

Gilpin County News

BLACK HAWK, CO CENTRAL CITY • ROLLINSVILLE • NEDERLAND

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DAVE GIBSON

Soar like an eagle in a silent glider. The tow plane pulls the glider up high before releasing. **p16**



LISA KUNZ

Team Penning one of fun weekend events in Gilpin. **p2**



LISA KUNZ

Artists appreciating Golden Gate Canyon State Park view.



REBECCA BLONDO

Last day of school! Ms. Bev's Montessori Pre/K class.

COMMUNITY

Gilpin BOE deals with multiple monetary-related issues. **p3**

New GC chipper will make quick work of killing beetles. **p4**

MMRR Quarry public hearing scheduled for June 17th. **p6, 10**

CITY

Skatepark groundbreaking ceremony in Nederland. **p2**

Lincoln Hills historic resort clean-up planned. **p3**

Black Hawk fireworks best and largest display in State. **p4**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Hats off to graduates who are off to fulfill dreams. **p8-9**

Soar like an eagle

In a glider

by Dave Gibson

Since the beginning of time man has wanted to soar like the eagles. With no current desire to go hang gliding, riding in a sail-plane, (or glider as they are more routinely referred), may be safer and the closest that I'll ever get.

Mile High Gliding is located on the north side of the Boulder Municipal Airport at 5534 Independence Rd. and offers "City Flights" for \$79.00. The ride that I've chosen today is the "Mile High Flight" at \$179.00 which will take me west above Nugget Ridge into Boulder's foothills. The front seat is reserved for paying customers to afford a better view. On the runway and strapped in, an attendant attaches a thin nylon rope under the nose of our craft. The FAA certified commercial pilot Sean gives the o.k. and a Piper Pawnee, (an airplane commonly used in crop dusting), begins towing us down the runway. Our thirty year old 900 lb. aluminum aircraft doesn't take long to lift off and we circle ever higher behind the Pawnee. The 14,000 ft. snow-blanketed peaks span the horizon. At 10,600 feet in elevation Sean releases the cable and it springs forward toward our motorized escort as she veers away. Our speed lessens and under our own power now we do some slow banking maneuvers taking in the mountain scenery below. The wind whistling around our craft is louder than I had imagined but communication with my pilot behind me is easy. I have total confidence in our sailplane because it doesn't have any mechanical parts to fail. Our flight is smooth with no major thermals to speak of. It is so relaxing that I wouldn't hesitate recommending it to even the most trepid. Well clear of the Flatirons we cruise over Folsom Field and with some gentle turns make a safe landing.



DAVE GIBSON

From reading Mile High's literature and instructions thoroughly after and not before my flight, I see where an "Aerobic Flight" is also an option. Not recommended as a first flight, I knew immediately that to make my experience complete I'd have to try it.

With parachutes donned and harnesses clasped we float over Valmont and Baseline Reservoirs. Once at 4,500 ft. above the ground, we release and my pilot John takes us into some "roller coasters." Talking me through each procedure, next we perform some "wing-overs" where we do a climbing turn connected to a diving turn. A few g-forces are felt and we transition into a "knife-edge." The tip of the wing pivots above the prairie dog mound pocked earth. Our angle to the ground is extreme and reminds me of a shark slipping sideways through the water. The moment that I have anticipated most is at hand as we dive at a 45 degree angle and enter our first "loop." My stomach drops and we pull up towards the sky reaching 3 and one quarter g-force. For moments upside-down, I'm in a time warp unfocussed on terra firma when the sky eventually creeps into the edge of the cockpit. Discombobulated and adren-

aline charged, my stomach is in my head. Still enjoying the ride, we perform a trick known as a "1/4 cloverleaf" which is a "1/2 loop" followed by a "1/2 roll."

Many of these maneuvers are the same ones that are used by fighter and stunt pilots. Communications between passenger and pilot are fewer now as all I mostly say is "Wow!" Myself having made earlier mention of "stalling", the pilot demonstrates one. Pointing slightly upward we slow until the aircraft "shutters" when he directs us back toward earth to prevent a full-fledged stall. I have been grasping onto my safety harness the entire time and notice that my hands are sweaty. Still feeling a little bit uneven, my pilot asks if I'm alright and if I'd like to do another "loop." I take a few deep breaths believing myself able to keep my lunch intact and answer; "Sure, why not?" Diving sharply again at 100 mph and curving upward, my body feels heavy until we reach the apex of the "loop" where weightlessness occurs. Gliding back downward, tightness squeezes my chest as the gravitational burden returns. Once again the blue sky and ground fall into their proper place with another deep breath. It is a good thing that this trip only lasts twenty minutes

because I don't think the body could take much more. John tells me that he knows a maneuver that will pull 4-g that I can try next time.

Aerial acrobatics successfully completed now, we soar over the airport in the direction of Boulder Reservoir when I'm offered the controls! If my pilot had a murder-suicide plot in mind surely he would have implemented it in a series of "barrel-rolls" and "loops" by now. I take control of the stick and foot controls and practice turning. Stick and right peddle to the right for a right turn and stick and left peddle to the left for a left turn. With a few corrections by my instructor, I am flying! The stick is touchy and the vessel dips quickly when pushed forward. At

first I tend to keep the nose too high decreasing our speed until I adjust. A metal rod and a piece of yarn outside the Plexiglass bubble is the direction indicator. With the pilot possibly as nervous as I was during our "loops" he takes back the controls for an uneventful landing. I sit a little dazed in the office talking about aerial maneuvers with my pilot until I think I can leave without bumping into the walls. I'm halfway up the canyon before my equilibrium is fully restored. When I set out to soar like the eagles, I never imagined that I would get to fly like a jet fighter pilot.

For more information about glider rides go to www.milehighgliding.com or call: 303-527-1122.



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DREW SCHLUSSEL

Judi Payne's Nederdance Studio presented "Springtime in the Rockies" recently. The Ballet 1 class (Helen Cross, Audra Niermann, Sierra Schlusssel, Isabella Roszell, Eileen Lanthier, and Avy Henrikson) demonstrated the fundamental ballet skills and performed the "Waltz of the Flowers."

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