

# Many Happy Returns

NO. 28

A Quarterly Newsletter of the U.S. Boomerang Association

Fall 1986



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**Dr. Larry Ruhf...with record-setting 'rang.**

## Amazing MTA Record

By Ben Ruhe

For excitement, it was the greatest single moment yet in global boomerang throwing—Dr. Larry Ruhf setting a world tournament record of 2 minutes and 31.02 seconds, with catch, in MTA at the first annual Cat-skill, NY corroboree Aug. 30. (Tournament summary elsewhere in this issue.) The mark more than doubled the previous 1 minute 2 second record set by Mike Forrester last year.

What was amazing was how ex-national champ Larry Ruhf, a psychologist by profession, pulled off his feat. The Hudson River playing field was bounded on three sides by dense forest and John Flynn and Larry, throwing in tandem, simultaneously had their opening throws go out over the trees, never to be seen again. Lost

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## 'Supercatch' Is Achieved

Supercatch has been pulled off at last. USBA president Ted Bailey, a master boomerang maker and thrower, did the feat during a twilight toss at Toledo Aug. 29, aided by USBA member Dave Saba, timer and spotter. There were several additional witnesses.

What's Supercatch? The thrower puts up an MTA 'rang, then does the five Fast Catch sequence, after which he searches for his hovering MTA boomerang and attempts to grab it for . . . Supercatch. Sounds easy but in practice it is extraordinarily difficult, having defeated the attempts of many of the best throwers in the world. The problems are in making the two different types of throw, in keeping the MTA 'rang aloft long enough to have a chance at catching it, and then in locating it where the wind may have blown it and in managing the grab.

Bailey's solution was to throw in dead calm, so the MTA 'rang wouldn't drift; but to get the necessary hang time requires an MTA tuned up for an autorotation hover, plus a perfect launch, a combination few can manage.

Anyway, Bailey gave it repeated tries with a pet inlaid 21-inch model and failed three times to make the MTA catch because of a continuing depth perception problem following eye surgery. On his final attempt before darkness, he pulled off Supercatch. Saba calculated Ted did the Fast Catch sequence in 26 seconds and had 5-7 seconds to locate and catch the MTA stick, which had strayed only some 8 meters away from the throwing point.

"I was elated," says Ted. "I knew I could do it. It was just a matter of

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## President's Column

By Ted Bailey

The USBA has a new Art Director—John Koehler of Gaithersburg, Md. John, a relative newcomer to the ranks of the USBA, has been active in the formation of the Potomac Boomerang Club. He brings publishing experience and is an art director at an ad agency. John can be reached at: 37 Dufief Ct., Gaithersburg, Md. 20878. With regret, we bid farewell to Ray Rieser's past dedication and hard work through his management of USBA affairs and with the publication of previous editions of this newsletter. Ray still remains a valuable asset to the USBA. This kind of dedication, even on a temporary basis, is what keeps the USBA alive and a bargain to be a member of. If you think you can help, please volunteer.

### USBA Rating System

The official USBA rating system for the 1986 throwing season will be the system published by the USBA last spring. The system assigns rating points to tournament scores based upon a parabolic scale. This method mimics RMS statistical bias. The membership at the 1986 USBA Nationals voted to use only the top three scores in each event for the rating. A summary of the top rated players will be published in the winter issue of this newsletter. On an

unofficial basis, the USBA plans to evaluate two additional rating systems for the evaluation of the rules committee. Modifications may be made to the rating system for the 1987 throwing season based upon the outcome of this review.

### 1987 Annual Meeting

The 1987 USBA annual meeting (formerly referred to as the Nationals) is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area near Cleveland, Ohio. The U.S. Park Service and the Cleveland Boomerang School will host the event. The event will probably take place in August and will have a more energetic format than in previous years. Details will follow.

### Winter Issue

The winter issue of *Many Happy Returns* will be dedicated to boomerang technology.

### Distribution in Australia

The USBA will distribute this newsletter in Australia at a low price and without other membership privileges, beginning with the winter issue. This will enable our boomerang friends down under to enjoy boomerang news outside of Australia and to keep up with the many technological advances that take place in the USA and Europe. Ted Bailey will be the Australian contact for those that are interested. Please pass the word to all your friends in Australia who may have an interest. The more

that participate, the cheaper will be the cost. For further information, contact: Ted Bailey, 2967 Gracewood Rd., Toledo, Ohio 43613, USA.

### World Cup

The BAA has proposed a World Cup to be held in the Alice Springs area of Australia in May of 1988. Chet Snouffer will serve as USBA correspondent with the BAA prior to the formal invitation expected in April 1987. Anyone willing to help with fund-raising or sponsorship should contact Chet or myself as soon as possible.

### New USBA Service

The USBA is planning a new member service for the 1987 season. A volunteer is needed to receive postcards from the membership and make telephone calls to provide information on boomerang events. A member who wishes to use the service will send a postcard with name, phone number, and the states or regions of interest. When a tournament is scheduled, the member will receive a collect call with information on the date, location, and a contact for detailed information. This will help to alleviate the problem we have with late newsletter distribution or late planning so that members miss important tournaments within easy driving distance. A phone call is cheap. The information is valuable. Let me know if you are interested in helping to provide this service. We need a volunteer.

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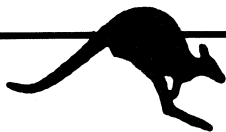
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## Many Happy Returns

*Many Happy Returns* is published periodically by the United States Boomerang Association and is sent to members as a membership benefit.

Annual dues are \$10; \$10 to renew. Foreign memberships are \$20 and this includes airmail delivery of the newsletter. Address the USBA at P.O. Box 767933, Roswell, GA 30076-7933. Editorial submissions are welcomed by the editor, Ben Ruhe, and should be sent to him at 1882 Columbia Road N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Black and white photographs and art work such as cartoons are especially solicited. Material is returnable.

Coupon—Xerox me and send me in.

- Yes, I want to join the USBA and receive *Many Happy Returns* quarterly.
- I am a beginner.
- I am an experienced thrower.
- I make my own boomerangs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

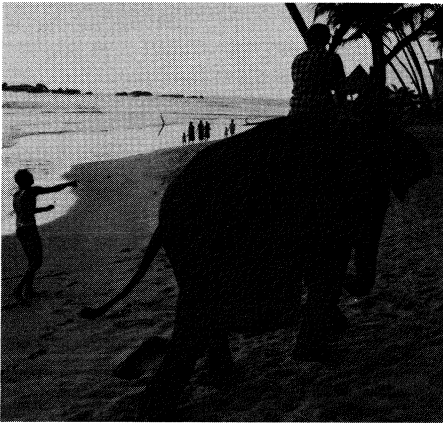
( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- I have enclosed payment:
- \$10.00 Renewal
- \$10.00 New Member
- \$20.00 Foreign Member

# European News

Janusz Jacek writes from Poland that he'd like to have some free boomerangs to popularize the sport in his country, where he says the boomerang is virtually unknown (not adding how he heard about it or how he got the address of the USBA, where his letter arrived). Anyone interested in helping out? You could always send two—one for him to keep, the other for him to throw over the Russian border (to the annoyance of Soviet guards) and bring back for the catch in Poland and be forwarded on to the donor as an interesting keepsake. Jacek's address is Fabryka Maszyn, 38-100 Stryzow, ul. 1 Maja, Poland.... The international tournament at Geneva Labor Day weekend drew 51 competitors and produced a couple of European record performances—a 20.44 second Fast Catch effort by Stephane Marguerite of France and 52 catches in 5-minute Endurance by Olivier Voukchevitch, also of France.



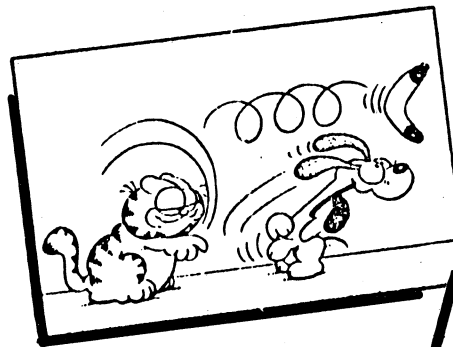
**On The Beach**—Wherever he travels, Dominique Pouillet of Paris takes his 'rangs. Here he demonstrates for an elephant and its mahout in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). "I didn't have time to teach the elephant to catch with its trunk," said Pouillet.

Throwers represented Great Britain and Germany as well as host country Switzerland and the audience turnout both days was surprisingly large, with many of the spectators getting throwing lessons as part of the festivities. "Sunny weather, a huge throwing field, green grass almost like a golf ground, a slight but tricky breeze to make it challenging, excellent facilities including a cafeteria and showers—all this helped make the tournament successful," says Kaspar Kramis. A visit by the Australian consul gave the throw a nice global touch. "Now Mr. Middleweek knows almost everything about boomerangs; Dr. Philippe Haake gave him lessons," says Kramis. He sums up: "A great weekend."....

Meanwhile, the German national championships in Hamburg drew an even bigger competition list than the U.S. nationals, more than 100 throwers to 90, but was afflicted by such strong winds the players almost got blown away. As the hours went by and the winds continued to blow at up to 25 mph, tournament rules were amended, with long range, MTA, and Fast Catch being dropped and other

events modified. The winner after two days was Michael Siems, with Erwin Schwab, Gunther Wandtke and Volker Behrens following. After paying just \$50 for liability insurance, the organizers saw five minor mishaps occur as the wind blew 'rangs out of control—"five too many," says Behrens, "there was some careless throwing under the conditions."....

Behrens reports that he and colleagues have purchased the tracking device invented by Robbie Sinclair of Melbourne and plan to use it in their quest for the world's distance record.... Ben Ruhe's early summer invitation to the Europeans to bring a small team to the States for matches in August drew upwards of a dozen favorable responses, the substance of which was the lead time given was insufficient for 1986 but that a tour in '87 was a fine idea. A May or June visit next year for rather casual, not overly competitive throws in New England, Pennsylvania, Washington, Norfolk and Atlanta (East Coast only, to keep costs down) is envisioned. Dr. Yves Rameaux's reply from Paris was typical: "May '87 would suit me very well. I am a rather old man (53) and not very productive in competition. And I am a newcomer in the Art of boomerang throwing. But love for the sport is there and I believe this is the point. I would be glad to participate."



(continued from page 1)

trying again and again."

Supercatch, by the way, was proposed a year ago by Peter Jonson of Australia when he noticed Fast Catch times plummeting and MTA times soaring. Put together the two developments, he reasoned, and there is a new feat to attempt.

Bailey worked out two key techniques that led to his triumph. First, after the MTA throw, he took a 2-3

second break to orient himself to the very different technique of throwing his mini Fast Catch 'rang. Secondly, he had Saba spot for him by standing under the MTA 'rang, so Ted knew where to run after he made his fifth Fast Catch.

Just to show the feat wasn't a fluke, Ted went out alone three days later and pulled off Supercatch no less than three more times. On one attempt, when he had a 42 second

MTA flight, he estimated he had an ample 10 seconds, or more, to locate the MTA 'rang, get into position under it, and achieve the grab.

