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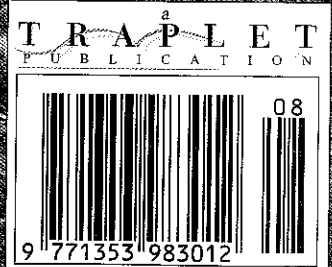
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# International Hand Launch



**Joe Wurt's classic follow through after launching his Epsilon.**



**Notice the level launch attitude of Daryl Perkin's Maple Leaf. A millisecond later this plane will be at a 70 degree vertical pitch.**



**The outstretched arm and sprinter's run is the key to Daryl's towering launches.**

## The "Happening" at Poway

Fifty-eight of the top RCHLG pilots from around the U.S. converged on tiny Poway, California to participate in the 4th Annual International Hand Launch Glider Festival, held on June the 7th and 8th. Hosted by the Torrey Pines Gulls and sponsored by Airtronics, the IHLGF, with it's two day, thirteen round format, is the largest HLG contest of it's type anywhere, and considered by many to be "the" HLG Championship event of the year.

This year's contest drew pilots from Texas, Washington, Kentucky, Utah, Ohio, Colorado and, of course, California. Some came to challenge the very best pilots in the world; others to enjoy two days of concentrated HLG flying in a contest format; and the rest came to participate in an event that

would expose them to techniques and strategies of flying HLG that they could never get by flying alone or by reading every page of printed matter on the subject. The one common denominator is that they all come to participate in the "happening" that the IHLGF has become.

The IHLGF is not just a contest. It has taken on a life of it's own. From it's inception, it was designed to be a "happening", a festival - something that would bring those who love to fly HLG together each year to celebrate what many consider the purest form of soaring.

Contestants start arriving as early as Wednesday to take advantage of the great thermal activity that the Poway area generates. Phil and Jim Pearson were the first to arrive this year, followed closely by Joseph Conrad and Steve Cameron, all from Washington. Their tents and bevy of planes became field landmarks. The Pearson's were flying their own design, the Sunspot, (a pod and boom design in both a poly and aileron version) and the Tactical ERR, the plane that caught everyone's attention.

The Tactical ERR, designed by Harold Locke, is a 44" wingspan, pod and boom ship with a swept back poly wing. The reason for all the fuss about this plane is that it is launched by grabbing the wingtip and throwing it in a low side-arm motion. You have to see it being launched to appreciate the ease and effectiveness of this method of launching. I had heard and read about this plane and it's launching technique, but I have to admit I was sceptical. Trust this skeptic, the Tactical ERR is everything that they say. The launches Phil was getting with this little plane were monstrous. I was particularly amazed at the ability of this plane to handle the wind. It is quite remarkable and very possibly the beginning of a design concept that will permit a larger group of pilots, those with arm problems, to participate in and enjoy HLG flying.

Friday is the official beginning of the Festival. This is the time when everyone has the chance to test their wings, gets familiar with the field and, most importantly, identify the field's thermal generators, of which there are many. By Friday afternoon, the field was packed with pilots enjoying the thrill that comes with being able to take a HLG from a fifty foot (or less) launch and convert it into a speck in the sky. One of those enjoying the conditions was Joe Hahn, of DJ Aerotech. Joe was skying out his new Wizard on what seemed to be every launch. Joining Joe were F3B World Champions, Daryl Perkins and Joe Wurts and the balance of the '97 U.S. F3B team, Gordon Jennings and Randy Spencer. Not everyone out on that field was a seasoned competition pilot. Elbow to elbow with these world class pilots were Phil Lontz, Tim Cone and Darrick Dalton, all of whom were experiencing their first major HLG contest. Guess which group was the most excited. The interaction between the world's best

and the world's newest is part of what makes this contest so special.

