

APRIL 2005



# e-WESTWIND



*Muddy Retrieve - Williams Style.*

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# Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Pacific Soaring Council, Inc., a non-profit, 501(c)3 corporation, is to initiate, sponsor, promote and carry out plans, policies and activities that will further the education and development of soaring pilots. Specifically, activities will promote and teach the safety of flight; meteorology; training in the physiology of flight, and the skills of cross country and high altitude soaring. Other activities will be directed towards the development of competition pilots and the organization and support of contests at the local, regional, national and international levels of soaring. PASCO is the acronym for the Council. West Wind is the monthly publication of PASCO. Material may be reprinted without permission. The present board will remain in office until November 2005. Current dues are \$25 annually from the month after receipt of payment.

## Pacific Soaring Council, Inc

### President,

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Marketing:  
(See Directors)

Ginny Farnsworth

### Secretary

TBD

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Eric Rupp

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#### Awards:

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415-667-9142, 211 Main/3/103

Cindy Donovan

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### Nevada Governor

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Reno, NV 89511  
775-849-8209 [cranest@hotmail.com](mailto:cranest@hotmail.com)

### Hawaii Governor

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Honolulu, HI 96825,  
(808) 395-9502 h

## PASCO Board Meetings; Every 2nd Monday of the month 7pm, San Jose Jet Center

(off Coleman Av, west side of San Jose airport)

Contact Marc Ramsey ([marc@ranlog.com](mailto:marc@ranlog.com)) for details and directions.

**Members welcome; please tell us you're coming.**

### REGION 11 GLIDER OPERATIONS

Air Sailing, Inc. Airport	Ty White	510-490-6765
Central California Soaring Club	Avenal Gliderport, 600 LaNeva Blvd Avenal CA 93204,	559-386-9552
Crazy Creek Soaring	18896 Grange Road, P.O. Box 575, Middletown, CA 95461	707-987-9112
Ely Soaring	Dan Callaghan P.O.BOX 151296, Ely, NV 89315 <a href="http://www.elysoaring.com">http://www.elysoaring.com</a>	775-720-1020
Las Vegas Soaring Center	Jean Airport, <a href="mailto:lvsoar@vegasnet.net">lvsoar@vegasnet.net</a>	702-874-1010
Mt. Diablo Soaring, Inc.	Rolf Peterson, Flt. Instructor <a href="mailto:rolfpete@aol.com">rolfpete@aol.com</a>	925-447-5620
Northern California Soaring Ass'n (NCSA)	Byron Airport, Byron, CA.	925-516-7503
Owens Valley Soaring,	Westridge Rd., Rt 2, Bishop, CA 93514	619-387-2673
Hollister Gliding Club,	Hollister Airport – Hollister California, <a href="mailto:info@soarhollister.com">info@soarhollister.com</a>	831-636-3799, 831-636-7705
Soar Minden	Minden-Tahoe Airport, P.O. Box 1764, Minden, NV 89423,	800-345-7627 775-782-7627
Soar Truckee, Inc.,	Truckee Airport, P.O. Box 2657 CA 96160,	530-587-6702
Williams Soaring Center	Williams GliderPort 2668 Husted Road, Williams, CA 95987 <a href="http://www.williamssoaring.com/">http://www.williamssoaring.com/</a>	530-473-5600

### REGION 11 CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

Air Sailing, Inc. Airport	Air Sailing Glider port, NV	Ty White	510-490-6765
Bay Area Soaring Associates (BASA) -	Hollister Airport, Hollister, CA;	Stan Davies,	408-238-2880
Central California Soaring Club	Avenal Gliderport, Avenal, CA.	Mario Crosina,	559-251-7933.
Crazy Creek Soaring Society (CCSS)	Crazy Creek Gliderport, Middletown, CA..	Roger Archey,	415-924-2424
Great Basin Soaring, Inc.	2312 Prometheus Court Henderson, NV89074	Terry W. Van Noy	
Las Vegas Valley Soaring Association	Jean Airport, NV, P.O.Box 19902, Jean, NV 89019,		702-874-1420
Minden Soaring Club	P.O. Box 361, Minden, NV 89423		
Mount Shasta Soaring Center	Siskiyou County Airport, Montague, CA	Gary Kemp,	530-934-2484
Nevada Soaring Association (NSA) -	Air Sailing Gliderport, NV.	Vern Frye	775-825-1125
Northern California Soaring Association (NCSA)	Byron Airport, Byron, CA.	Mike Schneider	925-426-1412
Silverado Soaring Association	739 Pepper Dr. San Bruno, CA 94066;	Paul Wapensky <a href="mailto:WapenskyPJ@mfr.usmc.mil">WapenskyPJ@mfr.usmc.mil</a>	650-873-4341
Valley Soaring Association (VSA) -	Williams Glider Port 2668 Husted Road, Williams, CA	Peter Kelly	707-448-6422

## WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESSES - REGION 11

Soaring Society of America Pacific Soaring Council Air Sailing Inc. Jim and Jackie Payne - FAI Badge Page Bay Area Soaring Associates Central California Soaring Club CRAZY CREEK SOARING SOCIETY (CCSS). LAS VEGAS SOARING CENTER Minden Soaring Club Mount Shasta Soaring Center Northern California Soaring Assoc. RENO SOARING FORECAST Silverado Soaring, Inc. SOAR HOLLISTER Williams Soaring Center Valley Soaring Association	<a href="http://www.ssa.org">http://www.ssa.org</a> <a href="http://www.pacificsoaring.org">http://www.pacificsoaring.org</a> <a href="http://www.airsailing.org">http://www.airsailing.org</a> <a href="http://home.aol.com/JPAviation">http://home.aol.com/JPAviation</a> <a href="http://www.flybasa.org">http://www.flybasa.org</a> <a href="http://www.soaravenal.com">http://www.soaravenal.com</a> <a href="http://crazycreekglders.com">http://crazycreekglders.com</a> <a href="http://www.lasvegassoaring.com">http://www.lasvegassoaring.com</a> <a href="http://www.mindensoaringclub.org">http://www.mindensoaringclub.org</a> <a href="http://www.craggyaero.com/mssc/">http://www.craggyaero.com/mssc/</a> <a href="http://www.norcalsoaring.org/">http://www.norcalsoaring.org/</a> <a href="http://nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov/Reno/rnosaforno.htm">http://nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov/Reno/rnosaforno.htm</a> <a href="http://www.silveradosoaring.org/">http://www.silveradosoaring.org/</a> <a href="http://www.soarhollister.com/">http://www.soarhollister.com/</a> <a href="http://www.williamssoaring.com/">http://www.williamssoaring.com/</a> <a href="http://www.sonic.net/~pjkelly/vsa.html">http://www.sonic.net/~pjkelly/vsa.html</a>
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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Annual Events	Location	Contact	Phone	URL
Feb 9-12	SSA Annual Convention	Ontario, California	SSA web site		<a href="http://www.ssa.org">www.ssa.org</a>
Feb 26-	PASCO Cross Country Seminar	UC Berkeley, CA	Carl Herold	775-827-3376	<a href="mailto:cdherold@charter.net">cdherold@charter.net</a>
Apr 29-May 1	PASCO League Event #1	Avenal	Jim Alton	925-355-9289	<a href="mailto:jim.alton@sbc.com">jim.alton@sbc.com</a>
May 7th	DOC Mayes Memorial Contest	Williams, CA	Noelle Mayes	530-473-5600	<a href="http://www.williamssoaring.com">www.williamssoaring.com</a>
May 12-15	Avenal Spring Contest	Avenal, CA	Mario Crosina	559-251-2880	<a href="http://www.soaravenal.com">www.soaravenal.com</a>
May 23-27	Airsailing Thermaling Camp	AirSailing, NV	Rolf Peterson	925-447-5620	<a href="http://www.airsailing.org">www.airsailing.org</a>
Jul 4-9	AirSailing Sports Class	AirSailing NV	Jimmy Hamilton	775-626-1950	<a href="http://www.airsailing.org">www.airsailing.org</a>
Jun 5-11	Region 11 Championships (Std, 15m,	Ely, NV	Karol Hines	510-791-2964	<a href="mailto:karoll@sbcglobal.net">karoll@sbcglobal.net</a>
Jun 27-Jul 1	A,B,C & Bronze Badge Camp	Truckee-Tahoe Airport	Dave Cunningham	925-933-4558	<a href="mailto:ldc@att.net">ldc@att.net</a>
Jul 18-22	A,B,C & Bronze Badge Camp	Airsailing, NV	Dave Cunningham	925-933-4558	<a href="mailto:ldc@att.net">ldc@att.net</a>
Jul 7-21	18 Meter Nationals	Montague, CA	Gary Kemp	530-934-2482	<a href="mailto:garykemp@sbcglobal.net">garykemp@sbcglobal.net</a>
Jul 22-24	PASCO League Event #2	Montague CA	Jim Alton	925-355-9289	<a href="mailto:jim.alton@sbc.com">jim.alton@sbc.com</a>
Jul 24-29	AirSailing Cross-Country Camp	AirSailing, NV	David Prather	530-672-6993	<a href="http://www.airsailing.org">www.airsailing.org</a>
Aug 13-14	Gerlach Dash	AirSailing, NV	Cindy Donovan	415-667-9142	
Labor Day?? TBD	PASCO League Event #3	Minden NV	Jim Alton	925-355-9289	<a href="mailto:jim.alton@sbc.com">jim.alton@sbc.com</a>
Oct 8th	Williams Oktoberfest	Williams, CA	Noelle Mayes	530-473-5600	<a href="http://www.williamssoaring.com">www.williamssoaring.com</a>

### Editorial

This issue is a little later than planned due to some sad late-breaking news of the loss of some of our long time members. Sadly we lost three stalwarts of our soaring community in the last few months; Pete Williams, George Congdon and Les Arnold. Pete was a pioneer of motor gliding and George was a long time member of PASCO and designed our distinctive logo. A reprint of George's article is included in this newsletter. Les was a huge force in the history of soaring in our region and I have included an obituary written by Emil Kissel in this issue. Our heartfelt sympathies to relatives and friends.

Also, a couple of errata from the last newsletter; I unwittingly neglected to include Ginny Farnsworth as a

speaker at the PASCO Seminars in November; sorry Ginny! Also there was an error in the Award History for the 2002 Longest Silver Distance Award for Eric Norris in 2002. And to cap my miserable catalog of neglect, incompetence and inattention, I made a typo on the date of the AirSailing Sports class comp; which is being held in July not June; please see the updated calendar of events.

Cindy Donovan recently forwarded to West Wind a really good website with some excellent cloud scape and soaring videos; [www.cloudappreciationsociety.org](http://www.cloudappreciationsociety.org)

**A Note from Carl Herold** ; My two six day ELY Race Efficient Course Flying will be available on two

periods. July 4 through 9, 2005, Aug 1 through 9, 2005. I will limit the classes to 12 gliders each course.  
Regards, Carl Herold  
775-827-3376

## **BASA Wave camp Dates**

Saturday 9 April through Sun 17 April in Minden. On average BASA expect 12 persons attending per day. BASA plan to have 4 or 5 ships in Minden.

## **Interested in Paragliding??**

(I recently received this from Jeff Greenbaum, a local paragliding instructor; this link will also be on the PASCO website shortly. Ed..)

"I saw that you have a section on your page <http://www.pacificsoaring.org/clubs.html> for paragliding I have been teaching paragliding in the SF Bay Area since 1988 and am currently running Airtime of San Francisco.

Link to <http://paragliding-lessons.com> phone # (415) 310-7411

Jeff Greenbaum  
Fly High, Safe and Far  
Airtime of San Francisco  
<http://sftandem.com>  
<http://paragliding-lessons.com>  
[jgreenbaum@paragliding-lessons.com](mailto:jgreenbaum@paragliding-lessons.com)

## **Cross Country Soaring Seminar a Success**

The PASCO Cross Country Soaring Seminar, put on by Carl Herold and friends in February, was a success attracting 40-50 pilots. Held on the UC Berkeley campus, this annual event attracted some new faces but still to my mind not enough, since it is targeted toward new pilots and we know there are more out there from the new solo and private ratings information we receive from the clubs and FBO's; If you know someone who would benefit from these seminars but didn't attend, please encourage them to think about it next time around; it is specifically for them, and very good value for a days cross country education.

## **New Region 11 Soaring FBO**

We have a new Region 11 soaring organization! Ely Soaring is now an official operation based at Yelland Field in Ely Nevada. (see last issue for a newspaper article about the recent camps there) Ely Soaring, P.O.BOX 151296, ELY NV 89315, [www.Elysoaring.com](http://www.Elysoaring.com) FBO is Dan Callaghan, all info available at the website. **Ely is of course the site of our 2005 Regional Champs, with Karol Hines as CD.**

## **2004 OLC Results for Region 11**

Congrats again this year go to Ramy Yanetz, Minden and Hollister gliding clubs for their 2004 OLC placings;

### ***USA: (256 participants)***

1st place: Doug Levy  
2nd place: Ramy Yanetz  
3rd place: Schmelzer Wlfgang

In the club scoring, Hollister finished 6th and Minden Soaring Club finished 17 out of 66 clubs.

