



Many Happy Returns

No. 21

A Quarterly Newsletter of the U.S. Boomerang Association

Winter 1985

New Way to Promote USBA Membership

Although there are substantial concentrations of United States Boomerang Association members in certain areas across the country, such as Atlanta; Delaware, Ohio; Eastern Pennsylvania; and Tallahassee, San Diego has come up with a USBA "first" — a city chapter organized on the principle that all members must be members of the national organization. Membership in the chapter itself is free. The exciting new development, which Washington, D.C., among other cities, is preparing to copy, is the brainchild of Dan Russell, a fireman by vocation and boomerang manufacturer and enthusiast by avocation. "At present," he says, "the USBA-San Diego Chapter is a little loose as a structured organization, but would improve with age. In good weather, we meet once a week for throwing where we practice competitive events and team relays. Most of the members are either new to the sport or have never thrown competitively before. We plan to have chapter T-shirts made, but no newsletter — the USBA letter has plenty of boomerang news in it. We do keep each other informed via telephone tree. At the weekly morning throws, a member may bring a new 'rang that was purchased or made by him to be critiqued. After the throw, we usually all lunch at a local Mexican restaurant to discuss the morning's events and come up with ideas for the future. 'I would say the long term goal of the San Diego chapter is the promotion of the art and sport of boomeranging for competition and pleasure, to the point that more chapters are formed in California and across the country. These chapters, in turn, would play off against each other in tournaments.'"

A tip of the collective USBA hat to Dan Russell for good thinking.

A New Challenge Called "Super Catch"

With competition boomerang throwers making such strides in adeptness, Peter Jonson of the Australian Boomerang Association has come up with a new competition to really test their skill — Super Catch. The event requires a strong arm, quickness, agility, good eyesight, foot speed, and terrific equipment. It combines MTA, Fast Catch, and Juggling all in one package. The rules are diabolically simple. The player launches Boomerang A, a maximum-time-aloft floater.

He then switches to Boomerang B and makes five throws and catches with it in minimum time, throwing from a center circle with the 'rang going out a minimum of 20 meters. After the fifth catch, he spots Boomerang A hovering somewhere in the not too far distance (hopefully), sprints after it, and catches it too for the grand slam sixth grab. Impossible? Hardly. Lots of throwers have five Fast Catches down to below 27 seconds, and are clocking upward of 30 seconds in MTA. All one needs to do is put the two heroic performances together! Australia is introducing the competition at the Cobram-Barooga throw opening the 1985 season Down Under. Why not make this a world-wide effort to see who can first pull off Super Catch in practice or tournament competition? Give it a go, mates!

Fun and Games at Night

In the first full-bore night boomerang tournament ever held (as opposed to a night throw by the light of the full moon — dim!), Chuck Bernstein and his Kite Site crew and Ben Ruhe staged a seven-event competition in Washington, D.C., that was notable for all the things it happily lacked — a stiff wind, irate polo players, myriad nearby softball games, pesky kids. What it did have was magic — night throwing en masse, as in Suicide, must be seen to be appreciated. Real spectacle! With Bob Coakley acting as head judge and Susan Olson, all the way from Anchorage, as chief cheerleader; Chuck Bernstein, the only leftie, took first in Suicide; Peter Cashin first in Accuracy; Jerry Glenn first in Fast Catch (done player vs. player, knockout style); Chris Casperson first in Doubling; Paul Ritchie first in Position; and Harvey Webb first in Stockyard Shambles. This final event was won when Webb made a leaping, 12-foot high catch, akin to a basketball slam dunk, to skunk the half-dozen mere mortals waiting for the catch under the descending boomerang. Ben Ruhe, making one of the early grabs in this violent event, found himself buried under a sea of bodies with nose pressed an inch into the turf, and glasses bent like a pretzel. (Shambles, for those not in the know, involves as many players as possible, but only one boomerang; which is thrown repeatedly. Just two catches wins the war . . . er, competition.) In the seventh event, Team Blue —

Fun and Games at Night (continued . . .)

minus a player who had a dinner invitation, a hazard of night throws — beat Team Red in One Minute Multiple Catches. Bob Coakley totted up the individual winners: Glenn, first; Casperson, second; Ruhe, third. The tournament was pronounced a great success over pizza in Georgetown. "Let's do this again on a quarterly basis," suggested someone. "Monthly," said another. "No weekly!" suggested a third. The final suggestion carried unanimously. Such was the enthusiasm of the moment.

Night-throwing could be the wave of the future, since it solves so many of the problems associated with boomerang tournaments — excess winds, difficulty of finding an empty field, excess heat (in the summer), tourists wandering across the turf, etc. It should be noted that while the Washington dozen threw Eric Darnell polypropylene boomerangs exclusively, with shafts drilled down the wings into which was injected Cyalume (nightstick, lightstick), night equipment can easily be fashioned by taking intravenous tubing (gift of a friendly doctor or nurse) and injecting it with the cold light chemical; the tubing is then tied off into sections and these are taped to boomerang elbows. Affects the flight some, but not seriously. Give night-throwing a try — particularly those who live in wind-infected areas like the Midwest. Asked her reaction to the phenomenon after seeing night-throwing for the first time, Susan Olson had this piquant comment: "Really sexy." Another observer offered bemusedly: "It was like some modern-day sacred rite."

Letter from the President

by Ali Fujino Miller

Election of officers of the United States Boomerang Association is coming up at the annual membership meeting at Los Angeles in July, held in conjunction with the USBA national championship, and I hope a substantial number of members will participate. It's important to do so if you want to keep the USBA democratic, representative, and strong! Here is what's happening:

1. Secretary Ted Bailey, designated by me as nominating chairman, has put together a slate of candidates from nominations sent to him by the Dec. 31, 1984 deadline. It is as follows: President — Chet Snouffer; vice president — Jerry Caplan and Larry Ruhf; treasurer — Ray Rieser; secretary — Ted Bailey; at large members of the board of directors (three will be chosen) — Jerry Caplan, Eric Darnell, Dave Emler, Carmen Foster, Skip Harmuth, Shelley Mack, Larry Ruhf, Ben Ruhe, Chet Snouffer, Hugh Vandergrift, and Bob Venable. (Note that after two terms as president, I — Ali Miller — cannot succeed myself but rather become an *ex officio* member of the board. Also kindly note that John Mauro, after two terms, cannot repeat as treasurer but can assume any other office. The same is true for Chet Snouffer, who has served two terms as vice president and cannot be given this post, although he can be elected to any other position.)

2. The election will begin with the presidency, and work down. Additional nominations for each office will be accepted from the floor — grass? And short speeches for candidates will be accepted by Bailey, who will chair the election process. The talks will be kept *quite* short, so marshal your points!

3. Following election of officers, the new president will take over the meeting as presiding officer.

I conclude by urging every member to take the election seriously, since it is the strength and dedication of the officers who give the organization its meaning. Choices should be based on an individual's merit and availability to serve the sport of boomeranging. Take part in the vote! Help keep the USBA expanding!

USBA Nationals Going West

The 1985 USBA National Championship Tournament goes west this year in a big way — all the way to California State University at Northridge, a Los Angeles suburb. The dates are Friday, July 12 through Sunday, July 14, and tourney organizer Jerry Caplan, USBA board member and ace thrower, has done himself proud with elaborate arrangements. Here is what Jerry has put together so far:

Housing will be apartment-style in the university's Dormitory Tower Apartment Building. It is located near the boomerang field. The building has a sizeable lobby which will be used for Friday night events. Behind the building is a swimming pool, recreation room, and barbecue area. The sports field the university is turning over to the USBA will be open for throwing from 7 a.m.-midnight Saturday, and 7 a.m.-dusk Sunday. The apartments are comfortable and modern, with private baths, cooking facilities, and living rooms. For those wishing to prolong their stay in California, they can be booked a week ahead or a week after the tournament. The daily rate is a moderate \$20 or so per person. Those wanting travel or sightseeing information for such places as Disneyland, Universal Studios, museums, etc., can write Jerry Caplan for information. He'll try to get brochures, times, prices, etc. His address — note that it is a new one — is 828 Old Farm Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. His telephone number is 805-495-5389.

