

# Many Happy Returns

The Official Newsletter of the United States Boomerang Association

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david hirsch photo

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## President's Letter

Hello USBA members,

*It's that time of the year again, the time when boomerangs become a viable hobby. The snow has melted, or in my case the rain is less and less frequent. It seems that while I may not love throwing in the winter, every spring when I make my first few throws my love of boomerangs is right there waiting. I encourage you to go out and get back in touch with boomerangs if you haven't. Hopefully your passion will be right there waiting for you as well. While I have not thrown often since returning from the WBC in Brazil, I have been busy working on the USBA.*

*The state of the USBA is not what I would like it to be, nor where it should be. We have had declining membership for a number of years now. For the vitality of the organization this is something that needs to be corrected. While there are numerous reasons that could be cited for this decline I think a large part is the USBA has not given the benefits it promised its members. The board is working to correct the decreased value in your membership and restore the USBA to past levels of success and then to the next level.*

*Earlier in the year the board identified the most pressing issues we felt the USBA was facing. We looked at what our membership was promised, what new benefits they might enjoy, and how we could bring new members into our community. While these measures individually will not solve all of the USBA's problems, they are a strong point from which to start. Here is what we are working on:*

*1. The board is actively working on returning the MHR to what it was promised to be - a multiple issue per year publication. Allowing the decline was a mistake. Betsy Lew, Richard and Logan are working to solve the problems with the MHR. I personally am looking forward to getting the MHR and seeing what is happening in the boomerang community.*

*2. We want to make membership in the USBA fun and special to maintain a strong base of members while also bringing in new blood. Mark Legg, myself, and Tucson Don are working to come up with ideas that will hopefully bring some excitement back to your USBA membership.*

*3. The USBA website needs an overhaul. This is possibly the most important issue we face for the sustained health of the USBA. Since the internet is how people communicate today, it is important that we make ourselves available to those who want to learn about not only the USBA, but the craft and sport of boomerangs. Adam Stankiewicz, David Hirsch, and Dan Bower are working to bring the USBA back to the technological forefront.*

*We all have different feelings of what the USBA means to us. For me the USBA is primarily a group of friends who share a passion for the hobby and sport of boomerangs. I have been fortunate to be surrounded by countless special people who are also talented throwers. Their love of boomerangs has rubbed off on me. I would love to see an increase in the number of tournaments. Tournaments are a place where the bonds in our community are formed. Competition brings an excitement to boomerangs that can renew past feelings, or for a new comer start them down the road to obsession if they are lucky. So does making boomerangs together or teaching and demonstrating boomerang throwing! The point I am trying to convey is that getting together to share what we love is what will keep us growing and evolving as an organization, group, and as individuals.*

*If you have an idea or concerns about the USBA please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the board. We learn from constructive criticism and are driven by your support. I hope to see all of you at tournaments throughout the year.*

*Sincerely,*

*James Stickney, President United States Boomerang Association*

## USBA INFORMATION

*The USBA is a non-profit, volunteer organization. Our mission is to promote the sport, craft and science of boomerangs in the United States. Contact the USBA through a member of the Board of Directors, or by joining our Yahoo group:*

### **USBA\_info**

#### Board of Directors

<b>President – James Stickney</b>	<b>jimbeam704@yahoo.com</b>
<b>Vice President – Dan Bower</b>	<b>darthdude@gmail.com</b>
<b>Treasurer – Betsylew Miale-Gix</b>	<b>rangsters@frontier.com</b>
<b>Secretary – Richard Bower</b>	<b>bubbajohnson@gmail.com</b>

#### Directors at Large

<b>Mark Legg</b>	<b>uberrang@gmail.com</b>
<b>Logan Broadbent</b>	<b>broadbentlogan@gmail.com</b>
<b>Adam Stankiewicz</b>	<b>adam@unicycletoday.com</b>
<b>Don Monroe</b>	<b>monroe47@q.com</b>
<b>David Hirsch</b>	<b>duckhead@airmail.net</b>

**Send commentary, photos, articles, tournament results, to MHR Editor, Bob Foresi:  
Raforesiassoc@verizon.net**

**MHR NEEDS YOU TO CONTRIBUTE TO KEEP IT THE TOP NEWSLETTER AROUND!**

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#### **JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

**USBA Membership, 3351 236<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Brier, WA 98036**

#### **USBA MEMBERSHIP INFO**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City, State, Zip** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone (optional)** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email (optional)** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Membership Type**

\_\_\_ **Electronic** \$15.00  
\_\_\_ **E Plus** \$ 20.00  
\_\_\_ **Family** \$ 35.00  
\_\_\_ **Internat'l** \$ 25.00  
\_\_\_ **Lifetime** \$ 250.00

\_\_\_ **New** \_\_\_ **Renewal**

**Please note this is an ANNUAL membership organization. All members without a lifetime membership expire on December 31 of each calendar year. THIS INCLUDES ALL DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS.**

**Don't let your membership in the USA Boomerang Movement Lapse!**

photos by david hirsch



2nd Place

L to R: Logan Broadbent, Daniel Bower, Billy Brazelton, Matt Golenor, Richard Bower, Dan Johnson, Gregg Snouffer (coach)

3rd Place

L to R: Adam Stankiewicz, Mark Legg, Steve Kavanaugh, James Stickney, George Essig, Jason Smucker



