

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES

MY FIRST FLIGHT IN A HANG GLIDER

by Don Stevens

On a bright, sunny Sunday Morning, January 16th, I drove down to Redondo Beach, to see if anyone was going to fly. I met Bob Morse and he talked me into taking his hang glider up to the hill. He pulled the glider out of the garage at the bottom of the Redondo Glider Field and loaded it onto the trailer all assembled. On the way up the hill, Stan Corcoran drove up along side of us with his "Cinema" sailplane. We yelled, "Are you going to fly?" He answered, "Not unless the wind picks up."

Soon we were up on the Palos Verdes Hills, which are 800 feet high. When we arrived on top, Bob immediately found a good slope to fly down. It was about 100 feet high and sloped off rather steeply down to a boulevard. A little breeze had picked up, blowing right up the hill. We all carried the hang glider up to the top and Bob strapped himself in and got all set. He uses his legs to take off and then sits down on a seat as soon as the glider



Bob Morse, left, and Don Stevens, just before Bob made his first long flight.

leaves the ground. I trotted on down the hill to give Bob the signal when to start. The wind picked up and, at my signal, he leaped forward and ran as fast as he could. Much to my surprise, when he came to the brow of the hill, the glider soared right out straight into the air, instead of coming down the hill. He glided and sailed for what seemed to be a long time. He flew all the way down the hill, a distance of 800 feet, and landed.

You have never heard a fellow yell so much in all your life. He had built hang gliders for six years, and his dream had finally come true. This was his first real flight. He was bubbling over with enthusiasm. He said, "Now you try it, Don." I wanted to, as I had tried about everything else except a hang glider. We wheeled it back to the top and I proceeded to get into the framework. After much difficulty in dodging braces and tubing, I was strapped to the bicycle seat. The harness fits around you at the waist line and cinches up very tight, and holds you on the seat. All the time I am standing up, straddling this seat with the wheel up in front of me taking the weight of the glider. Next came the harness for the controls, which slid over the shoulders like a vest. A regular stick is just behind your back, which operates ailerons and elevators. Ailerons are on the top

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wing and very large. The elevator is of conventional type and large, and a stabilizer like that on our regular glider. There is no rudder, just a very large fin.

I tightened the control harness and tried moving my body around, to see how it operated. To my surprise, I could not even feel that the controls were hooked up, it worked so freely. I asked Bob if he was sure all the controls were hooked up. He laughed and said, "Sure, that is the way I designed it, so you can't feel any control pressure and your body will be free to move quickly for controlling in the air."

This control stick at your back slides through an eyelet on your control harness. I was all set to go, so I grabbed hold of two bicycle handlebars on the framework and lifted the glider up off the ground until the seat was tight against me, and, to my surprise, it felt very light.

Bob said, "Now, Don, lean far forward when you run, to get the tail up off the ground." I started out, running as fast as I could and leaning forward as far as possible. I immediately felt the tail leave the ground and did not have any trouble balancing the wings. When I came to the edge of the hill, I leaned back as far as I dared, and Wow!—she shot off the ground and zoomed up to about 15 feet. I levelled out and, at the same time, put my feet up on the stirrups and started gliding. I heard Bob yelling, "Boy, oh boy, look at her go!"

I'm telling you, I have had many thrills in my glider activities, but this topped them all—to run right off into space! I glided over the top of the people and proceeded on over the main boulevard and into another field. As I was coming in to land, at about 10 feet, I started to take my feet off the stirrups to land on my feet, as Bob instructed, but thought I had better land on the front wheel and tail skid, as I was coming in too fast. As I leaned back to level off, to my surprise she zoomed up again. I had been flying with too much speed. This glider has a "sky-hook" wing section and can fly very slowly. I gradually glided closer to the ground and kept leaning back farther and farther, until I had the stick all the way back, and she made a perfect two-point landing. I even kept the wings level until she was completely stopped. I had glided about 1,100 feet.

Bob came racing down the hill and asked me if I liked it. I don't mind telling you, I was bubbling over with enthusiasm myself. After that, Bob made four more flights. Stan Hall, who helped build it with Bob, also flew it twice.

I suggested that Bob put on a small rudder, connected to the ailerons, before he attempted to fly off any high hills. It is all right now for small hills, when you only glide into the wind for a few hundred feet, but when you start going off the top of a mountain or a high hill, which Bob has planned, more control is needed to fly it where you want to.

Specifications of the Morse "Tobogganair"

Span: 20 ft.	Height: 7½ ft.
Chord: 4½ ft.	Weight: 120 lbs.
Area: 160 sq. ft.	Take-off speed: 15 m.p.h.
Length: 15 ft.	Useful load: 200 lbs.

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Ronald Goto, of the Southern California Soaring Association, sends us this picture of Bill Ishii, in his specially built Northrop Primary. Bill is the first American-born Japanese to learn to fly a glider in the United States, as well as the



Bill Ishii in his Northrop Primary, special built. It was loaned to Don Stevens recently in making launch from top of a car.

youngest of his race in the country to fly an airplane. He is now busy building a two-seater. The twenty-two members of his group served notice on us that they would not rejoin the S.S.A. this year unless this picture appeared in the magazine! Here it is—not because of their ultimatum—but because it happens to be a darn good picture to go with an interesting news story.



Seeing how it would work on "Cinema" Glider.

Don Stevens sends us this photo of a 35 pound 5 cylinder 14 h.p. portable engine, suitable for mounting in a glider or sailplane. The 4 foot prop turns up 1850 r.p.m. on the ground, and should do 2100 in the air. He hopes soon to try it.

MASSACHUSETTS

OSTERVILLE

The wintry blasts seem to have kept Parker Leonard up in the air, rather than down on the ground. A newspaper