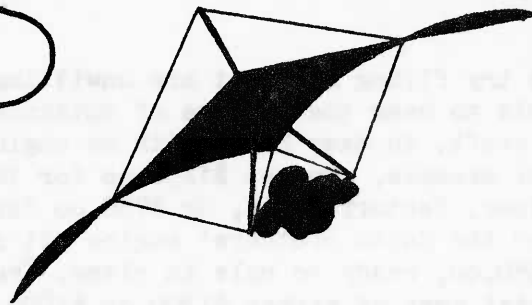


# UPDRAFT



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NEWSLETTER of the WESTERN MASS. HANG GLIDER ASSOCIATION

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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5

MAY, 1976

Editor: M. Morrissey

C 1976, WMHGA

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## MEETING NOTICE

The JUNE meeting of the WMHGA will be held at the ME Bar & Lounge, two miles to the north of Skinner State Park on Rt. 47 in Hadley, on the first Tuesday of June, June 1st, at 8:30 PM. New members please note that all WMHGA meetings are at the ME Lounge on the first Tuesday of each month.

At the May meeting, a vote was taken, and it was decided to have the starting time for the meetings pushed back to 8:30. This was because of the late sunsets this time of year, which mean that on any good flying day, nobody's going to get to the meeting on time if we'd continued to start them at 7 o'clock! The new time will stay in effect until further notice.

## PARTY TIME!

At the May meeting, it was also voted that the WMHGA should hold a social event, in the form of a dinner party. This is meant to be a full-tilt boogie, rather than anything too stiff and formal. Mark LaVersa volunteered to be in charge of the food and drink, and Spencer Smith was appointed as entertainment director. Location and date, as well as cost, will hopefully be known at the June meeting, so that we can get this affair underway sometime during the month of June.

## FEEDBACK

We've finally got some comment on one of the articles we've been running; John Dempsey had some things to say about our article on landing approaches. We couldn't get him to write it down, but it's worth repeating, so we will.

John feels that the sailplane type of approach is not always appropriate for a hang glider, and we agree. In fact, there

are some situations when this kind of an approach is not the hot set-up at all. For example, a pilot who is not too experienced at high altitude flying could get himself into serious trouble, simply because of the fact that a sailplane approach does involve a downwind leg. Any time you turn downwind, away from your landing area, at low altitude you're getting into a situation that demands a good understanding of wind drift, penetration, L/D and sink rate - in other words, you sure as hell better know what you're doing! Unless you're an experienced pilot, you'll be a lot better off staying on the hill side of the landing zone, and making a conservative S-turn approach. An experienced flyer will also find times when he'll prefer doing S-turns; there will be days when the wind is strong, and you just are not about to turn downwind for any reason! On such days, even a high-performance glider can be brought down fairly easily with a series of S-turns.

The most important point to keep in mind, is that flexibility is critical. No matter how carefully you plan your flight, you have to be ready to change your plan on short notice due to unexpected factors; if you can't cope with this - go fly some smaller hills for awhile, 'cause you don't belong in the mountains yet.

We might also add that there are some days - particularly if there's a crosswind in the landing zone - when the difference between the two types of approaches are minimal; simply a matter of making the last turn big and wide, and squaring it off.

## LOCAL NOTES

Motor Gliders are attracting a bit of attention lately, and perhaps with good reason. Several pilots in the area would love

to try flying one, but are unwilling or unable to bear the expense of obtaining such a craft. An Easy Riser with an engine kit, for example, runs at \$1250.00 for the Easy Riser, factory built, or \$750.00 for a kit, and the Catto Brothers' engine kit costs \$550.00, ready to bolt in place. That's a total cost of either \$1300 or \$1800, depending upon who does the building and test flying. That's a lot of money for someone on a hang glider budget - especially for the first aircraft of its type that anyone around here has ever even seen.

