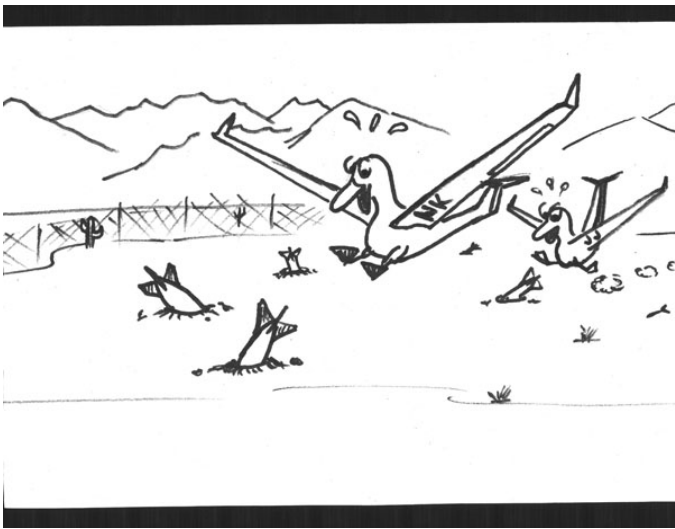


# FOLLOWING GARY'S LEAD, NOT A GOOD IDEA!

BY JJ SINCLAIR



Cartoon by Kurt Peltó

Did I ever tell you about the time Gary and I landed in a bombing range? We were flying a regional contest out of Minden. The task that day sent us south to Basalt and then north to Hawthorne. Gary and I made the turn at Basalt and were working a nice little 3 knot thermal on our way to Hawthorne when I spotted a glider wing-flash on the ridge just north of us.

I figured that anyone out in those boonies must know what they're doing. I headed for the wing-flashing glider. I joined him only to find he was working a little scrap of nothing. Mad at myself for leaving a good 3-knot thermal, we started a questionable glide for Hawthorne.

Gary was on the left, the unknown glider in the middle and I was on the right. Keeping an eye on each other, our little formation spread out to increase our chances of finding a thermal.

We were getting into serious trouble because the ground appeared to be less than 1000 feet below. Hawthorne was still a good 10 miles away!

Suddenly, two little doors opened up on the unknown glider and an engine came out! I was furious, not only had I left a good thermal to join this guy, now he's going to motor-home and leave us to, who knows what?

Gary said over the radio, "What'a you going to do John?" I said something real memorable like, "I don't know".

Gary replied "there's a dry lake behind us" and started a 180-degree turn. I followed like the sheep I am.

Sure enough there was a nice little flat, dry lake, up in the mountains. As Gary set up for a landing to the east, I spotted a chain-link fence that looked to be a good 10 feet high. I shouted over the radio, "Land outside the fence!"

He did and so did I. Sure enough the center of the dry lake was all fenced off and even more interesting was what the fence was containing.....thousands of little bomblets! We had landed on a BOMBING RANGE.

I found out later the Army used the place to test the dispersal pattern of cluster bombs. I believe they were inert and the place isn't a restricted area. The Army just cruises over with a cluster bomb slung under a helicopter. If there's nobody on the dry lake and nobody's flying over it, they just let the sucker go!

Well, we got a relay back to Minden from somebody that had an engine whining in the background that JJ and NK were on a dry lake up in the hills about 10 miles west of Mina.

Nancy and Pat, our wives, have a story all their own that involved asking directions at a well-lit house on the outskirts of Mina. Seems the girls there only knew the directions to the bedroom!

The Sheriff didn't have a clue. Finally two crusty old gals in the local café said, "You must be talking about Gerlach Flats. Follow us."

Meanwhile, Gary and I shared our land-out food. I gave him exactly half my apple, but I think he shorted me on his Babe Ruth candy bar.

About sundown I felt the call of nature and wiped myself with half of the task sheet and then used the other half to light a fire.

