

## GLIDING

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truck by a tow line. The tow line is attached to the truck with a pay-out wench, a tension device similar to a fishing reel (but much larger).

The glider is launched in a fashion similar to aero tow, and the pilot hopefully catches a thermal before the road runs out.

Bruce Mauzy, an Austin Airports instructor, said the length of the road and the direction of the prevailing wind, in relation to the direction of the road, often limits wench towing.

John Krueger, a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force and Austin Air Sports pilot, said aero towing and wench towing has allowed hang gliding to expand into the flatlands.

This also facilitated cross-country, or point-to-point flight, said Krueger.

"It's not unusual to go 40 or 50 miles, and you can land basically anywhere," he said.

"We had one gentleman that thought he was landing by a road, and ended up landing by a railroad track. He had to tow his glider three miles to get to the nearest road."

"We also had someone fly from here to Fort Worth, which is about 140 miles."

There are several safety factors built into the hang gliders.

The material used to build Austin Air Sports' tandem glider is aircraft quality, and the glider pilot has a primary- and secondary-release option for the tow line in case of trouble.

In aero tow, the tug pilot also has dual mirrors that allow him to monitor the glider as long as he is being towed by the plane. And should the unpredictable Texas weather sneak up on the crafts, Austin Air Sports is prepared.

"We keep an eye on the weather," Krueger said. "But you're probably not going very far from the airport, and you can land easily, in a small area."

Despite these safety factors, why do so many people choose to be towed behind a truck or plane up to 6,000 feet in what is largely a high-tech kite, and then released?

Krueger said his older brothers were involved in hang gliding, while Mauzy said it was, quite simply, a desire to fly that propelled him into the clouds.

"This is the closest I've come to flying like a bird," Mauzy said.

"We don't flap our wings, but everything else is the same. It's also the least expensive form of flight."

Surreal and peaceful were words that Patel used to describe her flight.

"It was awesome; I felt really light on the way up," Patel said.

"You realize that you're not connected to the ground; there's nothing to catch you. If you look down as you're flying among the clouds, you could see a circular rainbow, glory, and in the middle of the circle was the shadow of our hang glider."

Instead of an adrenaline rush, Patel said, she received an altered perspective on living on the ground.

"We flew through the edges of the clouds," Patel said.

"When you get to the cloud point, you can see the color, and reach out and feel the wetness and the change in humidity."

Patel said gliding changed the way she viewed the world.

"It gives you a new perspective on the earth, how big the clouds are, looking at the ground, and how everything is really very small."

**"You realize that you're not connected to the ground; there's nothing to catch you."**

— Niki Patel  
gliding student

## 12<sup>th</sup> MAN STUDENT FOUNDATION

### FIRST GENERAL MEETING

COACH R. C. SLOCUM

will be there to speak about the new recruiting class and answer any questions that you may have.

Date: Monday, September 6

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Rudder 601

## Summer box office rings big returns

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's been a sizzling summer of Jedis and witches, reluctant brides and randy spies, janky teens and a kid who chats dead folks — a cast of characters that helped set a second straight record summer at the box office.

From Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, the take at U.S. theaters is estimated at just under \$3 billion, shattering the previous high of \$2.6 billion in 1998.

A record 11 movies have taken in more than \$100 million each, and a fifth is expected to join the club.

All this comes at a time when the Internet, video rentals, cable and satellite television offer more alternative diversions than ever before.

On top of that, blistering heat in much of the nation sent people to the conditioned comfort of theaters, and the films were good enough to keep them going back for more.

This summer's films also have had staying power. In summer 1998, movies on average took in 27 percent their total gross in the opening weekend, Wayne Lewellen, distribution president for Paramount, said. This summer, that average was down 24 percent, indicating films are staying longer in theaters.

"It was so competitive that no matter how good you were, you got poked out the next weekend by another movie," said Paul Derabedian, president of Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc., which tracks movie attendance.

The usual late-summer doldrums, when movie attendance usually trails, never materialized, largely because of *Sixth Sense* and the surprise *The Blair Witch Project*.

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