

**POPS Meet, 1991, Raeford, NC**

**&**

**POPS Meet, 17-25 Aug 1991, Xenia, OH**

**&**

**POPS CRW records 1991**



see back for names

L-R

MAX MIENSOPUST  
BEST OF POPS 1990

LEN ZAK  
BEST OF POPS 1991

BILL WOOD  
TOP POP

PHOTO CREDIT: ALICIA ANDERSON

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TAKEN  
AUG. 91  
XENIA NATIONAL





The 11-way speed star winners pose for the camera during the National Parachutists Over Forty Society (POPS) competition held last August at Skydive Greene County in Xenia, Ohio. Members (in alphabetical order) are: Alicia Anderson, Ski Chmielewski, Fred Honchell, Roger Humphrey, Ed Moy, Anthony Perner, Barry Reinherz, Jim West, Bob Williamson and Bill Wood. According to Top Pop Bill Wood, 54 jumpers registered for the event from as far away as California, Texas, Florida and Canada. The average age was 51. Wood said some of the POPS members started jumping as early as 1942 and as late as 1991. Pat Moorehead won the accuracy event in the Over 50 category. Dave Waight took first place in the 40 to 50 age group. Ski Chmielewski won the "Hit 'n Rock"—land, take off your gear, touch the target, and then plop down in a rocking chair a few feet away. The next POPS meet will be held in March at Umatilla, Fla. Photograph by Tim Pugh.



# The History Club POPS Celebrates 25 Years

BY ALICIA ANDERSON

**“You don’t stop skydiving because you get old; you get old because you stop skydiving.” —Bill Wood, Top POP**

**G**rowing at the rate of at least one new member a day for the last two to three years, the Parachutists Over Phorty Society, or POPS, is now 3,400 strong—the equivalent of 17% of USPA’s membership. POPS jumpers are a highly experienced and active group that includes many champions and former champions in

our sport. Well-attended meets are held regularly and are a highlight for this gang, both for the friendly atmosphere and the thrill of tough competition.

Being over 40 years old and having made at least one parachute jump (tandems included) are the only qualifications it takes to join POPS. (To get a POPS number,

send \$15 for a life membership, which includes a membership roster and a patch, to Bill Wood, Top POP, 35 Dera Street, Greenville, SC 29615.)

POPS owes its recent growth to huge numbers of baby boomers—skydivers included— hitting the 40 mark. Many now have more time and money to spend than before. Also, jumpers appear to be starting later and staying in the sport longer as better equipment contributes to fewer injuries.

It wasn’t always that way. When Lenny Barad, a 45-year-old novice jumper from St. Louis, MO, started POPS, he was reacting to the good-natured ribbing he was taking as the “old man.” Lenny’s response was to put an ad in the June, 1966 issue of PARACHUTIST. It read:

**If you’re getting**

- a little grey
- a little bald
- a little paunchy
- a little ache in the back

**And you’re having difficulty**

- making dead centers
  - packing
  - with downwind landings
  - with becoming a Cardinal or Pope\*
- \*ask an old-timer to explain*

**And if you want to**

- promote fun in parachuting for men over 40
- promote safety in parachuting

**And if you are a member in good standing in the PCA, then unite and join the POPS—Parachutists Over Phorty Society. No dues. No officers. No constitution.**

Recipients of awards for the first 8-way POPStar in 1974 at the All American Parachute Club in the 82nd Airborne headquarters are (left to right) Max Mlensopust, Bob Paauw, Spider Wrenn, Jerry Thompson, Jr., Mike Estration, Tom Morrison and Pat Moorehead (Ted Pullam not pictured).





## POPS

Barad offered free a POPS number, a name tape and an emblem (at a cost then still to be determined) depicting Father Time fearlessly hurtling through space, in gear and seated in a rocking chair (*see logo*). He also offered a list of all other POPS members and promised announcements of any meetings, dinners, competitions and get-togethers.

Barad was more than a little amazed when, in the first month, he received 28 applications for membership. By October 1966, there were 44 members. At the end of 1966, Nina Wolkow of South Lyon, MI, became POPS 100 and its first woman member.