By 10 PM we had burned up all the firewood and settled into our respective cockpits for what looked to be a long uncomfortable night. Just then, two sets of headlights flashed across the eastern ridge. The Girls had found us!

Good Luck, Dr. Kemp. It's been a memorable 30 years.

Pat & JJ Sinclair



# DAD BLEW UP HIS WING at MONTAGUE

BY THOMAS W KEMP



**Landing on the highway in Marfa, TX**  
In front of the sailplane is Tom (age 5). In the background is brother Gary (age 13). Circa 1973. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

## The Boy Who Flew With Condors

I always said that Dad has been flying my whole life. What inspired him was the Disney movie “The Boy Who Flew With Condors.” This came out in February 1967. I was born in May 1967. Given this, he has been doing it my whole life!

## Summers with Dad

Unfortunate for my wife, I have 39 years worth of contest t-shirts. They are all in boxes. I refuse to give them up!

Those summers were spent loading up our motor home, grabbing a Big Mac for each of the four kids and hitting the road to some desolate airport in the middle of nowhere. Those airports weren’t at the end of the earth, but we could definitely see it from there!

We always complained about the dust and boredom, but looking back at those days, what a great time we had. It is amazing to think of the different generation of people influenced by my father, from

John Seaborn when he was about 14, to another young man who is now a fighter pilot at Top Gun in Miramar.

## Dad Blew Up His Wings at Montague

One of my memorable moments was when Dad blew up his wing at Montague CA. This was in the 1990’s when I was around 23 years old. Here’s the story.

We had left our house for a weekend of flying. We arrived a little late in the day. Several other crazy men were already in the air.

It was going to be another great soaring day in Montague, so Dad decided to fill his wings with a full load of water. He didn’t have the proper pressure regulator, but that didn’t matter. All that mattered was that other pilots were getting further and further away.

He decided to stick the hose in the wing and let ‘er rip. I kept telling him that I didn’t think this was a good idea. He insisted I turn the tap on. I told him again that I didn’t think this was a good idea.

As anybody who knows my very Type A father can attest, patience is not one of his virtues. So, when he started to get angry and threatened violence, I removed common sense from the equation and turned on the tap.

With one final grasp at reasoning, I only turned it a little so that a slow trickle came out. Needless to say, that wasn’t fast enough for my dear old dad.

## The Wing Blows

The radio chatter between other pilots increased. When Dad heard “14,000 feet and climbing...”, so did his sense of urgency.

He shouted: "Turn up the damn water; I'm never going to catch these guys." A few moments later came a loud splitting sound, a huge POP, and "#\$%&!!" from my very religious father. Yep, we blew that sucker up!

I will tell you that I never actually used the specific words "I told you so" but have taken every opportunity to remind him of this little incident. I was, however, smart enough not to bring it up while loading it back into the trailer for the trip to JJ Sinclair's for repair.

### Thanks for the Memories

Dad, we're very proud of your accomplishments and contributions to this great sport. We had a great time as a family going on these little adventures with you.

Now that you have more time on your hands, I am hoping you will have time to join me in Yellowstone for a different type of flying....fly fishing!

*About the author:* This article was written by Gary Kemp's son Thomas W Kemp.

At this writing, Thomas W Kemp is in his late thirties and is married with one son (the future Contest Director below). They reside in Phoenix, Arizona.

He holds a BS degree in Business Administration from the California State University at Chico.

He has been in the financial services industry (Banking, Casino Finance, Mutual Fund Sales, etc.) for over 15 years.

His hobbies include fly fishing in the White Mountains of Arizona as often as he can!



### Landing on the highway in Marfa, TX

The full sailplane is on the highway with three of the four kids in the picture. From the left Cindy (Age 8) is hidden with Tom (age 5) in front and Gary (age 13) in the back. Not in the picture is Dave (age 9). Circa 1973. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.



### Three Generations

Gary Kemp cuddles up to a future Contest Director, his grandson Jordan (Thomas and Samantha's son) at Williams Soaring Center, CA, right before Grandpa takes off for the day. April 2001. Photo provided by Thomas W Kemp.



