

NEWSLETTER of the WESTERN MASS. HANG GLIDERS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME #1 ; NUMBER 1 OCTOBER 1975

Editor: Michael J. Morrissey

The WESTERN MASS HANG GLIDERS ASSOCIATION IS ALIVE AND WELL, and living in Chicopee Falls. As most of you know, in the past months, this club has resurrected itself from its early demise. Prompted by threats to our flying sites, we have tracked down our disappearing club treasurer and treasury, membership data, GSI Insurance package; elected permanent officers, established site management policies for flying at Skinner State Park, and begun this newsletter, which will hopefully provide a voice for the members of the organization and help keep things reasonably together.

As far as the newsletter, yours truly is the editor, and thus far, the only contributor. I hope I'm not the only club member with anything to say, and it is hoped that future issues will contain articles and news from a variety of members. If anyone has anything of interest to contribute, contact me at my glider shop, Mountainview Glider Sports, at 300 Pleasant Street, Northampton. The phone number is 584-7233.

Also, since it costs money to print this rag, and the club isn't exactly wealthy, an editorial decision has been made to take paid advertizements, in order to cover printing costs. If all of us in the area who are in the business would take out an ad each month, it will cover the cost of printing and mailing, and hopefully leave something extra for the club treasury. Also, if you have anything to sell, such as accessory items that you may be able to make, or used equipment for sale, this is a very inexpensive way to reach the vast majority of local flyers, as well as a number of pilots in other clubs that the paper will be circulated to.

WMHGA CLUB ELECTIONS

At the October 1 meeting, elections were

held for permanent officers for the club. The results were:

- President: Mick Morrissey
- Vice President: Paul Kjoller
- Secretary: Ron Behnk, Jr.
- Treasurer: John Dempsey
- Safety Director: Sue Bathelt
- Flight Director: Chuck LaVersa

Also, Rob Stewart was appointed as the Assistant Flight Director. The appointment was made by Chuck LaVersa, who may appoint other assistants as needed to assist in his duties, mainly involving site management.

NEXT CLUB MEETING

The next WMHGA meeting will be on the first Wednesday of November, that is, November 5, at 7:30 PM, at the American Legion post on New Ludlow Road, Chicopee Falls. (That's right off Rt. 33, for new members.)

NATIONAL PARKS TO BAN HANGLIDING!

As most of you know, the National Park Service is attempting to get hang gliding banned in the national parks. Comments from the public are being solicited UP TO OCTOBER 20, but the park service has really made up it's mind. Therefore, instead of writing to the park service, write to your senators and congressmen, who are the people who must ratify all such regulations, and send a COPY to the national park service. In order to do any good, letters must be in by October 20, so START WRITING RIGHT NOW, before you forget, and get those letters rolling in. Chances are that very few people are bothering to write in against hangliding, so the more letters we get in that are in favor, the better chance we have of winning the battle. This is doubly important, since if the national parks ban us, the other federal land-administering agencies, as well as the states, will probably follow suit. If you list off all the good soaring spots, or potential spots, in this

state: Mt Greylock, Mt Tom, Mt Holyoke, No. Sugarloaf, the dunes at the Cape; you'll notice that ALL of them are on state or federal property. SO WRITE THOSE LETTERS. Stress the facts that hangliding is environmentally sound, safe if practiced with reasonable care, needs NO new facilities, etc. For your convenience, we're including the following addresses:

Sen Edward Kennedy, 2400 JFK Federal Building, Boston, Mass 02203

Sen Edward Brooke, 2003H JFK Federal Building Boston, Mass 02203

Rep Silvio Conte, 239 Cannon Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

Rep Edward Roland, 1883 Main St, Springfield, Mass 01103

Gary Everhardt, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240

Clubs all over the country are urging pilots, spectators, and friends to write, so if we all do our bit, we might just win this thing. WRITE!!!!!!!!!!!! Right NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!

SKINNER STATE PARK

(aka "Mitch's Mountain," Mt Holyoke, etc.)

Most members know by now that our main club flying site, Mitch's Mountain, was surveyed recently, and it was found that the top takeoff point is actually within the boundaries of Skinner State Park. As a result, it has been necessary to develop a strict regulation system in order to satisfy the Department of Natural Resources that the site can be flown safely. A satisfactory system has been adopted, and the park is once again open for hangliding.