6th Place

L to R: Gary Broadbent, Kenny Barr, Steve Cook, Tom Howman, Nick Citoli



## World Boomerang Championships - Germany Back on Top

Itu', Brazil, Oct. 17-28, 2012

by Bob Foresi

*If the names sound familiar, they should be. Most of today's boomerang throwers can't remember a time when the German team wasn't THE team to beat in World comps. With only one roster change from the Young Guns team that first won the Cup in 1996, Germany's 2012 edition, named Re-Motions, provided assurance that some things don't change. Gunter Moller, Fridolin Frost, Oli Theinhaus, Gerrit Lemkau and Thomas Szartowicz brought home Germany's 7th World Cup, and they have won their last 5 on 5 different continents. They had to shake off middle age, very difficult wind conditions and the absence of defending world individual champ Alex Opri, as they tried to defeat USA's Rad Revolution and a dozen other teams. The Revolution was put down, or at least put on hold for a couple of years, as Re-Motions cruised to a surprisingly easy win.*

*The first WBC on the South American continent proved a wonderful experience for most of the throwers who made the trip, and saw the emergence of Brazil as a major force in the sport. However there were some notable missing teams and throwers, owing partly to the logistics of getting long vacations late in the year. The Swiss team, considered by some to be capable of breaking the string of USA and German domination of World Cups since 1984, was absent, as were Italian and all-women teams. Instead, Switzerland's Manuel Schutz and Italy's Andrea Sgattoni and Alessandro Benedetti joined forces with Japan's Takeshi Honda, Holland's Lars Overzee, and Spain's Alejandro Palacio to form a very strong international team, BoomerGang. It was understood and agreed that the team would be competing unofficially, because they lacked the required 4 core members from the same country. With the pressure off and with so much talent, BoomerGang in effect set the pace through much of the 3 days of team competition, and actually outpointed Re-Motions in the final tally. Their scores by events can be found on the WBC web site, but have been omitted for the purposes of this article. Wind conditions for much of the team comps were black diamond difficulty, as both wind direction and velocity were quite variable.*

*USA's Rad Revolution, the defending champs, didn't get untracked fast as in 2010 in Rome, and had to play catch-up to Re-Motions from the second event on, an unenviable position. Re-Motions on the first day won MTA-100, Australian Round and Team Relay, with Brazil's 220V Team taking Supercatch. Rad Revolution managed to hang tough and take 2nd overall for the 1st day, but second was 8 points behind. It would take a super effort by Rad Revolution on Day 2 and an off-day by Germany to make this close.*

*USA did win Day2, but it wasn't RR, it was USA TOBY (Team Occupy Bull's eYe). They won Supercatch Round 2, took 2nd in Team Relay-Round 2, and 3rd in Accuracy. Rad Revolution was great also, winning both Team Endurance and Accuracy, but Germany Re-Motions somehow actually gained ground on RR on Day 2 with a win in Team Relay and 2 second places. Going into Day 3 it was pretty much over: Re-Motions 18, Rad Revolution 29. BoomerGang was right there with Re-Motions, for bragging rights only.*

*The remaining events saw continued strong throwing by USA-TOBY, especially in TrickCatch/Doubling, and by Japan-Samurai. Rad Revolution finally closed some ground on Germany and was the best team for the rest of the way, but too late. This Re-Motions team, despite four throwers over 40 years old, were unflappable in terms of consistency and expertise once given the lead, and hats off to them!*

1) Germany	Re-Motions	35.0	
2) USA	Rad Revolution	41.0	
3) USA	TOBY	54.5	
4) Japan	Samurai	64.0	
5) Brazil	220V	90.5	
6) USA	Full Throttle	108.5	Complete scores on WBC web site.
7) Australia		115.0	
8) France		123.0	
9) Germany	Ossos	125.5	
10) Brazil	BCA Team	132.5	
11) Japan	Shoryu	140.5	
12) Brazil	Skywalkers	142.5	

International Teams: BoomerGang 33.0, Veterans 160.0

(cont.)

## World Team Comp History

<u>Site</u>	<u>Winner</u>
1981 Australia	USA
1984 USA	Australia
1987 USA - 3 sites	USA-Midwest
1988 1) Barooga, NSW, Aus.	USA
2) USA, France, Germany., Switz.	USA
1989 Gaithersburg, MD, USA	USA
1991 Perth, Australia	USA
1992 Hamburg, Germany	USA
1994 Tokyo, Japan	USA
1996 Christchurch, NZ	Germany
1998 Edwardsville, IL, USA	Germany
2000 Melbourne, NSW, Aus.	Germany
2002 Kiel, Germany	USA
2004 Charleville-Mézières, FR	Germany
2006 Asahikawa, Hokkaido, Japan	Germany
2008 Seattle, WA, USA	Germany
2010 Rome, Italy	USA
2012 Itu', Brazil	Germany

### Individual Championships

*Speaking of back on top, Switzerland's Manuel Schutz walked away from a field of 70 throwers on the second day of the 2-day competition to win his fourth Individual World Championship. Manuel won Endurance with 65 catches in 5 minutes in breezy conditions, and took second in Fast Catch.*

*USA's Richard Bower won Accuracy (86pts.) en route to the 3rd podium spot. Fridolin Frost took 2nd overall, after leading thru the first day. Gunter Moller pulled off a big win with 85 pts. in prestigious Australian Round. Upsets came in Fast Catch, won by Andre' Caixeta Ribeiro of Brazil, with 18.43 sec. for the five catches, and in Maximum Time Aloft - 100, swept by Japan and won by Jungi Maiya with 72.67 seconds.*

1) Manu Schutz, Sw.	20.5	6) Andrea Sgattoni, It.	72.5
2) Fridolin Frost, Ger.	29.0	7) Gunter Moller, Ger.	73.5
3) Richard Bower, USA	30.5	8) Masaya Hamaguchi, Jap	80.0
4) James Stickney, USA	62.0	9) Thos. Szartowicz, Ger.	87.5
5) Eduardo Mistica, Brazil	69.0	10) Takeshi Honda, Jap.	88.0

*Complete scores on WBC web site.*

*Kudos to Ricardo Bruni Marx and the Brazilian contingent for hosting a memorable WBC event.*

*The next World Cup is scheduled to return to Perth, Australia in April 2014.*

# BEN'S BLOG

from the desk of Ben Ruhe



These articles were written & collected by Ben Ruhe, the father of boomeranging in the USA. The crowning achievement of his career so far (beyond his work with the Smithsonian, anthropological research and paving the way for international boomerang competition) is, of course, founding the newsletter *Many Happy Returns*.

