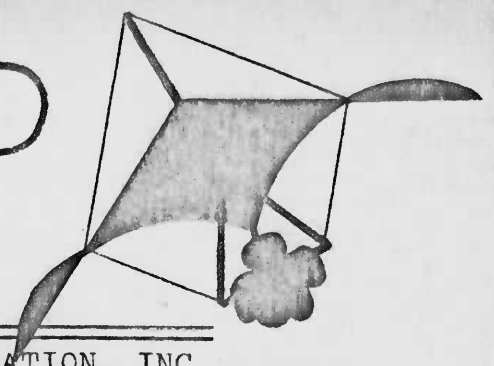


# UPDRAFT



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NEWSLETTER of the MASSACHUSETTS HANG GLIDER ASSOCIATION, INC.

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## MEETING NOTICE

The February meeting of the MassHGA will be held as usual on the third Tuesday of the month at the ME Bar & Lounge, two miles to the north of Skinner Park on Route 47 in Hadley. Members are reminded that all meetings are now being held on the third Tuesday of every month. That will be February 15th, at 7:30 PM. Please note the starting time. Usually we try to start at 7:00, but hardly anyone straggles in until around 8:00. This month we will make every effort to start at 7:30 so that the business portions of the meeting can get over as early as possible.

Board of Directors are asked to show up an hour early if possible, for the purpose of a short meeting before the general membership gets together.

## DIRECTORS

Once again we are publishing a list of those who have agreed to be responsible for the various business aspects of the association. This is for the convenience of the members, so that any questions may be directed to the proper party. Telephone numbers have also been included for this reason. Anyone who can be of any assistance in any way will also be able to contact the appropriate person.

The list is not a complete one of all the directors, because not all directors have yet taken on any particular assignment. Please recall

that the membership of the Board is still flexible, and will remain so at least until our bylaws become officially chartered through incorporation. In other words, there is still room for new members on the board - the only qualification is a willingness to do some work.

Mick Morrissey - Newsletter, general coordination of effort, miscellaneous administrative stuff. 527-9075

Chuck LaVersa - Flight Director, liaison with State Park officials re. the use of Skinner Park and Mt Greylock, Membership drive and liaison with the other clubs in Massachusetts, Relations with USHGA and GSI. 665-4962

Paul Kjoller - Insurance. 532-1771

Mark LaVersa - Incorporation. 663-7010

Sue McGuire - Treasurer. 527-9075

## NEWSLETTER FORMAT

Readers may be wondering what happened to the December issue. Well, you didn't miss one - there was no Updraft in December, due to the long period between meetings due to our change to third Tuesday dates.

Readers may have also noticed the use of photocopy reproduction rather than the usual printed pages, and the lack of feature material and technical articles. There's a reason for all this, and it's simple: the

club is nearing the end of its fiscal year, and funds are getting to be scarce. Long, printed issues are expensive, whereas a short issue is free, courtesy of Midnight Reproductions. Unfortunately, this outfit has a small capacity and can produce only a few pages in the quantity required by Updraft. Once our '77 dues are collected, Updraft will return to its original format, and will once again provide MassHGA members with the kind of comprehensive news, technical, and instructional coverage to which they have become accustomed. We have some great ideas in store for the spring issues, as soon as we get back to our normal editorial routine, so don't miss out!

### SPEAKING OF MONEY...

Since incorporation is just about to drain the Treasury, it has been suggested that MassHGA advance its membership renewal date from April to February (March 1?). This will be discussed and almost certainly approved at the Directors meeting in February, and the membership will be asked to vote on it at the February meeting. Also to be discussed will be a dues increase. If you have an opinion on this, be at the meeting!

### KUDOS TO MassHGA!

Those of you who read Glider Rider have already seen this (and those who don't read it, should!). At any rate, we were recently proud to see Skinner State Park, a MassHGA site, held up in a National publication as an excellent example of how a flying site should be operated. The article, which appeared in the February issue of Glider Rider, was written by Bernie Wolfard, who was a regular visitor to the ridge this past summer. Bernie is a factory pilot for Electra Flyer, and hails from Oregon; having flown extensively throughout the country, he knows

what's going on all over, and his choice of Skinner as a good example of a well-managed site is quite a compliment to all concerned. We hope that this will serve as an incentive to keep up the good work.

