

BRET WILLAT, 53, was born May 14th, 1952 in Studio City, Calif. Bret's father, the late, **Irvin V. Willat** was a motion picture Director/Producer, so while still in grammar school, Bret began acting. Preferring the technical side of film production vs acting, Bret started as a sound mixer, gaffer, editor, and finally, assistant director in the film industry while still in high school. However, he didn't enjoy the counterfeit world that Hollywood had adopted, and instead he opted for his true love, *flying*.

Bret comes from an inventive family. His Uncle **Arnold** invented the *Jet Engine* in 1911, other inventions include the *phonograph needle* and the *Cold Permanent Wave*. His older brother **Boyd** invented the *Personal Organizer Concept* of the binders, which have found their way into every businessperson's belongings, and started **Harper House** (now *Day Runner*) in the garage, which is now a revered International Business. Boyd's newest invention is the *SENSA* pen. Bret even holds a US Patent on a recreational device called the *Hydro-Sled!*

The one area he really enjoyed was flying and at the age of 15, when most kids were dreaming of driving a car, Bret soloed in a glider (you can solo at 14 in a glider, 16 in power). *"I did not consider aviation as a career, I just loved the Freedom of Flying. Even today I still love to fly, whether it be instructing, towing, flying antique or experimental aircraft, or flying a graceful sailplane soaring with the eagles. It is still a tremendous natural high!"* explains Bret.

In 1971, Bret began his chosen career as a cadet attending the **United States Military Academy, at West Point, NY**. Unfortunately, an injury 2 1/2 years into his service caused him to be discharged as a disabled veteran. Bret remembers the moment well. "After all that time it was frustrating to leave because I wasn't sure what I would do, maybe start a career in aviation. It was my half brother, A.J. Allee, who helped me to decide." The call of Flying bit Bret very hard!

"AJ had just returned from Vietnam and was a solid inspiration to me. I took his advice and did various jobs at Flabob Airport in Riverside, Ca. I eventually earned my commercial and Certified Flight Instructor licenses in single & multi-engine, and Glider aircraft, since then Instructing has been my sole source of income. I have been fortunate and have worked with some of the best people in aviation. That is what I enjoy most, the people" commented Bret.

While at Flabob, Bret worked as assistant manager for the late **Flavio Madariaga** and became chief pilot at **Art Scholl Aviation**. **Art Scholl** was the World famous Airshow and Hollywood Stunt Pilot who lost his life while filming the 1986 hit film **TOP GUN**.

Having moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to attend **San Jose State University**, with a major in Aeronautical Operations and minor in Airport Management, Bret worked for **Amelia Reid**. *"I feel very strongly that when learning to fly in a powered aircraft, one must, to do it best, learn in a tail dragger (wheel in back). The best overall way to learn to fly, however, is in a sailplane. The Germans proved it in WWII and even now the Air Force Academy, British, Russian, Hungarian and German Air Forces all learn in sailplanes"* said Willat *"All pilots of the Military Flight Test Schools must undergo training in sailplanes. It really is, the safest, and most fun way to learn to fly."*

In 1979, Bret began instructing at **Sky Sailing Airport** in Fremont and soon was managing the airport for the owner, **Bud Murphy**.

By the end of 1979, Bret and his soon-to-be wife, **Karen**, bought the operation. **Bret and Karen were married in a sailplane in 1980**, making history by being the first couple of record to be *"hitched"* in silent flight! The minister was specially checked out to fly in the three seater for the wedding. The wedding party consisted of three 3-seat and two 2-seat sailplanes flying in formation, not to mention the 5 tow planes and many guests, which made for a quite festive and unique celebration!

Since 1979, Bret has performed in over 200 events with one purpose in mind: *"To show the pure grace and beauty of the sailplane."* How successfully he has accomplished this is best described by two world class airshow professionals. Airshow great, **Bob Hoover**, says that *"Bret's act is one of the best I have ever seen."* Veteran performer **Art Scholl**, the day before he began work on **TOP Gun** told Bret that his show was *"beautiful, simply beautiful! Don't change a thing."*

Bret, Karen, their sons, **Garret**, 23, and **Boyd**, 14, delight in showing the pure grace and beauty of the sailplane. In 1994 Shane Hazlewood, 25, joined the Willat family. Shane assists the team in ground operations and launches. On Garret's 14th birthday he entered the history books by soloing 18 sailplanes, 9 different makes/models. Two days later he flew a single seat hi performance sailplane for 431 miles (over

4 days) in 19 hrs 52 min! On his 16th birthday, Garret soloed 4 tail wheel aircraft (2 PA 18-180's, Callair, and Cessna 180), and got his private glider pilot rating. On his 19th birthday he earned his Commercial glider rating and his Certified Flight Instructor Glider certificate. Garret also rebuilt a 1947 Cessna 140 which he flies to school (Grossmont Junior College in El Cajon). Garret flight instructs when not in school. Garret is a 3 time member of the US Soaring team, twice as pilot. He is a full-time flight instructor and towpilot for Sky Sailing with over 4000 hours in gliders. Flown in many national and regional contests, including winning in standard class at the last region 9 contest, flew to a second place at the Australian junior nationals. Was coached by 3-time world champion George Lee at one of his junior training camps see Feb 2005 *Soaring* for a full article.

