

## 360 Degrees of Flying Adventures

*By Donna Bishop*

I'm seated in a red and white jet plane as we streak across overcast skies. The noise of the jet combined with the air being thrust by this magnificent bird makes it difficult to communicate. The pilot is in command of the five jets I can see. There are three identically colored jets on the left and two on the right. The landscape is snow-covered but flat. I sense that the five jets are moving closer to our plane. Almost instantly the view changes as we enter over a valley bound on both sides by razor-sharp jagged mountain peaks covered in deep snow. Whew! That ended my ride but I could almost imagine the terrain in Afghanistan; how that might have changed my emotions about that adventure.

For my next adventure I head to Tahiti for some surfing. There is no way to explain the sensation of flying across the surface of the sea. Surfers are always seeking to capture that next big wave as they ride the crest and hurdle airborne, downwards twisting, to catch the next upsloping swell. The desires to take flight can be experienced in big wave surfing or kite surfing but learning to surf on a foil board, which is shaped like a surf board but has an attachment called a foil that stays underwater to capture underwater currents that help thrust the board airborne, may be the closest man can fly over the sea.

A new market for small 360-degree cameras combined with 360-degree videos on YouTube opens up the world of adventures to all of us. Now all those adventuresome souls can film away and I can sit in a comfortable chair at my computer and share some of their awesome delights as they ski right off the edge of a mountainside in speed flight to the bottom with their paragliders or fly off a mountain in their wind suits. I can even experience the sights and sounds of skydivers leaving the plane and landing on the ground or hear and see four Navy Blue Angels flying in formation as close as six inches from me.

The reason all of us can experience these pictures is due to the creative efforts of three young men: Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, who developed the website YouTube.com in 2005, which included the option of uploading video. By 2006 YouTube was the fastest growing site on the World Wide Web. Google purchased the site in November 2006.

360-degree videos are not Virtual Reality (VR) which is a technology using sophisticated equipment that allows a subject to control their actions within a visually created reality or fantasy. In 360-degree videos you can click on the video and move the pictures around only to the limits of the camera's focus. Check it out! You will experience wonderful visions and sounds.