

Letter to the Editor

Editor: AHGA *Thermal Flyer*

Dear Editor:

In response to the many E-mails being circulated regarding the "incident at Oatman", I would like to clarify some misunderstandings. As an observer, I can provide some insight. I was the supposed "wuffo" on the left wing of the pilot's glider and was never solicited to be a "wing person" for this flight. Let me make it clear that my involvement was to help the pilot maneuver his glider to the launch. I was never asked to help with the launch, and there was no communication to this effect.

Also, I would like to mention that the pilot simply walked to the launch, said he was "ready to go", and launched. He was not

blown off launch. I have participated in enough launches and been given directions by experienced hang glider pilots to let go of the wing when the pilot says he is "ready to go". The pilot took none of the required safety measures to have prevented this accident, including having someone on the nose of the glider in these wind conditions, and to do a hang check. I even asked why no one was on the nose, especially with the gusting wind conditions.

Although I do not fly hang gliders, as Jim indicated, I am a licensed pilot and flew squirrely taildraggers for over 15 years. My knowledge of winds had to be very good so as to prevent embarrassing and potentially serious ground loops in severe crosswinds. I never had an accident in all

these years of flying.

In summary, I can say I was in no way responsible for this accident and, although the pilot initially blamed me, I believe he only said this because of his initial shock and pain. He has since vindicated me. I do, however, want everyone to know exactly what did happen that day.

And, I do not think that Eric's reference to "the girls" was necessarily chauvinistic although a reference to "persons" might have been more appropriate. The pilot did refer to persons in his communications and did not specify gender.

Sincerely,

The so-called "experienced wuffo"
Pam Kalish

by Steven Scott

Meeting Minutes for February 13, 2001

Presidents Call to Order:
19:37 Jerry Dalen President
20:30 Meeting Ended

New Faces: None

Old Business:

February 17, 2001: Parachute Clinic with Rob Kells of Wills Wing. Will be held at the Peter Piper on Saturday morning the 17th of February at 10:00 to 15:00. The chutes will be inspected, deployed, repacked and then inspected. The cost will be \$30.00 if signed up before February 1st and \$40.00 after that.

April 10, 2001: APS Power Line Safety Course rescheduled (again).

Jerry said that he and Gil went to the Shaw Butte Users Association meeting and all seemed well, that is, with the exception of last years unpaid road assessment fee which was taken care of immediately. Impressions can be deceiving because Jerry received an e-mail from Jeff Spellman of the Phoenix Parks and Recreation asking him to have his members cut the beer drinking out in the park. It seems that the residents at the LZ area of the park are getting annoyed at the noise and trash. All were informed of the likelihood of the rangers giving us a close watch for the next few months. Lets keep it cool so we don't have trouble with keeping this site.

Kim Shipek proposed that the *Thermal Flyer* be sent by e-mail to those of us who want it. To get the *Thermal Flyer* by e-

mail sent your e-mail address to Kim Shipek at thermalflyer@hotmail.com. Please have patience while we make the switch over. If anyone gets cut from the mailing list it is an accident and you need to let me know as soon as possible.

New Business:

February 24th and 25th: Oatman fly in.

Tim Costello, the Cottonwood City Engineer and hang glider pilot says that there is a power play for land adjacent to the dump landing site. A developer and the city of Clarkdale are trying to gain control over it. Tim wants Clarkdale to win out because the land has contaminated soil and most likely the city of Clarkdale would not expend the funds to clean it up were the developer would and then would develop it. We'll see!

Hal Hayden has taken on the task of making up a map of sites that we can land at on cross-country journeys from Mingus.

Andy Rockhold says that he got no XC forms this season. He also said that the Flagstaff club has designated Eldon a H4 site. Since they insure the site through the Tucson club they can do it. All of the clubs here and elsewhere should try and honor the efforts at self-regulation that we decide on. The launch at Eldon is in need of setup and launch area work. Any volunteer work is welcome. Any donations are welcome.

Certified Rigger returns to the Valley: Jay Schumacher has

returned to Phoenix. He is a certified Rigger and will repack chutes for \$25.00. In a couple of weeks he will be able to sew bridals and swivels. Welcome back Jay. I don't have Jays contact data as of yet.

March 31st & April 1st: Via De Bravo, Mexico fly in.

Dan Schroeder is making a positive hook in device and told us that he would bring prototype devices to the next meeting. He asked the club members if they would be interested in that type of device and most members indicated they would if it worked and it was cheap enough.

Dustin Martin said that this year's XC contest would be a \$20.00 entry fee paid up front. If you wait to do a good flight then it will not count. The entry fee has to be paid before he will count a flight. Everyone will get a T-shirt for entering. The points will be rated with a multiplier depending on the month the flight is done in. April will have a 1.5 multiplier, May will have a 1.25 multiplier and June will have a 1 multiplier. All contestants must file the flights within two weeks of the flight. More to come.

Site Reports:

South Mountain: Light but consistent
Shaw Butt: Sleds except for Shawn
Mingus: No report
Eldon: No flying
Craters: Blown out and cold
Oatman: Light conditions
Turf Soaring: Always good at

\$15.00 per 1000 feet plus \$1.00 per hundred on up on tow. Buoyant air when weather patterns are around small thermals

Yarnell: No report
Springerville: Aiming for a tow-in around July or August.

Awards:

Eagle Award: The nominee was: Bill Lemon for a Paraglide from South Mountain to the Hooters at 48th Street and Chandler Boulevard. Dustin for his out and back from Turf Soaring to Anthem and back. Shawn for consistently going high at Shaw Butte. Bill Lemon Won!

Turkey Award: The nominee was: Mele Glantz flew unrated at a P3 site. Len Clemens for putting Shawn's Dream together wrong and Dutch Rolling to the LZ. Len Clemens Won!

Driver Award: Yolanda Sanchez for driving Chad and Dustin. Linda Poley for driving Saturday and Sunday. Pam Lemon for driving for Chad and Bill. Linda Poley and Pam Lemon Won!

Raffle: Scott Campbell won the raffle of \$18.50. He donated it back to the clubs Mingus Relief Fund. The tradition continues. Thanks Scott.

Dealer Announcements:
Chad Koester: Come to the Parachute Clinic by Rob Kells of Wills Wing.