After a severe disabling injury, Barad retired from the sport. In May 1967, he turned over the POPS files and title of "Top POP" to Jack Sowle, POPS 33, of Houston, TX. The roster by that time had reached 130, including members in Canada, Europe, Jamaica and New Zealand. A year later, with extensive business and family commitments, he turned the title over to Mike Efstration, POPS 37, the 42-year-old president of Long Island Skydivers. Efstration held the post for about a year from May 1968 into 1970. The reins next went to Jack McManaman, POPS 21, of Winthrop Harbor, IL, followed by Bob Rhyne, POPS 305, of Flint, MI.



Smitty the Jumper, still jumping in his 90s.



The Grandfathers prepare to exit the Porter.

### All-Grandfather 8-Way

On Saturday morning, July 27, the weather was absolutely beautiful and 12 grandfathers had arrived at the Kapowsin Air Sports DZ in northern Washington State, eager to be part of the first-ever all-grandfather world record. The event was a result of efforts begun by Ron Hornback, sitting it out in his wheelchair as a result of a landing injury a few weeks prior, and Larry Chernis. The local newspaper sent a reporter and a photographer, and many photos were snapped of the all-Grampa team in their snappy T-shirts.

Late in the afternoon, they were finally ready to go for it. They commandeered the Turbine Porter for a 10-way.

The plan was a traditional round from 12,500 feet, with a Cessna carrying alongside a newspaper reporter and freefall cameraman Erling Olson.

The climb to altitude was quick. The Porter leveled onto jump run and the floaters began to climb out, when sud-

denly, Don Bentley was gone.

The others hurried into position, gave a quick count and completed a 9-way star by 9,000 feet. They spun the star for the camera, but Bentley was nowhere in sight.

As it turned out, while getting into position, he saw his main bag begin to deploy, apparently knocked loose from the container. He jumped clear of the plane and threw his main pilot chute only to find himself under a malfunction at 11,000 feet. Ten minutes later, he steered his reserve to a stand-up landing in the peas to the delight of the crowd.

Recovering his cutaway main canopy had to wait until the next day, but Bentley found it about a mile away. Never a dull moment.

—reported by Ron Hornback, D-528

The Grandfathers (left to right), front row: Gary Young, Tommy Lentz, Don Rabe, Pat Moorehead; back row: Glen Dufur, Lenny Aikins, Larry Chernis, event organizer Ron Hornback, Grant Linn, Bob Pfeiffer.





## POPS

Rhine took charge on January 1, 1971. Hundreds of new POPS were given numbers during his tenure including legendary barnstormer H. T. Smith, a.k.a., Smitty the Jumper, to whom Bob assigned POPS 13 during the U.S. National Skydiving Championships in Tahlequah, OK, in 1972. Number 13 previously had been held as an honorary position by the FAA, but Rhine felt Smitty, already 73, was more deserving of a low number.

In ten years, with membership at nearly 1,000 and applications arriving regularly, it was clear that the POPS organization had become a permanent part of the skydiving scene.

Tom Morrison, POPS 96, of Ambler, PA, became the sixth Top POP. Today, Morrison, while not nearly the oldest POP, is at 67 one of the most active. He's been observed making nine jumps and up each day at the meets. He will soon be applying for his USPA Sexta Diamond Wings.

John L. Reid, POPS 966, operator for many years of a small DZ near his home in Tahlequah, OK, then served. During his tenure, Reid appointed Pat Moorehead to head "POPS West" to coordinate activities of the growing number of POPS on the west coast.

Today's Top POP, Bill Wood, POPS 1135, of Greenville, SC, was invited by Reid to succeed him in February, 1988.

Internationally, Top POPS include Bernie Shaw POPS 898, from Australia, who also organized the first POPS World Championships, held in New South Wales, Australia in April, 1990; England's J.L. "Lofty"

Thomas, POPS 911, a just-retired gear manufacturer whose sons, Derek and Chris, are familiar figures at boogies in the U.S. and around the world; Canada's Eric Roggencamp, POPS 2076, who is also president of the Canadian Parachute Association; Rene Boidon, Belgium; Liam McNulty, Ireland; Jim Huizinga, The Netherlands; and 74-year old Gordon Calder, POPS 601, who heads the New Zealand POPS, newly-formed during the first World POPS in Australia.

