

A CHRISTMAS LESSON
Bill Berle

'Twas the night before Christmas - I knew there was wave
the glider was calling its financial slave
I tried to stay home, I tried to behave
but I saw a big lennie (the bottom's concave!)
So I dove for the car keys, avoided six wrecks
'cause a fiberglass glider is better than sex

I sped through the night at a blistering speed
so the highway patrol could not take the lead
at six in the morning tow pilots were called
I begged and I pleaded "I need to be hauled!"

My Mini-Nimbus was airborne at quarter to seven
the rotor was rough, but I broke through to heaven
I breathed the elixir that hissed in my face
and started to ponder, alone up in space
My thoughts turned to summer, cross country and race
of riding the mountains at dangerous pace

In deepening thought I began to lament
that the champion racers have gifts heaven sent
They know how to thermal, when to stop and to go
they know where the lift is, they just simply know
That Striedieck must have extra sen'sry perception
with Moffat the master of blatant deception

I'd give up my car, take a bus to the field
if only it'd help get my canopy sealed
I'd hold up a market, a store or a bank
for an increase in size of my small ballast tanks
I'll say ten "Hail Marys" or 50 "St. Peters"
for an increase in span of a couple of meters

To know how to dolphin, and just how to sail her on
to handle the Sierra when you run out of aileron
Those wizards just sit back, enjoying the ride
when my shorts would change color, on a low final glide

At last I had landed, a little dismayed
'cause I can't change my ship 'till the bank is repayed
Then just as I thought I was finally licked
a voice said "Enough!" - and there was St. Nick
He said that he had a new glider for me

just over there, 'neath a joshua tree

My eyes looked at Santa - "Is it really for me ?"
a brand new exquisite Schempp-Hirth Nimbus 3
'twas a special Klaus Holighaus racing edition
constructed and crafted for world competition
Computers and needles to talk to the wise
and negative flaps to prevent compromise
Outfitted, equipped to master the skies
and three ballast dump valves (for the spectators eyes)
This craft was the limit in speed and in style
it loses a foot - but it goes half a mile!

But just when I went to get in the machine
it's voice said "Get lost kid, you're still way to green!"
"You really don't know how to make fast decisions
and totally lack the required precision
"I'm not the right glider to teach you these skills
I don't like outlandings, especially on hills
"In a contest you'll never keep up with my pace
use your own Mini-Nimbus to learn how to race!"

The Nimbus and Santa climbed right out of sight
and I knew deep inside that the glider was right
In soaring it happens so often, my yearning
but despite my attempts I never stop learning
And after years of this training and I hope few bad incidents
I'll know of these mysteries, which I'll then call "experience"