At dusk, Friday evening, about 30 of us packed up and headed for the local "hole-in-the-wall" Mexican restaurant where we took advantage of the "local" cuisine and the \$1 a beer "IHLGF Especial". Thanks to the IHLGF, Tony's now has an international reputation. To get a good mental picture of this event, consider that Phil (The self-proclaimed "Lost Bozo", as in "clown") Lontz is seated in the middle of a 40 foot row of tables holding court over the likes of Joe Wurts, Gordon Jennings, Randy Spencer, Steve Cameron, Jim and Phil Pearson, at one end and Paul Seigle, Arthur Markiewicz, Don Van Gundy, Joe Hahn, Jeff Burg and Tom Hoopes at the opposite end, just to name a few. With this crowd you can be assured that there was no shortage of theories and related stories to back them up. Every contestant is invited to the "Friday Social". No cliques here, just avid HLG pilots.

Saturday dawned with "Seattle" skies and the associated cool temperatures. The overcast stayed with us the entire day with only an occasional quick glimpse of the sun. The normal coastal inflow of wind was kept to a gentle breeze. These unusual conditions made for a challenging day, particularly for those not use to these ultra-light lift conditions. It forced pilots to incorporate a delicate flying style and rewarded those gram conscious builders. Poly ships were the hot ticket. These conditions proved that there was an enormously talented group of contestants. It also separated the talent pool.

Contest Director, Steve Condon, got things underway with the pilots meeting and a brief explanation of the rules, field boundaries, etc. He then gave everyone an opportunity to hear the computerized timing and scoring system which was devised by Don Richmond.

The timing system consists of a computer "wave file" that has a pre-recorded voice announcing the count-up to begin the heat, time announcements during the heat, and a count-down for the end of the heat. The system, which has proven to be enormously popular with the contestants, provides a consistency that human timers just can't duplicate. Since we installed this system, we have had zero complaints from contestants on any matter regarding timing. Most contestants don't even concern themselves with keeping the time for the round as the computerized timing is punctual, consistent and audible from all points on the field.

The computerized scoring allows for the posting of the results of the previous heat's results before the end of the next heat. With the fierce competition that exists among the top pilots, this instantaneous posting of results is one of the little things that makes the IHLGF their "favourite contest".

With all questions answered and all heats (five in each round) in all ten regulation rounds posted, the IHLGF '97, began. There



# inch Glider Festival '97

ron scharck

is nothing like watching twelve HLGs going into the air at the same time. Oh awesome!

Going into the fourth round, George Joy was leading the pack with a perfect score of 3,000 and then fate struck. George was in the process of launching his Epsilon when a gust of wind tipped the wings just enough to cause the left wing to graze the back of his head sending the plane into a violent spin and crash. Even with a back-up plane (Climmax PF) and radio ready, the lost time cost him dearly. His 655 for the round would eventually cost him a third place finish. If "ifs" and "buts" were candy and nuts every-day would be Christmas! At the end of Saturday's six rounds, the leaders were Daryl Perkins (5933), Joe Wurts (5895), Paul Naton (5863), Gordon Jennings (5823), Fred Mallett (5715), George Joy (5645), Steve Cameron (5637), Larry Jolly (5618), Jeff Burg (5609), and Ben Clerx (5522).

As soon as everyone could put their gear away, fifty tired, aching, and hungry pilots, together with wives and kids, headed for the Saturday evening "All-you-can-eat" Pizza Party. And party it was. With plenty to eat and drink, the evening developed into one giant discussion of the trials and tribulations, joys and successes of the day. Of course there was a bit of good natured bantering between tables, not to mention some creative uses for otherwise mundane utensils.

Bright blue skies with puffy white clouds greeted the pilots Sunday morning. This was going to be a "Poway" day. Strong lift and afternoon wind were as sure to happen as the sun rising over the crests of the nearby hills.

These were to be the conditions that pilots came from afar to experience and they were not to be disappointed. Many times during the day pilots would speck out, force their ships back to earth, employing a variety of aerobatic maneuvers, just in time to meet the maximum flight time, and, with a single launch, speck out again. This was a day for the aileron ships and, as the wind picked up, ballast.

The wind began to take its toll as more and more ships fell short of the field boundaries. The downwind treeline and hills beckoned you to take advantage of their lift but didn't warn you that if you didn't succeed in working their magic to the optimum you were staring at a seemingly endless distance upwind to return to the field. Steve Cameron, flying his very light and highly modified, Orbiter '95, was well aware of this beguiling, potential trap and elected to work the upwind end of the field snaring thermal after thermal and working for altitude. For him the treeline was like an afterburner that shot his plane even higher.