Boyd Willat turned 14 on May 19th 2005 and beat his brother Garret's record by soloing 23 sailplanes! A tremendous achievement. His solo cross-country, made it to almost Carlsbad Caverns in NM covering just under 500 miles in 3 days. Boyd has his sights on aviation! To see Boyd's full story: <http://www.skysailing.com/pages/boydsolo.htm>

Bret has more than 16,000 hours total time with over 4,000 hours in sailplanes. The towplane used for some shows is the *Snarl Cat*, which is a small single-seat Bi-plane. It was completely rebuilt in 1976 by Bret.

As part of the show, Bret designed and built a miniature version of the Snarl Cat (known as the *Snarl Kitten*), while it can't fly, Bret's son Garret uses it to tow the 850 lb., 60 foot wing spanned sailplane around on the ground. Garret has been an important part of the show since he was 3! Many times Garret will show up, riding on the tiny bi-plane, on the TV News, since the media really enjoys his enthusiasm and showmanship! In 1990, Garret premiered his new act, WING WALKING. With Dad driving the little Bi-plane Garret performs as a wing walker. This act is used as a filler and, *kids of all ages love it!* In 1994 little Boyd started wing walking on the bi-plane driven by Garret! THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST WING WALKER. This May little Boyd will turn 14 and he plans to beat his brother's record by soloing 20 gliders!

The family participation in this show makes it a real audience pleaser! This "*aviation family*" has participated in many activities such as the "*JUST SAY NO*" programs as well as speaking to school children while Garret gives rides on his bi-plane before airshows.

SKY SAILING, INC AT WARNER SPRINGS is one of, if not the Finest Soaring Centers in the United States! Picturesque Warner Springs, is known for its year round soaring weather, probably the best in the World. The Willat's, when not on the airshow road, work 7 days a week to promote the sport of soaring. Sky Sailing is an FBO (fixed base operator) offering Rides, Instruction and rental of sailplanes. Bret actively participates in community needs as a Volunteer fire fighter. He is also an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-DC). Bret is a Reserve San Diego County Deputy Sheriff (Sergeant) as a Pilot for Search & Rescue. He is also an Amateur Radio Operator (HAM) KE6BKR. Karen was elected to the Warner Unified School District as a member of the Governing Board, currently she is President.

In 1985, Bret was involved in an aircraft accident leaving him an incomplete paraplegic. Although in pain, Bret never gives up. Bret is a mighty lucky guy who still believes that flying is a lot more enjoyable than any other job he may have considered. He shows that love for flying and his family at each airshow when Bret, Karen, Shane, Garret, and Boyd demonstrate the beauty & grace of nature-powered flight to the cheers of the crowd.

We are now *Sensa Sailplane Magic* with our sponsor *Sensa*, makers of "*the world's most comfortable Pen, Sensa*"

Recently Bret earned his Jet Wings by getting his rating in the L-39 Albatross!

BRET WILLAT

PILOT SKILLS:

Commercial pilot: ASEL&S, AMEL, INSTR, GLIDER, & L-39
 Certified Flight Instructor: ASEL&S, AMEL, GLIDER
 Flown over 16,000 hrs in more than 100 different types
 FAA AIRCRAFT & POWERPLANT MECHANIC with IA
 FAA SAFETY COUNSELOR
 UNLIMITED LOW ALTITUDE AEROBATIC WAIVER

AVIATION EMPLOYMENT:

JUN 89' to Present: *Sky Sailing*, Warner Springs; Owner/Operator, Airport Mgr., IA(in 1993)
 MAY 79' to Present: Professional Airshow Performer
 DEC 79' to JUN 89': SKY SAILING AIRPORT, Fremont Ca.; Owner/Operator
 JUL 79' to DEC 79' : SKY SAILING AIRPORT; CFGI, Tow Pilot, Airport Mgr.
 JAN 79' to DEC 79': AMELIA REID AVIATION, San Jose;
 CFI:Primary,Comm,ME,Aerobatic
 SEP 78' to JAN 79': DON'S FLYING SERVICE, Flabob Riverside; Asst Airport Manager,
 Chief Pilot: Aerobatics, CFI:Primary,Comm,ME,Aerobatic
 WALL STREET JOURNAL Co-Pilot CV240 & CV340
 SEP 76' to SEP 78': AMELIA REID AVIATION; same as later
 FEB 74' to SEP 76': DON'S FLYING SERVICE ; same as later
 ART SCHOLL AVIATION, Flabob Riv.; Chief Pilot (6 months)
 JUL 71' to OCT 73' UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY,West Point NY ; Cadet

AFFILIATIONS:	WATSONVILLE ANTIQUE FLY-IN: Past Chairman 3 years
AMERICAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY	WEST POINT, ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES
AOPA: Command Pilot. EAA	WHO'S WHO, AMERICAN BUSINESS
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF AIRSHOWS: Performer	
INTERNATIONAL WHEELCHAIR AVIATORS: Member	OTHER CERTIFICATES/ DUTIES:
JULIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	SAN DIEGO COUNTY RESERVE DEPUTY SHERIFF, SGT.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS	WARNER SPRINGS VOLUNTEER FIRE OFFICER
REGION 12 SOARING COUNCIL	EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECH EMT-DC
SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF AERONAUTICS	AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR- TECH KE6BKR
SOARING SOCIETY OF AMERICA: Business Member Past Chairman of the Commercial Operators	AIRFRAME & POWERPLANT MECHANIC WITH INSPECTOR AUTHORIZATION