



The Thermal Flyer

the Arizona Hang Glider Association membership newsletter

September 2001

by Jerry Dalen

Fly Safe

Greetings everyone,

I'm having a hard time concentrating right now. You see it's Thursday. Not just any Thursday, but the Thursday before Labor Day. You know, the HOLIDAY!!!!!!

Thoughts of cool pines and big air are filling my mind. Thoughts of campfires, four wheel drives, and friends getting together to celebrate this incredibly fantastic thing we do called hang gliding. Uhh, paragliding too.

Sorry folks. I'm not biwingual. Maybe one day. Especially after having watched Pete and Tanner take off last week at Mingus in their bag wings. Fourteen years of flying the best site on earth and it was the first time I had seen a paraglider launch there. Looked pretty cool, so who knows, one day I might be calling up Dixon for lessons.



Jerry Dalen congratulates Hal Hayden

Speaking of Mingus. In case you haven't heard, Hal Hayden was the big winner in the Sedona Getaway raffle. Hal and his lovely wife Cathy made a sizeable contribution to the Mingus Relief Fund and it paid off for them in more ways than one. Two nights and three days in beautiful Sedona. Congratulations guys!

Anyway, what was I saying? Oh yeah.

This thing called hang gliding. It really is incredible when you stop to think about it. It never ceases to amaze me that we are so fortunate to be alive in a time when it's so easy to launch yourself into the sky and literally fly like a bird. You've heard me say this before, but it's true. The people make the sport what it is. Whether it's meeting new faces like last week, or getting back together with some old friends, it's all good.

I've tried to figure out what exactly is going on during these times when I'm out on the hill in the thick of things, and I believe it is a combination of actions and reactions, psychological and physical that combine to form everlasting impressions in our minds and bodies. Think about it. The tug on your harness straps when you hit a boomer, the chill of air that hits your face when you sky out, the adrenaline rush when you take that run off launch, and the definite wake up call when you get tossed around like a puppet in the air. There are lots more, but these are examples of lasting ingrained images of flying for me. Then there are the more earthbound pleasures that always accompany a hang gliding adventure. The simple pleasure of hitching a ride in the bed of a pickup truck back to launch, and yakking to your buddies about your flights all the way up. These are memories that stay with me long after the weekend is over.

These are the things that make me feel alive. If I never do anything else of consequence in my life I can proudly say that I was a hang glider pilot. Hang glider pilot. Three small words, but the images that flood my mind when I hear them puts a smile on my face that lasts for a long, long, long time.

In This Issue

Pilot Interview

Hang Gliding P.R.

Verde Valley River Days

Demo Daze 2001

Hand Gliding

NO Meeting Minutes

Membership Renewals

AHGA Web Site

Classified Ads

by Tim Costello

Umpteenth Verde River Days

It's hard to believe that it's September already and time for another Umpteenth Verde River Days. Mark your calendars for the last Saturday in September, the 29th, 2001. For the unfamiliar, this is a fun comp that takes off from Mingus and involves landing down by the Verde River. It is a big affair in Cottonwood with the events taking place in Dead Horse Ranch State Park. The landing zone is outside of the park but on the access road leading to the park. The landing zone is the west corner of N. 10th Street and Riverfront Road.

The contest is low key, a bomb drop and a spot landing contest in a combined

event. In spite of the retro format, a true competition develops each year. Half the fun is the generally weak fall conditions. The 7 mile glide to the contest field requires a gain over launch. The contest fee is a donation to the Mingus Relief Fund.

Following the contest, the awards ceremony will be a party at my house, 935 S. 4th Street in Cottonwood. There will be live music featuring Mid Life Crisis, an acoustic "hard folk" band (it's Pam's band). We will have burgers on the grill and cool drinks. We are asking that folks bring a potluck dish to share. Please call or e-mail me to coordinate the potluck dishes at (928) 634-7411 or <aireout@sedona.net>.

I'm not biwingual.

Jerry Dalen

AHGA