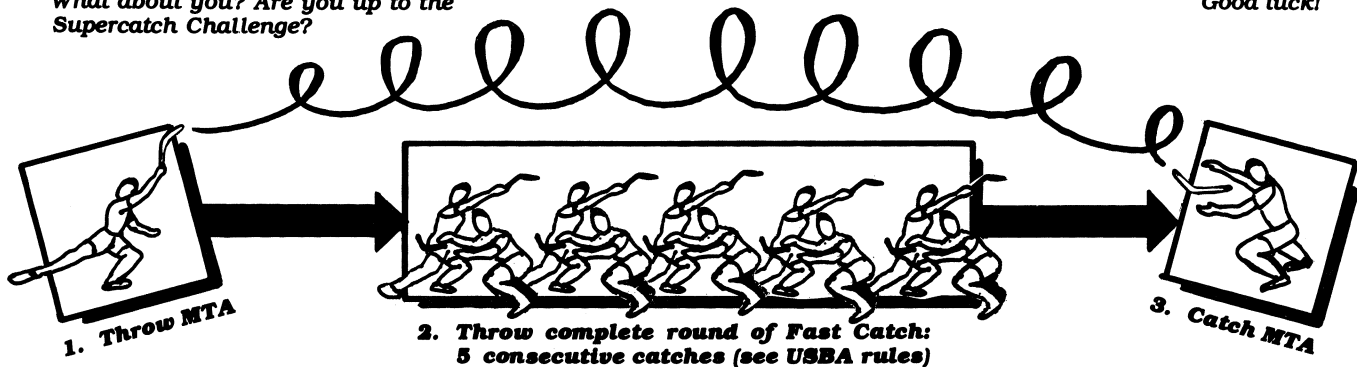
"Given the right conditions and two perfect 'rangs, Supercatch is almost easy," says Ted. It's a judgment few are prepared to echo.

**Ben Ruhe**

## The Supercatch Challenge

Supercatch is extremely difficult but not impossible. What about you? Are you up to the Supercatch Challenge?

If you are and you succeed let this newsletter hear. Good luck!



(continued from page 1)

boomerangs. But both were pleased at the great flights. Both throws were timed at upwards of one minute before disappearing from view. (Forrester too put one up that went into the trees, but he later searched hard and found it stuck in a tree.) For his second throw, Larry reached into his bag and pulled out an inlaid 21-inch Ted Bailey model and let fly. The stick went up and up, and achieved a perfect hover just as the breeze freshened: perfect timing. Everyone knew it. "It's gone!" "Never, never land!" "Yahoo!" were the shouts. The boomerang drifted downwind, then over the forest, but this flight, unlike the other three, providentially followed a road through the trees. Larry raced up the path in hot pursuit, his head craned upward. His timer, Stephen Ringold, barefooted it along the stony trail. Flynn, Forrester, Mike Tamblyn and two little boys trotted along.

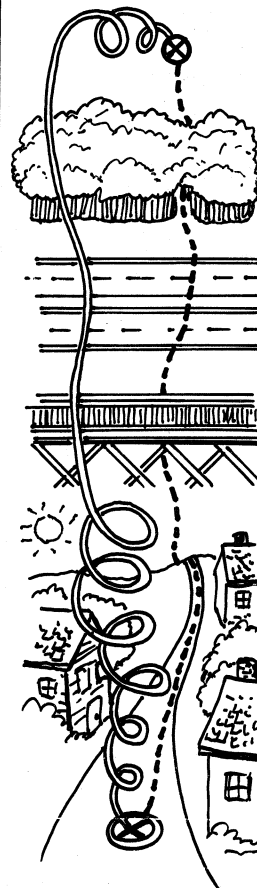
Minutes passed. The crew was forgotten—searching for the lost 'rang no doubt. Fully 10 minutes later, an exhausted Larry burst from the forest path, leading his pack, the boomerang held high in the air. He had made the catch, he shouted. World record! The feat was so unbelievable, several people retraced his steps to see the scene for themselves. Flynn,

meanwhile, got into his vehicle and by driving parallel roads clocked the distance as best he could at one fifth of a mile.

Here was the story: With the boomerang spinning overhead and tracking downwind, Larry and group climbed the path, negotiated a gate at high speed, raced safely across a busy and dangerous highway, ran under a railway trestle as the boomerang flew overhead, tore down a hill, and entered a subdivision full of houses, big trees and power lines. Miraculously, the boomerang decided to come down in the middle of a suburban street and as it dropped softly downward, Larry was right there to make a safe trap catch on the chest, with his observers surrounding him. Nearby housewives gaped. Madness, they thought, over a flying saucer.

Back at the tournament field, Larry was hoisted onto shoulders for victory photographs, as the excitement continued for many minutes. It was judged that this world tournament record might just last a while. "Let everyone sign your boomerang," Larry was urged. "No one's touching it," he said. And no one did.

## The Miracle Mapped



1. Ruhf throws rang.

2. Rang goes over trees, Ruhf goes through.

3. Rang goes over highway, Ruhf crosses.

4. Rang goes over railroad trestle, Ruhf goes under.

5. Rang descends into neighborhood. So does Ruhf.

6. Ruhf catches rang in middle of street. 2 minutes and 31 seconds after throwing and 1/5 mile downrange.

## Exhilaration in Toledo

After two days of tournament throwing in Ohio (see Delaware and Cuyahoga Valley tournament coverage elsewhere in this issue), some of the best throwers went to Ted Bailey's Toledo domain that Monday to have a go at MTA throwing. As luck had it, the day was perfect with winds of 5-10 mph and many great clockings were made. Peter Ruhf got several minute-plus flights with catches, Barney Ruhe and Jerry Caplan both achieved their first ever one-minute plus flights, with grabs, Barney being timed at 1.15, Jerry at 1.10. Ted himself put one up that vanished from sight, another "never never land" maximum time aloft flight for him, although this one had an eventual happy ending. But the day's clear highlight was a throw by Ron Tamblyn with a Bailey mini with damaged wingtip crudely repaired with an unsanded blob of epoxy. The boomerang should never have been thrown, but was. Here is Ron on what happened:

"It was a relatively poor throw, too much sidearm. The boomerang only went up about 60 feet, then it slid down to 30. Surprisingly, at that point it went into a stable hover. It apparently was hit by some wind and that stopped the 'dishing' flight. The boomerang parked in the air. It dropped a bit, then gradually began to rise. As it moved downwind, with me in pursuit, Mike Forrester and Doug DuFresne trotted along; the others had chased Ted's boomerang that vanished. My boomerang crossed a parking lot, where we met the Bailey gang returning, and at this point my 'rang hit a thermal. The higher it got, the faster it climbed.

Next the boomerang went over a store, with us running around in hot pursuit and the boomerang still ascending. I still had hopes of catching it, even though we'd been going two and a half minutes. What started out as a slow jog became a run. I'm losing steam at this point. Barney Ruhe joined the chase and shouted, 'Come on, keep going!' The 'rang was now 250 high. We came to a six-lane highway which we crossed. At this point, I threw the car keys to Mike and told him to get the van so we could keep up the pursuit. By this time, we could barely see the boomerang, it was so high. It was a speck in the sky, a pulsing object, a gnat.

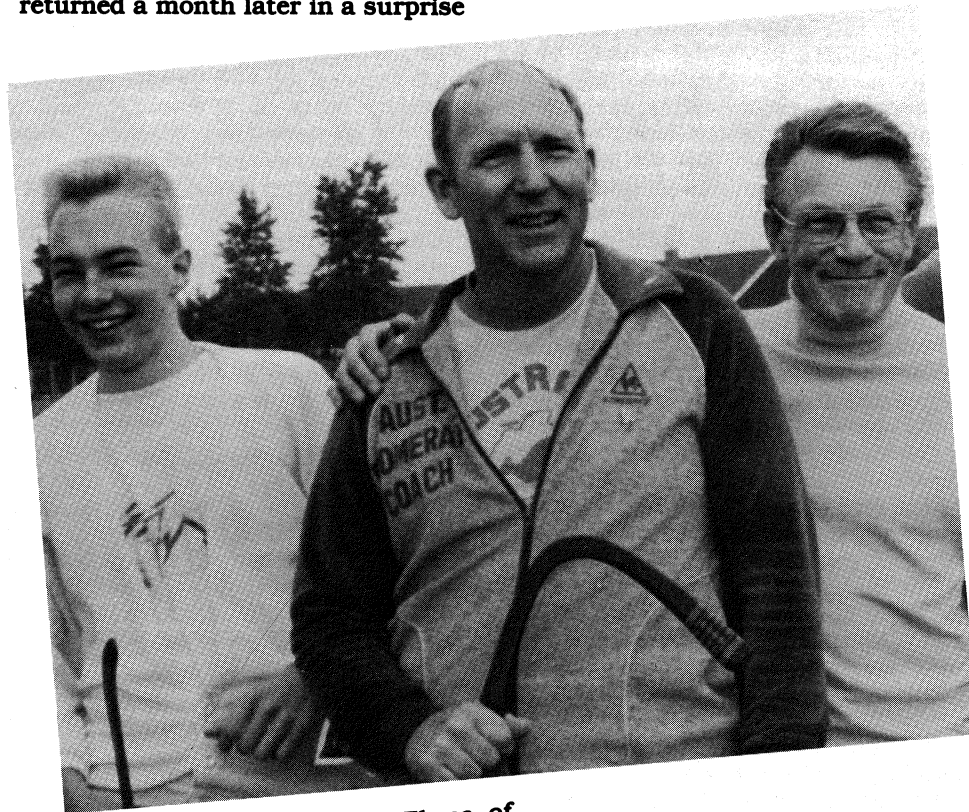
At five minutes, the boomerang disappeared from sight, still heading

upward, an estimated mile from the launching point. We quit running. I was astounded at what I had witnessed at the end. The incredible rate of ascent in the last 30 seconds made me think of the boomerang as a powerful flying machine."

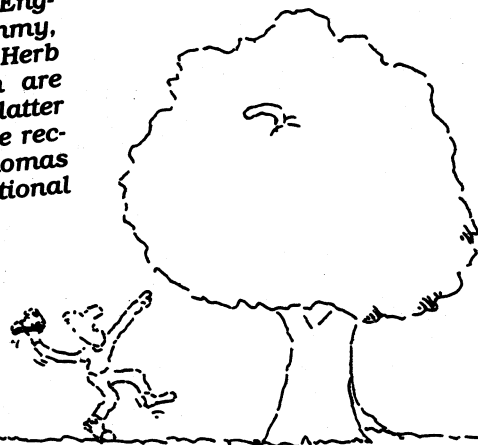
Bailey adds: "You should have seen the looks on the face of people in the parking lot when several barefooted madmen came running through, dodging obstacles and looking up into the sky, at nothing." Emotions ran high all day. "Jerry Caplan was so excited after his great throw that he couldn't sit down for hours at my place." Others were similarly keyed up. Bailey sums up: "A day of pure exhilaration for all of us."

