

The Thermal Flyer

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June Meeting Notes

6/11/02 A.H.G.A. Meeting

New Faces: Dave Smith and Randy Buell, both longtime hang glider pilots graced us with their presence. Dan introduced our guest speaker Mark Barry. Mark gave us a presentation on the "The Real Story of Larry Walters: The Lawn Chair Pilot"

New Business: Alicia Webb was voted in as our new Sec/Treas

Joe Pettit Memorial Fund: Karen's request to donate to the Mingus Relief Fund in Joe's name has garnered over \$500.00 so far.

Arizona hang gliding chat room is on the web. Flying sites, news postings, etc., useful information. Jerry will put instructions in next TF. Darren May gathered Joe stories off the net and sent to Joe's brother Steve and Karen.

Garage Sale: Suggestions for storing Linda's belongings until the garage sale can take place were asked for. Hal Hayden donated space in his hangar in Prescott until the weather permits us to have a fly-in/garage sale in the valley.

Safety Clinic: Conf. Room at Chad's office: in about 2-3 weeks, need some suggestions. Ideas on what you want to get out of it, re-pack chutes, throw chutes, pack your own chutes, email any other suggestions you may have to Chad.

Site Reports:

Shaw Butte: Hot! Good glass offs reported.

Aubrey Cliffs: Be sure to sign in at Seligman before you head up. Call Andy Rockhold 928 525-2657 if you don't know the procedure. The town of Seligman is willing to set up party day for hang glider pilots. A volunteer is needed to arrange this. If you would be interested please call Dan Schroeder or one of the club officers.

Oatman: Merle had a sled ride.

Presidents Corner

Dan Schroeder
AHGA President

A "Joe Pettit" story,

It has now been two months since Joe Pettit's accident and his death has affected all of us in some way. For several, getting back into the air has taken time and reevaluation to do so. One thing I would like to share, is what for me, was a very special weekend with Joe Pettit.

It was July of 2000 and Joe called me up asking if I would like to join him on a road trip to the Owens Valley. Sure, I said, I've always wanted to go there. We left early and arrived at the S. end of the Valley at midday. Since we still had half the day left, Joe decided to head to Piute, some 70 miles N., in hopes of a late glass off. Along the way, he pointed out all the landmarks, LZ's, and the strategies needed for XC flying through the Valley. I didn't pay close attention to him since I'd never flown that far and just couldn't relate. We ended up not flying that day and headed back to camp at Tuttle Creek with Len and his family.

The next day was to be something words alone cannot explain. We got to launch with about ten other pilots and set up. I was unusually nervous and would be the last off at 11:30am. Just before hooking in, I remember looking up at my king post and seeing the green streamer stub still there from Rob's funeral. I looked at it and thought, "This one's for you Rob".

Ten miles down wind I got badly trashed and headed out to land near camp. As I was beginning my approach, I turned right into a thermal and went straight to 9,000 ft. This would be the first of seven low saves from below 200 ft. and two more from about 600 ft. It was the first sign that something unusual was with me on this flight. I had a weird feeling that I was not going to land, and could not explain it. Every time I came in to land, there was always something in the LZ at the last minute.

After two more aborted landings, I caught up with Joe in Independence who was on the ground kicking dirt for me. As I came in on my downwind approach, it happened again. Joe now had me in site and began pushing me to cross the valley. After three more low saves while cutting across to the Whites, I