

Skyline



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Capital Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association

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Mark Cavanaugh checks out the scenery at High Rock

Pre-Flight ~ by Scott Wilkinson

Summer seemed endless as a kid. It's shorter now, but to me each day follows a lengthening curve toward that most beautiful time: summer evenings. The sun seems to slow in the evening sky, and grants relief from the punishing heat of the day. Though I haven't experienced it yet, I can't imagine a more beautiful time to fly than a summer evening. Many times I've hiked in the evening to a favorite rock tower in George Washington National Forest. There I'd sit, watching the shadows lengthen as the tops of the clouds evolve from blazing white to a dusky orange, and finally to a purple-gray that fades into the atmosphere. I've often imagined soaring over those mountains, ignoring in my fantasy the absence of landing zones in the thickly wooded valleys. At other times I've flown vicariously through my radio-controlled glider, just a silhouette against the sunset from the Blue Ridge mountains.

I hope to experience that flight sometime this summer. It's been a year since I began training to be a hang glider pilot. It all started from a chance encounter with local pilot Gary Smith on Skyline Drive. He was flying his model glider from an overlook, and I noticed a hang glider on

his truck. We struck up a conversation, and Gary described his experience learning to fly. After years of whitewater kayaking, I thought, time for a new sport. I could do this!

Soaring flight is an extraordinary thing. It is unique, along with sailing,



surfing, and whitewater boating, as one of the only pursuits that involve a close relationship with the most dynamic forces of nature: air and water. I would argue that even gravity sports such as skiing don't compare, because gravity is constant. It doesn't let you float one moment and slam you down the next. You can always predict its effects. When immersed in flowing water or the atmosphere, you're in a kind of dance with a partner who, like

it or not, ultimately cares nothing of you and would gladly kill you in a heartbeat. That's a sobering thought, yet is also the source of immense joy when your partner is in a generous mood.

The dangers inherent to flight were vivid in the near past with the deaths of pilots some knew well. There were also serious injuries to some of our own club members. I settled into a dark mood reading the detailed accident reports of Ed Reno, Terry Spencer, and Chad Elchin. For a moment, I questioned whether I really wanted to get into a sport like this. I thought of Ed Reno flying alone at The Pulpit, and

wondered how he could be so careless. Then I paused, realizing that I routinely paddle whitewater by myself. (*I just did it last night.*) Isn't that just as careless?

Familiarity breeds carelessness. Depending on your point of view, the longer you fly successfully, the more you begin to think that either your time is coming...or that you're so good

(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.

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Prez Sez ~ by Lauren Tjaden

The Sky Goddess Sez

I sat amid piles of cardboard boxes, and searched for the Magic Marker. The phone interrupted me. Would I be interested in refinancing my home? I slammed down the phone, but it immediately rang again. I snarled into the receiver, but this time it was a call from one of our clients, who wished for her horse's blankets to be cleaned and shipped back to Maine. I moderated my tone and scrawled a note to myself, then dumped the note in a pile of paper on the desk.

Paul strolled in and plunked down beside me. He told me the new owner of our place didn't want the farm equipment after all. The tractor isn't green and she wanted one that will go with the rest of the farm. Could we sell the tractor, manure spreader, hay prong, and drag in the next two weeks? Moving is always a challenge, but the disposal of equipment gathered over twenty years in the horse business made this time even more interesting.

As I packed, I wondered whether my horse, Vincent, would stick his hooves through the wire fence at the barn I had arranged to keep him until we had built a new one. I wondered if the contract we put on the house by Ridgely would win out over the one already on the house. Hmm, only 10:30, too early for a drink. I wondered how we had ended up in this position, and with a little reflection, I decided it was all John's fault.

Three years ago our good friends, John and Kathi Chambers, decided to explore a back road on the way home

from the beach. They got lost. They stumbled down remote highways, took wrong turns, and became confused. Finally, they pulled over to study their map near Ridgely airport.



Parked on the roadside, John spotted the DragonFly banked at an extreme angle overhead.

John had an interest in ultralights, and

I wondered how we had ended up in this position, and with a little reflection, I decided it was all John's fault.

he veered onto Racetrack Road to investigate. He met Chad. Chad took John for a flight in the yellow tug plane, but another, more important event occurred: Chad convinced John to take a tandem hang glider ride.

I will never forget the call Paul and I received in the Wichita Airport, where we waited for a late flight back to our home in Virginia. John was an experienced pilot, who had flown sail planes and Airbuses and home-builts, but he said that hang gliding was the most bird-like type of flight he had ever tried. That instant, we made a date to try it.

On a mini-vacation, I was introduced to hang gliding. I had doubts about it. First, I had always been terrified of flying, even in the biggest jet. Besides, hang gliding was the most impractical sport I had ever seen. You had to wait for the wind, wait for the weather, and you had to have an airplane to tow you or be willing to sprint off of a mountain, which was clearly out of the question. Lastly, I had little aptitude for the sport. The runway looked as narrow as a straw from altitude, and I was dyslexic, often confused. I strained even Chad's patience.

But I loved our new friends, and the sheer beauty of being in the air overwhelmed me. One evening Sunny had me guide the glider with my eyes closed. When I opened them, I could see the Chesapeake Bay glitter below, and I viewed a vulture from the top-side.

This was only the beginning of the addiction. Hang gliding has become much more than a hobby to enjoy once or twice a week. It has led me to reexamine all of my priorities and what I really want to do with my life, to question what risk is worth-

while and which is not, about what is most important. It has led to this grand new adventure, where Paul and I have sold our farm and business so hopefully we will have more time to enjoy ourselves, and yes, to fly. So we will see where it leads us next. So far, it has been one hell of a ride.

Until next time...

