

After seeing Jim Zeiset, you'll believe a man can fly

By Nancy Wilson

Hang gliding. Beautiful to watch and a marvelous challenge, but definitely not for the untrained novice.

According to Jim Zeiset, an experienced hang gliding pilot with more than 100 hours flying time, there are two things that are vital in this sport: intelligence and manual dexterity. You have to react quickly and be able to think ahead.

Zeiset, 13154 C.R. 140 in Salida, has a bachelor of science degree in aeronautical engineering and is one of only five hang gliding pilots in Chaffee County.

One may think that all you need is the right equipment and enough intestinal fortitude to lunge off the top of a mountain to succeed in hang gliding. But after a conversation with Zeiset on the complexities involved, you realize that lying prone (or flat)

strapped into a harness under a 50-pound, rip-stop Dacron glider thousands of feet in the air is a risky business if you haven't been trained how to react.

Zeiset explained that while holding onto an aluminum control bar it is only by shifting body weight that a glider can be controlled.

You have to know precisely how far, which way and when to shift weight for a controlled reaction.

Also, it should be added, you have to know how to descend and not "tuck your glider" (for us laymen—keep it from tipping forward and collapsing into itself).

"Tucking" not only breaks up an expensive glider—but it can do the same thing to the pilot.

According to Zeiset, the equipment necessary for an aspiring hang glider pilot to start is:

•A glider, which ranges in price from about \$300 for a good beginner's model to around \$1,200.

•A harness, which costs around \$1,000.

•A parachute, costing about \$300 (these have come out in the last year and a half with greatly increased safety features).

•A helmet.

•Lessons, which cost about \$100.

The lessons are available from Randy Cone in Salida and there is a good beginner's hill on Poncha Loop near Salida.

There is no license neces-

sary for hang gliding, but Zeiset recommends that anyone who's interested join the U.S. Hang Gliding Association. The organization provides insurance and a magazine that gives necessary current information, and it helps prevent unethical or unsafe training through a national program of instructor certification. The association zine that gives necessary current information, and it helps prevent unethical or unsafe training through a national program of instructor

certification, he says. The association also offers many other benefits, says Zeiset.

According to Zeiset, you don't need an extensive education to hang glide. Most anyone can do it—if they are properly trained, he adds.

hang gliding by his brother Danny, who was tragically killed while hang gliding off Mt. Princeton on Oct. 5, 1977.

Strangely, on the first anniversary of his brother's death, in October 1978, Jim came very close to being killed

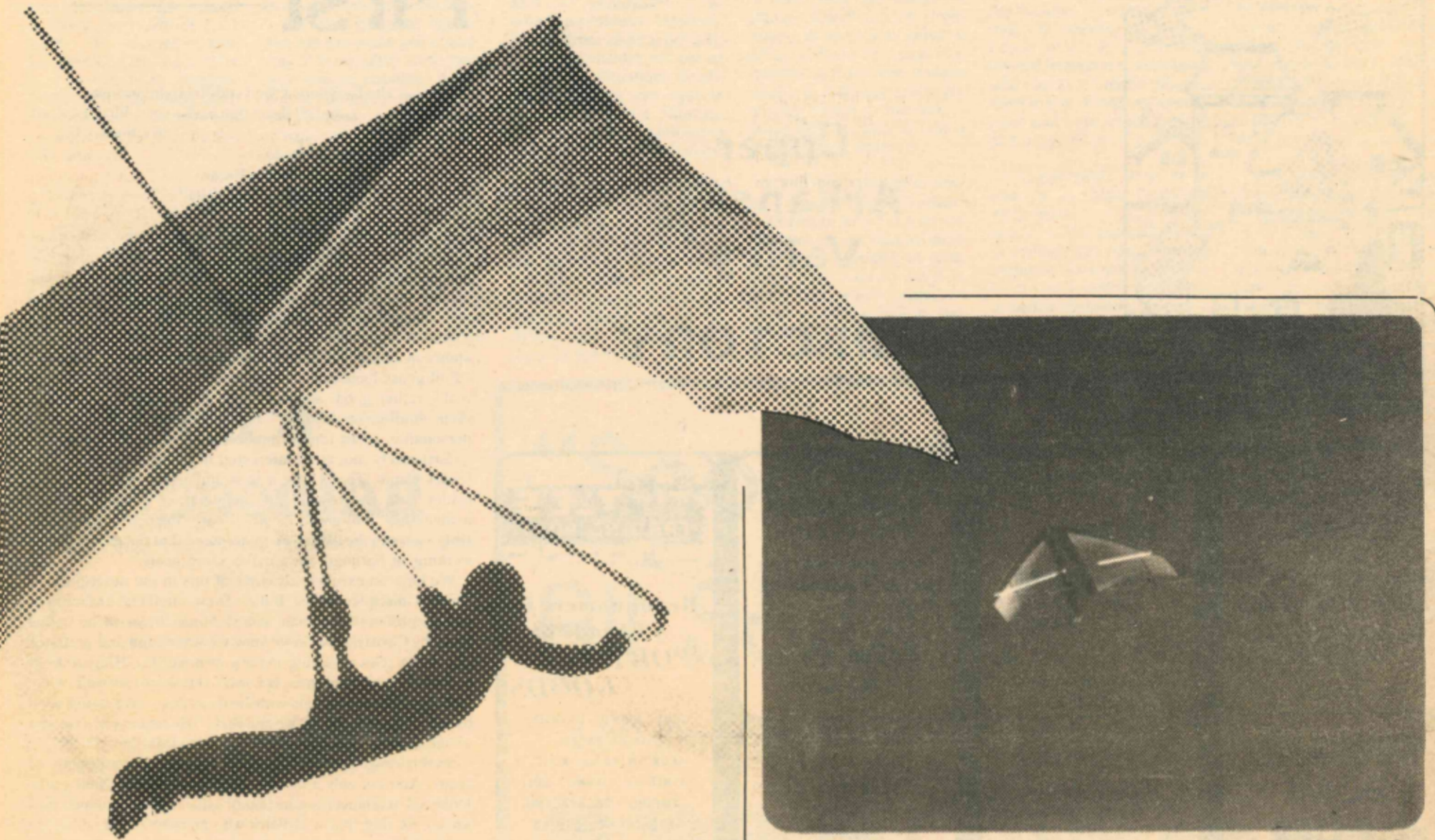
himself while flying a new, more professional glider off Mt. Princeton.

