



Many Happy Returns #107 • Official Newsletter of the United States Boomerang Association • www.USBA.org • Summer 2015

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In this issue

Editor's note >

Musings from The World of Boomerang >

Bear in the Air: Girls Rock with Rev. David Fantone >

A Look Back: Bob Foresi delves into the USBA archives >

Returning Credit >

Random boomerang videos >

Gateway Classic Trophies by Chicago Bob,,,,, and Stu Jones >

Upcoming events schedule >

Ben's Blog: from the desk of Ben 'Guru' Ruhe >



Editor's note >

I keep my field tally counter handy as I go out to throw in the summer. Mostly for tournament events like Endurance where it's difficult to keep an accurate count, but it's usually kicking around in the bottom of my bag on a sunny afternoon.

When someone wanders across my field I do my best to put a boomerang in their hand. The coolest part is when they catch their first one. First one ever in their life. I go looking for my counter and give it a click if I can find it. Doesn't even matter what number it was on. Measurements of awesome events are not precise, but it feels good to add +1.



Paul D. Sprague, Editor



Musings from The World of Boomerang >

This is a public group, you can join at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/142594709264084/>. Excerpt below, I like the international flavor of this group. The auto-translation allows you to almost sometimes be comprehending of the postages from outside tongues. Click you are urged, much informative joyous scroll will return you to your boomerang.



> Todd Horkey: Well I am getting better. About 3-5 catches with Glaive boomerang for about 100 throws. It seems to float 10-15 yards to my right. I throw left handed. Or I over shoot it way behind me. I throw lower and it seems to help. What's the rule of correction for wind?

> William J. Glover: Turn farther to the left to throw, and try wrapping a small rubber band halfway between the elbow and dingle tip to increase drag and stop it from blowing by you.,,you can adjust its location until you get it exactly where you want it...the only "rule" is, not every boomerang necessarily requires the same angle of release with respect to the wind. A rough rule for a lefty would be to throw between 9 and 10 o'clock

> Raymond Wright: I had the same problem as you. Found out I was throwing with too much forward speed and not enough spin. It kept landing 10 yards to my right. Worked on flipping the wrist almost like throwing darts. I have found that the windier it is the higher I throw it for a good return.

Bear in the Air: Girls Rock >

> Girls Rock 2015, Grants Pass, OR

Mon Mar 2, 2015 9:53 am (PST) . Posted by: bearboomerang

this past Saturday i was invited to be one of the 9 work shops at the Girls Rock function here in Grants Pass. we used Kendall Davis, Master Designs cardboard stock Quad as a hand out, to take home. but in the gym we used Gary Broadbend's Room-a-rangs and backyarder's. everyone got to try even Mom's and Grand-Ma's and a few Dad's. i wasn't working the camera, so i got what i got from a volunteer that was helping me the whole day. first a class room session on history and science then across the hall for some throwing fun. of course story's had to be bragged about, a 3.59 min MTA catch by a WOMAN to... the Girls Loved it. that was the idea that day, to inspire the 8 to 13 years old and their parents.

i made a photo album here in the group: Girls Rock 2015 https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Boomerang_Talk/photos/albums/1288184727.



A Look Back >

Many Happy Returns Ex-Officio Editor Bob Foresi takes a look over our collective shoulder to see what's in the Many Happy Piles Of Dusty Old Newsletters. "Ain't no need to watch where I'm goin'; just need to know where I've been," - Mater.