~Lauren



What Goes Up... ~ by Ralph Sickinger

Yesterday was a beautiful day at High Rock; I still think that view is just spectacular! While not as magical as Woodstock perhaps, it is still breathtaking in it's own way. I would have liked to have launched a little earlier, but delayed my own take-off in order to take pictures of Kelvin and his little girl, on her first HG flight. I couldn't pass-up the opportunity to shoot such a special occasion, and, even though conditions had shut down by the time I launched (resulting in a 5 minute sled ride), I'm not sorry in the least. Down in the LZ, it took me a while to get my glider packed up, and when I finally finished, several pilots were looking for transport back to the top. I recently rebuilt my rack, with a new sturdier design, that should be capable of handling an additional 3 or 4 gliders (in addition to my own), and was more than happy to test that theory. The rack worked perfectly, and I was able to give Mark Cavanaugh, Rick Holts, and Carlos Weill a lift to the top. We then headed out to the Rock to watch the sun go down. As we stood their enjoying the view Mark elected to repay me for the ride up by pointing out how nicely the streamers were blowing in, and gee, it wouldn't take that long to set up the Falcon for another flight. (Rick asked if this was what they meant by "peer pressure"; I told him, no, in the hang gliding community this is called "encouragement".) I finally decided to go for it, which meant I had to sweet-talk Maria into driving my truck down the mountain for a second time. She knows how to drive a stick, at least at a minimal level, but she pretty much hates it. Still, she recognized the look in my eyes, and knew

that I was committed. (Or at least ought to be.) Mark and Carlos helped me set the Falcon up, and as I was just about to climb into my harness, the MPs came by to kick everyone out so they could close the gate. I asked them for 5 more minutes so I could launch, which they were kind enough to allow us. I wasted no time getting up to launch, but the beautiful breeze



we had seen 15 minutes earlier had already started to die off. I waited a few minutes for a good cycle, and then took off. This cycle was certainly no worse than my earlier flight, and in fact I felt much more comfort-

There is something special about launching off the mountain, when there is no one else in the sky, and you know that no one else is going to launch after you.

able. I had enough lift to maintain altitude as I returned to pass by the launch, and I followed this by making passes in zero-sink to 10fpm down for about 5 or 6 minutes. There is something special about launching off the mountain, when there is no one else in the sky, and you know that no one else is going to launch after you. As I flew back and forth, in silky smooth air, the High Rock air space was my own private playground. My new glider should be

on it's way here soon, and I've known that my time with this glider would be coming to an end, after almost 10 years together. Getting to play together, just the two of us, with the sun low on the horizon, and light getting dusky, was an indescribable pleasure. All too soon, the wind dropped off, and gravity exerted it's influence, calling us to the LZ. As I headed out, there was a hawk below me, just above the tree tops, and a little bit ahead of me, gliding in the direction of the LZ, as if escorting us on our final flight. I landed in a deserted LZ, and walked to the breakdown area, where I was able to say my last good-byes in peace, before I broke her down for the last time. I removed the hang straps; the ones that I sewed myself eight years ago, and installed at the perfect trim point, where they have remained ever since. I have so many memories, that it's hard to believe I won't be flying this glider again. I know that I will move on quickly, once I have a new glider to play with, but right this minute, it's nice to reminisce, and enjoy the memories of a decade in flight.

I know that she'll be in good hands, and that Brian will fly her to heights and distances that I have not yet been able to do, and I wish them the best of times together. For me, this was an incredibly special way to end my time with her.

Farewell, my Love...



Flying Injuries (Stay in Shape and Avoid Them)

In flight, hang gliding and paragliding are not cardiovascular sports. But they can still exert isometric stress on our bodies. This kind of stress often appears slowly, and sometimes we don't even notice it until we're back on the ground. As with any sport, regular conditioning can make a big difference in our comfort level and abilities. We asked the professionals at Sport & Spine Rehab in Alexandria, Virginia for some advice. Here's what they had to say...

Common movements involved in hang gliding and paragliding, such as shifting from side to side, may cause muscle fatigue on the pectorals, the back muscles and muscles of the shoulder region. Resistance exercises can minimize injury because they enhance muscle performance, increase the strength of connective tissues, create greater bone mineral density (or prevent bone demineralization), decrease stress on joints during physical activity, reduce risk of soft tissue injury, enhance physical performance, and cause positive neural changes.

These neural changes involve the recruitment of additional muscle fibers. This translates into an increase in the force of the muscle contraction. Neural changes also include an increased rate and synchronization of firing, and enhanced kinesthetic awareness of muscles and joints, making the movements more fluid and coordinated. This is important because the muscles will be better prepared to react to abnormal movement and make the necessary corrections to muscle and joint position that decrease the likelihood of injury.

Another way to reduce the risk of serious injury is through stretching. Stretching is an intervention used to lengthen soft tissue to increase range of motion in the joints. Having com-

plete range of motion is essential to enhance the proprioceptive capabilities of a joint. In addition, increasing muscle and tendon length results in a potential increase in muscle power, improves dynamic balance and gives you better ability to perform small specific movements (*fine motor control*). Stretching can also reduce muscle soreness by increasing blood circulation, which in turn removes waste products such as lactic acid. Stretches should be performed before all exercise, including flights, and should include stretches for each muscle or muscle group that is used in launch, flight, and landing. As a rule, each stretch should be held 30-60 seconds and should be static in nature. Bouncing while stretching has been shown to carry a greater risk of injury than static stretching.

When deciding on a resistance program, you will need to take into consideration the type of exercise that you do and how it relates to your specific activities, the exercise intensity, the duration of your activity and the frequency. In-season it's advisable to perform exercises specific to your activity. In the off-season, cross training can be emphasized. Depending on your level of fitness and your current activity level, you can choose training that involves either maximal or submaximal effort. While everyone is different with regard to their fitness level, submaximal levels of intensity (*50-80% of your maximal effort for resistance exercises or 60-80% of your maximal heart rate for aerobic exercise*) are recommended for nearly all people, with the exception of elite athletes.

The duration and frequency of your exercise or training sessions will most likely change from week to week based on your personal time constraints or the activity you choose.

According to the the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), 20 minutes of aerobic exercise three times per week at 60-80% of your maximum heart rate is adequate to maintain cardiorespiratory fitness. The ACSM also notes that 1 set of 15 repetitions three times per week at approximately 60% of your maximal one repetition effort is sufficient for maintaining muscle strength when performing 8-12 different exercises involving large muscle groups, including squats, dead lifts, and bench presses, etc.

Warm-ups should be performed prior to exercise. Proper warm-ups facilitate the transition from rest to exercise, increase blood flow, and reduce susceptibility of soft tissue injury. The warm-up should begin with a low-intensity aerobic activity lasting 5 to 10 minutes and should be followed by stretching. Cool-down periods are also very important. The same rules that apply to warm-up activities also apply for cool down activities. When performing aerobic activity, the cool-down should involve a gradual decrease of exercise intensity until your breathing and heart rates are returned to normal. Then the appropriate muscle groups should be stretched again. The cool-down is essential because it provides appropriate circulatory and heart rate adjustments and it also helps facilitate the removal of lactic acid from muscles. Therefore, cool-downs are important to reduce next-day muscle soreness.