# THE MAD PILOT

BY GARY E. KEMP



## **Gary E. Kemp (left) at Ephrata, WA**

Bob Klemmedson's son (right) is in the back-ground.  
Circa 1972. Photo provided by Gary Kemp

## **Dad Was Crazy**

We all knew that Dad was crazy. We never discussed it, but we knew. Each year, promptly on the 15th of June, we would load up in our gigantic Pace-Arrow Motor Home. There were eight of us: my father, mother, two brothers, my sister, a springer spaniel, a toy poodle, and me. We would take off for obscure airstrips in deepest, darkest America, towing a thirty-foot glider trailer behind us.

As a cosmopolitan twelve-year old, I grew excited at the prospect of new cities and places. In fact, the whole family was abuzz with the spirit of adventure. Maybe this summer it would be different.

## **A Sport the Whole Family Can Enjoy**

Cross-country soaring is a sport the whole family can enjoy, whether you're in the air or on the ground. Only as we pulled the rig into our destination after days of travel, did we sober up to the realities of a dismal, semi-deserted airport smack in the middle of nowhere, what our fun summer would be! As my father was tossed around on his currents and eddies in the sky for hours on end, we could look forward to

following behind on every bad road in the western United States.

## **Laws of Aerodynamics**

Gliders have no motor. So, in order to get into the air, Dad, snug and secure in his tiny cockpit, would be towed on a long rope behind a retired crop-dusting plane. These monstrosities were often so rickety that had they been dive-bombing Germany in 1917, the Red Baron, himself, would not have bothered to shoot them down.

When a certain altitude was reached, our mad pilot was hurled into the clouds. Through certain laws of aerodynamics which to this day elude me, Dad was able to spend all day cannonballing through the air racing other similarly affected lunatics from one non-descript burg to another.

## **Good Years and Bad Years**

If it were a good year, un-burgeoning metropolis like Perris, California, became the centers of this minority hysteria.



## **Washing Schweizer 1-35 in Tulare, CA**

Gary E. Kemp is washing the glider in Tulare. Circa 1975. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.



### **Central Soaring Club's Schweizer 2-22**

Hitched on Gary Kemp's motor home at El Mirage, CA. Circa 1974. Photo by John Seaborn.

Bad years, we would trek to places that weren't even places, just strips in the middle of the Mojave Desert or Nevada Desert, or Borrego Desert, Marfa, Texas, Ephrata, Washington; and Minden, Nevada or Well, you get the idea.

After a day or so of settling in to the routine of sleeping bags and Tupperware, the pilot's and their respective crews would converge on folding chairs from the local Methodist Church in a huge generally deserted hanger, where we would listen to the contest director chart out the turn points.

Turn points were typically ghost towns, hundreds of miles from the base airport, which the pilots would fly over and photograph before racing rapidly to the next glamorous, wildly exciting point to do the same thing. The goal in these contests would be to leave the airport around eleven in the morning (having been up since seven, washing the plane, pouring over air maps, and arguing about breakfast) and through a circuitous route, return to that same airport in time to hit the nearest "Dairy Queen" for dinner. When the glider and its attendant pilot did not return to the base, the crew suffered from the consequence of that great horror of horrors known as "landing off-field.

Our ground crew consisted of everyone in the family, including the two dogs, with obvious exception of the mad pilot himself, that elusive shooting star who we would try to follow.

I, being the oldest child would fumble daily with incomprehensible aerial maps, depicting mysterious places couched in terms of odd forbidding: dead lakes, restricted zones, no access roads, deserted villages. I would try to figure a route which paralleled the one above. When my father communicated his position via radio to us, my mother, our crew captain, jumped into action.

A pampered former Rose princess, Mom, looking like a cross between Doris Day and Joan Crawford, would grasp the wheel of this enormous motor home-trailer combination like a seasoned truck driver. She would scream "shut-up" to any of her four children or two dogs who happened to be listening, and head for parts unknown. I do mean, unknown, unknown.



