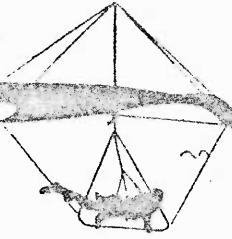


Mass
Hang
Gliding
Association



UPRAFT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HANG GLIDING ASSOC., INC.

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 10 OCTOBER, 1979 c MHGA, Inc. Editor: Mark La Versa

MEETING NOTICE

The October meeting of the MHGA Inc. will be held on the third Wed. of the month, the 17th, at the Moose Lodge in Northampton, Ma. The meeting will commence at 8:00 pm.

This month's agenda includes such items as these:

a report on T-shirt sales by Sue McGuire; a report on potential fund raising activities by Mark La Versa; reflections on the recent Intercollegiate meet at Hanes Hill by Chuck La Versa; and an exciting slide presentation by Chuck which is comprised of photographs taken during our recent tour out West.

Another important topic will be the discussion of a program plan for future meetings, and possibly the appointment of a Program Director.

NOTE: This month the members of MHGA, INC. are happy to welcome the members of the UMASS H G Club, who will be attending the meeting en masse. While the MHGA, INC. always welcomes visitors, it is pleased to see such a large group attend and show interest. The UMASS H G Club has been working

very hard to enable student members to experience the most beautiful and thrilling form of aviation, let's see if there's any way we can help them.

PRESIDENTS JOURNAL

Congratulations to all of you letter writers! Pat some backs, shake some hands, and let's have drinks all around because the FAA has decided to drop the more threatening aspects of its great airspace grab. Langhorn Bond himself (FAA DIRECTOR and general Mr. BIG - Ed.) characterized the forty thousand some-odd letters of opposition to the plan as being of impressive quality and thoughtfulness. (WALL STREET JOURNAL 9/10/79, p. 14) Someone suggested he knows more about letters than he does about airplanes.

Condolences go out to those brave souls from Region 8 who so valiantly endured the worst meet of the century at their own expense. (I'll NEVER rank on ole PICO again! - Ed.)

More congratulations go to Murph and Lenny, who've recently passed the rigors of Intermediate testing successfully to join the BIG GUYS! HIP, HIP!

1000 feet per minute up to all of those people who were party to the clean up and improvement of the Skinner Launch area, and Knighthood to Marky for his valor above and beyond the call of duty in the Battle of the Monster Bees. Mothers can rest in peace as their children are once again free to roam the prettiest trails in the East.

without fear of abduction by the Monsters. Thanks to Doug and his rubber fetish as well as all the crew at Skinner.

Well, it's almost time to gear up for the Greylock Work Bee, as apres-leaf-peeper projects come to mind. We'll keep you beavers posted.

Just to sum up, the latest in the world of hang gliding is this:

the NOVA really does handle

the MOSQUITO really is hot

the FLEDGELING is undisputably

the hottest portable-alla-Rogallo glider in the sky

next years gliders will be different

within a few years all your favorite companies will be producing flying wings

the hottest pilots have added mini calculators to their instrumentation

and you'll be getting high regardless of any of this bull because it's Fall in New England again.

VP's RAMBLIN'S

For those of you who wondered where in turbulence the UPDRAFT was last month, let me answer here that it was in limbo, of sorts. Charlie and I spent much longer than we expected on the West Coast. This was due to the fact that the National Piasco was not the type of event that could justify such expense and effort, unfortunately. So we set out to get our moneysworth of airtime and sightseeing, getting back only in time to attend the Sept. meeting. Our apologies, sincerely, that there was no alternate plan.

However, we DID INDEEDY get what everybody should get at least once; that is a thrilling drive/soar vacation through the country where we logged a pretty piece of hours and shared a lot of excellent flying with some just-great-folks.

From Santa Barbara's LA CUMBRE PEAK to Salt Lake's FRANCIS PEAK, from CRESTLINE to FT. FUNSTON to YOSEMITE (THE most beautiful sled ride there is!!!) to a zillion other spots all we did was fly, fly, FLYYYYY! It's

enough to make ya forget what feet're for! This club could simply NOT AFFORD what it would cost for MY written account of the trip to appear in the UPDRAFT. So I'll finish writing it for next month and Chuck gave me permission to print it in installments, you know, like one page a month for the next 80 years!

