

Skyline



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Capital Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association

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Ralph Sickinger says Good-bye

Pre-Flight ~ by Ralph Sickinger

So here we are, at the start of another new year, and I'm trying to figure out where we're going. Just in case you haven't noticed, the world we live in has changed. A lot. The Internet, which was the limited province of universities and techno-geeks, has now become an inseparable part of our daily life. Cell phones used to be limited to doctors and high-powered executives, but now everyone has one. When I think back at how we used to do things, and compare that to the way we do things today, I can't help but be amazed. Of course, not all of the changes in our lives are for the better. Life moves a lot faster than it used to. We put in longer hours at work, we have more to do at home, and we spend more time commuting on the road. It's no wonder that when we finally get home, most of us only want to do one of two things: relax, or head out to the mountains to go flying. I believed that one pilot summed it up best with his simple comment: when asked what our [club's] goals should be for the next year, his response was "Get high, and go far". I've been thinking about that statement a lot in the last couple of days. I see MANY pilots who aren't willing to get involved with any of the club's non-flying activities. For instance, in four years I have yet to see an election where anyone was actually "elected" to the Board of Directors. Usually there are volunteers for two or three of the positions, and then the club goes through this process of elimina-

tion to find people for the other slots. It's sort of like a giant game of "hot potato", and the last people left in the game have to serve on the board. And trying to get volunteers for special events like the Smithsonian Kite Festival, fly-ins, or site clean-ups is like pulling teeth. It seems like pilots have to be shamed or guilted into "volunteering". And that is really



unfortunate. The current approach is to dump those responsibilities on the newest pilots in the club, calling it "paying your dues"; but there are three problems (*at least*) with that approach: first, the newest pilots have the least experience, and are thus ill-equipped to take on those roles. Second, that approach only works as long as there are new pilots coming in to the club. Third, is that really how we want to welcome people to our sport? By immediately dumping a bunch of extra

work and responsibility onto them? Of course, I suppose it's really not that bad. I mean, it's not like those new pilots are actually allowed to *do* anything. Anytime a new idea is proposed, it's immediately shot down by the "old guard". Now, I certainly understand that the enthusiasm of young pilots sometimes has to be tempered by the wisdom and experience of other pilots who have been around for a while, but there is a world of difference between tempering and guiding, and just outright squelching. Too many times now, I've seen someone's promise and enthusiasm killed off by a bunch of pilots, who aren't willing to get involved themselves. In the end, the new pilots just stop trying, giving in to the "why bother" mentality. So what does this get us? It gets us a club that absolutely refuses to change.

Which is fine, except for one thing: the rest of the world IS changing around us, and it's going to move on and leave us behind. It's time to wake up and smell the Internet; because if we don't, those pilots who have focused solely on "getting high and going far", will suddenly discover that we have no place to take off from, no places to land, no public support for our sport, and no way to fly.

(See PRE-FLIGHT, on page 15)

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Capital Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association

CHGPA represents hang glider and paraglider pilots from the Washington, DC mid-Atlantic region. We are committed to the safety, growth and solidarity of hang gliding and paragliding.

Board of Directors:

President:	Lauren Tjaden	president@chgpa.org
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Secretary:	Karen Carra	secretary@chgpa.org
Flight Director:	Ralph Sickinger	flight_director@chgpa.org
Director at Large:	Matthew Graham	datlarge@chgpa.org

Skyline Editor: Ralph Sickinger skyline@chgpa.org

Web Master: Mark Cavanaugh webdev@chgpa.org

USHGA Chapter #33
15914B Shady Grove Rd.
#L-197
Gaithersburg, MD
20877-1315

www.chgpa.org

Prez Sez ~ by Lauren Tjaden

The Sky Goddess Sez

It's spring. Yeeoow! Strong thermals, long flights, and parties with our friends are a-coming! I can see it now, those teeny tiny gliders waaayyy below me as I fly to the beach. Can't wait to do that, to feel the sand in my toes after I accomplish that huge goal. Paul can take my picture this time, and boy, I'll be grinning. Hopefully you are all dreaming as big and feel as excited as I do. That's what the sport is all about, learning and fun and playing that endlessly interesting game in the air.

But hey, while you're chasing your dreams, fly safely, huh? I'd appreciate it if you didn't go hug a tree at fifty feet up or so and scare us all to death. Or that your base tube doesn't pop apart at a bad moment. Just kinda spoils the whole day when that happens. Preflight well, write a checklist if you are the forgetful type. Visit the training hill if you need a brush-up on launches. Visit Ridgely or Manquin if you need practice on approaches. Don't launch when a tornado is coming. Theeennk.



Other stuff. Ralph had this great idea to put discount coupons for all schools in the pamphlets we give out on hang gliding, to help attract new pilots into the sport. And Paul was

reading one of the ancient Skyline newsletters and noticed at the very first meeting, they had 60 people show up. How they did it was by getting free announcements on public

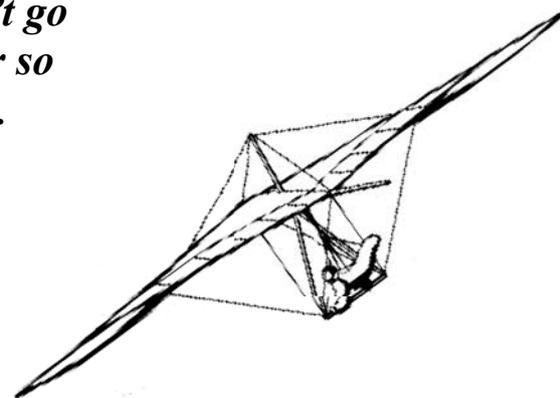
I'd appreciate it if you didn't go hug a tree at fifty feet up or so and scare us all to death.

radio. We'll try this out and see what happens. Who knows, we could sucker loads of new pilots into the sport and then elect them as officers and make them do all the work. Smart, huh?