While Ron's stick went to boomerang valhalla, Ted's lost 'rang returned a month later in a surprise

epilogue. A Bill Bailey (no relation) found it in his yard, where a storm had apparently blown it off his roof, and rang up Bailey, whose name was on the back of the stick. Ted calculates the distance at three-fifths of a mile away from the launching point. "This is my favorite boomerang ever," says Ted, who has crafted a custom-made leftie as a reward for the finder. Ted suggests that all boomerangers put their names, addresses, phone numbers and a reward offer on the back of their MTA 'rangs, and that this will produce an occasional, much appreciated return, with a great bonus: information on how far the stick actually did fly.



**What They Look Like**—Three of the famous names in world boomeranging assembled for a toss in England. From left, David Schummy, Brother Brian Thomas, and Herb Smith. Schummy and Smith are cannon-armed Londoners, the latter a former world's long distance record holder, and Brother Thomas serves as the Australian national boomerang coach.



## MTA Demystified

Following is a quick, simplified analysis of why the slender hockey stick-style Bailey MTA boomerang works:

By Ted Bailey

The rough underside, caused by wetting the outer surfaces of the boomerang blank to raise the grain, combined with subsequent ultrafine sanding of the upper surface only, results in more evenly balanced boundary layer turbulence between the upper and lower surfaces.

The boomerang is bent to give both arms positive dihedral. The lift arm is twisted to give positive angle of attack. The dingle arm is twisted to give negative angle of attack. The result is a highly warped boomerang in which the entire outer perimeter rests higher than the inner perimeter. Mother nature also weights and warps her best samaras (maple seeds) in this manner so that the samara rotation fits inside a cone. Al Gershards twisted his super booms to rest flat on the inside surface of a 7 foot diameter spherical shell made of concrete. My best large size MTAs also lie flat in this shell, which approximates a shallow angled cone.

To prevent killing flutter on launch, excessive dihedral on the throwing arm must be avoided and a pinch grip which allows the boomerang to begin rotation before release must be employed.

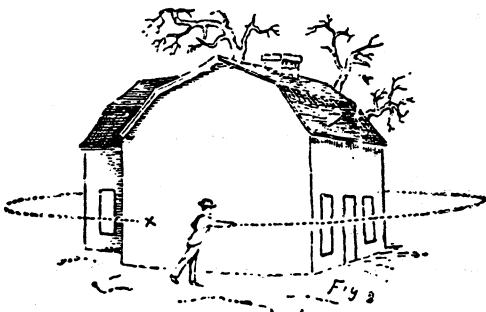
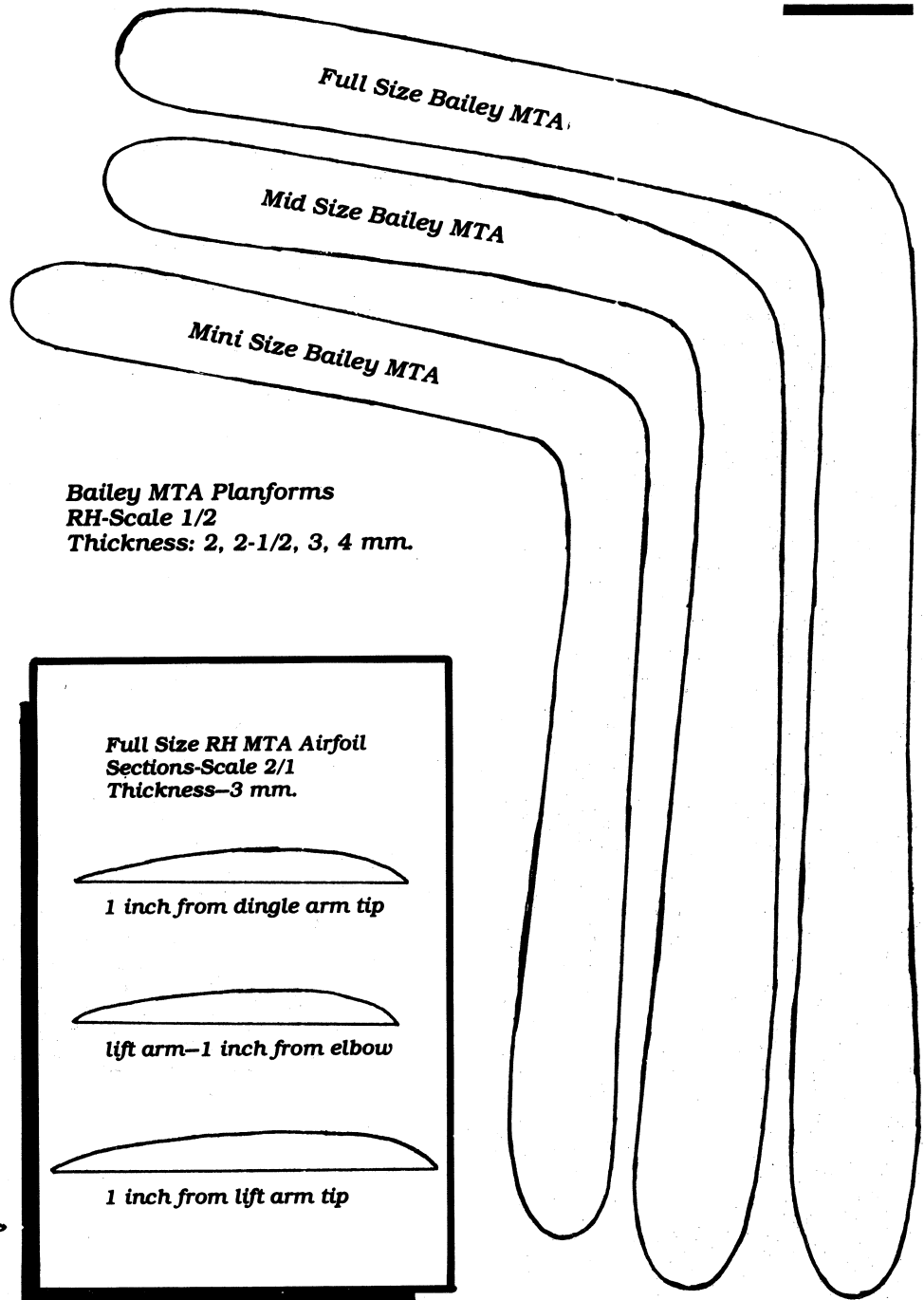
For maximum height, the throw is inclined at about a 40 degree angle; the tilt should be vertical or slightly over-vertical, that is, to the left of vertical for a right-handed thrower.

The MTA hockey stick design behaves like a classical boomerang at launch when it is given both rotation and translation. At the peak of the throw, the translational energy is converted into height and possibly additional rotation. From this point on the MTA either slowly descends in dead calm, or behaves as a classical "autogyro" with wind. The unsymmetrical arms cause the center of rotation to continually shift about

the center of mass, much like a board with a loose slot rotating about a fixed pin. This pulsing mechanism allows the MTA stick to "tack" like a sailboat at about 20 degrees to the right of the wind direction (on a right handed boomerang). Maintaining a relatively slower drift than the wind, the lift arm absorbs additional energy as the twisted (fan) blade bites into the oncoming wind. Under (better than) ideal conditions with a perfectly tuned MTA, it is possible to absorb more energy from the wind

than is expended through aerodynamic drag. The energy is converted into height (potential energy) and the boomerang continues to climb straight up until it is no longer visual.

I have lost no less than 18 MTA boomerangs in this manner, and am not alone. Many throwers have recently joined the Jet Stream Club with this boomerang style. If you must lose a boomerang, this is the way to do it. The planforms for three sizes of these magical sticks are shown in the accompanying figure.



## Around and About

Bob Letson of San Diego suggests throwing his tennis racket boomerang named the McEnroe Special beside a tennis court to amaze the resident players. In like vein, Jill Jacobson of Duluth has crafted a tomahawk 'rang (a la Rusty Harding) and plans to practice with it next to one of the up-country tomahawk throwing contests. Good thinking!...

Letson reports he threw and caught one of his rackets 70 straight times, with the distance being 60 yards or more every time. That amounts to about 2-1/2 miles of flight. He dropped on the 71st attempt. Because of the intense interest in his invention, Letson has crafted a limited edition of the McEnroe and is offering it for sale at \$60 each. The 'rang comes equipped with tennis handle grip and strings, and is cheap at the price, considering its inspired novelty and the vast work involved. If interested, contact Letson at 4369 Hamilton St., No. 4, San Diego, CA 92104....

Ted Bailey challenged Toledo TV personality Neil Hartman to an on-camera boomerang throwing match—ceding him a 10 second handicap in MTA—and beat him when the newsman muffed the catch on a very respectable 25-second flight. Ted scored with his 27-second catch (after dropping one at 38 seconds) and now sports an "I Nailed Neil" T-shirt award. As earlier suggested in this newsletter, 'rang throwers around the country can easily get themselves and the sport some media attention by similarly challenging a local TV personality to a boomerang throw. It's fun to do....

There's a mindless, visually messy but somehow intriguing boomerang stunt that involves putting as many boomerangs into the air as possible, while launching them singly. The record is 14 flying at one time, by Adri Van Der Berg of Holland. Rusty Harding suggests that with the advent of mini MTA 'rangs, with their small size so many can be held in the hand at one time and their great hang time in the air, this feat now can be surpassed. Anyone want to give it a shot? Anyone except Ted Bailey have enough MTA 'rangs on hand to even make the attempt?...

After being invited by the base commander, Bob Kley and group were thwarted in their attempt to throw boomerangs inside one of the gigantic 100 by 400 by 60 yards blimp hangars on the Marine base at Tustin, CA. Tightened security by

the Pentagon in response to terrorism around the world was the reason quoted. Alas....

Always plotting new ways to have fun with boomerangs, Michael (Gel) Girvin along with Leni Barker and Peter Axelson are planning what Girvin calls the "ultimate boomtest"—a competition next summer that will involve throwing 'rangs over rivers, off bridges, around trees, off cliffs, atop massive rocks, etc. They envision a two-day event in the Sierras and see it as a celebration of nature, good boomerang throwing and esthetics in general. Fun is to be the watchword. Details as they are worked out....

Richard Ruhe of McLean, VA, an exchange student at Chenghow University in China, reports he went out throwing 'rangs soon after arrival. "One person volunteered to try it, then everyone wanted to throw. Pretty soon there were so many people around there was no room at all. It was crazy." Ruhe says he eats daily in a mud brick, grass roofed ancient restaurant that has two giant woks and serves only one dish, noodles in curry soup. "The sauce," he says, "has been cooking for as long as the restaurant has been there. They add new ingredients when the level gets low, so it's possible that I'm eating food which dates back to the Ming Dynasty." ... More on the travel scene: Eric Darnell is home in South Strafford, VT after a hairy business trip to the Philippines to install windmills. Traveling in the back country, he made the mistake of wearing army fatigues—marking him as a CIA agent, or worse, in the eyes of the teenage gunmen manning sporadic checkpoints. Eric says he had no chance to throw 'rangs or buy wood to make them and counted himself lucky to get home at all....