As a possible solution to this, Mick Morrissey and Ron Behnk, Sr., have been talking about forming a consortium of interested flyers, to chip in on one of these birds. If half a dozen flyers kicked in a couple of hundred bucks each, we could do it without committing a huge amount of the money individually. Mick has the space in his shop to do the construction, if a kit were to be chosen, and Ron has the power-plane experience that such a project ought to have. If the idea works as well as it sounds like it should, one or more parties might want to buy the others out and keep the bird - others may buy one of their own. And if it doesn't turn out to be practical, we can always fly the ship as a hang glider, which it was originally designed for - after all, an Easy Riser just won the World Open, so it can't be a bad ship to have around.

Anyone who is interested in such a venture should contact Mick or Ron at or before the June meeting. Maybe we can make it happen.

Bob Stewart became the second pilot to leave the ridge at Skinner and fly cross-country. What was unique about this flight is the fact that he headed south, over the back of the mountain. Soaring approximately a thousand feet above the ridge, Bob figured (correctly) that he was far enough over the rotors and turbulence, and cranked it over the top, flying a couple of miles past the mountain. He landed in a field in South Hadley. Unfortunately, a non-flying spectator reported to two other pilots that Bob had passed over the top at an altitude of fifty feet (!! instead of the actual 1000') with the result that the two pilots spent the rest of the day searching the back side of Mt Holyoke for the crash site! Well, it's good to know that they were concerned...

Chuck LaVersa, our Flight Director, was recently honored by the award of a qualification for the USHGA Nationals, to be held at Dog Mountain, Washington, late this May. Chuck had gone to Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina for the USHGA qualifier for the Nats, but the meet was cancelled due to weather. It had, however, attracted most of the top flyers in the East, as well as a large number of top-ranked West Coast pilots. Much flying was done at other sites, as well as at Grandfather, and on the basis of the performance and skill demonstrated during several days of informal flying, the visiting USHGA Examiners selected several flyers for the limited Nats slots. Only Stu Smith, formerly a local flyer, now relocated to Grandfather Mountain, was ranked ahead of Chuck in the selection process! Now if only he can get his bod out to Dog Mountain...

Advertizing at Skinner Park and Mitch's field became an issue of sorts lately, and as a result, a temporary club policy has been formulated, to the effect that no permanent advertizing (ie., signs) will be allowed at the site. Hopefully the membership will vote to make this a permanent policy at the next meeting. For over a year, the five local dealers have done business on the hill in a low-key, informal manner. Nobody minded when Bob Poulis put his phone number on the windsock - partly because we were all glad to have the sock, and partly because you could hardly notice the writing on it anyway. However, the appearance of a large advertizing sign near the barn led to a dilemma for the rest of the dealers; either everyone else puts up a sign too, making the site look like the Indianapolis Speedway on race day and incidentally making Mitch liable for any accidents that might occur on the mountain - or leave the one sign uncontested, thereby allowing one dealer to gain a disproportionate share of new business, simply because nobody else was willing to be so crass and commercial.

As a result, NO signs will be allowed. The present sign is coming down immediately, the phone number is coming off the windsock, and no new signs will be erected by anyone. Agreement is presumed by any local dealers who may not have been already contacted, and compliance is expected whether you agree or not.

If you're in the business, you can paint

your truck, pass out business cards, give away brochures, talk your head off - but NO SIGNS on Mitch's field.

Your President recently was the guest of honor at the May meeting of the South Deerfield Rotary Club. The invitation was the result of interest in the flying that has been going on at North Sugarloaf, and we're happy to report that the burghers of South Deerfield are interested, entertained, and sympathetic to hang gliding in their town. We hope it stays that way!

UMASS is offering a credit-free course in hang gliding this summer, and Springfield College is offering a similar program for credit. Are we becoming established?

### SITE REPORTS

Poet's Seat: No new information from the Greenfield Board of Selectmen, who must make the final decision on whether to go along with the Recreation Commission's plan to sanction hang gliding at the site. If this does get settled - we may have new information by the June meeting - we'll still not be flying there much at least until fall, as we'll have to share the landing area with many other sports.

For the information of new members, Poet's Seat is a 250 foot cliff with a due West face, located in downtown Greenfield. It has been flown intermittently on a guerrilla basis for over a year.