You guys have to help think of interesting talks to give at the meetings. Do you know Dennis Pagen visited before and gave talks? Of course we need more than 10 people to come and listen if we manage something like this, but I figure that with only 4 meetings a year we can do better. Pete Schumann plans to tell us about his tree rescue kit and how to use it at our April meeting. Richard Hayes volunteered to give a talk at one of our future meetings on some of the old sites and hang gliding history of this area. We have so many skilled pilots, and we need to convince them to help educate us.

Anyhow, I can't wait for the year to start, to hear all of your ideas and about all of your milestone flights. I'm sure I'll see you all soon, and remember, spec out!

~Lauren



Yaesu VX-150 Radio...

\$135

What Goes Up... ~ by Ralph Sickinger

Wow - my first column as the club's Flight Director... how exciting! Ok, maybe not. But then, flight safety just isn't as glamorous as the thrill of flying itself. Still, it's a necessary part of what we do. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

Let's begin with why I took this job:

Historically, being the "Flight Director" has been synonymous with being the "Pulpit Fly-In Party Director", but I have a philosophical problem with this. I strongly believe that the Flight Director should be responsible for "activities which promote flight". To me, that means things like making sure that we have parachute repacks, site maintenance, training activities, flight-related seminars, and above all, promoting flight safety within the club. Which brings me to the title of my column; I would imagine that most of you, when you hear the phrase "*What goes up...*" automatically complete the unspoken part, "*must come down.*" And in reality, *that's* what my column is going to be about - coming back down; ideally in one, uninjured piece. Let's face it, we all talk about the beauty and the wonders of flying, but the one

inevitable facet of our sport is this: if you leave the ground, you ARE eventually going to return to it. Hopefully, that will be in a manner of your own choosing. And, if you think about it, all of our safety focus is centered around that fact. Why do we pre-flight a glider? To ensure that it will be able to fly until we are safely back on the ground. Why do we



carry parachutes? So that you can come back to the ground safely if something DOES happen to the glider. Years ago, I took a beginner

...the one inevitable facet of our sport is this: if you leave the ground, you ARE eventually going to return to it.

lesson in rollerblading. My instructor welcomed the class by telling us that people don't take rollerblading lessons to learn how to *go*, they take

lessons to learn how to *stop*. He also told us that everyone starts out already knowing 3 basic stops: the face-plant, the butt-plant, and the immovable-object stop. You can extend this philosophy to hang gliding - a lot of what we learn isn't geared to helping us fly, it's geared around making sure that we can land. The 3 basic landings still apply too, though I strongly recommend *against* the immovable-object landing. Especially if that immovable-object is called "Earth".

So here are my goals for the year: as Flight Director I want to focus on flight-safety issues for the club. I plan to run the landing contest again, but hopefully with a few more prizes available and a longer time frame (*since I can announce the rules in this issue of Skyline*). I plan to organize at least one parachute packing day, and at least one site maintenance day. I'll also be doing my best to support Matthew in site improvements at the Pulpit. I'd also like to collect flying data and incident reports, so I can try to measure how safely we, as a club, are flying. My one hope is that I'll be able to make a difference. In the meantime, I wish you all this: may you spend many hours soaring with the birds, and may you land upon the earth as gently as their feathers.



Helmet & glider wiring for in-flight communications...

\$65

Blowback at High Rock

~ by Brian Vant-Hull

Back when gliders were slower and weather information was patchier, the phenomenon called "blowback" was fairly common. Pilots would launch into decent conditions, the winds would strengthen and people would end up in the trees. This was not viewed as abnormal and folks generally dealt with it in a safe manner. The modern pilot doesn't expect the wind to increase more than about 10 mph above the forecast, which most gliders can handle. In my case it finally did happen, and I was fortunate to have some historical wisdom to draw upon, even if I chose to ignore (*and thereby relearn at great cost*) some of the most crucial lessons.

Forecasts were calling 10-15 at 2 PM decreasing to 10 mph by evening. We showed up about 1:30 and found winds blowing 15-20. After watching it for a while the breaks between the gusts began to widen and the average speed was definitely diminishing. I started to set up and others followed suit. By 3:30 the average speed was less than 15 without too much spread about the average, though it was crossing strongly from the north. I launched, went up immediately, and though stronger than average had no problems with penetration, so called down that it seemed okay to me.

The lift extended fairly far out in the valley, so I spent most of my time upwind and out from the ridge. As conditions seemed to be increasing I moved further upwind and out. Finally I overflew launch and shouted down that it was definitely getting strong. (*I was carrying my radio as always, but with all the cold*

weather gear the finger tab was just one more nuisance I didn't feel like dealing with). I worked my way back upwind and from an altitude of about 500 feet above launch made an attempt for the LZ. When I reached the railroad tracks the proposition seemed somewhat iffy: there was still some lift, but as I would descend towards the field the lift would decrease even as the headwind decreased, and I judged the two factors might cancel out. My flight angle showed the LZ neither rising or falling in my field of view. I decided to retreat back to the ridge to gain more altitude for another attempt.