- > 10 Years Ago - Matt Golenor successfully defends U.S. title at Lebanon, NH.
- > 15 Years Ago - Chicago Bob outlasts Steve Kavanaugh in GLORP at Nationals in Canton, OH . The event was filmed by the extreme sports show "Adrenaline TV".
- > 20 Years Ago - At age 15 Adam Ruhf wins Fast Catch at U.S. Nationals and U.S. Open in Minneapolis, MN.
- > 25 Years Ago - At Barooga, NSW, 34 throwers compete in a night tournament running from 5:30 PM to 1:15 AM. Overall winner is Rob Croll.
- > 30 Years Ago - At the Design Competition at Nationals in Northridge, CA, winners in various categories are Neil Kalmanson, Ray Riser, John Flynn, George Reitbauer, Charles Springer, Ted Bailey and Larry Ruhf.
- > 35 Years Ago - At Smithsonian Tournament, Washington DC, Suicide is won by Allen Lilly, the only one of the last three contestants to make a successful foot catch.
- > 40 Years Ago - John "Billy Boomerang" McMahon makes record 388 consecutive catches at South Padre, TX.
- > 45 Years Ago - The Society for the Promotion and Avoidance of Boomerangs is organized in England by Dr. Brenning James. It was replaced in 1980 by the British Boomerang Society.

Those wacky Brits shoulda kept the old name.

Returning Credit Where Credit is Due >

This upcoming month marks my 5th year throwing boomerangs. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped me along the way and welcomed me into the sport. Without everyone who has given me boomerangs, advice, and encouragement I couldn't have had all these awesome experiences and made such wonderful memories. I would have never thought I could achieve so much just by throwing a stick at myself.

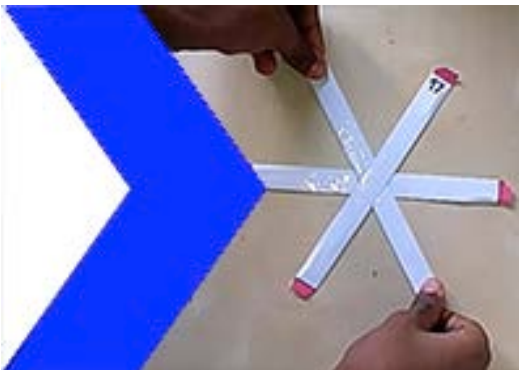
Thank you!



Kenny Barr

Random boomerang videos >

Following is a collection of video links. If you have one you'd like to submit for consideration for the next issue, please send it in.



Step-by-step paper boomerangs by Nathan

Dereje

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSbVmI3QAwg&list=PL6Vk6IrGFmNsnM_iOkEYsBPNs3-fAjbO-



Here's a kinetic park bench design by Studio

Anaszonyi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNMx0sZ1jDc>



Michael Gel with a head-hacky & Isaac

working with a triblader

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5YMpU8MHXQ>



A nice GLORP compilation from the 2006

Nationals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lo1oGYTovV4>



I guess you could call it "slapstick,"

Adventures with Bill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3nCQADV6XE>

Gateway Classic Trophies >



Chicago Bob ran his Gateway Classic tournament in Waterloo, Illinois Memorial Day weekend with an award system other tournament directors may want to pick up. Caution, though. If you do the whole thing, you have to invite this guy:



> The way the random trophies works is rather than give the same few guys first, second, and third place trophies for all the events, I'll have trophies for other

placings. For instance, Sport division trick catch may have first, fourth, and eighth. Sport division fast catch may be first, fifth, and ninth. And so on. And every thrower gets an overall trophy, so usually people leave with a couple of trophies or more. My trophies are usually sorta fun Dollar Store creations, but this year included some beautiful Stuart Jones Arches. Never the same trophy as an earlier year!

Upcoming events schedule >

> July 18 (official date!)

Vermont/New Hampshire Boomerang Tournament

Sachem Field adjacent to Campion Ice Rink, 394 North Main Street, West Lebanon, NH 03784