### A NEW RECORD ?

Seen from the landing zone, the ridge was a formless shadow blotting out the stars that filled the frigid winter sky. The wind howled through the naked trees, and the radio in the car informed us that it was fourteen degrees in downtown Springfield. Atop Mount Holyoke, there were no thermometers to record the temperature as John Dempsey, bundled up like a polar explorer, launched his "White Kite Mark IV" into the formless void.

From below, he remained totally invisible - only the shouted comments between him and his fellow nighthawk, Mark LaVersa, allowed us to follow their progress up and down the ridge.

By the time he landed, between twenty-five and thirty minutes later, he had set an unofficial nighttime winter soaring duration record. Mark accompanied John on about two passes, but then pulled out to land. As far as we know, that's the longest anyone has ever soared at night in true winter conditions.

John said it was great, but we think that this is one record that will stay unbroken for quite a while!

### SITE REPORT

Well, folks, the Midnight Beaver has struck again. On our last trek up Mt Holyoke, several more of the trees that adjoin the launching site were among the missing, and the set-up area has been enlarged to a considerable degree. It was possible to set up five high performance kites and still have enough room for the first guy off to back right up into the shrubbery for a running start; we could've fit in more!

We sure hope that the DEM guys don't take this too seriously, or

the repercussions could be serious.

In the meantime, however, the critically-needed north takeoff has yet to be touched. C'mon, Midnight Beaver!

Access has been good, with the snow packed down on the trails as of January 24th. Crampons are just about required, but they make it an easy climb. The launch site itself is pretty well packed, and thanks to your intrepid editor and John Dempsey, there's a runway that's about 5' wide and twenty feet long that's clear right down to bare ground.

Nobody's been up Mt Tom or No. Sugarloaf in several weeks, so we have no information on access there.

#### AWARDS

This is our humble attempt to bestow a little recognition where it's due. It should've appeared in a New Years issue, but space didn't allow. If anyone objects to any of these awards, they're welcome to go take a flying leap.

FLYER OF THE YEAR: CHUCK LaVERSA  
Chuck came in 15th in the Masters, a gathering that purported, with mucho validity, to be comprised of the top 40 pilots in the world; he remains the area's only currently certified instructor; he set up the program at Skinner Park which has attracted nationwide praise; and has consistently displayed unsurpassed skill, technique and knowledge in his flying which has been a true inspiration to all of the local pilots.

MOST INVENTIVE FLYER: JOHN DEMPSEY

John currently holds the soaring duration record at Skinner in a glider that he designed and built himself. His glider designs have provided a high point of interest during the past season. His best

designs have carried him as high and as far as anyone around while all of the local pilots have been flying on the most sophisticated wings available. Even his failures have usually been mostly-successful, and his best work has been truly professional in quality.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: MARK LaVERSA, who has progressed from non-flyer to advanced mountain soaring in little more than half a year, and has done so safely and with caution.

MOST CONSISTENT FLYER: JACK McMILLAN, who has been doing advanced mountain soaring for over a year, and has yet to crack up a hang glider. He may be the only flyer in New England who's been flying high for any length of time, who's never been in a tree!

MOST EXCITING FLYER: BOB STEWART, who has taken more years off my life with one flight than all of my own flights put together!

MOST HARD-CORE FLYER: JOHN DEMPSEY, who holds the nighttime-winter-sub-zero-moonless-night-duration record.

FUSSIEST FLYER: JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY, who only flies when the conditions are perfect, but who did manage to get himself airborne once this season.

VISITOR OF THE YEAR: BERNIE WOLFARD  
Who blew us all right off the ridge once he'd got us to put him on the list and let him fly here, and then said nice things about us in the national press.

TURKEY OF THE YEAR: Anonomous. The guy who got taken off the list.

MOST FRUSTRATED FLYER: BOB PERWAK, who still hasn't got a Dragonfly.

LUCKIEST FLYER: STU SMITH, who fell out of his Merlin at three grand and hung on and flew down standing in the bar when his suspension broke.

Records,  
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January 25, 1977

TO NORTHEAST CLUBS AND PUBLICATIONS

USHGA NEWSLETTER, REGION 8, JANUARY

USHGA has a new president and other officers as a result of the recent elections by mail ballot, and nominations by the board of directors at the January 14-16 meeting in Washington D.C. Appointed president was Vic Powell, a long-working supporter of hang gliding and USHGA. Vern Roundtree will serve as vice-president, Kay Brake secretary, and Lloyd Licher treasurer. Five directors-at-large were also appointed by the board to serve a term of one year. They are Harry Robb, John Harris, Kay Brake, Bill Allen, and Don McCabe. By mail vote Jim Aronson was elected as Region 8 director. Tom Peghiny is still serving as an elected director from the same region.

