



# Skyline

A publication of the Capital Hang and Paragliding Club

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Many thanks for help on this issue go to David Bodner and Carlos Weill.

Submission Deadline for next newsletter: 25 May

## Help wanted!

- layout editor
- photographer
- reporter
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To submit articles and information and wanted ads, call Ellis at 703.536.3209 or email at [e46kim@hotmail.com](mailto:e46kim@hotmail.com)

## Wintering in Valle de Bravo

By Steve Kinsley

(photos also by Steve Kinsley)

Valle!!

I hate winter. I do Southern California in January but that still leaves a pretty serious slog through February and March. So when PK said he had signed up with Fly Mexico and was going down to Valle de Bravo in February (with wife Janice and daughter Hannah) I said count me in. Plus, I managed to convince Joe Gregor to join us by promising that we would fly all the time. Then I convinced my wife Ruth to come along by promising that we wouldn't fly all the time.. Anyway we made an awesome flying threesome.

Valle sits in the mountains nearly 6000 ft up, maybe 3 hours west of Mexico city and two hours from Toluca. Ruth and I came in through Toluca and were met at the airport by a Fly Mexico driver who took us in to Valle. Toluca and environs (or what we saw of it) are pretty grim but once clear of that it was a very pleasant (although very curvy ) drive through the mountains. At one point the road passes near a Monarch butterfly sanctuary and there are huge clouds of them (see below). It is pretty amazing. Fifteen mph with flashers to keep from squashing them.

Valle itself is a delightful colonial town of cobblestone streets and tile roofs fronting a lake. No box stores, no traffic lights, no 18 wheelers, no Starbucks or Mickey Ds, no people wandering around with cell phones glued to their ears. Plenty of shops, restaurants and coffee houses. Like stepping back in time. It is a happening place in the evenings, especially on the weekends. Valentine's day is apparently a really big deal in Mexico. Fiesta time. We sat on the central square eating dinner in a sidewalk cafe and listened to a Mexican band do Dire Straits. They were pretty good.

The Fly Mexico accommodations are hang glider pilot basic with the added dimension of Mexico. Ruth and I stayed in a 4 bedroom 2 bath house with Joe and three others(flying buddy of Mike

## HG and PG events this year

April, 25: CHGPA meeting with tree rescue demonstration at 6319 N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Arlington, VA 22207. Call 301.270.1862 for more information

May, 18-21: Kitty Hawk Spectacular

May, 25-28: Hyner Fly-In

May, 25: Skyline submission deadline

June 3-9: East Coast Championships at Highland Aerosports.

June 23,24: Flat Land Fly-in, Highland Aerosports

June, 27: CHGPA meeting: Pulpit fly-in preparation, location TBD

July, 2-8: Hyner 4<sup>th</sup> of July fly-in

July, 6: Windfest West VA, Paragliding at Canaan Valley Resort State Park

August, 29: Skyline submission deadline

August, 30- September, 3: Hyner Fly-in

September 15-16: Pulpit Fly-in

September, 26: CHGPA meeting: fly-in results and awards

October, 11-14: Hyner ox roast fly-in

November, 16: Skyline submission deadline

December, 14: CHGPA holiday and awards meeting

Chevalier's and girl friend plus a SF bay area pilot). Pk and family rated their own little casa adjacent to us. Our house had a 20 gallon hot water heater (mas de menos de). This worked out surprisingly well. You get a 5 minute hot shower before it runs out which is actually ok once you get your tiny gringo brain around the concept that that is all there is and there ain't no more. It recovers in 10 minutes for the next person. There was a refrigerator for beer, a coffee maker and a patio with a beautiful view of the lake and the town. You also get free breakfast at the Meson del Viento a very, nice hotel with a garden and swimming pool (yes you can use it)



The weather while we were there was as perfect as you can imagine -- 75 degrees and sunny every day. I understand this is pretty typical in the winter. In the summer, the rainy season, it supposedly rains for an hour in the afternoon and then it is back to sunny and pleasant. While some days were better than others lift wise, it all looked pretty much the same. The pressure didn't even appear to change much. Every time I turned on my vario/altimeter at the El Penon launch (the main launch) it read 7200 ft plus or minus a little. All this bothered Joe who said that he didn't understand a place where there were no fronts or pressure changes. I never understood weather much anyway so I didn't bother being bothered.