In order to fly the top, a pilot must go to the office of Mr Kenneth Dubuche at the Dept of Natural Resources in Amherst, on the UMass campus, and purchase a permit. In order to be eligible for the permit, flyers must be members of WMHGA, and be on a list of flyers submitted by the club's flight director. To be on the list, you must have purchased an individual GSI Insurance package, and hold a valid Class 3 or 4 GSI rating certificate. Since few of us actually have the certificate, or proof of the insurance, the list has been made up of those flyers who are flying at a class three level or above, and who have presumably sent in their GSI applications. If you are a club member, AND have applied for GSI, AND are a class three or better flyer, you are probably already on the list. If you go to buy a permit, and find that you are NOT on the list, you should see Chuck Laversa to determine why

not, and to find out what you have to do in order to get on it. Most of the club members who are flying the mountain are on the list, but there are a few who aren't, either because they are known not to be purchasing GSI, or because their flying at the hill has demonstrated that they really shouldn't be flying there yet. Non WMHGA members who want to fly the site will have to join the club (\$5.00 per year) and purchase GSI, either through WMHGA or elsewhere, as well as achieve the mandatory class three or better rating.

Class 2 flyers who are nearing the class three level may purchase a day permit, which allows them to fly the hill on one day, in the presence of a GSI rated instructor. All other permits are valid for the period from date of purchase until December 31 of that year, and must be re-purchased annually.

It is to be hoped that as time goes on, we may not have to travel to Amherst, and the permits will be available at the ranger station at the top of the mountain, but for now, this is the best we could do.

Permits are necessary only to fly the top of the mountain. The "slot" is on Mitch Drozdal's property, and is not subject to State regulation.

Skinner State Park closes for the season on the weekend of October 19th, and the road to the top will be locked until next spring. Flying IS allowed when the park is closed, but we will have to find another way up, or walk. Snowmobiles are allowed in the park during the winter, so maybe this will be a way, once the snow is on the ground. Even though the park is officially closed in winter, flying permits are required, and anyone caught up there with a glider and no permit is subject to arrest and fines.

Although the regular launch point is on park property, and we can use it, we are not allowed to launch from the rocks by the hotel. Not yet, anyway...

MT. TOM CLOSED!
(sort of)

It has been announced by Channel 40 that anyone caught using their access road to the top of Mt Tom will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespass. Club officers have spoken with the station manager about this, and were informed that they have no intention of being reasonable about this, and it is extremely unlikely that the situation can be reversed. Research shows that TV 40 definitely owns the road, and has every right to throw us out, with or without reason, so it seems that there is no way around them.

You can still fly the mountain, but to do so without getting in trouble, you have to

walk up. The best route is to follow the power lines that start near the Log Cabin restaurant, and lead to Channel 40. According to the station manager, any use of the station's land is trespass, including just walking across it, but chances are that you won't take a bust for just passing by the transmitter. However, it's possible, so be quiet and discreet. We are strongly urging members NOT to sneak up the road, even if you have the opportunity to, because it is at least somewhat possible that we might make some kind of arrangements with the station, as long as we don't do anything to upset them further for awhile. So let's be cool for a time, okay?

The situation was precipitated, by the way, when a number of local flyers plus a lot of out of state flyers converged on the hill a couple of weeks ago. Not realizing that this is a guerrilla site, they took more vehicles than were necessary to the top, didn't hide them in the woods, and as a result, the people from the station found that the road was blocked, and rapidly figured out why. At that point, Mt Tom became a walk-up.

Also, there has been a problem at the bottom of Mt Tom. As often happens, the word got out to the public that we land at Don Hicks' yard after flying Tom. As a result, the landing area has been swamped with spectators and hangers on, the last few times the mountain was flown. Anyone flying the mountain should be aware that the deal with Don Hicks is that we can use his yard to LAND, but NOT as a parking lot, or a picnic area, or as a grandstand for spectators. Please spread the word. When landing at Hicks', please get in and get out fast. Park on the street, not in the field, and don't allow anyone else to park there or hang around there. Otherwise we will lose the landing area.