North Sugarloaf: Pilots are reminded once again that they should carry a waiver form for the owner of the landing field. Access is by hiking trail from the pumping station, and the town doesn't want motor vehicles in there - so don't try to drive up the hill! (It isn't a bad walk at all.) For new flyers information, this site is a 650 foot cliff with a due west face, located in South Deerfield.

Mt. Tom: This site is still "closed" to hang gliding - everyone who flies there knows it. You can tell by all the "No Hang Gliding" signs. Remember, access is by hiking trail from the Log Cabin, and anyone caught on the road to the top will be prosecuted by TV-40. Tom is a 1100 foot west-north-west cliff on the Holyoke-Easthampton town line.

Petersburg Pass: Still open under the direction of Brooks Ellison, this 1200-footer on the Mass/NY state line faces north-north west, and is soarable in a northwest wind. It's worth the trip, especially since you may have to fly here to check out for Mt Greylock.

Mt. Greylock: The park is open for the summer, but arrangements have NOT yet been completed for hang gliding, and as far as we know, the mountain is NOT yet open for flying. All that remains is for Brooks Ellison of WMHGA to meet with Doug Poland of the Dept of Environmental Management, to agree on a system of regulation. At present, three possible systems are under consideration: a list system, through which any pilot wanting to fly Greylock would have to get on a list like we do at Mitch's. WMHGA would make up the list in this instance. An alternative would be a Class-4-only system, whereby any class 4 flyer could get a permit to fly by presenting his credentials at the Visitor's Center. We aren't crazy about this, as the rating system just isn't that reliable yet, and some "4"s who would be able to fly are not as qualified as some 3's who couldn't. Another alternative is to have the hill open only when a WMHGA Flight Director is present, and he would have total control over who can fly there on any given day. Possibly, we'll see some combination of the three methods. We expect a full report on the system and a report that the hill is open at the June meeting. In the meantime, we're working on it!

New flyers will be interested to know that Greylock is a 2200 footer, facing south-east, located in the North Adams area.

Sundown: should be open for flying as of the last weekend of the month (May.) Lifts will run on Friday evening and Saturday, as well as Sunday, as was the case last year. Contact the Northwind School of Hang Gliding at the site, or the ConnHGA for more information on this site. This is a 650 footer with a mid-station launch and a training hill, located in New Hartford, Conn.

Avon: Open experimentally, weekdays only; contact the ConnHGA for information.

Sodom Mountain: This 250 foot hill in Southwick faces south-south-east, and has always been open to flying - just ask the man in the office if you can fly the hill. He always

says OK.

South Hadley High: Closed at present, but we hope to have this southwest-facing 80-foot training hill open for the summer. Maybe our vice-president will have some good news on this site for us at the June meeting.

Hospital Hill: This 100-foot southeast hill in Northampton is also closed at present, but Paul's working on it. Again, we hope to get it open for the summer months, when the horse people from Smith College are out of the way in the landing zone.

Skinner State Park: Skinner Park is open for the season, and has been receiving heavy use. New members may note that this 750 foot northwest facing soaring site is the main WMHGA site. Hours of operation are from 8:00 AM to 6:00 on weekdays, and from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM on weekends and holidays. Flying is allowed during the hours that the park is closed - if you don't mind walking up the mountain. Day permits are available to all flyers who are on "the list", and are to be obtained from the park rangers at the Half-way House office, or at the old hotel at the top of the mountain. For the information of non-WMHGA members, the following rules are here published:

1. **PERMITS**. Daily permits will be issued by the park attendants during normal park hours to any eligible pilot.

2. **ELIGIBILITY**. Glidersports International has issued insurance for Skinner State Park and Mitch Drozdal's property, so only flyers with current GSI or GSI-accepted insurance (ie., USHGA) and proof of insurance coverage will be eligible for a check-out or a permit. Because of local site conditions (wires, dwellings, etc.), only advanced pilots will be considered. Paid members of WMHGA may apply while at the Class 3 level; all others are required to hold Class 4 or higher ratings.