## Boomerangs and Me: A Memoir

*Editor's note: The following essay arrived in the mail in response to a request for biographical information by Errol Gautreau in 2007. The author has since died.*

By Michael Hanson

Since I was a toddler, I've always been interested in things that fly---birds, butterflies, balloons and airplanes of all sorts. About the age of 18 I read of boomerangs. The description of their flight seemed a little fanciful at the time, to me. So out into the shed with a bit of wood. I sawed it, spoke shaved it, sanded it but I didn't apply any aerodynamics to it (idiot). Anyway, out into the field I trudged, gave it a hurl---and it's probably still there. So I inquired more and obtained from the library some old copies of learned texts on the boomerang. Hey, look how the wings are shaped, just like an airplane! That's more like it. So I constructed a copy, quite big, massively thick, inordinately heavy. I gave it a hurl, sprained my wrist and no beginning of a return. But I tried and tried; oh my poor arm.

Then I made one smaller, lighter and thinner. Partial return. Wow. Wow. I got into contact with the late John Jordan who taught me proper boomerang making and throwing. I got some old books on the subject and splashed out on a Ph.D. thesis by one Felix Hess. I became hooked. I read more, made more, practiced more. John Jordan formed the British Boomerang Society and then it all took off. Competitions in the U.K., U.S.A., France, Holland were instrumental in me realizing I still had masses to learn and practice. I even had a visit from the late Brother Brian Thomas of Australia and we did get a little boomerang throwing.

Anyway, I got a little better and even organized a boomerang contest in Scotland. At a competition in Washington, D.C., I put an apple on my head (about three-foot diameter and made of expanded polystyrene!) and nearly knocked it off with a returning boomerang a la William Tell. Later on Barney Ruhe did it with a real apple.

About 15 years ago I fixed a little battery and bulb to a fair sized boomerang and a friend took some photographs of its flight at night. Good fun, except when the light failed halfway through the flight. I'm soon had another go with some brightly colored LEDs.

In my early boomerang days I had a little booklet published by Penguin Puffin Books---good fun and it generated a bit of interest. I also set up a little postal boomerang business and I sold a few from different suppliers. I've recently realized that I've got a few valuable boomerangs, by John McMahon, Herb Smith, etc. I've just had a look at my boomerang book collection and I've copies of a few excellent tomes in addition to Felix Hess's magnificent and weighty Ph.D. thesis.

I've given a few talks to learned societies on the good old boomerang and published a few articles in magazines. Now I'm retired I'll take up throwing again. Trouble is it's either pouring with rain or snow or it's blowing a gale.

So, keep on throwing the good ones, as they say.



## Samurai Woman

At the World Boomerang Cup competition in Rome awhile back, the No. 1 Japanese team, named what else but The Samurai, had a woman member, Yuko Kondo. She won the spot by capturing the Japanese national singles title the preceding year, the first female ever to win a country's singles championship anywhere in the world.

Then at age 30, Kondo, a practicing chemist, more than held her own at Rome with the almost totally male field of throwers. With 131 competing, she finished 23rd overall, defeating such stalwarts as two-time world singles champion Rob Croll of Australia, Gunter Moller, member of three German title teams, Roger Perry of Australia, leader of the big Australian contingent, and Matt Golenor and Dan Johnson, members of the American championship team.

In an interview, with chaperone Nobuyuki Zizuka translating, Kondo said she prepped for boomerang throwing by tossing a javelin around as a sports workout and chose the 'rang sport to specialize in partly because of her university training in physics. She found 'rang aerodynamics challenging.

Tall, thin and strong, her purposeful stride makes a statement to fellow competitors. So does her stylish, martial uniform---black jacket, black shorts, black leggings and red trainers. Here's someone to reckon with!

"She throws as hard as the guys," says Gregg Snouffer, coach of the American team. "She's very athletic, very agile, and definitely competitive."

Although she only took up boomerang tossing a few years before, Kondo is pleased to reel off her best competitive scores: 20 seconds in fast catch, 43 in endurance, 1 minute and 10 seconds in maximum time aloft, 79 points in accuracy, and 94 in trick catch. It's a record to make America's top woman competitor Betsylew Miale-Gix pay attention. What does she think of Betsylew? "I adore her," says Kondo.

Kondo says she does muscle work and running during her lunch hour, and then throws after work before going home to cook supper for her father.

Does she have a boyfriend? An abrupt "No!" Hand to mouth in embarrassment. Does she intend to marry a boomeranger? Another strong "No!" The interviewer suggests there are at that moment a lot of good looking guys out on the Rome boomerang field. Kondo pauses and then says, "Do you have a recommendation?"

# Throwing in the Wind

By Michael Girvin

When I first started to throw, I would only go out on days when it was calm. I didn't think it was possible to throw with much success in windy conditions. Even the first couple of years that I went to tournaments, I didn't know how to throw in the wind. It was not until I lived in the "windy city" Chicago, that I learned how to throw in the wind. All it took to learn was to go out and throw in the wind. It is possible to have success in windy conditions.