### ***International scoring (8140 participants):***

6th place: Doug Levy  
11th place: Ramy Yanetz

### ***And in the international scoring for pure gliders (without engine) (7155 participants):***

1st place: Doug Levy  
3rd place: Ramy Yanetz

## ***STOP PRESS!!***

### ***Another National Record from Minden!***

#### **US National Record Claim for Open Class - Free 3 Turn Point Distance**

#### **Pilot: Gordon R. Boettger**

Date of Flight: **3/27/05**

Sailplane: Kestrel 17 meter

Duration of Flight: 12 hrs 00 min

Course Distance: 1129.3 smi (1817.5 km)

Estimated Loss of Height Penalty: 82.2 smi (132.3 km)

Performance Claimed: 1047.1 smi (1685.2 km)

Course Description:

Release: Near **Minden-Tahoe Airport, NV**

TP1: Near Chilcoot, CA

TP2: Little Lake, CA

TP3: 10 miles north of Susanville Airport, CA

Landing: Fox Field, Lancaster, CA

OOs: Michael Moore, Robert Semans

Note: 53RA0TP1.IGC flight file is available on

AeroKurier OLC

### ***Congrats to Gordon!!***

### **Safety Message from Steve Northcraft (Region 8 Director) and Dennis Wright (SSA President)**

Did you know Scott Richmond, Willy Burhen, or Joe Patton? If you didn't it's too late, they were all killed in gliders accidents in Region 8 during the last two seasons. Each accident involved a different part of soaring flight and all were different gliders. They were

all licensed pilots and they had one other thing in common: none of them started their flight expecting it to end the way it did. I think it's time that we take notice of these losses to our community and each of us take the time to reflect on how we can be safer in every aspect of our flying and help others to be safe also.

I don't believe a detailed review of the recent accidents in this communication is necessary, as there is information publicly available on each one. But we can take something away from their loss. We can remind ourselves that complacency in our sport is something that will kill us as surely as any other cause, and we must be ever watchful not to fall into it.

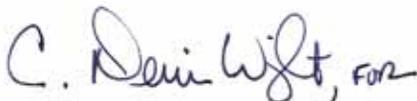
In the world of commercial aviation, it's an axiom that no accident is the result of a single failure: it's the result of a chain of events. Our job as pilots is to recognize the threat, take positive action and break the chain. How do we do that?

One way is checklists. We teach checklists for rigging gliders, pre-flight checklists, landing checklists. For some it is a simple rote. For one pilot I met at the Nationals in Hobbs this year, it was a solemn ritual involving 2 pages of carefully checked items before every flight. Which are you? How well do you review your checklists? Checklists aren't just something to quickly skip through; they are there to remind you what has to be done to remain safe.

Another way to break the chain is to always have a plan. If you have a plan you can take action when a crisis occurs and not simply react to it. Do you review your emergency options before closing the canopy? Do you call out 200 (or?) ft on tow? At a new or unfamiliar field do you ask what the rope break options are before flying? Do you know what out landing options to choose, and what to avoid – before you fly? You should have contingency plans for any situation from the time the rope is hooked up for takeoff until the wheels stop rolling and you are off the runway on landing.

What else can you do? You can checkout the Soaring Safety Foundation's web site, [www.soaringsafety.org](http://www.soaringsafety.org) and read the latest on how to be a safer pilot. And you can help others by making sure they do their pre-flight checks and planning too. But in the end it's up to each of us to be responsible for our own safety by making sure that we are ready to fly each day.

Safe soaring,



Stephen Northcraft, Director  
SSA Region 8

## **Badge Camps at Truckee and AirSailing**

**June 27 - July 1, 2005** A,B,C & Bronze Badge Camp, Soar Truckee Gliderport, CA. Beginning and intermediate-level glider pilots who desire improved and more efficient soaring skills for longer local flights and for safer cross-country flights. For those more experienced pilots, an official observer will be available for badge flights. Contact Richard Pearl or Dave Cunningham. 925.933.4558 [ldc@att.net](mailto:ldc@att.net)

**July 18 - 22, 2005** A B C & Bronze Badge Camp, Air Sailing Gliderport, NV. Beginning and intermediate-level glider pilots who desire improved and more efficient soaring skills for longer flights and for safer cross-country flights. Experienced pilots - an official observer will be available for badge flights. Contact Dave Cunningham. 925.933.4558 [ldc@att.net](mailto:ldc@att.net)

## **Club News**

### ***News from Byron (NCSA); Monique Weil***

#### **NCSA 2004 Flight – Awards**

**Pilot Of The Year:** Yuliy Gerchikov:

**Tow Pilot Of The Year:** Ken Ferguson:

**Instructor Of The Year:** Monique Weil:

#### **NCSA Spark Plugs Of The Year:**

Ken Ferguson, John Randazzo, Norm Freitas, Ken Pruchnick

#### **\*Special Appreciation Award**

To Mike Schneider For Over 10years Service  
To NCSA As President.

#### **Pasco Youth Award:**

Scott Stiehr PPG July 2004

#### **Total Glider cross-country miles flown in 2004**

Yuliy Gerchikov: 5369 sm

Rolf Peterson: 4,213 sm

Mike Green: 3,918sm

#### **Longest glider Distance flight anywhere**

Yuliy Gerchikov: 432sm

Rolf Peterson: 349 sm

Mike Green: 286sm

#### **Longest Distance / time flight from Byron**

Boris Deianov: 3.6hr

#### **Highest Altitude achieved from Byron**

Rich Miller: 10,600'

#### **Highest Altitude anywhere**

Yuliy Gerchikov: 30,300'; height gain: 22,800'

### Fastest average X-C speed anywhere

Yuliy Gerchikov: 136 km/h over ~400 km  
Buzz Graves: 65MPH in SS 150m triangle

### Longest flight in a 1-26

Shannon Madsen: 1.8 hours

### Total number of Instructional flights/hours given

Monique Weil 206 instructional flights/73.9 hours -  
Rolf Peterson: 33 hours including motor glider  
Buzz Graves: 20 instruction flights/14 hours given

### News from Hollister (Ramy Yanetz)

The 2005 Hollister League will start 4/17/2005 and end 5/28/2005.