My return to the ridge coincided with a dramatic increase in the winds, and even with the bar stuffed to my waist I found myself flying backwards. There was no option of going over the back, and if I had added enough speed to keep me in the lift zone I would have descended too fast to even think about what was happening. I eased up on the speed slightly and resigned myself to a tree landing. My position upwind of the LZ put me far to the right of launch, and I had to drift further back while crabbing closer to launch. But before I could fine-tune my landing position I had sunk into the turbulent layer, and it was all I could do just to keep the glider level. All that stuff you read about choosing a nice bushy tree, flaring into it...well, sometimes what you read is hooey. I was riding a bronco, and have to say I got rather lucky. The glider was at about a 30 degree bank when I hit, but the landing was still soft, and when I looked around I found a nice trunk within arm's reach. I

pulled myself over, got a good footing, located my hook knife and cut myself loose before a gust could pull me away.

Having deposited Brian safely for the time in a tree, let's go back and examine the flying decisions, to see if the flight itself could have been done differently.

The forecasts certainly did not indicate an increase in winds for this period, but all those that were checked before the flight were surface forecasts. The difference between the winds at Smithsburg and the Rock was dramatic, leading Allen Sparks to suggest that the upper and lower winds were behaving very differently. A check of upper level winds may have indicated a possible danger. I haven't checked up on this idea yet, but it seems likely. Of course, the forecasts could have been plain wrong as well.

In normal headwind conditions if the LZ remains stable in your field of view at a decent angle (*I estimate I was at about a 2:1 glide when I gave up, assuming I pointed the nose perpendicular to the ridge and let the cross carry me in*) then as you continue the slackening headwind should allow you to make the field easily. Perhaps I should have continued my first attempt instead of giving up at the railroad tracks. But after I turned around, the winds had already increased dramatically by the time I reached the ridge. I would never have made the LZ. I have to conclude that unless I had made a beeline straight to the LZ shortly after launching, my flight was doomed.

Could I have placed myself closer to

Application & Exam fees for FCC
Technician Class license...

\$15

launch in order to expedite the rescue? Most likely if I had placed myself in tree landing mode as soon as I realized I was being blown backwards I could have moved myself a little closer to launch. Something to keep in mind next time.

So let's return to Brian waving gently in the breeze in his tree. What should he have done next? Clearly he should have surveyed the area with great care, getting a fix on roads and landmarks to help out the rescue effort. Establishing radio contact while still safely in the tree would have been a good idea. If a GPS was along, help probably could have arrived within a matter of minutes, but he doesn't normally carry one unless anticipating an XC flight. Once help arrived, he could have attached a stick to the roll of dental floss he always carries in his harness, lowering a string to which a rope could be attached. If long enough, the rope could be used to lower him all the way to the ground, if not, it could be used as a tie-off to prevent falls as he climbed down. If there's no chance of help coming, he could at least have shed his harness (*though keeping the helmet!*) in order to make for an easier climb down.

I of course was aware of all these possibilities but did none of them. In one of the supreme moments of asininity in a lifetime marked with such moments, I briefly surveyed my tree, decided I could handle it, shrugged my shoulders, and started the descent. I had completely forgotten about the harness. I was aware that the vast majority of injuries occurring during tree landing episodes are the result of the pilot deciding to climb down under his own steam. Didn't slow me down at all. Below me was about 8 feet of trunk with no branches, and a bit of

curvature before the next set of footholds. My plan was to wrap myself around the trunk and slide down.

It started off okay, followed almost immediately by the sensation of falling. I think once I picked up speed (*my winter clothes and harness not providing the friction I'm used to*) the curve swung me around to the low side and peeled me right off. I had enough time after I realized I was falling to formulate the complete thought: "Oh no!" before I hit. I remember that "Oh no!" very clearly: especially the tone. It was equivalent to the feeling you get when you've gotten on the plane to Australia and suddenly remember you've left the oven on. Exactly that rueful/anxious type of "Oh no!"

My injuries tell me I must have hit in the sequence of feet, hips, back; but all I remember is flopping on my back. I never lost consciousness, thanks to an old helmet that will be retired with all the reverence and dignity it deserves. I lay on my back several minutes letting the reality of the situation sink in. I felt pain in my back, but no-where else. I carefully went through and wiggled each of my body parts, then reached around and finally pulled out my radio. I made several attempts at contact with no answer, then left it on as I unbuckled and unzipped my harness. Finally Karen came on the radio, and I gave the best approximation to my location relative to the towers and launch that I could recollect. Then I waited and listened to the search.

They sent cars up and down the roads honking, but I only heard the horns in the distance. (*Hindsight is a bitch: I was lying with my ears level to the snow. When I thought the horn was a mile*

away, it was actually less than 100 yards downhill. Much of what follows could have been avoided.) I continued to wiggle body parts and wait, shouting occasionally. I'm not really clear how much time had passed, but about half an hour before sunset I decided my back pain was due to muscles only, and slid backwards to pull my legs out of the harness. This was when Matthew asked me if they should call out the search and rescue. I said I thought I had no spinal injuries and would try to walk downhill to a road. I used a tree trunk to help myself sit up. Karen was protesting the idea of my trying to move, but I had spotted some orange streamers and said I would head for them.

