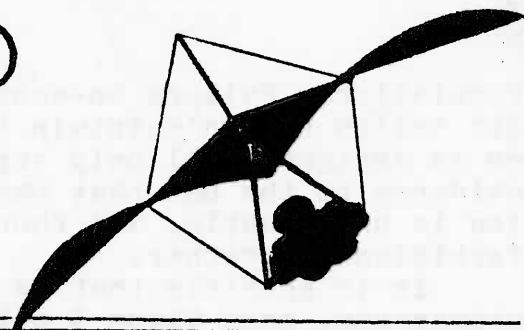


UPDRAFT



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Ed.: M. Norrissey

C 1976, WMHGA

MEETING NOTICE

The JULY meeting of the WMHGA will be at the ME Bar & Lounge, on Rt. 47 in Hadley, on the first Tuesday of July, at 8:00 PM.

For new members, WMHGA meetings are always held at 8:00 PM on the first Tuesday of the month, at the ME Lounge. The ME is located just two miles north of Skinner State Park (Mt. Holyoke) on Route 47.

PARTY TIME

One last reminder, the annual WMHGA blast will be held at Susan McGuire's house in Easthampton, on Friday, June 25. Come in the evening, and feel free to bring a guest if you like. Donation will be two or three dollars at the door, with the exact amount depending upon how much is spent on provisions. If you have lost the special mailer with the directions, or didn't get one, call Sue at home (527-9075) or at MGS in the evening (584-7233.)

SITE REPORTS

Mt. GREYLOCK: Flying is once again in full swing at Greylock, and the following set of regulations will be strictly enforced.

1. All pilots must sign in at the lodge at the top of the mountain (not at the visitors center, as was the case last year.) Waivers must be signed and credentials in order, for a day permit to be issued.

2. Class 4 pilots with GSI or equivalent insurance will be issued day permits to fly on their own discretion.

3. Class 3 pilots with GSI or equivalent insurance may be issued a day permit ONLY if accompanied by either Brooks Ellison or Chuck LaVerza, and will fly under the authority of these two pilots. Check-outs at other mountains may be required in any case where Chuck or Brooks is not familiar with a certain pilot's level of competence or experience.

4. The regular take-off point is at the top of the mountain, and this is to be used whenever possible. The secondary launch spot, on the road below the summit, may only be used when vehicle traffic on the road is light, and must be discontinued at any time that traffic or parked cars build up at the spot.

5. NO "LANDSCAPING.!"

6. Greylock will be closed to flying on the July 4th, Labor Day, and Columbus Day weekends, due to heavy use of the park on those weekends. On all other holiday weekends, and possibly on other weekends when extra-heavy use of the reservation is in evidence, flying operations will cease at noon. Extended soaring will not be frowned upon, but no launched after twelve noon will be permitted.

7. The Gould's farm is the regular landing zone, and no others should be used (including the golf course,) except in the case of emergency. When the hay is high in the landing field, pilots are requested to make every effort to touch down on the dirt road that bisects the field, so as not to trample the hay.

8. No spectators in the landing zone when the hay is up.

9. Pilots, as well as WMHGA officers and Department of Environmental Management personnel, share in the responsibility for enforcement of these

regulations. Failure to assure that our fellow flyers maintain the system as designed will only serve as evidence to the DEM that hang gliding is unmanagable, and should be forbidden altogether.

It is possible that as the year progresses, some Class 3 pilots who fly there frequently and competently may be placed on a list and allowed to obtain permits without having to go with Brooks or Chuck. However, we do not yet know if this will come to pass.

Also, Mr Doug Poland, the head of the DEM Region which includes Mt. Greylock, has said that some trimming and clearing may be allowed at the take-off spot. Certain rocks and a few bushes and tree branches come to mind at once. This is to be done by arrangement with the DEM people, and pilots are NOT allowed to do ANY of this work on their own.

It looks like a pretty good system, and if it causes a few pilots a small hassle (ie., the Class 3 flyers), it should be worth the effort to keep the turkeys off the hill, and keep the site open. Let's not blow it.

For new members who may not be familiar with the site, Greylock is a mellow 2200 foot southeast face with a decent take-off and an easy landing zone, located in North Adams. Besides being the biggest flying site for hundreds of miles around, it is our only good southeast site, and one of the few real drive-up-and-fly mountains in the region. Treasure it!