The goal is to fly x-c and have fun in a competitive environment by creating an informal series of contests with minimum rules. The idea is to give incentive to both novice and experienced pilots to fly XC out of Hollister. There will be emphasis on assisting novice pilots with flight planning, strategies, and helping them out if they are struggling on course. Radio communication for this purpose will be encouraged. I will be available for mentoring along the first leg upon advance request. Also the Duo and DG1000 will be available for those who would like to fly with experience XC pilots. There will be briefing every morning at 10AM.

This year we simplified the rules significantly by taking advantage of OLC. The following are the new rules

1 - The scoring will be based on OLC. More Hollister pilots are now participating in the OLC, and those who don't, can send me their igc file and I'll score it.

2 - Pilots who don't use logger or GPS, can still participate by sending me their turn points and times.

3 - All tasks will be pilot selected speed tasks, which we tried successfully last year.

4 - There will be only one class. Novice pilots can fly shorter tasks along the same leg as other pilots, and thus achieve higher XC speed, giving them a chance to win. Experienced pilots will be required to help novice pilots as needed.

5 - All flights will be scored, including land outs and straight outs. The scoring will be based on handicapped OLC speed. (OLC calculate the speed based on distance from release to landing, with altitude penalty).

6 - Daily results will be published on the HGC web site and hggroup.

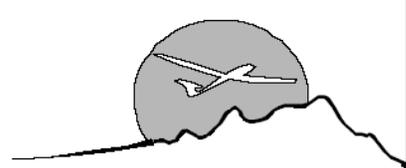
**Williams**  
**Soaring Center**

*Proudly servicing the Soaring Community for over 15 years*

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- Winter Instruments
- Tost Products, Tire Releases
- Mylar Seals, Wing Tape
- Pilot Supplies

- Cambridge GPS
- Oxygen Systems
- Flight Accessories
- Training, Rides & Rental



Formerly  
PIK Pacific

Williams Soaring Center (530) 473-5600

*Rex & Noelle Mayes*  
2668 Husted Road, Williams CA 95987-5105

### News from Williams (Noelle Mayes)

Noelle forwarded this set of dates for the Williams Race Series and annual events at Williams.

March 12	Race Day 1
March 26	Race Day 2
April 9	Race Day 3
April 23	Race Day 4
May 7	Race Day 5 & "Doc" Mayes Memorial Contest
May 21	Race Day 6
June 4	Race Day 7
June 18	Race Day 8
July 9	Race Day 9
July 23	Race Day 10
Aug 13	Race Day 11
Aug 27	Race Day 12
Sept 10	Race Day 13
Sept 24	Race Day 14
October 8	Race Day 15 & WSC Oktoberfest

Contact: Noelle Mayes; 530-473-5600  
[www.williamssoaring.com](http://www.williamssoaring.com)

### News from AirSailing (Mike Green)

#### AirSailing Memorial Sunday April 17, 2005 10:00

Air Sailing's memorial grove began in 1987 to provide a unique and living memorial to those who are significant to Air Sailing. A line of Austrian pine trees was planted to outline the grove, and a granite stone was commissioned. The memorial was dedicated to six founding members of Air Sailing, and has since grown to recognize over 30 of our friends.

Remembrance celebrations are held periodically, to recognize people whose names have been newly added to the stone, and to provide the opportunity to appreciate the legacy of those who are still at Air Sailing in spirit. At this next gathering we will honor and remember Lori Brand, Tom Jona, Bob McKee, Ray Duncan, Nancy McKay and Ruben Zelwer.

Please join us in the memorial grove and later in the clubhouse for cookies and coffee. Call Pam Sutton for more info: 775-830-8388 [jt12330@earthlink.net](mailto:jt12330@earthlink.net)

## **Obituary for Les Arnold; By Emil Kissel**

I met Les Arnold in 1939 at the SSNC [Soaring Society of Northern California]. We flew on weekends at a farmers field in Livermore located on the North side of Highway 50 just as it starts up the grade over Altamont pass. It appears to be a model field these days. Les was considered experienced because Rod Doyle and he built and flew a secondary glider called "Valiant Lady" The rest of us flew and cracked up the Primary's the club owned. They were repaired during the week for the next weekends flying. Dick Johnson was active and building his Baby Albatross. On occasion we went to Tracy Airport for higher auto tows. Les was soon married to Maybelle who us old timers remember fondly. They lived in Hayward on a large chicken ranch with his father's family. Les became skilled at determining the sex of new born chicks and pursued this vital skill during WW2. 1940,41 Arvin held contests sponsored by the LA and San Diego enthusiasts, who were further advanced than SSNC. Les attended these. Gliding was pushed back to Nevada during the war. After the war a site at Camp Parks was used. Centerville, Warm Springs and Hummingbird Bird sites were used when Les decided to open a school at Hummingbird. He brought so much activity that he decided to develop Sky Sailing Airport. It grew rapidly and at one time he had several Schweizer 2-32's flying rides all day every, Sat and Sun. He built a clever glider hanger that still exists at Byron Airport. Many privately owned gliders were also based at Sky Sailing. The major activity was instruction and it was one of the largest glider operations anywhere.

Les used the WW2 Schweizer TG3 surplus glider as one of his trainers. He used the recent Schweizer 2-33,1-26 for his fleet. He developed the efficient mid-field operation, eliminating pulling gliders back to the starting areas. On the busy weekends the ride pilots would roll up to the front of the line where 2 line boys would skillfully remove the 2 passengers and strap in 2 more. His employees were qualified to instruct, hop passengers, fly the 5 tow planes, maintenance and collect the money. I had great admiration for this self made man, especially in his trust of his employees. Every day he would distribute a wallet, with change, and collect them at night. He NEVER had anybody

steal. He eliminated the need for a cashier. Many of his line boys went on to become airline captains. His influence was so pervasive that we Northern Californians never had the rivalries that plagued the LA and Texas groups. We had some deep technical discussions that showed his inquisitive mind was first class. Among the other activities were; participation in national contests, helping develop Nelsons motor glider [Hummingbird], I believe he donated his to Elmira's museum. Very active in our early Wave Camps at Minden -Later in life, he was struck down with Alzheimer's at his home at Brownsville. His older daughter Jean took on his care for those many years.

Good bye my friend. Emil Kissel.

A Memorial for Les is currently being planned sometime in June at his home in Brownsville. More information ]s it becomes available.