A careful study of altitude and wind speed was constantly being conducted by each pilot as the thermals whisked them further and further downwind and away from the field. This was not for the faint of heart, but rather an indispensable lesson in correlating time, distance, and altitude, with the planes ability to penetrate. Even the best pilots with the "best" equipment cheated fate once too often before this day was over.

Joe Wurts finished the day's four regulation rounds with a perfect score of 4000. As

a matter of fact Joe was perfect from the 4th round on. Who would believe that the round that would cost Joe first place after 10 rounds (and possibly the Championship) was one in which he failed to get a 1 minute, 10 second flight? It was Daryl Perkins consistency that paid off. Daryl's lowest score was a 955. This one round accounted for over half of the total points Daryl dropped in the 10 regulation rounds.

At the end of 10 rounds the following pilots were advised to get ready for the three round fly-off which would determine the final standings: Daryl Perkins (9912.07), Joe Wurts (9895.23), Gordon Jennings (9655.0), Fred Mallett (9546.49), Paul Naton (9541.35), Larry Jolly (9533.92), George Joy (9525.26), Steve Cameron (9334.0), Ben Clerx (9165.66), and Jim Pearson (9142.26). As a side note, Joe Hahn finished in the 11th spot with a score of 9,089.66 and 5 points behind Joe, was Steve Condon.

While not particularly cherished by most of the fly-off participants, the final three rounds of this contest are a huge favorite for all those who battled and came up short. For them it is a symposium on "How to fly HLG" being conducted by the preeminent experts in the field. This is a three round study in technique (launching and flying), strategy and reading air that cannot be bought. For those of us mere mortals, the excitement of watching these top pilots pit their skills and determination against one another is awesome.

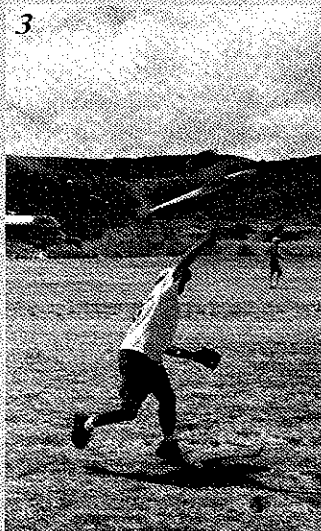
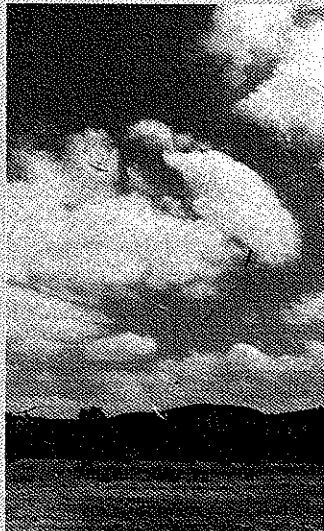
Picture the following: A solitary plane heading out where there appears to be no lift

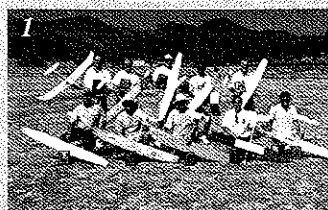
**1: Steve Cameron watches intently for signs of "air" as he readies to launch his highly modified Orbiter '95 which weighs in at 10.5 ozs. with four servos.**

**2: A gaggle of HLG's defining the boundaries of a Poway thermal.**

**3: Seventh place finisher, Paul Naton rockets his Climmax skyward.**

**4: The Future. Junior contestant Kevin Elliot flies as Dad, Tim, looks for the next thermal. Kevin and Tim were but one of four father son teams to compete in the contest. Chris Jolly, Larry Jolly's son, won the Junior Championship while old dad was placed 4th in the Open competition.**





1: IHLGF Winners. From right to left, front row; Jim Pearson (10th), Ben Clerx (9th), Steve Cameron (8th), Paul Naton (7th), George Joy (6th). Back row, right to left; Don Richmond (Senior Champion), Fred Mallett (5th), Larry Jolly (4th - not in picture), Gordon Jennings (3rd), Joe Wurts (2nd), and the 1997 IHLGF Champion Daryl Perkins.

