

from the AZ Hang Gliding List

Dust Devils

Bill Cox was killed after being picked up on launch by a dust devil at approximately 1:00 PM Saturday, June 16th at Dry Canyon in Alamogordo, NM. The following was taken from Ed Bennett's post to the hang gliding list. "Five pilots went up to fly Dry. Nice southwest day, good wind, nothing too strong. A bit overdeveloped over the back, but not a problem for launch. As things go so often, by the time the first pilot was ready for launch the wind died to nothing. The first pilot ready was Bill, flying his Laminar, with George on his nose. This is what happens at Dry: you approach launch hooked in, never unhooked, and someone is on your nose, you are never alone. Bill never launched. Mike noticed rustling in the brush to the east and mentioned a wind coming up, and people ought to get their gliders. George told Bill maybe he should unhook 'till this passes, but Bill chose to stay hooked in. Lots of cycles come in, as do dust devils. This wind was (apparently) a dust devil from hell. It came along the east ridge, then moved between setup and launch, then headed out over launch. Bill was picked up off of launch by his keel. George tried to hold it but had the wires ripped from his hands. One of the other pilots holding his glider thought this was not much of a breeze to be concerned with, then caught sight of Bill out the corner of his eye. Spinning over launch. When done with him, the dust devil dumped Bill about 100 to 200 feet below launch, apparently dead on impact."

"Ever since Shawn's accident at the Butte, I have been hooking my harness into the glider first, checking the lines, then getting in and walking to launch. I won't change that procedure because I still think it's the best method for me. I have been on launch several times when dust devils have rolled through, and never have considered unhooking. Always told the wire person to hang on tight. I have never seen a glider with pilot hooked in and noseman be taken. Scary to hear of it happening."
Jerry Dalen

"Yes, continue to do what works for you. A lot more people have died from running off unhooked than have ever been killed as Bill was. The only reason we're not attending two funerals tomorrow is that the wires were ripped out of George's hands; Mike Ellsworth said that dust devil was the most violent thing he's ever witnessed. Be careful, be aware of everything that's going on when you step up to launch. Good luck."
Robin Hastings

"I learned a large lesson about Dust Devils very early in my flying career. Ask Bill Holmes about the "Dust Devil tragedy of '95". Four of us students were sitting under our wings on our base tubes waiting for the slightest hint of a launch cycle. Only Kevin, who was waiting on launch, was even hooked in. Out of nowhere, a huge Dust Devil came up the side of Merriam from behind us. The monster surprised Vince and

Tyler, lifting them both off the ground. Vince was dropped to the ground almost immediately, suffering no injuries. His glider was tossed around like a toy and ripped to shreds. Tyler was not so lucky. He was lifted some fifteen feet off the ground before being thrown against the side of Bill's truck. He was knocked unconscious and was badly injured, suffering a severe concussion, a broken wrist and several cracked ribs. Kevin tried to run out a no-wind launch, but got no lift and had to abort. He was promptly dragged twenty or thirty feet down the slope. Luckily, he was mostly unhurt. His glider was totaled. All tolled, Bill lost four or five training ships to total devastation that day. From that day forward, whenever I heard someone call, "Dust Devil!" or sounded the alarm myself, I immediately moved away from my glider. I didn't matter whether I was hooked in or not."
David Dumins

by Paul Alley, Northern Arizona Soaring

Mt. Elden Reminders

1. You must be a hang 4 (or H3 with a H4 sponsor) to fly Elden...period.
2. You must call the Flagstaff Airport tower at 520-774-7435 at least two hours in advance of launching.

These policies aren't here to hinder flying or annoy new pilots; they are here to save lives and promote safety. Mt. Elden has many nuances that aren't readily apparent to newcomers.

Please spread the word. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Andy Rockhold, NASA's president.

Andy Rockhold: 520-525-2657
Paul Alley: 520-380-1674

Bill Lemon launching at Oatman
photo by Gill Couto



Gary McIntire soaring at the craters
photo by Gill Couto



by Steve Scott

June Meeting Minutes

Jerry Dalen, President

7:54 P.M. Presidents call to order

09:45 P.M. Meeting ended

New Faces:

We welcomed Stewart; he wants to take lessons, Sean Locklear an advanced pilot, Derrick a new pilot of Bill Holmes, James, Paul Wilson and Lisa a returning pilot. It is nice to see Bill Holmes at the meeting again too.

New Business:

Sedona Raffle for the Mingus Relief Fund.

Cheryl Street in accord with

Sunterra Resorts donated a 3-day 2-night Sedona package to the club. Thanks for the work Cheryl. It was decided to raffle chances at the vacation package for \$5.00 a chance. The estimated value of the package is

\$500.00. When the raffle reaches that level or more we will hold the drawing. The package will be good from now until July 31st, 2002.

There are two properties to choose from in Sedona. The Summit is at the west end of 89A coming into Sedona and the Ridge on Sedona Golf Resort is on the south east side

of Sedona.

Old Business: None

XC Contest: No comments

Site Reports:

Shaw Butte: Very Hot! No flying

South Mountain: Flyable but Hot!

Oatman: North launch trashed and no flying

Mingus: Good during the weekdays. The weekends have not been good.

Craters: No reports

Mt. Eldon: No flying

Turf Soaring: Too hot!

Springerville: No reports

Awards:

Eagle Nominations are: Paul Yunker for still having virgin leading edges and lots of air time in his new glider. Kim Shipek for a 2.5 hour flight at Creastline with good landings. Paul won! Congratulations Paul!

Turkey Nominations are: Dale Webb for top landing at an angle to the wind and bending his down tubes. Dan Schroeder for landing at a sight with no access for retrieval. Keith Evert for making a bad landing approach

and landing at Miller Canyon after having covered the LZ hazards with Kim Shipek just before making the flight. The winner is Dale Webb.

Driver Nominations are: Gene Irwin for driving for Joe Pettit. Chad for hauling so many pilots up. Gene won. Congratulations! Raffle: 1st A Velcro strap.

Mingus Relief Fund \$52.00

Sedona Raffle: \$275.00

Dealer Reports:

Bill Holmes is towing at Valley airport between Williams and the Grand Canyon in Northern Arizona. Log onto

AirSportsArizona.com for more details. Dan Schroeder has hang check kits, smoke bomb holders, streamers and streamer poles for sale at great prices. He has upgraded his hang check reminder kit with new checklist cards and instructions for installation. Shawn Jarrell has all sorts of good stuff on sale at good prices. Chad Koester deals Wills Wing and High Energy. Have Talon gliders.