best of the XC days were months away, but I was busy learning about the various official LZ's are around the mountain, along with the five different launches, best soaring options, and the myriad other nuances

needed to get the best of the site.

In the first several months of flying, I simply tried to do what I was told by the veteran Diablo Teamers, and follow them around in the sky. I was having really fun flights, but the Team was sticking close to the mountain.

One particular winter day we convoyed up the hill to Juniper, and found it to be especially cold. As we started setting up in the 10-15 mph breeze, we were excited to see a smattering of snowflakes floating by! As per the typical, I let some of the others launch and get up before I punched off. The grey cloudbase was well above our altitude, and we spent an hour or so cavorting in the mixture of ridge and thermal lift, dodging the occasional snowflake. Over the radio, someone said, "Hey, let's go land somewhere different today! " There was a general agreement, and the lead pilots set out for the northern parts of Concord.

At this point, I was a little confused by the novelty of the idea, and exactly where were to end up, but I could see that there were plenty of options in that general direction. Bringing up the rear in my lower-perf wing, I was soon on my own; the others were either out of sight or mere specks in the distance. Of course, we were chattering by radio, and my friends were verbally guiding me through unfamiliar terrain. After about 15 minutes, it became clear that I wasn't going to land in the same place as the rest, and I had better use my H4 skills to find a place to safely land. Hmmm, my drift indicates a probable wind direction below; there's an empty hillside ahead that is uphill in the right direction; a paved road nearby; triple-check for power lines and fences. While certainly not bursting with confidence, a few minutes later I was buzzing into this new LZ and pulling off a perfect hilltop landing. Holy smoke! What a great new adventure!

Being able to perform many fun components of XC flight on a mid-winter day was a real eye opener. We hadn't left the general area, and we had only flown about 6 miles, but it felt like much more. The others had landed about a mile away, and I was

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soon retrieved for the usual celebratory dinner and beer. Surrounded by the Diablo Team, I realized that this mountain offered XC-style fun even on non-XC days.

Next month, I will continue with a few more tales of dancing with the Devil. It's Part 2 of My Favorite - and Least Favorite- Diablo Flights.

... Editor's Turn - continued ...

This first issue of what would evolve into our national mag begins with this greeting: "Welcome to the fellowship of birdmen that are open to fresh approaches of to the universe of motorless flight. Dare to fly daily. Dream. Bring your personal notes to this gathering place. We need each other." It continues to list some goals for the periodical as follows:

"Your fellowship."

"Your enjoyment."

"Advancement of the science of mechanical motorless flight in the realms of minimum total cost."

"Complete sharing of ideas ... the lowering of inhibitions that keep us from letting others really enjoy the miscellany of our deep self ... such miscellany that may give others a foundation for discovering really fresh vistas about soaring and other modes of motorless means of flying."

Page 3 of same lists as future booklet topics not only "hang-gliders" but also "gliding parachutes", the 1971 term for paragliders. Now I might be a tad old-fashioned, but it seems to me that these goals are as true today as they were some 35 years ago (although some in our national organization would like to strike the "motorless" adjective.) I hope Joe Faust won't mind if I use those same goals for my job as editor.

**This page unintentionally left
blank ???**

Your back-of-the-bar-napkin scribbles
could be here, but you forgot to mail them
to me in time

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VOL. 124 NO. 2 February 2006

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