I worked my way up and staggered from tree to tree. When I reached the streamers I saw the road downhill, and staggered towards it. At just this time the military police drove by, stopped and asked me if I was the downed pilot, and took me back to launch. I got into Matt and Karen's truck to keep warm. Turns out people had started parts of the search from where I was picked up, but had headed downhill instead of uphill. Figures. Cavanaugh went to retrieve my harness. Eventually an ambulance showed up. They were helpful, but seemed a little bemused when I denied service. I felt I was in a vehicle that could already get me to a hospital, so why climb into a more expensive one when my life's no longer in danger? They gave us directions to the Waynesboro hospital and left.

So the cavalcade sets off for Waynesboro, minus Sparky who had to go retrieve a kid who was standing out in the cold waiting to be picked up. Strong shoul-

Calling Kinsley to tell him that you're
500 feet higher than he is...

Priceless.

ders on each side to help me up the steps to the emergency room. We went up to one glass window and was told it was the wrong one, go to the one 2 feet over. I remember thinking "I've been blown backwards, my glider's stuck in a tree next to the one I just fell out of, my back's killing me after walking out when my rescuers couldn't find me and...and...you want me to fill out some PAPERWORK?!!" I seem to remember they had a stool to sit on. A guy's searching for his wallet while bleeding to death, the least they could provide would be a nice padded swivel chair.

They x-rayed me and CAT-scanned me, determining I had a compression fracture to the L-2 vertebrate (*standard climber's injury*) and a fractured bone internal to my left foot. My right foot was the one in pain, not my left one. I tried explaining that they had the wrong foot, but one of the doctors started squeezing my left foot while I irritably explained that was the wrong foot, until I yelled "Ouch!". She broke out in a dazzling smile: "What do you know, right where the x-ray showed it!". They wrapped up my left foot and I was left staring at my throbbing, abandoned right foot. The damn thing still hurts as I write this. Tendons and bruises get no respect.

They decided my vertebrate was a threat to my spinal chord, so strapped me down to a backboard. Literally a board. Now if the purpose is to give support, I have to wonder what kind of threat would be posed by adding a half inch of rubber. The damn thing hurt, and it was my home for the next four hours. The hang gliding crew was allowed to filter in and listen to me fuss and moan about my back board as the doctors called around

to find a hospital with a neurosurgeon on call. They decided on the UMD shock trauma center in Baltimore, and when the guys left the word was an ambulance would take me there. The thought of riding an ambulance on that backboard set my teeth on edge, but then I heard they would have to send one up from Baltimore. Black despair.

Fortunately they sent a helicopter instead. I've always wanted to ride a helicopter, but strapped on a backboard with your head immobilized by blocks of foam, all I could do is glare at some dials on the roof that wouldn't even bounce around interestingly. What a crock. When I arrived at Baltimore I was greeted by "there's a familiar face!" and it looked to be one of the nurses from Waynesboro. And when one of the young doctors came to talk to me, I could've sworn it was the same one who examined my foot. I was in no shape to process teleporting medical staff and have made no further inquiries along these lines.

Eventually a rakish doctor in a blue bandanna came up and introduced himself as the neurosurgeon. I had a choice: I could wear braces for 5 or 6 months but never have quite the same back I had before, or they could operate and I'd be mobile in a few weeks and completely recovered in a couple months. Yep, that was a mind bender alright. Less than two hours later I was wheeled into surgery. Anesthesia has come a long way since I had my tonsils out, when I remember gas masks and pricks on the arm, waking up with a funny taste in your mouth that took hours to dissipate. This time a group of anesthesiologists introduced themselves to me, then stood around my bed smiling.

Suddenly I woke up in the recovery room, feeling fine.

I was sent up to recuperate in the shock trauma ward, which as part of the University of Maryland is also a training facility. The staff are young, self assured, and very good. I'm always more relaxed when surrounded by young people like this; it reminds me the future is one less thing to worry about.

Any true description of a hospital stay would tend towards the earthy, and so I will demur. But one incident stands out. I was on deck to be discharged and was lolling on my bed waiting for Joe McMannus to come get me when two poker faced women walked into my room. They explained they were conducting a scientific survey and understood I acquired my injury during Hang Gliding. "Now sir, would you describe this as a business or a leisure activity?" Having asked their one question and received the answer, they left as poker faced as they had entered.

Haven gone through all of this, we must return to the one big lesson: don't try to climb out of the tree without assistance. History tells us this, as does common sense. I'm a very accomplished tree climber, but I'd like to thank Ralph for pointing out that up to now every tree I've climbed down, I've first climbed up. I was also encumbered by my harness. Finally, a tree landing is not a normal experience, so what makes you think you'll be in the best mental state to process the information needed to climb down safely? Always carry a radio, and be prepared to wait for help. Take it from me, it's worth it.



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Commentary on Amateur Radio Use

~ by Cragin Shelton

On Preserving Airwaves/Airspace for Amateur Use

Radio Frequencies are managed under a set of international treaties and conventions, and U.S. commitments and requirements are managed and enforced by the FCC, under the authority of a combination of law and federal regulation.

Aviation airspace is managed under a set of international treaties and conventions, and U.S. commitments and requirements are managed and enforced by the FAA, under the authority of a combination of law and federal regulation.

In both cases, regulation and management covers both types of use by area (frequency or geography & altitude) and by defining qualified users, some of whom must pass tests of knowledge and skill.

In the USA, amateur radio operators can use the low power CB, FRS, and 2-way FM frequencies without a government test or license, and can use GMRS with a non-test license. Licensed amateurs (HAMS), who must pass qualifying tests, can use additional frequencies and power levels.