## **Final Glide; Pete Williams (Leo Montejo)**

It is with sadness that I have learned, while away from the US, that our friend Pete Williams has passed away. I learned this yesterday evening from a fellow club member.

Pete, who was one of the club's founders, became a close friend after he was part of the "gang of five" last year when we had differences with the airport administrator. Since then, he became an indefatigable collaborator with me those of us who wish to preserve soaring at Minden.

About once a month I would always receive a personal letter (not email) from him with the latest news on the field. He encouraged me in many ways, and yet he also disagreed with me at times.

During the last six months, Pete's drumbeat clearly became the need for a MSC clubhouse at the airport. At one point we sat down with Bob Trumbly and looked at the feasibility of the project, and nothing was really in the way. He insisted that we start last fall, but we let things go by.

Most recently, Pete wrote a letter to the Record Courier delineating the airport's history and the need to preserve runway 22 for gliders. He wrote me about a week ago telling me that he had received no negative comments and that we should meet at the SSA convention.

The weather turned sour, and I didn't fly to Ontario, and now this news... How can we pay homage to Pete and his contribution to soaring? I propose that once and for all we build the clubhouse this year and name it after him. Pete kept saying, "We have to place our stake on the ground... We cannot wait any longer..." Finally, we need to ensure that runway 22 is preserved for gliding. My deepest condolences go to Charm.

## In Memoriam; George Congdon (Ty White)

We recently learned from the wife of George Congdon that he passed away on July 22, 2004. George designed the PASCO logo, and he also wrote the following article regarding a flight launched off Mt. Diablo in 1946. The article first appeared in WESTWIND in 1967, and we reprinted it in 1998. Here it is again, to remember old times.

### The Birdman of Diablo, 1946 by George Congdon

*George Congdon, a long-time PASCO member and resident of San Rafael, designed the distinctive PASCO logo. This story first appeared in the February, 1967 WESTWIND.*

For the purpose of recording an interesting account of an early soaring incident and to provide current Northern California soaring enthusiasts with a picture of one of the many attempts to unstrap oneself from earthly bonds via the soaring glider, the following is an account of an attempt to get into the upper air by means of a high launch from Mt. Diablo.

If my memory is correct, my efforts to fly off Diablo were not the first. There was an intrepid fellow by the name of Sanborn who accomplished it in a Grunau two-place ship. Following Sanborn's flight, one other person launched from the mountain -- a person whom we all know very well for his repeated wins in National contests, Dick Johnson. This was done in his first glider, a Baby Bowlus. Although I have known Dick for some time and have talked with him on occasion, it never occurred to me to talk to him about his Diablo flights.

To get on with it now, let's step back in time a little. World War II had just ended and I was anxious to get back into gliding after being away from it for some time. My previous experience began in 1934, in Ogden, Utah, in a primary glider. Since that time I hadn't been able to shake the bug. When the opportunity arose to purchase a glider from Bob Blaine in Southern California, I immediately grabbed it. The ship was a German sailplane, built in this country from plans, by Blaine. It was called a Goeppingen I, or better known as the Wolf, and designed by Wolf Hirth, a German pioneer in the sport. It was designated as an intermediate glider, capable of cloud flying. It had a glide angle of about 17 to 1 and a sink of about 3.5 ft/second; not good by our present standards, but it was a pretty ship, very stable and real fun to fly, with its open cockpit -- a pleasure I am sure we are missing nowadays. Blaine was kind enough to deliver the ship to San Francisco as he was up this way on business. This was a big day! Now I was confronted with the problem of what to do with it. There were absolutely no gliding activities going on in the Bay Area at this

time. There were still the old-timers located here and there, formerly the old "Soaring Society of Northern California", but they had practically quit as they had nothing to fly. My immediate problem was to get the much needed help to fly the glider. I had to become a master salesman to do this. Somehow, I managed to get a relative or some unsuspecting friend on the job where I worked to lend a hand.

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Most of the beginning launches were made by auto tow from any large field I could find -- even highways, if traffic wasn't too congested. Things did get rather hairy sometimes -- I might have created problems here and there, but I experienced no accidents.

I was getting discouraged with the up and down of the simple auto tow on flat fields and decided that if I was going to get any soaring, I would have to start higher. Bear in mind that if I had known more about thermal soaring, as it was done in Southern California, I might have even been successful on the flat fields. However, the only type of soaring done in Northern California up until this time was slope soaring.

On March 2, 1946, I decided to try a launch from Mt. Diablo as Dick Johnson had done before the war. I was living in San Francisco at the time and kept the glider in one of the large garages usually found under apartment buildings there. I made arrangements with Gil Walters to borrow his 100' shock cord (rubber rope), then mustered the usual relatives and friends or anyone I could find. On that eventful day, I hitched the glider trailer to my '36 Ford and started off with high hopes and the anticipation of being a bird that day.

Gliders on trailers, being towed down the highway are always an attention getter, even causing accidents by people who spend too much time looking and not paying attention to their driving. It was not surprising that the closer I got to Diablo, the more followers I could pick up along the way. Being Sunday, there were lots of curious people around. I arrived at the Mt. Diablo Ranger Station, about half way up the



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mountain. Luckily, they agreed to my making the launch. After one boiling radiator and mounting apprehensions the higher I got, I finally arrived at the launch site, a place called Deer Park. This was just a few hundred yards from the top. The place was banked with trees to the rear, but sloped off beautifully to the brow of the mountain. The view was spectacular. I could see San Francisco, Marin County and the Livermore Valley as though I were on top of them. I was really at a high pitch of anticipation; however, I decided not to let this get the better of me. I took my time assembling the glider and checked things over carefully. Gil Walters was on hand to assist in the shock cord launching. This was old hat to him, but completely untried by me. Now and then someone would ask me if I was scared. I probably was, but I was too busy to be aware of it.

Luckily, there were from 20 to 25 people around from which to muster a launch crew. Those chosen were given instructions by Walters. Things started to happen. The ship was hauled to the launch site and the 100' shock cord stretched out in a giant V. One man was to hold the tail of the glider to allow the rubber rope to build up to maximum stretch. Approximately ten persons were then located on each end of the V, including my wife. She probably felt this was the last time she was going to see her crazy husband.

I put on helmet and goggles, climbed into the cockpit and readied myself for the big moment. It came with surprising speed. The launch crew started to walk

outwardly down the hill, then came the order to run -- almost instantly I was in the air.