### POPS Meets

The first advertised POPS Nationals was held at Combs Airfield in Lebanon, IN, on August 25, 1969. It was sponsored by the Indianapolis Sea Hawks Club and organized by Chuck Spiedell. About 15 jumpers attended, including Mike Efration (then Top POP), Bob Rhine, Roy Grace, Dick Cochenaur, Paul Supan, Pop Kline, Ray Mahon, Walter Engle and Emmet Norris, some of whom continue to jump today.

Five years later at Fort Bragg, NC, over 45 POPS attended for a weekend of competition and fun jumps out of Army UH-1H "Huey" helicopters. Capping that two-day event was the first all-POPS 8-way star, which included Maximilian Miensopust, Bob Paauw, former Golden Knight first sergeant Bobby "Spider" Wrenn, Jerry Thompson, Jr., Mike Efration, Tom Morrison, Pat Moorehead and Ted Pullam.

POPS Nationals are held in the late summer to early fall at different host DZs. In addition to the competitive events held during the day, the highlight during the traditional Saturday night banquet is the awarding of the Best of POPS Award. This award—and the spectacular trophy, do-

### The Oldest Active POP?

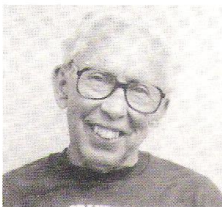
Lenny Aikins at 75 is more active than most guys in their 50s. He is certainly the most active 75-year-old in this sport.

Holding D-2240, Aikins is a regular at the family DZ, Kapowsin Air Sports, operated by his daughter, Jessie Farrington and her husband Geoff. Aikins has made nearly 4000 jumps since beginning in 1960 at Thun Field in Puyallup, WA, at the age of 45.

His interest in aviation began during World War II, when he learned to fly an Aronica C-3, soloing after three hours of dual instruction. He went on to fly P-47s in the European theatre.

Aikins truly pioneered skydiving in the northwest. He participated in the first baton pass over the state (the basis of relative work) and also in the first 4-way and 8-way stars. His adventurous spirit didn't stop at RW. He also flew himself into the first 9-way canopy stack ever built in the world.

Always dedicated to skydiving, he and his partner, Ed Shipuleski, ran the DZ at Thun Field until 1974.



Lenny Aikins

Today, Aikins makes about five jumps a week. He is occasionally joined in the air by his son, Lance, or his 17-year-old grandson, Luke.

Aikins is the star attraction of most of the exhibition jumps the DZ performs, and he fills in as a jump pilot when the young kids get too tired.

Last May, Aikins' family and friends gathered in Kapowsin to build a 31-way in honor of his 31 years in the sport.

Every winter, he and the Farringtons make the para-ski circuit, as Aikins has since the circuit began in the northwest around 1972.

Is getting old really going to be this fun?

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## POPS

nated by George Rabe, POPS 1563—was first presented at the 1984 POPS Nationals to the member who best exemplifies the spirit of POPS. This year's recipient was Len Zak from Torrance, CA. Past honorees are: Tom Morrison, 1984; Larry Rossi, 1985; Bill Wood, 1986; Pat Moorehead, 1987; Harry Ervin, 1988; Roy Grace, 1989; and Maximilian Miensopust, 1990.

The POPS Winter Meet, hosted annually by Jimmy and Wilma Godwin of the Paragators DZ in Umatilla, FL, celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. The 1992 winter meet will be held March 21 through 28.

The POPS West Coast Championships, organized by Len Zak and Pat Moorehead, are held every other year at Perris, CA. The next will be in April, 1993. The all-POPS 35-way record was set this year on the last day of the event.

The Famous Ettamogah Pub in Albury/Wodonga, Australia was the site of the first World POPS Championships in April of last year. Nearly 120 competitors from nine countries registered. The second World Meet will be hosted by the Godwins in Umatilla September 14-28, 1993 (with competition scheduled September 17-21). Plans are to celebrate with a special dinner.

Although other smaller POPS meets are held occasionally, those are the primary and long-standing favorites held on a regular basis.