We picked up on all the latest local news when we got back-how poor the summer flying was, with some exceptions. And we discovered how anxious everyone was for the advent of the Fall Soaring Season. MMMMMMM, things got off to a delicious start when the Incredible Hulk, Doug Weeks' Hangvan, whisked a segment of the MHGA off to the White Cliffs of Plymouth on Cape Cod for a Sunday of sweet skyout. As can be expected, the local troops fared very well. Your VP was playing in better-than-Ft.-Funston-and-right-down-the-street type conditions, and the only time he seemed upset was when Dougie kept outsinkin' him; but we're gonna keep that a secret, right Doug? Some people just give ya a hard time, y'know?!!

When the geeks and the general riff raff started leavin' the place Murph moved in for a heavy session of speckout practice, followed shortly by Leapin' Lenny. These two guys just added to Dougs offense, and between the three of 'em I was glad to be on the ground. Buncha guys like that flyin' rings around me would sure hurt my rep, see? Guess I better buy a big black car and a violin case, to keep these mugs under control.

So here we are again, coupla weeks down the road from the Cape, and darned if I can't get a moments peace. Had to stay up longer and top land at good ole Greylock on one foot just so's I could look respectable, what with the Big Fig Finkowski, C-MAN and the incredible FUDGEWING, and BIG BAD BROOKERS' Icarus 5 zoomin' round me, not to think about Tim Donovans' E Z RISER blurrin' by while him and the Brooks are playin' cards on the lower wing, yet! WHEW!!!

Then we come to the topic of

Skinner as of late. So, you guys are ALL looking REAL GOOD up there, and think I'm all nervous and worried about how bad yer makin' me look, huh?

Even Jim Burrill is smokin' and at times makes me glad I'm down in Mitchs field teaching someone, so's he can be smokin' OTHER people.

And just when I thought I wuz gonna get a minute to catch my breath all I'm catching is the heavy breath of Billy the Clark, and Ascending Alfie who I swear re-upped their dues just to read about the top of my sail.

So what can I do? Guess there's only one reasonable alternative, to GET EVEN BETTER. And just in time, too. Those Neimi and Wicks guys're hangin' round these parts with sky in their eye looks again. I can take some comfort thanks to Sue McGuire however, 'cause I still sky out on HER! (Thanks Sue, your stayin' on the ground right? I can relax, right? Oh, thanks, you are a true friend.)

Maybe I'm in need of a short vacation from air. Maybe my camera should amuse_A and occupy more of my time. HMMMM. me

Then again, all kinds of praise has been laid down for Jim B. lately, and rightly so. As part of the fine program that the Hitchcock Center for the Environment has run at Skinner this year he gave an impressive slide lecture to a more-than-full Summit House. With his photographic talent on display, and the keen assistance of Matt C. and his Oly, Murph the Surf and his Osprey, and a pair of clean C-5's along courtesy of Lenny and Doug, well, it just produced the sensation of the season around here. It's enough to give hang gliding a good reputation. Another demo like that and folks'll get the outrageous idea we know how to fly!

The Park Personell, as well as those great people from Hitchcock Center said it was the best gig, and had the highest attendance, of any program run there this year. Roger Ward (HEAD RANGER and good guy) and Candace Julian (of Hitchcock Center) both made very positive statements to the recent Mt. Holyoke Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting, and the group was

more than pleased to hear it! The Hitchcock Center will be more involved with the park in the future, bringing various educational and recreational nature programs to the public, and have generously made room for future hang gliding exposure based on the positive reactions of park goers.

By the way, the survey taken this season by the HCE showed that a good proportion of the respondents replied that they specifically enjoyed our presence and activity at the park. HERE HERE!!!!

So everybody is jus' SHININ' in the photo and public relations dept. (Mr. Weeks has PR'd around professionally.) Geeez, you guys keep all this up, and I'm not gonna feel secure AT ALL. I'll havta retire or sumthin' .

Maybe I'll write constantly when there's no flying going on. Then I could have stuff on hand to get the 'DRAFT out sooner, as writin' seems to be the only place nobody is chasin' me around in.

THAT'S IT!!!!!! As Editor I can turn away every one of the hundreds and thousands of letters and articles that pour in the mail slot daily! I can monopolize on the UPDRAFT, have every word and comma be my own!!!