SKINNER PARK: (Mt. Holyoke) This site is enjoying heavy use under the system detailed in last month's Undraft. Besides many WMHGA members, quite a few flyers from other organizations have stopped by for some super soaring. Some have had to be turned away due to lack of qualifications or of recent practice, but many have been invited to fly. Incidents have been kept to a minimum, with only a few crashes-on-take-off, tree landings, and landings off-field. At this time last season, we had days when the kites dotted the forest like umbrel-

las on a beach, so the system must be working.

THERE IS A NEW LANDING AREA, and pilots are to use it at ALL times, for the duration of the growth of Mitch's hay crop. The new LZ is Mr. Johnson's field, which is the huge lawn by the red house, a few houses to the north of the usual landing area. Also useable is the hay field immediately to the right (looking down from the top) of Johnson's, which is part of the State Park. On long, low final approaches, beware of the fact that these two fields are separated by a barbed wire fence. Also, the same set of electric lines that cut across Mitch's field, also cut through the woods on a line just barely in the trees along the near side of the new landing zones.

Pilots are urged to examine the area near the house for souse wires, too, before landing here. These single lines are especially difficult to see from the air.

Once Mitch cuts the hay, we will go back to using the regular landing area again, until the hay gets long once more. These periods will last for a few weeks each, one or two more times through the summer.

Also, during the periods when the regular landing zone is closed, the use of the "slot" is also prohibited. How to tell when you can fly there again? Simple: when the hay is short, you can fly.

The Barstowes, owners of the field that forms the southern half of the double field at Mitch's, have been upset at the amount of hay that they have been losing due to picnickers spreading blankets in the field. It seems that once the hay is trampled, the machine won't cut it, and it's lost. All flyers are asked to share in the responsibility of keeping the spectators, who we attract, out of the hayfields at all times.

Mt. TOM: Still "closed" to flying, but still getting a lot of walk-up use, on a guerrilla basis. Have a good one!

Hospital Hill: Still closed, but we're working on it. trying to get it back, at least during school vacation time.

SOUTH HADLEY HIGH SCHOOL: is now OPEN to flying! Thanks to VP Paul Kjoller for getting this situation straightened out. The only restrictions are that flying is not allowed at any time that the school's sports teams are using the landing field for practice, since this is the real purpose of the field; and flyers are asked not to park their cars on the grass at the top of the hill. During the school year, flyers are asked to keep their use of the hill quiet and light during school hours, and to try and fly there mainly on weekends during the school year.

For beginners, So. Hadley HS is an excellent training/practice hill, with about an 80 to 100 foot vertical drop on a smooth grassy hill and wide open take-off and landing areas. It faces southwest, and curves to form a bowl, so that south through west winds all allow straight into-the-wind take-offs and landings.

The goal posts at the bottom of the hill are easily removable and replaceable. Pilots are asked to please remove them before flying, and put them back afterwards, so as not to fly into them and break them down.

PETERSBURG PASS (Taconic Trails): is still going strong as a flying site. The regular take-off area is back in use after the winter, so those hairy launches across the street are no longer necessary. Brooks also says that he has a new landing zone, off of Route 2, which means that we no longer have to worry about getting our high-performance machines into the postage-stamp regular landing area. Class 3 or better and GSI are required to fly here.

North Sugarloaf: Still open on a walk-up basis; nothing new here.

POET'S SEAT: Still no word from the Board of Selectmen, who must finalize the agreement before this hill opens.

AVON: Closed to flying at present.

MERIDEN MOUNTAIN: Closed to flying.

ASCUTNEY: Flyers interested in trying this site should contact Lee Keeler for information and assistance.

STOWE: Status uncertain, since the death on Memorial Day weekend of pilot John Stevens during a flight from the top of Mt. Mansfield. Stevens was prevented from getting down into the large blacktop landing area, possibly by heavy thermal activity, and overflew it. He then made a downwind 180° turn and stalled out, crashing into the woods, where he was killed by way of a skull fracture. This is the East's second hang gliding fatality, and the first involving a flexible wing ship (a Sun III.) Stevens was a solid Class 3 pilot who had flown Stowe previously on many occasions, being a Vermont resident, and he presumably had adequate skill to fly there. Whether the crash was caused by pilot error, freak wind conditions, or both, remains to be seen. Full reports will be forthcoming from Stowe Sky School. Status of the mountain as a flying site is uncertain at this time, pending decision by the Mount Mansfield Company.

