



Ridge Dancer

Eye on the Sky: An Interview with Andy Gravityboy

by N. Swisser

Through the chaos of the talk-show stage Nick, the host, wound his way to his swiveling captain's chair. In a similar chair beside him sat his guest for today's shooting. Two grips were busy raising the chair so the head of his shorter guest would be level with his on camera.

"Just relax Andy, everything will be fine," Nick said, as the director's assistant barked out the time to the staff. Nick put his clipboard in his lap and adjusted his position. Andy was calm. "I guess you've

done this a lot."

"Actually it's my first time too. Last week I was just a writer for the Jerry Springer show. I used to choreograph the hair-pulling scenes."

"Ten seconds! Nine!" The DA called out the final seconds before taping began. He pointed to Nick and ducked.

"Hello, I'm Nick Swisser, and welcome to Eye on the Sky, television's first talk

show for paraglider pilots. I'm pleased to introduce today's very special guest, the Bay Area's own Andy Gravityboy." The applause sign lit up and so did the audience. Nick waited a few seconds for the noise to subside, then continued.

"So tell me, Mr. Gravityboy, how long have you been flying?"

"Call me Andy. Just a few years now."

- continued on Page 7

U.S.H.G.A. Region II BOD Report by S. Gasparian

Greetings Fellow Pilots!

Here is my report to region 2 pilots on the Fall USHGA BOD meeting. This was the second meeting of the year, and was held in Colorado Springs. I have now attended 4 of these meetings and think I'm finally getting the hang of it (pun intended).

The big news is that Mark Ferguson was elected to Vice President of the Board, which makes him the first Paraglider Pilot to be elected to the Executive Committee. David Glover was elected president, Bill Bryden Secretary, and Geoff Mumford Treasurer. Both David and Mark are first time EC members, and I feel confident that the "new blood" is a Good Thing for our organization. Both have voiced their support for the PG community, and have vowed to turn our association around.

So here is some rough info

from the separate committees that met this weekend, not all these issues actually make it to the voting stage, so I will try to specify which ones actually became "law".

Safety and Training:

Some aeropark operations are issuing H2 ratings without the student being able to launch or land on their feet or setup/teardown gliders. There is an "LGO" rating (landing gear only), suggestions where made to remove the "feet" part from the H2 rating.

Some instructors have voiced concern about accident reports being used by students in litigation, a system to provide confidentiality or destruction of reports after statistics harvesting is being considered.

There is some concern that the magazine rankings of schools based on number of students signed off is causing some instructors to sign off students before they complete the requirements.

The Paragliding test questions suck, and will be rewritten before the spring BOD meeting. Doug Sharpe, Chris Santacrocce, Bob Hannah, Ken Baier, and yours truly will be working on the new pool. Suggestions and comments are solicited from all instructors and pilots to develop a new question pool for all PG and Tandem PG ratings.

Discussion on USHGA legal backing of instructors who revoke a students rating.

Recent accidents on rigid-wing gliders (i.e., Millenium, Extacy, etc) may be a result of flex-wing transitioning pilots being uninformed of the flight characteristics. Dennis and others will put articles and info on rigids on the USHGA web site.

Some instructors are complaining about the FAA FOI test requirement.

- continued on page 3

Inside this issue:

Trips & Stuff	2
BAPA Events Calendar	4
BAPA Meeting Minutes	5
More Early Thermal Flights	6
Paraquotes	7
BAPA Holiday Party	8
Favorite Thermals	9
Dues are Due !	9

Worth remembering :

- Next Club Meeting is Dec 1st @ 7:00 PM at the Round Table Pizza, Oceana at Manor Drive in Pacifica
- Please get your BAPA Dues in NOW !!
- Coast Guard Emergency Phone 415.331.8247
- BAPA Ballots will be counted December 1

Trips and Stuff - by Jerry Schimke

The October 16-17 Anderson Flat party to welcome the fifty-first year of our beloved President, Mike Galvin was indeed a noteworthy event. Gene and Joanne Pfeiffer once again provided a more than wonderful venue and Kim made great preparations for all the folks who came to enjoy the party. In addition to that there was some really enjoyable flying on Saturday and Sunday. My initial flight on a demo Arcus (thanks, Wally) was long enough to win the duration contest (thanks for the swell prizes, Kim). The Arcus was stable and kind enough to save my kiester when I inadvertently put the left wing into a frontal collapse on final approach as I was trying to adjust my altitude with big ears so I could hit the spot. (Grabbing the wrong side of the split A-riser is not recommended. But if you have to, the Arcus really recovers nicely, and fast too.) My emotions were mixed when I was informed that Martin's "spin and recover" landing far surpassed mine as the most spectacular pound-in. Bruce demonstrated some great accuracy in the spot landing with a tandem. For those who made it a couple of grand over launch, the view was still pretty spectacular, though you had to look carefully through the haze to see Half Dome in Yosemite. The whole weekend went off without a hitch. All pilots (except those with leg casts) flew and landed safely and a good time was had by all.

