The Evolution of Lifter Technology

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1. Introduction

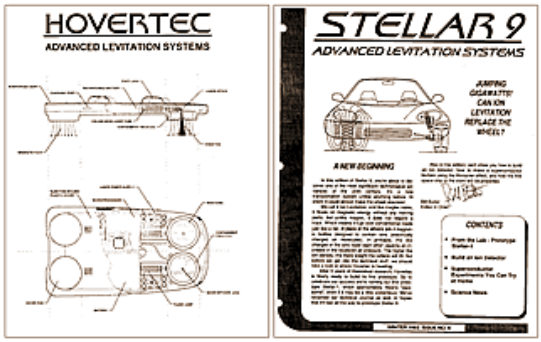
Readers of the *Electric-Spacecraft Journal* might know a little about the Lifter technology popularized recently by Jean-Louis Naudin, but they probably don't know the whole story. In the short amount of time that has transpired since the publication of that article, this technology has both literally and figuratively taken off – going from a "proof-of-concept" prototype by Naudin to an international group of researchers investigating how to give the lifter higher-performance and greater efficiency. With the first commercial products now on the horizon, if you haven't taken the time to read up on lifter technology, this is the perfect time to do so. . .

To give you a complete up-to-date overview of where this technology is, where it is going, and what I think it is capable of, let me start with the basics – an overview of how I became involved with Electrogravity research and what eventually led me to become involved with lifter technology.

2. My Background

I started college at 16 years old, back in 1992 – at the same time, I purchased a kit containing "hoverboard" plans from Hovertech, Inc. The moment that I received that $20 white-manila envelope in October 1992 was the moment that I became involved with what has now been nearly 10 years of electrogravity research.

I worked with Bill Butler – the president and chief-scientist of Hovertech – on a variety of different antigravity, Electrogravity, and levitation ideas from approximately 1992 through 1996. While putting in my college time, I was also taking distinct advantage of the enormous college library at Western Washington University to read up on everything that might possibly relate to Electrogravity. I read books on standard electronics and physics theory alongside with books by the masters of this science, such as TT Brown and Nikola Tesla.



Hovertech: Bill Butler published these levitation technology newsletters circa 1992.

Bill and I played with several different ideas – many of them only peripherally related to Electrogravity. For instance, I published a manuscript initially in 1996 describing Tesla's theory on how to reliably produce Ball Lightning using a standard Tesla coil – the information courtesy of WWU's excellent library. Bill also assisted me with obtaining video footage of a Searl-effect conference that he attended in Denver in the early 90's – this footage was an excellent overview of Searl's design and construction concepts for what he believes is the next major technological step in aviation and space travel.

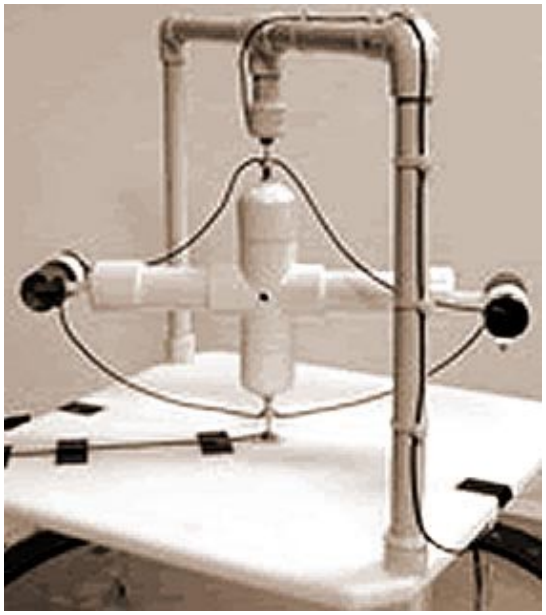
Bill and I eventually found different paths, and in some ways drifted apart. Bill moved into Geomagnetic levitation research and started intense investigation on the patents of How Wachspress and the magnetic dipole levitator. I went to more traditional technologies – eventually becoming a UNIX system administrator for AT&T Wireless.