There are four basic ways:

1. "Surfing" throw
2. Humpback throw
3. Drag-producing additions that slow the boomerang down
4. Adding weight

## "Surfing" throw

The simplest

way to deal with the wind is to throw your boomerang with less power. The key to this approach is to impart a lot of spin, by snapping your wrist, without providing a lot of forward velocity. The wind speed will supply most of the boomerang's velocity. Also, you must release the boomerang higher

and with more layover than usual; this will prevent the boomerang from getting blown into the ground. In huge wind, throw the boomerang with 40 degrees altitude and 45 degrees layover with no forward velocity and tons of spin. Your boomerang will ride on the wind like a surfer rides on a wave. Although this is a spectacular way to deal with wind, it is the least effective of the four methods.

## Humpback throw

Throw with a vertical release, high altitude and hard throw! If you utilized this throw on a calm day, your boomerang would fly up high and then crash into the ground half way through its turn. But on a windy day the wind will save it from crashing and then push it back to you. The flight pattern goes from very high, to low, to medium high as it flies back to you. The reason this type of throw works is because the boomerang loses forward velocity as it tries to crash into the ground. Generally, in windy conditions, if you throw your boomerang more vertical and/or with higher altitude, it will come back more accurately.

## Drag

The most effective way to deal with wind is to add drag to your boomerangs.

Drag will slow the boomerang down and prevent it from flying over and past your head. If you make your own boomerangs, you can drill holes in the wingtips. The more holes, or the closer the holes are to the tips, the more drag you will have. If you don't make your own boomerangs, you can still drill holes in the boomerangs you have purchased. Leaving the leading edges dull on your boomerangs will also yield velocity reducing drag.

The most convenient way to add drag is to place taped flaps on your boomerangs. Duct tape or electrical tape works fine. Wrap your boomerang with tape and fold the tape back onto itself in a small section so that you have a flat flap sticking straight up from the wing. The larger the flaps or the closer the flaps are to the tip the more drag. Every shape will react differently to flaps. So you will have to experiment to see which location works best for your throw and boomerang. Generally, flaps near the center of the wing in the upper elbow area work best.

## Weight

Adding weight, such as taping a coin to the wing, will cause your boomerang to travel further and it will help combat windy conditions. Start with a penny or dime taped to the flat side of your lift arm. In windy conditions, use larger coins or multiple coins. Again, you will have to experiment and find which spot works best for your boomerang and throwing style.

## Conclusion

When throwing in wind it is helpful to understand that boomerangs don't come back very accurately. If you don't mind a little running, the rewards for a catch are great. And when you do flap, weight, or throw the boomerang just right, and it comes back to you accurately, it is very satisfying.

The key to learning how to throw in wind is to go out and throw in wind! Simple as that. Try flaps, weights, humpbacks and surfing. The best solution is probably a combination of one or more of these techniques. Try them all, experiment and have fun.

*Editor's note: For years until injury curtailed his competitive throwing, Michael (Gel) Girvin of Portland, Oregon, was easily the dominant figure in world boomeranging. His innovative approach to the sport which he pursued as fun and games, rather than deadly competition, gained him converts everywhere. Highly intelligent, he studied the boomerang in its various aspects and wrote an 18-page pamphlet outlining some of his discoveries, excerpted here.*

# Replica of Oldest Boomerang Now Available

The world's oldest boomerang, a hunting boomerang, was found in the Oblazowa cave in the Carpathian Mountains in south Poland some two decades ago. The shaped mammoth tusk has been convincingly dated 20,600 years before present. Preservation of the artifact occurred when the roof of the cave where it was found collapsed, burying it. The site is a complex one and archeological digging has been going on there for years. A portion of human thumb is among the important finds.

Copies of the boomerang have been made. German Michael Siems, of Mannheim, an expert thrower, has a reproduction in ivory-colored plastic made from an archeologist's detailed drawing. Eckhard Mawick of Lubeck, Germany, on the other hand has a replica made from a dental silicone mold of the original. Both fly well.

Dr. Pavel Valde-Nowak of the University of Krakow made the boomerang find and has created the mold. He made it available to Mawick who agreed to create reproductions for educational purposes. A retired school principal, Mawick colors his replicas the discolored brown of the original and sells them, depending on the amount of work required, in the neighborhood of \$100 each. He hopes to place them in museums and with collectors and scholarly throwers. The last may be interested in putting them to the test with target practice and documenting what they learn. (Living game like hares are well advised to be wary when these 'rangs are tested out in the field.)

Because a mammoth tusk is hollow in the center, the ivory when split in half as was done to create this boomerang has a natural lifting airfoil. Both tips are sharp--the one tip apparently shaped that way by the man who made it. The artifact is 71 cm long (28 inches) and 5.6 cm wide at the elbow (2.3 inches). It is thin (15.6 mm or a bit over one-half inch) but whippy strong and weighs 600 grams (21 ounces). Curiously, Siems' replica performs well if thrown either right or left-handed. A leftie, Siems has had conspicuous success in tossing kack-handed since the boomerang stays lower to the ground than if flown the usual way and this provides an advantage in hunting small, ground-anchored prey.

For further information on this Paleolithic prize, contact Mawick at [elbowart@gmx.de](mailto:elbowart@gmx.de).



## Europe's Mr. Boomerang

He's not well known to the U.S. boomerang world, but Frenchman Patrice Castel of Toulouse is a key player in the European 'rang scene. He sells boomerangs through a network of 200 stores---30,000 of them a year, he says---gives throwing demonstrations, sponsors competitions, designs and molds plastic 'rangs, promotes high grade photography of the sport, and in general, according to one fan, carries on with enthusiasm, generosity and charm.

He may be the very model of the modern boomerang merchandiser. He's been in the business 26 years now, ever since a

friend gave him a flying stick and he got it working on a beach and was enchanted. He says his business, which includes other aerodynamic objects such as gliders and flying disks, remains stable, that he is going strong despite the economic downturn.

Castel emphasizes that he deals only with first-rate boomerangs, both indoor and outdoor models.