GREYLOCK GLEN: See article elsewhere in this issue.

SUNDOWN: Sundown will operate weekends only for the duration of the non-skiing season, with lift service to the top of the mountain and walk-ups to the midstation of the main mountain, or to the training hill. All-day tickets for the lift cost \$5, or you can get one-ride tickets for \$1.50 each. Walk-up tickets, for use of all facilities except the lift, go for \$3 per day.

No flying will be permitted during the week, for the purpose of erosion control.

Phone number there is 203-379-8077, or call Charlie Stetson at 203-745-4848 for more information. Sundown is off of Rt 219, 1½ mi. north of US44 in New Hartford, Conn. The access road is a right off of 219.

STOWE MEET

Local Flyers Make Good

The Stowe Summer Solistice Hang Gliding Festival was held at Mt. Mansfield and Spruce Peak in Stowe the weekend of June 18 to 20. Due to the main attraction - a chance to fly on 2100-foot Mt. Mansfield - plus the added incentive of a thousand dollar purse, drew nearly a hundred pilots from all over the northeast, as well as a number of flyers who are on the national professional circuit. Due to some uncertainty about the status of the meet, shortly after John Stevens' death a couple of weeks ago, there were not as many flyers from "out west" as this meet usually attracts.

Due to marginal weather conditions, only a few pilots got to fly Mansfield; most of the meet was at Little Spruce, with a number of flights from Big Spruce. Although a complicated task had been set for the Mansfield site, the use of the much-smaller Spruce Peak area led the meet to be scored on a simple duration-and-spot-landing basis. As the landing area was an area of rather funky winds all weekend, it worked out so that the high performance kites' duration advantage was effectively nullified by the much easier time that the short-keeled standards found in the target landing phase of their flights. Only a few old box-stock Standard Rogallos and the Seagull III's were at a real disadvantage, since these gliders were consistently unable to reach the target area. You can't hit the spot unless you can first make it to the landing zone!

Although the majority of the kites at the meet were Sky Sports Kestrels - at least half, and maybe two thirds - the remainder of the entries reflected the whole range of high performance ships that are presently available, and the final scoring also reflected this variety.

Jim Finkowski, in his souped up Dragonfly I had the only soaring

flight of the meet, getting about fifteen minutes off of Big Spruce. Al Cupertino in his Kestrel had a startling altitude gain when he hit a booming thermal on final approach which lifted him from fifty feet or less above the target, to at least five hundred feet altitude in one big rush. However, he was unable to stay in it, and as soon as he started to 360, he got into the sink and was back on the ground at the end of a single 360! The other startling flight was Friday morning's last trip off of Mansfield, when an unknown pilot got rotored immediately after launch and dove the full two thousand feet from takeoff to landing in the Mansfield parking lot, a glide of about 1 to 1 away. This one flight set at least two site records: shortest flight from Mansfield in duration (about three quarters of a minute) and shortest distance covered. He may have also set a third record; most terrified pilot!. After that flight, everyone went flying somewhere else.

Thrills and spills were the order of the day, as the funky air combined with everyone's attempts to hit the spot (as opposed to making the best possible landing in whichever part of the LZ this required) led to crashes galore. Only one flyer was really hurt - a couple of broken ribs - but bent gliders and scrapes and bruises were common. None of the area's local flyers even bothered to bring a glider - they just hung around and laughed a lot.

Despite the vagaries of the wind and weather, there were a goodly number of competition flights, and when the points were added up, Brooks Ellison and his Seagull IV were the winners. Second was Jim Finkowski in his Dragonfly, and Chuck LaVersa was eighth, making three WMHGA flyers in the top ten, including first and second.

Oh, by the way, flying will continue at Stowe as usual, despite the fatality there. Hopefully even more of us will make it up there to catch some of that Vermont sky.

The ULTIMATE HIGH

A new site was opened this month by four intrepid flyers - and in the process, a new (and unbreakable) altitude record was set for foot launch hang gliding. The mountain is Mt. McKinley in Alaska, a twenty-thousand foot walk-up! The record is for the highest altitude for foot-launched gliders, 21,000 feet, and also the highest vertical drop for a foot launch. The record is unbreakable for the simple reason that McKinley is the highest mountain in the world in terms of vertical drop - there's just noplace where you could go to fly a bigger mountain.