**"Mom, looking like a cross between Doris Day and Joan Crawford"**

The dogs would bark, my sister would let out a wail,<sup>6</sup> and the engine of our unreliable Leviathan (home on wheels) would clank and screech, all in sounds of protestation. As the rig pulled onto the highway, we would all tune our ears to the static on the radio and listen for the euphoric, oxygen deprived voice of our elusive patriarch.

## Earth to Dad: Where Are You?

"November Kilo Ground, this is November Kilo Air. Do you copy? Over."

"This is November Kilo Ground. Go ahead."

"I'm about thirty miles south of the third turn point; it doesn't look like I'm going to make it back. I think there's a town about fifteen miles west of here. Can you find it on the map?"

"No, I mean negative November Kilo."

"Well, keep looking, I'm going to try and make it there."

"Dad. I can't find it!" would come the frantic reply. "Over and out", the ever dimming voice in the sky would reply.

## Dad's Perception of a Town

More often than not, Dad's idea of a town fell into the same general category as Dad's idea of a vacation spot. After driving the better part of the afternoon and suffering countless oblique directions from Contest Headquarters, we would come upon two decaying farm houses, a wheat silo, half a barn, and a long dirt road, to find my father guarding his plane, a crooked half-smile on his face, his dark brown hair sticking up in back, and his dirty un-opened parachute on the ground beside him.

"You made it. Good thing, I was getting hungry," He'd say

"But Dad, you said there was a town here," we would collectively moan. He'd shrug his linebacker shoulders in semi-apology and say something like "Hell, I can't see anything from up there. That's a crew's job." Without further comment, we would rush to take the damn plane apart and put it in the trailer, in order to get to the closest town before nearest Kentucky Colonel Fried Chicken closed.

## Landing In Town vs. Landing "In" Town

Of course, there were times when he did land in town, as in streets with hospitals and drug stores. I

can still see the pinched, shocked faces of the good citizens of Grand Coulee, Washington, when Dad, eschewing the high school football field, pulled to a dead stop ten feet from a cliff, on the hospital administrator's front lawn. Perhaps it was better when we weren't there to view the landing, I thought, as I saw my Mother's face turn several non-primary colors in a matter of seconds.

Further, I doubt that few of the Texas farmers could forget the sight of my brothers and I waving pillow cases to stop traffic as our mad pilot swooped down on to a four lane highway, during an August thunderstorm.

"Glad I made it down in time, that thunder storm could really dangerous," dad would say to Mom, as she held a cold cloth to her head.

There was a certain amount of glamour involved in all of this for his four pre-adolescent children. I'm sure Dad couldn't have garnered more rural fame if he had hired a gang of Madison Avenue advertising executives to promote him. The small town reporters just kept their flashbulbs flashing away. Each of them were busily covering the scoop of the year, my father!

Adventures were common, but once in a while even Dad suffered a little apprehension due to his unorthodox landings.

## Annie Oakley Confronts UFO

One afternoon, Dad ran into a little trouble. He had set out on a course over the hilly of southern Washington. We were late in leaving the airport that day and suffered from complete loss of radio contact by three. Contest Headquarters had reported no contact from our pilot either. Thoughts of some mysterious interior Bermuda Triangle played on our minds.

Meanwhile, as the ground cooled and the warm air currents grew stagnant, Dad, in the sky some hundred and fifty miles away, was searching for a place to land. A town, I mean farm in sight, he turned the engine-less plane down in back of an old farm house with a soft woosh of air. Unlike a "power--plane", a sailplane or glider makes virtually

no noise when it lands. With the exception of the sound of a TV movie coming from the front room of the two-story pseudo-Victorian farmhouse, the entire farm was silent.

As Dad pried himself out of the small cockpit and made his way to the back of the house, a middle-aged farm wife with a vivid imagination was watching the afternoon movie, "I Walked With A Zombie".