Events at the above meets traditionally include accuracy, RW scrambles and the infamous "hit 'n' rock," by far the most popular with jumpers and spectators. The event consists of landing, removing one's equipment, running to the target disc and then sitting in a rocking chair placed 40 feet away. The score is derived from the time between touchdown and sitting in the chair. It sounds simple, but anything can and does happen on the way to the chair. Amazingly, this event is usually won by a time of five seconds or less.

### SCR #1: Still Busy

Lucky for Gary Young, D-2147, it doesn't always rain in the northwest. And it didn't rain on the day he planned to make 50 jumps to celebrate his 50th birthday.

Young, began skydiving in March, 1960, at Lake Piru, CA. The sport has taken him all around the world, including Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, as the 1987 U.S. Para-Ski Team Leader, and for performances in the West Indies, Mexico, Central America and throughout the United States with the California Aerial Circus Parachute Team.

The world has seen Young skydive in numerous stunts for the movies, commercials and television, including riding a motorcycle from an aircraft in "The

Best of POPS, 1990, Max Miensopust (left) passes the big trophy to 1991 winner Len Zak (center) as Top POP Bill Wood (right) looks on.



### POPS Records

Since the first POPS 8-way RW formation was formed during the POPS Nationals at Fort Bragg in 1974, several hundred other POPS have received their patch and number. As skilled younger jumpers advance into POPS, they bring along experience in other disciplines such as CRW, night jumping and large sequential relative work.

(To register any type of POPS 8-way or larger formation and obtain your individual number, contact Bill Wood (803) 370-2614 or Len Zak (213) 542-3030 for application details. Prompt notification is important to obtain credit for your achievement and a low sequence number. If, in the past, you participated in any type of all-POPS formation, 8-way or larger, you have until February 29, 1992, to apply for a retroactive chronological sequence number. After that date, numbers will be issued in the order they are received.)

The decision was made by the Top POP at the POPS Nationals in Xenia, OH, this year to establish a recording procedure for POPS 8-way CRW stacks, and some serious attempts were made at that meet. Although unsuccessful, a 9-way CRW stack was completed the following weekend on Labor Day during the Herd Boogie. Organized by well-known CRW enthusiast Ed Cummings, POPS 1604, the stack is

claimed to be the newest POPS record. The record-setting group averaged 1,000 CRW jumps each and included several former world CRW champions. In order of entry, they were Pat Moorehead, Tom Morris, Ed Cummings, Al Altendorfer, Bob Lamberson, Malachy O'Connor, Jack Kirk, Ray Sermet, and Donald Marchionese.

The stakes will surely go higher over the next 25 years of POPS with the graying of mainstream skydivers. (For instance, world-class skydiving coach Tom Piras turns 40 next month.) It's something everyone tries to ignore, but turning 40 won't go away, and it beats the alternative.

These new POPS may alter the profile of the records and competitions with their future contributions, but they'll find the good vibes of POPS already in place and going strong. ■

### About the Author



Alicia Anderson, POPS 2375, D-9821, is a PRO rating holder and member of the California Aerial Circus Parachute Team. She made her first jump in Hinckley, IL, in 1978, and eagerly anticipated joining POPS in 1987.



Gary Young

Fall Guy." But he is best known in skydiving for his participation in the first 8-way, 10-way and 20-way relative work formations. He holds Star Crest Recipient #1, from an awards program that became popular in the '70s and is still administered by California jumper Bill Newell.

At 9 a.m., Friday, July 26, Young kicked it off by jumping with his son,

Gary, Jr., an experienced jumper, over Kapowsin Air Sports in Washington State. Young's father Rick, a veteran of over 3,000 hours flying jumpers, also pitched in, flying 17 of the 50 loads. They maintained a respectable pace of four to five minutes per load until lunchtime.

On jump 34 of the day, Young's daughter Katie came along for her first tandem jump, with Gary, Jr., tagging along. Finally, on jump #50, his wife Joyce made a rare appearance at the plane in a tandem harness, joined by Katie for jump number two. Meanwhile, as a complete surprise to Gary, along came Aerial Circus teammates Larry Langrand and USA National Director Pat Moorehead.