Friday, July 12

Noon-6 p.m.	Arrival in Los Angeles and registration in apartment tower lobby.
6-7:30 p.m.	Wine and cheese reception.
7:30-8:30 p.m.	Talk by Ben Ruhe on 15 years of boomeranging in the U.S.

He'll show films of the 1974 and '78 Smithsonian tournaments, anthropology films from Australia, and selected news clips and features.

8:30-10 p.m.	Boomerang auction for benefit of USBA, Swap meet. Competition for best crafted, best decorated, most unusual, etc., boomerangs.
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Saturday, July 13

7-9 a.m.	Practice throwing.
9 to 11 a.m.	USBA annual meeting.
11 a.m.-2 p.m.	Practice throwing.
Noon-2 p.m.	Tournament registration.
2-4 p.m.	Tournament for novices.
2-4 p.m.	Tournament for city, state and regional teams.
4-4:30 p.m.	Demonstration.
4:30-6:30 p.m.	Team tournament continues.
7:30-10 p.m.	Barbecue and swim.
10 p.m.-midnight	Night throw with illuminated boomerangs.

Sunday, July 14

7 a.m.-noon	Practice throwing.
Noon-4 p.m.	Tournament for individual throwers.
4-6:30 p.m.	Record-breaking attempts.
7:30-9:30 p.m.	Dinner at nearby restaurant.

Jerry Caplan is organizing the Sunday throw pretty much like those of former nationals, but the Saturday team competition will be something new. Teams will constitute four players and it is hoped that each group will outfit itself in an identifiable manner, either stylish or whacky. Team names should reflect a geographic orientation and each squad should name a captain for purposes of registration and rules discussion. Competitions will be run on a team-versus-team basis, as much as feasible. Get started on organizing your own team now!

Detailed information on the tournament, including a rundown on rules for both days, will be forthcoming to all USBA members.

Jerry's final word is that he is working to make the tournament as much fun as possible, and that he seeks to use it as a vehicle to introduce the sport to as wide an audience as possible in Southern California — laudable aims.

USBA Update

A directory of the membership of the United States Boomerang Association, arranged by zip code, has been compiled by secretary Ted Bailey and is available free to members from treasurer John Mauro, 4030-9 Forest Hill Ave., Richmond, VA 23225. Send a self-addressed, legal size (No. 10), stamped envelope.

Also available free to members is a list of American manufacturers and distributors of boomerangs, compiled by board member Maureen Clark. The list consists of 27 names and addresses and is testimony to the rapid expansion of the sport in the U.S. For a copy, write to Mauro as above. If you want *both* membership

and manufacturers' lists, put a 37 cent stamp on the envelope to cover the additional cost.

The deadline for submission of advertising copy for the spring issue of *Many Happy Returns* is March 1. Please submit copy and payment to Mauro.

Sponsorship of the next *USBA Interim Report* is hereby sought. The reports are occasional supplements to the quarterly newsletter. One issue costs \$80 to support, tax deductible; to co-sponsor a report costs \$40. Kindly contact president Ali Miller at 3009 137th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98005, if you want to help out.

Miller has compiled and Mauro published a limited-edition, 82-page press book on the 1984 Australia-U.S. test series. Included are magazine articles, news releases, press clips, cartoons, photos, and even tournament scorecards. *Most* impressive. And fascinating reading, particularly the Australian material. Copies were sent to team members, officials and key sponsors. Just three of the 25 numbered copies remain undistributed; they can be purchased for \$30 each from Miller (as above).

Please note that both the *Education Packet* by Ali Miller and *An Introduction to Boomerangs* by John Mauro are both out of print. Reprint consideration is given to both.

Upcoming. 1. A guide to wood sources is being put together by Maureen Clark, to supplement the extensive one compiled by Ted Bailey and published in the Fall 1984 issue of *Many Happy Returns*. It will be issued in due course. 2. USBA tournament rules and related material have been put together by the President, Ali Miller, and are being typeset by H. L. Mayhew, a USBA enthusiast and printer by profession, and published by a donation from John Cassidy of Klutz Press. When available, a copy will be sent for 50¢ ppd. This long-awaited document is far overdue, feels Miller, who sees its publication as a spur to continued thought on, and refinement of, USBA rules. USBA members are hereby solicited to give thought to any rules problems and prepare to respond on their ideas in due course. 3. Ted Bailey (2967 Gracewood Rd., Toledo, OH 43613) is soliciting information on proposed '85 tournaments across the U.S. to help him in proposing criteria for choosing a U.S. team for a projected challenge tour Down Under in '86. In addition, he asks for ideas on establishing those criteria. If more convenient than writing, he can be contacted by telephone at 1-800-537-8682 during working hours.



Addenda. Notice that the previous issue of *Many Happy Returns* was mailed from Florida? Many people did, and wondered greatly about it. The answer is that publisher John Mauro went on business to Tampa and took the newsletter south with him from his Richmond home base to have it printed and circulated . . . Ali Miller, the USBA's energetic president, has taken a full-time, high-ranking job with the Museum of Flight in

USBA Update (continued ...)

Seattle and has promptly raised upwards of \$75,000 for a paper airplane contest the museum is sponsoring. "It's a *lot* easier raising money for paper airplanes than boomerangs," she says. Past paper glider competitions have included brilliant promotional stunts boomerang tournament organizers might copy. One competition had a convertible automobile out in the center of the field and anyone launching a glider from the stands who put the plane into the car won the vehicle! That sort of imaginative idea.

Tips (In More Ways than One)

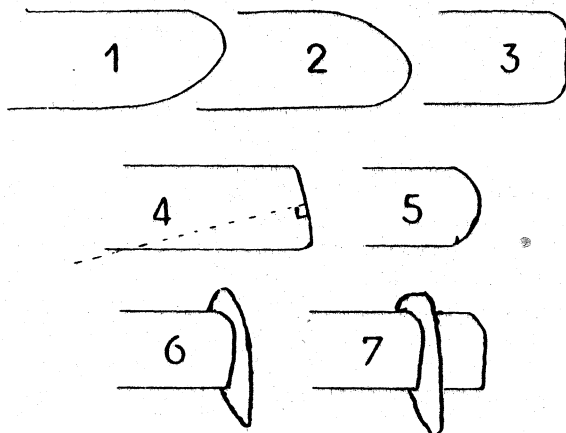
By Michael Hanson


The tips of a boomerang (or helicopter, or propeller, or fan) are the bits that move fastest through the air, so I reckon that these bits are rather important. That is, they have the potential for providing more lift — and doing most of the work.

If you consider a typical boomerang launch, the 'rang leaves your hand moving forward at high speed and spinning at about 10 r.p.s. So the advancing tip really zips through the air while the receding tip only ambles along. Indeed, it may sometimes be almost at rest (relative to the air) or even moving backwards! After half a revolution the fast tip slows down and the slow tip speeds up. Since they speed up and slow down like a possessed yo-yo they've got to be pretty smooth and sleek to do their job properly.

But before we talk about tips whizzing through the air let's chuck the boomerang first. A tip, one or the other, is the bit to be held for launching. (There is such a thing as the 'elbow grip', but forget about it!) Most seem to be lifting arm hurlers though a significant proportion of us throwers grab hold of the dingle arm. To increase gripability I have in the past tried glueing sandpaper to the tips, but I don't do it now. You could dip your digits in strawberry jam though squeezing a few blades of grass between the fingers is probably better. I digress ... back to tips.