Working on your musculoskeletal fitness is just one thing you can do to reduce your risk of injury. Proper training and wearing the proper protective gear can further reduce the chance of injury. However, should you have an accident or become in-

(See CONDITIONING, on page 7)

**Book
Review:**

The Book of Clouds

~ by Scott Wilkinson

“The Book of Clouds”
by John A. Day
ISBN: 0-7607-3536-0
Amazon.com price: \$13.97

“Clouds and cloudscapes are the greatest free show on earth. It doesn't cost a penny to look up and feast your eyes on the view.”

~ John A. Day

Since childhood, I've loved watching clouds. I coined a phrase I've used ever since (*and now my daughter uses it*), “magic weather.” For me, magic weather is that brief but amazing time when a cold front passes through, roiling the skies, bending the trees, clearing the air... and filtering sunlight in a way that makes every object look etched upon the landscape. Many times I've pulled over while driving just to stare at the sky.

In spite of my love of clouds, I remained ignorant of their names most of my life. Then I discovered “The Book of Clouds.” This is as close to a bible for clouds as you'll ever find. Not only from the information it contains, but from the many beautiful color photographs that are a tribute to the beauty of clouds from a man who has studied them his whole life.

Author John A. Day, known simply as “The Cloudman”, has a PhD in cloud physics. He is also a graduate of the Boeing School of Aeronautics and was a weather forecaster for Pan American World Airways. While working for Pan Am, Day lived all over the world, and eventually left the company to teach meteorology at Oregon State University and Linfield College. He has a website at www.cloudman.com which includes a cloud photo gallery and (*among other things*) a concise cloud formation chart that's worth studying.

But the web aside, “The Book of Clouds” is a magnificent example of why the web will never be the same as print. The book's design is excellent, and the content is organized in a very user-friendly way. It opens with an 8-page introduction on how clouds form. This is one of the best-written explanations of the Earth's water cycle I've seen.

“When warm air with a lot of water becomes colder, some of the vapor condenses into liquid droplets,” says Day. “To understand why this happens, one needs to realize that in warm air molecules move faster, while in cold air they move slower. When warm air cools, the molecules slow down. And as a water molecule slows down, it has more of a chance to latch onto something else. Often, what it latches onto is a bit of dirt. Air is dirty. Even in pristine ecosystems, far from human activity, the atmosphere is not clean. Air everywhere is polluted with a variety of microscopic particles that can come from both natural and human sources.”

Day's writing is simple and straightforward without seeming dumbed-down. He's obviously had plenty of experience explaining the weather to general audiences.

Following the introduction comes the bulk of the book: “A Portfolio of Clouds.” The portfolio is organized into six chapters: the cumulus family (*heap*), the stratus family (*layer*), combinations of heaps and layers (*such as altocumulus*), precipitating heaps (*such as cumulonimbus*), precipitating layers (*such as nimbostratus*), an “optical” group (*including such phenomena as sun dogs and rainbows*), and an “unusual” group (*such as virga, cap clouds and mammatus*).

Within each group of clouds, the chapter is organized from lowest-altitude to highest. After a brief introduction describing each family of clouds, Day lets his photos do the talking. Page after page of expansive color images vividly illustrate many of the variations within each family. Almost all the photos were intelligently shot with a landscape or other object in the foreground for scale. Some of the photos are breathtaking---the kind of scene you'd be lucky to see once in your life.

Another really nice touch is a tab-style technical brief along the page's edge for each chapter. This is a quick, no-nonsense rundown on the specifications: Group name, Cloud name, base altitude range, top altitude range, air mass stability, buoyancy, moisture content, temperature, frontal lift, and precipitation type. You can learn a lot just from looking at this data.

The book closes with 25 pages of interesting history, such as the man who named the clouds, a British pharmacist named Luke Howard. In 1802, Howard first gave Latin names to the clouds: cumulus, stratus, cirrus, and nimbus. There are also chapters on storm clouds, weather forecasting, and a weather glossary.

If you're looking for a single book to acquire on the clouds, you can't do any better than “The Book of Clouds.” But John Day sums it up best when he says, “My knowledge of the physics of clouds and the science of meteorology has given me a great deal of satisfaction. Yet never does my soul feel so nourished as when I look up and really see the clouds---those elusive, captivating, ephemeral gifts of nature.”



Hang Glider Review:

The "Sport 2" Does It All!

~ by Scott Wilkinson

Blue Sky Flight Park in Manquin, VA was recently the lucky recipient of the very first Sport 2, the latest hang glider by Wills Wing. I talked with Steve Wendt and Tex Forrest about it. Wills Wing advertises the Sport 2 as the do-everything-glider, with performance close to their high-end wings and handling like the low-end wings.

"The Sport was introduced in the mid-80s and was the original 'do everything' glider," said Steve. "It was right in the middle, in that sweet spot. Then came the Super-sport and the Ultrasport. The Sport 2 continues that heritage. It's the perfect mid-level glider that seems to do everything right."

Tex agrees: "The Wills Wing Eagle satisfied the need for higher performance that's easy to fly, but the Eagle's performance didn't quite reach high enough for some. The Sport 2 flies as easy as the Eagle, but comes close to the U2 in performance. Where the U2 is a bit more touchy and unstable, the Sport 2 is the best of both worlds. It has a lot lighter handling than the Moyes Litesport, but is almost as fast. It fills a niche."

Compared to the Eagle, the Sport 2 has a slightly higher aspect ratio, VG (*variable geometry*) and curved wingtips. Compared to the U2, the Sport 2 has less double surface, is lighter, has an easier VG, and a looser sail with VG off. "Setup was really easy," said Steve. "It has the curved-tip planform we're familiar with from higher-performance gliders. Curved tips soften the handling a bit and provide a lot more flex out near the tips. It has typical high-quality Wills Wing hardware and many of the same features as the U2, like a streamlined basetube, cam-clip batens, and integrated wheel hubs in the basetube."

Tex flew the Sport 2 off truck tow during the middle of the day. "It tracked straight and true," he said, "and I had an effortless tow. As soon as I released, I knew I was flying something unique. It had the comfort level of an Eagle, but now that Eagle performs! I can go faster, I have better glide, like a supercharged Eagle, but with all the friendly characteristics you like."

Tex said the glider's thermalling ability was great. "Three fingers on one hand. It just locked in and I thermalled effortlessly for an hour. It had good penetration: I thermalled way over to the back corner of the field, then pulled the VG on and shot all the way across the field and lost maybe 500 feet into the wind. The VG has a nice, easy pull. It was a totally predictable wing. Some gliders are a little quirky... but this one felt like I'd flown it before." On landing the Sport 2, Tex said "From 300 feet down it landed just like an Eagle. The flare window was obvious and generous."