On the brighter side, the Workman Publishing book he did with Ben Ruhe last year titled "Boomerang: How to Make, Throw and Catch It," is being issued in Australia in a cut-down version, and will also be available in England. A total run of 22,500 copies, with Eric's Wizard boomerang shrink-wrapped to the cover of each, is being printed. In less than one year, U.S. sales of the original volume have topped 65,000.

## Correspondence

"In Melbourne, I scrounged around and bought some Aboriginal boomerangs. Whether they fly is another matter. However, they are without exception beautiful and some are signed by the Aborigines who made them, with the name of tribe included. I found enough time in Sydney to take a mad taxicab ride to the boomerang shop of Duncan MacLennan. My daughter and two other doctors were with me. The driver, a very eager refugee from Beirut, almost hit an Australian serviceman and I thought they were going to come to blows, but fortunately it blew over. The Aussies have short fuses and cuss a lot, especially in traffic on a Friday afternoon. I think they would fit in just fine on the Houston freeway. MacLennan was very obliging, and I noted with interest that he was left-handed. I brought back from my trip eight boomerangs, including a MacLennan leftie."—Dr. Sam Hartman, Beaumont, TX....

"I always take along a Boomerang Fever for teaching purposes in case somebody comes by. I always offer to take time out from practice to teach, and though I am right-handed, I own a left-handed boomerang just in case it is needed for instruction. It is always a thrill to see a novice's first successful throw. If we are to promote the sport of boomeranging, then teaching should be our primary business. I always learn something from teaching. By watching mistakes, I learn to pay more attention to my own form."—Dr. David Silver, Morris, CT....

Silver writes later: "I'll report my outstanding times with MTAs—boy, those are fun. I live on a large lake which gets frozen over in the winter. I'm going to try MTA in brisk wind on ice skates. Giving MTA a chase on skates should be interesting, to say the least."...



## The Tournament Circuit

Following are highlights of late summer and early fall boomerang throws held across the country:

### Gaithersburg

A new suburban Washington group, the Potomac Boomerang Club, took a leaf from Team Gel's book and ran its first tournament—a team affair—with an emphasis on fun. Organizer John Koehler, having seen the San Francisco gang in action at the Nationals, said: "Team Gel proves that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. They have fun together and this infects other throwers. This infection of fun is necessary to boomeranging as a sport." With veterans Gene Arnow and Al Gerhards joining in, three teams of four players competed. Al amazed all hands by throwing a 50 meter boomerang with deadly aim in Accuracy. "The rest of us felt wimpy throwing our 20 meter sticks next to him," says Koehler. The Cosmic Four—Arno, Peter Ruhf, Ola Wahlberg and Dennis Joyce—crushed the Throw Up and Dread Kahillills teams by more than 20 points to take the title. Individual highlights were Koehler's and Joyce's 46.2 and 44 second MTA clockings with catches. After the hot, sweaty afternoon, some pleasant partying followed, with Clyde Heming's pavement diving acrobatics a highlight. "It was a fun day," says Koehler.

### Catskill

An artists' colony in lovely upstate New York along the Hudson was the venue for one of the nicest long weekends of the season. Sponsored by the Bond Street Theater of New York City, the corroboree featured a hot tournament at Catskill High and two days of demonstrations at the colony in nearby Palenville. The tournament was captured by Dr. Larry Ruhf, who had the greatest competitive day of his life (his MTA feat is the subject of a separate P. 1 story).

In addition to this dazzling first in maximum time aloft, Larry took a first in Endurance, three seconds, a third, and three fourths, to take the over-all grand championship. Last year's national champ thus edged this year's, cousin Barney Ruhe, who scored four firsts and two thirds but bombed in three events to get only the runnerup spot. Larry's point total was 74-1/2, Barney's 69. Ruhe's firsts came in Aussie Round, Accuracy, Juggling (with 18) and

Consecutive Catch (with three straight foot grabs).

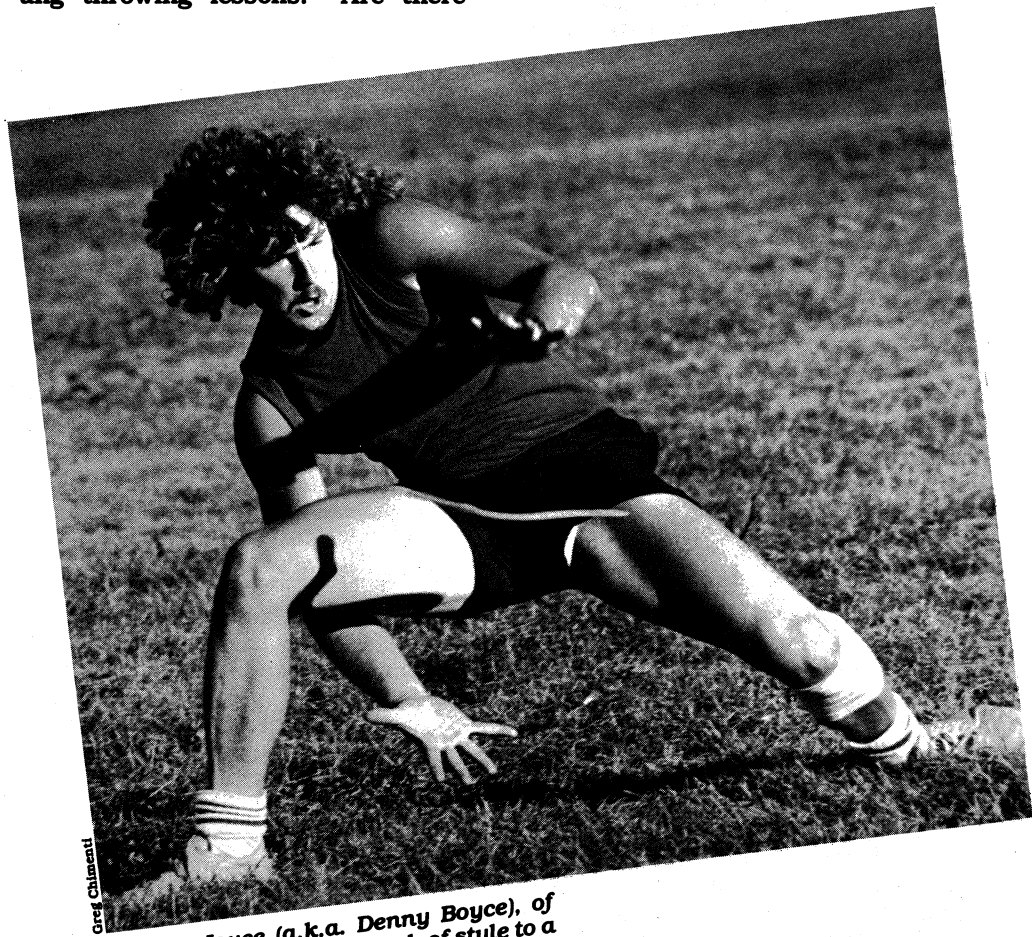
Mike Forrester came in third over-all with a first in Doubling and two seconds. Run in no-nonsense style by Ben Ruhe, the nine competitions were clicked off in three hours and 10 minutes, including a substantial break to celebrate Larry Ruhf's MTA heroics. This was something of a time record for a full-scale tournament. Demonstrations and recreational throwing over two days at the arts colony were highlighted by a no-hands chest catch by Mole Man, some enthusiastic leaping catches of a Nerf 'rang by Mole Man's pit bull Gel Dog, and 134 consecutive juggles by Barney Ruhe just at twilight in dead calm. The jugglers were named "El Benno" and "Ellen."

Another highlight was Michael McGuigan's throws and catches on stilts. In residence at the colony along with the boomerang gang was the Golden Dragon acrobatic troupe from Taiwan, members of which traded juggling lessons for boomerang throwing lessons. "Are there

tigers in this forest?" one of the acrobats asked. The Chinese revealed that their troupe had once had a boomerang thrower but that he grew old and died and the tradition ended with him. Several studied boomeranging very carefully, apparently with an eye to reinstating a boomerang routine in their astoundingly difficult show.

### Washington, D.C.

In the second night tournament of the season on the National Mall, Ron Tamblyn and partner Mike Forrester took first and second over-all, with teenager Nathan Holland scoring third. Ron took firsts in five-minute Endurance with 39 catches, Consecutive Catch with a foot grab, and Position with a perfect bullseye catch. He got two second places as well. As a way of beating summer heat and daytime breezes, a night tournament is the way to go. Give it a shot next year!



Dennis Joyce (a.k.a. Denny Boyce), of Newport News adds a touch of style to a between-the-legs catch.



## Amherst

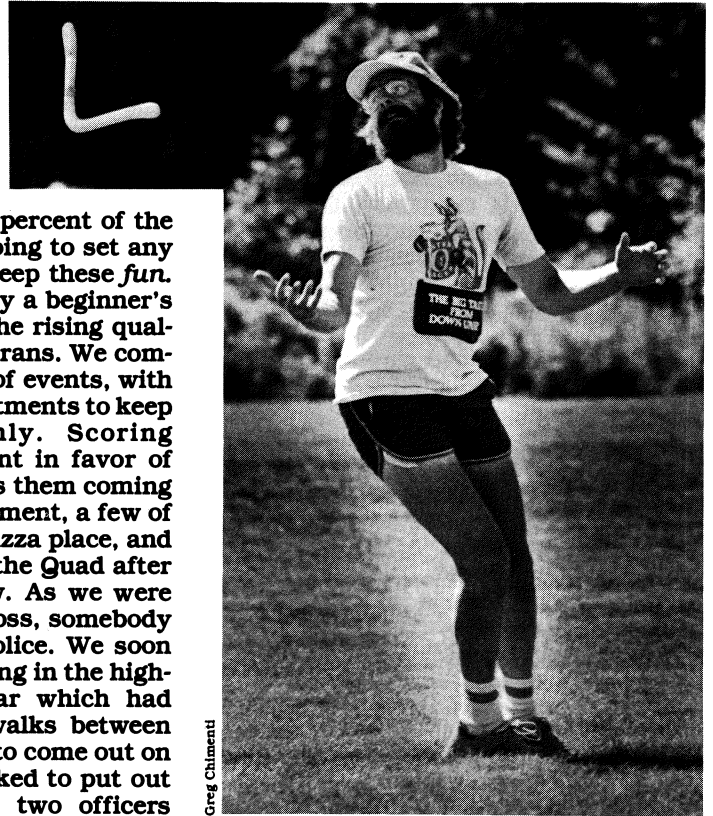
Against all-star competition and for the second year in a row, Barney Ruhe failed to take a single first place here yet he won the over-all championship. His second, two thirds, two fourths and a fifth got him the title, even as others were shining in the individual events but showing less consistency in placing. Peter Ruhf's 25.9 in Fast Catch and John Flynn's lightning fast but ultimately unsuccessful rounds in the same event were highlights, as was Nathan Holland's 37 second MTA time (the catch being awarded because of interference). Consecutive Catch had six players make successful foot catches, just to illustrate how a feat considered almost impossible a few years ago has now become almost run of the mill. On the playoff and with a new wind condition, Eric Darnell was the only one of the half dozen to make a successful second foot catch, and thus won the event. Mike Forrester was runnerup overall, with Peter Ruhf trailing in third place. Guests included Europeans Ola Wahlberg, a Swedish medical student, and Dominique Pouillet from Paris, both good throwers and exceptionally nice people. Team events capped a day of top throwing and good cheer.