I hadn't heard from Bill Butler in about 6 months when he sent me a short email containing the words "hey, check this out" – and a link to Jean-Louis Naudin's "Lifter Experiments" home page. I visited the site, watched all of the video clips, and then watched them again. This was the technology that I had been waiting for!

3. Lifter Technology

I can say without a doubt that the lifter technology is completely revolutionary, but you might not realize how profoundly revolutionary it is until you've stopped to think about it for a bit. What is it about the lifter that makes it so unique, especially when so many inventions claim to produce more and better electromagnetic thrust? The answer is simple – the lifter works repeatedly.

Jean-Louis Naudin started a figurative bonfire when he decided to replicate a "proof-of-concept" experiment by a small Huntsville, AL aerospace contracting firm. The lifter initially came into being in the mind of Jeff Cameron – the chief scientist of Transdimensional Technologies – in the 1970's from experiments conducted with high-power military and research-grade lasers. A device in the lasers called a "pre-ionizer" was used to apply a high-voltage to the lasing-medium to facilitate better performance. Repeated operation of the pre-ionizer had a common side effect of horribly twisting the wire and foil combination out of shape, which required a decent amount of work to repair.



BB-Effect Rotor: A rotor for testing the BB-Effect at Transdimensional Technologies.

Jeff Cameron realized that the torsional effect on the pre-ionizer was a side effect of some unknown force acting on the pre-ionizer apparatus, and he began a long-term investigation into what was causing the apparatus to deform. His eventual results indicated that a force in the foil collector in the pre-ionizer was causing a net-thrust in the entire pre-ionizer apparatus that was making it twist and move on its mounts within the laser – the lifter came to him later as a three-dimensional device to demonstrate this force.

Naudin's genius became readily apparent not through a giant breakthrough in technology, but rather in a more subtle fashion – he replicated the lifter experiments of Transdimensional Technologies and published videos, articles, and complete construction plans on his website to allow others to do the same. In a manner similar to the open-source software movement, Naudin had taken an incredible scientific find that might have otherwise been overlooked and done and incredibly charitable and intelligent thing – he gave it away for others to play with. By following Naudin's instructions, inventors all over the globe began to slowly replicate the Transdimensional Technologies experiments and thereby validate the proof of concept that Jeff Cameron had created to show that his "mystery force" was real after all. Naudin of course took advantage of these replications of the experiment by showcasing them on his own website – which in turn lends additional credibility to his research.

As far as technology goes, the lifter demonstrates that science and engineering have more than their share of humorous irony. For the years that I researched Electrogravity and antigravity claims, all of the devices that I had seen required something "magic" to make them work. For instance, Bob Lazar's UFO-claims could have been reverse-engineered except that they require

'element 115' to make them work – an element chemically related to Bismuth that is theorized to potentially have electrogravitic properties. I will come back to the possible electro-gravitational properties of Bismuth in a bit, as it turns out that this element may in fact provide some use for future lifter technology.

The Searl-effect disc is an even better example of the "magic" usually involved with building a working Electrogravity device. Searl's ideas seem valid enough, but although he supposedly demonstrated several working prototypes in the 1950's, he is currently pursuing millions of dollars in research funding in to replicate those experiments in a modern-day setting.

The irony involving lifter technology is that while inventors all over the world have been searching for the perfect electro-gravitational device for decades, the possible working proof of concept for many of these theories has been sitting in front of us the whole time – the lifter costs less than $10 in parts to build, and none of them are magic – in fact, for my experiments, all of them were at stores within 2 blocks of my house -- balsa wood from the craft store, aluminum foil from the supermarket, 30-gauge magnet wire from the local Radio Shack, and an old computer monitor for the high-voltage power-supply.

