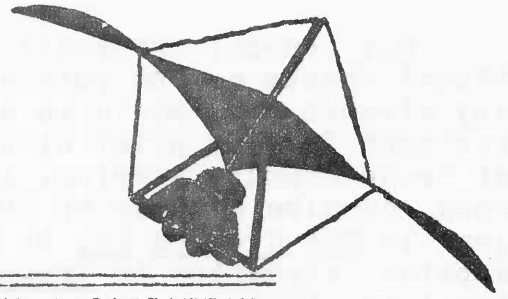


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NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS HANG GLIDER ASSOCIATION

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Editor: M. Morrissey

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The July meeting of the WMHGA was held as usual at the ME Bar on the first Tuesday of the month. In attendance were two representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration from the FAA General Aviation District Safety Office at Barnes Airport, Westfield. The subjects of discussion were air traffic patterns in our local area, with the point of the matter being how to avoid trouble with other types of aircraft, now that many of us have new high performance wings with high altitude and cross country potential. Also discussed at length were FAA regulations regarding homebuilt and experimental airplanes - which categories include any motorized hang glider.

With regard to air traffic, it was pointed out that since the FAA does not require hang glider pilots to be licenced, we are not officially subject to any of their regulations, except for the fact that it is illegal to fly into an Airport Traffic Area in any kind of flying device unless actually in the process of taking off or landing at the airport in question. It was noted that anyone flying at Mt Tom is right on the fringe of the traffic area for Barnes airport, which does have an operating control tower. An Airport Traffic Area extends for a radius of five miles around any operating control tower, and includes all airspace within that circle up to an altitude of 3,000 feet.

It was also pointed out that the Instrument Landing System approach to Barnes goes right along the ridge at low altitude, and that any pilot practicing ILS approaches will pass the flying side of the

ridge at low altitude UNDER THE HOOD; in other words, physically prevented from seeing outside the airplane. If a large aircraft is doing ILS approaches, the check pilot will be able to see out, but he will be sitting on the right side of the cockpit, on the side away from the ridge, and his vision to the left will be obstructed by the hood over the pilot flying the plane. In short, if you meet an airplane at low altitudes out in front of the ridge at Tom, the odds are that the pilot CANNOT SEE YOU. 'Nuff said.

A good suggestion was made to the effect that any pilot planning to try cross-country should get a sectional chart of the area, which will show airport traffic areas, air traffic control areas, airways and altitude/direction combinations, military climb corridors, and other hazardous areas.

The remark was made that while the FAA presently would not prefer to get involved in hang gliding, the first time a hang glider has to be washed out of a jet engine intake will lead to an immediate change of attitude in this regard, and that any forthcoming regulations that might result from such an incident will be made by weighing the fun and freedom of a single hang glider pilot against the safety of the hundreds of passengers on any commercial airliner. You can easily guess where the priorities will lie - and justly so.

Much interesting and detailed information came from this meeting; to try and reprint it all here would turn this newsletter into a book; besides which, all of this and more has been covered in recent issues of Ground Skimmer and other publications.

For general information, sectional charts can be purchased at any airport, and would be a good investment for any pilot with dreams of cross-country soaring. Also, a good, concise article on the subject is The Crowded Sky by Kendall Hopkins, appearing in Ground Skimmer for June, 1976.

The discussion of licencing and certification for powered hang gliders was even more detailed and interesting; since everyone in the club who owns or expects to own a glider suitable for power applications was at the meeting, there is no need to repeat that information here. Let it suffice to say that the regs are complicated and detailed, and it would seem almost necessary to talk to the FAA people BEFORE starting to build an aircraft of this kind, in order to be certain that the various inspections required for certification can be completed during the construction process. It could save a lot of trouble later, if you cover your ass early in the project.