In the USA, amateur pilots can use limited-powered and unpowered ultralight aircraft in physical areas defined by geography and altitude without a government test or license. Licensed amateurs (private pilots, and soon Sport Pilots) who must pass qualifying tests, can use additional geographic regions, and power and weight levels.

Powerful commercial interests and government programs are actively trying to reduce the allowable areas (frequency bands) available for licensed amateur use in the united states. Ham radio is an aging and dying hobby. Don't believe me? Go to any ham club and look at the average member age. The residual community includes a core membership that truly believes in the value they add to society, and are fighting back to keep their airwaves available.

There is a very active enforcement division in the FCC that patrols ham frequencies and enforces usage rules and laws. One of their monitoring sites is in Frederick MD, not far from two of our local HG sites. Active hams worry that repeated, confirmed illegal use of ham frequencies will add to the argument that

those bands are not really needed by the licensed amateur community and can be moved into commercial use. This division does not wait for a citizen complaint to monitor, charge, or enforce.

There is no active FAA division or program that proactively monitors operation of unlicensed ultralight aircraft (including HG and PG) and enforces current law and regulation. Such FAA enforcement is proactive in the licensed community, but only hits us unlicensed types when there is a citizen complaint. (*Can you say LMFP and Dragonfly, boys and girls?*)

If you want to draw parallels between radio users and pilots, we in the HG/PG/UL world are not equivalent to Hams. We are equivalent to CB and FRS users.

When we wander into the ham bands without license and without proper gear and procedures, we jeopardize the long term availability of those bands for all the licensed hams. They know that. That is why they work to enforce the laws and regulations themselves, rather than sitting back and waiting for the FCC enforcement division to do it.

When you step on the hams' toes and say it doesn't matter because you aren't really hurting anything with your puny occasional transmission, you are quite demonstrably wrong. They know it. You seem not to.

If you want to play radio like you play pilot, stop using the ham and business bands, and go back to using only CB, FRS, and Wal-Mart toy walkie talkies.

If you want to do your part to be sure we will continue to have the more useful ham and USHGA frequencies available, get a license, get a proper radio for the bands you use, and follow the required procedures in those bands.

You know what? When I re-read the above, the parallel of bandit radio use affecting hams as equivalent to obnoxious PPG use affecting HG/PG pilots got even clearer to me!



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Site Acquisition 101

~ by Richard Hays

The Maryland Hang Gliding Association and the Capitol Hang Gliding Association have toiled in years past to address these issues. A little known fact is that there is a law on the books in Maryland, Va. and Pa. that virtually eliminates landowner liability IF the landowner has granted permission for the use of the land (without charging a fee) for recreational purposes. The wording SPECIFICALLY includes "hang gliding". This was due to the efforts of Skip Rifkin back in the early 80's. For more information about it, contact Christy Huddle and/or Matthew Graham who know how to access the info. Matthew helped me out about a year ago with this stuff.

In addition to the forementioned, there is always the USHGA Liability insurance that covers third party liability. And....a worthy site can be added to the master policy as an additional layering of insurance coverage for the "third party" aka landowner.

But...when approaching a new prospect, don't get bogged down in the semantics of laws and lawsuits. Approach in a non-threatening way with your best "good ol' boy" face if in a rural setting, and maybe with a business suit in a urban setting. But...always have your glider atop your vehicle, your USHGA card with you to provide proof of insurance (just in case it gets to that point) and a copy of hanggliding magazine.

Now this may sound sexist but....I have had success approaching new sites with the company of a female pilot, wife or girlfriend in tow. Seems less threatening that way (women rule the world). I usually start off by saying "Hi...my name is Rich Hays and I fly hanggliders and boy... you sure have a wonderful hill and I was wondering if we could possibly fly it sometime. I belong to a local club and we're always looking for places to fly and gee....your hill is absolutely perfect!" Then I try and name drop if possible...like dropping the name of some other landowners that have allowed permission to fly from their property, etc. Then explain that it wouldn't be an every day thing, that maybe only once and awhile if and when the winds permit, blah, blah, blah. Be happy, smiling and friendly. But don't overdo it too much. Then shut up and listen to the landowners concerns.

If they express concerns about Liability, pull out your USHGA card and reference the insurance coverage that EACH ONE OF US CARRIES. Explain that we're just looking for a place to practice and would gladly sign a release form. Have a blank ready to present to them. Give them a copy, along with a copy of the back of your USHGA card. If they are still waffling, then bring in the State Law issue exemption. Be prepared to present a copy of that and a list of other landowners as references. Offer your personal information and that you'll be directly responsible for the hangglider guys, etc. and that you'll monitor activities and so on.

Hopefully by then, you'll have addressed all the fears, liability issues and so on. If not, well... move on and thank them for considering. Note the location and have someone else revisit it in about a year or two. :)

On the "other" end of the spectrum, if the property is a park or public place, just go fly it. See if it draws attention. Go back again and again.

If approached, then start the aforementioned process with the appropriate entity. We flew the now defunct White Marsh, Md. site for 10+ years until development finally pushed us out. Herring run has been flown for about 15 years and no one has ever approached us. The theory here is that it's easier for some pencil-neck to say "NO" vs. "YES" so as not to be on the hook for something. Ignorance is bliss. So, sometimes its better not to ask until approached. Be your own best judge on that issue. But never do that to a farm owner, etc.