Tournament director: John Flynn <activermont@myfairpoint.net>

> July 25

NALDO Long Distance Tournament

Diamond Middlebranch Park, 2782 Diamond St NE, Canton, Ohio 44721

Tournament director: David Hirsch

> July 26

Canton Boom Bash

Diamond Middlebranch Park, 2782 Diamond St NE, Canton, Ohio 44721

Tournament director: Gary Broadbent

> August 1

36th Annual Free Throwers Fling

YMCA of Delaware, 1121 S Houk Rd, Delaware, Ohio 43015

Tournament director: Chet Snouffer

> September 11-13

2015 US Boomerang Association National Championships and Exposition

Cornerstone Lakes Park, 2199 Smith Road, West Chicago, Illinois 60185

LD on Friday, standard 6 events on Saturday and Sunday is a Gel/Funday maybe with H2H. The location is Cornerstone Lakes Park in West Chicago. Entry fee will be the same or less than last year. Details to come (approx. \$50). The name

of the hotel: Hyatt Place, Chicago/Naperville/Warrenville. Rate is \$85 per night from Thursday to Sunday. Rooms must be reserved by 8/20/2015 to get that rate.

New dates & details will be posted at www.usba.org/Calendar/2015season.html

For those overseas, check out the international events schedule at <http://www.ifbaonline.org/ifba-tournaments-worldwide-calendar/tournaments/>. And note the IFBA officials have no affiliation with FIFA.

- > June 20 Shrewsbury 2015 tournament; Shrewsbury UK
- > June 27-28 BesaK 2015: Besançon FR
- > June 27-28 Deutschen Bumerangmeisterschaften Ü 40: Hürtgenwald-Gey DE
- > August 8-9 5° Schaalsee Bumerang Cup 2015: Dargow DE
- > Aug 29-30 Trefriw Games, North Wales UK
- > September 5-6 Open Swiss Championship, Marly CH
- > September 26 Iron Man; Birmingham UK
- > October 10-11 BeachBoomerang 2015: Viareggio IT
- > October 17-18 LongDistanceSpaceBoomerang: Carcassonne FR

Ben's Blog © 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*.



> **Stranger Than Black Swans**

*In the following excerpt from his book *The Nutmeg of Consolation*, Patrick*

O'Brien, author of the immensely popular 20-volume Aubrey-Maturin series of sea novels set in the early 19th century, pens an instructive look at the boomerang as seen early on by Europeans visiting Australia.

“We must take something for the good of the house,” said Stephen, sitting down by a tray of objects designed for visiting sailors: beautiful deep-green pitted emu’s eggs, Aboriginal stone axes, spears against the wall, and a flat, angled piece of wood like an indifferent circumflex accent some two feet across. “House,” he called. “House, there. House. D’ye hear me now?” House came.

“Pray tell me the use of this wooden implement, something between a scimitar and a sickle.”

“That, sir, in an Aborigine’s. . . toy, as you might say, since they only use them for play. They hold one end and throw it yards like a Catherine-wheel and when it has gone fifty yards or so it rises up, curves and comes back to hand. There was an old Aboriginal that used to show it for a tot of rum, and that was his undoing.”

“You throw it from you, and it comes back without rebounding?”

“You find it hard to believe, sir, I am sure; and so it is too if you have not seen it: but reflect, sir, you are in the Antipodes---you are standing upside down like a fly on the ceiling---we are all standing upside down; which is much stranger than black swans or sticks that fly back to your hand.”

> Underhanded But Still Ethical

When he was a university student, longtime boomerang buff Paul Sprague made a discovery that sheds light on the nature of boomerang flight.

Having read about an S-shaped stick “with funny airfoils,” to quote Sprague, that supposedly was launched underhanded and successfully returned to the thrower, Sprague said he became convinced the feat was impossible.

“A fellow here at the University of Illinois was trying to get his Nerf ‘rang to come home to him with a sidearm toss,” says Sprague. “Recalling what dihedral does to the shape and maximum height of a flight pattern, I suggested he give the boomerang a little negative dihedral to make a good vertical circle without going off to the side. This worked well and I started thinking that if I could stand the flight circle on end, why not lean it over the other way?”

“More and more negative dihedral compensated for more and more layover until I was bringing back completely underhanded throws. The wings were bent pretty far down at this point, but the boomerang was coming right back. But this

was only a Nerf. Would it work with a real boomerang? I tested this out with the most tuneable conventional boomerang, the plastic Fever.