*Jim checked this before & sent*

Bill Wood  
35 Dera Street  
Greenville, South Carolina 29615  
(803) 370-2614

*Hi! & sent to:*

*w/photos*

PARACHUTIST  
CHIVING STAFF  
SKYDIVING  
Xenia Gazette  
Yellow Spgs News  
Evon Messenger  
Springfield  
News-Sun  
Fairborn  
Herald

August 31, 1991  
For Immediate Release:

The Boss said it was the top of the POPS...and if the Boss Jim West (C489) says so, it's so.

Of course, West was talking about the National Parachutists Over Phorty Society (POPS) meet hosted at Skydive Greene County, Xenia, Ohio, August 17 - 25, 1991. The skydiving center is owned by West.

Top Pop Bill Wood (TOP POP 8) reported 54 registrants were from as far away as California, Texas, Florida and Canada. They averaged 51 years of age, all with a total of 112, 043 jumps. Some POPS members began skydiving as early as 1942 and as late as 1991, he said, and many are internationally known in the world of skydiving.

*See you soon!*  
*Paul Morrison*  
*Ingoldsby*

Wood also noted that "The Best of POPS" awarded at the annual banquet was given to Len Zak (POPS 460) for his vast experience and accomplishments in sport parachuting.

The meet actually began with a get together cookout at the Wests' home the night before the competition. With high spirits and excellent weather, judging began early Saturday by Al Altendorfer, and his team of Howard Hill, Bill Fliszar, and Boyd Stephens.

The main events featured an 11-way speed start which is a competition with 11 skydivers doing formations during freefall. It was won by a team headed by Tom Morrison (POPS 96) and comprised of Alicia Anderson, Bill Wood, Roger Humphrey, Ed Moy, Barry Reinherz, Ski Chmielewski, Jim West, Bob Williamson, Fred Honchell, and Anthony Perner.

Accuracy awards were given to those landing on a designated target. The awards went to Pat Moorehead, Larry Cordeira and G.D. Williams in the over 50 category, and to Dave Waight, Tom Zukowski, and Russ Manhold for the 40-50 age group. Dave Waight won with an amazing three-jump cumulative distance of two centimeters.

The most popular event in POPS, "Hit 'N' Rock", features the skydivers landing, removing their parachute rigs, touching the target, and running to a rocking chair as fast as possible. This event was won by Ski Chmielewski, Al Danko, and Pat Moorehead. Rookie POPS member Bob Ingoldsby won the rocking chair for his special long distance running efforts.

A world POPS record attempt was made for an 11-stack canopy formation. Those in the stack were Al Altendorfer, Al Danko, Frank Bender, Bob Williamson, Ed Cummings, Len Zak, Wayne Powell, Jim Shaeffer, Larry Barnes, Danny Smith, and Dennis Timm. Because of thermals the team only gained six in a stack.

The next national POPS meet is in March at Umatilla, Florida.

Editor Note: Please give photography credit to Tim Pugh of Skydive Greene County, Ohio.

## Skydiving Grandpas

Older guys take a starring role and shine in skies over Kapowsin



Brian Clark

Grandfathers Gary Young, 50, left, and Pat Moorehead, 59, flank senior skydiver Lenny Aikins, 75.

By Brian Clark  
For The News Tribune

It was grandfathers' day in the sky over Kapowsin, in south Pierce County, last weekend.

Led by 75-year-old Lenny Aikins, nine skydivers hooked up in midair to form what is believed to be the first free-falling, nine-way star made up entirely of grandfathers.

Jumping out at about 14,500 feet, the skydivers

gradually positioned themselves during a 45-second free fall and then grasped hands to form the star. Then after holding their formation for about 20 seconds, they separated and their colorful chutes opened. Moments later, they were all safely on the ground.

"It was great," said Pat Moorehead, 59. "It's always wonderful to get a first."

Along with Aikins and Moorehead, the other skydiving grandfathers were: Larry Chernis, Glen Du-

fur, Tommy Lentz, Grant Linn, Bob Pfeifer, Don Rabe and Gary Young.

The granddads ranged in age from 41 to 75-year-old Aikins, and represent 216 years of skydiving experience, 28,424 jumps and 31 grandchildren.