The annual fall gathering of a few flying friends at Elk Mt. on October 23-24 was typical Elk. However, it was so dry and images of forest fires were fresh on everyone's minds, so this years bonfire was controlled at the level of "wonderful, beautiful" instead of the "spectacular" and "positively frightful" level that we have become so used to. Nobody flew Friday, and Saturday morning was blown out. After that, Dave Bingham listened to the weather observations and forecasts and decided to call it a weekend. Fortunately for those who

stayed, his departure was apparently an effective sacrifice to the wind gods, because in the late afternoon the wind settled down and everyone made for Launch as quickly as possible. It was gorgeous! The smoky sunset provided a wonderful backdrop for about a dozen ridge soaring paragliders. Conditions were pretty smooth and glassy so you could fly back and forth between the launch at the top and the west end of the ridge. There were enough gliders in the air to make it very interesting, especially at the end of an eastward run when your turn back directly into the setting sun required error free identification of other flying paragliders to avoid collision. Half hour flights were about typical on Saturday evening. Al Baldini provided transportation, and stayed on top to watch the beautiful sight as the nearly full moon rose opposite the setting sun. On Sunday, conditions were launchable in the morning, and I took my extended sled ride at a bit after 10:00 am. After hanging around for a while with no indications that there would be a repeat of Saturday's conditions, I packed it in. As usual, the Elk trip provided new entries for the memory book.

Cheryl tells me that a couple of weekends ago she, Ann, Julie, Gever and Andrew took the long trip South to Marshal where the haze below the inversion was so thick you couldn't see the LZ from launch. Still, everyone made it to the LZ (even if it took some guidance by radio in some cases) and it was an adventure driving home through the season's first rainstorm.

The BAPA/Glidell reserve clinic last spring, featuring Betty Pfeiffer and Bill Gargano, was a real winner. Everybody who attended got a whole lot out of the experience. (Remember all the discussions about packing and repacking and deploying your reserve that followed?) Well, guess what? On December 4-5 there is another opportunity to improve

your personal safety by getting smarter about all that stuff and experiencing deployment in a simulator. Final arrangements are still underway at press time, but commit to those dates and check out the Events part of Glidell's Web page at <www.glidell.com> for the latest details. Cost will be \$100 (great investment) and I, for one, am planning to attend, deploy, and have my chute inspected and repacked, as well. Not on the net? Call Jody Lucas at (650) 424-9704

And of course on December 11 is the big BAPA Holiday Party hosted once again by the ever-gracious Cheryl Cohen. This year it's a Potluck. Bring something to share, what you want to drink, and bring your slides and videos. Also, this year bring someone along who might make a good BAPA member. This party will be a good opportunity for prospective members to get to know us in a comfortable, informal setting. Cheryl emphasizes: **PLEASE RSVP** to Cheryl at (650) 593-7458. (She wants to be certain we don't run out of plates, glasses and utensils.) Festivities begin at 6:30 PM on Saturday, December 11.

If you're hot to go to Mexico in January, and weren't quick enough to get signed up for one of the three weeks offered by Chris Santacroce before the trips were full, don't despair. Glidell is also offering a January trip to Valle de Bravo on January 15-22. Check out the Glidell Web page for all the details, or contact Juan Laos (925) 377-8810.

And then, if you can't go until later, Chris Santacroce has an additional trip scheduled for February 6-13. These things fill up quickly, so don't delay. Chris can be reached at chris@firebirdusa.com or (801) 255-9595. Happy Thanksgiving! Have Fun. Fly Safe.

Bay Area Wind and Weather

Wind Talker Phone Numbers

Ed Levin	408.946.9516
Fort Funston	415.333.0100 or 415.584.9891
Mt. Diablo	925.838.9225
Mt. Tamalpais	415.381.9463
Stinson Beach	415.868.1922

Internet URL's

Funston Webcam – www.sirium.com/~mlbco/webcamx.html
Bay Area Wind Patterns – sfbay7.wr.usgs.gov/~jonathan/wind.html
USHGA – www.usgha.org/
BAPA – www.igi.org/BAPA

Accident Reporting Procedures

Paragliding is an evolving sport. Safety awareness and knowledge are vital components for avoiding accidents. If you sustain a paragliding injury, please help to raise the awareness of your fellow pilots by submitting an Accident Report to USHGA. If your accident occurs in the Bay Area, please also send a copy to :

BAPA Safety Director

P.O. Box 1809
Pacifica, CA 94044-9998

Contact the BAPA Safety Director to Obtain an Accident Report form. Forms are also available online at : www.usgha.org/emailacc.htm.

U.S.H.G.A. Region II BOD Report -by Scott Gasparian

- continued from Page I

Consensus was that others have no problems understanding the material and passing the test, and that the whiners probably need that info the most.

The >6000ft DensAlt requirement of the para-ski signoff was removed.

Again the "rating alphabet soup" issue was brought up (there are too many rating levels and signoffs), but dropped for lack of better solution. Suggestions are welcome as to how to simplify the system.

Accident Review

Much discussion on the confidentiality of accident reports. Basically, some instructors and/or schools are hesitant to submit accident reports for fear of the reports being subpoenaed for lawsuits. The problem is: some specific information on the report is necessary to collate the duplicate submissions, but specifics can be used against the reporting party. Possible solutions discussed where encryption of the database, destruction of the paper reports, "bare bones" report forms, Anonymous submissions. Paul Klemond and Bill Bryden will work on a better database that tries to address these issues.