4. Lifter Physics

Whether or not Jeff Cameron knew it at the time he constructed his lifter prototype, what he was actually building was a 3 dimensional representation of a drawing on a patent application by TT Brown in the 1950's. In the patent application, the drawing shows a positively charged wire suspended over a grounded foil body which was meant to demonstrate the most basic Biefeld-Brown effect generator. While Brown's drawing is a little different than Jeff's design, the resemblance is uncanny enough to indicate that both of these men had the same basic force in mind.

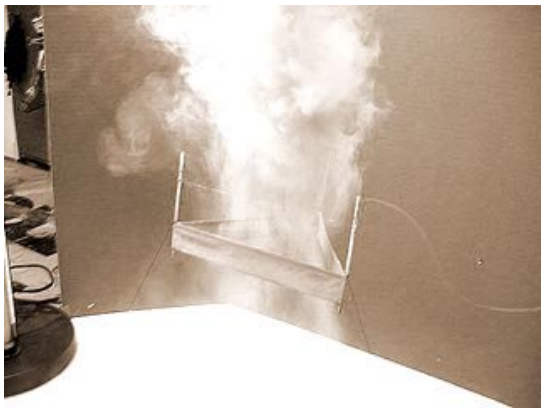
Lifter: This is a single-cell Lifter utilizing Biefeld-Brown Effect propulsion.

TT Brown's patent indicates that this Biefeld-Brown effect generator works due to a gradient electrostatic-field between the wire and the foil – in essence, these two elements compose a low-efficiency, high-voltage air-gap capacitor in which the difference in geometries between the two capacitive elements generates a net-directional force from the larger element towards the smaller element. Jeff Cameron seems to have a practical axiom that goes along with this scientific philosophy, which is that there must be both a leakage current and a capacitance between the wire and the foil in order for the lifter to function.

Conventional physics says that two capacitor elements of different sizes will not generate a net-directional force, so what gives? This is actually the thinking that convinced me to abandon my research into Biefeld-Brown effect technology in 1996 – physics says it doesn't work. What the books say will happen is that since the wire can only maintain a lower-capacitance than the foil, the overall capacitance between the two elements will be reduced to be equivalent to that on the smallest element (or plate) in the capacitor. This, of course, assumes a 2-element series-wired capacitor, such as the lifter.

I can give you the conventional physics answer to this small riddle by simply saying that the lifter uses a manifestation of ion-wind. This would state that the electrons crossing the air-gap cause a breeze that causes thrust – since the breeze would be traveling down from the wire to the foil,

the thrust would be up, as demonstrated in testing. In the ion-wind explanation, the electrons are emitted from small-diameter of the positively charged wire in such great abundance that they move a significant airflow down to the foil where they are absorbed and transported electrically back to the HV power-supply's electrical ground.

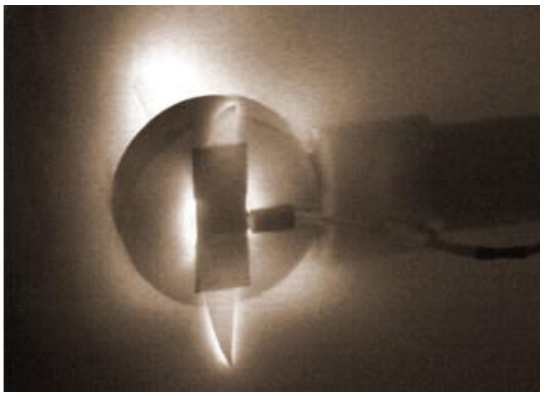


Airflow: Ion-Wind is an unwanted side effect in many Biefeld-Brown devices.

