

The Thermal Column



Newsletter of The Rainier Paragliding Club



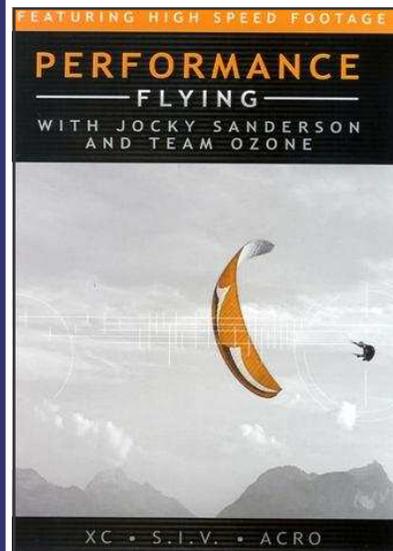
Serving the Paragliding Community of Western Washington, USA

January 2006

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|-----------------------|----------------------|
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ally listed in the scene selection portion of the menu. In fact, each of the scene selections has a submenu that is quite complete. Those submenu's are listed on the box, too. So much for the shortcoming.

Jockey

Sanderson is quick to point out

that Performance Flying is not something for the experts. It is for all of us. Performance Flying means that we know how to ground handle, launch, stay out of trouble, and land. It means that we are safe, well-rounded pilots who are aspiring advanced pilots and who seek improvement in all aspects of our flying.

I found the video to be packed with an extreme amount of information; way too much to absorb with one viewing. The video first discusses XC. It talks about staying with it, fighting the boredom until you break through to base, coring, signs, triggers, sources, inversions, transitions, flying speed bar, harness settings, and even subtle chunks of experience like how to use the valley wind to get where you need to be. There is a ton of information in this video about XC, and every bit of

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PERFORMANCE FLYING

A Movie Review

By Steve Messman

Performance Flying is a wonderful film. That is the short of it. The long of it is this. The film, an Escape production, features Jockey Sanderson and Team Ozone. It is fast paced, features what they call "high speed footage," which really means they do a great job of putting slow motion in the video, features split-screen technology (you can see both the pilot and his wing), and is way too educational for an in-depth review. The only shortcoming that I saw in the video was that it was so packed with information that I wished it had the chapters listed in the menu. Well, they are, sort of. They are actu-



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it is useful. You will be amazed at what you see, like how much brake these people fly with on a normal basis. You will be amazed at what you hear, like how lots of turbulence might be a good thing. But again, there is way too much information to absorb in one setting.

The video discusses recoveries from collapses, spins, twists, stalls. And it discusses acro from the basics: wingovers, asymmetric 360's, spins, helicopters, SATs.

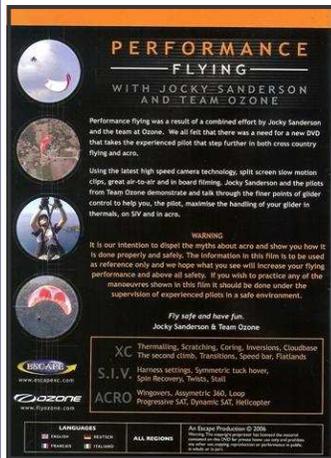
Personally, I think the main reason that they put the acro on the video was to show you the GREAT, in fact heart pounding, video. Maybe they put it there to inspire people to learn acro, because for sure, it does look exciting. They did put all kinds of instruction in the video, like different ways to enter the SAT, how to do a great wingover, how to enter and exit a helicopter or a spin,

but I'll be damned if I want to learn acro from a video. And, Sanderson says that exactly. Do NOT go out and try these unless you are under the supervision of a qualified instructor.

What I'm going to do is keep watching parts of this video in the evenings before I go flying. There is so much info that finding and working one piece at a time will be best for me. But, for sure, I am going to work on my wingovers and my asymmetric 360's. I am going to stick with my thermals until I break through.

My recommendation—buy the video. You can borrow it, but you'll want to watch it, and watch it, and watch it, and the dude (or dudette) that you borrow it from will get really irritated.

Steve



Two fleas on a dogs back !