The \$5 merchandise coupon for submitted reports is working.

Feedback on the accident column in the magazines is very positive, and Paul, Bill, and Pete were commended and encouraged to keep up the good work.

Membership Development

A survey for new pilots is being designed to gather info on "why" they want to fly.

As to the power question (mosquito, paramotors, etc), the committee recommends that "Hang gliders and paragliders are defined as foot launchable and landable

vehicles. There is an emergence of powered devices that can be used to self launch hg and PG from flat ground. All pilots flying hg and PG, whether or not they use auxiliary power are encouraged to join the association and will enjoy the full benefits of membership including insurance". Clubs are to be reminded that they can set their own restrictions on a per-site basis. S&T was directed to develop programs for power signoffs.

Concern that some schools are padding their numbers to increase their ranking.

Concern that some schools are not properly paperworking their "discovery flights", office tasked to check numbers.

Much discussions on PR, including presence at Reno Air Show, national modelers convention, possible hiring of PR person or firm, and infiltration of middle schools.

Worldwide Competition

Lots of comp rules changes, mostly to the "GAP" system. I did not attend this committee meeting, but have the minutes if you want the details.

HG Worlds; lack of team leader led to team member problems

PG Worlds; team withdrew (along with a lot of other countries) due to extreme safety concerns and lack of meet organizers adherence to rules. Our CIVL rep will protest at the next CIVL meeting.

HG Speed Gliding; much discussion on how we need to have a strong US team as speed gliding is going big, possibly Olympic, cutoff date for team selection is June 19 2000.

Next Comps

Sandia Nationals, late June
Lone Star, 8/13-8/20
Quest Air, 4/16-4/22
Wallaby, 4/16-4/22

(not a typo on the dates, I think GW moved his to after the other)

No PG Comps were submitted.

Site Management

Discussion of the USHGF (Fund), donations, charitable donations, etc. Discussion on identifying goals. Previously, this committee didn't do a whole lot, but that is changing as Steve Roti is now the chair.

Organization and Bylaws

Lots of SOP changes and updates, see me for details. Biggest new thing is the addition of Sop's for all the committees that describes the committees purpose and goals.

Awards

I cant tell you who got 'em yet. If you know of anyone who deserves special recognition for their involvement and

support of the flying community, please contact me.

Publications

Well, its finally gonna happen, PG magazine will start to be 12 issues/year starting in May 2000. Lots of discussion on the money aspects, especially since the advertising income will be different. The short of it is: the magazine costs the USHGA about \$270,000/yr. but generates only about \$180,000/yr. Going from 6 to 12 issues a year will double some of the costs (printing, shipping, etc) but we don't know yet what the advertisers will do. Financial plans and estimates should be finalized by the end of the year.

Towing

Much discussion on the thickening alphabet soup over "FL", "PL", "AT" etc. Concern that pilots are towing without first getting a tow signoff. Beginners are not aware of the differences and dangers of towing. Action to ICP and instructors to remind students that alternate launch methods require specific training.

Adjustment of rating to include the "AT" in tandem signoffs.

Tandem

Review and discussion of Tandem administrator list. More discussion on Cherico/Hannah conflict.

New Committee, Radio Communications:

A new committee was formed specifically to continue work with the ARRL for designation of some frequencies in the 2m ham band to be designated as "glider" frequencies.

That's it for the committee reports, other things of interest:

The next BOD meeting will be March 16-19 2000 in Albuquerque NM and will be held in conjunction with the SSA (sailplanes), USUA (ultralites), Balloon Federation, ISAC and the NAA. This should be a real party, with a big exhibition and lots of flying peoples of all sorts of wing.

I'm planning on driving down a few days early to hang out and try to fly some of the nearby sites too. All members are encouraged to attend this and all BOD meetings, and I personally entice you to attend this one if you ever wondered what goes on at these things.

BAPA PARAGLIDING CALENDAR, 1999 +

Updated November 12, 1999 by Jerry Schimke

DECEMBER, 1999

- 4-5 Joint BAPA/Glidell Reserve Clinic
Contact Jody Lucas -- (650) 424-9704
- 11 BAPA Holiday Party – 6:30 p.m. Potluck at Cheryl Cohen Residence.
Please RSVP to (650) 593-7458
- 11-12 Instructor Renewal (ICP) in San Bruno
Contact Bob Ost – (650) 588-1975
- 27-31 1999 Mauna Kea Fly-In, Hawaii -- Advanced Air Technologies --
Contact: Achim Hagemann -- (808) 968-6856

JANUARY, 2000

- 15-22 Glidell Trip to Mexico – Fly Valle de Bravo
Contact: Juan Laos -- (925) 377-8810

FEBRUARY, 2000

- 6-13 Super Fly trip to Mexico -- Fly Valle de Bravo.
Contact: Chris Santacrocce – (801) 255-9595

MARCH, 2000

- 16-19 USHGA Spring BOD Meeting and Air Sports Expo in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

OTHER CLUB MEETING INFORMATION

Wings of Rogallo meets every 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Omega Restaurant in Milpitas (corner of South Park Victoria and Calaveras Blvd.) Social hour @ 7:00 PM, meeting starts at 8:00 PM.