It is not widely known, but we DO have permission to land at Don Raymond's grandfather's farm, which is the huge farm to the right of Hick's field, as you look down from the top of the mountain. Any time you see spectators gathering by Hicks', PLEASE start using this alternate landing field. It will help keep the crowds down, and help preserve the fields for us.

INTERMEDIATE FLYING SITES

There are a number of people in the club that are at a stage of flying where they have outgrown the "slot", but aren't yet at

th. point where they are ready to fly the top of the mountain. There are a number of sites available where you can prepare for the transition. Among the best are

SODOM MOUNTAIN, in Southwick. It's a 250 foot walk-up, which allows you to get up to or above treetop height, make some turns, and get used to being up high enough that you have to think about a landing approach. You must be able to make a gentle 90° turn to the left in order to hit the main landing area, but it's much more open than the "slot."

To get there, go to Southwick center, take Rt 57 towards Granville for a few miles, and look for a left turn with a small sign that says "camping." Sodom Mountain Resort is a couple hundred yards down that road. It faces Southeast. Ask the man in the office if you can fly there. Hanggliders are welcome at all times.

SKI SUNDOWN, in New Hartford, Conn. This is a ski area that's been developed as a full scale flight park. It features a small bunny hill for beginners, a two hundred foot midstation (walk-up) where you can get some air-time and work on turns, and a five hundred and fifty foot hill, served by a chairlift that operates on weekends, which will put you well above the trees, leave lots of room for maneuvers, and allow you to work on the techniques of picking out a landing area and setting up an approach. It's a good place to get used to the idea of flying over woods and buildings, and being off the ground long enough to really work out a glider. The hill faces Northwest, and it costs three bucks to fly the midstation, five to use the lift and fly the top. Food and beverages are for sale to the bottom of the hill. It's neat!

LAND USE LEGISLATION

There's a law in Massachusetts that says that a property owner is NOT liable for anything that happens in the course of recreational use of his land, as long as he isn't charging for the use of the land. Not too many people know this, as the law is only a couple of years old. It was sponsored by the trail bike and snowmobile people, and should be REALLY useful to people trying to get flying sites opened up on private land.

GLIDERSPORTS INTERNATIONAL

As you've gathered from previous articles, WMHGA is now a GSI club. This means that our club sites are covered by a million dollar

liability insurance policy. This does NOT cover you if you're hurt, but it covers you and the landowner if you land on a spectator and kill him, send some farmer's cow to the great pasture in the sky, cause a traffic accident, or anything like that. Individual GSI members are likewise covered anywhere that they fly. All flying members of the club should get this insurance (only \$10.00 per year), and you MUST have it to fly the top of Mt Holyoke or Mt Greylock, as well as most of the other big hills in New England. It also gets you into the GSI rating system, which is becoming increasingly necessary to do any serious flying.

SO YOU NEED A RATING...

The following local pilots are raters for various organizations and systems:

Chuck Laversa (GSI)

Rob Stewart (GSI)

Sue Bathelt (GSI, 1 & 2 only)

Mick Morrissey (NEHGA, 1 & 2 only)

A NEHGA rating is honored at just about any site in New England, and can be easily converted into GSI ratings once you get a GSI individual policy.

As you must do more than one or two flights to get rated, KEEP A LOG.

AVON

Russ Lord of ConnHGA tells us that it looks good for getting Avon re-opened for flying. We hope so. Further news will follow.

BEWARE PHONEY INSTRUCTORS!

A lot of people are thinking of trying hang gliding for the first time, and there are a lot of pilots giving lessons these days. Unfortunately, many of them are not qualified to be doing so, and many students are getting very poor preparation for the sport. It's not enough to tell someone how to move the bar around, and push them off a hill. Basic instruction should include some detailed explanations of air flow over terrain, advanced maneuvers, hazards to flight, and a good deal on what the student will encounter as his flying develops past the lesson stage. Hangliding is the ultimate example of an activity where a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Before you shell out your hard-earned cash for lessons, be sure you're getting what you pay for. Just

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because you saw someone fly off a big mountain doesn't mean that he's a KNOWLEDGABLE flyer - he may be just a lucky one. Some of the crap that "instructors" have been telling their students lately is just incredible, and it's going to get someone hurt or killed. You'll make enough mistakes on your own, without getting more of them programmed into your flying through poor instruction. Don't be snowed by a fast talker. Before you sign up, talk to a number of flyers, and get an idea of how your potential teacher is thought of by the majority of flyers. A little time spent asking questions could save your life. As a rule of thumb, a GSI instructors rating, a class 4 rating, and a year or more of flying experience are signs that someone knows enough about flying to instruct, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There are very few GSI rated instructors, due to the fact that there has been very little opportunity to get such a rating. However, there are enough class 4 pilots, and enough pilots with a year or more's experience, that you don't have to take lessons from someone who is barely out of the student stage himself. So beware, and be careful.