Of course there are an infinite number of tip shapes but just let me mention a few sensible ones. The drawings show the tips as seen when looking down on the boomerang. The leading edges are nearest the top of the page.



Tip 1. I always admired the wingtip shape of the Spitfire aeroplane and read somewhere that in order to increase lift you make the trailing edge as long as possible. I don't expect I got it right or you'd see wings on a glider like: 

Tip 2. H. L. Mayhew has a word to say on (1) and (2). He reckons that (1) has greater gripability than (2). By accident, he made a boomerang with tips as in (2) though in all other respects it was the same as a boomerang with tips as in (1). The differences in flight characteristics? ... nil! He concludes: 'Perhaps good wingtip profiles are reversible. Perhaps the actual outline wingtip shape is of minor significance compared to airfoil and lift effects.'

Tip 3. At one time Rusty Harding said he'd had reports that if you leave the tips a bit squarish, greater range is obtained. That makes sense as not rounding off the tip results in greater mass around the tip and an increased moment of inertia.

Tip 4. Tony Slater feels that there ought to be less drag if the tip shape lines up with the circle whose center is at the center of gravity of the boomerang. That makes good sense to me ... at least on the hover.

Tip 5. This is a favorite shape with commercial manufacturers.

Tip 6. Fitting fins on the tips seems like a good idea for the hover part of the flight though they might get in the way of the air during the initial phases. You see, during hover the rotating arms centrifuge off a lot of air. If this air could be retained, it would (might) increase the lift efficiency of the arms and that's what we want for maximum time aloft flights, don't we?

I thought I'd better experiment with tip fins. Haven't had time to do a real scientific study yet but ... You can't chuck the boomerang if the fin is at the end of the tip you grip so fix it in 2 or 3 cm to give Tip 7.

Tip 7. The fins I used were made of plastic and could be easily slid onto the boomerang. I used a trusty M17 and flung it ... once. Apart from making the boomerang sound like a banshee the fins caused so much drag, spin was quickly lost and the 'rang fell to the ground about half way round. All pretty unsuccessful.

So I thought I'd make the fins smaller by using elastic bands instead. Again with my M17, I put a band on each arm fairly near the tips. The bands were positioned so that they were on the 'same' circle, the center of which was at the center of gravity. Apart from a bit of extra noise there was little difference in the flight. Why are my experiments so invariably inconclusive?

So much for the 'top' view of the tips. Let's now consider the shape looking from trailing edge to leading edge (or vice versa). In the sketches below, the top of each boomerang is toward the top of the page.



(A) This shape is generally used in conjunction with a square tip.

(B) Symmetrical top and bottom. The only opinion I can pass is that it looks nice.

(C) My usual shaping. As virtually all the shaping is on the top surface at the leading and trailing edges, I just extend the shaping round the tips.

(D) There's a story about this one. On my first visit to Amstelveen, Holland, I was amazed at the hovering qualities of a 'rang made by Jerome Quin. He showed me the 'secret'. It looked good and I reasoned that, in effect, it sort of added a bit of dihedral. So back home I made a few boomerangs with similar tips. I was far from convinced it did anything useful. The next year at Amstelveen, Jerome took me aside and said what he'd told me the previous year he'd since found to be a load of rubbish!

So there we are . . . I don't know what to make of it all!

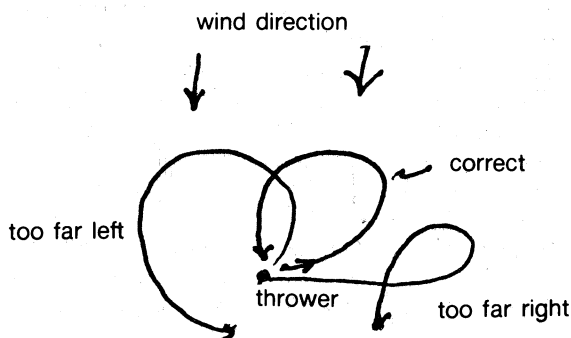
(Reprinted from the British Boomerang Society Newsletter. The author is a physics teacher in Ayrshire, Scotland.)

Aerodynamics Lesson

Some fast food stores now give out drinking cups that are folded at the top and then sealed with a plastic clip. Inventive Ted Bailey of Toledo has figured out uses for these clips, so save them. Filling a length of small diameter aquarium tubing with Cyalume (nightstick, lightstick), the cold light chemical available at many hobby and toy shops, he uses the plastic clips to attach tied-off lengths of the tubing to boomerang elbows for sporty night-throwing. Does away with messy tape, he notes. In a second application, Ted uses the clips to observe drag effects on his 'rangs. Placing a clip on the outside edge of the elbow causes a boomerang to fly higher, he observes. Placing one on the leading edge of the lifting arm near the wingtip grounds the 'rang completely, etc., etc. Try clips in various positions yourself; it will afford a useful lesson in practical aeronautics.

Teaching Beginners

Ray Rieser of Lower Burrell, PA, has worked out the following technique when he gives instructions to first time throwers: "I find that the most difficult thing a new thrower has to remember is how to throw with respect to the wind. If you use the diagram included with the Oregon Hat (the best set of throwing instructions I have found), you will see:



"If you throw correctly, the path is circular like a letter 'O'. If you throw far to the left, it is like a letter 'C' and if you throw too far to the right, it is like the letter 'P'. This spells the word COP. If I tell someone this, then if they get a C-shaped return they turn toward the 'O' in cop and if they get a 'P' shaped return turn back toward the 'O' in cop. It is easy to remember and works everytime for right-handers."

Report From Texas

With about 50 members, the Boomerang Association of Texas is doing well, reports Hugh Vandergrift of Killeen. A picnic and fling was held last fall near Austin, and more of these informal gatherings are planned for the coming spring — one of them to be held near LaGrange so as to include Houston, San Antonio, and Austin members and another in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to accommodate northern Texas members. Vandergrift then envisions a statewide tournament at Temple to make the vast traveling distances of his state equitable for all members. Further information from Vandergrift at 2308 Zinnia Court, Killeen, TX 76542.

Addendum on World Records

In the previous issue of this newsletter, world marks in Fast Catch, MTA, Juggling and Consecutive Catch were listed. Previously publicized, including a citation in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, was Peter Ruhf's Long Distance standard of 125 yards outward with a complete and accurate return, set in Sydney June 1982. Now the Aussies are claiming two other records: Robin Witeka's 45 out of a possible 50 points in Accuracy in the Western Suburbs Competition in Sydney last August, and Brother Brian Thomas' 90 out of a possible 100 in the Australian Round, at Albury October 1983. (Submitting these marks, the Boomerang Association of Australia lists a second one for Australian Round in the days when the competition was lengthier — Bob Burwell's 131 out of 160 set at the Albury national championship in April 1976.) So, seven certifiable world records, set either at tournaments or under equivalent circumstances such as to guarantee both expertise and impartiality in judging, surely the relevant tests for record-setting. An eighth claimed world mark, since it is not an accepted competition, probably actually falls under the feat category; it is Dutchman Adri van der Berge's 14 boomerangs in the air at one time, thrown singly. And quite a sight to watch, it must be added. Most consecutive catches in Doubling is a record crying out to be set. Submissions anyone? And consecutive catches in Tripling is another one, although it may well qualify as a feat since the trick is too difficult to qualify as a standard competitive event. Ideas on other world records, anyone? Submissions are hereby invited. And for feat claims, the crazier the better. Please, let's not forget the nice freedom of expression, verging on whackiness, the sport has so long engendered.