Sonoma Wings Hang Gliding Club meets every 3rd Monday of the month at the Round Table Pizza, Hwy 12 and Stonypoint Rd. in Santa Rosa at 7:00 PM.

Marin County Hang Gliding Association meets on the last Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM at the Round Table Pizza in Corte Madera. (Come early to start on your pizza)

BAPA Club Officers

President	Mike Galvin	510.748.0451
V. President	Chris Northcutt	415.584.5610
Secretary	Cheryl Cohen	650.593.7458
Treasurer	Kim Galvin	510.748.0451
Site Director	Gene Pfeiffer	408.356.7782
Safety Dir.	Phil Neri	650.737.7926
Activities Dir.	Jerry Schimke	530.758.0582
Past Pres.	Ann Sasaki	650.355.8888
Editor	Steven Pease	650.556.1978

BAPA Site Administrators

Stables	Dave Sondergeld	650.756.4530
Mt. Tam	Wally Anderson	415.456.3670
Mt. Diablo	M. Zabetian	925.933.9045

USHGA Region 2 Examiners

Jack Hodges	650.728.0938
Ed Stein	650.367.9707
Kathy Wilde	650.556.1320

USHGA Region 2 Observers

Mt. Diablo	Eric Wilcox	415.474.8057
Stables	Dave Sondergeld	650.756.4530
Ed Levin	Dave Bingham	408.923.0394
Ed Levin	Claudia Lehman	510.893.4787
Ed Levin	John Wilde	650.556.1320

Ed Levin paragliding observation by appointment, contact :
Kathy Wilde 650.556.1320 wildeblu@aol.com
Kim Galvin 510.748.0451 kim_galvin@mpsh.com

The Bay Area Paragliding Association (BAPA) is an organization of paragliding enthusiasts. The charter of the club is to promote and encourage the sport of paragliding. BAPA is a registered chapter of the United States Hang Gliding Association (PC006).

The material presented here is published as part of an information dissemination service for BAPA members. BAPA makes no warranties or representations and assumes no liability concerning the validity of any advice, opinion or recommendations expressed in the material. Readers are encouraged to report errors of fact to the Editor.

The Ridge Dancer is published monthly. Material for publication should be sent to the Editor and may be edited for format or space considerations only. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. Submissions can be made via email to : spease@interserv.com. Classified advertisements are free for BAPA members

Address changes should be sent to : BAPA Address Change, PO Box 1809, Pacifica CA 94044-9998. To receive the Ridge Dancer electronically (.PDF format) requests may be sent via email to mgalvin@concentric.net.

BAPA Meeting Minutes of 11/3/99 – submitted by Cheryl Cohen

President Mike Galvin called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM. Sixteen members, including one new member, were present.

Notable Flights

Shankar reported on his Halloween-costumed flight at Ed Levin. Darron had a 29 mile flight in the Owens. Eric had a 40+ mile flight in the Owens. Patricio has had a few soaring flights at Mt. Tam.

Officer Reports

Treasurer

In Kim's absence, Mike reported that we have about \$2,700 in the bank.

Secretary

Cheryl will obtain the list of current and lapsed BAPA members from Mike, coordinate the list with the USHGA Region II list, and recruit new/renewal memberships.

Site Director

Dave Sondergeld had a discussion with the manager of the Olympic Club about run-off from the golf course which may be eroding the cliff above the Stables and pooling at the bottom. The problem seems to have been solved, and the manager offered future assistance to maintain the

site.

Safety Director

Phil spent \$476 to purchase and install carpet at Walkers Launch. Vandals tore the carpet free, but Phil put in back in place. Cheryl moved that BAPA reimburse Al Baldini for the \$176 in excess of the amount approved by BAPA for the carpet purchase. Mike asked that in future, money should not be spent in excess of the amount approved without review. Motion to reimburse Al passed.

Activities Director

The BAPA Holiday party will be held on December 11th at Cheryl Cohen's house. A motion was passed to allow \$75 toward Cheryl's housekeeper for cleanup after the party.

Jerry reminded members to check the calendar for other activities, and contact him with any suggestions.

Old Business

A motion was approved to accept last month's minutes with the correction of the meeting date to be shown as October 6, 1999.

Mike will follow up with Mic Bergen about

the proposed BAPA flyers/cards and the 1st Aid Clinic.

New Business

Dave Sondergeld will present his proposal to the Fellow Feathers to change the site rules at Fort Funston to allow paragliders to fly past the site. He would like other BAPA members to go with him to the meeting on Tuesday November 10th for support.

Gaspo reported on the recent USHGA Board of Directors meeting.

Discussion followed regarding goals for BAPA. Patricio felt that not enough was being done to help beginning pilots or to expand the use of current sites. Dave thought BAPA should put more effort into developing sites and promoting safety issues. He thinks we should look into regulating the Dump. Other members thought that intervention by government agencies would restrict use/access at the site.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

More Early Thermal Flights *by Ann Sasaki*

Last month I wrote about thermal flights early in one's flying career. Immediately after the article was published, I thought of more items and refinements which I should have included. So here are a few additional points which may be of interest to the pilot who is just starting to chase those elusive thermals.