“I bent the tips down as much as I dared, fearing to break the poor thing. I kept testing it and it kept needing just a little more negative dihedral to keep it off the ground. I finally caught an underhanded throw with the wingtips a full one and a half centimeters below flat.

“The throw was backwards, like a conventional throw, only with a really late release. Or forward, with a reverse grip.

“The most disturbing thing about the catch was that the boomerang seemed to have precessed backwards. The faster air speed is on the bottom of the rotation, rather than the top, and it curves to the right, instead of the left. But it still flattens out horizontally for the catch. If the precession principle had its druthers, it would dive into the ground shortly after the stick began to curve.

“Apparently, the maximum lift point being below the axis of rotation is now sufficient to forcibly tip the spin plane up against the grain for a horizontal return.”

Got that?

> **Best American Wit: Maximum Thyme Aloft**

American thrower Ron Kerner turned over his boomerang bag (“A flight bag from Flying Tigers Airline, with an external pouch”) to see what would emerge from it. “Apart from several boomerangs,” he says, “the standard gear that most throwers carry was present. This included the usual herbs and spices----cumin, to rub on the trailing edges so it will be cumin back when thrown; bay leaves, for spreading around the field to keep unwary spectators at bay; and thyme, which adheres well to a boomerang coated with a little rubber cement, for getting maximum thyme aloft. (This winter I am growing several varieties of thyme to test their aerodynamic properties. *Thyma invertica*, or Australian thyme, looks most promising.)

“Also included were a thermometer to determine if boomerang fever is present and a recording of *My Boomerang Won't Come Back* to cure it quickly; a box of pineapple upside down cake, a favorite Australian snack; a mirror, which is the graphic device I use to explain how I get a boomerang to return; a bottle of Pusser's rum, reminiscent of the line in the poem *The Lovesong of J.A. Ruhfrock* that goes ‘One shot for the boomerang, two shots for me, and we'll both be flying as you'll soon see;’ Annette Funicello----yes, you're right, I haven't yet read *How to Catch a Flying Boomerang Without Annette*; and last some lint from the bottom

of the bag, which I can only assume is from my boomerang made from marine plywood, this structural material having had a navel history.

“Nothing out of the ordinary, really.”

> **What’s the Attraction?**

The returning boomerang has a special appeal. What is it and who responds to it? These are intriguing questions. There are four obvious areas of appeal.

1. Physical exercise. Sport. Competition. Fun. Individualism. Going against the grain of mass spectator sports. Throwing is one of the few sports where player makes and tunes his own equipment. It’s a cheap sport and the equipment is portable. Boomerangs are fun to talk about.

2. Anthropology. The boomerang comes from the Stone Age. It has historical appeal. Australia with its undoubted glamour is the mother lode. There are unanswered questions: how, when and just where was it invented. There is even a problem of definition, viz. what is the actual difference between returning and hunting boomerangs. (A nonreturn hunter may be blown back by the wind.) Both are fascinating for their own reasons.

3. Aerodynamics. Taps into a universal love affair with flight. How does it work exactly? Complex physics needed to explain its workings.

4. Craftsmanship. People like to carve wood into utilitarian and decorative objects. The boomerang is the perfect foil. The boomerang can be made in many shapes. Natural wood elbow ‘rangs are a pure expression. Some boomerangs are so elaborately constructed or painted they are more art objects than sticks to throw. Many people find boomeranging attractive for two or more of the above reasons.

5. There is yet another area of appeal, perhaps most compelling of all. The return boomerang is mysterious, subjective, distinctly odd. It can be summed up in one word: magical. Hard to define, the aura of the throw away stick that faithfully returns to the thrower is immediate and enduring. The boomerang retains its power to nudge people’s thinking out of the mundane, as well as the power to make people smile. Richard Loffler caught the general spirit when he wrote: “The boomerang could be described as an un-usable wooden coat hanger. That is minus the metal hook. But it is, of course, eminently usable----you can hang your spirits out to soar on it.”

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