That's the simple explanation. A more difficult to visualize explanation of a more efficient method of generating conventional ion wind involves a positively-charged emitter stealing electrons off nearby air-molecules, which in turn experience a force propelling them down to collect electrons from the foil, which is still at the ground potential. The reason that this is more efficient is due to positively charged ions having less charge-mobility than electrons. Electrons can "hop" atoms in the air-gap, but positively charged ions must travel the entire distance. Also, since they have a greater mass than electrons, they produce more thrust

Conventional physics would seem to have the theoretical answer to why the lifter causes lift, but in the experimental setting, which is what we now have an abundance of thanks to Jean-Louis Naudin, the conventional physics explanation doesn't suffice. Experimentally, there are several deviations from the ion-wind explanation that seem to invalidate it. For instance, if you completely contain the lifter in a plastic-enclosure, it will still generate lift – this would not be the case if a breeze were responsible for lifting the device. How could it be, if the breeze is limited to the inside of an enclosure which itself is levitating?

A more compelling proof that Biefeld-Brown is something other than ion-wind comes from Purdue University, where the lifter experiment was replicated inside a vacuum-enclosure with positive results. While ion propulsion can work in space, it usually assumes that there is argon, krypton, or other noble gas to be used as the propellant – the vacuum enclosure showed that with no gas available for transport the lifter showed a moderate improvement in performance.



Vacuum: Residual ionization during a Transdimensional vacuum-chamber test.

The vacuum enclosure tests are definitely compelling evidence that something else is going on other than ion-wind – at least compelling enough for NASA to file patent number 6,317,310 – "Apparatus and Method for Generating Thrust using a Two Dimensional, Asymmetrical Capacitor Module". The NASA patent description – which can be accessed from Naudin's lifter website – is as vague is it is compelling in that NASA is basically requesting a patent on any technology that generates force using two geometrically dissimilar capacitive plates. Disregarding the fact that this patent was issued nearly 50 years after TT Brown's patent using nearly identical descriptions and pictures, and also disregarding the fact that NASA also doesn't understand why the lifter generates thrust, it seems apparent the this phenomena is gaining credibility in engineering circles while physicists seemingly continue to deny that anything is going on.

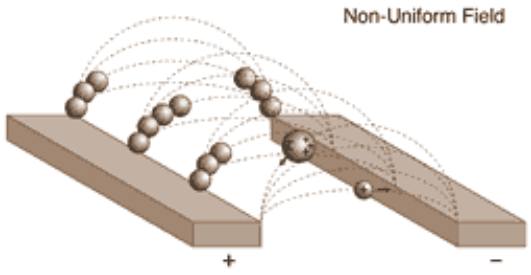
5. *Evolving Technology*

Every good movie always has a sequel, and in technology, if at first a major government agency 'liberates' your idea, it may seem that a sequel is in order. In the case of the lifter, it would appear that the NASA patent would cover this technology to at least some degree – at least until someone overturns this patent under the prior-art rule – which means that the next generation has to be considerably more advanced to escape having the research and development be forfeit to the government.

The pursuit of more advanced versions of the lifter technology is currently underway by several independent inventors, as well as Transdimensional Technologies themselves. Most of the private research by inventors has delved into improving the current lifter design to produce a greater force output and utilize less power to do so. Because the lifter is so simplistic in design, many of these enhancements have been of a very basic nature.

Jean-Louis Naudin was the first independent inventor to do serious work with improving the technology behind the lifter – and even so, the majority of his work has utilized similar materials in more complex arrangements. Naudin has demonstrated dramatically increased lifting forces by building a "lifter inside a lifter" for demonstration purposes. Naudin has also done a great deal of work in taking breaking up the concept of the single triangular lifter into a parallel series of lifting cells – which means that these cells, working in parallel, can contributed to greater stability and higher force output than any single lifting element.

Saviour – an independent inventor working with Jean-Louis Naudin – has done some of the most interesting improvements on lifter design since those by Naudin himself. Saviour's concerns have not focused around the "bigger is better" philosophy that many inventors have stuck by – he has done several experiments to determine the radiation output, remote-controlled applications development, and materials analysis and improvement on the lifter that others have not had the time or expertise to conduct.