By Kim Smith

That's what it was last Saturday. Steve called and wanted to go fly Dog. I had not planned on flying but what the heck it was 20 days in to the month and still my flight log was blank for the month. We met at the LZ and watched as several eagles



soared above. Looked good but the road to the top was covered with snow. Steve decided to drive up in his Subaru so I loaded my gear in

his car. The snow kept on getting deeper and deeper as we climbed on the road towards launch. We made it just short of the launch and parked. I could not believe the car made it that far. The top was covered

by about 5" of snow and hundreds of elk tracks. Oh yes, there were elk nuggets all over in the snow. We launched be-



tween rain squalls and each had a nice smooth half hour flight. Most of the time we were above launch level. We had hoped to top land and drive the car down because my VW was not going to make it to the top. Steve slid in for the save so I set up to top

also. We were both on launch with big smiles on our faces.

What a great day to go fly. The whole mountain and just the two of us to savor the

view and time flying. Thanks Steve for rousting me out of my easy chair.



Are You Wishing For Some Sunny Weather?

Time constraints lead me to just do a piece on Elsinore, our current location. If there is enough interest, maybe I can do a series.

After four, maybe five winters, flying in Southern California (SoCal), I thought there might be some interest in the local flying



sites. I was originally going to do a piece on the whole L.A. area. Kim says he needs and wants something today, however. Sooo, I'll only do Elsinore, where we are currently. I'll do other sites if there is any interest. These are only opinions, If you want facts, go to the appropriate internet site.

Elsinore, Lake Elsinore, epic summer site, I hear. Take off in the late am, in the prevailing N wind, and be aloft when the on-shore flow hits the offshore flow. Fly high

and far in the convergence, plus the plentiful thermals.

Wintertime is not so hot. Site faces mostly N so not much solar heating. Where else you going to

go when the north winds blow. Frequent ridge soaring, with some thermic activity, in north wind. Lots of sledders with fast easy turn around.

Two launches, Edwards and the E. Ten to fifteen minute turn around on a paved road, to either launch. Plenty of pilots and rides on most days. You need a National Forest "Adventure Pass" to legally park. The same pass is also required at Horse. Probably ok without it at



Santa Barbara.

Edwards launch is immediately above the regular LZ. No concern about landing out, here. It is, however, kind of intimidating in anything but perfect 6-8 mph winds. It is a small knob with room for only one glider and no run out area. For most pilots / conditions, you inflate and are gone. No facilities except small bushes.



E launch is used when there is a little east in the wind. It's another 2 miles down the road. Lots of room, easy launch. Need to get up right away or head for the LZ. Plenty of bail out LZ, if you don't mind landing where there is no beer. Porta Potty type toilet. Picture enclosed. They say it is pumped weekly.

LZ is huge, but has down slope into prevailing wind, usually light and switchy. Plenty of camping spots (but no camping in LZ), no facilities, except lots of bushes, used by local ladies even. Near busy highway, so kind a noisy. Lots of small brittle brush to get in your lines and wing unless you land on bare ground. Usually a good vocal audience for your perfect landing. Very helpful,

friendly group.



Old, old hang site. They have a culture all their own. They are very proud of their site and history. Some are hard drinking and smoking in-

dividuals. Usually a lot of socializing, after flying, under one of the biggest oaks I've ever seen.

No fees, paperwork, or ratings asked for at this site.

See ya Wayne

Due to ongoing litigation, this site currently requires USHPA membership. Also no camping in the LZ at this time.

THE VIEW FROM MY WINDOW

By Jim Baldo

Now that we are firmly entrenched in the winter months and our flying days are at a premium, we have time to prepare for our next season of flight. Although for us the weather has only brought a sharp reduction to our number of flights, it has brought to others a struggle of life and death.



If you have followed the news recently, you may be familiar with the story of the Kim family from California. After visiting friends in the Pacific Northwest on Thanksgiving, their plans were to cross over the Oregon coastal range, spend the night in Gold Beach, and then continue on to California the following morning. They never showed up at their destination and unfortunately the story ended tragically for the father, James Kim, who made a desperate last ditch attempt setting out on foot to find help for his family after waiting six days for rescuers to arrive. Ironically and thankfully, his wife and two daughters were rescued 2 days later.