"I want to make people happy," he says. "I don't want to have any deception. As a boy, the first boomerang I ever threw didn't work at all, couldn't work, and I never want this to happen with anything I am associated with."

To this end he sells 'rangs from mainly big name quality makers---from France, Yannick Charles, Philippe Picgirard, Christian Jabet, Olivier Vouktchevitch, Francois Clouet, Jean-Louis Leyrat-Savin; from Belgium, Hubert Foulon; from Switzerland, Matthieu Weber; from Canada, Stephane Marguerite; from the U.S., Eric Darnell, Richard Pollock-Nelson (heir to the late Jim Mayfield's operation), and Michael (Gel) Girvin; from Australia, Roger Perry. He also handles books on boomerangs, t-shirts and associated paraphernalia. Catalogue available from LMI&Fox, BP 16, 32500 Fleurance cedex, France.

"He's more interested in having fun than making money," says Eric Darnell, big for many years in the American boomerang scene. "He's good for the sport. We've been friends for years. I've gone to visit him at his summer house on the southwest coast of France at Capertone. Graphics are one of his strong points. Take a look at his website to see this."

Over the years one of Castel's contributions has been the beautiful book *Boomerang: Dream Images*, by Christophe Dautriche and issued by Imprimerie Centr'Imprim, Venissieux, but bankrolled by Castel ("I lost a lot money on it," he says half proudly, half ruefully.). This large format 149 page volume lavishly documents Boomerang World Cup action at Charleville-Mezieres, France, in 2004. It is by far the best collection of action photos of the sport ever put together and needs to be in every collection of books on the sport. Many of the images have two or more stop-action images in them. One large photo shows Didier Bonin, of France, leaning back and cocking the boomerang, launching, following through, starting to run, then hitting full stride---a dramatic sequence of five shots. The volume is a classic.

## Saving the Aboriginal Past

"The Aborigines of Victoria are losing their culture," says Rob Croll, "and I'm keeping it going." This in a nutshell explains a project the Australian boomerang expert and collector of native artifacts has kept running for more than a decade.

Exploiting cages formerly used to house pheasants, Croll runs a museum in Gumbyah Park, an hour and a half from Melbourne. In the glass housings he displays a comprehensive range of boomerangs and related objects as well as all sorts of other Aboriginal artifacts---clubs, fish traps, spears, spear throwers, stone tools, drone pipes, feathered and shell ornaments, wooden coolamon bowls, bark paintings, and sculptures. There are a total of 2,000 artifacts on view.

The park charges a fee to enter, but admission to the museum is free. Because exhibits are behind glass, no custodian is needed. There is no museum shop. As supplier of the exhibits, Croll serves as curator of exhibitions but the museum goes easy on the academics---"labels are nonscholarly," says Croll---and he visits from his home in Melbourne only on a monthly basis or so.

Attractions at the park include a forest, lake, rides for kids, and a zoo featuring kangaroos, koalas, dingoes, emus and a range of other indigenous birds including colorful cockatoos.

The museum draws up to 5,000 visitors a week, including surviving Victorian Aborigines interested in studying remains of their ancient, almost vanished culture.

Croll, a two-time world champion in boomerang throwing, began collecting boomerangs when a youth and became really interested in them as historic artifacts after mingling with enthusiastic American collectors during the first international boomerang test series held in 1981. "I used to buy old Aboriginal things for \$5, now they cost \$500," says Croll. "I heard that a Queensland Aboriginal boomerang sold for \$15,000 U.S.. That gives you an idea of the market."

Married with two children, stocky, cheeky, shrewd Croll lives by making and selling first rate returning boomerangs, selling Aboriginal artifacts, giving talks and demonstrations, and---his basic vocation---repairing automobiles. More and more he gains satisfaction for continuing to be a savior of a regional Aboriginal culture that becomes increasingly valued with passing years.

*Rob Croll's "Great Wall" of boomerangs at Gumbyah Park merits a pilgrimage from anywhere.*



## 8 Memorable Places to Throw

**Koh Nang Yuan, Thailand.** Nang Yuan is two Gulf of Thailand islets joined by a narrow white sand beach that can be waded at high tide. A breeze blows all day until 6:15 p.m. when the trade wind abruptly ends. (By this time the topless Swedish girls have left the beach for their lodgings.) Because it is dead calm, the sand is now the perfect place to toss boomerangs with pinpoint accuracy. Any that do land in the water are easily retrieved by wading. Tropic bliss continues until 6:45, almost to the minute, when it abruptly becomes too dark to see. It has been boomerang Eden for exactly one-half hour

*Ben Ruhe, Gloucester, Massachusetts*

**South Pole, Antarctica.** There's a mirror ball atop a barber pole, surrounded by the flags of all signatories to the Antarctic Treaty. It is flat and the air is thin---you're on two vertical miles of ice. Brilliant white powder ice crystals blanket the plateau. You're likely to draw a crowd, as the nearby Amundsen-Scott South Pole station is full of hard-working scientists with an underdeveloped ability to produce fun on their own. The last plane out is sometime in February, so unless you want to overwinter make sure you're finished throwing by then.

*Erich Muhs, Seattle*

**Hartland, Vermont.** It's the four-dimensional boomerang experience! A nearly perfect rounded hill where the top is about the size of a standard competition bullseye, then slopes away in all directions. Throw accurately, catch on top of the hill. Less accurately, maneuver down the slope to attempt the catch, then climb back up as added penance. Anyone can get to this spot. It's part of a rolling meadow mowed two or three times a year for hay, located just east and within sight of Exit 9 on Interstate 91. There is even a park-and-ride lot at the entrance to the field.