EM-Field: This shows capacitive polarization while atmospheric charge-transfer occurs.

A recent experiment by Saviour demonstrates just how this gentleman's foresight is helping other experimenters – Saviour substituted nichrome heating wire for the common lightweight wire used for the emitter, and demonstrated that the lifting force greatly increased when a higher potential 12-volt charge was used to heat the emitter wire in conjunction with the standard high-voltage charge coming off it.

Transdimensional Technologies – the developers of the initial lifter design – are taking the approach to optimizing lifter performance to another level. They are currently not-so-secretly working on a 2nd generation lifter, which will consist of a 1-piece layered material to replace the current wire and foil design.

The layered material approach to the lifter is an idea that Jeff Cameron may or may not have had after some lengthy discussions with Travis Taylor – the man responsible for testing some anomalous materials known as "Art's Parts".

Art's Parts were some pieces of material sent by an unknown person to the Art Bell radio talk-show with a note stating that the they were pieces of UFO wreckage taken from the often-cited "Roswell crash" in 1947. Whether or not the pieces of material actually came from that crash is

unknown, but Art Bell did the honorable thing by sending them to an acquaintance in US Army research named Travis Taylor for a professional scientific investigation.

Taylor, who apparently tested the materials after-hours in a world-class research lab to avoid potential classification by his superiors, used an electron microscope to determine that the layered materials were actually pieces of metal – containing several hundred microscopically thin layers of magnesium and bismuth. Taylor also tested the layered-metal with a high-voltage apparatus, which seemed to indicate that when a voltage was applied to the material, the layered metal would move – and in some cases levitate.

Taylor reported his findings to Art Bell and sent video clips of his high-voltage experiments, which eventually made it back to a permanent home on the Art Bell radio show website. In addition, Taylor conveyed his belief that the only manner in which the pieces of metal could properly be produced was through an advanced form of electron-deposition technology, due (apparently) to an absence of oxygen-molecules between the different layers of metals. Additionally, the layers of metal were too thin to have been mechanically produced.

Jeff Cameron indicated that Transdimensional Technologies maintained some contact at one point in time with Travis Taylor, apparently as professional colleagues in the defense community in Huntsville, AL. I am not an expert on this relationship, other than to say that to the best of my knowledge these two individuals knew and contacted each other, and that this is how Jeff Cameron might have come up with the 2nd generation lifter idea.

6. Advanced Lifter Technology

As an inventor, I couldn't care less whether or not the idea for the technology came from a crashed UFO. To be perfectly honest, I'm not what you would call a "believer" anyways, although I have often wondered about it. My point is not to attempt to lend any credibility to "Art's Parts", but rather to tie in the properties of the anomalous material's high-voltage movement with the underlying theory of lifter operation.

Even mentioning a UFO in a respected publication or article is the kiss of death in today's world – and I wouldn't do it if it weren't an intricate part of the story. The other interesting thought is that the layered material is once again partially composed of Bismuth – which is thought to possibly have some of the same electro-gravitational properties as Bob Lazar's Area 51 "element 115". Is there a similarity, or merely a coincidence between a claim that hasn't gained credibility and a technology currently under development?

Prototype: TT Brown holding a 1960's era 12,000-rpm rotating prototype disk.

The lifter in its own right is essentially a layered material. One of those layers is the emitter wire, which is highly charged with about 30kV worth of electrons, another layer is the air-gap, which is approximately 3 cm in height, and the final layer is an electrically-grounded "skirt" of aluminum foil that surrounds the lifter. It is also reasonable to expect that there are only two possible forces at work in the lifter – one of which being a possible ion-wind effect moving down from the emitter to the foil, and the other being a possible Biefeld-Brown effect, moving up through the foil to the emitter.