New Manual on Boomeranging

The Boomerang Association of Australia has just issued a 20-page *Boomerang Coaching Manual* that puts together in one package the basics of boomeranging. Edited by Peter Jonson and Brother Brian Thomas, the volume covers boomerang theory, current Australian records, advice on how to run competitions, safety tips, instructions on how to throw, simplified rules, and tips on training for the sport. Useful material, nicely presented in a small enough format so the booklet can easily be carried in one's kit for ready reference. The manual is priced to cover just cost and postage — \$2.50 per copy. Order yours from Dr. Jonson at 25 Pleasant Ave., E. Lindfield 2070, Australia.

From the Archives

Early accounts of boomerangs in literature about Australia remain of perennial interest, both for what they reveal and what they hint. Following is one such account by explorer Thomas Mitchell, from his *Three Expeditions Into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, published in London in 1839:

"The *bommereng*, a thin curved missile, can be thrown by a skillful hand, so as to rise upon the air, and thus to deviate from the ordinary path of projectiles, its crooked course being, nevertheless, equally under control. It is about two feet four inches long and is cut, according to the grain, from the curved parts of acacia or other standing trees of compact hardwood. They usually weigh about 9 1/2 ounces. One side, which is the uppermost in throwing, is slightly convex, and is sometimes elaborately carved. The lower side is flat, and plain. The bommereng is held, not as a sabre, but sickle-wise, or concave towards the thrower; and, as a rotatory motion is imparted to it when sent off, the air presents so much resistance to the flat side, and so little to the sharp edge as it cuts forward, that the long sustained flight of the whirling missile, seems independent of the common effect of gravitation.

"The native, from long practice, can do astonishing things with this weapon. He seems to determine, with great certainty, what its crooked and distant flight shall be, and how and where it is to end. Thus he frequently amuses himself in hurling the formidable weapon to astonishing heights and distances, from one spot to which the missile returns, to fall beside him. Sometimes, the earth is made a *fulcrum*, to which the bommereng descends only to resume a longer and more sustained flight, or to leap, perhaps, over a tree, and strike an object behind it.

"The contrivance probably originated in the utility of such a missile for the purpose of killing ducks, where they are very numerous, as on the interior rivers and lagoons, and where, accordingly, we find it much more in use than on the sea-coast, and better made, being often covered with good carving."



Around and About

Enthusiast Steven Quan of San Francisco reports that a boat called Boomerang recently won the St. Francis Yacht Club's Big Boat — i.e., vessels over 60 meters — championship in San Francisco Bay. He thinks the multimillion-dollar vessel should fly the U.S. Boomerang Association flag. Good thinking! . . . Carolyn Hakansson has relocated to 865 NE 122nd Ave., No. 8, Portland, OR 97230, for graduate study and announces that her technical treatise on boomerangs done for Reed College remains available. Now paying "real world" (viz., not undergraduate) rates for copying, she pegs the cost of the 100-page volume at \$25 ppd. — When the author of this newsletter introduced boomerangs to the Flying Karamazovs, a Broadway juggling team, he was surprised that these five pros were not more immediately adept with them. Leslie Borbely of Morgantown, WV, suggests the answer; a juggler himself, Borbely says, "Perhaps all of my juggling has foreshortened my triceps muscles and I can't give enough force (spin?) to throwing. Follow-through's also a weakness for me from much juggling and bouncing of objects close to my body." Interesting . . . Turner Ragsdale of Birmingham has joined the Navy and is seeing the world. He expects to visit Australia and can show off his mighty boomerang arm there. A former tennis professional, Ragsdale once won a Yamaha fast serve contest with a delivery clocked at upwards of 140 m.p.h. Look out Bob Burwell! . . . As a promotion for his Come Back Press books, particularly *How to Catch a Flying Boomerang*, H. L. Mayhew is offering free a periodic leaflet called *Grab Bag*. Send him a stamped, self-addressed envelope and he'll send you issue No. 4, which is a reprint of *Sports Illustrated's* fine article on the U.S.-Australian 1984 challenge series, and issue No. 5, on boomerang topics. Send the SASE to him at Box 07652, Columbus, OH 43207, and he guarantees the envelope will boomerang back to you — filled . . .

Here's yet another source for high-grade plywood suitable for boomerang construction: Alpha Aviation Supply Co., Box 641, Greenville, TX 75401. A catalogue costs \$2. Recommended by the discriminating Eric Darnell . . . Having noted a recent newsletter section on how to finish boomerangs, David Ratliff contributes a suggestion of his own. "I've been using a finish that may not be common. In this part of the country (Mississippi), it seems everyone has guns. One of these users asked if I ever used Tru Oil. I tried the stuff, named in this case Birchwood Casey Tru Oil Gun Stock Finish, and found it gives birchwood a honey gold color. Nice. Look for it in the gun cases area of a store, not with the paints. I follow up with Kiwi neutral shoe polish." . . . Prevention magazine out of Emmaus, PA, has a boomerang in first place on its "healthful gifts" shopping list. The boomerang "can indeed reverse direction in midair," says the advertising copy, "and will get you romping in the sunshine to prove it" . . . Learning Annex, a private educational company with divisions around the country, is giving boomeranging a try for those seeking something new and different in the way of a hobby. Both the New York City and Atlanta branches held courses in the making and throwing of 'rangs last fall, taught by Carl Naylor and Dave Philpott, respectively. "Here's your chance to be the first boomerang whiz on your block," advertises the Learning Annex; "don't miss this irresistible new game!" . . . J.C. Crimmins Co. of New York has premiered its Mobil Oil-funded film series for students titled "Challenge of the Unknown." One of the programs, which will be furnished free to thousands of schools, focuses on the boomerang and features Peter Ruhf and Holly English-Payne as performers.



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by Steve Brosnihan

News From Australia

Les and Arthur Janetski, octogenarian brothers from Albury, were honored for their contribution to sports in New South Wales when they recently received the Premier's Senior Citizens Award at a ceremony. Les, 83, and Arthur, 80, were photographed kicking up their heels — literally. Before retirement, they were noted vaudeville tap dance performers. Now they make some of the most beautiful, coveted boomerangs in the world, as well as collecting them for their backyard museum. Both remain competition throwers to be reckoned with. "We thank all of you Americans," they wrote about the recent successful Aussie challenge tour of the U.S., "for your kindness and hospitality to our boys while they were over there. They had a whale of a time." . . . Journalist Paul Bryden of Sydney is readying yet another book on boomerangs. He reports that his volume is in the editing stage and has been well

received by both his publisher and a leading anthropologist . . . Ken Colbung, an Aboriginal leader, has created a "boom-arena" at the Aboriginal complex at Lake Gngarra, outside Perth. It's a funnel-shaped, grassy arena designed for teaching tourists as well as demonstrations and filming. Colbung and his colleague, Jurgnen Pruess, are going ahead with plans to serve as host to any visiting American team that may show up, either in connection with South Australia's 150th anniversary year celebration (jointly with the state of Texas), the 1987 America's Cup yachting defense at Perth, or the 1988 Australian Bicentennial. Pruess sees such a combination demonstration-competition as shining a useful light on Aboriginal culture. "The art, craft, recreational aspects, and sheer magic of the boomerang afford a beautiful opportunity for Aboriginal people to identify with," he says. "It will give them back their dignity and help clear up discrimination. We look forward to a close encounter with American boomerang-wranglers" . . . Graeme Pretty, senior curator at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide, wants his city included in any American team tour. "I am concerned to see Aborigines and Australians take up the sport with a bit more vim and vigor than heretofore," he says. "I'll see what I can organize." Graeme is summoning help on the venture from Barrie Forsythe, the Boomerang Association of Australia's State of South Australia leader. Although Barrie lives a long way from Adelaide in Port Augusta, he is now talking of setting up a club in Adelaide to supplement his own . . . Dr. Lorin Hawes nostalgically visited the spot where he made his first M-17 boomerang 25 years ago, the "scene of the crime," as he phrases it, since boomerang manufacture took him out of the academic life and led to his very successful career as entrepreneur. "A rather idyllic beach on the Capricorn Coast near the town of Yeppoon," he says of the spot, "it almost vanishes at high tide and then becomes more than half a mile wide at low tide. The whole area is renowned for the abnormal tidal activity and is most interesting. Most of the interesting parts of Australia are here in Queensland, it seems." . . . The '84 Sydney boomerang open drew five minutes worth of coverage on a city sports show — unusual attention for competitive boomeranging in Australia. "It seems to me," says Peter Jonson, a key Boomerang Association of Australia official, "that boomeranging may be poised to go." . . . Upcoming tournaments: the New South Wales championship will be held in Sydney March 10, the '85 national tournament at Albury March 23-24 . . . Jackie Byham, the self-styled "last black man on the Murray River," reports that the business he bequeathed upon retirement to his nephew Peter Byham is flourishing — "He is turning out 1,000-odd boomerangs a week." Jackie keeps his hand in by making an occasional hand-carved stick of mulga and keeps busy fishing for trout, although "the Euro-carp have the Murray buggered." On his health, he reports, "I had two months of some wog which had me at pretty low ebb. Since then I have felt as fit as a mallee bull (but not quite as dangerous)." Cheers to Jackie Byham, a living national treasure of Australia.