Once you do procure the site, don't gang-bang it. Start off gently. Fly it with just one or two friends for about a year or two. Then introduce other pilots more SLOWLY. That way the landowner gets used to you being there and that you and your buddies aren't a bunch of Loons. And always make sure that EVERYONE knows the rules of the site. Pick up trash. Dont' get stuck with the car. Close gates. And so on and so on.

Sites don't just magically appear. They are found by club members willing to take the time to open them.



	Qty	Total
CHGPA Flying Member \$40 (1st member)		
Family Member \$31 (each additional)		
Non-Flying Member \$25		
Site Acquisition Fund		
Site Maintenance Fund		
Make checks payable to "CHGPA".	Total:	

Please exclude me from the members-only online roster at the club website.

Do not mail me the newsletter; I will read Skyline on the web.

• All phone numbers you choose to provide will be available to members via the printed club roster. Flying membership grants privileges for The Pulpit, Bill's Hill and Fisher Road.

• Site acquisition and maintenance fund donations are tax deductible.

• If you choose not to receive the CHGPA newsletter by mail, \$12 of your membership fee is tax-deductible.

Send completed form and payment to:

Hugh McElrath
5708 39th Avenue
Hyattsville MD 20781-1715

or CHGPA
15914B Shady Grove Road,
#L-197
Gaithersburg MD 20877-1315

Congratulations to

Sunny Venesky



United States Hang Gliding Association's

Instructor of the Year!

2003

CHGPA Meeting Minutes (28 January, 2004)

Introduction:

Matthew Graham gave a short talk on how to scratch safely in light lift.

Called to order: 8:24pm

Lauren began by introducing the board.

New Faces:

Ken Swingle - New Hang 2

Andy Harra - Hang-0, couple of flights at Kitty Hawk

Old Business:

Claytonsville Landfill Hang Gliding Site - this effort was shot down by the local community board.

New Business:

Brian Vant-Hull is in the hospital after being blown behind the launch at High Rock. He landed in a tree, unhurt, but then fell out of the tree climbing down, breaking one of his vertebrae and a bone in his foot. He has since undergone surgery, and is expecting to make a full recovery.

A discussion followed on "what to do if you can't penetrate". Recommendations and options when you're having trouble penetrating:

DON'T go back to the ridge - you're likely to get pinned!

Stay calm - try moving sideways; the airspeed can vary greatly in different locations, depending on the terrain

Sometimes the wind will decrease as you get closer to the ground

If you have to go down in the trees, try to stay in front of launch - people can see you there, and it's likely to be easier to get to you.

Maintain your reference, so that you know where you are, and can describe your location accurately to other people.

Carry a whistle or other noisemaker in your harness, so people can home in on you faster.

New Ratings: Paul Tjaden has earned his Hang-4

Treasurer's Report

- Renewal forms will be e-mailed to members, already filled out, to be mailed back with checks.
- There will no longer be an option for joint CHGPA/MHGA membership, as current MHGA members will be renewed automatically at no charge.

Due to the excessive amount of refreshments that were left over after the Christmas party, the host of this party (*Cragin Shelton*) declined to be reimbursed for party experiences, as he had more left over than he had started with.

Paul Tjaden received a \$5 voucher off of his USHGA membership for submitting an accident report on his landing at the Pulpit. Paul opined that incident reports are extremely valuable, and that we, as a club, should be more active in submitting them.

On-line site guide - Scott Wilkenson has offered/suggested putting the site-guide online in electronic format, possibly in password-protected restricted access.

Motion: Scott Wilkenson is directed to put together a plan for what he intends to do, and his intended approach, to be published in the Newsletter, and voted on at the next club meeting. (PASSED)

Richard Alexander has volunteered to take the lead on putting together a hang gliding simulator.

Pulpit PG launch - We can get fill dirt for \$100 a truck load; there IS interest in developing this launch area.

Motion: approve \$1500 for site improvements to the Pulpit in order to develop the PG launch. (No Vote)

Action: (Matthew) We need a detailed plan on what will be done.

Pulpit Ramp (Left) - The old ramp needs to be improved.

Action: (Matthew) Will find someone to look at the old ramp, and develop a plan for improving it.

Amateur Radio Operators out West have filed complaints with the FCC about hang glider pilots broadcasting illegally. It is very important that we all have Ham Licenses, and follow FCC protocols.

Annual Awards were given out.

Elections of New Officers were held. New officers are:

President - Lauren Tjaden

Treasurer - Hugh McElrath

Flight Director - Ralph Sickinger

Secretary - Karen Carra

Director At Large - Matthew Graham

Pulpit Treasurer - David Bodner

Skyline Editor - Ralph Sickinger

Adjourned at: 10:20pm

Agenda for the April CHGPA Meeting:

- Pete Schumann's Tree Kit Seminar
- Establishing a mechanism for conducting club business on-line
- Making sure that members have up-to-date e-mail addresses
- Improving/Rebuilding the left Pulpit ramp
- Establishing a PG Launch at the Pulpit
- The club needs someone to be in charge of selling T-Shirts
- Buying an LZ for the Pulpit
- What to do with Dave Green's DVD library of past Skyline issues

CHGPA Landing Contest

It seems as though the one thing that tends to motivate us more than anything else is competition. That being the case, I thought that a little friendly competition involving one of our most important flying skills (*landing!*) might give us all a little incentive to better ourselves. Last year, for the first time, I actually kept track of my good-landing percentage. It was less than 60%!! Not even a passing grade, and that's with a Falcon! (*Which I ought to be able to land blindfolded.*) I think that the ability to land safely, and with consistency, is very important, and it's amazing how quickly that skill degrades without regular practice. So, with that in mind, I thought that a contest with real money up for grabs might make a difference! There's two reasons that I think that this will help: first, I'm hoping that it will motivate people to spend more time practicing; either on the training hill, or at the flight parks, with pattern and/or truck tows. The other reason has to do with benchmarking and metrics; in order to improve, you have to be able to quantify where you're at, so you can tell if you're getting better or not. My thought is that by participating in the contest, people will start tracking their own landing statistics, and possibly learning from it. Keeping track of my own statistics last year was certainly an eye-opener for me!