2: George Joy may be one of the smaller pilots, but he has a Gorilla arm. George's launches are right up there with Joe Wurts. George is cocked and ready to send his Climmax PF into orbit.

3: Jo Joy, George Joy's wife, and TPG member volunteers ran a very efficient impound area. There was never a wait for a transmitter or a score card.

4: Computer scoring was done to perfection by Cathy Jennings, assisted by Jo Joy.



Some of the new guys; Jim Wakefield, with Maple Leaf, is flanked by timer Phil Lontz and observer Don Peters, the designer and builder of the Maple Leaf.

— at an altitude that belies proceeding further. Then, just when there appears to be no chance of recovery, the pilot adroitly maneuvers his ship into a series of gentle flat turns, seemingly suspended on nothing more than a hope. With perfectly executed turns, the pilot is rewarded with a glimmer of lift, and with each ensuing rotation a gentle separation of his craft from the ground below. This is but one of the exhibitions on flying that occurs in the final three rounds. For anyone remotely interested in soaring, this is breathtaking.

The three Championship rounds were flown in testy conditions with the wind playing a very big part in this the final chapter of the '97 IHLGF. The field boundaries had been moved approximately 40 yards west of last years boundary in an attempt to make sloping the tree line and the hill an even more dangerous and radical maneuver. Nevertheless, it was the finals and guys like Joe Wurts and Fred Mallett were seen streaking back there on a couple of occasions trying to take advantage of the slope lift created by the strong winds. It took a big arm, a lot of talent and a huge dose of intestinal fortitude to head back to that cactus and sage brush encrusted hill.

The first round was won by Steve Cameron, separated by 5 points from George Joy with Perkins a close third. The second round resulted in a three way tie between Perkins, Gordon Jennings and Larry Jolly. There was a 15 minute break between the 2nd and 3rd rounds to allow for charging and to post scores.

The final round was won by Joe Wurts, with Perkins trailing by 98 insignificant points. There was an understandable drop-off in third round scores by all but the two leaders as each pilot was aware of their standing going into the final round and few were willing to unnecessarily risk their planes. Fred Mallett, was the lone exception but then caution is not part of Fred's vocabulary.

For the second year, in as many attempts, Daryl Perkins is the International Hand Launch Glider Festival Champion. Joe Wurts, the '94 and '95 Champion, placed second. Below is a rundown of the top 20 pilots and the planes they flew. Note: The top ten scores reflect 13 rounds.

Additional awards were presented to the Junior Champion, Chris Jolly, and to Don Richmond, the Senior Champion. The Team Award went to Team SML (Small-Medium-Large) consisting of Fred Mallett, Joe Wurts and Gordon Jennings, respectfully.

So now begins the preparations for next years contest, which will take place the weekend of June 6-7, 1998. This will be the fifth anniversary of the IHLGF. One of the major goals for next year is to make this contest truly international. Last year the IHLGF was graced by the presence of three international pilots: Buzz Tokunaga from Japan; Robert Schmid from Austria; and Graham Garner and his lovely wife, Judy, represented Australia. The inclusion of these pilots added

a very special deminsion to the contest, a dimension that the Torrey Pines Gulls will work hard to repeat in 1998.

For information on the Fifth Annual International Hand Launch Glider Festival, June 6-7, 1998, you may contact me at 619-454-4900 or e-mail me at Scharck@aol.com. Hope to see you here next year.

## New Planes

Production kits that made their first appearance at the IHLGF this year included the Wizard, the Epsilon, and the winning plane, the Maple Leaf. There were some other planes that were very interesting, including the Phil Pearson's Tactical ERR (previously mentioned) and a Russian Free Flight design that Ben Clerx was sporting.