I'll have to read 'em all, tho, so when people angrily ask why their articles didn't get printed I'll be able to discuss them intelligently. So for those dichards who're gonna send stuff in ANYWAYS, INSISTING it see print, here's my address:

MARK LA VERSA
386 PLEASANT ST.
NORTHAMPTON, MASS. 01060.

Now, does anybody have any idea yet why this is called VP'S RAMBLIN'S? (No, there is no prize for a correct answer. Just consider yourself fairly bright and keep reading.)

Now, where were we? Oh yeah....
...and then, just after passing the 9000' altitude marker over Greylock, Chuck and I turned 180° and left for Chicago. Windy City, eh? We'll just SEE ABOUT THAT.....

WEATHERWISE

This month's column features a couple of questions from Jim Finkowski. Asking only shortly before press time has made it difficult to give a comprehensive and detailed answer, but as questions have been rare of late they are greatly appreciated. The reward for good questions is good answers so Q's will keep coming in, so here's your tea biscuit, Jim, and thanks much for pulling this column back to life!

Jim has expressed interest in and curiosity about flying frontal conditions and possibly even storms, or the wind in advance of. These can be, as a matter of fact usually are, pretty strong conditions, to say the least. So he'd like to know more about them to decide IF and HOW and WHEN he may fly them.

Well, to start off, I'd like to say the obvious, that is this: anytime a pilot exceeds his area of competence and knowledge he puts himself in grave danger, no matter how easy the endeavor seems to be. Let no one assume that because Jim is a very consistently hot pilot and is asking these questions that all hot pilots are gonna start flying in storms, and therefore that's where the best flying is. WRONGO. There may be at times, SOME safe conditions for flying for SOME pilots with considerable experience and ability and judgement. Let's look at those worthy spots.

Thunderstorms are composed of often violently vertical air currents that through cooling at the upper levels produce condensation and hence some form of precipitation. The mature self-sustaining thunderstorm, and also the frontal thunderstorm, are the only type that usually will travel awhile producing steady conditions of strong lift ahead of them. There are extremely strong downdrafts and churning turbulence produced with the rising air however, and this is where real danger lies.

The lifting air normally occurs ABOVE ground level and precedes the storm, feeding it. AT ground level an onrushing gust representing not only a change in speed, but a radical change

in direction as well. This presents a problem to the would be stormrider, how to be where there may be safe lift when it happens. One must either be soaring far above ground level already, or must launch into the strong updrafts immediately preceding the storm. HMMMM. One must also be able to STAY OUT OF lift so strong as to suck a craft into the storm itself, a truly deadly place to be. How can we tell if it's THAT strong? Well, we really can't, but we know that it usually is from the experience of other types of aviators, from weather researchers, and from the debris we see as a result of a strong storm's passing by.

The recent tornado tragedy in this locale was an enlightening demo to be sure. About 125 tornadoes touch down in the USA each year, and scientific analysis of their occurrence shows that better than 80% occur about 150 miles in advance of strong, large storms or strong frontal conditions. HMMMM....do we really want to fly in the conditions that birth such havoc???

There may be occasional, possibly rare, times when soaring ahead of storm formations is safe under certain conditions. Such as:

When the pilot is very advanced AND very experienced AND studies storm dynamics closely AND has the strongest glider possible AND has a superb penetration ability and top speed AND AND..AND..AND..... and it looks like not many of us are really prepared for nor qualified for stormriding, doesn't it????? SINCE LUCK plays such a large role in this endeavor, due to the fact that so much is beyond our control and awareness, I think I'll opt for something considerably less radical to fly in myself. Each pilot makes their own choices, so make INFORMED ones.

Now, there are times when the passage of mild fronts bring weather changes we desire. Indeed, many of us have flown during the fronts' passing, and safely so. Sometimes, and not rarely, we are even UNAWARE that a front has passed by, we're just happy that after soaring at 500 feet over the ridge for awhile it's suddenly improved and we're at three grand!!