1. Centering a thermal without a vario. Many pilots don't have a vario when they start thermal flying. So all that stuff about listening to the vario and adjusting your turn until the beeps are consistent is kind of useless if you don't have one. If you are flying without a vario, look for places where the lift lasts for 3 - 4 seconds. Do this by feel. You can tell when you hit the edge of a thermal because of the lifty feel and you can see yourself going up relative to the ground or the horizon. When you feel the lift at its peak, start smoothly turning in a 360. Not abruptly, but smoothly. (In your early thermal flights on a stronger day, you may want to skirt the edges of the core and stay in the slightly less strong lift. If the thermals are mild, then try to stay close to the core.) If you are flying without a vario, you will need to tune your senses to feel subtle lift and sink, and really pay attention to how your wing feels.
2. One of the hardest things about thermaling without a vario is figuring out if you are in lift when the lift is light and there is some sink. If you are in significant sink and then get into lesser sink, often you think you are in lift. This is because relative to the greater sink you were just in, you feel like you are going up. But you're actually just going down slower than before. If you have a frame of reference such as the horizon, then it can help to let you know whether you are really rising or just not falling as fast. Be careful not to core sink if you can avoid it.
3. Use other pilots (who have varios!) to help you identify where the lift is. Team flying is fun. Just don't get in

the way of another pilot and always turn in the same direction that others are going in a thermal. By watching other pilots you can see who is in lift and who is in sink and figure out where to go. If someone else is going up and you're going down close by, travel over to where the other pilot is. If you enter the thermal lower than the other pilot, you may find that the lift is weaker down low and less well-defined. But if you can maintain and stay in it, you'll likely start to work up to the better lift. Don't forget that there is often sink close to where there is lift so you also may get skunked if you are too low.

4. Observe the pilots who are familiar with the site. One of the best ways to learn about a site is to watch how pilots who know the site fly it. On this particular day, with these particular conditions, take note that the local legend is going over THERE to find lift. Generally, they do know something we don't and they've learned it from the hours spent successfully flying the site. Figure out who is who in the sky to find out more about what's going on. But also, remember that you are NOT the local legend so if you follow that person, you must still maintain a conservative flight plan which does not require exceptional site knowledge and/or advanced skills to pull it off. Such as doing a tricky top landing at a mountain site. Leave that to the more experienced pilots until you have lots of hours and a lot of experience. Also remember that it is important to know why something works, not to just blindly follow another pilot. If you can't make sense of why that person could land there without getting rotored, don't do it. You need to know what makes it work or you are likely to not execute the task correctly.
5. Look for birds. Everyone will eventually have a bird story and it certainly is one of the most special moments when you let a bird show you where to go. This summer at Potato Hill I was the only pilot in the sky, and I was low and in need of a thermal or I was going to the LZ. I saw a hawk starting to circle slowly off to my left, down below me. What the heck, it was worth a try. I cruised over to

where he was, still slightly above him, and I was rewarded. The thermal was big enough and strong enough that I took that one up to launch. I don't know whether the bird thought it was cool, but I certainly did. Thanks guy.

6. Look for thermal lift along ridges, spines, tree lines, steep faces, places where the wind hits some feature of the terrain and separates from the flat ground. Moving objects can also set off thermals such as dirt bikes ripping along the hillsides. In your search, always keep your eye on the terrain. Don't work yourself below ridges where you will get rotored or into deep canyons.
7. While looking for thermals may seem fun and like a big puzzle, don't forget that you need to leave a margin for error. In general thermic air is less consistent than coastal ridge lift. Thermals create cycles which means that the lift is contained in parcels of air rather than being everywhere. Because of the up and down nature of the air, scratching close to the solid ground is dangerous. Stay far enough away from the terrain that you can fall out of lift and not hit anything.
8. Keep evaluating the conditions. When you first arrive at launch you check the conditions. If there are 28 pilots on launch and only room for one to set up at a time, it's going to be a while before the last person launches. If you're hanging out for a while, be sure to reevaluate the conditions when you decide to set up. Are the wind speed, the cycle strength and the direction the same as when you arrived? Check the wings in the air and observe whether the lift looks smooth or turbulent, whether pilots are skying out or sinking out. Also, observe the type of clouds in the sky, cloud development and cover, prevailing wind, etc. Consult with more experienced pilots if you are not sure how to read the conditions. Realize that you may have to change your mind about launching if the conditions have deteriorated since you arrived.

- continued on Page 8

Eye on the Sky: An Interview with Andy Gravityboy

by Nick Swisser

- continued from Page 1

"Yes, and that's one of the amazing things about you, Andy. Your rapid rise is certainly compelling evidence of a great talent for flying."

Andy turned away from Nick, smiled faintly and blushed. "Thanks."

"To what do you owe your success?"

"Well Nick, I think the biggest factors are practice, and patience."

"Patience? How do you mean?"

"Well, I developed patience during my former life as a rock climber. In that sport we're used to spending hours just to get a few hundred feet of altitude. Also, being up and close to the rocks for so long has meant that I don't get as rattled scratching close to the faces. I know that if I take a big whack I can just reach out and grab hold. I practice the move occasionally."

"So having a background in climbing really helps?"

"Sure. Check any of the successful competition pilots in the US, and you'll find that nearly all of them are climbers."