As my handsome, six foot-three muscular father knocked on the open back door, the woman jumped knocked over a blue Ginger-jar lamp and began to scream.

Simultaneously, two huge Australian Shepherds/Wolves bounded off the front porch determined to thwart this Zombie Pilot from carrying out his evil deeds. As the women, with an Annie Oakley flourish grabbed the shotgun off the wall, I'm sure Dad seriously contemplated Sunday afternoon trout fishing as a permanent hobby.

Fortunately, Dad was and is a fast talker. By evening, once again, he was a local celebrity. The farmer, his sons, and several of his neighbors had gathered to hear about the mad pilot who landed his strange looking engine-less plane with so little noise that even the fierce watchdogs did not wake.

I'm not sure the poor farm woman ever believed that my father was totally human (she may have a point). In fact, I'm convinced that her very active imagination has had a hand in the endless stream of UFO, Zombie, Werewolf stories that emerge from the Northwest to this very day. The last time I heard one, there was a gang of extraterrestrials, all six foot, three inches, who made no noise and could hypnotize wild animals with their X-Ray vision, stalking the hills of Washington for victims. It's true. I read it in "The Enquirer".

### Found Dad, but Tomorrow Is Yet Another Adventure

Meanwhile, the lot of the faithful crew consisted of wandering endless back roads and calling Command, I mean, Contest-Headquarters. By the time we found our well-fed hero, it was after mid-night.

With glazed eyes we listened to a rehash for hours. By 3:30 a.m. when we woke a dam-keeper to open a gate crossing our only route home, we one-by-one began to fall asleep. After all that was not the last bridge we would cross, for tomorrow would be another adventure.

### I Still Have Nightmares

Some nights now, I still wake to hear: "November Kilo Ground, this is November Kilo Air. I'm going to have to land off-field." I groan and try to go back to sleep by thinking peaceful thoughts about fathers who spend their weekends playing golf!

*About the author:* This article was written by Gary Kemp's son, Gary E. Kemp. The original version of this article was printed in the 1987 issue of Soaring Magazine. Permission was granted by author for re-publishing.

At this writing, Gary E. Kemp, is in his mid-forties, single and resides in San Francisco.

He holds a double-degree in History and Anthropology from UC Santa Barbara.

He works for a law library and writes book reviews for its law and literature collection.

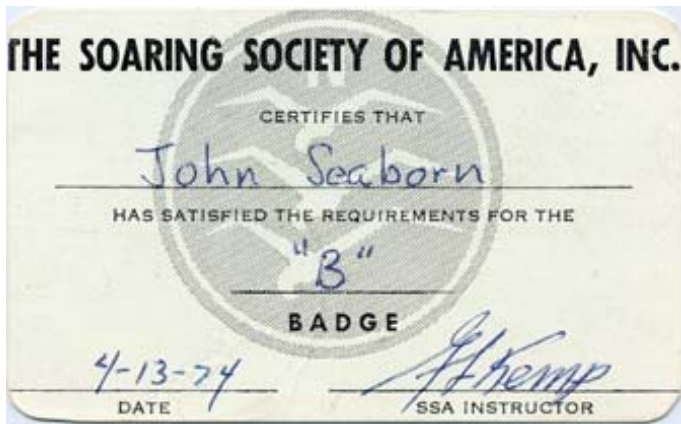
His hobbies include reproducing Russian Icons, photography, and ornamental horticulture.

He has written for Long Ridge Writer's group and Spectrum magazine.



# MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH GARY KEMP

BY JOHN SEABORN



## Fond Memories

John Seaborn's B Badge, signed by Gary Kemp on April 13, 1974, over thirty years ago!

## The Boy Who Flew with Condors

By John Seaborn

I happened upon the Disney short film, "The Boy Who Flew with Condors" and was hooked on the idea of soaring. Immediately I went looking for a gliding club and found one in the Central California Soaring Club about 80 miles from my parent's home. Since I was too young to drive, I talked my long suffering father into taking me to the airport. This turned out to be the first of many trips.