"The Sport 2 is that glider that so many more people can fly," said Steve. "It's the Swiss Army Knife of gliders. It does a bit of everything well. It will satisfy the performance pilot who doesn't want a Falcon or Eagle. It's not quite as high-performance as the U2, but for the majority of pilots, it's all the performance they'll ever need. It's a big jump to go from an Eagle to a U2, so the Sport 2 is an easier step up."

Tex summed up the Sport 2 with a grin: "I landed right next to Steve at the hangar. He asked what I thought, and I replied 'Steve, this may be the perfect hang glider!'"



(CONDITIONING, continued from page 5)

jured, it is essential to receive treatment as soon as possible. Waiting as little as 8 days for proper diagnosis and treatment moves the injury from an acute to sub-acute stage and can double your recovery time. Treatment should be comprehensive in nature and should address not only the symptomatic areas, but also other areas in which there are biomechanical and/or neurological deficiencies to ensure that problems don't re-occur.

Although helpful in the early stages of an acute injury, medication alone should not be the only source of treatment. RICE (*rest, ice, compression, elevation*) in acute injuries is critical to fast recovery. Icing should be done in 15 minute "on", 15 minute "off" intervals and should be done when there is pain and/or inflammation. Utilization of physical therapy modalities such as ultrasound, electrical stimulation and low level laser therapy can decrease inflammation, spasms, and pain without the negative

side effects that are associated with medications. Joint mobilization and manipulation are critical elements to improving biomechanical function of an injured area. Lastly, proprioceptive (*coordination*) exercises, strength and endurance training is your insurance policy for decreasing exacerbations and re-occurrences of injuries. Early and appropriate treatment will help you fly again in no time!



Hiking and Flying in France, 2004

~ by Christy Huddle

I finally talk Rich into going to France with me, after almost three years of nagging. The big draws for him are the promise of some airtime, good hiking, great food, cheap (*and good*) wine.

We leave May 6th on the 10:15 pm flight out of Dulles. I've never taken this late a flight before, but now that I have, it will be my practice since it allows you to try to sleep when your body is saying it's ready for rest. Also you can avoid rush hour and take advantage of the new express Metro bus (*5A - only \$2.50!*).

Upon arriving in the Charles de Gaulle airport, we almost miss the TGV (*fast train*) as I hadn't realized I would need to exchange the tickets I'd received when I purchased the Dulles-to-Lyon tickets from Air France. The conductor holds the train for me while he and Rich wait outside the car for me to run upstairs and switch tickets. Good thing getting there is half the fun.

We pick up the diesel Peugeot 205 in Lyon right as rush hour is starting, adding a few extra minutes to our escape from the city. We take the autoroute towards Grenoble, leaving it at Voiron for a trip through the Chartreuse area. We take in the snow covered southern Alps. Really snow covered. Too snow covered. Getting more snow covered. The Col du Coq pass I normally take is barré because of the snow still on the road so we take a lower pass that drops us into the east side of Grenoble. Even on this lower pass we run into falling snow. We never get to see the magnificent Dent du Crolles which I've benched up to on previous trips and normally was not covered in snow at this time of year.

The next morning (*Friday, May 7th*) Rich wakes up early and heads out on the balcony to film the snow falling around the pilot hotel in St. Hilaire du Touvet. This is home of the Coupe Icare, the crazy HG and PG costume contest held every fall. It isn't looking very promising for flying that day, so we drive over to Chambéry to take in the old town and have a real French lunch. We later learn that the snow/rain showers had stopped in time

for some students to get in their late afternoon sleds. That evening, Alain, the HG instructor at PrevoDelta, invites us over for dinner. Rich takes copies of the HG movies he's made so far which are part of the evening's entertainment. Alain shows us a video of his attempt to design and test fly a rigid wing. The guy has guts.

The next day, Rich joins the other students to take a HG flight from what I think is one of the safest launches on earth. I opt to stay earthbound and film Rich's launch. Rich is first off. He's grumbling because he's left his vario back in the room, but it doesn't matter. There is enough lift in light thermals and he is able to get over the ridge for a 30-minute flight. After all the students are off, the instructor takes me back to get my harness and a glider (*the usual Tecma Mambo*). No way I'm going to pass up soaring conditions! The Mambo is like an Eagle, but sets up a lot faster once you have it down, as there are fewer parts and the control frame is put together with pip pins. I have a fun half hour finding all the lift I need and more. Having forgotten my gloves, my hands are freezing so reluctantly I go out to land while I still have some feeling in them. I end up landing on the dirt road that lines the upwind edge of the landing field. Note: Need to remember that a Mambo does not have the glide of a LiteSpeed.

That night Rich and I join several other pilots for a fondue at a local restaurant. A great time had by all. Rich impresses us with his ability to follow along with the conversation which is, for the most part, in French. All that time he has spent on the computer with his French CDs is paying off.

Monday morning the HG cross country clinic participants and the two instructors load all the gliders and harnesses into the various vehicles that will be making the trek south to Aspres sur Buëch. At the chambres d'hôte (*B&B equivalent, but with an evening meal normally included*) in Aspres, we unload what will not be needed for flying. We head into town for lunch before continuing up to launch in Alain's big ol' Citroen. That car can

really take the bumps in stride.

Conditions on top are looking good for soaring, but probably not so great for XC. I am third off and get right up. The views of the Alps and the Buëch valley are gorgeous, so even just boating around near the ridge is a blast. I head down to the other end of the ridge where I see another class setting up their gliders for their second flight of the day. They are under an instructor based out of Laragne and, being less experienced than our group, fly outside the most thermally part of the day. Rich also soars, but after exploring the other end of the ridge, he finds some sink that ultimately puts him on deck.

After an hour, I go in to land and again find myself landing just inside the edge of the field. Gotta stop doing that. The landing field is large and immediately adjacent to the grass runways of the small airport. There is a bar/restaurant where we'd enjoyed après vol beers, but it is closed temporarily.

On Tuesday Rich elects to spend time away from all the French-speaking pilots. I recognize the symptoms, having suffered them myself the first time I lived in France. The brain just needs a break from all the work of trying to understand what's being said. He walks into town while the rest of us head back up to the launch. We get lighter thermals this time which means more work for less gain. I spend at least half my flight getting bubbles off a big quarry to the west of the landing field. After a half hour, I am on the ground, this time using a bit more of the field for my landing.