## Champaign

The University of Illinois Boomerang Club's fall tournament started off in the Illini armory, so spacious the school's marching band was practicing as the club members threw over the heads of the musicians. Band members were unperturbed—"two trombone players came over to toss with us," says Paul Sprague, the organizer. After an hour of throwing, the club moved out of doors for its tourney. "We used," reports Sprague, "our own collegiate boomerang rules. The most distinctive feature of these is that players use standard boomerangs. For each event, we will tell competitors which boomerang they will use—no modifications permitted except for tuning. This way, if somebody hasn't got a boomerang, we can loan him one and he (or she) can compete on the same level as everyone else. Get this—we use the same boomerang for Fast Catch and MTA. A Boomerang Fever has a range of about 6-14 seconds, depending on the throw and the tuning."

We used Darnell Wizards for distance, measuring the return flight only (from maximum outward point to catch point). This eliminates the need for a starting line and we don't

*What do you think was going through Mike Forrester's mind when this picture was taken?*



have to disqualify 80 percent of the throws. We weren't going to set any records—we want to keep these fun. Ours was still basically a beginner's tournament, despite the rising quality of some of our veterans. We completed a standard set of events, with a few minor rule adjustments to keep it running smoothly. Scoring changes generally went in favor of the beginners—it keeps them coming back. After the tournament, a few of us wound down at a pizza place, and we all reconvened on the Quad after dark for a glow-throw. As we were having a great night toss, somebody put in a call to the police. We soon found ourselves blinking in the high-beams of a patrol car which had driven onto the sidewalks between the campus buildings to come out on the Quad. We were asked to put out our Tiki candle, and two officers deliberated at length as we continued to throw our UFOs. We asked if we were doing anything wrong. 'No ... I guess not,' said one of the officers. They couldn't stay to throw with us." Sprague concludes: "This is my last semester here at the university. The club is stronger than ever, and I have every confidence it will continue to break new boomeranging ground (and break new boomerangs). I'll encourage more of my club members to join the USBA, to keep the ties strong."

## Berkeley

The second annual Team Gel regional throw "went off with a style that is undisputed anywhere in the known universe (or at least Berkeley)," according to Michael Girvin, the organizer. "Many familiar faces from last year, as well as some boomstuds from southern California and even Mole Man, all the way from Connecticut. What was truly awesome was the diversity of lifestyles represented. There were punk-rockers, heavy-metalers, conservatives, the kicked-back-Berkeley-types, parents, grandparents, bikers, and even some teachers, as well as local hoods who were amazed at everyone's expertise. It was a mixed bag of people that under no other set of circumstances would have spent the day together. And what happened? Unabashed fun was had by all. Regardless." Girvin himself came through as the over-all champion with two firsts and two seconds to go

with four other placings. Peter Axelson's runnerup achievement was remarkable in that he used only too boomerangs all during the windy, variable day, bending and weighting them to suit the various competitions. Leni Barker had three first places and took third over-all. Pizza and beer and an awards ceremony at the sponsoring Samiches restaurant, "the most awesome boomerang restaurant," according to Girvin, closed out "a stupendous boomtest."

## Delaware and Cuyahoga Valley

Chet Snouffer's seventh annual Free Throwers' tournament in central Ohio and Dave Boehm's annual Boomerang School throw in a national park near his home city of Cleveland the following day drew entrants from 12 states, including California, Oregon, Vermont and Florida. As usual for Ohio, the winds were gusty both days, so luck with the breezes proved an important factor. At Delaware, aerodynamicist Eric Darnell showed his ability to cope by edging Chet for over-all honors, revenging himself a bit on Chet who had beaten him out for the world title in Paris in 1985. Eric had a first in Consecutive Catch with two foot catches and two third place finishes. Ted Bailey took MTA and Fast Catch, Peter Ruhf Accuracy and Chet and Dennis Joyce tied for first in Aussie

(Continued on Page 16)

## 'For Me, It's Files Only'

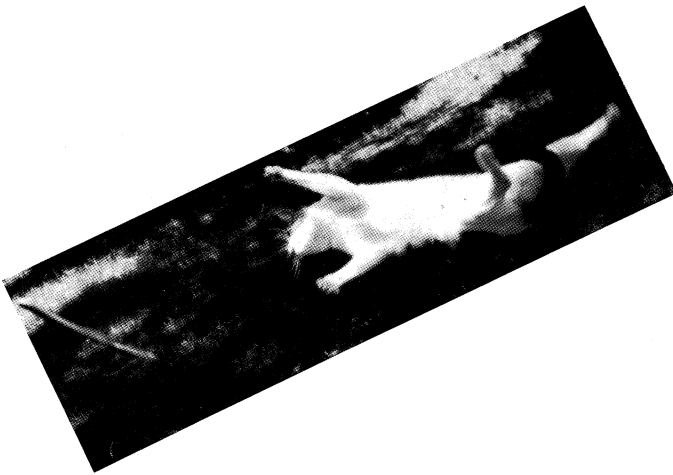
What's the best way to shape boomerangs? A Gunnison, Colorado ski shop operator and boomerang maker herewith gives a personal viewpoint:

*By Jim Mayfield*

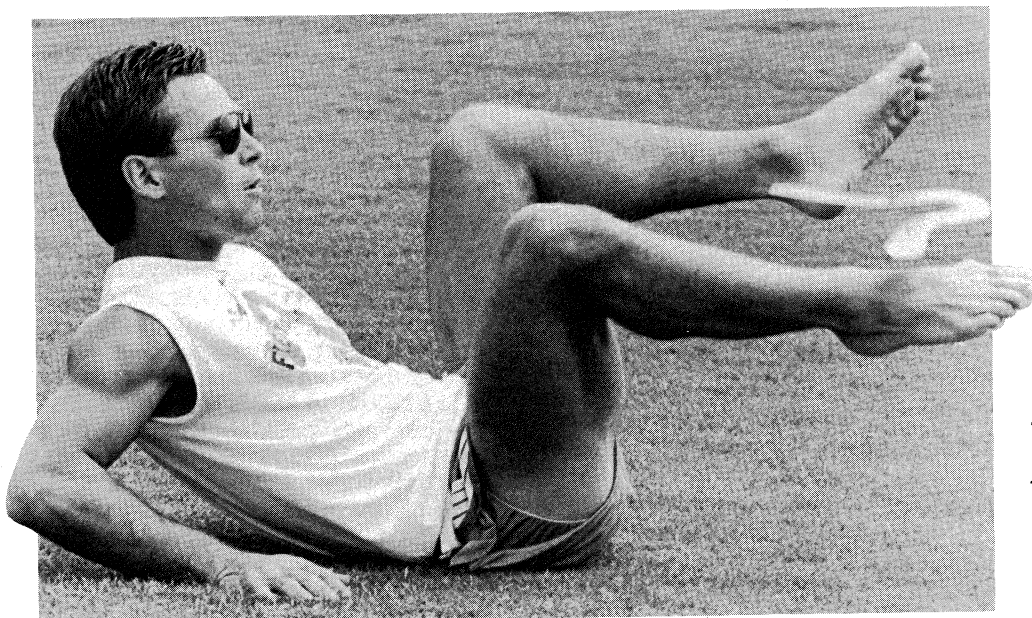
My first 100 boomerangs were done on a sander, and I learned a lot about 'rangs and aerodynamics. But one day I decided to try hand files and have never gone back to sanders. The three hand files I use are a 10" half-round Shur-form, an 8" Patternmaker and a 10" 4-in-1. Because of the Shur-form and Patternmaker's files, my process is practically as fast as using a sander, with more control and consistency. My 'rangs are made on a table I designed and built. The table itself facilitates

speed in production, too. Consistency in the procedure is very important to me. The undercut is first, then the leading edge, tips and finally the trailing edge. The leading edge gets 2 or 3 light passes with the Shur-form, then the Patternmaker's file to really form the leading edge, then one of the smooth cuts of the 4-in-1 to smooth the file marks. (I never use the 2 rasp sections of the 4-in-1.) Next it is sanded by hand with 80 grit. Then I move on the next edge, using the very same procedure, except trailing edges get a lot more Shur-form. Once it is finished I flip it upside down, put it on the table and smooth any irregularities from the edges. Next it is sanded with a hand held finishing sander with 80 grit.

Then the 'rang gets a bath. It is fully submerged in a tub of water to raise the grain for the next sanding. It receives 3 sandings and sealings with progressively finer sandpaper each time. Testing occurs after the first sealer and as a finished product. All rangs are tested, signed and dated. A spray polyurethane is usually applied for protection, sometimes Dett-thane. Some of my boomerangs are weighted with lead. Please excuse me if I keep my technique to myself. Occasionally I make one on the sander to remind myself why I use my files. Some of the finest 'rangs I've flown have been done on a sander, but, for me, it's hand files only.



**Catch as Cat Can--** Everyone's seen a frisbee-catching dog, but a boomerang-catching cat? Well, here's one--Boomer, owned by Leigh Barry of Columbia, MD. The acrobatic feline ends a catching session by gnawing on her nerf 'rang. Cat bliss!



**How It's Done--**In this remarkable action shot by an Atlanta Journal photographer, Chet (The Jet) Snouffer shows how to catch with the feet--just sandwich that left foot over top of the right one as the boomerang hovers in. Easier said than done.

## What They Had To Say

"I'm getting married—to a great right-hander."—Jef Tirante, Philadelphia.

"The game of life is a game of boomerangs. Our thoughts, deeds and words return to us sooner or later, with astounding accuracy."—Florence Shinn, Reader's Digest.

"I once threw a boomerang at a cockatoo in flight in Australia. The bird changed its course, let the boomerang fly by, then let out a mocking laugh."—Doug DuFresne, as quoted in the Portland Oregonian.

"Here's a circular thought for today: It's more fun to run around in circles throwing and catching boomerangs than it is to run around in circles trying to search out why people run around in circles throwing and catching boomerangs."—H. L. Mayhew, Columbus, OH.

"The sport of boomeranging is a curious sport. It attracts a certain kind of person—very individualistic. You can be older, and the finesse and knowledge count that much more. You don't need brute strength."—Larry Ruhf as quoted in the Transcript-Telegram newspaper, Amherst, MA.

"I'm running out of places to put my boomerangs. My apartment is kind of small. Right now I'm beginning to look for a house to move into. But that gives me another dilemma. I'll have more room to store them but less money to buy new ones. Oh well."—Ray Schleppegrell, Columbia, MD.

"I'm going home with 46 more boomerangs than I arrived with."—Dominique Pouillet, preparing to leave for his Paris home after a quick visit with U.S. boomerangers.