### Region 8 Reorganization

Region 8, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, and the Virgin Islands, has become difficult to hold together and disproportionate in its USHGA membership. The board, therefore, voted to establish a new region, Region 12, composed of the natural geographical lines of New York and New Jersey, and supported by the large representation of USHGA members in those two states. Jim Aronson of New York will be the regional director for Region 12, while Tom Peghiny will continue to represent Region 8.

The NEHGA has invited representatives of all the clubs in Region 8 to come to the Flight Resources Cooperative in Wilton, NH on March 19-20 for a meeting to discuss the reorganization of the region and affiliation of the clubs within the region to better serve the hang gliding community. At this meeting site preservation, government regulation, holding sanctioned meets, starting up a regional news publication, and improving communications between clubs will be some of the topics. The people at FRC, besides hosting the meeting, are reported to be offering floor space for overnighters. This is an important meeting and its results could lead to lower club dues for USHGA members, opening new sites, and the improvement of the pilot rating system and insurance coverages now in use. At the very least, better communications and understanding between clubs in Region 8 will be encouraged by this meeting. I hope that each club will be represented by two of its members and that we all work together on this project before the heat of the Summer.

### 1977 U.S. Nationals

A set of competition rules for regional and national USHGA Sanctioned meets was refined and adopted by the Competition Committee at the Washington D.C. meeting. It is now official. Flyers who hope to qualify for the nationals must now attend a sanctioned meet using these rules. Further, the meet must be held within the flyer's region and the flyer must be an insured, rated, USHGA member using a machine carrying the HGMA Certificate of Airworthiness. A set of the 1977 Official Competition Rules may be obtained from USHGA. Since these rules were adopted after a sanctioned qualifying meet was held in Region 8 (in August of 1976) it is expected that those who qualified at that time will not have to requalify. It appears now that 110 slots will be created for qualifiers from meets to be held, and an additional 9 flyers will be invited based on their showings at last year's nationals.

Don McCabe, Director-at-Large

# OUR BIRD CLUB

## Special Notice

### SKINNER STATE PARK IS CLOSED TO FLYING PENDING FURTHER NOTICE

All flyers are hereby notified that Skinner State Park, on Mt. Holyoke, is presently closed to flying effective immediately. It is hoped, but not certain, that this situation is temporary.

The reason for the closing of the site is the fact that a large number of trees have been cut in the take-off area. MassHGA is presently negotiating with the Department of Environmental Management for the re-opening of the site in the spring.

A decision will not be made on the reopening of the park until the site can be examined by the Regional authorities of the DEM. This will not be done until the snow is off the mountain; probably in a month or so. In the meantime, the site will remain closed.

The reaction of the DEM officials to the cutting at the take-off will be determined to a great extent by the visual impact of the damage at the time of their examination. Presently, the area is quite badly damaged, and the visual impression is very poor. It will be to the club's great advantage if this situation can be changed between now and the time of the DEM examination.

Therefore, a prime object of the March MassHGA meeting will be to organize the pilots into a series of work parties, with the intention of cleaning up the damaged area to the greatest extent possible. ALL PILOTS ARE URGED TO ATTEND THIS MEETING. There is a lot of work to be done; several felled trees must be removed from the launch site, and several large stumps will have to be dug out and removed. This will take both manpower and time - however, the result may well make the difference in whether or not we can retain this mountain as a flying site.

If the DEM decided to re-open the site, there will be still more work to be accomplished. The trail from the hotel to the launch site is badly eroded and washed out - so badly, that the park authorities were considering a temporary closing of the site until repairs could be made. Since DEM manpower is limited, it will probably fall to the pilots of MassHGA to do the work ourselves if we are to get it done in the near future.

The pilots of the Windward Club have offered their assistance in these projects, and we hope that the Connecticut pilots who use the site regularly will also kick in with the work. However, this is OUR local site, and we are the ones who stand to lose the most if it is not re-opened.

Time is of the essence. All pilots, PLEASE attend the March meeting at the ME Bar on Rt 47 this Tuesday at 7:00 PM, March 15, so that we can begin to get this problem solved.