After lunch, we go back up for a second shot at it, this time to the other end of the ridge to take better advantage of the more westerly wind direction. Conditions aren't looking so great. The students from the other class are already there, setting up. We sit under their gliders during a brief shower, then set up ours. Rich puts his camera on my glider so I now have a real mission and not just a mere sled. My landing inside the bulls eye circle (*not in the center though*) is documented on film. The evening meal

lasts the usual 2-3 hours, followed by a showing of Rich's films and the new footage taken so far on the trip.

On Wednesday morning we drive down to Laragne since conditions are favoring that site. We arrive in the LZ for a north wind (*the ridge can be flown from either side*) and see all the students in the other class skying out. By the time we arrive on top, conditions have deteriorated and it is obvious we will be seeing some rain before we have time to set up and fly. We sit in the cars when the showers pass through, then eat lunch in hopes the cloud base will lift and allow us to fly. No luck. At least we eat well that night.

On Thursday morning we pack up all our stuff. The wind is supposed to be strong so we're going to a site to the east called St. Vincent les Forts, which, like Woodstock, is sheltered such that the wind speeds are less than the surrounding sites. We arrive at the LZ next to a big reservoir and I have a major case of déjà vu. I am sure this is the place Kim Rowan (*Jim's now ex-wife*) and I stumbled upon several years back when she and I had taken a 9-day whirlwind trip in France. She was a travel agent at the time and had gotten a great deal on tickets.

Up on top it is trickling in and only a couple of paragliders are in the air. The ridge is very short and the idea of sharing space with paragliders who are just over or even with the top doesn't look very attractive (*or safe*). We decide to have lunch while waiting for conditions to improve. By the time lunch is over and our gliders are set up, it's looking really iffy. The clouds are moving in from behind launch and they are getting darker and darker. Out in front it's still blue skies. For a brief moment the wind looks enough to maintain and I'm tempted to take a shot at getting up. But I'm afraid that something will move in quickly and I'll be having to deal with a turbulent landing, so I opt out. As does everyone else. Just as well, a half hour later we are rushing to bag up as the rains move in. Eh oui.

We load up the cars and Alain decides to end the XC clinic a day early. He says Friday is also looking questionable. We say our goodbyes in the local bar before heading out. Rich and I take some back roads southwest to Sisteron where we spend the night. We have to keep the bathroom door closed and the window to outside open to hold the smell down from whatever died in the shower drain. The view out the window is great though.

The next day we continue on to Aix-en-Provence, the town where I used to live. We spend three nights there, taking in the local scene (*open air markets, pétanque, shops*) and a hike in the Calanques (*like fjords, but much warmer*) between Marseille and Cassis. My hope is to stop at one of the many restaurants with seating along the dock area for the local specialty: bouillabaisse, but traffic is horrible. It is a Sunday and everyone is out to enjoy the beach scene and the outdoor dining.

I should mention that Alain, my ex-French-husband, is our host, sharing with us his tiny efficiency apartment. Generous (*now that we're not married*) to a fault, he gives up his own bed (*with the controls that raise the bed for more comfortable tv viewing*) and he cooks us three typically French meals. He's a good cook and we were appreciative diners.

On Monday we drive to St. Rémy de Provence where we enjoy a half-day walking around the castle ruins at Les Baux and spend the night in a charming hotel on the main road. I take a bunch of pictures of the crosswalks and other pedestrian improvements to show the folks in Montgomery County how to do it right. (*Which is how they do it in France and will probably never learn how to do it here.*)

On Tuesday we head east, stopping at a vineyard tasting room on our way to the Drome area. This is fast becoming my favorite spot of France - not much traffic and great hiking. It's also not far from the good flying sites of St. Hilaire and Laragne. We stay at a chambres d'hôte two nights and have a fantastic hike around Trois Becs on the full day in between.

We take a bunch of curvy back roads to Lyon on our penultimate day in France. On May 21st Air France takes us back to Dulles where we get through customs in record time and catch the same bus back to the Roslyn metro for our final trip home. The following day the ceiling of the airport collapses in the other half of the ring we were in. Quelle chance!



Gliders set up at St. Vincent



Software Review:

Fly Aware™

~ by Scott Wilkinson

Fly Aware™

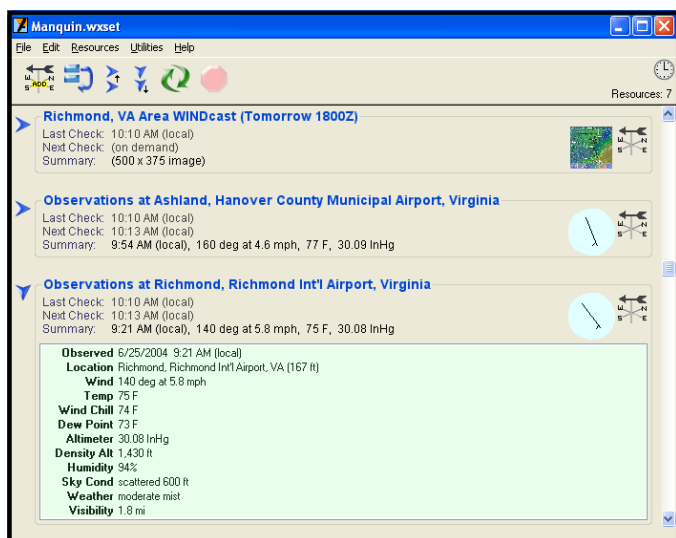
<http://www.adeptool.com>

Cost: \$19.95

Pilots are weather junkies by necessity. Our flights (*and possibly our lives*) depend on the atmosphere's behavior, and the best source for weather data is the Internet. You might regularly check just a single website for your forecasts. But if you're like most, you surf through several sites for a composite picture of the weather. Most meteorological data comes from the same government sources, but the number of websites that interpret the data may exceed the number of clouds in the sky. My web browser has a list of no less than 27 weather sites, some of which contain links to even more sites.

Fly Aware™ is an inexpensive Windows application that removes some of the clicking from online weather checks. Developed by a soaring pilot, the program automatically retrieves online weather data of your choosing and displays it in a single, user-friendly window. I downloaded the time-limited trial version and was impressed enough to fork out twenty bucks.

Fly Aware™ is based on simple concepts. A single set of data (*for example, a National Weather Service Zone Forecast*) is called a "Weather Resource." Multiple Weather Resources are grouped to form a "Weather Set." When you launch the program, it starts with a blank window. Then you open a Weather Set file, click the "Retrieve Data" button, and Fly Aware™ crawls the weather sites in your set and displays everything in a compact list. Any item in the list can then be expanded to see the details.



Fly Aware™ screen shot.