AUGUST MEETING

The August meeting of the WMHGA will be held as usual at the ME Bar and Lounge on Rt 47, two miles north of Skinner State Park in Hadley, on the first Tuesday of the month at 8:00 PM. That will be Tuesday, August 3. Subjects to be discussed include the possibility of WMHGA becoming simply MassHGA, and stepping in to fill the void left by the lack of a state organization in Mass. As all the sites are out this way with the exception of a few small bumps, and since we are already dealing with the state agencies on a semi-official level, this move appears logical. It could also be a big step towards streamlining the GSI/USHGA organization of hang gliding. You may be aware that Mass is now the only Northeastern state without a state organization.

A board of directors meeting is to be held sometime prior to the regular meeting, so that these issues can be somewhat clarified for voting.

SITE REVIEW

SKINNER STATE PARK (Mitch's): Flying at Skinner has been excellent this summer, with a lot of ridge soaring and the beginnings of experimentation with cross country. Chuck LaVersa has been landing at the ME Lounge on an almost-regular basis, with three flights to the ME within less than a month. On one of these, he flew there in his Dragonfly II accompanied by Jim Cobb, also in a D'fly II, and by John Dempsey in his 'Dempsey Wing.' This is the area's first mass cross country flight. It was enough to warm the cockles of any flyers heart to see the three gliders parked in the parking lot along with all the cars as the pilots celebrated their flight inside at the bar.

The new landing area in the field next to Johnson's has worked out so well that nearly everyone has continued to use it, even though the regular landing area is now hayed and open for use again. Not only is it a good deal larger, but it does not have the tree line turbulence that comes from the line of trees along the road at Mitch's field.

Since Mitch has done his haying, the "Slot" is now open again for flying; good news for learners, as well as experienced pilots who need a small hill to experiment on.

Please remember that if you are not a member of WMHGA, you MUST have a Class 4 rating AND current GSI or equivalent insurance to fly Skinner, AND you must be certified by either Chuck LaVersa, Bob Stewart, or Mick Morrissey. Credentials will not be accepted by the DEM rangers unless vouched for by one of these three WMHGA officials.

Club members are reminded that even though they may fly Skinner as a Class 3, they still MUST have GSI. Rangers will soon start checking GSI cards for those on "the list" to be certain that all pilots have CURRENT insurance coverage - don't get caught short - be sure your insurance doesn't expire!

Also, please note the piece on GSI elsewhere in this issue.

Mt GREYLOCK: Effective this month, all pilots who wish to fly at this site will have to carry a "Greylock Card," which certifies to the park authorities that the pilot has been checked out and is qualified to fly the mountain. Details of the arrangement will be available at the August WMHGA meeting. In the meantime, anyone wanting to fly Greylock is advised to contact Chuck LaVersa or Brooks Ellison for assistance in coping with the regulatory system.

OTHER SITES: No new regulations or problems have arisen since last report, in regard to any of the area's flying sites.

GSI INSURANCE

The WMHGA club policy, covering all of our regulated sites, is almost ready to expire! In order to renew this coverage, it is necessary for WMHGA to purchase twenty new or renewed policies for the coming year.

The problem is twofold. First, most of the area's established flyers will not have their individual policies expire until the fall, so are not yet ready to renew. Second, of those whose renewal dates were during the winter, spring, and summer, ^{many} have renewed their policies on their own, and have not made certain that their policies were credited to WMHGA.

IMPORTANT: If you have bought GSI since last December, PLEASE be sure to notify the club in writing of this fact - we will then take steps to be sure that GSI knows you as a WMHGA member. Also, it would be a boon to the club if you would take a minute and write a short note to GSI, stating that you are a member of the WMHGA. This applies to renewals as well as new memberships.

If you have not got a current GSI individual membership, PLEASE buy your GSI insurance through the club.

GSI will be an important subject at the August meeting.

NOTES AND QUOTES

Jim Finkowski and Spencer Smith have departed the area on a long-term hang gliding safari. The trip will begin with a slow and rambling trip across the US and Canada, flying all of the well-known sites along the way. Ultimate destination - Hawaii, where Jim plans to stay for a year or more. Spencer's planned stay - if any - is of undetermined length. Both flyers have taken brand new Dragonfly Mark II's along, and we hope that we will see some well-worn gliders by the time these guys get back here.