Tournaments Here and There

As an addendum to the Page 1 coverage on the Washington, D.C., night tourney, following is a report on some of the other late season throws around the country:

Long Island. Although he now has a permanent sore shoulder and before that he had never claimed to have quite the arm of Al Gerhards or Dave Schummy or Peter Ruhf or Bob Burwell, Eric Darnell showed that brains can beat brawn at Holly English-Payne's annual Long Island Boomerang Open. Using an aluminum boomerang of his own manufacture (painted with day-glo stripes for necessary visibility), the Vermont inventor took first place in Long Distance over an all-star field of 35 with a throw of 105 yards outward with accurate return. How'd he do it? Tuning is the answer. Eric took a table right out on the field with him and after every toss put his 'rang on it to adjust it slightly for improved performance. Finally, he got the optimum result. Larry Ruhf took second with 99 yards. Eric's 'ranging mate and protege, John Flynn, won Fast Catch with a remarkable 24.3 second clocking — on six throws; one of his tosses was short of the 20-meter mandatory distance and thus did not count and he had to make an extra toss to make up for this miscalculation. Remarkable — particularly when one recalls that the world record in this event was 33 seconds just three years ago. Ray DiCecco took first in One-Hand-Behind-the-Back Catching but from there on it was all Barney Ruhe for the over-all title with four firsts, in MTA, 40 Meter Round, Suicide (with a foot catch, edging Ray Laurent), and One-Hand-Consecutive-Catching. Unchallenged in Juggling, Barney iced his cake by pulling off 111 in a row as a demonstration. A hot tub gala and party with more than 100 prizes divided up between competitors topped off the cold but pleasant day.

Hendersonville, Tn. Lewis Sly, Rusty Harding, and Terry Johnson introduced competitive boomeranging to Tennessee with a first-ever state fling that was successful enough to get the trio thinking about organizing a boomerang club and an exhibit for a local museum. Interested people in that region are invited to write Dr. Sly at 136 Lake Park Rd., Hendersonville, for particulars.

Germantown, Ky. Meanwhile, in the adjacent Bluegrass State Mark Morgan held a first-ever boomerang day that began as a workshop in the making and throwing of boomerangs and culminated in a small competitive throw — just the way the Smithsonian got boomeranging started in the late 1960s. Morgan in-

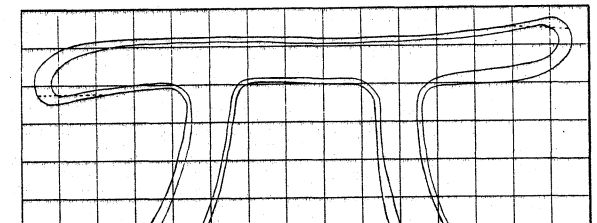
Morgantown, WV. Dean Helfer's annual Boomerang Jam at the University of West Virginia drew tristate (Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia) representation and initial weather calm enough for decent throwing before the gale moved in. So things worked out well enough, although the day over-all was pronounced a mixed success. Helfer took Accuracy and Aussie Round himself, Steve Greb got Fast Catch, and Shelley Mack, the excellent woman thrower down from Pittsburgh, scored in Suicide. The day before, three members of Dean's university club gave a demonstration at a big homecoming football game, with Dean doing commentary on the P.A. system ("Got a free press box lunch out of it!" he says). The assembled throwers concluded the weekend by making plans for tristate throws in 1985, and Dean restates his challenge to other universities to take on his Mountaineers' Boomerang Club in matches next spring.



Boomerang Pi

by Tony Slater

This attractive boomerang is made from 1/8" (3.2 mm) 3-ply birch plywood. The squares are 25 mm and each of the 4 arms is slightly undercut at the end. Tony suggests that you throw this 'rang with plenty of spin, slightly upwards and with no layover. You should then be rewarded with a flight of about 20 meters range ending with a nice slow hover permitting a very easy catch.





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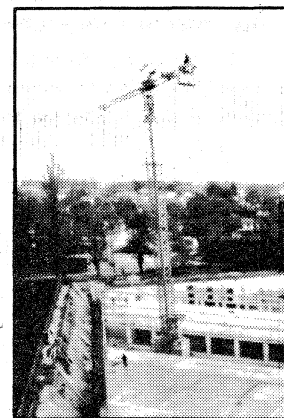
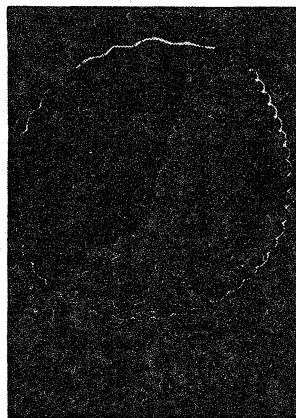
In one of the most remarkable boomerang action pictures ever made, news photographer Jonathan Sherrill captures Barney Ruhe (above) making a catch with the feet while cousin Peter Ruhf gets set to make the same difficult grab. The scene was the Consecutive Catch (Suicide) final at the annual New England Open at Amherst, Massachusetts.



Learn to throw boomerangs, and see the world. That's what cute Baby Ben Loveland of Victoria, an Australian national junior champion at the incredible age of 2 1/2, advises. He's pictured here by Ali Miller during his 1983 Lands' End tour of the U.S. Coming up for Ben is a free trip to Japan with his demonstration thrower grandfather Bunny Read. Ben will appear in a film about global super tots.



The USBA president herself, Ali Fujino Miller.



In an apparent first, Jacques Thomas of Lyon, France, photographed a boomerang's flight path from directly above. The night shot was made from the jib of a construction crane 36 meters over a building site. "Unfortunately," he says, "I could not climb higher and, even with a 24mm lens, the camera angle was too short. More, the wind began to blow hard, so I have only one picture that is pretty correct. But the observations were quite good and confirm what Felix Hess has established in his studies. Now I am in search of a higher crane!" Ten people participated in the photography project, spread over two nights, and the detailed results are included in Jacques's just-issued book *Magie du Boomerang*, copies of which are available in the U.S. from Rich Harrison, 311 Park Ave., Monroe, LA 71201, at \$25 ppd. Persons elsewhere in the world can order direct from M. Thomas at 24 rue Tronchet, 69006 Lyon, France.



From a secret source, here's a photograph of an Australian boomerang throwing team in full regalia getting into shape to help defend the Lands' End Boomerang Cup from the coming U.S. challenge.

