

Branches

2015: 2 October, 2015

Newsletter of the



Calendar:

- * BOD Meeting Nov. 14
- * BOD Meeting Dec. 12
- * Christmas Party Dec. 12
- * BOD Meeting Jan. 9
- * Valley Fest Apr. 30-May 2
- * Mayhem May 28

2016 BOD Election

It's time to choose the Tree Toppers you want making decisions for *America's No. 1 Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club* in the coming year. Obviously, the bylaws referendum to allow paraglider pilot membership passed, so this will be an important year for the BOD as they decide how paragliding will be accommodated in our Flight Regulatory Program (FRP). If you know the slate personally, you may even recognize a PG pilot name on the ballot.

We have the usual busy year ahead with the addition (hopefully) of activity from the imaginations of new brains in the TTT and on the BOD. Of course, BOD meetings are open to all Tree Toppers. Contribution of ideas and the work to make them real is always appreciated, elected or not!

Maintenance Report

by Rick Jacob

During the summer months, a number of maintenance projects were completed. With the exception of one, all these projects were completed by members who volunteered their time

and energy.

Steve Larson spent many hours removing everything from the clubhouse, repairing and painting all damaged wall surfaces, and sanding and refinishing all the interior trim. He did an awesome job!

Ed Lyons sanded and refinished the LP tank. He then spent many hours designing and rebuilding the clubhouse handrails. Excellent job, Ed!

After many years of neglect, the clubhouse got a much needed uplift. Instead of replacing the rotted siding, all exposed wood was wrapped in metal. Covered porches were also added under the deck. New deck boards and hand railings were installed. Local builder Mike Gibbs has protected one of our major assets.

Brian Peterson split and Ed Lyons stacked all the firewood that was piled under the deck. This wood is stacked under the club porch. There is plenty more available for splitting on the property.

There is always something that needs to be done around the properties, from picking up sticks, mowing, bathhouse cleaning, trash hauling, etc.. Please feel free to identify improvement projects and a solution for them.

TENNESSEE TREE TOPPERS

CHRISTMAS PARTY

6:30 PM EST

DECEMBER 12, 2015

by Bryson Harper,

Social Committee Chair



Don & Stacy Murdoch in the Oktoberfest sunset tandem afterglow.

Photo by Rob Dallas



Aris' Harbor Light Restaurant and Lounge will again host the annual Tennessee Tree Toppers' Christmas Party on Saturday, December 12th at 6:30 pm EST. The address is 9718 Hixson Pike, Soddy-Daisy, TN 37379.

Please join us for an evening of celebration with the Tree Topper family. Guests and family are welcome. Reservations are not required, but a rough head count would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Bryson at bharper0108@gmail.com with any questions, as well as the number in your party if you plan to attend. Merry (early) Christmas!

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OktoberFest sunset.
Photo by Rob Dallas

The Prez's Perch *by Rob Dallas,*

TTT President

Fellow Tennessee Tree Toppers,

It has been a truly remarkable year and I want to start by thanking each and every 2015 Board member for working so well together to keep all things TTT running smoothly and improving well, pretty much everything in sight. We accomplished a great deal since January and you made my job easy, so thank you James, Michael, Buddy, Rick, Ollie, Bryson, Dan, Clark, Erik, Marco, Tim, Eric, Kenny, Tom, and Lucas! It has been a great honor serving as your president during my 5th year on the Board.

As you know, the Bylaws referendum passed adding the two words "and paragliding" and we now welcome paraglider pilots as full members. This is arguably the biggest change in club history and I really think it was a smart move. There is more work to be done with Rick setting up a PG flight regulation program, etc.. If you have been flying either TTT site lately you probably noticed quite a few hang glider pilots are earning their Para rating. It's great to see so much flying activity going on! I've seen nothing but positive attitude, hard work, and respect from all our members, old and new, and I'm certain that will continue.

What else has been going on? Steve Larson volunteered his time and professional handy-skills by fixing up the clubhouse sheetrock, painting the walls & window trim, staining the outside, etc.. Thanks Steve! Thanks also to Ed Lyon (our very first PG member!) for building a super nice dual handrail for those steep clubhouse steps.

Thanks to Rick who took the point on a much needed clubhouse improvement project that we hired out for the most part, including matching green metal siding on the south side, shed & window trim, replaced all the deck boards, lag screwed through header boards, a sloped metal

rain control ceiling below the deck to channel water away from the foundation, and replaced the deck railing. True Tree Topper volunteer spirit was abundantly evident with cold hard cash donations covering about a third of the cost of this project from Ray Helman, Ollie, Michael, yours truly and others (and it's never too late!)