All applicants must submit a standard type log book containing at least 20 flights within the two months prior to application, at least 10 of which must be of at least 2 minutes duration each. The log must reflect recent knowledge of cliff-launching techniques and spot landing capabilities. Pilots may be asked to demonstrate their skills.

3. **CHECK OUT**. All potentially-eligible flyers should submit their proof of GSI or equ-

ivalent insurance and their log books to WMHGA Flight Director Chuck LaVersa (Tel.# 413-665-4962), Assistant Flight Director Bob Stewart (413-253-5852) or President Mick Morrissey (413-527-9075 Or 584-7233.) Provided that everything is in order, you will be recommended to head ranger Doug Peterson for the list of people who are eligible for daily permits.

#### 4. RULES OF THE RIDGE.

a. Doug Peterson has the final decision on all matters concerning flight activities at Skinner State Park.

b. Mitch Drozdal owns the landing zone. **THERE IS ONLY ONE** landing area - use it and no other, without specific permission from the landowner. It is imperative that we land safely in the proper field. There are many high tension lines in the surrounding fields and woods - please find out **WHERE** they are before you fly!

c. Skinner is best in winds from 260° to 340°, and should not be flown in any other winds.

d. Use standard flight patterns:

1.- Gliders travelling in opposite directions pass on the right.

2.- When overtaking a glider flying in the same direction, pass on the ridge side, never to the outside.

3.- Make all 180's away from the ridge.

4.- If the wind is crossing enough to make a downwind pass marginal, a pilot on his upwind pass should extend the common courtesy of allowing a glider on its downwind pass to pass closer to the ridge. This will sometimes be the opposite of the usual pass-to-the-right rule, and should not be assumed without prior discussion by all the pilots involved.

5.- Be constantly aware of all of the other aircraft in the sky. Above all, do not turn or make any change in your flight path without first checking for clearance in every direction.

c. **PARKING**. At the landing zone there is limited parking in front of the field, and some parking along the road. Beware of posted areas and rights of way (driveways, etc.), and do not park on the pavement. Driving in the fields is prohibited. At the top, pilots are to park and unload at the white fence by the barn, just below the main parking area. All hang gliders' cars

are to be out of the park one half hour before closing time, and any spectators should be asked to leave the take-off area one half hour before closing time. Spectators will be more cooperative if they are informed that their vehicles will be locked in until the following morning if not moved on time.

5. This park is open to flying through the kindness of park officials and area landowners, and flying at Skinner State Park is no more permanent than is your name on the eligible list. Any circumstances other than a perfectly normal take-off, flight, and landing could void your day permit, and failure to seek the advice of someone in charge about extenuating circumstances could be reason to remove your name from the list of eligible pilots.

#### MY FIRST FLIGHT OFF MT. HOLYOKE by Bob Vicari

This is my story of my first flight off of a mountain. I'd like to share my feelings about this flight, the first of many more

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glorious flights. I feel that I have embarked on a whole new dimension of hang gliding. Here is my story as I experienced it.

On March 26, 1976, I was flying the slot at Mitch's, with the thought of flying the top of Mt. Holyoke if the opportunity presented itself. When Paul Kjoller decided to hike up, I decided to go up with him.

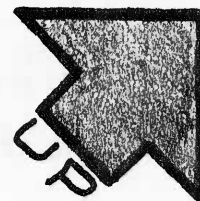
It was a rough climb up the steep trail. When we reached the take-off spot, I was overcome by the splendid view of the valley and the sun shining off the river below. The air was perfectly calm, and it seemed like the world had stopped so we could fly. We set up our kites, and I was to go first. I felt that this way, Paul could give me any last minute instructions that I might need prior to take-off.

I picked up the kite and got ready to launch. I took a deep, slow breath. Then I looked at the orange sunset, and at the wind streamers, which were dead still, and said to myself, "Here goes!" I leaned forward, then sprinted over the edge. At the moment that I was about to pull the bar in, Paul yelled for me to do so, which was reinforcing. The second I attained airspeed, I



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knew I had it under control.

