

Inglis, a private pilot and World War II Navy fighter pilot, has tracked animal herds by air in Africa. He believes that the powered hang glider might be useful in his field.

"A slow airborne vehicle has a lot of applications where you can see down into the habitat," he said.

"I have a project written right now and, if it goes through, we'll get one," Inglis continued. "Maybe not this one, but at least one that I can fly."

"One of the prerogatives of being the professor," he said, smiling and puffing on his pipe. "Graduate students will have to wait their turn."

Inglis listed some other reasons why he thought a hang glider would be effective in wildlife management.

"We spend a lot of money hiring helicopters," he said, "and fixed-wing aircraft go too fast."

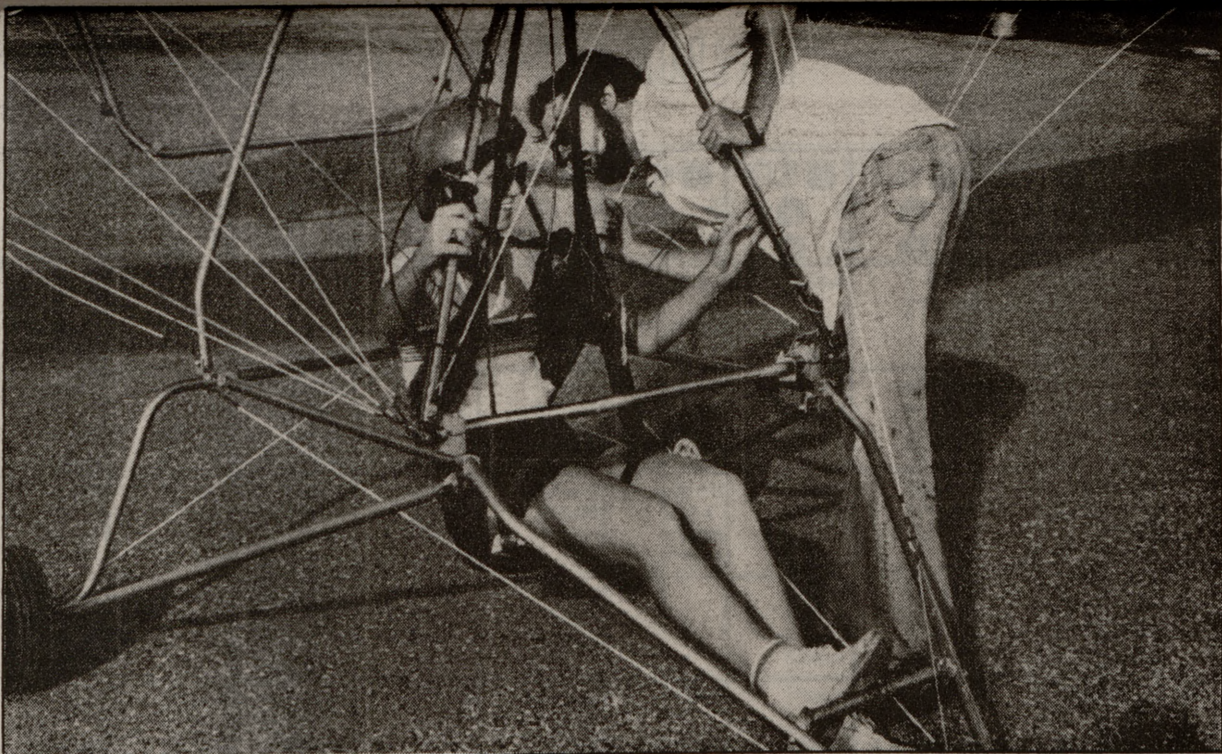
Shaffer added a sales pitch: "It can come and go from practically anywhere, and you can fold it up."

"You have to follow all the flying regulations, but you don't need a pilot's license or an airworthiness certificate."

Others received the ground instruction and went through the taxi phase of the training: Jordan; Inglis; and Sherri McCloud, an 18-year-old Aggie freshman from San Antonio.

Each came back to the starting point, smiling as if he or she knew some secret.

The wind began to pick up and Shaffer called a halt to the training. It was easy to imagine that, somewhere, the ghosts of Wilbur and Orville Wright were smiling, too.



Paul Shaffer checks Sherri McCloud out on the proper way to taxi the "Quicksilver."

photos by Wiley Gilmore



Tim Morse, a Texas A&M graduate student in aeronautical engineering, after his first flight in a powered hang glider.

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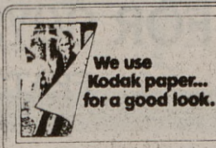
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