As I sailed over the edge of the mountain, I was suddenly thrown into some very erratic positions as though placed in a giant mix-master. I had flown into an area of extreme turbulence created by wind eddies off the hogback ridge to the north. The wind was not coming directly up the slope, but came at an oblique angle to it. I immediately pointed my nose away from the mountain and dove into calm air. At this point I thought I would try to get lift on the windward side. Luckily, I found a ridge lower down the mountain that provided some encouragement. I was able to hang on there for about half an hour; however, I was not gaining much altitude and figured I had just about had it. Turning away from the mountain, I headed out into the valley, located a small field between two rolling hills and landed.

I was finally located and retrieved by my excited crew and wife. I was as happy to see them as they were me. I was determined to give another try on a better day. They all agreed to help.

A few days later, on March 7, I decided to try another launch from Mt. Diablo. I again went through the routine of making arrangements for another assault on the mountain. In my own mind I probably felt like Hilary in his conquest of Everest. Luck was with me on this day. The weather was beautiful and the wind direction perfect at about 15 knots.

After the usual trek up the mountain with my faithful friends and relatives, preparations were again made for a launch. This time it was a different story. I was launched into that wonderful wind coming directly up the slope and was immediately carried up and over the heads of the launch crew. They grew smaller as I climbed higher. What a sensation! I felt like the ship had suddenly become a part of my anatomy. I could do anything -- I had the whole sky and it was all mine. This piece of wood and fabric had come alive and I was its master.

For nearly two hours, I sailed back and forth along the mountain, enjoying the magnificent view and feeling like I never felt before. Finally, I turned away from the mountain that I had so long wished to conquer and headed westerly towards the town of Danville. On the way I encountered areas of lift which were in truth, thermals -- something I know little about. Instead of circling in them, I flew straight through. I had accomplished my objective, anything else was just unimportant at the time. After about two and a half hours in the air, I landed in a small field near Danville. Today this field is a housing tract.

Thus came to an end one of the most important and thrilling soaring experiences of my life.

**Aviation Aphorisms;** (On a lighter note, some light entertainment purloined from somewhere on the web....)

Though I Fly Through the Valley of Death ..I Shall Fear No Evil. For I am at 80,000 Feet and Climbing! (Sign over the entrance to the old SR-71 operating base Kadena, Japan)

You've never been lost until you've been lost at Mach 3. (Paul F. Crickmore-test pilot)

The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.

Blue water Navy truism: There are more planes in the ocean than submarines in the sky. (From an old carrier sailor)

If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage, it's probably a helicopter -- and therefore, unsafe.

When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash

Without ammunition, the USAF would be just another expensive flying club.

What is the similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots? If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies; If ATC screws up, the pilot dies.

Never trade luck for skill

The three most famous last words in aviation are: "Why is it doing that?", "Where are we?" and "Oh S\*\*t!"

Weather forecasts are horoscopes with numbers. Progress in airline flying: now a flight attendant can get a pilot pregnant

Airspeed, altitude and brains. Two are always needed to successfully complete the flight.

A smooth landing is mostly luck; two in a row is all luck; three in a row is prevarication.

I remember when sex was safe and flying was dangerous.

Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding or doing anything about it.

When a flight is proceeding incredibly well, something was forgotten.

Just remember, if you crash because of weather, your funeral will be held on a sunny day.

Advice given to RAF pilots during WWII: When a prang (crash) seems inevitable, endeavor to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity as slow and gently as possible.

The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world ...it can just barely kill you. (Attributed to Max Stanley, Northrop test pilot)

A pilot who doesn't have any fear probably isn't flying his plane to its maximum. (Jon McBride, astronaut)

If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash as possible. (Bob Hoover - renowned aerobatic and test pilot)

Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you.

There is no reason to fly through a thunderstorm in peacetime. (Sign over squadron ops desk at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1970).

### Basic Flying Rules:

Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges of it. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, sea, and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there.

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## Our Ladies of Soaring

Just to prove ours is not a male-only pastime, here are a few pictures of just **some** of the 'fairer' movers and shakers of our Region. I shamelessly stole these excellent photos (by Thomas Jue) posted recently on the Williams web forum. Thanks for the posting these great photos Thomas!!



A great photo of *Cindy Donovan* in her Libelle. Cindy has coordinated our annual region awards for many years now and does a great job.



**"Once you have tasted flight,  
you will walk the earth with  
your eyes turned forever  
skyward, for there you have  
been, and there you long to  
return" *Leonardo Da Vinci***



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Membership requirements are private pilot certificate for power or glider, checkout with an approved instructor, and initiation fee of \$300. Pilots using gliders for cross-country must meet certain minimum requirements.



***Ginny Farnsworth*** and Todd from Crazy Creek flew into Williams. Ginny is a PASCO board member and doing great work to promote soaring in all forms to the public (gliders , paragliders, you name it she's done it)

Nice looking HP 14!



**Noelle Mayes**  
(The Boss)

Helping fix up a Pawnee tow plane for more work at Williams. Noelle really holds Williams together and makes it a great site to fly from!

### **John Shelton's Sheep Story**

*(This was a post John made some time ago on r.a.s. As some of you know, John is a very colorful character, flew in Vietnam, was a crop-duster pilot for a while and is one of the precious few who can laugh at himself as well as others. He is the author of the brilliant Pez.D.Spencer soaring cartoons which can be found through the PASCO website. John's irreverent sense of humor comes through loud and clear in this article; hope you like it! Ed)*

.....I was spraying herbicide on a bell pepper field outside of Gilroy, California one morning in the Spring. It has to be done at the last minute before the plants emerge from the ground to control the weeds effectively. I was flying an S2R modified by Stewart Davis in LA to carry a Wright 1820 and 3-bladed prop. You could forget knowing how to fly. Even with 400 gallons on board, any problem could be solved by pushing the throttle forward.

Even a 1000-horsepower Thrush has its limitations and on one pass, that limitation was a very high power transmission derrick. No getting over it from field level. I had to do a flat rudder turn on the deck to get the hog to avoid the girders by skidding around them while staying low and level enough to get under the wires but over a line of apricot trees right underneath them. Just a day in the life...

The job had begun before light and I was augmenting my imagination with the lights. This incident occurred just as Mr. Sun started to pink up the sky. The offending pass revealed a pasture, that I knew was there, with a sheep in it, of which I had been unaware during my scout of the area. Since the apricot trees had not leafed out yet, I wasn't being too careful of them and let the herbicide drift into them to kill the weeds there also. Some of this stuff got into the pasture.