"Yes, except for that ex-military pilot from LA. With all of that training he'd have to do well. Anyway, has your success helped your, um, social life? You know."

Andy fixed his gaze on Nick for a moment, then smiled. "Well, yes, it has, as a matter of fact. Of course, this kind of fame is fleeting. At Jackson Hole, for instance, I was on top of everything. At the Moose bar the groupies were lined up and taking numbers. But at Aspen, heck, I couldn't get arrested in that town. All the excitement was over the Europeans, and that skinny guy for ProDesign. Overall though, I'm not complaining."

Nick smiled and checked his clipboard, then looked up again. "So Andy, the bay area pilots have just been blown away with your success., especially those two forty-mile flights from Potato Hill. How did you do it?"

Andy looked at him quizzically. "Well, uh, patience, like I said."

"But Andy, no one had even gotten close to that kind of flight before. Even the hang gliders were impressed." Nick's expression grew sterner as his questions came out. "Come on, what's your secret?"

Kneeling below the camera, the makeup man spotted a drop of sweat just below Andy's receded hairline. He signaled the DA to speed up the cut to commercial, so he could take care of it.

Andy responded haltingly. "I... I...don't know what you mean Nick. Like I--"

Nick tossed his clipboard aside, shot out of his chair and grabbed Andy by the throat and wrist. In an instant Andy was on the floor, his cheek mashed to the carpet, his arm cocked and Nick's knee in his back. "COME ON, GRAVITY-BOYEEE," Nick sneered, "SPIT IT OUT! NOW!" He twisted Andy's arm a few more inches. The startled off-camera staff jumped up and formed a circle around the pair. The camera moved in to follow the action.

"OW! I don't know what --OW! You're breaking my -- OW! Jesus! What are you--"

"Spill it now or I swear, I'll rip your damn arm right off!" Nick spat the words out, his face red with rage and his neck swollen and stretched with protruding veins. His whole body became rigid with anger. "Spill it!"

"Uh -- I -- OK, OK!! Stop it already!"

Nick loosened his grip a bit. He turned his head and screamed at the circling crowd. "Get back, I say, or your precious home-town boy will be flying with one brake toggle!" The staff stepped back, but only a single step. All eyes were on Nick. He returned his attention to Andy. "Well?"

"It... it...my father, he's a physics professor at Oberlin College. He was experimenting -- OW! -- on the effect of gamma rays on a synthetic polymer, under pressure, and --"

"I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!" Nick threw Andy's arm aside and stood up, still glaring at him on the floor as his guest curled up and cradled his injured appendage. "FLUBBER!"

Nick stamped back to his chair, took the clipboard from the grip and dropped into his seat. Andy was visibly shaken but crawled to his seat, still holding and rubbing his arm. The camera and the relieved crew retreated to their stations again.

Nick stared at him for several seconds. Andy, shaking quietly, looked everywhere other than back at Nick. Nick spoke, "So, those forty-mile flights. Bogus."

Andy turned to Nick, defiant. "Hey, those flights were real!" I didn't have the stuff that trip."

"But what about Jackson Hole? Damn, I had a friggin' midlife crisis over that!"

Andy smiled, realizing he finally

had the upper hand. "Yeah, I kind of noticed, you lost the beard. Anyway, it was important, nobody was getting up. I had to go for it."

"So, who else knows about this?"

"Nobody. Well, almost nobody. There's that stockbroker guy."

Nick was deadpan, then his eyes widened. "You mean...?"

"You don't think he made it from the Spud to Elk Mountain and back on his own, do you?"

"Damn! What did you get out of the deal?"

"Bottom floor on an Internet IPO. I won't be buying my own gliders for quite a while now." He retrieved and donned a pair of *Black Flys* sunglasses, grinning. He could be smug now.

Nick looked around, then back at Andy. "Um, where, uh, might I get some of this?"

"Go suck a quicklink."

"Really, Andy, I didn't mean any of --"

"Go suck a quicklink." Andy glanced at the side door, then rose from his chair.

"Wait! Look, I know the producer, I can get you your own sh--"

"It's been giggles, Nick, but I've got an appointment with a sponsor."

The DA stood and signaled for a commercial. The staff were up and preparing for the next shot. Andy disappeared stage left with Nick close behind.

"Andy! Wait! I can pay! *Really!*"

Paraquotes

"Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself."

"Experience is a hard teacher. First comes the test, then the lesson."

"To go up, pull the stick back. To go down, pull the stick back harder."

Early Thermal Flights - by Ann Sasaki

- continued from Page 6

9. Use visualization to practice what you will do. Some maneuvers you don't have the opportunity to practice that often in real life. Recovery from a negative spin is one such example. But reviewing in your mind what you will do to recover makes you more prepared to respond if it does happen.

"...what we do is dangerous and we cannot afford to regularly exceed our skills..."

10. Supplement your real practice with more visualization. Make use of the coast for actual practicing of launching, landing and kiting. And then, when you're taking a shower or waiting in line to buy lunch, review in your mind how that one-step forward launch sequence goes again. Or how that cross brake kiting goes. Or how the running reverse is done.

11. Take a maneuvers clinic. Sound strange coming from a person who in nine years of flying hasn't done this yet? Well, I'm going to confront my trepidation about maneuvers and attend a clinic next year.