So far, everything was going very smoothly. When I came over the slot, I began thinking about my approach. I made two 45° turns and tested my airspeed. When I was over the wires in the woods, I started a slow 10°-roll left turn. Being a bit lower to the ground than I'd anticipated, I knew that my landing would be right on. I picked my landing spot, and put it there. After landing I gave out a big scream, for I had accomplished one more step up in hang gliding.

CALANDAR

June 18,19, 20: Meet, Mt. Mansfield, Stowe,

June 23,24,25: Instructor Clinic, NYSHGA, Holiday Mt., Monticello, New York.

Stowe: An annual event, Stowe's 2200-foot Northeast face, with alternate 1700-foot Southwest facing hill, will be one of the major meets in the East this season.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classified ads are available to WMHGA members at a cost of one buck per hit. All classifieds are to be submitted to the editor at the monthly meeting, and must be renewed each month if they are to be repeated. Ads submitted after the monthly meeting will appear if space permits, but no guarantee can be given for late ads.

FOR SALE: 17-foot hang glider, 80° nose, 32 lbs, sail in good condition. New wires top and bottom. Excellent buy for girls interested in getting a kite to learn on. Call Sue Bathelt 536-1683

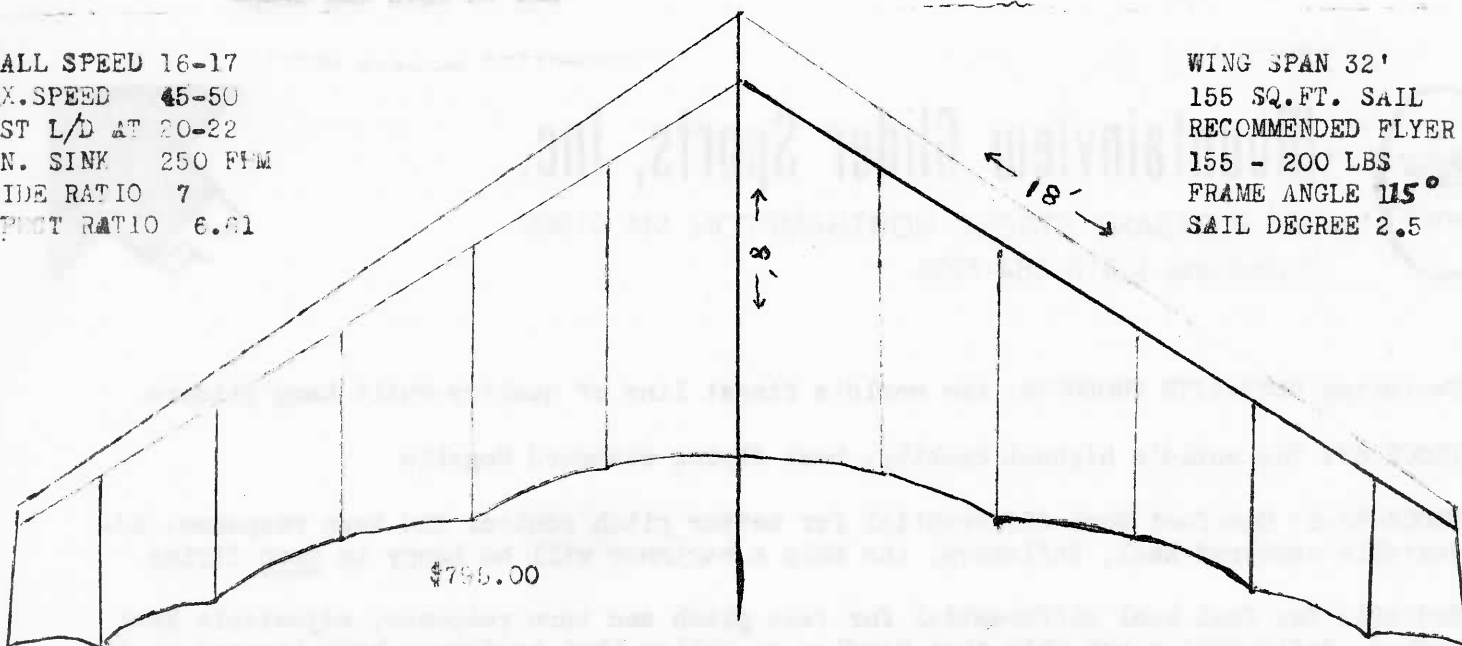
FOR SALE: 18-foot Sky Sports LARK, excellent condition, 6 months new, solid yellow sail, includes bag and harness. Completely overhauled with much new hardware, raised mast, coated spars - better than new. Call Bob Perwak, 665-3601