But even the experienced pilot takes risks in this sport. Asked why he hang glides, Zeiset cited many reasons. Perhaps the most compelling is the challenge of overcoming gravity in birdlike fashion, and the unique sensation that comes with soaring over the beauty of the landscape sliding by far below.

Zeiset was introduced into

his face and once shattering his kneecap. Zeiset owns and operates Monarch Manufacturing in Salida and has two sons: David, 9, and Zackary, 7. He has lived in Salida three years and says he plans to be a permanent resident.

Zeiset has previously been injured twice while hang gliding—once receiving stitches to



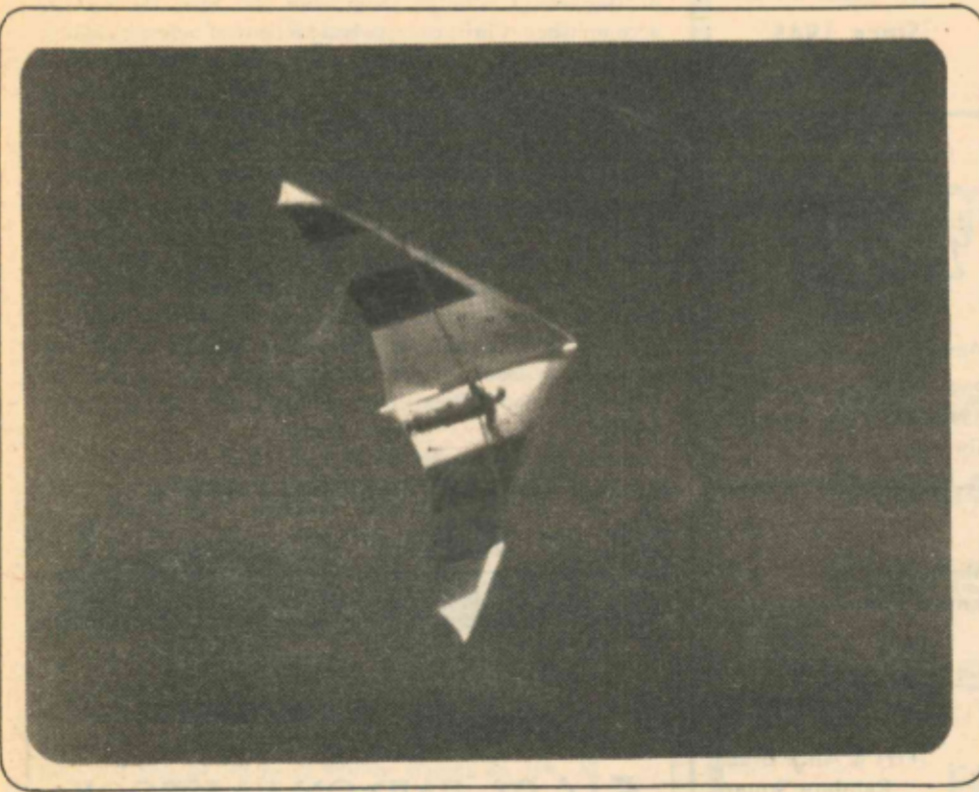
FLYING HIGH—This photograph and the one at left below were taken of Zeiset as he did some hang gliding in Arizona.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH—Mt. Princeton is seemingly dwarfed as the glider catches an updraft from the air rising off the valley floor.



SOFT LANDING—Randy Cone of Salida, a friend of Zeiset's, poses on the ground near Mt. Princeton after swooping down for a soft landing following a soaring trip high above the surrounding slopes.



himself while flying a new, more professional glider off Mt. Princeton.

He was fortunately able to regain control after being tossed in space for about eight minutes. A friend, Rod Ogilvie—who is also an experienced

pilot from Salida—was flying his glider at the same time. Ogilvie had unexpected difficulty in landing and received a broken wrist.

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his face and once shattering his kneecap.

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NOSE CONE—This is Jim Zeiset with a hang glider near Mt. Princeton about a year and a half ago. The tip of the hang glider in this picture resembles a rocket.