The program's developers maintain a variety of free Weather Sets on their website containing common Weather Resources such as NWS Zone Forecasts, aviation weather reports (METARS), winds aloft data, NOAA current observations, and more. I decided to build a custom Weather Set for Manquin, Virginia. I went to Adeptool's website and clicked the "Weather Resources" link, which took me to more links for resources by state and region. I chose a few for Virginia, including zone forecasts, METARs, and the Intellicast Winds graphic, and downloaded them in seconds. Finally, I opened the File menu in Fly Aware™ and clicked "New Weather Set," then clicked "Add Weather Resource" and loaded the ones I just downloaded. It might sound complicated, but trust me---as software goes, this was easy.

Once I had my Weather Set ready to go, I saved it, and from then on all I have to do is open and click "Retrieve Data." In one click I have the Richmond windcast (*at 4 times today and tomorrow*), current observations at Hanover County Airport, the latest mid-Atlantic radar, and the Hanover Zone Forecast. Pretty slick! Weather data is mostly text, so even on a dialup modem the retrieval process is fast (*with DSL it took me about 5-10 seconds*).

Fly Aware™ has several nice touches. You can create new Weather Sets by opening existing sets, then click-dragging individual resources from one window to another (*which duplicates the resource*). You can quickly create a single Weather Set containing forecasts for several flying sites...or a set with several different forecasts for a single site. Another nice touch is when data is retrieved for a Weather Set, the compact display shows a wind flag with the current speed and direction. The program also allows you to create your own custom Weather Resources by specifying the web address of any data or image online. If you have an "always on" Internet connection (*like DSL or cable*), Fly Aware™ will automatically retrieve updated data at hourly intervals. Finally, the program includes three utilities: a cloud base calculator, a thermal index calculator, and a time converter from Zulu to local.

Is this program a must-have? No. But if you regularly check several different websites before flying, this makes the process easier and faster. For \$20, it's an outstanding value. I should add that Fly Aware™ even has a bit of humor: when all your data is retrieved, the program plays a short series of climbing vario beeps. Awww, how cute! (*Yes, you can turn that off if you want.*)



Software Review:

Flight Log

~ by Scott Wilkinson

Flight Log

<http://www.jiffyloc.com/flightlog/>

Cost: Free

Several flight logging programs can be found online, but most are developed for general aviation pilots. Using these for hang gliding or paragliding is a bit overkill (*unless you really need to calculate wing loading with passengers and full tanks*). Flight Log is a gem of a Windows program at a price that's hard to beat---free. Developer Greg Lanz must either be a soaring pilot or he's listened to plenty, because this program has exactly what we need and no more. If you're a cross-country or competition pilot who uses a high-end, vario-synchronized program like Flychart, you probably won't be interested in Flight Log. But for the rest of us, it's ideal.

Once upon a time, back in the 20th century, all software was this small and good. At 1.75 megabytes, Flight Log is a quick download and install. Even the program's window is fixed at a small size, reflecting the less-is-more aesthetic. In essence, Flight Log is a database with seven screens, each easily accessed from a row of buttons across the top.

The first and primary screen is simply called Flight Log. This is the screen you'll use most often to enter data about your flights. The next three screens (Site List, Gliders, and Pilot Info) allow you to enter detailed information for each of these categories, which then appears in dropdown menus on the main Flight Log screen. For example, when you first install the program, you go to the Gliders screen and enter information about your glider(s), including name, manufacturer, model, size, serial number, etc. There are checkboxes to indicate hang glider or paraglider, and even a section for DHV/AFNOR ratings for paragliders.

Then you'd click over to the Pilot Info screen, where you enter your name, email address, phone number, USHGA number, USHGA hang glider/paraglider rating, and even your region number. Finally, the Site List screen lets you enter all the sites you fly, their locations, description and/or notes, difficulty rating, and flyable wind directions. Once you enter this data, logging flights in the main Flight Log

screen is a breeze.

The Flight Log screen has entry fields and dropdown menus for date, time, airtime, location, and glider. The Flight conditions section of the screen has a nice compass rose graphic with 16 divisions. To indicate wind direction during your flight, you simply click on the appropriate direction(s) in the rose, which highlights them. There is also a six-step turbulence indicator graphic that works the same way: just click to indicate turbulence level. Once you've

entered max lift and max sink, this is displayed graphically by a Flytec vario-style vertical indicator.

The Altitude Info section has entries for launch MSL, max MSL, landing MSL and altitude over launch. A cross-country flight section lets you enter flight distance in miles, and a popup box features GPS coordinates for launch and landing and calculates average speed from launch to landing.

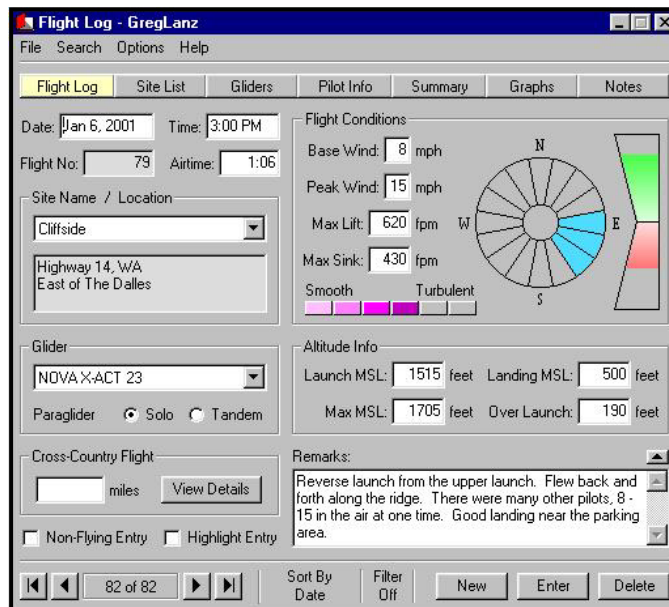
The last three screens give you a place to add general notes, as well as provide an automatic summary of your aerial feats with stats like

longest and highest flights, greatest distance, number of sites flown, and a sometimes depressing figure, "Number of days since last flight." There are even a couple of graphs that show your flights and airtime by month over a calendar year.

Many programs that look good on screen fall down when you view their printed reports. But Flight Log's printouts look fine, with each flight neatly summarized in a separate table. My only complaint about this program is that for some reason, USHGA skills ratings (*e.g. footlaunch, aerotow, etc.*) were left out of the Pilot Info screen. Instead, there are checkboxes for awards like the Lilienthal Award, Cross-Country Flight Award, and Safe Pilot Award. Not that we don't enjoy patting ourselves on the back, but skills ratings would be useful.