DEFLEXERS

We've seen a number of kites on the hill lately that have been modified through the installation of deflexers. These gadgets are a great way to assure a smooth-flying sail, increase your L/D by reducing drag from sail flap, especially in turns, and trim out a tail-heavy kite. HOWEVER, there are some things you must watch out for when using deflexers.

1.- Deflexers are designed to hold the leading edges straight in flight - NOT to camber them downward to form a conical Rogallo wing. The "word" is out that you can realize a performance increase by cranking your deflexer wires down really tight, and several west coast pilots have been killed by doing so. What happens is that the extra camber in the wings offsets the reflex in the keel, leading to a negative reflex in the SAIL. The result is that the kite handles squirrly at low airspeeds, and becomes a dive machine at high airspeeds. At a certain speed, the dive will become non-recoverable, as the forward pitch caused by the cupped sail will more than offset the maximum upward pitch available by pushing out on the control bar. SO DON'T OVERTIGHTEN DEFLEXER WIRES.

2.- Even when properly installed, the addition of deflexers will make the kite more

BLOWBY: PURCHASE PRICE FOR SKINNER PARK PASSES: FREE!

nose-heavy. Indeed, one of the most common reasons for installing them is to offset tailheaviness in an out-of-trim kite. The point is, when installing deflexers, always test the kite on a small hill, and make your adjustments gradually. Expect a trim change to be required, and make it carefully.

SWING SEAT WARNING

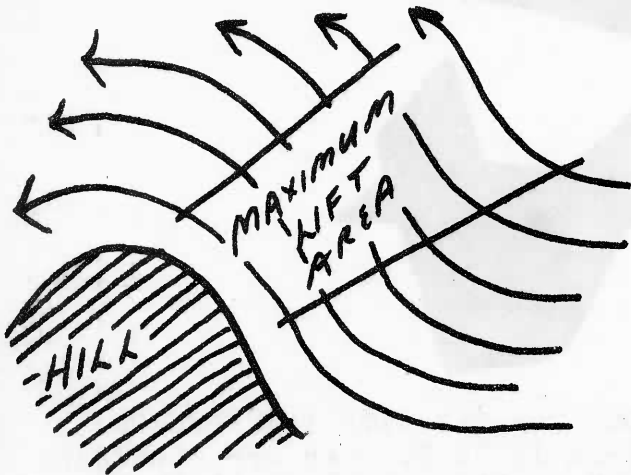
We've had some reports of seat belts being accidentally unbuckled in flight when the pilot snags his hand on the buckle while turning. This could be a pretty hairy experience! If it happened in turbulence, it could easily result in the pilot separating from the kite! (People HAVE fallen out of hang gliders at altitude, y'know...) Dual leg straps go a long way towards reducing the risk, as well as making running takeoffs much easier.

There was also a report of a New England flyer breaking his back in a crash after falling backwards in a seat. Backrests can add more than comfort to a seat - there's a safety factor as well.

Finally, if you have a seat without the fast-acting automotive type buckles, you should definitely invest in a quick-release system. It could save you from injury or damage to the kite if you get blown over on the ground after land-

SOARING TIP

Did you know that the lift band is not always at its strongest directly above the top of the ridge? As you move higher up, the point of strongest lift moves OUT from the ridge, as a result of the way the air layers upon itself as it flows over the terrain/. You can see how it works in the accompanying diagram:



In order to avoid being blown over the top of the hill, MOVE OUT AS YOU MOVE UP.

