

Safer Hang Gliding Encourages Zeiset

By Todd Coleman

For ages and ages man watched the birds fly through the sky. Man thought he could fly and for hundreds of years he tried.

The Chinese made kites, but no one could make one big enough to hold a person in the air.

A man by the name of Otto Lillenthal invented a new thing called the glider. Lillenthal would strap the glider to his back and run fast down a hill until the glider would be lifted and held up by the wind.

Lillenthal flew some 2,000 times, but was killed in 1898 when a strong wind caught his glider and crashed him to the ground.

The Wright brothers learned from Lillenthal and flew gliders from a place called Kill Devil Hill, near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

With the invention of the airplane, the glider became obsolete until World War II. They were used for reconnaissance because they could not be heard.

Early hang gliders were developed by Francis M. Rogallo of the NASA Langley Research Center in the early 1960s. His early delta-wing kites were dangerous and many early pilots were killed because of a lack of stability and control.

James A. Zeiset, a local manufacturer, has made hang gliding his hobby and sport. He has been gliding for three and a half years but

quit for a year when his brother was killed three years ago on Mount Princeton while hang gliding.

Zeiset said he started flying again because of new developments which make the sport safer. One such development was wearing a parachute while hang gliding.

He said parachutes are recommended for flying and can cost up to \$300.

Hang gliding is one of the most dangerous sports until fliers have learned to master the glider. Hang gliding takes a lot of judgment which Zeiset says, "is not paralleled in other sports."

Zeiset recommends the minimum age for hang gliding at 18 because at that age, "people tend to have more coordination, response, and judgment."

Zeiset said, "Judgment is ten times more important than coordination." He continued, "Flying can get you in trouble and bad situations happen all the time. If the air is coming down while you are, you come down twice as fast as normal."

The best areas for hang gliding are cliffs that face the ocean, because ocean air is smooth. Mountain flying is interesting but treacherous, and Salida is one of the best mountain areas for flying, Zeiset said.

He explained that there are three types of flights. "A normal flight from Mount Princeton is called a sled ride.

There is no lift and it usually lasts about 15 minutes."

He continued, "The second type is called a ridge lift and is usually experienced near the Selalia Mine."

"The last and longest flight is called thermal flying. It results from a vertical movement due to air heating close to the ground."

While mountain gliding is beautiful, it also can be cold. Zeiset recommends down-filled clothing for such flying.

Another must for hang gliding in high mountain areas is an oxygen system. At certain heights the air is very thin and hard to breathe.

Zeiset explained that he would be glad to teach anyone how to hang glide as long as they have taken basic flying lessons. Gliding lessons can cost around \$150.

While gliding is an exciting sport, it also costs a bit of money. The glider alone usually costs from \$1,400 to \$2,000.

Within the last century hang gliding has become a popular sport. From Lillenthal's first experimental hang gliders to present day competition gliders, man has increased his technology.

Preparation and experience are the most important assets in hang gliding. Before hang gliding, a little planning and readiness will probably save your life.