In summary, you'd be hard-pressed to find a simpler, more useful program. Now all that's needed to make it perfect is a companion Palm/Pocket PC version.

(Anyone want to develop one?)



Flight Log screen shot.



CHGPA Meeting Minutes (28 January, 2004)

Introduction of the Board

New Faces:

Chris Amater and Nicki Gorden, interested in Paragliding
 Scott Wilkinson – 1st meeting.
 Linda Baskerville – new pilot – training with John Middleton

Flying stories:

Tom McGowen & Dave Procter flew the SAC and got to 6000 MSL.
 Dave went 20 miles and Tom flew 30 miles east of Hershey

Lauren & Paul Tjaden flew XC from Ridgely together. They were getting low when Lauren found some lift. Paul, who was up ahead, came back but hit sink. The predominant wind had been NW all day, but Paul got caught in a downwind landing. Lauren saw Paul's glider beak from the air. He radioed to her that he was hurt badly. Lauren landed beside him and they called 911. Unfortunately the GPS coordinates were slightly off and there was some confusion finding them. Paul has a spiral fracture of the left humerus.

Mark Cavanaugh, Steve Kinsley and visiting pilot Alex flew Pulpit the day of the meeting.

Daniel Broxterman & Alek Beynenson made a road trip to Florida. They settled at Quest and had their 1st thermal flights. They also man towed Bo by some condos and had some tows and a mountain flight apiece at Lookout Mountain on their way back.

John Dullahan flew Ravens Roost in Carlise PA (north site)

Business:

Treasurer Report: the treasurer paperwork transferred to Hugh, including mailbox and signature authority. Hugh will consolidate accounts online with Wacovia. The club has 416.89 in checking, 590 in money market, 1100 in site acquisition, and \$1239 in checkbook. The CD information is currently unclear.

Ralph has provided the club with optional online renewal with Paypal. Users of this service should get confirmation back but some have not received it. Ralph will check on these individuals.

The High Rock Fly-in will be held in mid August.

Parachute repack – Ralph will coordinate one at Ridgely later in the year – no specific date yet.

The Sunday Source had an article about Ridgely in a March issue.

Old Business:

Sunny Venesky was named instructor of the year for 2004!

Ralph updated hang gliding pamphlets with a discount coupon on back for lessons. About 300 were distributed at the Kite Festival. John Middleton reported that he has not had any takers of the coupons yet. Dave Bodner has more pamphlets that pilots can distribute to any interested people.

Improving PG launch at the Pulpit :

The club approved spending up to \$2000 to improve the launch. Improvements will include a retaining wall & filler dirt. We have access to free railroad ties to build the retaining wall. Estimates of costs are \$80

for dirt and \$120 topsoil. A backhoe would be needed to move the dirt. Matthew is coordinating this project.

The Bills Hill Cleanup was run by Ralph and was very successful. The launch was returned to original dimensions. 3 bags of trash including 4 tires were removed. Fortunately they did not have to contend with bees this year.

New Business:

Ralph resigned as newsletter editor. Scott Wilkinson was nominated for the position and accepted. Next newsletter to come out in June

Landing contest – Ralph is still running it as Flight Director. It starts May 1st and continues through the end of October.

Joe Shad met a Manager of a mall who wants to display a HG from the mall ceiling and give out publicity materials. There were several volunteers of HG's for display from the club. Dave Bodner and Alek took over the project. Dave met the manager and looked at the location. The mall will pay for any hardware needed. David and Alec will follow up next week by taking one glider and trying to hang it

Pulpit left ramp – Ralph is taking the lead on getting it redecked. Kelvin determined that the foundation is fine. Ralph needs a volunteer to give and estimate for the amount of wood needed.

Holly mentioned a website, Café Press, that will print Tshirts on demand. They would need vector artwork of a logo that is scaleable. Ralph has some vector artwork that would work. Dave Bodner also needs artwork for the mall project, so Ralph offered to send artwork to Kinkos and get a poster made.

Awards:

Flight distance goes to Tom McGowen.

1st thermal flights for Daniel Broxterman & Alek Beynenson



Agenda for the July CHGPA Meeting:

- Usual introduction of new faces and flying stories.
- A report will be given on the progress that has been made on building a better paragliding launch at the Pulpit.
- Flight Director will give a report on the progress that has been made on fixing up the left ramp at the Pulpit.
- Vote on whether to include the Daniel's launch and LZ owners on our club's gift list, since many of our paragliding pilot members use this site with more frequency than any other site.
- Vote on whether the club would like to give a donation to our training hill site owners, in order to help them maintain and mow their property.
- Flight Director will give us a firm date for the Fall parachute repack.
- Jobs will be assigned for the Pulpit Fly-in to be held in September.
- Joe Gregor will give a talk on airspace, including how to read a sectional.

MHGA Meeting Report

~ by Linda Baskerville

On Thursday evening, June 3, 2004, I attended the Maryland Hang Gliding Association Club meeting, held at Oregon Ridge Park to see how the sister club to the CHGPA is doing, and to find out if there was anything behind the rumor that the Maryland Club was considering disbanding.

Not only did I learn several useful tips at the ground handling session offered by Danny Brotto which precedes every club meeting (*and I am very fond of free hang gliding instruction - I need all the help I can get*) but the meetings are being held this year with free pizza and beer (*even more to my liking!*).

It turns out that the club is NOT winding down, but instead is gearing up for, and going after increased membership as well as more socializing through club efforts. Richard Hays expressed the concern that if membership were to drop off, or the club to close down, then the club maintained access to the free training hills and mountain launch sites would no longer be available, the sites would eventually be closed and/or lost through attrition and change of ownership, and the Hang Gliding community's presence and influence would dissipate, leaving only the tow parks to provide an outlet for hang gliding launches. As commercial entities, tow parks are subject to the whims of the market place, and are perhaps particularly susceptible to closure stemming from damaging lawsuits or other costly liabilities (*let's face it, hang gliding is a high risk sport*). So it behooves the hang gliding community to strengthen all of its many facets.

The development of the list server for the sharing of sport related information has, to a certain extent, replaced the information sharing aspect that club meetings have typically provided, and also inadvertently replaced the social milieu that the HG club(s) has formulated. The Maryland Club would like to re-invigorate the social side of the club meetings in order to bring people together to share hang gliding information on a one-to-one basis, and to generate a more cohesive hang gliding community, which the list serve cannot provide.

This year there are no dues for the Maryland Club membership, and they have staged their meetings for every 3 months on the first Thursday of the month; so the next meeting will be the first Thursday in September.