360's

Two things to keep in mind when doing 360° turns:

1.- When turning from an upwind to a downwind direction, due to your momentum, it is possible to lose airspeed drastically as you turn downwind, resulting in a stall. Stall recovery can be difficult when in this situation, since you are in an extreme bank angle as you stall. Recovery may take a lot of altitude, and will result in a recovery of flying speed while flying downwind, headed right back into the hill. This is why so many pilots have died doing 360's.

2.- Even when properly executed, the 360 does not result in a true circular path in relation to the ground. Because one half of the turn is done basically upwind, and half basically downwind, your flight path through the air may describe a perfect circle, but your ground track may look like this:



Remember, when you make a 360, you're turning downwind and back into the hill at the same time, so leave plenty of room!

FLY FOR BUCKS !

Pete Brock has asked us to spread the word that any pilot who can set a new New England duration record in an UP glider will be awarded \$50.00 per hour for the flight. If you make the 10 hour mark, the prize is a new Dragonfly (worth a grand) or any other UP kite of your choice.

You Redtail drivers, go for it! Other qualified pilots may wish to try for the record in an UP demo model, available at your local UP dealer. It would be nice if one of us in the club could claim the prize!

GOOD NEWS

We're informed that Dave Menard's condition is improving. He's been out of his coma for some time now, and while nobody is ready to predict a full recovery, the prospects look a lot brighter than they did a while ago! In a good break for his family, the Veterans' Administration has assumed responsibility for his medical expenses.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"The object is not to be the hottest pilot in the sky - it's to be the OLDEST."

- Robert Heinlein



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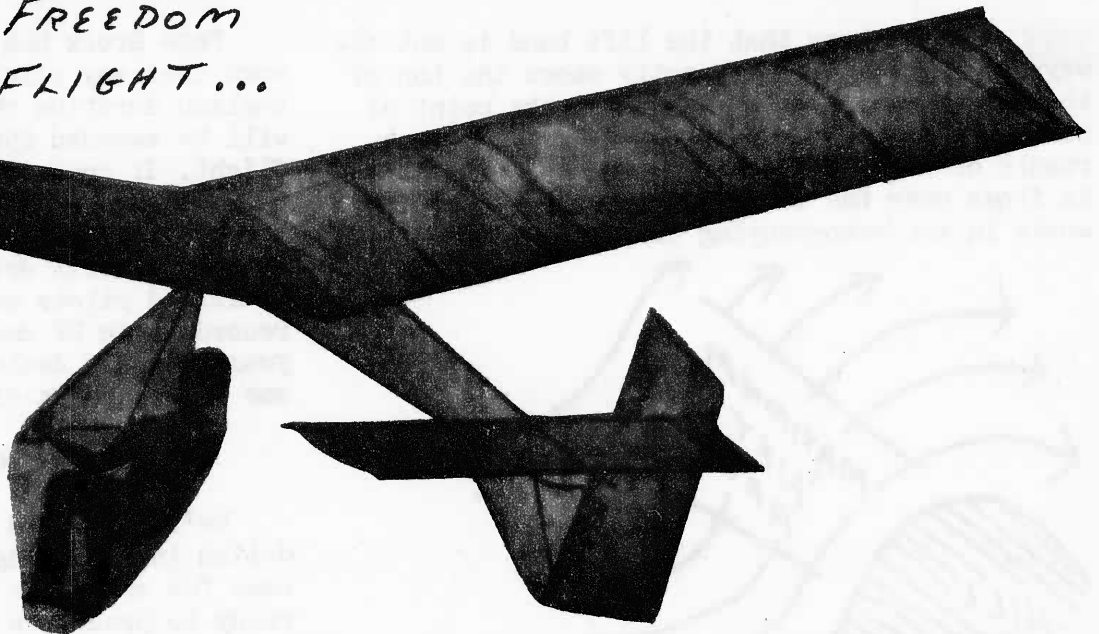
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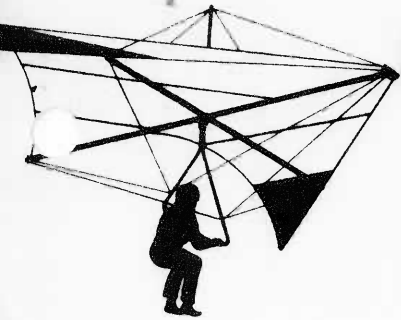


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