*John Flynn, White River Junction, Vermont.*

**Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.** We were 20 Americans practicing for the World Cup. It was dusk, with a heavy salt sea breeze. Accustomed to tossing boomerangs on the level, here on this big dune we aimed down the steep slope. Everyone was tossing short range 20 meter stuff hoping to get their boomerangs home. I however threw my pet 60-meter Herb Smith paxolin omega as a sacrifice to the gods of Kitty Hawk. It was being sent off on a one way trip of bliss. It was a sweet goodbye. At the command "Go!" we all launched. My 'rang went down into the gloaming and out of sight. Lost and gone. I waited. To my astonishment, the wind blowing crisply up the slope brought my Herbie back into view and then home to me. Perfect. It was weird, wild, wonderful. The same magical wind the Wright brothers used in their epic flight of fancy had given me a dream throw and catch exactly 99 years later.

*Dr. Barney Ruhe, Emmaus, Pennsylvania*

**Johor, Malaysia.** It was a weekend morning, already sweatie hot, at a time between calls to prayer. My boomerang was a five-ply birch Napoleon's Hat. Broken once and repaired, it was the one I always carried with me. Me throwing and catching in a field attracted hundreds of women, draped in robes and with heads covered, only faces visible, accompanied by children. There were almost no men or boys. The

crowd was viewing a Western woman but with Asian face doing something way out of the out of the Malaysian box, making something happen---making a silly piece of thrown wood return to her. There was a lot of giggling going on. It was a spectacle for all of us.

*Ali Fujino, Seattle*

**Bora Bora, French Polynesia.** On our 'round the world jaunt years ago, my wife, daughter and I, toting backpacks and boomerangs, spent a week on Bora Bora Island at Pauline's campground (cheapest place we could find), We stayed in a thatched hut, under coconut palms, on the lagoon. Bora Bora is said to be the most beautiful island in the South Seas. The campground host was a young Israeli, Meir Shalev, who had access to a workshop. Seeing my boomerangs, he led me to the garage where we rifled some plywood and traced one of my 'rangs, cut it out with a coping saw, filed with a rasp, and gave it a toss. Throwing in a grove of palms, with a little adjusting and tuning, we got returns. I then charged Meir to organize a Bora Bora Boomerang Club and promised to lead the island team to the World Cup when the team was ready. I still await word.

*Dr. Jerry Caplan, Santa Fe, New Mexico*

**Grand Isle, Louisiana.** Just off the coast of Louisiana, the island is about 50 miles due south of New Orleans. Just to the north is Barataria Bay, to the south the Gulf of Mexico. The sandy beaches draw tourists for swimming, boating and fishing. The marsh lands of Louisiana form a huge, flat expanse---"big sky country." Sunsets and rises are impressive. In 1973, the Baton Rouge Boomerang Club went down for some fishing and throwing. In those days, we threw the plastic Wham-O. Unusually strong winds that day made decent throwing impossible. But the day was saved in most unusual fashion: by a "boomerang" which is not a returner but a good throwstick, the Sport Craft model from Italy. We threw the thing side-armed over a raging surf, into a southerly gale. Out about 50 yards it would rise up, turn and get blown back on the wind ----at a hellish speed! In the following weeks, Ben Ruhe of the Smithsonian in Washington helped the club with ideas for meets, gave prizes and provided good performers like the Hawes M17. In his honor, we renamed our club the Baton Rouge Ruhe-Rangers. Almost four decades later, the club still exists, but only in fond memories.

*Errol Gautreau, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

**Vatican City, Rome.** Were Brother Brian Thomas alive today and asked to name his favorite place to throw a boomerang, he would with no doubt choose St. Peter's Square, center of the Roman Catholic Church, of which he was a devoted son. A member of the Christian Brothers teaching order, Brother Brian of Sydney was a major figure in Australian boomeranging for decades and spread the word about the sport globally both teaching and throwing. Widely known and loved for his warm, caring personality, Brother Brian made a farewell European trip after being diagnosed with a fatal disease and he not only tossed 'rangs in St. Peter's Square, he taught Swiss Papal Guards to throw and catch them and when granted an audience with the Pope presented him with a boomerang as an apt gift from Down Under. At his funeral, fellow boomerang enthusiast Brother Rod Shoebridge speculated that Brian, ever the instructor, "probably as a first order of business began teaching the intricacies of boomerang throwing to St. Peter and any others in Heaven with free time on their hands."

*Brother Rod Shoebridge, Sydney  
for Brother Brian Thomas, RIP.*



## ***2012 USBA National Rankings and 2013 preview***

by RICHARD BOWER, USBA Secretary

Hi everyone!

It has been my pleasure to oversee the USBA rankings in both 2009 and 2011 as a means to select high class throwers who competed for spots in the 2010 and 2012 World Cup teams. Throughout the course of tournament history attendance has blossomed and a lot of skilled, younger throwers have hit the scene; looking to crawl their way into the ranks of the USA elite. This resulted in some highly competitive and fun-loving World Cup teams for both 2010 and 2012.

Attendance numbers dropped slightly between 2011 and 2012, but it was still a highly competitive year with a number of really close finishes at tournaments. Though down from 2011, we still had a hefty number of throwers attend qualifying tournaments in 2012. It will be very exciting to see what occurs in 2013 as the season continues. Additionally, we have the US Team Trials in Dallas, Texas, on November 1st-3<sup>rd</sup> which will determine who represents the USBA at the 2014 World Cup in Perth, Australia. Below are the top 10 ranked throwers of the 2012 tournament season:

### *2012 USBA National Rankings*

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Richard Bower      | 6. George Essig      |
| 2. Daniel Bower       | 7. Jason Smucker     |
| 3. Betsylew Miale-Gix | 8. Nick Citali       |
| 4. Stevie Kavanaugh   | 9. Mark Legg         |
| 5. Will Gix           | 10. Adam Stankiewicz |

Despite a low number of early tournament announcements, 2013 will be a great year for US Boomerang throwing. In 2012 we saw a few veterans like Betsylew and Will Gix, Stevie Kavanaugh and Jason Smucker re-crack the top spots. There was also some hot, new talent that emerged in youngsters such as Adam Stankiewicz. Adam was looking poised enough in the late half of 2012 to take a real run at the 6 members of the "Rad Revolution" US team. "Rad Revolution" has been holding steady as the top squad of US throwers for the past 6 years and 3 World Cups. Adam's youthful energy and enthusiasm will certainly bring both young and old sprinting after him on his quest to up-seat and evolve the US Team into a new competitive era in 2014.