What does this have to do with paragliding? Well, it seems to me that their journey, like that of paragliding, ended up being a high risk adventure, an adventure where correct decision making is crucial to help mitigate the dangers.

On the day of their departure, they were last seen late evening at a Grants Pass

restaurant. Apparently they missed their turnoff at Roseburg and were now required to make unplanned decisions for their trip. After looking at a map, they decided to take a route to Gold Beach on secondary forest service roads, a route that had a cautionary statement about closures in the winter. They probably felt more confident to tackle this route since they were in an all wheel drive Subaru. Do you make flying decisions based on the fact that you are flying a more forgiving wing? Having the right equipment does indeed help but it won't change the flying conditions nor our need to adequately determine what is right for our experience level.

As their journey continued, they passed a total of four signs warning of possible road closures in the winter due to snow. They continued onward driven by their desire to reach their destination. Many times when we go flying, we travel long distances to a fly site. Once there, we really hate to return home without a flight. From our training, there are many observations (signs) we make about the flying conditions that await



us. It is critical to obey those signs. Obviously they're not black and white and we must interpret them using our knowledge and experience, but we must read them all and interpret them all.

The Kim's finally arrived at a fork in the road with a sign indicating the way to

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Gold Beach. That road was covered in snow and appeared impassable so they decided to take the other fork. To me, this decision speaks of desperation; a last ditch effort to make their goal. Have you ever made a desperate attempt to get off the hill even to the point of doing something which you knew was not the smartest thing to do?

The rest of the story has been told. We can use the Kim's experience to help us make better decisions for our own flying journeys. Looking in from the outside with the help of hindsight, it is easier to make better and more informed decisions. From the inside however, in the heat of the moment, those decisions are much more difficult since our emotions and life experiences tend to cloud reality. Let's use some of this winter downtime to examine our past years flying decisions from the outside with hindsight. With this knowledge, many of our future decisions will have already been made months before we begin our flying journeys.

There is one additional observation I'd

like to make. Before writing this article, when I heard of the Kim's plight, I'd assumed that things started going wrong when they missed their planned turn. In fact, I now believe this not to be the case. I believe they made their first mistake on that fateful day even before they got into their car. Since we know they had dinner late in the evening after they missed their turn, they were traveling on a not very familiar road (Interstate 5) after dark, thus making it more difficult for them to see the sign for their turnoff. Setting out on their trip earlier in the day, planning to complete it in the daylight, and allowing some extra time for any unforeseen events, might have been a much better plan. Do you plan your flights before leaving home? Have you looked at all the current weather predictions, winds aloft forecasts, and lapse rate data before hand so you're better prepared for the days conditions, or do you too fly in the dark?

Club Classified Ads

This section is a new addition to the Club Newsletter. You will be able to advertise your no longer needed paragliding equipment. The ads are free and are limited to club members only. No commercial sales.

To submit your ad please write your ad in the body of an e-mail, if you are including a picture please attach it to the e-mail and write newsletter ad in the subject line. Send your ad to Kim Smith (newsletter editor).

Application to join the Rainier Paragliding Club

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

E-mail: _____

USHPA #: _____ Rating: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Annual dues are from July 1st to June 30th of each year.

\$24 for Individual membership

\$36 for Family membership living at the same address.

Send completed application and payment (payable to Rainier Paragliding Club) to:

Kathy Smith

P.O. Box 13

Cinebar, WA 98533



Guess who came to visit Jim Baldo.

Yep, it is a bobcat and it followed Jim into the garage. I think he was hungry and was sizing Jim up. Apparently he left without taking Jim down. Count your blessings Jim, you survived another day in the wild kingdom.

Calendar 2007

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| Feb. 17 | Club Meeting and reserve repack. |
| Mar. 20 | Club Meeting |
| Apr. 17 | Club Meeting |
| Apr. 27-29 | "Spring Fling" campout location to be announced |
| May 5 & 6 | Chelan Bike and Fly |
| June 17 - 23 | Rat Race at Woodrat |
| June 24 -30 | Paragliding Nationals at Lakeview, Oregon |
| June 30 - July 4 | Umpteenth Annual Festival of Free Flight at Lakeview, Oregon |