The owners of this little pasture also had one chicken, one dog, one cat, one goat, one cow, one horse, one this and one that (Sort of a Noah's Half-Ark). They had moved to the country to get away from noise and the intrusion of the modern world in the Bay Area and had found a little farm house in the middle of nothing but vegetable fields. This morning, they were greeted the dawn with the roar of a Wright 1820 pulling 6000# of chrome moly steel, aluminum, yellow paint and a ton of Paraquat over their sanctuary at just about TV antennae altitude.(Welcome to the country, ya'll.)The offending pass was right over their house at about 0500 when I imagine that they imagined that they had another 4 hours of sleep before the yokels got up. I was watching for the antennae but could still see the one-of-each menagerie scattering in all directions like Judgement Day had arrived and the Angel of Death was painted yellow.

As I was finishing the field, I could see the surprised homeowner outside in his boxer shorts trying to assure his cat that it was okay, and even desirable, to come down out of the apricot tree. Maybe it was the goat. I saw one of them jump through the roof of a barn once. I think the homeowner was probably scowling at me also. It seems that people just aren't all aviation enthusiasts and don't understand modern agribusiness much either. He was pissed and he was going to get retribution. I can't say that I blame him.

At this time, I am only surmising, Mr. Homeowner began to walk around looking for damage. City people all know that if you have gum on your shoes, you can sue Wrigley. After a few days, a spot about the size of a card table started to turn brown in his pasture and he had his smoking gun. He had been damaged!

Still surmising here, I think Mr. Homeowner realized that a patch of grass isn't worth much. That or his attorney told him. He told the County and they slapped my hand for drift. He told the FAA and they told him that I was not in violation of any regs. He told the police and they asked him how long he had lived in the country. He told the pepper grower next door and was told besame culo, pendejo, whatever that means. But somewhere in there, he got the idea that his prized, lone sheep was sick and would probably die. I don't know why he settled on the sheep and none of his other grazing critters.

He finally called me. Obsequious, as usual, I went through my usual bowing and scraping. I told him that if his sheep were to become sicker to take to a vet. And while I could not accept responsibility for the sheep being sick, I would certainly be reasonable. If he knew the code, he would have known that meant I would pay him for his costs and his sheep but I did not want to file an insurance claim so don't hire a lawyer. But, he didn't know the code.

He told me he was going to sue me for making his sheep sick. I told him that when the sheep got well, he wouldn't have much of a case. So, he killed the sheep and sent it's liver and other organs in to a lab to see if it had been poisoned. Don't know what he did with the meat. The lab test revealed that there was no exposure to anything out of the ordinary. Cause of death was a .22 bullet in the head. So now he was stuck with a dead sheep, a pasture that had grown back and no revenge...yet.

When the certified mail arrived, I was informed, through his attorney, that if I had not sprayed the field inadvertently, he would not have thought that his sheep was allegedly sick from spray drift. Because his client thought I was the cause of the sheep's lethargy and because the only way to prove it was to have a liver to examine, he was justified in sacrificing the sheep to gain the evidence. That the sheep might have recovered was irrelevant for some reason. The fact is if his sheep had died without his help, he would have then had a liver. The damned sheep just kept getting better and better and was being otherwise uncooperative. Impatience got the best of the sheep.

I think my insurance company settled to shut him up and raised my rates. He moved back to the Bay Area shortly thereafter. Must have had a hell of a barbecue with all those critters not welcome in San Francisco condos.

Lastly, I am still amazed that people have checklists that tell them to look at the ground or to land. This is the one I use:

- W- Wonder what to do today
- W- Wander on out to the airport
- W- Waste a lot of time talking to the other pilots
- W- Whine for someone to help me put on my wings
- W- Wheeze after pushing it out to the launch point
- W- Wait around for the tow plane to get to me.
- W- Wrestle with the shoulder straps
- W- Wait a minute. My oxygen isn't on and I have to get out to get to the knob.
- W- Wipe the sweat off my face after getting back in
- W- Waggle my rudder to signal I'm ready to go
- W- Wince as a wing drops on takeoff
- W- Whip around behind the tow plane
- W- Wrap up into a turn in a thermal
- W- Wish I'd remembered to put some ice in my water.
- W- Wiggle my legs and toes so they won't go to sleep.
- W- Waste time in weak thermals
- W- Wander around looking for lift
- W- Wag my tongue making comments I think are funny on the radio
- W- Water. Dump it because I am getting low.
- W- Wadio. Call for my trailer because I have just landed out.
- W- Weeds. Pick them out of my gear well.
- W- Wait for my trailer to arrive.
- W- Weturn. Drive home thinking about what a great day it has been flying instead of working



**Wills Wing / Grumman F-14 Comparison, By Stuart Broce, August, 1996:**

( I've had this article so long now I cant remember where I got it; A paragliding site I think! Anyway; I hope no one minds but I borrowed it for our readers; I thought it was great Ed.!)

.... As a recreational paraglider pilot, and a professional fighter pilot, I often get asked by people from both communities about the 'other' type of flight. From the interest shown by fellow paraglider pilots, I suspect that more people wonder how the two types of flying compare.

A few weeks ago, I logged an hour and a half each flying a Wills Wing AT 125 and an F-14D Tomcat. Granted, there are few similarities between a fourth-generation fighter and a paraglider, but let's not split hairs—it was a perfect opportunity to compare the flying qualities of the two aircraft.

Fighter first: The F-14D is a supersonic, two-place fighter manufactured by the Grumman Aerospace Corporation. It is powered by two afterburning General Electric turbofan engines. With its variable-sweep wings, the Tomcat is capable of in-flight aerodynamic reconfiguration, allowing flight beyond twice the speed of sound, yet providing approach speeds low enough to land on a boat. These features allow the jet to patrol from the decks of aircraft carriers to just about any place on Earth.



The Wills Wing AT 125 is a single-place, Class 1 paraglider made by Wills Wing, Inc. Its fabric construction also allows for in-flight aerodynamic reconfiguration and remarkable portability.

Inherent design philosophy in each aircraft is very different. Not surprisingly, each aircraft performs its intended mission significantly better than the other. The AT 125 is a very capable recreational paraglider, but it wouldn't fare well in combat. Tactically, a paraglider pilot could have the initial advantage of surprise and low heat signature, but effectiveness would be negligible due to limited ordnance carrying capacity, and poor survivability. The F-14 can down multiple enemy aircraft from a perch in a different time zone and also perform a devastating ground attack, but it glides like a Coke machine and only comes in gray—factors that seriously limit its recreational soaring appeal.