When I first saw Ben with this flat center sectioned, high polyhedral, built-up wing, I thought he had gone to altitude once too often without his oxygen (Ben is an American Airlines pilot). I should have known that Ben, an outstanding international competition thermal duration and F3J pilot (and designer of the Mako series of Unlimited TD ships), knew what he was doing. As you can see by his top ten finish, the plane is very capable of the task at hand. Upon closer inspection, this semi-awkward looking craft is an engineering marvel. The ribs appear to be 1/32 balsa capped with carbon fibre. The "d-tube" leading edge is a

## IHLG Results

1.	DARYL PERKINS	12805.08	MAPLE LEAF (POLY AND AILERON)
2.	JOE WURTS	12679.82	EPSILON (AILERON)
3.	GORDON JENNINGS	12181.68	EPSILON (AILERON)
4.	LARRY JOLLY	12181.68	FLINGER (POLY - OWN DESIGN)
5.	FRED MALLET	12164.20	EPSILON (AILERON)
6.	GEORGE JOY	12074.08	EPSILON (POLY-FLAPERON)
7.	PAUL NATON	11994.65	CLIMMAX PF
8.	STEVE CAMERON	11852.14	ORBITER '95 (HIGHLY MODIFIED)
9.	BEN CLERX	11596.49	RUSSIAN FF DESIGN (POLY)
10.	JIM PEARSON	11072.28	SUNSPOT (POLY - OWN DESIGN)
11.	JOE HAHN	9089.66	WIZARD
12.	STEVE CONDON	9084.04	GEM (AILERON)
13.	DON VAN GUNDY	9036.72	WIZARD
14.	MARK NAVARRE	8996.21	OWN DESIGN / WIZARD
15.	ARTHUR MARKIEWICZ	8986.34	OWN DESIGN
16.	PHIL PEARSON	8957.40	SUNSPOT / TACTICAL ERR
17.	JOHN ROE	8892.16	WIZARD / EPSILON
18.	GREG NORSWORTHY	8765.40	EPSILON
19.	PAUL SIEGEL	8593.86	WIZARD

Kevlar taco-shell type construction. Ben invited me to twist the wing. It is unbelievably strong. The more I looked at it the prettier it became. Ben tells me that it is going to be imported into the States in an ARF version in the not too distant future. (This sounds like the "Simply the Best" model sold by FVK in Germany.)

Daryl Perkins flew both the poly (Maple Leaf 4) and the aileron (Maple Leaf LE) versions of Maple Leaf to victory. Designed by Don Peters of El Cerrito, California, the Maple Leaf is an all Kevlar/epoxy (except for the tail surfaces which are glass/epoxy skinned balsa cores) composite beauty. You literally have to see this unique plane to appreciate the exquisite workmanship that is incorporated into this ship. Every detail is covered to perfection, even the tiny solid carbon fiber pushrods (that I first mistook for black Dacron pull-pull lines) and the intermittent pieces of tubing attached to the fuselage sides that act as the guides for the push rods. The Maple Leaf is as close to an ARF ship as you can get without having someone else install the servos for you. Both versions are extremely light (8.5 - 9.75 oz for the ML4 and 11 - 11.5 oz. for the ML-LE) and yet the Kevlar fuselage is very durable. Perfection comes at a price though roughly \$300.

The Wizard, while new to the IHLGF, has been chalking up some very impressive numbers since its introduction earlier this year. Actually, Poway and last years IHLGF inspired the design of the Wizard. The Monarchs were a tad short in the penetration department, by Poway standards, so Joe (Hahn) went back home and, together with partner and chief designer, Don Stackhouse, hit the design table. The result is the Wizard. Designed to float like a butterfly and penetrate like a bee, the Wizard, with its ultra-thin, glass and carbon composite wing proved its design criteria during the two days of "wind tunnel" tests at Poway. The Wizard launches high and travels far and fast. Great for reaching those thermals that have escaped your immediate vicinity. The boys from DJ Aerotech, Don Stackhouse and Joe Hahn, just keep turning out winners.

Speaking of winners, it is hard to look at the standings and not see one glaring fact. The Epsilon, designed in Texas by a Texan, was the plane of choice of four of the top six pilots including Joe Wurts, who completed his Epsilon late Thursday night. Fred Mallett, of the soaring capital of the World (?), Corpus Christi, designed this ship after competing in the IHLGF last year. What he came up with is one potent little ship. A word of advice, this plane is not for the intermediate pilot. It was designed to be an itchy-twitchy high performance competition HLG. This plane will tell you more about your piloting skills than just about any other plane I know. If you set it up to be docile, you loose big time on performance. If you set it up to fly at peak performance you had better be a peak performer. In the hands of an experienced pilot, this ship is dangerous to the competition.