It took a month of climbing, a major mountaineering expedition, and well over 40 thousand dollars to get the four Dragonflys to the top of the mountain - one set of good reasons why this record will probably be never equalled, much less broken. In the time between the beginning of the climb and the last landing, there were seven people killed on the hill. Luckily, none were in the flying expedition, though two of the flyers were delayed for two days in their takeoffs due to their participation in a rescue of some injured climbers.

Due to the month of climbing that the expedition required, and the resulting acclimatization, the flights were made without oxygen. However, a few quick hits were taken from an oxygen bottle before takeoff by each pilot. The first two flyers went off in calm air, one crashing on takeoff and bending his glider, and the other becoming the first to fly McKinley. After two days of rescue operations, the other two flyers got their chance. Launching into soaring conditions, both gained a grand over the summit, setting the record for absolute altitude, foot launched.

The flyers in the expedition were Mason Wade, Ed Kvalik, Robert Burns, and Kent Hudson. At press time we were still unable to learn who flew when, or who it was that crashed.

Twenty grand in a hang glider!
Just think about that one...

GREYLOCK GLEN

by Bob Vicari

Greylock Glen, formerly owned by the Elco Development Company, is now owned by Mr. Canter of Adams. The defunct ski area was almost complete when the money ran out. There are eight or ten wide ski trails completed, which can be used for flying. Numerous 60-foot poles with spotlights abound, but as all wiring was placed underground, that hazard is not present. The chair lift poles are in place, but no chairs or wires run between them.

The hill has about a five hundred foot vertical drop from the top down to the Gould's farm (which is the regular Mt Greylock landing zone) although nobody has yet flown all the way to the Gould's field.

There are many wide-open spots for class 1 and 2 pilots to fly, and these range from 25 to 100 feet vertical drop. The class 2 flyer with solid turning ability and who can plan a flight should have little trouble flying from the top. However, extreme caution should be exercised when flying over such obstructed terrain. Class 3 and 4 pilots should have no trouble at all.

Some soaring should be possible due to the large hay fields, which constitute a real thermal factory. I got over a minute of soaring due to thermal lift on one short hop in a standard, and Chuck got two passes in his Dragonfly, and could've stayed up except for harness problems.

Mr. Canter's policies are as follows: 1, contact him or his son and present a waiver; 2, Do not drive on or damage the property; 3, do not land on the golf course; 4, be watchful for the actions of spectators, especially for littering.

Greylock Glen faces Southeast, and overlooks the Mt Greylock landing zone. The ridge itself is a spur of Mt Greylock, and it tends to be flyable in much the same winds as the big ridge above it.

Another new site! Go for it!



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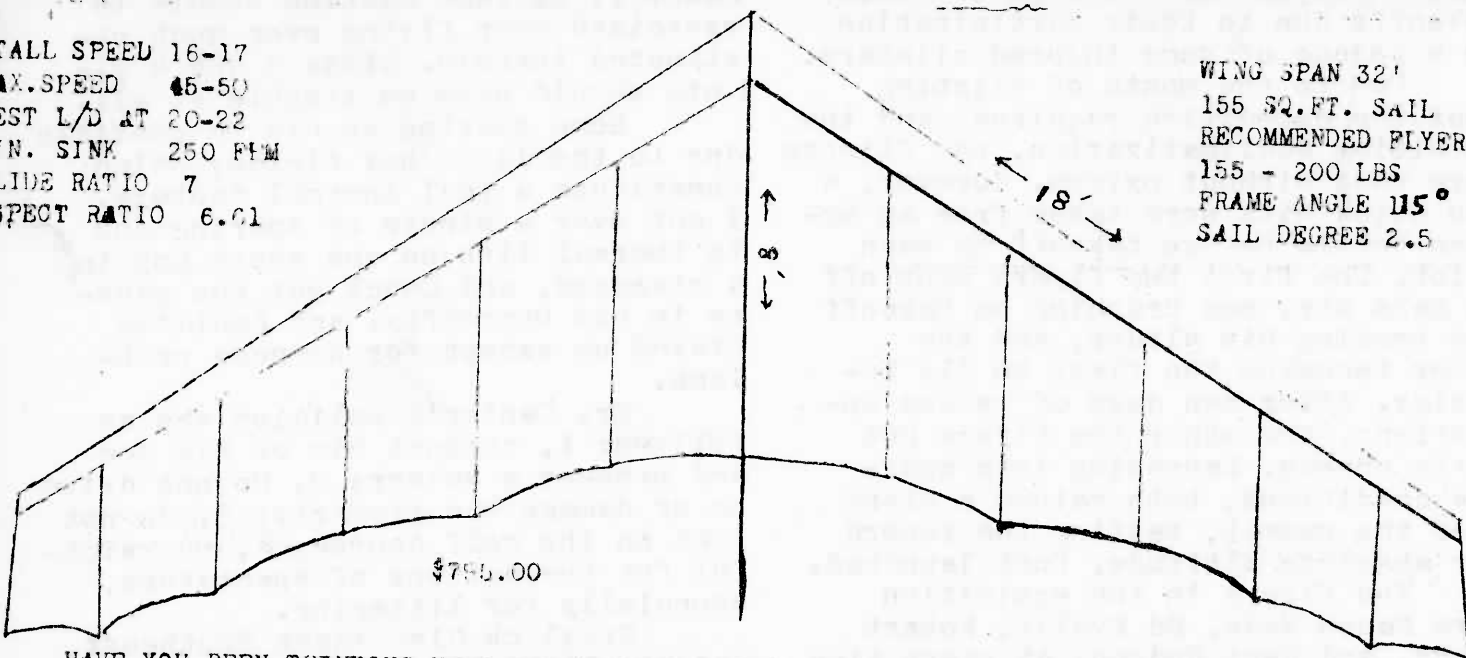
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RATINGS CLINICS