I believe that practicing and observing under controlled conditions will help you deal with the tough stuff if it happens in uncontrolled conditions. If you buy a new wing, it's probably wise to go to another maneuvers clinic to find out how this wing responds to narnar.

12. Try not to rush. And try not to compete or compare yourself with other pilots, especially if they are more experienced. Flying is an individual sport but it is almost inevitable that you will feel some amount of competition with others. The danger, of course, is that what we do is danger-

ous and we cannot afford to regularly exceed our skills and experience in order to keep up with or surpass the pack. And then there are the super-talented people who even as beginners seem to have a natural ability far beyond most pilots. Don't envy these people (a.k.a. Keeping up with the Gubermans), just be pleased for them that they are successful.

13. Log your flights and make note of what you learned. If you realize that you made a judgment error, make note of what it was so you don't have to repeat that again. If your log books are accurate (not fictitious!), you'll be able to look back through them and see the progress you've made and remember the thrill of your early thermal flights.

So there you have it, again. The nutshell expanded. Fly high and fly safely.

BAPA Holiday Party - by Cheryl Cohen

Come one, come all! The date for the annual BAPA Holiday Party is Saturday, December 11th at 6:30 PM. The location is my house in San Carlos – centrally located, easy to get to, plenty of parking.

The party is pot-luck, so bring whatever you want to drink and food to share. This is your chance to demonstrate your culinary creativity. We want more than Potato (Hill) chips and (Dunlap) dips. If you need suggestions on what to bring, give me a call.

As always, family members are welcome. This year, to kick off our effort to expand BAPA's membership, we are inviting pilots who, for whatever reason, haven't got around to joining our club. If you know someone you like to hang around with at The Dump or Ed Levin, bring them to the party. You know they'll be persuaded to join!

If you have any (paragliding) videos, bring them along too. Please RSVP so we'll know how many to expect. You can reach me at (650) 593-7458 or e-mail at cheryl_ehm@msn.com.

Directions:

404 Portofino Drive #3, San Carlos, CA 94070

From Highway 101

Take the Holly Street exit and go west to El Camino Real. Turn left on El Camino, go one block and turn right on San Carlos Avenue. From San Carlos Avenue, turn left on Alameda de Las Pulgas (4th stop light). Turn right on Melendy Drive (1st stop sign) and go up the hill. The first left past the second stop sign is Portofino Drive.

From Highway 280

Take the Edgewood Road exit. Turn (east) at the stop sign. From Edgewood, turn left on Crestview Drive and go up the hill. The first right past the second stop sign is Melendy Drive. Go down the hill to Portofino Drive and turn right.

My apartment (404 #3) is on the top left hand side of the third building on your right.

Look forward to seeing you there!



Paradog at Potato Hill
Photo contributed by Ann Sasaki

Favorite Thermals *by Larry Friend*

It's really tough to pick out a single favorite thermal flight because there are so many factors that come into play for considering "best" like scenery, conditions, sunsets, first-time experiences, height gained, distance flown. Replaying the mental imagery from various flights tells me that portions of many flights make up the "best" experience. I'll share a few of those and then give you my choice of single best flight.

The composite best flight would include the first time I recognized and flew over an apparent thermal trigger. To my amazement, there actually WAS a thermal there! It was smooth, it was spherical, it was not too strong. I circled over it, around and around, going up, and up, and up. It was just like in a textbook! When that lift died, I crossed the little drainage to the next apparent thermal trigger, and there it was! Just like the first one! What a rush! I could actually READ the terrain!

Another scenario was riding a house thermal in a setting sun with a beautiful view of the lake below. The house thermal pumped air constantly, like riding an elevator. The edge was distinct. As soon as you flew out of the circle, down you went. Back in the circle, "Going up. Fourth floor; sporting goods, linens, electronics."

Later in that composite flight, I flew in really BIG thermals in a notorious California valley for the first time. It was also the first time I flew in the same thermals with hang gliders. The lift cells were huge! You didn't find them, they found you. When you entered you

went up, REALLY fast, yet the turbulence was not at all unreasonable. I was amazed how the hang gliders circled around outside my tight circle in the core, and how I could frequently out-climb them. I worked my way up the ridge until the air actually got cold. The people on the ground were sooo tiny. Heck, a lot of the other WINGS in the air below me were tiny!

In a way though, big-thermal flights can be less rewarding because as long as you find a big lift cell, you can't help but have a long flight. In many ways, I actually feel greater reward when the lift is really light, and you have to use all your tactical and intellectual skills to find and use adequate lift to stay up. These are the flights that make me feel like a real pilot instead of just a plaything of the winds.

"The house thermal pumped air constantly, like riding an elevator. The edge was distinct."

My favorite flight of these criteria was a launch from an eastern Sierra site in very light conditions. We had to watch the cycles for a long time to predict the pattern that just might provide a chance for an extended flight. I had to make a flawless launch, managed to get just enough lift to hold my elevation, then had to figure out the extremely weird shape of the thermal. That disappeared and I sunk down. I found another light cell of lift lower down the ridge, once again oddly shaped. I worked that one for awhile, trying to map out the thermal while making constant adjustments in the bank angle of the wing and my speed to optimize the lift given the size of the cell. Gain a little, lose a little. Sometimes working zero sink while waiting for something better to come along.