## Aftermath of the Nationals

Scanning the registration list in Atlanta, filmmaker Garry Lamothe spotted a new category of people seriously interested in boomerangs: those in high stress professions. There was a surprisingly high percentage of people from the health service and security professions, he noted, work that evidently welcomes the after-hours release of 'rang throwing....Credit is herewith given where due. On behalf of her husband Eddie, Suzanne Carrigg wants the record to show that he tied for third in the Australian Round event. This was not reported in newsletter coverage of the tournament. "Eddie tied with Dennis Joyce, and we have the award certificate to prove it," she says....H. L. Mayhew was impressed by the officials who used their split-second timers to compute the distance away and speed of passing of the several thunderstorms that hit the tournament. Knowing the speeds of light and sound, the science-minded were able to make their calculations after noting lightning flashes and thunder booms....Correspondence: "It was a blast meeting and talking with all the luminaries of the returning stick."—Bo Emerson, Atlanta Journal; "I had a great time—shred and be stoked! I can't wait for the next Nationals. They were soooo fun."—Michael Girvin of San Francisco's Team Gel.

## 'Ranging and Trekking

This newsletter periodically publishes articles on odd and wonderful places people have thrown their boomerangs. In the following piece, a Minnesotan from Minnetonka goes to the center of the universe and lets fly.

By Bob Schmidt

"I just got back from a trip to Isle Royale, a national park in the middle of Lake Superior. During the trip I made it a point to take Ol' #1, the first 'rang I made, along with me. It is, I believe, the first linearly laminated 'rang with hardwood strips, oak and black walnut, in a speed stripe pattern. I've thrown that 'rang on the Plains of West Point, over the Mediterranean at Tel Aviv and at the bottom of La Barrance del Cobre in Chihuahua, Mexico. That last one is a canyon almost as deep as the Grand Canyon. It takes two days to hike to the bottom and two days to get out.

"Isle Royale is almost as isolated for those of us without charter air fare. It takes a day to get out there by motor launch from Grand Portage,

Minnesota, and two days paddling to get to a place called Ryan Island in Lake Siskiwit on Isle Royale in Lake Superior. Whuffo? Well, Ryan Island is the largest island in the largest lake on the largest island in the largest fresh-water lake in the world. That makes it something like the center of the universe for those who like to think poetically. For those who see a wolf's profile in the shape of Lake Superior, Ryan Island is the gleam in the pupil of the wolf's eye.

"My canoe paddling companion and I got to Ryan on 18 September. We found a bare room-sized rock on the northeast end of the island and I threw my 'rang. Now I'd like to tell you that I made a beautiful catch in the natural beauty of Isle Royale but I won't because I didn't. The wind was rather stiff. I had three choices. If I threw it across the wind it would land in the drink. If I threw it a bit farther upwind it might have crunched into that big rock I was standing on, and I wasn't about to do that to a friend. So I threw it well into the wind and let it

land behind me in the trees. No catch, but I've still got my 'rang and didn't mess up my shoes too much tromping around in the moose droppings.

"I also learned something else—about photographing moose: It is wise to use a wide angle lens if one wants to capture the full grandeur of a rutting bull moose's antlers when he charges the camera to a distance of five feet—plus the four inch thickness of a quaking aspen between the moose and the cameraman, who was doing something more embarrassing than quaking.

"There's still a first catch waiting out there on Ryan for someone who likes combining 'ranging and wilderness treks."

## 5 Mighty Tosses

Volker Behrens of Lubeck, Germany, recently recorded five of the greatest measured long distance throws yet. Testing an electronic measuring device on October 4 purchased from Robbie Sinclair of Melbourne, Behrens and colleagues Wilhelm Bretfeld and Eckhard Mawick, noted boomerang figures in Germany as is Behrens, had problems getting the gadget working properly. As the wind turned perfect for out of sight throwing, 6-9 mph, Behrens unlimbered his self-designed weighted 123 gram 40.5 cm long Challenger III resin-fiber hook boomerang and threw one beyond the two as they were standing at the 125 meter mark. He got a full return right over the 40 meter baseline. This throw bested Christian Jabet's 121 meter world record claim, set in Lyon, France, last spring. Amazed and delighted, Behrens had the pair stand at the 130 meter mark, and then blasted four consecutive throws

past them, with complete, accurate returns being recorded. On the final toss, the boomerang landed two meters in back of Behrens at the center of the launch point. Pinpoint accuracy! For the four throws, Bretfeld and Mawick pegged the distance at an estimated 134 meters each—close to 150 yards, or almost a football field and a half in length. These unofficial tosses outdistanced the French record by some 13 meters—a clear margin. Behrens said he will not claim a Guinness long distance record at this point, but will seek to set one soon with a bevy of officials, carefully delineated field, and a super accurate measuring arrangement. He wants his claim to be indisputable. Meanwhile, Behrens exults. As he made the sequence of wonderful throws, he says, "I was screaming in an uncontrollable manner." And next day? "My shoulder ached."

# USBA Store

The USBA's fund-raising store is back in full operation, under the stewardship of Callie Laurent (P.O. Box 2996, Newport News, VA 23602). Some two dozen items are available, from which Callie has chosen the following highlights:

USBA sew-on patches, \$3.50 ppd.

A beginner's packet made up of a USBA membership, with subscription to this quarterly newsletter included; an easy to throw Steve Glover "Rippa" boomerang from Queensland, Australia, with instructions; the 96-page book *Boomerang* by Ben Ruhe; USBA competition rules; and a selection of interesting literature. A great gift idea! \$22.00 ppd.

A fascinating collection of selected U.S. boomerang patents from 1890 through 1942. Many interesting ideas here on both boomerangs and boomerang launchers. \$11.00 ppd.

USBA competition rules. \$1.50 ppd.

Also available are other books, back issues of this newsletter, scholarly articles, mylar stickers, and USBA T-shirts. Write Callie Laurent for list.

Coupon—Xerox me and send me in.



Please send me:

USBA sew-on patches—  
\$3.50 ppd.

Beginner's packet—  
\$22.00 ppd.

Patents collection—  
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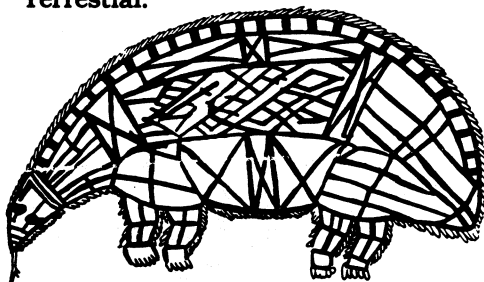
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## The 'Penro Cat'

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Ron Janetske, a senior research scientist at the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, successfully photographed in beautiful color two hard-to-capture-on-film objects at the same time, Halley's Comet and a night boomerang. "The picture," he says, "is not a double exposure, but an actual flight path under the light of the comet. I was both photographer and thrower. Ever since I obtained a night boomerang, I wanted to make photographs of its path similar to those in Felix Hess' book. After gaining confidence in my low light photo capabilities by taking numerous pictures of Comet Halley, I combined both efforts on the early morning of March 22. The same conditions that provide good conditions for comet-watching also provide sufficient conditions for catching a boomerang on film (no moonlight, no city lights, low humidity, etc.). High speed film helps also. Konica Color SR 1600 was used with a 35mm camera and a tripod. The shutter was tripped, then I ran to the launch position (approximately 20 yards), performed the launch, and ran back to the camera and closed the shutter before the stars and comet started to streak. I did not remain at the launch

site for a catch because there was not enough time. Operating solo, I had no verification that the launch site or flight path were in the field of view. The exit of the boomerang at the left of the picture is an artifact of this condition. Everyone thought I was joking when I told them the trace was a boomerang flight path. Many thought it was an aircraft of some sort, most frequently a helicopter. Some conjectured an atmospheric phenomenon." While the photograph is too subtle for decent reproduction in this newsletter, Janetzke might trade copies of his color masterpiece for boomerangs. Write him at 6220 Culebra Road, P.O. Drawer 28510, San Antonio, TX 78284. He calls his shot, incidentally, The Penro Cat—Photograph Evidence of Naturally Returning Objects—Celestial and Terrestrial.



## Oddity From Africa

Probably the first boomerang ever crafted on the west coast of Africa has joined the collection of Jerry Glenn of Washington, D.C., a world traveler, expert thrower, and enthusiastic boomerang promoter. The 'rang was made of several pieces of dense, golden camwood pegged together and shaped by an unnamed carver in Liberia. The incised decorations are palm tees at the tips and a "palava" (palaver-talk) hut at the elbow. Instigator of the project was Glenn's friend Win Morgan, of the Peace Corps, who is promoting small business opportunities in Africa. The boomerang copies the Dan Russell Skyhawk shape, but is so heavy in relation to its aerodynamics it may not fly in anything less than a gale. Nonetheless, it is distinctly a collector's item for its oddity and beauty. Boomerang throwing demonstrations by Morgan in Liberia occasioned the coining of a new word in the local language, Kru—"aw-mun-a-ji," literally "It goes, it comes."



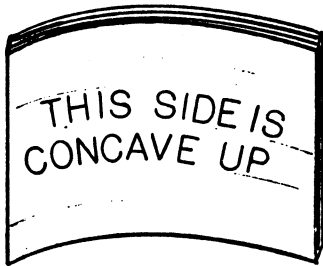
## Cutting Blanks With a Jigsaw

By Ted Bailey

Many of the larger boomerang manufacturers employ the use of a large industrial bandsaw for cutting blanks out of plywood. Most hobby craftsmen do not have access to such equipment and use a jigsaw (often called a sabresaw) to cut out their blanks. The results are often discouraging with splintered edges forming around the perimeter of their boomerang blanks. The finished product is often unsightly and rough to the touch when thrown or caught. This article is for the hobby maker with this problem.

**Step 1:** Do not buy cheap plywood. Your problems may never be solved with poor grade pine or fir plywood. I use aircraft quality baltic birch plywood from Finland exclusively. My personal source is Trimcraft Aero, but many other outlets also carry this product.

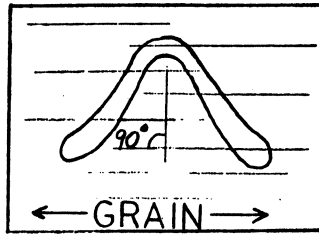
**Step 2:** Before you begin cutting, you must orient your plywood properly. Stand the wood on its edge and look for the natural bow curvature warpage that occurs. The best wood is uniformly curved throughout the entire sheet. Before tracing your patterns, lay the plywood flat so that the curvature is concave upward.



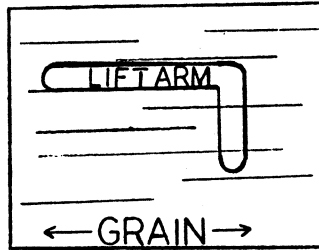
**Step 2**—Before tracing your patterns, lay the plywood down with the concave side facing up.