Team Challenge was another great success this year with Ollie (aka Mr. Wizard), Bryson, Erik, Michael, Dave Hanning, James, and Buddy pulling together. A little flying and tons of learning seminars took place because, let's face it, the weather just sucked. Bryson brilliantly contracted the eats out to two gourmet food trucks which just made all the difference. Citizen's Tri-County Bank graciously hosted the TTT and the public one rainy day where long time supporters John & Dale Stokes donated one of their amazing raptor shows.

Michael and Buddy are putting the final touches on a slicker than snot-on-a-glass-door-knob website at TTTmember.org where you can fill out an online waiver and we now accept Paypal or credit cards.

Michael and I are working to set up a TTT account with Vanguard and fund it with \$5,000 from the LZ fund which has been in safe CD's to date.

We authorized a pavilion improvement project at the October BOD meeting to enclose one end of the space with low maintenance metal siding and incorporate sliding doors on the end wall. This will provide a more weather resistant place to hold seminars during Team Challenge and keep the band dry during parties. We are of course accepting donations to cover costs.

There is more stuff going on, but those are the highlights and that's enough for now. As usual if you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Read BOD Minutes at www.tennesseetreetoppers.org/

Team Challenge *by Ollie Gregory,*

Competition Chair

Team Challenge (TC) 2015 was a blast! Sure, weeks of excellent flying weather before and after TC added to our frustration with the wet days, but multiplied our appreciation of the three flying days Mother Nature gave us! Even with four damp days, we filled the down time with useful seminars and demonstrations that have become the backbone of this teaching competition. There was so much opportunity to learn new skills and perspectives on free flight in this blended Para and Hangie TC. This event proved to all doubters that Paras have real advantages in weak conditions. In fact, with identical tasks called for all wing types, para teams took first and third! We learned from each other and enjoyed sharing the sky together! Everyone had fun! We appreciate everyone who stepped up to share their knowledge with talks and demonstrations. Many thanks to all the volunteers who make TC happen.

The highlight was the last day! We called a non-scored "fun" race course task after having doubts the wet valley would produce lift, but produce lift our Magic Valley did! The flying before the awards party was epic with low saves and climbs to base and higher beside friendly clouds. My team kicked ass that day with all of us maxing the course! The party was as epic as the sky with the Blues Devils band wearing it out!

Yes, it was a successful though wet meet! Next year we are chasing the weather with a move to April! I hope we will be rewarded with great flying weather, but I know TC 2016 will be extra special! We have a special treat! We've always enjoyed the support of Steve Pearson and Wills Wing. In 2016, Steve is bringing WW Demo Days to TC! This is gonna be the BEST! As soon as we have the dates pinned down, I'll spread the word!

2015 Bylaws Referendum

by Dan Shell, Bylaws Committee Chair

As you've undoubtedly heard or read by now, the 2015 Bylaws Revision Referendum regarding admission of paraglider pilots to TTT membership passed. If you voted, thanks for registering your opinion. Our club's democratic operation depends on the kind of thoughtful contribution you were willing to make. Membership participation in this referendum probably set a record with seventy-five members voting. That's over half the membership at the time! The vote broke down thusly:

41 (54.67%) Yes, I approve...

34 (45.33%) No, I disapprove...

75 (100%) counted referendum ballots.

Our Bylaws Committee deserves our applause and profound gratitude for handling what could have been a divisive and contentious issue in a professional manner which contributed significantly to the maintenance of cool heads all around. It would have been difficult to envision at the outset without Rick Jacob's insight and expertise. Marco Weber and I distracted Clark Harlow from hours of profitable sail work with discussions of pros and cons. Kathy Lee and Michael Bradford wrote important op. ed. pieces for the ballot newsletter, publishing much of the same for your review. Michael also reviewed, critiqued, and edited the newsletter ad nauseam (for me, anyway), then printed it for us for free, which is the reason your last issue of *Branches* was so correct and so pretty!

Now that we've crossed that bridge and the water under it, the betrothal's over and it's time to figure out the matrimony. Stay tuned and please pass along your gratitude to our Bylaws Committee for helping maintain our unity as we move forward!

2016 TTT BOD Election

The Tree Toppers listed below have volunteered to serve on the 2016 TTT BOD. Please vote for no more than fifteen (15) candidates.

- James Anderson (I)
- Michael Bradford (I)
- Bill Colvin
- Buddy Cutts (I)
- Katie Dunn
- Paul Edwards
- Dean Funk
- Erik Grabowski (I)
- Ollie Gregory (I)
- Dave Hanning
- Clark Harlow (I)
- Bryson Harper (I)
- Anne Horgan
- Rick Jacob (I)
- Kelly Myrkle
- Curt Patterson
- Dave Pugh
- Kenny Sandifer (I)
- Dan Shell (I)
- Marco Weber (I)
- Jay Westmoreland

2015 Tree Topper of the Year

Many dedicated Tree Toppers do much over the course of a year to make the TTT *America's #1 Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club*. This is, by no means, an all-inclusive list. Some of our heroes continue to make quiet contributions year after year, so if you've noticed the efforts of someone not yet nominated, please use the write-in blank. Vote for one of the nominees listed below or write in the name of the member you feel is deserving of the prestigious Tree Topper of the Year award.