Numerous thermals and non-thermals later, I'm starting to set up for a landing approach. Wait! Not yet! Here's another butterfly fart thermal to work on. Zero sink. Zero sink. Too small to circle. Slide back and forth doing figure eight's, keep the turns as flat as possible. Gain a little. More back and forth, gain a little more. Soon, this thermal joins another small thermal and the combination is big enough to circle in. Climb up slowly, that peters out, find another, and another. Soon I'm back above launch, then doing the same slowly-sinking dance I did before. Once again, as I'm setting up for a landing, I get caressed by another nearly non-existent thermal and ever so slowly work my way back up above launch again.

Finally, the lift gets light enough to completely sink out. The flight was just under an hour and there was no real turbulence, yet it was one of the most mentally engrossing flights I had experienced. I could not let my attention waver for a moment or I would lose lift. I constantly had to evaluate the wing's relation to the thermal or I would lose lift. I constantly had to map the perimeter of the thermals and read the terrain for their sources or I would lose lift. It was not a great elevation gain, nor was it a significant cross country flight (I landed in the primary LZ), nor was I battling ragged turbulence, but because it required precise execution of all my thermal skills and I was able to climb all the way back from LZ to above launch twice, the satisfaction that I received made the flight spectacular. The scenery was pretty good too.

- article contributed and reprinted by request from Ann Sasaki

Dues are Due !

Dues for Y2K are due **on or before January 1, 2000**. You can renew your BAPA membership by mailing a \$25 check to P.O. Box 1809, Pacifica, CA 94044-9998. Or, you can bring a check to the December 1 BAPA meeting.

Dues are used to pay for BAPA site insurance, site improvements, club sponsored activities and our monthly newsletter, The Ridge Dancer. Please complete the enclosed membership application/renewal form indicating any changes in your address, phone number, e-mail or other vital statistics, to help us keep the BAPA database up to date.

Also, if you wish to renew your stickers at Mt. Diablo, Mt. Tamalpais or The Stables, please remember to include a copy of your current USHGA card and a self addressed, stamped envelope. We will try to get the 2000 renewal stickers to you in a more

Have you paid your Y2K dues yet?
Dues are due Jan 1, 2000.

BAPA Ballots will be tallied December 1st.
Please vote now.



Bay Area Paragliding Association
Membership Application & Renewal Form

Instructions : Complete and mail this form, along with your payment, to : BAPA, PO Box 1809, Pacifica, CA 94044-9998. Forms may also be given directly to the Treasurer at the monthly BAPA meetings. Make your check payable to: "Bay Area Paragliding Association".

Member Information :

Name _____ Street Address _____
 Home Phone _____ City, State, Zip _____
 Work Phone _____ Email Address _____
 FAX _____ HAM Call Sign _____
 USHGA Number _____ USHGA Rating _____ Expiration date _____
 First Aid Rating(s) _____
 Other interests _____

- * Check here if you do not wish this information to be published to other club members []
- * Check here if the information above has changed since your last renewal []
- * Check here to reduce club costs by electing to receive our monthly newsletter, "**The Ridge Dancer**", by e-mail (.PDF format) []

Membership dues (based on a calendar year) :

Dues Renewal - \$25.00 per year	\$	
New Members - \$2.00 per month from application date until end of year	\$	
Club Donations	\$	
Total Enclosed	\$	

Site Sticker Information :

To obtain a sticker to fly a BAPA administered site, you must apply in person at one of these shops :

<p>Airtime of San Francisco 3620 Wawona Street San Francisco, CA 415.759.1177</p>	<p>Mission Soaring 1116 Wrigley Way Milpitas, CA 408.262.1055</p>
---	---

You may also obtain stickers, as well as additional site information, by contacting the following Site Administrators :

<p>The Stables Dave Sondergeld 650.756.5430 dsonder@slip.net</p>	<p>Mt. Diablo Mahboud Zabetian 925.933.9045 mahboud@aggroup.com</p>	<p>Mt. Tamalpais Wallace Anderson 415.456.3670 tipvortx@thegrid.net</p>
--	---	---

Site Sticker Renewal :

To request a sticker renewal for the current year, please send BAPA a photocopy of your current USHGA membership card, write your sticker number on the photocopy and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Mail to: BAPA, PO Box 1809, Pacifica, CA 94044 9998. Please indicate which site(s) you wish to renew your sticker(s) for :

The Stables [] Mt. Diablo [] Mt. Tamalpais []

Your donation will help to defray site maintenance, insurance and sticker costs - ENCLOSED \$ _____

Additional Site Information :

<p>Ed Levin & Mission Ridge Point Reyes</p>	<p>Stickers and info available by contacting Wings of Rogallo, PO Box 361885, Milpitas, CA 95036-1885. Permits are available at the Bear Valley dispatch office on weekdays between 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. Flying without a permit is a \$200 fine.</p>
<p>Pacifica Dump</p>	<p>The dump is an unregulated site. BAPA recommends that you speak with an experienced local pilot for a site intro. prior to flying this site.</p>

----- FOR BAPA USE ONLY -----

Payment Amount received _____	Payment Method _____
Date of Receipt _____	Date in Database _____