**Step 3:** Orient your pattern to give the proper stiffness in each arm. If you want both arms to be of equal stiffness, then place the arm angle bisector perpendicular or parallel to the grain of the top ply. I do this on most of my standard models. For MTA or other special application boomerangs, orient the arm you throw with to be parallel to the grain of the top ply for maximum stiffness. Trace the patterns with the flat side of the boomerang you are copying down. Trace with a pencil as close to the edge of your pattern boomerang as possible. When you do cut the blank, cut just outside the pencil line

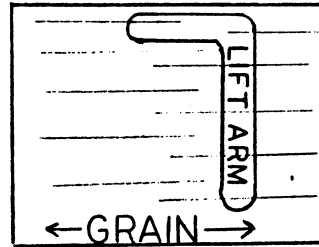
so that you do not remove too much stock when the airfoil is put on.



**Step 3**—To achieve equal stiffness in each arm, align the arm angle bisector perpendicular to the grain.



**Step 3**—If you throw MTA with the lift arm, align the lift arm parallel to the grain.



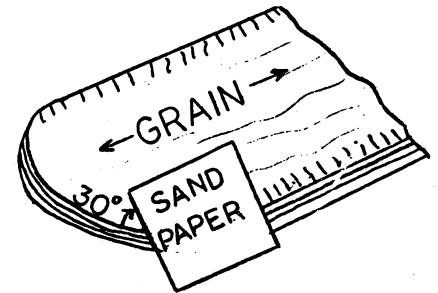
**Step 3**—If you throw MTA with the dingle arm, align the lift arm perpendicular to the grain.

**Step 4:** Test cut your wood before cutting blanks. Do not use a scroll or regular jigsaw blade designed for cutting wood. You should use a blade with at least 18 teeth per inch and preferably with 30 teeth per inch. I like to use a metal cutting blade for the smoothest cut. If you have a variable speed jigsaw, try using a slower speed than normally recommended for wood. Cut out a few experimental irregular shapes. Examine both the top and bottom surfaces for rough edges. The most vulnerable location is the underside of the blank when the cut is orientated at right angles to the grain of the surface ply. If a ragged edge appears, proceed to step 5. If the edge remains smooth, proceed to step 6.

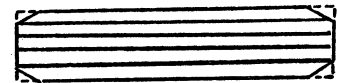
**Step 5:** To solve the splintering problem, make sure you are using a fine enough blade at a low enough speed. Make sure the plywood is held down firmly when the cut is made to avoid the wood vibrations from contributing to the splintering process. Do not allow the wood you are working with to have too much overhang. If these adjustments do not correct the problem, take out your garden hose and thoroughly wet the top and bottom plies 10-20 minutes before you begin cutting your blanks. The water will slowly soak into the surface plies and soften them. The effects last about an hour with baltic birch. The results are dramatic, with clean edges on both the upper and lower surfaces of your blanks. I have been doing this for years and never had a problem with baltic birch warping. Warpage may occur with other kinds of plywoods, from other sources.

**Step 6:** Keep checking the edges of the wood as you cut. As the wood dries you will see small splintering begin to form and eventually it will become unacceptable. Go back to step 5 and rewet your plywood veneers.

**Step 7:** If splintering has occurred, do not throw the blank away. Sand the rough edges nearly parallel to the splintered surface until the rough edges are eliminated. Do this before you put on the airfoil. This may even cause an aerodynamic improvement as the stagnation point on the leading edge of the airfoil is raised.



**Step 7**—If splintering occurs, sand the edge of the blank at about 30° before carving the airfoil.

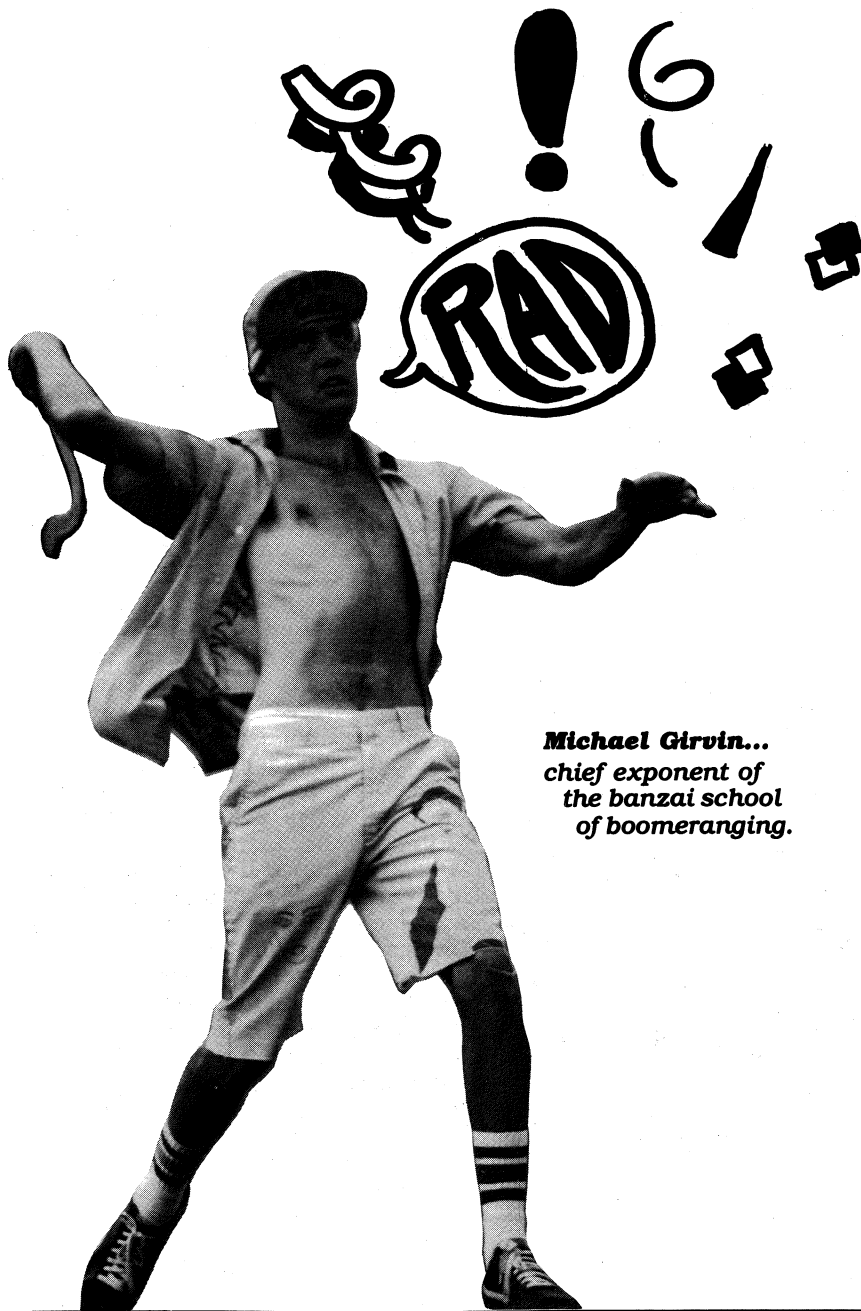
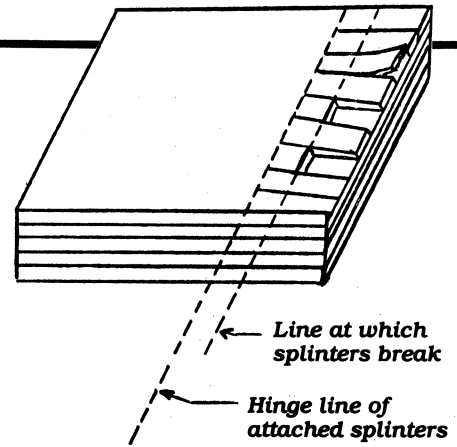


**Step 7**—The finished blank section with splintering removed and ready for the addition of the airfoil.

### The Mechanism of Splintering Explained

Rough splintered edges occur most frequently when the blade is cutting at right angles to the grain of the surface plies. Well aged plywood has dry surface plies, dry veneer is strong veneer, it is also stiff. If the surface plies are strong (dry) enough, they exceed the bonding strength of the resins that hold the plies together. When the blade catches the edge of a surface ply, the wood splinters and

separates from the ply beneath it. Sometimes the wood splinter bends about its hinged attachment and returns to its original position when it loses contact with the jigsaw blade. Sometimes the wood splinter breaks off. The combined effects are a rough and ugly edge on the blank. The finished product retains the poor features to some degree.



**Michael Girvin...**  
chief exponent of  
the banzai school  
of boomeranging.

### Personal Best

Do you think you're rather good at throwing and catching boomerangs? If so, score yourself on the following personal standard of achievement compiled by national champ Barney Ruhe. He hasn't achieved every one of the feats himself, but says he's trying. Here's the list—with degree of difficulty marked by stars:

Accuracy—Boomerang comes to rest on center point.\*

Position—Catch in the bullseye on the third and last throw.\*

MTA—1 minute plus with catch.\*\*

Endurance—40 or more catches in 5 minutes.\*\*

Aussie Round—3 straight bullseye catches.\*\*

Fast Catch—25 seconds or less.\*\*\*

Juggling—20 straight catches or more.\*\*\*

Distance—100 yards or more with accurate return.\*\*\*

Supercatch.\*\*\*

Barney has pulled them all off except for the last one. What's your own score? Six or better and you can count yourself a real expert.

(Continued from page 9)

Round. Third over-all went to Ruhf and Adam Lewis, who wowed a batch of the players by putting them up in his almost empty 35 room mansion in Lyndhurst that night.

At Boehm's corroboree on the following day, Snouffer showed his best form by taking three firsts, Juggling with 26, Fast Catch and Endurance (tie with John Koehler), plus a second place in Consecutive Catch to easily take grand championship honors. Gary Broadbent and Barney Ruhe were second and third. Efficiently run by the U.S. Park Service, the throw drew more than 200 spectators. Computer printouts of all the scores were available at the end of throwing, a novelty for a boomerang tournament. That boomeranging is sometimes a contact sport was shown when slender 150-pound Ken Reed decked big, brawny Ron Tamblyn in a collision. No harm was done. Ron, incidentally, placed in all five events yet scored only 15th over-all. "If you go for Barney Ruhe's 'consistent mediocrity' approach to winning tournaments, you can't be too mediocre," he said.

### Portland

Sandwiched in between terrible Oregon rainy days, Doug DuFresne's "summer's final fling" drew an excellent West Coast contingent and was pronounced a beautifully run affair. Jerry Caplan of L.A. took first over-all with 55 points followed by William Gix with 38-1/2 and Leni Barker with 37-1/2. Caplan captured MTA with 32.42 seconds, Aussie Round, Doubling and Juggling and took thirds in Consecutive Catch and Fast Catch. A strong performance by The Jeweler, as he is nicknamed. On hand was a contingent from San Diego as well as a delegation from the San Francisco area (Team Gelato, Team Gel Bean, Team Gel-O and Team Gel-E). Washington State was represented by Ali Miller of Seattle, ex-president of USBA, who had dropped boomeranging for personal reasons but is now back into it. A beautiful gift boomerang from Robbie Croll of Melbourne got her out into the field to try it out and restored the sport to grace in her eyes. Cheers! Team Gel-E (Leni Barker and Luken Phipps) with two firsts, a second and a third took the team competition, followed by Air Done and No Deposit, No Return. At one point during the tournament, a small twister swept the field and put a stack of paper fliers and certificates so high into the air some of them vanished from sight. DuFresne and Caplan unlimbered

their MTA boomerangs to take advantage of the jetstream but then decided against throwing, on the theory they'd certainly lose their boomerangs. As another sidelight, Team Gelato's Vieri Novelli showed how to make Australian Round particularly difficult. He tried catching his pinpoint long distance returns with his feet.