- Michael Bradford– treasurer, IT, website, Bylaws Committee.
- Dave Hanning– PG instructor, TC volunteer.
- Rick Jacob– Safety Committee Chair, PG liaison, Integration Committee Chair.
- Steve Larson– many clubhouse improvements.
- Ed Lyon– clubhouse loft ladder rails, campground maintenance.

Write-in

You can review BOD attendance, read the meeting minutes, and vote using the SurveyMonkey ballot linked on our website at

www.tennesseetreetoppers.org.

Name _____

Address _____

USHPA# _____

All fields required to validate mailed ballot!



TTT MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*****All fields marked with ** are required *****

You have two options to submit this form:

1. Complete this form and submit it (with payment) directly to a TTT Board Member and have them sign as your witness. Your membership will become effective immediately. -OR-
2. Complete this form, have any adult sign as a witness, and mail it with payment to: Tennessee Tree Toppers P.O. Box 1286 Dunlap, TN 37327. Your membership will become effective when the TTT has received and processed your application and payment.

Name**: _____ Address**: _____

City**: _____ State**: _____ Zip**: _____ Country**: _____

Your Phone #**: _____

Your Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Emergency Contact Phone: _____

Authority of Medical Directive: _____ And Phone # _____

USHPA #**: _____ USHPA Rating**: _____ USHPA Expiration Date**: _____

Membership Type (check one)**:

- Life \$1000 5-Year \$400 Annual \$100 Family \$50 (per additional member) 3-Day \$25 1-Day Tandem \$5

In consideration for being permitted to use the facilities and equipment of the Tennessee Tree Toppers, Inc., hereinafter referred to as the TTT, and to engage in the sport of hang gliding, paragliding, solo and/or tandem instruction, and other related activities (hereinafter collectively referred to as Hang Gliding and Paragliding activities), I hereby agree as follows:

Initial Here** I (print name)** _____ hereby RELEASE AND DISCHARGE the United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association and any of its members, the cities of Dunlap, TN and Whitwell, TN, any owners of land where Hang Gliding and/or Paragliding activities are conducted, the TTT Board of Directors, TTT members, and TTT designees (hereinafter collectively referred to as Released Parties), from any and all liability, claims, demands or causes of action that I may hereafter have for injuries and damages arising out of my participation in Hang Gliding and/or Paragliding activities including, but not limited to, losses CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASED PARTIES.

Initial Here** I further agree that I will not sue or make claim against the Released Parties for damages or other losses sustained as a result of my participation in Hang Gliding and/or Paragliding activities.

Initial Here** I also agree to INDEMNIFY AND HOLD THE RELEASED PARTIES HARMLESS from all claims, judgments and costs, including attorneys' fees incurred in connection with any action brought as a result of my participation in the Tennessee Tree Toppers Membership Application and/or Hang Gliding and/or Paragliding activities.

Initial Here** I understand and acknowledge that Hang Gliding and Paragliding activities have inherent dangers that no amount of care, caution, instruction or experience can eliminate and I EXPRESSLY AND VOLUNTARILY ASSUME ALL RISKS OF DEATH OR PERSONAL INJURY SUSTAINED WHILE PARTICIPATING IN HANG GLIDING AND/OR PARAGLIDING ACTIVITIES, WHETHER OR NOT CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASED PARTIES.

Initial Here** I have been advised and recognize that my Hang Gliding and Paragliding activities are not covered by any personal accident or general liability insurance policy issued to the Released Parties.

Initial Here** I hereby expressly recognize and accept that this Agreement-Release of Liability is contract pursuant to which I have released any and all claims against the Released Parties resulting from my participation in Hang Gliding and/or Paragliding activities, including any claims caused by the negligence of the Released Parties. I further agree to abide by all of the TTT rules and Flight Regulatory Program (FRP) and to report any noncompliance of these regulations to a TTT official. I have received a copy of the TTT Bylaws, Site Guide, and Flight Regulations defined in the FRP. I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT - RELEASE OF LIABILITY IN ITS ENTIRETY OR HAVE HAD IT READ TO ME, FULLY UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ALL OF ITS CONTENTS, AND SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Your Signature**: _____ Your Printed Name**: _____ Date**: _____

Witness Signature**: _____ Witness Printed Name**: _____ Date**: _____