The club had a Schweizer 2-22, which I thought was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. My lucky break was that my instructor, Gary Kemp, was between gliders and eager to fly so off we went.

My first flight with Gary was 7/14/73 which was a one hour aero tow from Tulare, CA (our home field at the time) to Springville CA, all in a SGS 2-22! Gary would keep saying: "Try and keep the wings level". I had to apologize to the tow pilot after the flight as I had the tug pointing every way but forward most of the time!

I give Gary a lot of credit for getting his young student off to a good start as he is an excellent instructor and a rabid cross country pilot. Gary's attitude is that the point of soaring is cross country flying and teaches his students accordingly. I soloed at age 14.

Soon the club acquired a Schweizer 1-26 which was absolutely the most beautiful thing a 14 year old had ever seen. My first cross country was based on a threat from my instructor Gary who said, "If you get over 3,000 feet, I do not want to see you landing back here."

Now Gary played college football. He is not to be trifled with to this day. He used to delight in saying, "hey I'll flip you for it." He didn't mean flipping a coin but rather me. He would hold me upside down by an ankle!

Needless to say I got the picture. So, at 4:30 in the afternoon as the last pitiful thermal pushed the inversion up to 3,200 feet, off I went. Twelve miles later my flight ended in an alfalfa field near the Interstate.

As soon as I landed, a car pulled off the Interstate and stopped. I walked over to the fence expecting to hear all about the lack of wind and crop damage. Instead the gentlemen extended his hand and said, "Hi I am Del Blomquist, President of the 1-26 Association."

"Hey this off field landing stuff is no big deal", was my first thought!



## Long Time Friends

From left to right, John Seaborn, his father Walt Seaborn, an unidentified friend and Gary Kemp. Photo taken in Minden, NV in 1981. Photo provided by John Seaborn



# Literally Sailing Thru High School

By John Seaborn

Gary was my flight instructor when I was attending High School. This was not unusual, except that it so happened that Mr. Gary Kemp was the Principal of a neighboring High School.

I would frequently call Gary up and say something like, "what does it look like?" He would frequently say, "a front passed through last night. It looks great". This was our subtle code for, "We are heading for the airport".

Unfortunately, this exchange often took place on school days. One day I was called in my principal's office to explain my frequent absence from school. Now our principal, Herman Ziegler, was not a man to toy with. I had to tell him that I had been soaring during my absence from his august institution. I also coughed up that my partner was none other than his friend Gary Kemp, the principal of the nearby institution.

My confession resulted in the most remarkable expression on Mr. Ziegler's face, easily remembered to this day!



## 15-Meter Nationals at Montague 2006

From left to right, Gary Kemp, Brenda Seaborn and John Seaborn. Photo provided by John Seaborn.

*About the author:* Since his solo in 1974 at age 14, John Seaborn has gained over 3,000 hours of glider time. He has flown over thirty types of gliders.

Inspired early on by his instructor Gary Kemp, John won the Pacific Soaring Council's (PASCO) Sawyer Award for cross country flight. Then he went on to earn Diamond Badge 377 at age 17.

An enthusiastic competitor, he has participated in the Regionals and Nationals since the mid-1970's, finishing in the top five, fourteen times in National competition.

John is the four time winner of the Joe Giltner Memorial trophy for the fastest speed at a 15-meter nationals. He was a pilot member of the 1985 U.S. Soaring Team to Italy. In 2006, John is ranked second in team selection for the 15-Meter Class.

John is past President of the Central California Soaring Club and the Soaring Society of Boulder.

A two time winner of the SSA Exceptional Achievement Award, John was a founding member of the re-worked US Team Committee, creating the U.S. team web site, team resource binder and many other team programs.

John was also the 2002 manager of the successful Robertson Trust capital campaign which raised over \$100,000 for US Teams while serving as an SSA Foundation Trustee. He also Co-Chaired the U.S. Team Task Force.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with a Certificate in Marketing Communications. He has put to work starting and managing several small technology companies over the years