So, how does this work? The official rules are below, but here's the simple version: the goal is to improve landings that occur after normal flying; I've found that landings after I've been flying for 30 minutes or more are significantly worse than landing after a sled ride. I'm going to allow landings at tow parks, as long as you're doing "normal" flying, and not "practicing". That means doing a full aero-tow. It also means that, if you tow more than once, only the first two flights count. The reason for this is: the hardest landing to make is when you're "cold"; you show up, you fly, and then you land. If you've already flown the same place a few times, you start getting used to the field and the conditions, and making a good landing is considerably easier. It's good practice, but that's not the point of this contest. I'll be handicapping gliders as well; because of the extra difficulty involved in landing a topless glider, those pilots will be given an extra 5% in their score. Conversely, single-surface gliders will suffer a handicap of -5% on their score.

Last, because we're doing this on the honor system, you will have to log all of your flights (*whether they are eligible for the contest or not*) in order to win. A sample log page is available online at <http://skyline.chgpa.org>, which can be photocopied and punched, and then stored in an 8"x5" mini 3-ring binder, available at Staples. Alternatively, you can e-mail me after each flying day with your results, and I will be happy to keep your stats for you. I encourage everyone to submit their stats on a regular basis, so I can maintain an active "leader board" for the club!

I hope that this will be a fun challenge for everyone in the club, and I look forward to seeing lots of good landings this summer.

OFFICIAL RULES

- 1) This contest is open to all members of the Capital Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association.
- 2) This contest will run from April 30, 2004 through October 31, 2004.
- 3) Scoring will be calculated based on the number of good, eligible landings, divided by the total number of eligible landings.
- 4) A landing is considered "eligible" if:
 - a: the pilot launched from a region 9 mountain site, or towed from any region 9 flight park.
 - b: if towed, the pilot must achieve a maximum flight altitude of at least 2000' AGL, OR have a flight duration greater than 25 minutes.
 - c: only the first two flights in any given day are eligible for the competition.
- 5) A landing is considered "good" if:
 - a: The pilot must land on his/her feet;
 - b: The control-frame of the glider may not touch the ground during the landing;
 - c: The leading-edge of the glider may not touch the ground during the landing;
 - d: The glider may not be damaged during the landing;
 - e: The landing is considered finished when the pilot has either held the glider in place for 3 full seconds (with both feet on the ground) OR the pilot has carried the glider at a walking pace at least 30 feet from the touchdown point.
- 6) The pilot must log ALL flights in Region 9 during the contest, whether they are eligible landings or not. Log entries must contain the following information:
 - Date
 - Site
 - Glider type
 - Number of flights
 - Landing result for each flight (good or bad)
 - For eligible tow flights, max altitude and/or flight duration must be included as well.
- 7) Pilots will be scored on ALL eligible landings made within the contest time frame.
- 8) Pilots must have at least 20 landings. Pilots with fewer than 20 landings will be scored as though the remaining landings were evenly split between good and bad. (i.e: a pilot with 16 landings, 12 of them good, would be scored as 14/20, or 70%)
- 9) Landings made with topless gliders will be scored an additional 5% for each good landing. Landings made with single-surface gliders will be handicapped by subtracting 5% points for each good landing. Paraglider landings are **not** eligible for this contest.
- 10) Prizes: To Be Announced



Announcements

CHGPA email list for Club Business

The club's email listserv is a great way to share flying stories and have free-for-all discussions. But it does have a couple of limitations:

- Not all CHGPA members are on the list.
- Many members (myself included) use the website version of the listserv and access it infrequently. And/or perhaps only in digest mode.

Why does this matter? Occasionally, there is a need to distribute important information to all club members in as timely and reliable a manner as possible.

For example, think back to last year when High Rock was under a continually-renewed TFR, when pilots had to follow special procedures to fly under the waiver which Joe Gregor worked so hard to obtain.

Given that both club meetings and the newsletter are now quarterly, we need a method to communicate very important issues (*such as the High Rock TFR*) to all members, ASAP.

We propose to do this by creating a new, non-public, member-only, **announcement-only**, mailing list. Only club officers will be able to send messages using

this list. Discussions/flammewars/etc will not be possible.

If you have opted out of the general club listserv because you find it annoying... don't worry, the "business-only" list will be used rarely, and only for topics that truly matter to every member.

If you've opted out of the general club listserv because of concerns about keeping your email address private... don't worry, this list will not be public. It won't be possible to obtain the addresses of those who are on it.

When you renew your membership, we ask that you provide an email address at which they would like to receive club-business announcements. Ideally, it should be an address that you use on a frequent basis.

It could be the same as the address you use to receive messages to the general club listserv. Or it could be a completely different address. That's up to you.

And, of course, you do not *have* to provide an e-mail address for this business-only list. But please be aware that by doing so, you will possibly miss out on important club issues.