Without a doubt, the four most popular planes at the IHLGF this year were the Epsilon, the Wizard, the Maple Leaf and the

## 1997 International Hand Launch Glider Festival - Schedule of Tasks

### SATURDAY

ROUND	WINDOW	THROWS	OBJECTIVE
1	10	UNLIMITED	THE MOST NUMBER OF FLIGHTS IN THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE: :10, :15, :20, :25, :30, :35, :40, :45, :50, :55, 1:00, 1:05, 1:10
2	8	UNLIMITED	TOTAL TIME - TWO MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT
3	8	UNLIMITED	THREE LONGEST FLIGHTS - THREE MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT
4	10	UNLIMITED	A TWO, THREE, AND FOUR MINUTE FLIGHT (ANY ORDER)
5	8	UNLIMITED	TOTAL TIME - THREE MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT
6	10	6	FIVE LONGEST FLIGHTS - TWO MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT

### SUNDAY

ROUND	WINDOW	THROWS	OBJECTIVE
7	8	UNLIMITED	MOST FLIGHT TIME FROM INCREASING FLIGHTS. MUST HAVE AT LEAST 3 FLIGHTS. FIRST FLIGHT MUST BE AT LEAST 15 SEC. TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR A FLIGHT IT MUST BE LONGER THAN PREVIOUSLY CREDITED FLIGHT.
8	10	UNLIMITED	THREE LONGEST FLIGHTS - FOUR MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT
9	10	UNLIMITED	TOTAL TIME - THREE MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT
10	8	UNLIMITED	FOUR LONGEST FLIGHTS - TWO MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT

### CHAMPIONSHIP FLY-OFF - TOP TEN COMPETITORS

ROUND	WINDOW	THROWS	OBJECTIVE
11	5	4	FOUR ONE MINUTE FLIGHTS
12	10	UNLIMITED	A TWO MINUTE, THREE MINUTE AND FOUR MINUTE FLIGHT (ANY ORDER)
13	10	6	FIVE LONGEST FLIGHTS, TWO MINUTE MAX TIME PER FLIGHT

### Rules

1. This is an AMA sanctioned event. AMA rules will apply, except: Maximum wingspan is 60".
2. Heats will be posted in advance and announced as a courtesy. Pilots are responsible for knowing which heats they are in, and for being ready on time.
3. All heats will be flown man-on-man and scores will be normalized for each group.
4. Flight time commences when the model leaves the hand and ends when the model comes in contact with any land based object, including people.
5. There is no restriction on the number of planes a pilot may fly during a round or the contest, provided all planes are on the assigned frequency.
6. All launches and landings must be made within the field boundaries in order for flight time to count. The field boundaries will be clearly defined.
7. Any launch made before the official launch buzzer starts will not count. Any landing that occurs after the official landing buzzer stops, will receive a 50% penalty toward the flight points for that flight. Field judges will be the final word on late launches, landings and field boundaries.
8. Mid-air collisions will receive no reflight consideration. Pilots should observe "Blue Sky" rules.
9. All launches must be made by the pilot, by hand, without use of any artificial launch aids.
10. Warm-up and test flights will only be allowed between heats.

Climmax PF. You can see for yourself how these planes fared in the hands of the top twenty pilots.

All of the above are excellent planes, but before you race out and buy one of these "super ships", take into account your proficiency. You always want to "push the envelope" but make sure that the plane you buy will reasonably fit your flying ability and style. The idea is to launch, find a thermal, work it up, and come back down (in one

piece). Aileron (Flaperon / Spoileron) ships are sexy and very efficient in the right hands. For most of us, a poly ship should be the plane of choice. They are less expensive, lighter, easier to build, easier to fly and don't require 100% of your concentration 100% of the time. The more confidence you have in your plane and your ability to make it do what you want, the better you will fly and the more fun it will be -- and that's what it's all about!