Aikins himself has been skydiving more than 31 years, and says he has absolutely no intention of grounding himself.

"Quit? Why I'm having to much fun. Age is in Please see **Grandpas**, Page 4



P-2

## Grandpas

Continued from Page 1

the mind, and this keeps me young and spry," chuckled Aikins, who has 11 grandchildren.

A wiry, semi-retired pilot from Kapowsin, Aikins has thousands of jumps under his belt. But last Saturday was special.

It would have been a 10-way star, but a malfunctioning chute forced one grandfather, Don Bentley, to leave his perch on the jump plane slightly ahead of his buddies.

The event, which was organized by skydiver Ron Hornbeck, himself a Puyallup grandfather, was also supposed to include a grandmother or two. But none could be found, he said. That "first" will have to come later. Ironically, Hornbeck could not

take part in the jump because he'd broken his leg in a skydiving accident on July 4, when a gust of wind slammed him into a concrete barrier at Clear Lake near Eatonville.

"Why do we do these things?" mused Aikins, a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter pilot in World War II. "Because it's exciting for one thing. For me, perhaps because it makes me a more efficient neurotic. It keeps my juices flowing."

In fact, Aikins said he would recommend skydiving to other older adults. "If you're active and healthy, an adventure sport like this can heighten your quality of life. It does for me," he said.

Though he has had 26 rides on his reserve chute — as a result of his main parachute failing — Aikins said he hasn't really had any close calls.

"If you are mentally prepared and your gear is good, a reserve ride is no big deal," he said.

One of the observers of Saturday's record-making jump was Luke Aikins, Lenny's 17-year-old grandson.

"I think it's neat that my granddad does this. But to be honest, it's what's normal for him. He was doing it long before I was born," said Luke, who himself has made more than 200 skydiving jumps.

"I just hope I can be doing this when I'm my grandfather's age," he said.

Young added another "first" to his personal records just the day before the grandfather star event. He did 50 dives on Friday, his 50th birthday.

"It seemed appropriate," said Young, a pilot who lives just down the road from the Kapowsin jump center. "Obviously, this is a big part of my life."

For Moorehead, a retired fireman and granddad from

Los Angeles, the nine-way leap into record books was a way to prove to the world that grandfathers aren't old, rickety guys who sit in rocking chairs in front of the fireplace or television.

"This kind of thing is neat because it shows that grandfathers — and older adults in general — can do just about whatever they want," said Moorehead, who has been jumping for 22 years.

"I know I need something like this in my life," said Moorehead, a lean, white-haired stuntman who has worked in Hollywood films and travels around the world as part of a skydiving team.

"I really believe that you don't quit skydiving when you get old, you get old when you quit skydiving," he said.

Though Puyallup's Hornbeck could only watch his fellow grandfathers from his wheelchair on the ground, he was excited by the stunt.

"Of course it would have been better if I'd been a part of it, and I'm disappointed that I wasn't up there, but I'm glad I helped put it all together," said Hornbeck, 50, a retired fireman with one grandchild.

Hornbeck, who has been jumping for 30 years, said the idea to round up as many skydiving grandparents started "just as a fluke."

"As long as I've been involved with sport jumping — which is only a little over 30 years old — "firsts" have been a big deal. And now that I'm a grandpa, this seemed like a good one to go for," he said.

Hornbeck plans to be back skydiving as soon as his leg heals.

"It's not easy to sit here and watch this from a chair. I'll be back as soon as I can," he said.





"POPS" 9 MAY CRW STACK  
LABOR DAY 1991  
L-R  
PAT MOURREHEAD  
ED CUMMINGS  
AL ALTENDORFER  
BOB LAMBERSON  
MALACHY O'CONNOR  
JACK KIRK  
RAY SERMET  
DONALD "DISCO" MARCHIONESE  
NOT PICTURED - TOM MORRIS

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PHOTO CREDIT: ALICIA  
ANDERSON

World Pops CRW Record  
1 Sept 91

Herd Boogie

PHOTO BY  
SCOTT  
TORRES  
D12526

World Pops CRW Record  
1 Sept 91

Herd Boogie

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