~Mark Cavanaugh

New Film Project

Notice:

I would like to warn everyone that I'll be working on a new film project this Spring which will include bugging people with my camera, and getting waivers signed for permission to air the resulting shots. If there is anybody that doesn't want to be involved, PLEASE let me know. Many thanks to Jim Rooney who helped me find a small remote lens which I will use when attempting to film from my glider. (*It worked on my bicycle.*)

Well, what a year 2004 has been so far. New Years Day I had my first flight at High-Rock. An amazing 10 minute extended sled. Since then I've been shoveling snow, cutting firewood, and mostly hiking on weekends.

~Rich Alexander



Wing Things

UP Axis 13

(1989) Nice looking, very tight glider.
Hook-in weight 125# - 210#
Very good condition; not flown in over 6 years.
Hang III rating required.
Cocoon harness with parachute, for pilot up to 5'9".
\$600 for the glider, \$300 for the harness & chute,
or \$800 for both.

Mark Wallner 301.283.6275 e: wallnerme@ih.navy.mil

Moyes Xtralite 147

Very good condition, \$800.00

Kelvin Pierce, 703.946.0583 or 703.255.1297

(Continued from page 2)

Now at this point, there just may be one or two of you out there, wondering how you can help. First, open your minds. Take a look around, and ask yourself: *What can I (myself) or we (as a club) do that will...*

- ...be an improvement?
- ...help the club run more efficiently?
- ...attract more pilots to the sport?
- ...make a difference?

It doesn't have to be a big effort; start with something small, like not standing in the way of other people who are trying to get something done. Try to be *encouraging*, not *discouraging*. Then, get involved. Yes, we all want the opportunity to spend time in the air. But that doesn't just happen by itself. It takes a lot of work to keep our flying sites open and properly maintained, to keep our legal paperwork in order, to keep our members informed of important news, and to maintain a positive image for our sport in the general public's eye. It isn't fair or reasonable to expect a few individuals to handle that load by themselves, while everyone else gets to go out and play. Support the board; it's a thankless job, and the people who volunteer to do it deserve a little help.

For my part, my goal is to be more involved as the club's Flight Director (see my other column, "What Goes Up", on page 4). Unfortunately, I just don't have the time or the energy to take care of both positions. And, if I can only do one of them, I feel that I should go with the one that will be most beneficial to the club. Accordingly, I must resign my post as editor of the newsletter. The fact is, that I don't believe that there is any utility in having a newsletter anymore. It's becoming harder and harder to come up with worthwhile content, even with only 4 issues a year. Any news items worth reporting appear on the listserver long before they can be formally published in the newsletter. Important information can be broadcast more efficiently via e-mail. How-to and educational pieces can be posted on the website, where they are more readily available for future pilots. I've heard all of the arguments for having a paper newsletter, but when compared against all of these other options, the benefits are minimal. Which is not to say that there aren't *any* benefits, but the newsletter is expensive, and I think that money can be better spent elsewhere. In any case, I've had a good run. I've produced 18 newsletters. Along the way I've written 19 columns, 6 feature articles, and produced 5 special center layouts. It's been at times both fun and heartbreaking, both stressful and rewarding. But despite the fact that it's been a thrilling experience, as the editor of Skyline, it's time for me to say good-bye...



As a prisoner longs for freedom, a distant murky dream, I too long for the Spring. March 10th has rung in my head all Winter. At first a painful thought as it marked a far spot on the horizon, a mirage in the cold desert of winter, but now, just more than a week away the mirage is turning real. I can hear the water flow, the palm trees rustling. I can almost taste the fresh pineapple. The pain has become hope. I run to it now, my face parched, the sun scalding my back, tears welling up in my eyes. Oh joy, oh bliss, oh Spring!

~Jim Rooney

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(Steve Wendt)

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e: blueskyhg@yahoo.com

Minutes from Richmond, home of Blue Sky hang gliding school and Manquin AT. Quality instruction, sewing and repairs. Scooter tow, truck tow, aerotow and foot launch lessons. Dealer for Wills Wing, Moyes, US Aeros, Mosquito and Doodlebug powered harnesses. A full line of custom accessories are available. Camp, golf and fly. Paragliding towing also available.

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(Sunny Venesky & Adam Elchin)

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www.aerosports.net

Offers tandem instruction, solo aerotows, and equipment sales and service for Aeros, Airwave, Moyes, Wills Wing, High Energy, Flytec, Brauniger and more. For more information, please visit our website.

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(John Middleton)

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**Capital Hang Gliding and
Paragliding Association**

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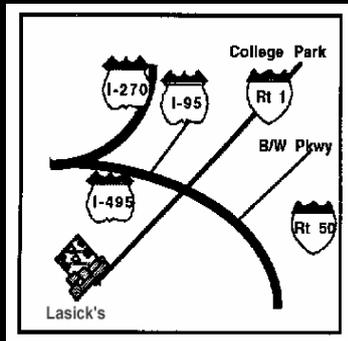
**Next CHGPA meeting will be held:
April 28, 2003**

Meetings are held downstairs at: Lasick's Beef House

Directions: 0.8 mile inside the beltway on Route 1 South,
just past the Super 8 Motel (College Park exit off I-495).

Note: If coming from points north on I-95, at the
Capital Beltway stay right at the split and then take
the immediate left exit to
Route 1 South, College
Park.

Lasick's Beef House
9128 Baltimore Blvd.
College Park MD 20740
(301) 441-2040



SPRING '04



The Future of our Sport (Kite Festival) ~ Photo by Ralph Sickinger