Performance figures back up differences in the two designs. The Tomcat is powered—its motors crank out nearly 60,000 pounds of dynamic thrust in full afterburner. Coupled with large, hydraulically-boosted flight control surfaces, the motors can shove the F-14 through the sky with remarkable agility for a 54,000 lb. (half fuel load) jet. Top speed is advertised as MACH 2.4, but flying near that speed may peel lots of expensive paint off the nose and will, most certainly, upset the squadron maintenance officer. Trust me.

The AT 125 approaches MACH 0.035 with the speed stirrup fully engaged, but its low-speed handling is remarkable, allowing for landing speeds near zero.

In terms of turn radius, the AT 125 blows the Tomcat away. Max performance figures for the F-14's turning ability are classified, but it's safe to say that the turn performance of AT 125 makes it the obvious choice for sites with tight lift bands. Turn radius, while small and fairly constant throughout the Wills Wing's speed range, varies in the Tomcat from a few thousand feet to several miles as you accelerate toward maximum velocity. Also, the AT 125 is much more enjoyable at its turning limit because the associated g-loading, approximately 2 g's compared to the Tomcat's 6.5 g's, is more conducive to sightseeing because of the reduced strain on the body and significantly reduced chances of GLOC (g-induced loss of consciousness).

Gliding performance is the F-14's biggest disadvantage. Deceleration from supersonic to landing speed in the big jet causes the wings to sweep forward from 68° aft of perpendicular (to the longitudinal axis) to 20°. Wing loading on the Tomcat is about 90 pounds per square foot with the wings fully forward in their 'best glide' position. The AT 125 boasts a wing loading of less than 1 pound per square foot, even with my 220 pounds aboard. All but the most severe turbulence is unremarkable in the F-14. The AT 125 responds to even the slightest variations in lift, but remains stable even in conditions that sometimes send Class 2 gliders toward the LZ.

The Tomcat has a power-off glide speed of about 250 knots, minimum—any less and the engines stop wind milling, cutting off hydraulic power for the flight controls. This speed translates into a glide ratio comparable to the AT 125, but with the associated 5000 feet per minute rate of descent, local winds and/or thermal activity would have to be epic to significantly extend flight time. Unfortunately, an F-14 with its engines off is uncontrollable at landing speeds so pilots really take their chances when operating the jet down low with the motors off. The AT 125 has a no-wind rate of descent of about 2-300 feet per minute—obviously the better pick for recreational soaring and unpowered landings.



The F-14 does, Thermaling capability. Each automatically upon ejection. cooperative topography, to log some post-ejection are many, however. The maneuvering flight (such as you have to share a site with post-ejection trauma such as you could get to some prime much (\$70 million a pop) to punch out of every time your favorite site goes off. It would be nice if paraglider technology could be utilized in the ejection system, especially in wartime when flying within gliding distance of friendly forces. I didn't ask Wills Wing about it, but I doubt that their gliders are stressed for 450-knot opening shock.



however, have a viable, built-in ridge-soaring and ejection seat contains a parachute that deploys. With a strong (35-knot plus) breeze and these steerable chutes could theoretically be used soaring time. The disadvantages of this system harness is just too uncomfortable to enjoy any observing the ridge rules that would apply when your radar intercept officer) especially if there is spinal compression or flail injury. And, although sites very rapidly, the F-14 just costs too darn much (\$70 million a pop) to punch out of every time your favorite site goes off. It would be nice if paraglider technology could be utilized in the ejection system, especially in wartime when flying within gliding distance of friendly forces. I didn't ask Wills Wing about it, but I doubt that their gliders are stressed for 450-knot opening shock.

In terms of pilot comfort, the paraglider harness beats the cockpit of the F-14, hands down. The Tomcat's cockpit is well laid out for its intended purpose, but the ejection seat isn't very relaxing. Seat padding is almost non-existent, and the backrest angle forces the occupant uncomfortably upright. Throw in the g-suit, harness and oxygen mask required for flight and things get even more uncomfortable. I contacted Grumman about this and, although their customer service department was very helpful, there are no current plans to improve aircrew comfort. They cited the need to minimize spinal compression when asked about the seat, but I suspect it was just designed to keep us from enjoying the ride *too* much.

The Wills Wing harness is luxurious by comparison. Using the various adjustment straps, I was able to find an agreeable setup that allowed me to forget about the harness and enjoy my flight. Some of the adjustments work their way loose near the end of each flight, though, due to inadequate adjustment device design. My harness is a couple of years old, though—I assume Wills Wing has addressed this problem on more recent designs.

For flight instrumentation, I'll have to give the nod to the F-14. I refuse to sell my car to finance a Swiss wonder-vario, but I'd bet the Tomcat's HUD (Head Up Display) can provide more information. Undoubtedly, flying in instrument conditions and at night is probably be more enjoyable in the Tomcat, although I've tried neither in the AT 125. Both aircraft have optional GPS units, so neither has a real edge with navigation.



Comparing the two types of flying involves more than aircraft performance, hardware and flying comfort, though. Intangibles such as sounds and smells are much more enjoyable in the paragliding environment. The scent of a rubber oxygen mask and the roar of an air-conditioning system just don't compare to the varied odors of wild foliage, the ocean, and the medley of sounds that make local soaring sites so enjoyable.

Which aircraft would I rather fly? Each is capable of providing great enjoyment in its own domain. The Tomcat rocks—there is absolutely nothing subtle about it. It converts kerosene and air into copious heat, noise and adrenaline. The most rowdy summer thermals in the paraglider pale compared to a forty thousand feet-per-minute climb. Twenty seconds of inverted, near-weightless flight pulling over the top of a 40,000 foot vertical climb does wonders for the soul. So does a 5 g inverted pull, 200 feet over a mountain top and down the other side at 600 knots (head's up in Owen's Valley). As a cross-country aircraft, it's unsurpassed with its bubble canopy and speed.

To be honest, though, most operational flights in the Tomcat aren't unbridled fun. Fuel conservation is the main mission when the only place to land is bobbing around in a storm two hundred miles away—especially at night. Flying the AT 125 can be just as enjoyable as cutting loose in the F14, however. The flight controls on the Wills Wing are more intuitive and strangely satisfying in a visceral way—arms outstretched in a wanton romp with the wind. Ironically, the

utilization 20 pounds of fabric and lines to soar strikes me as the pinnacle of aviation technology. Exploring beautiful soaring sites and playing with the wind are things you just can't enjoy in a 600-knot air-conditioned bubble.

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