Mad Dogs and an Englishman

In a recent essay in the London *Sunday Telegraph*, *Punch* magazine editor Alan Coren, showing enough knowledge about boomerangs to indicate he must be an adept himself, calls boomerang-throwing "the ideal, the quintessential, urban Sunday sport . . . it is an enormously impressive thing to do; and there is no better reason for pursuing a Sunday sport than to knock the onlooker's eye out (metaphorically, mind you)." He continues his charming, iconoclastic essay article:

"All you do is buy a boomerang, hold it by the chamfered wing vertically, and throw it into the breeze. It flies 80 yards, pauses, sniffs the thermals, then gently banks and, like a giant sycamore seed, flies back.

"It takes some 12 seconds, during which brief span, soccer games stop, birds flee, tennis players gawk, joggers collide with skateboarders, unattached women fall hopelessly in love with you, and dogs go mad.

"The last is the best. For all those who use the London parks and thus spend much time dreaming hopelessly of revenge for the turded welt, there is no sweeter answer than the boomerang: Pull back the arm, let fly the stick and the canine wallies are off like bullets in pursuit. But it does not land, they lose sight of it, they disappear into the shrubbery, they crash into fencing, they howl in frustration, their minds begin to go, their dim owners plod after them, yelling fruitlessly, and get bitten."

'I'm Wearing These Stitches Proudly'

For more than two decades, Duncan MacLennan, proprietor of boomerang shops in the Kings Cross section of Sydney, has been giving weekly classes in 'rang-throwing to all comers in a nearby park. His Boomerang School has provoked many tales from Duncan, to which can be added the following new one:

"A European chap came into the shop to buy a real Aboriginal boomerang to take home to the folks. He selected a beautiful black wattle stick 22 inches across. 'Could I just see it fly, so that I can truthfully tell them in Europe that it really does come back?' he asked. Sunday at 11 a.m. he showed up at Rushcutters Bay Park with the boomerang. I had about 25 tourists taking lessons. I excused myself for a minute to show the guy that the boomerang really worked, threw it out 40 meters; the boomerang returned about 10 meters short. I have a strong young New Zealand pupil, Robin Whittaker, and called him over and asked him to throw his best shot. 'Aim toward the Sydney Harbor bridge,' I told him, 'and wait until the park is clear of people. I know this boomerang will go a long distance.' A small jetty protrudes into the bay approximately 70

meters from where I teach. With not a soul in sight, Robin threw hard and low. The boomerang shot over the sea wall and out towards the bridge. It went 70 meters before it started to turn! I thought it would fall into the water, but it just kept going down toward the jetty, turned and came in alongside the jetty, hit the sea wall, jumped over it, skipped right across a man's head who had appeared from nowhere, put him down with blood everywhere, continued on into the park another 30 meters, finally came to rest about 15 meters from where it was thrown. I took the man home, called a doctor who put in six stitches; meanwhile I was having a silent heart attack since police came after an anonymous phone call from some public-spirited troublemaker. The police were convinced it was an accident and that my classes were conducted in an orderly fashion after I gave them an explanation of the difference between modern plywood boomerangs and real Aboriginal boomerangs with their unknown quality. The victim was a rich retired Dutch gentleman who was exhorted by his fellow condominium owners to sue the pants off me, and get rid of me once and all from the park. I sent him a nice box of Dutch chocolates (no pun intended) and called to see him the following week. 'Son,' he said, 'I'm okay, and I'm not going to sue you. I think you're the only real Australian in the locality, and I'm wearing these stitches proudly.' I said, 'Sir, I don't wish to add insult to injury, but would you be offended if I brought you a real Aboriginal boomerang as a gift, similar to the one that caused this disaster?' 'My boy,' he said, 'I thought you'd never offer. I will be delighted.' Sure enough, it's hanging over the wall of his study in Darling Point and he still waves at us each Sunday morning. What a great guy! After this episode, Robin Whittaker gave up throwing Aboriginal boomerangs, but he went on to win the Sydney championship in boomerang throwing. The European customer whose boomerang caused the damage ran out of the park after seeing the result of his stick being thrown, but he came back after the police left the scene and retrieved his boomerang. He said to me before he left the park, "What a story this boomerang can tell. They will be proud of it in Europe."



Magpie Boomerang Bags

What do throwers carry in their boomerang bags, both utilitarian and oddball? This question, posed in the last newsletter, elicited a batch of interesting responses, among which those of living national treasure Barney Ruhe (Bunny LaRue, in his latest *persona*) and Ray Rieser are clearly among the early leaders in the competition for a marvelous prize boomerang. Entries are still invited in the competition, and foreign ones particularly solicited. *Please* typewrite them. The contest winner will be announced in 1985. To retain their flavor, the letters that follow are largely unedited. (Next issue, paraphernalia in Eric Darnell's and Ben Ruhe's kits, etc.)

By Barney Ruhe

"1. Pennies plus aluminum tape, for reweighting b's for wind, retuning — for going from 19 to 21 meters for fast catch, or from 39 to 41 meters in aussie round. 2. Lots of post office rubber bands, to keep b's in stack presses, prevents warping from sun and heat and steam. You can pick up a b' at the nationals and discover, too late, in air that it has a warp. 3. Leather glove for right hand. Especially if bag contains a Willy Urban "lawn mower." 4. "Green Gripper" (R): "Wipe on grip and control" — a sticky towel that gets fingers tacky so you can "bury" a 40 meter distance b' below the horizon — Carl Naylor "rubber band" style — in order to get it to come all the way back in no wind. Also great to rub over whole b' for sure catch (pitcher's rosin, plus sweat, combine comparably. Maybe the best of all is orange juice gooo). 5. plumber's toilet ball — cut in half, with the bolt filed down to a spike, sliced to spread to fit the head, rubber padding taped on the copper toilet ball, all to make an apple perch, as the spike pokes through. 6. Elfedrichler's red stocking hat . . . for William Telling. 7. Sewing needle and thread: to sew around the widest girth of an apple. Next pull the string through the apple's core, et voila! A secretly split apple, (thanks to Al Gerhard for this idea), which breaks a bit easier on impact of self-targeted b'. PPS: the apple's skin is often tough enough to resist the most sinister weighted 40 m. b', e.g. musashi. 8. Alternative, also kept in bag: toothpicks to keep pre-split apple together until the denouement. Let's face it, folks, the unruly mob craves having the apple split on contact. No roll-offs. 9. Apple. 10. Arm and forehead sweat bands. Can hitch armband up to elbow to aid in warding off tennis elbow. 11. Elbow and knee braces. This is an old boys' sport. That's me. 12. Cleats: required. B'er is a launching platform. Must dig in for stability, and power push-off. How many times have you felt a tiny slip on the grass at launch, re-directing that b' that fatal bit. Great too for jump-off for the bunny-hop, kamikaze tactic for catching mid-air as one hurls toward consec catch foot catch). (Remember to scream mid-air for 13c. kamikaze leap.) 13. You knew this was coming; you waited this long to get it; here it is: FETISH. This is personal: can be a striped red and black sock with a sea stone and an abo thigh bone knob. Can be a peg dressed with emu feather, peregrine tail feathers and claws, black aussie eagle tail feather; peg is painted, koala turd ball, red string, redwing blackbird — entire, and clothespin-wooden-painted emblem of instant satori-flash zen-society, (a secret b'er society, for which the members are unaware of the secret). Fetish useful in dialogue with furry bear wind spirits that noxiously bat the boomerang mid-air, waiting till after launch to descend and derail impeccably aimed b'. 14. Polaroid camera to catch wind spirit in the act, not yet successfully photographed. But I swear it's there. 15. Cigarette and match, to light up when the breeze is variable and soooo light only smoke will discover its path. 16. Flask and Jamison's scotch whiskey, when the winds are soooo wild one needs a nip of courage. 17. Strips of