FOR SALE: Sky Sports Kestrel, pre-production

- 6 -

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FOR SALE: used Seagull III, rainbow sail, in good condition, some cosmetic blemishes but completely airworthy, 395 with seat and bag. Inquire at MGS shop.

FOR SALE: used BROCK-82 16-foot standard, in excellent condition, solid gold sail. At MGS.

FOR SALE: used Sky Sports LARK, 18-foot, red white and blue sail, excellent condition, has deflexers added for better performance and smoother-flying sail. Jack McMillan, 543-3065

FOR SALE: newly built 18-foot Free Flight, built from kit, flown twice. Solid white sail, with prone harness. Inquire at MGS.

### JONATHAN LIVINGSTON HAWK?

A few weeks ago, several of the local flyers were standing around on top of the mountain at Skinner State Park, waiting for the howling gales to calm down enough that we could fly. Several hawks were on the ridge, soaring, and whenever one took off, someone would call it out. Then we'd watch with envy as the bird would proceed to do a few passes up the ridge for altitude before heading out to pick up a thermal and disappear from view. Nobody thought it unusual, then, when somebody called "hawk," as another bird pulled up out of the trees to the south and cruised up in front of the take-off area.

Some of us weren't even bothering to watch, until one of the pilots whooped in amazement. "Hey, Lookitthat!!!" As we stared in amazement, the big Red Tail cut short his soaring pass directly in front of the launch area, and proceeded to fold his wings and dive straight for the ground. We watched, expecting him to complete his dive and come back up with some unfortunate critter that was destined to become the bird's supper.

However, that wasn't the case. After about two hundred feet of vertical dive, we saw the bird suddenly pop everything out, and swoop into a vertical climb. He let his momentum carry him almost to his starting point, then, just as his airspeed reduced to Zero, he tucked it all in again and fell over backwards into another dive. A hundred feet down, pop it back out and swoop into another climb; this time, before he came to a dead stop, he flicked a tip feather and curved over into a graceful wingover, which he held to the vertical dive position, only to pull up - wings still fully extended and motionless - into a series of whip stalls.

As we stood there staring, the bird continued for about three minutes of aerobatics - whip stalls, wingovers, swoops and dives; even a three-quarters loop, where he tucked everything in on the down side and converted it into a vertical dive - then he suddenly went back into straight and level flight and continued soaring to the north, just like a normal hawk.

Hawks don't do that stuff! Kind of makes you wonder, doesn't it...?

### HOW TO JOIN THE WMHGA

Prospective members should send their name and mailing address to WMHGA Treasurer John Dempsey, 107 Ridge Road, East Longmeadow, MA 01028, along with their dues for the remainder of the year. Any new member's dues are calculated at the rate of 50¢ per month from the month of joining the club until the following April, inclusive. New members joining in June, for example, would send in \$5.50 for the rest of this year.

In April, ALL members dues become payable at the rate of \$6.00 for a full year.

Membership includes a year's subscription to Updraft, reduced rates on GSI liability insurance, special consideration in flying WMHGA sites (ie, you can often qualify to fly Skinner when a Class 3 flyer) and reduced membership rates in the New England Hang Glider Association (publisher of Ridge Rider Magazine.) Also, participation in any flying clinics, events, or social functions of the club.

### NEXT MONTH

Thermal Soaring by Chuck LaVersa, Flying the Rigid Wing Gliders by Bob Stewart, info on a new site (Greylock Glen) and more.