### Northampton

It rained in the morning and it rained at twilight, but in between the weather was reasonable and the Le-high Valley Open came off in good style. Dr. Larry Ruhf took first over-all, followed by his twin Peter a half point back—41-1/2 to 41. In third was newlywed Jim Jordan, recovering from major leg surgery, with a score of 36. Look out when big Jim becomes completely healthy! Tight competition was the order of the day, witness Fast Catch, won by Larry with 28.05 seconds, followed by his twin at 28.21 (who had to make six throws when one was called short), and John Koehler at 28.23. Larry took Doubling and placed in other events. Koehler won Long Distance with 100.1 meters, followed by Mole Man at 89.3. Ted Bailey pulled off 49 catches in 5-minute Endurance without a single drop, quite an achievement for bullet boomerangs. Al Gerhards, making the circuit again, showed his old form and had a good time, as did everyone. After having taken three over-all sixth places this season, John Koehler grabbed fifth over-all, showing satisfying progress. Partying at the Ruhe Farm (not a farm at all, actually, but rather a retreat for a big family) out in the eastern Pennsylvania wilderness made the long weekend a time for the pleasant exchange of boomerang lore and information.

### Potomac

Great MTA times by Mike Forrester and his partner Ron Tamblyn highlighted the first annual Potomac Boomerang Club invitational in sub-

urban Washington, D.C. Mike's time was 1:04.32, with catch, the second best tournament time ever recorded. Ron scored 1:01.45, also with catch, the fourth best time for a tourney. (Mike's own 1:02 from last year now is in third place, with Larry Ruhf's 2.31 the standard setter.) Because it was so windy, Forrester had to run an estimated 250 meters to haul in his boomerang, a Ted Bailey midi model. Tamblyn tracked his throw, with the same boomerang on loan from Mike, almost as far. Both times were clocked by two timers, who followed along at a fast trot. The scene of the throwing was the gigantic Potomac polo club, with three fields side by side. Predictably for late October, the weather was sunny but chilly. With a first place in Consecutive Catch and seconds in Accuracy and Endurance, Forrester took over-all honors, edging Barney Ruhe, who had first places in Accuracy, Endurance and Doubling, but bombed in a few events, unlike his usual consistent self. Fierce winds at times during the day blew not only Ruhe but everyone else out of the park. Ruhe's first place in Doubling was another highlight of the day. Using his "slowest inside doubler and fastest MTA 'rang'" as the outsider, Ruhe on his first throw had to race some 150 meters downwind to make the second catch, some 35 seconds after snaring the first one.

It was humorous but effective, since he and Ray Laurent were the only ones able to even make the doubles catch on the first try. Ruhe then won out on the second round. Other firsts in individual competitions were taken by Laurent in Long Distance with a throw of 101 meters, Dennis Joyce in Fast Catch, and Ron Tamblyn in Aussie Round, which helped him net third place over-all. Among the 20 plus competitors were delegations from Cleveland, Toledo, Newport News and New England, although the thrower coming the longest distance by far was charming Olivier Vouktchevitch, all the way from Paris just for the throw. Olivier, one of the best throwers in Europe, wanted to meet the U.S. gang, test himself against some Yankee competition, and acquire some hot equipment. On the field, he showed great form and was judged a formidable opponent by all. A great party and awards ceremony, with video screening by genial Garry Lamothe, ended the long day. John Koehler and Jim Jordan and wives, were principal organizers of the tournament and fete and drew plaudits from all.





## What to Collect: A Viewpoint

Weapons collector Ray Rieser's boomerang trove has expanded so much he was forced to computerize the holding to keep track of it. He has more than 400 'rangs and one of his newest acquisitions is particularly interesting. It's a metal non-return boomerang from India which he describes as follows:

"It weighs under six ounces and the surface is quite detailed. There are six parallel lines running the length of the boomerang on each side. The short tranverse lines appear to be made with a chisel. The ball-shaped handle is hollow with pieces in it to make a rattling sound—apparently on purpose. One side of the boomerang is made of a single piece of iron apparently hand-forged. The iron is slightly under 1/16th-inch thick. The ball at the handle is beaten into the iron to form a convex spherical surface. On the other side there is a piece of iron also beaten into a convex spherical surface. The two pieces of metal are joined by two rivets, one through the center of the ball and the other just at the beginning of the flat portion of the boomerang. The boom-

erang appears to be tuned. I have not tried to throw it, or tried to find out how soft the metal is, for fear of changing any tuning."

By cataloguing his collection on his computer, Rieser, of Lower Burrell, PA, has obtained a good overview of it. "When I started collecting modern boomerangs," he says, "I already had several dozen Aboriginal specimens. My intent was to chronicle the evolution that was taking place in boomerangs. Looking over things I feel that I have accomplished much of what I set out to do.

"At the present time the focus is MTA. I have a sufficient number of these in the collection to show how they are evolving in size and shape. However, I tend to regard MTA 'rangs as more of a aerodynamic device, rather than as a true boomerangs. So I do not have much enthusiasm for keeping up with the only significant direction that I see boomeranging heading.

"In building my collection I try to stand in the future and look back on this period of time and try to judge what boomerangs and makers will be

of historic importance. I know that everyone enjoys MTA and I see nothing wrong with this. But I project that with the new rules allowing more than two armed boomerangs that MTA 'rangs will eventually evolve into symmetric shapes, thereby producing more stable hover and extended flight times. I also feel that eventually unlimited MTA will break away from boomeranging and become a aerodynamic device or toy like the Frisbee.

"Currently I am being offered a large number of ethnographic boomerangs, and am focusing all my attention to this area. I am still adding to my collection but generally only old Aboriginal items, antique boomerangs, works by the Australian makers of the mid-century such as Frank Donnellan and the Onuses, and boomerangs by makers such as Herb Smith and Al Gerhards. Smith boomerangs are truly beautiful. He is a superb craftsman. It is interesting to watch the evolution of his work."

### Catching a Fever

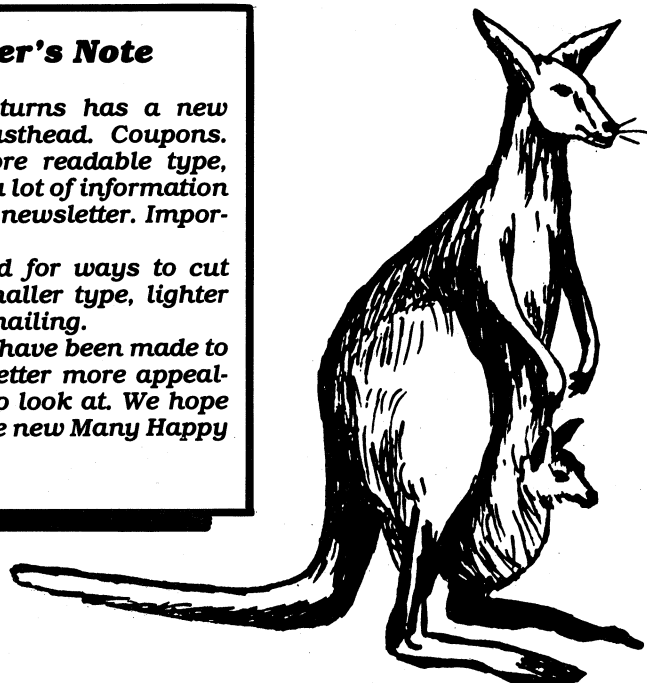
By accident, Ted Bailey, USBA president, has come up with a new way to catch a boomerang. Juggling two Boomerang Fevers, he dropped one. As the other came back, he retrieved the dropped 'rang, stood up, and stuck the boomerang in the air to intercept the second one sailing over his head. To his surprise, the boomerangs interlocked and he made the catch. It was a no-hands effort, in short. Pleased and piqued, Ted tried the catch repeatedly. He found he could pull it off once in five tries, but figured he'd do better with practice. Give it a shot, he recommends. It's challenging. Use a V-shaped or sharply angled 'rang for easier traps, he advises. The trick is to twist your wrist in the direction of the rotation to cause the interlock. Got it?

### Publisher's Note

*Many Happy Returns has a new look. A new masthead. Coupons. More photos. More readable type, etc. We have put a lot of information into this 20-page newsletter. Important information.*

*We have looked for ways to cut costs such as smaller type, lighter paper and bulk mailing.*

*These changes have been made to make this newsletter more appealing to read and to look at. We hope that you enjoy the new Many Happy Returns.*



## Collector's Corner

By Leni Barker

Auction result: The high bid for the Ted Bailey inlaid omega, offered in the last newsletter, was \$200 by John Wilcox of Somerset, WI. Thanks to John and every one who sent in bids on this fine boomerang.

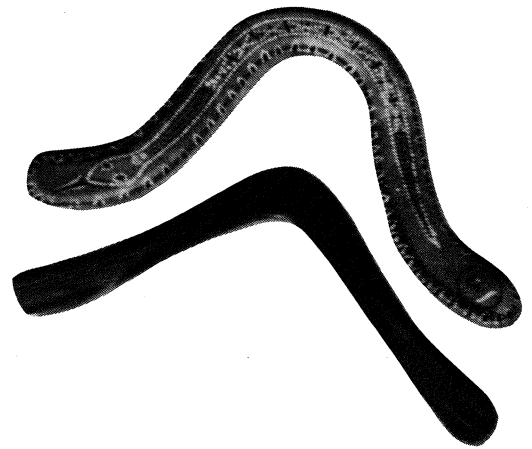


New auction: Item No. 1. Michael (Team Gel) Girvin has donated a superb hand-painted T-shirt on which he spent more than 13 hours. A portrait of his friend Madonna, the rock star, with boomerang and message "Dare to Be Rad" is on the front, three 'rangs with sun's rays and the message "Live to Boom" is on the back. Created specially for the USBA auction, the artwork and colors of this shirt are fabulous. This piece of original art is valued at \$150.

Item No. 2. Two boomerangs to be auctioned together. First a mahogany ply 'rang made by Doug DuFresne and nicely decorated with aboriginal motifs by Doris Caplan. Second, a lap joint boom made by Leni Barker of walnut with tulip wood tips. These two boomerangs are valued at \$50 for both.

To bid on either or both of these items, mail three bids on each—low, medium, high—to Leni Barker, P.O. Box 3037, Sonora, CA 95370 by Dec. 15. The lowest of the three bids that tops everyone else's high bid will be the winner.

Trade column: Introducing free ads in the newsletter for members wishing to trade boomerangs and related items. Send ads to Leni Barker. To kick things off I will trade booms for boomerang T-shirts. One Lizard model boom per T-shirt. Send a description of what you have to me at above address.



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