fiberglass and 5 minute epoxy, to repair the b' that just broke that will win. (A roll of thin steel tape was vogue this summer, until it was discovered that an upflap made a cutting edge. Forget this one . . . new craze is carbon fiber cloth (strong). 18. Dog and travois for caddying all the above . . . with the hundred b's taken to a contest by the neurotic competitor who has a b' for every wind and pressure differential and energy level and contest type. And remains undecided. 19. Blanket, to lay b's on to keep off the grass. 20. Notepad for tuning comments on the field testing, to take back to the shop for reshaping decisions. 21. Stopwatch, for f.c. and MTA practice tests. 22. As with #1, aluminum tape doubles as wing spoiler, when taped onto top of wings with a crease flap raised, acts as brake, drops b' without kiting . . . in heavy wind for Fast Catch and accuracy. Darnell's. 23. Unbreakable plastic b' for urban assault. Good for throwing around monuments in the city square. 24. Sheleghleigh, heavy wooden stick, for un-treeing forlorn b's. 25. Power snacks 26. Mud-geeraba dirt. 27. Fingernail clipper. 28. Wind sock plepole and string O.K. 29. USBA membership applications, for voyeurs. 30. Chess set/portable, for playing Naylor & Forrester; one queen is missing: their handicap. 31. Indoor b', for bar bragging, and setting MTA records while crossing datelines in planes. 32. Dog tags; donating b's to science, when struck by teed off golfers teeing off. 33. Sparklers, to tape on for niteflite, pseudo-darnell style. 34. B's. Natch. 35. More b's. 36. Etc. 37. Subway tokens, to get to sheep meadow at dawn. 38. Baby frisbee dayglo cones, for instant circle markers. Sawed off tennis balls O.K. 39. Timely permit, to foil irascible pompous polo riders. 40. Sextant, binoculars, megaphone, walkie-talkie, for unbelievable distance measures. 41. Change of socks. 42. Dog, to fetch boomerangs that act like ash trays. 43. Kite, for those windy ones. 44. Frisbee, when you feel like slumming into un-thought. 45. Butcher paper, for stealing tracings of the latest MTA designs. 46. Cold cash for buying what you can't steal."

By Leni Barker

"I make and carry a rather large bag with lots of pockets. At times it contains quite a miscellany of sticks, equipment, paraphenalia and junk. Other than the booms, the most important item in the bag is my 4-in-1 rasp, which I always carry for fine tuning boomerangs. There is pencil and paper for giving out and taking names and addresses and making notes to myself and a catalog or two to give away. I like to keep some paper surgical tape in there to cover scrapes and cuts on my fingers and tape for strapping coins to 'rangs. If the ground is wet, I take along a towel for drying hands and 'rangs. If it's real cold, or if I'm throwing the Comeback then a pair of gloves goes in the bag. On days when there's a gusty wind, I carry sandpaper and a boom to work on while I wait for the wind to die down. I keep half a dozen redwood boomerangs, some plastic four-bladers and a few cheap plastic

Magpie Boomerang Bags (continued ...)

boomerangs handy for teaching people to throw and giving away. A wind meter is often included for quantitative analysis of wind conditions. Other things have found their way into The Bag: my lunch and thermos jug, shirt, shoes, eyeglasses, wallet, keys, letter, matches and sparklers. And who knows what else. Also, rubber bands for four-bladers and a frisbee for the hell of it."

By Herb Smith

"On the latest clear out, my bag contained the following items: Small tin of assorted, thin lead discs and a roll of plastic adhesive tape for weighting boomerangs. Leather finger guard to use when index finger gets sore. One pair of gloves for cold weather throwing. One extra woolen cardigan. A piece of soft cloth for drying off dew and moisture from boomerang. One note book and pen for memory jottings. One small repair kit for damaged boomerangs. One 50 yard measuring line. One 6 inch iron nail for pegging the measuring line. Two pieces of a broken boomerang. Two tennis balls, 3 golf balls. (Picked up around the field when throwing). One cricket ball and a couple of golf tees. One 4 inch square of perspex, picked up on the field (thought it might come in handy for something or other.) Several elastic bands for grouping boomerangs together. One wooden peg to mark my throwing spot. Needless to say, most of these odd items have now been discarded and my bag is much lighter."

By Ray Rieser

"1. First the bag itself. I use a back pack made by Wilderness Experience called a Kluttersack. It is used for mountain climbings and is light and *waterproof*. It has a single large compartment on the bottom which will hold the longest boomerangs I have (the Bakwood) and the biggest hooks with ease. The top is a separate compartment that is zipped in which I store small items which can be easily lost and may scratch my boomerangs. I like a back pack because it leaves your hands free when walking around. 2. I carry long athletic cotton socks in which I store my boomerangs. I also carry rubber bands. I place similar shaped boomerangs flat side to flat side, put rubber bands around the arms and insert into a sock. It prevents warpage and scratching. Also the sock will keep away moisture from the surface of the 'rang if I miss it prior to repacking. 3. I carry a large trash bag. I do not like putting wood 'rangs directly on the ground. I feel the moisture will warp them. I lay the bag down and put my back pack and

for scraping, etc. I carry a cloth to clean mud and moisture off the 'rang after it has hit the ground. I also use a chamois to dry the 'rangs completely once they are clean (I worry about warpage). 7. I carry an assortment of change to use to weight the arms of the 'rang for wind and testing. 8. I carry lead-tape for the same reason. The wide variety I get from a boomerang supply house and the more narrow from the golf shops. (The army knife cuts it.) 9. I carry scotch magic tape (the only good cellophane tape) to attach the coins and also to change airfoils. (A toothpick can be placed under the tape to increase lift or decrease it when experimenting with homemade 'rangs.) 10. I also carry glass-fiber packing tape to repair 'rangs that get broken. I do not believe in glue repairs in the field. The fast set glues are not that great, and the problems of alignment are substantial. I repair my 'rangs at home with a slow set glue and clamps. 11. I use a piece of cloth to mark my position when I am throwing so I get back to the same place each time. I do not use the boomerang bag for this. I am afraid I will forget and step on it. 12. I only carry the boomerangs I intend to use on a given day. The rest are left home in safety. 13. When I am testing my own boomerangs, I carry a small half-round file and a piece of plywood 2" x 3" and fine sandpaper to modify airfoils. 14. I wear a watch with a stopwatch in it to time flights — especially when going to a competition. It helps me decide which 'rangs are the fastest — for the purpose of purchase. 15. Sunglasses, and lotion (all day competitions). 16. I have a first aid kit in the car — (this was used in Cleveland at the tournament there). 17. I also carry magazines in the car trunk — glossies like *Town and Country* and *Vogue, Teen*, etc; it helps to occupy the time of those who are with me and are not so enthusiastic about boomerangs after the first hour. 18. Money, to buy more boomerangs, especially at competitions. 19. One of the most important things I carry is a plastic ring-binder, with plastic sheets. It is waterproof and I put into the plastic pages the following: a) throwing instructions. I use the Oregon Hat instruction. b) Hess's path plots from the *Scientific American* article showing how flight changes with different throwing conditions. It helps me analyze my errors. c) Info from *Many Happy Returns, Return Mail & Hawes' Boomerangs*, on throwing when calm, windy and warping (Darnell insert). Hawes shows flight paths when testing newly made 'rangs. d) A copy of *Introduction to Boomerangs*, by John Mauro. It has concise various designs I can't buy. I use a roll of architectural paper about 15" wide. 21. Paper and pencils for names and addresses and notes. 22. I carry in my car catalogs of suppliers of boomerangs to hand out to the truck

Three Limericks

By Barry Falkner

Boomerangs can be lots of fun,
Especially if you know how it's done,
But it can all get quite hairy,
So always be wary,
If in doubt after throwing, just run.

A friend of mine said, and I quote —
"If you're going to throw 'rangs from a boat,
There's nothing as good
As one made of wood,
Then if you should sink it'll float."