The 2013 US Nationals will be held on July 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We are looking at the second straight HOT Nationals to follow up the 2012 tournament in Nashville, Tennessee. Last year, on-field temperatures reached 106 F° and many throwers were wilting in the sun. Despite the desert heat, look for 2-time defending USBA National Champion Richard Bower to come out running and gunning. Richard is aiming to be the first thrower since Chet Snouffer in the 1990's to win 3 straight National titles.

Also look for Richard's twin brother Daniel, National Champion in 2007, 2009 and 2010 to be not far behind (or even ahead). Daniel's pirate-like, swashbuckling style contrasts with Richard's calculated and aggressive throwing style. The two brothers have won 5 of the past 6 National titles and fully intend to use all means available to keep the 2013 title within the family.

However, with the reemergence of veteran throwers and fresh blood coming from the US youth movement, 2013 is sure to be a very competitive and interesting year with plenty of boomerang related ups, downs, thermals and wind shears. So here's wishing everyone Many Happy Returns!

## **Call for Nominations!**

Nominations are now open for USBA Officers and Members of the Board At-Large. Email nominations to Richard Bower, USBA Secretary at [bubbajohnson@gmail.com](mailto:bubbajohnson@gmail.com) or mail to 8900 NE 152nd PL., Kenmore, WA 98028. Nominations are open until the USBA General meeting, Saturday July 27, 2013 at the USBA Nationals. Voting will then occur in 2 stages: there will be an anonymous ballot at the meeting, where any USBA member current with dues may vote in person or you may mail or email your vote to Richard by Sept. 1, 2013, postmarked or date stamped by midnight whereupon voting will cease and the ballots will be tallied and winners announced. If you are not able to vote in person, the slate of candidates will be placed online on USBA\_Info shortly after Nationals.

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### **Other Tournament Results**

Australian Nationals , 4/3/2013, Adelaide - Grant Perry set an Australian record for Accuracy with 90 points en route to first overall. Roger Perry (Grant's father) placed second, with Robbie Croll taking third.

Swiss Long Distance Champion, 4/7/2013, Kloten - Manuel Schutz continued his mastery of LD events since the 1990s with a throw of 177 meters. 2)Ludovic Brioux (FR) 136m; 3) Thorsten Gaupp (GER) 131m; 4)Lorenz Gubler (SW) 122m; 5) Uwe Kitzberger (GER) 118m; 6)Joel Hernandez (FR) 115m; 7) H.-G. Borowski-Kyhos (GER) 106m

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### **Tournament Calendar**

NALDO Long Distance tournament - 6/29/2013 - Canton, OH

David Hirsch : [duckhead@airmail.net](mailto:duckhead@airmail.net)

1st Nat'l Kylie Golf Championships - 6/30/2013 - Canton, OH

20th Annual Greater Seattle Open - 7/13/2013 - Seattle, WA Will Gix or Betsylew Miale-Gix  
[rangsters@frontier.com](mailto:rangsters@frontier.com) or Ph: 425-485-1672

New Hampshire/Vermont Tournament - 7/13/2013 - Lebanon, NH

John Flynn  
802-296-2158

USBA Nat'l Championships & Exposition - 7/26-7/28/2013 - Albuquerque, NM

D. Hirsch: [duckhead@airmail.net](mailto:duckhead@airmail.net)

U.S. Team Trials - 11/1-11/3/2013 - Dallas, TX " "





By David Hirsch

*A great crowd turned out to throw Long Distance at the 2012 WBC. Thirty competitors signed up, which was almost a third of those who threw in the Individual Championships. We had an interesting day, for several reasons. Early on, we had technology issues; one of the two laser range spotters refused to work. Then one and another of the walkie talkies failed. It was quite warm and, for most of the day, there was very little wind. Not what we like for LD. The air was humid and the sky somewhat overcast so contrast on the booms was low. On the second throw, Alejandro Palacio's boomerang was lost in the sky because the spotters could not see it and so even though he scored, we were unable to measure the distance... and it was close to 100m. I've never seen that happen! Then Manuel Schutz lost one of his best booms on return as it went over the line and behind a hedge... though it was found later. And then in the afternoon, a strong thunderstorm with lightning and high winds blew in, threatening to end the event without everyone getting to throw. As the official in charge of the event, I gathered everyone and told them that I thought we should wait at least 45 minutes and hope to be able to continue. All agreed and though the weather lightened and was still iffy, we did continue. This actually proved very beneficial for several throwers, who were able to use the increased wind speed to help with their scores. With so many throwers, we only managed one round of eight throws per person. But all in all, we had a great day with some great scores, several new records and several personal bests. I look forward to Perth!*