WMHGA is planning a series of ratings clinics to give local flyers the opportunity to upgrade their ratings with a minimum of hassle. These clinics will provide a chance to demonstrate skills and perform required tasks in the presence of a GSI/USHGA rater and to get all of the necessary hassling done in one least amount of time.

There will be a charge for participation, in order to reimburse the instructor(s) for their time; in the past, it has been well worth while to pay a modest charge and do everything in a day, rather than to go running around for weeks or months, hoping that a rater will happen to be looking in the right direction when you have a flight that needs to be signed off.

Times and places of these clinics are impossible to announce too far ahead, due to the obvious unpredictability of the weather - if you are due for a change in rating, you should make a point of staying in touch with Flight Director Chuck LaVersa, so you won't miss out on this.

FAA INFO AT NEXT MEETING

At the July meeting of WMHGA, our featured guests will be two officials from the Westfield District Office of the Federal Aviation Administration. They have accepted an invitation to attend the meeting in order that we may seek information regarding some of the advanced flying that's been going on in the Northeast lately, and which we expect to see around this area soon.

Anyone with a high performance glider, once they've learned how to maximize the potential of their equipment, is likely to be "going away" this summer on long, high cross-country flights. We've already seen flights of nearly ten miles in the Northeast, and altitude gains of up to seven thousand feet over takeoff.

Flights like this are going to be common around here soon, and it means, among other things, that we will be sharing airspace with sail-

planes, powerplanes, and other types of regulated aircraft. Also you may be aware, any time you get more than five hundred feet above ground level, you are flying in controlled airspace.

Regulation of the airways is not simply for the purpose of restricting the sky. Anytime more than one aircraft, regardless of type, are in the sky together, it is critical that all pilots concerned are flying according to the same set of rules. It's not enough that you know what you're doing, and what you're about to do - the other guy must also know how you are going to react, in order that you both can stay out of each others' way. Therefore, certain rules have been established. Pilots must be licenced so that other pilots can be assured that they know the rules of the air.

Fortunately, we are not (yet?) subject to regulation and licencing. Unfortunately, this means that we are not formally required to follow the regulations that apply to other craft...and that neither we, or any other pilot, can be assured that we will react predictably in a crowded piece of sky.

Hopefully, this visit by the people from the FAA will give us a chance to get familiar with the set of rules that are being followed by other users of the airways, and may help someone to avoid a collision some day.

Also, we have a few rigid wing gliders coming into the area, and there has been some speculation on motorizing one or more. This will be a great chance to find out just what the legal situation is in this regard, too.

Have your questions ready...

HOW TO JOIN WMHGA

Send \$5.00 and your name and address to Treasurer John Dempsey, 107 Ridge Road, East Longmeadow, MA 01028. This will cover your membership and subscription to Updraft from now until April of '77; at that time, you will rejoin for a full year, at \$6.00 per year.