From an old clock case of mine
I made a 'rang that works fine,
I had hoped to go every day for a throw,
But now I just haven't the time.



Poem

By Terry Reitbauer

It leaves me and soars like a bird,
But it has no life of its own.
Against the clouds, a curved shadow,
Careering, veering, almost disappearing
in the blue, blue sky.

Where will it go?
To the place of its birth,
To the land of desert & 'roo?

Will it crash?
Will it smash into a star,
Or rest on rooftop or tree?

For a short time, it hums through space.
And then, like the most faithful of friends,
It returns to the hand
that gave it life.

(Terry Reitbauer is the wife of George Reitbauer,
member of the 1984 U.S. national boomerang team.)

Trading Post

Want to buy or trade: high technology or fine hand-crafted boomerangs. Top of the line items only. I have some beautiful lap joint boomerangs with complex patterns on tips for trade only. Contact: Ted Bailey, 2967 Gracewood Road, Toledo, OH 43613.

The Far Side

By Gary Larson



'Freezing' the Boomerang in Flight

Aerospace engineer Ted Bailey of Toledo suggests a technique for slowing down the apparent rotation of a descending boomerang. This, in principle, makes the catch easier. "As the 'rang drops down to you in a hover, blink your eyes rapidly to produce an effect like a stroboscopic light," he advises. "The visual blur becomes the two distinct airfoils, each rotating about the boomerang center of mass at an integer multiple of the fundamental rate of rotation." Got that? Do give this eyesight trick a try. It does seem to help catching, perhaps by focusing attention. Indubitably, an odd sensation is experienced by the catcher. Ted continues: "Humming at the appropriate frequency will also stroboscopically 'freeze' a rotating pattern." For details on this even stranger phenomenon, he advises that an article by Jearl Walker in the February 1984 *Scientific American* magazine be consulted.



Best Analogy of the Month

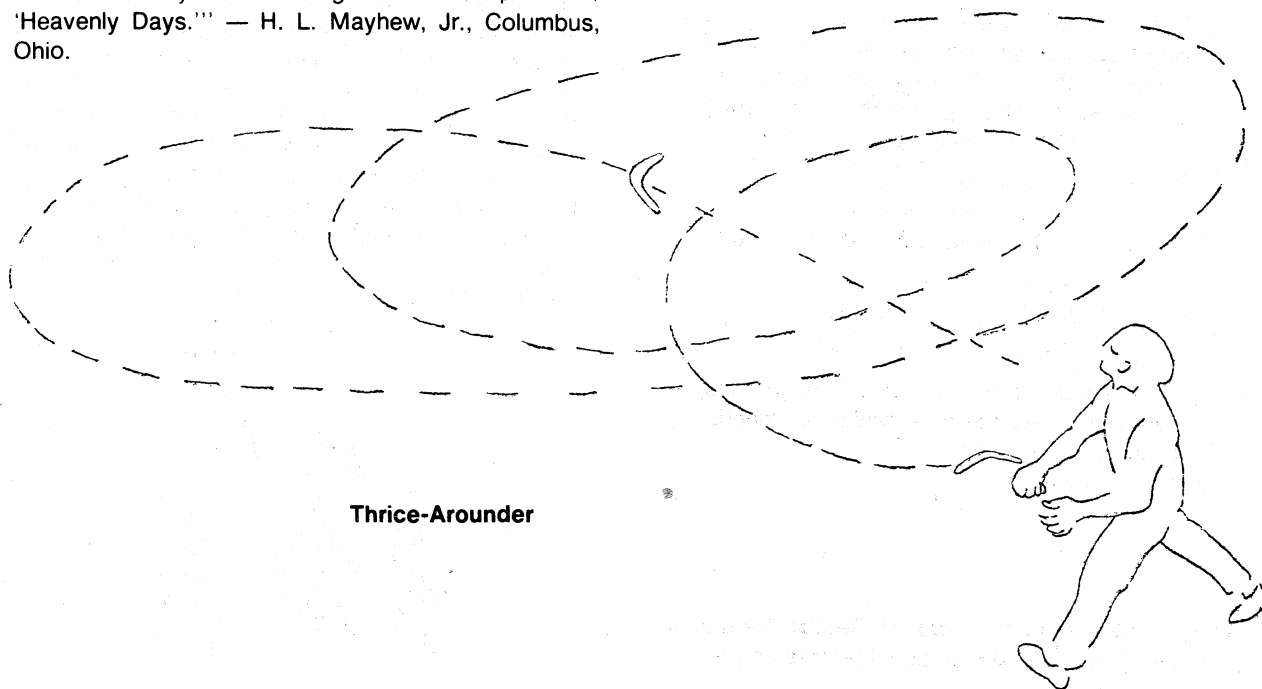
When Barney Ruhe opens his boomerang bag out on the field, he sees his sticks as a pack of excited, yelping hounds, all saying: "Pick me up, I wanna be thrown, I wanna fly!" . . . And best opening paragraph: "The whole idea of throwing something forcefully forward, then watching it irrationally turn and head back toward you as if to take revenge, is more awesome than it is comical. Such is a boomerang. Without its ability to return, it is just another stick." John Mauro's lead to his guest column on 'rang in the Nov. 6, '84 Richmond *News-Leader*.

Correspondence

The telephone rang one recent Sunday afternoon. It was the rector of the Church of St. Edward, who had a friend interested in boomerangs. Could they come over and see my collection? Anytime, I said. And maybe see me throw one? Yes, of course. They weren't looking for artifacts; they wanted to see some real, throwable, catchable boomerangs. They arrived, and were amazed at the number and variety of boomerangs I've managed to collect — and wanted to see them in action. So, off we went, rector and friend and me, to the park for some boomerang fun. It was a good session. The rector's friend made a throw and catch after short instruction and demonstration. The rector, alas, didn't quite get the hang of it — but promised to read my *How to Catch a Flying Boomerang* book, and practice with the 'rang presented as a gift. There's no reason why this Episcopal rector won't eventually become an adept boomerang . . . even though her name happens to be Sue — Sue Reid. 'Call me Sue, or you can call me Miss Reid if you want to be formal,' she explained, but added with a smile, 'but, please, don't call me Father Reid.' When she finally gets the knack, I assured her, she'll have an entirely new meaning to the old expression, 'Heavenly Days.'" — H. L. Mayhew, Jr., Columbus, Ohio.

In another of his entertaining letters, Mayhew suggests: "We have novice, intermediate, advanced, etc., categories of boomerang throwers. And now looms the possibility of separate male/female categories for keeping records of some events. But we *still* don't have a category for over-the-hill-but-still-in-there-pitching. How about an "Old Buzzard" classification for those of us who have been around for more than thirty odd years, plus the thirty even years in between? That might not be the best choice — but it's better than "Tough Old Turkey." . . . Here is some inventive thinking by Carl Hillier of San Diego: "I fly my boomerangs near Mission Bay in San Diego, the water isn't too much of a hazard, but there are a few boomerang hungry trees! So I developed a *rang roper* to carry in my boomerang bag that made rang retrieval quite easy. Select a nice sized rock, about the size of a baseball, tie a rope around it and tape it tight to the rock with packing tape. I use a nylon rope about 25 feet long (the length of the rope can be changed depending on the height of the trees). Throwing the rock up at the rang may knock it down, but if you miss, and you throw high enough, the rope may catch the rang and pull it down. If *that* misses, then you've probably got the rope over the limbs, and you can shake the limb by tugging on the rope till the rang falls! I'm finding that I'm throwing things into a tree only once or twice now to retrieve my rangs, rather than into the night! After the rang drops, just let go of the rope, and the rock falls to the ground. That's the most time saving item in my boomerang bag.

Drawing by Peter Ruht



Thrice-Arounder