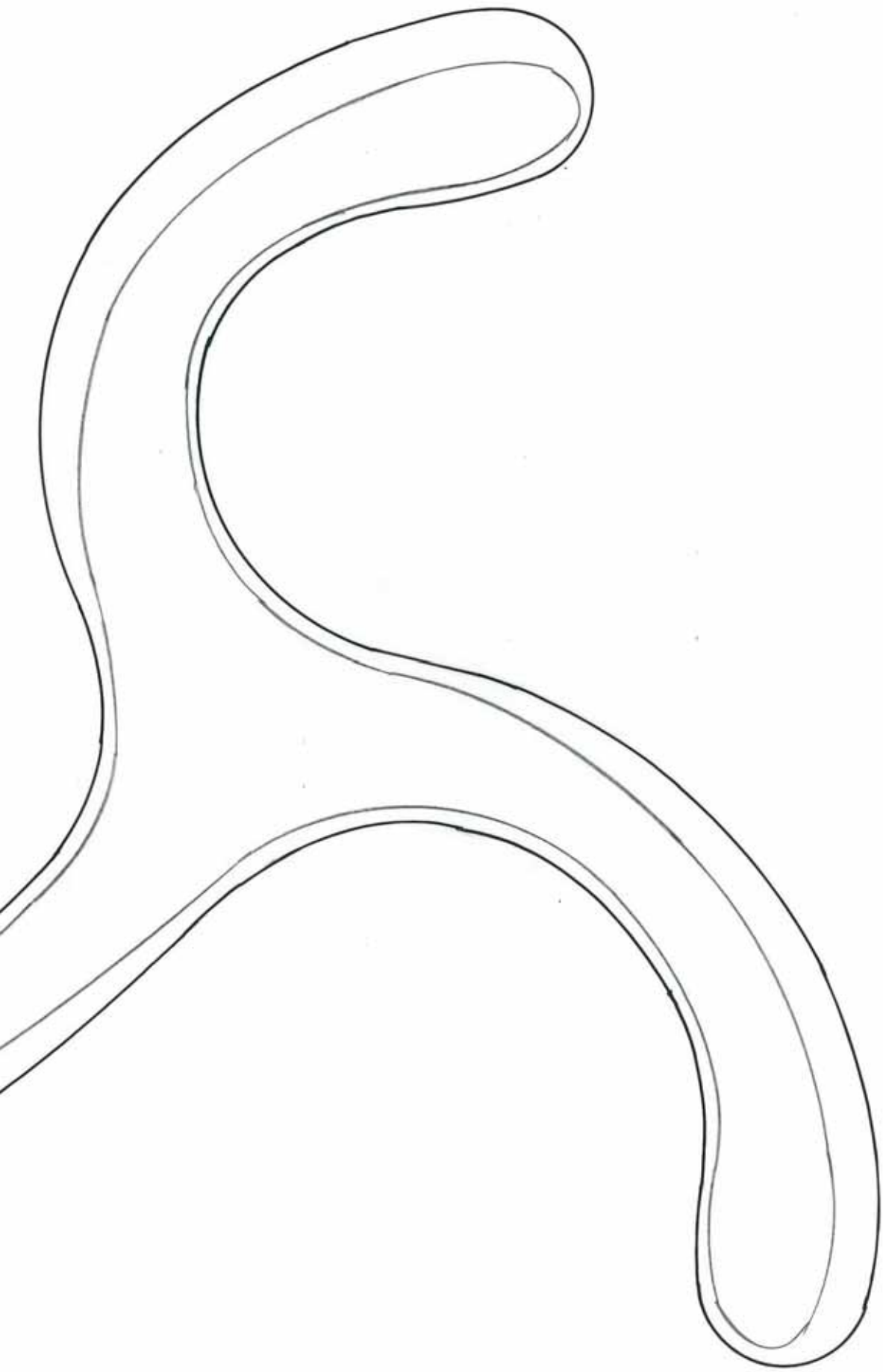
The throwers and their scores, in order: Manuel Schütz (CH) - 154m; Róbson Oliveira (Brazil) (Brazilian record) - 126m; Andrea Sgattoni (Italy) (Italian record) - 122m; Haruki Taketomi (Japan) - 121m; Kagemitsu Fukazawa (Japan) - 117m; David Hirsch (USA) - 110m; Giossér Braga (Brazil) - 103m; Jerri Leu (Brazil) - 100m; Alejandro Palacio (Spain) - 98m; Hiroyuki Murata (Japan)- 98m; Tom Howman (USA) - 93m; Nobuyouki Iizuka (Japan) - 93m; Jason Smucker (USA) - 93m; Martin Schulc (CZ) - 82m; Gary Broadbent (USA) - 77m; Edgardo Confessore (Argentina) - 77m; Sonia Appriou (France) - 64m; Junji Maiya (Japan) - 64m; Eduardo Místico (Brazil) - 0m; Michel Appriou (France) - 0m; Adam Stankiewicz (USA) - 0m; Kenny Barr (USA) - 0m; Luiz Carlos Otoboni (Brazil) - 0m; Rodrigo Colombini (Brazil) - 0m; Takuya Tachibana (Japan) - 0m; Nick Prichards (Aus) - 0m; Yves Appriou (France) - 0m (though we gave Yves an honorary 6 meter score!)

## **Palm - MTA**

When you factor in Long Distance with the 6 core boomerang events, Manuel Schutz of Switzerland is certainly the best boomeranger in the world today, and has been for quite some time. With long-standing World Records in events as diverse as Trick Catch and Long Distance, Manu's innovative boomerang designs are sometimes difficult to improve upon as well. The Palm is one of those, optimized for windy conditions in the Maximum Time Aloft event. The original uses 1.75mm Paxolin.

*Tuning: Start with generous positive dihedral on long arm and slight pos. twist. One of other arms neutral and the other with positive dihedral, but negative twist. Keep leading edge rather blunt throughout, just tapered enough that rang doesn't lose spin in hover mode. Adding slight undercut to trailing arm(s) may improve stability or spin retention.*







***United States Boomerang Association***  
***3351 236th Street SW***  
***Brier, WA 98036***