Brian Vant-Hull steered the group towards decisions on the High Rock Fly-in for this year (August 21), guessing when Bush would be most likely to attend the Republican convention rather than at Camp David, and he wrangled donations from the members for the raffle to be held at the Fly-in. An at-cost glider was donated, as was a sail plane ride and computer services, along with some less high profile but always necessary services.

Bunkhouse Bob provided the music for the post-meeting entertainment; Steve & Mara Krichten regaled us with tales of their recent wedding. Mara is planning on getting into hang gliding soon, Leigh Hays kindly volunteered to commandeer the barbeque at the Fly-in so that catering costs would not be necessary, and Dory Truitt, Bill Garrison, and George Tutor rounded out the group. Pongo the Dalmatian mooched the pizza crusts from all partiers, and the weather was so sweet that this meeting was held outside in the pavilion - Hard to beat!

Schools, Dealers and Flight Parks

Blue Sky Flight Park

(Steve Wendt)

540.432.6557 or 804.241.4324

www.blueskyhg.com

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.

Highland Aerosports Flight Park

(Sunny Venesky & Adam Elchin)

410.634.2700

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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Maryland School of Hang Gliding Inc.

(Richard Hays)

410.527.0975

www.mshg.com

e: mshgflyer@hotmail.com

Certified instruction: 25 years experience. Richard Hays is a USHGA advanced rated Instructor-Examiner. Specializing in foot launch flight utilizing Wills Wing Falcons and radios for instruction. Authorized dealer for Moyes, Wills Wing, Airwave, High Energy Sports. New and used gliders in stock. Balt./Wash. Oldest Wills Wing dealer. Seven training sites within one hour drive of Baltimore.

Silver Wings

(John Middleton)

www.silverwingshanggliding.com

703.533.1965

Authorized dealer for Wills Wing, PacAir, UP, and Seedwings. He represents Ball, Sentek, Litek, High Energy, BRS, Blackhawk and many other hang gliding equipment manufacturers. New and used gliders in stock. Demo flights available. Quality, responsible service.



Come to the 2004

High ROCK Fly-In!

August 21st
(Rain Date: August 28th)

For \$20, the price of a single tow, you get dinner, beer, bonfire, Saturday flying fee, and LZ moonbounce.

Pre-registration entitles you to 3 free raffle tickets and discounts on additional tickets. Glorious prizes.

For more information and to pre-register online go to the CHGPA webpage: <http://www.chgpa.org> and look for upcoming events.

*All profits from registration go to the Carbaugh family.
Profits from the raffle go to the MHGA.*

(PRE-FLIGHT, continued from page 2)

nothing could happen. In his book "Deep Survival", author Laurence Gonzales says there is no such thing as an expert. Only people who have gotten away with doing the wrong things for longer than others.

There is a theory called "The Sandpile Effect" that says the world runs in a continuous collapse mode, like individual grains slipping down the side of a sandpile. The passage of time is like a stream of new sand pouring down on that pile. Most of the collapses are small and relatively insignificant, but they're always there, always breaking down. According to the theory, larger collapses (*read: accidents*) are a normal part of the system. It's never a question of "if" they'll happen, but when. It might seem a pessimistic thought, but it's good to keep in the back of your mind when flying. It might save you one day. Oh, and one other thing: don't do aerobatics in your glider. They aren't built for it. Skill's got nothing on physics.

The USHGA recently opened an informal vote on whether to change the name of the organization to include paragliding. With respect to all forms of soaring, I believe the phrase "sky sailing" is a beautiful and memorable way to refer to both hang gliding and paragliding. With respect to anyone who thinks sky sailing sounds silly, the verb "glide" doesn't begin to suggest extended soaring flights and remaining aloft for hours. So why cling to this term? Sailing, on the other hand, suggests unlimited wind-powered travel---a goal many pilots aspire to. Where "glide" is more indicative of a short trip down, "sail" has nothing but positive connotations. (*We even call the Dacron part of hang gliders "the sail."*) I'd hate to have take a deep breath every time I wanted to say "United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association." (*Or our*

own club's name, for that matter.)

On a final note, I noticed USHGA President Bill Bolosky's comment on the USHGA mission in a recent Oz Report. Bill says, "The main focus of the USHGA is to enable people to fly hang gliders and paragliders, and to do so safely. This means doing what we can to ensure access to sites (*i.e. insurance, helping with landowners when we can, site acquisition and support programs that we donate money to the Foundation to support*), seeing that people are properly trained (*including the tandem exemption and selling instructional materials*), doing accident reviews, the aerotow exemption, and working with the FAA to make sure that the rules continue to be written in a way to allow us to fly (*Sport Pilot, the part 101 stuff, possible changes to part 103 to codify tandem, etc.*)." Bill adds "Secondary activities are setting rules for and sanctioning competitions, representing our sports to the NAA and our sport/country to CIVL, doing awards and records, publishing the magazine, marketing the sport, and selling promotional merchandise."

It's helpful to keep this in mind when discussing our club's mission. It seems to me that ours should be the same, only on a regional level. Of course, there will always be the give and take between actions that directly benefit existing pilots versus actions that help promote the sport and develop new pilots. All good things to think about.

As the new editor for our newsletter, I hope

I'm up to the task. Kudos to Ralph Sickinger before me and everyone else who has kept it alive over the years. I'm a generalist: I've had several careers, have many hobbies, and am endlessly curious. You'll likely notice the newsletter content reflects that bent. I've added some reviews of software and books, and plan to add a regular weather column.

There may be times when, as a pilot, you might wonder why I avoid using a technical term (*or explain it*). This is because some of our readers aren't pilots, but landowners, family members, or people interested in getting into the sport. It's important to keep the non-flying audience in mind as well as pilots. If you have ideas for articles or columns in future newsletters, let me know. I'm as likely to be interested in the geology of the Blue Ridge Mountains as how to replace the cables on your glider.

~SW



15914B Shady Grove Road #1-197
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-1315

*Capital Hang Gliding and
Paragliding Association*



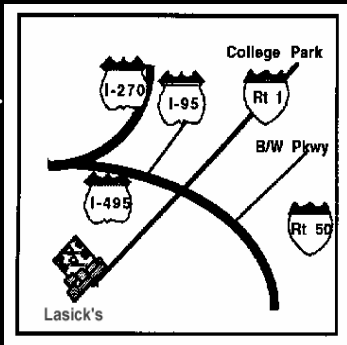
**Next CHGPA meeting will be held:
July 28, 2004**

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



SUMMER '04



Matthew helps Karen get ready for towing. ~ Photo by Ralph Sicking