There are a few shortcomings in the lifter as a design that might be overcome if we could transition the layered material from one containing an air-gap to one that does not. For instance, the lifter is currently a rather delicate object, in that having a wire under tension as the emitter makes construction difficult for future automated assembly. Additionally, because the air-gap requires struts to support the emitter wire, a trade off involving the weight versus the strength of the struts is additionally involved in any current implementation of lifter technology.

Some of the other changes that would be helpful to implement when transitioning lifter technology from one type of air-gap to another are changes in the materials used to increase the dielectric capacity. High-K dielectric materials may be used to increase the displacement of electrons in the material to enhance charge transport. And since increasing the dielectric potential of the layered materials also increases the breakdown resistance, it means that thinner materials can be used.

Layered Materials: This electric force thruster patented by Gravitec's Hector Serrano doesn't require an air-gap.

Designing a lifter without an air gap would accommodate lower voltage requirements between the foil and the emitter. The voltage would not have to create the large e-field gradient to create a leakage current across such a large void. Therefore the overall voltage across the device could be greatly reduced, without much cost in thrust. A lower operating voltage in turn means that a lower-output power-supply can be used for a given amount of current, which increases the overall efficiency.

Transdimensional Technologies recent research is utilizing the layered materials approach to eliminate the air-gap and substitute for it high-k dielectric materials that may allow higher overall performance. Although they have not yet released details about the exact composition or thickness of the materials that they are working with, they claim to currently have a 10% reduction in weight using a low-voltage current across the thickness of their newest device.

7. Future Lifter Technology

Thanks to the tremendous amount of research being done on lifter technology by Transdimensional Technologies and a loosely affiliated group of inventors around the world, the future of lifter technology seems very bright at this point.

Transdimensional hopes to release some breakthrough research to allow replication of their newest 2nd generation experiments in the very near future, and along with that stands the massive body of research and advancements being done by inventors and researchers such as Jean-Louis Naudin, Saviour, the Lifters-group, and myself.

My personal goals are to attempt to assist Transdimensional Technologies in popularizing this technology to increase awareness of it and help "spread the word" about what it is and how it can potentially help the world.

Imagine if instead of getting in your car and driving through the usual maze of thoroughfares and side streets you were able to simply type in your destination and have a flying vehicle take you there automatically. The lifter technology offers to potential to transform the current transportation market by offering point-to-point aerial transport without the need for roads or freeways.

Additionally, unlike the magnetic-levitation ("Maglev") technologies that are currently being promoted as the future of transportation, the lifter does not require a specially constructed and exorbitantly expensive track to operate – the greatly reduces the per-unit cost on the technology and opens the door for wider adoption by the general public for transportation solutions.

Other individuals are currently working to see if lifter technology may offer cost-effective methods of transport into space, which would reduce the cost greatly and allow a one-piece, reusable method of moving things into orbit.

Advancements: American Antigravity's Lifter-4 is one of many larger-scale Lifters.

8. Lifter Resources

All of the research involved with the lifter technology is available to the public on the Internet. The lists of resources below are some of the better and more common resources to obtain detailed lifter information.

American Antigravity
→ http://tventura.hypermart.net
→ The author's website that includes video clips, complete instructions, and other related lifter information.

Jean-Louis Naudin's "Lifter Experiments Website"
→ http://jnaudin.free.fr
→ A very in-depth website containing video clips, complete instructions,

World-Wide Lifter Replications
→ http://jnaudin.free.fr/html/lftwrld.htm
→ An overview with photos and video from many of the independent inventors who have replicated the lifter experiments.

Transdimensional Technologies, Inc
→ http://www.tdimension.com
→ The home page for Transdimensional Technologies, the developers of the lifter design.

Blaze Labs (Saviour's Research Website)
→ http://bel.150m.com
→ An excellent site on research into lifter enhancements, radiation testing, sealed devices, power supplies, and other topics relating to lifter technology.

Lifter Builders Group
→ http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Lifters
→ An email group for the exchange of research findings for those interested in building lifters or staying current on the state of the technology.