This reminds us that not all

fronts are violently stormy. These moderately light fronts do, it seems, more often provide the conditions that are both practical and safe to travel somewhere crosscountry on. Mild cold fronts occasionally produce a conjunction of goodies like these:

moderate, wide lift over a long frontal line

frontal travel speeds below 20 or 25 mph

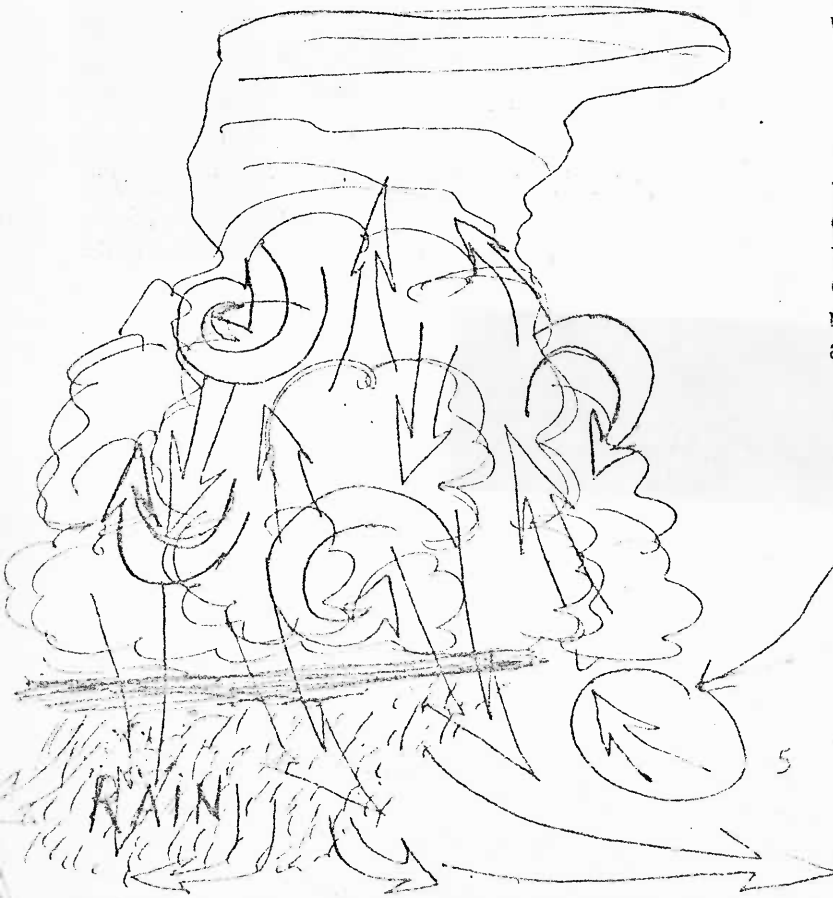
lack of violent updrafts, down-drafts, and churning (from condensation in strong updrafts)

lack of any form of precipitation
good visibility

reasonably steady conditions with little variation and no sign thereof

At times, under the mildest frontal conditions, then, it appears not only safe, but desirable to try soaring, and reasonable to attempt cross country flight. For those of you who desire more info, check into Dennis Pagens' books on Micro-meteorology and Advanced Pilot stuff. Also, use the old standby, GOLDEN GUIDE TO WEATHER, by Burnett, Lehr, and Zim. (GOLDEN PRESS, NY)

STORM TRAVEL →



Check your local library, there are LOTS of books for and by aviators, and lots of aviation weather sources. See if you can come up with some more detailed questions or answers, and maybe we could generate enough interest to warrant a micrometeorology talk at a future meeting, with someone from the National Weather Service, or elsewhere, speaking.

And KEEP THEM CARDS AN" LETTERS POURING IN! (P.S. Here's a simple sketch of a thunderstorm, just see a mental line of 'em along a front to get a better pix. - Ed.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR UPDRAFT EDITOR,

We just know that you are the most wonderful and interesting pilot around. Your style and charisma are evident as you circle around, lonely at the top of the stack, high over Mt. Holyoke in that incredibly beautiful glider of yours. We sit here flunking, but awed; staring out the windows at your handsome airborne profile. We even think about you in our rooms at night, and dream about your high rating, and wonder what you're like up close. Won't you fly in on moonbeams sometime, and visit, PLEASE?? We can't stand just watching anymore.
(signed) 300 Mt. Holyoke Girls

Dear 300,

That you have excellent taste is obvious, but in the interest of higher education I will only visit those with good grades. Remember, every A wins a kiss, and those who make Dean's List can ask me out for an ENTIRE EVENING. You may pay.

Sincerely,
HIM

potentially useable lift, if you could get to it. Note that long before it comes by (several miles ahead) the wind pushed ahead by strong down drafts creates downwind conditions at the local flying sites.