Lots of ladies getting into the air lately, after a year or so of being cautious - presumably waiting a while to see how long the guys would survive the sport, before making the decision to actively participate. A fitting comment from novice pilot Ilene Blakesley after her first flight in a hang glider: "Oh! Now I see why people get so bullshit over this!"

Last year's high performance wings are getting to look like Model T's, with all the new HP's on the local ridges of late. We now have a Wind Gypsie, four Swifts, two Kestrels, two Dragonfly I's, seven Dragonfly II's, and a Sun IVb flying at Skinner regularly, and a Fledgeling and a trio of Easy Risers on the way.

Pilots are warned of a trend in accidents on the west coast - a number of pilots have been injured and even killed by a certain kind of overconfidence in the new high aspect flexwings. It seems that if you try to fly really fast in strong headwinds, especially if turbulence is present, it's possible for these ships to tuck under and break up. As we hear it, these incidents involved much higher winds than are being flown around here - but beware. The new gliders can go FAST - but speed is NOT a substitute for common sense when it comes to flying strong winds or rough air. Just because your new ship will go 50 mph doesn't mean it is okay to fly in 35 to 40 mph winds.

See you in the sky!

PLEASE FORWARD TO NEWSLETTER FOR PRINTING. ALSO, SEND NEWSLETTER ADDRESS IN RETURN MAIL.

THANKS,
Don



GSI GLIDERSPORTS INTERNATIONAL

July 12, 1976

TO EASTERN CLUBS AND PUBLICATIONS

GSI NEWSLETTER, REGION 7, NUMBER 5 (JULY)

Hang gliding schools, clubs, and individuals have asked many questions about GSI's liability insurance coverage, and rightfully so, since this appears to be the most economical and widely used insurance within the sport. If the questions are not satisfactorily answered, however, it does make any difference how economical it is. Several questions have come from this region and have been asked, in turn, of GSI headquarters in Oregon. When answers are available they will be printed in the next newsletter. If any school, club, or individual wishes to look over the full policies with endorsements attached, mail \$1 to cover costs of printing and postage to me, and the policy will be in the mail within two days.

The following flying sites in Region 7 are currently insured by GSI:

Attitash Recreation Area	NH	Ellenville	NY
Mt. Cranmore Ski Area	NH	Holiday Mt. Ski Area	NY
Mt. Washington	NH	Wildwood Mt.	NY
Mt. Mansfield	VT	Catamount Ski Area	NY
Sugarloaf Mt.	MF	Dutchess Mt. Ski Area	NY
Blanchard Hill Ski Area	MA	Snow Valley Ski Area	NY
Groton Hills Ski Area	MA	Willard Mt.	NY
Western Mass. HGA (club)	MA	Creek Peak Ski Area	NY
Talcott Mt.	CT	Pleasant Mt. Ski Area	MF

(if your site is insured and not listed please notify Region 7 office)

The following State Flight Directors can issue ratings to fly these and other sites, help answer your questions about insurance coverage. Each is also a GSI-USHGA Certified Instructor and USHGA Observer:

- Don Post, Box 977, Stowe, Vermont 05672
- Paul LaLiberte, Box 142, Kingfield, Maine 04947
- Al Mulazzi, 28 Reed Drive, Wethersfield, CT06109
- Mike McCarron, 17 Vichy Drive, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
- Dave Stuckert, 3 Blackwatch Trail, Morristown, NJ 07960
- Joe Miller, 68B East Montgomery Ave., Hatboro, PA 18966

For information on local flying sites and regulations to fly, get in touch with the State Flight Director in your area.

More GSI news in the next issue.

Don
Don McCabe, Region 7
Director

GSI REGION VII OFFICE

P.O. BOX 898, N. CONWAY, N.H. 03860