The El Penon launch is about 9 miles south of Valle. It is a moderately steep south facing slope launch. Brain dead simple. It is always blowing in -- lighter in the morning; building in the afternoon. El Penon is named for a huge stubby spire a half mile off to the west. There is an LZ right out front (the Piano LZ, so named

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because you have to fly like a piano to land there) I think the vertical is about 1800 ft. There is a sort of ridge that extends crookedly off to the west which is fun to explore but the lift is pretty much all thermal and you often do better out in the valley than along the ridge. There were a couple of times where I would start to sink out along the ridge and go out into the valley to get back up -- sorta backwards from what we are used to.

PGs generally launch in the morning when it is lighter. Us hangies typically hung until two or two thirty. The lift seemed less organized early although the PGs seemed to be able to exploit it without any difficulty. Except on weekends when the place is lousy with pilots from Mexico City (mainly PG), you are generally flying with just a few fellow hangies. The PGs were usually gone or on the ground by the time we got in the air. Should also note that there is no GA traffic to speak of. Other than a single helicopter, the only thing any of us saw in the sky were fellow HG and PGs.

The main XC drill is to get up somewhere along the ridge and fly over the back toward Valle. If you drift back with a couple thousand over and can maintain for a mile or two you will encounter northerly winds from lake Valle and a widespread convergence.. You can get stinkin' high in this. (I got to 12,200 once.) There are designated LZs all over. The Penitas LZ is directly over the back and makeable with only 1,000 over. Another one that is used frequently is Casa

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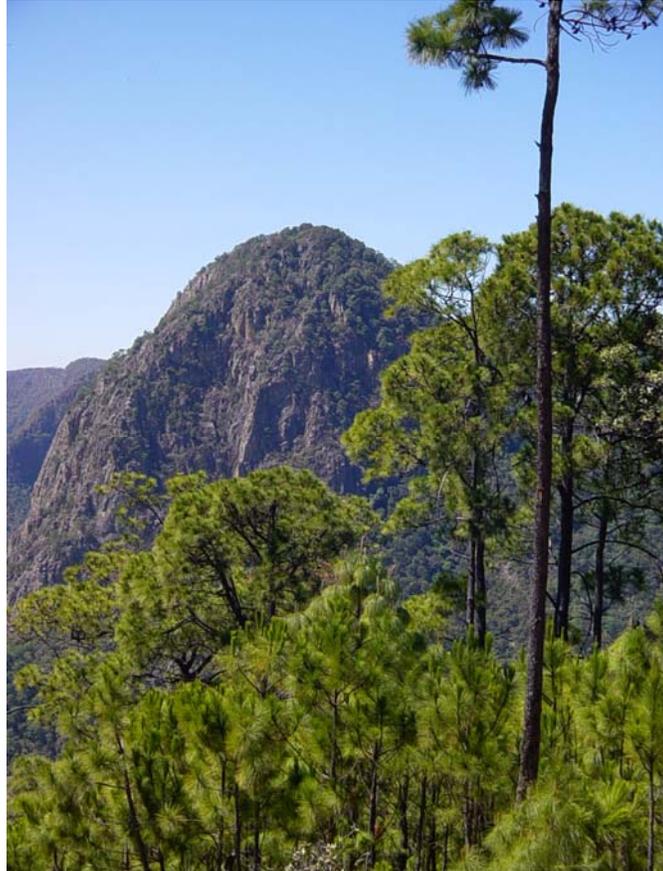
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Most area flying sites are H3 and P3. However H2 and P2 can often fly with an observer. A suggestion to H2s and P2s: Be nice to your observers. They take time away from their own flying to help you. The CHGPA website has a lot of information on the caring and feeding of observers. But the cardinal rule is not to show up at a site unannounced, hoping for an observer to show up and throw you off. Call first and get their OK.

Viejas which is almost to Valle. There is a small lakeside LZ in Valle used mainly by PGs and while we all said we could easily land there, it is pretty small so we didn't try. I mean if you miss you are not just standing there with your dick in your hand feeling stupid, you're dead. Fly Mexico honcho Jeff (known locally as Jeffo) does it all the time and I think he was a little disappointed that we didn't even try..



The main communication mode is 2M radio which works well and is not cluttered with ham radio guys talking about their lawn mowers or air conditioning repairmen ordering parts like it is in the US.. It is strictly HG and PG traffic just like God meant it to be. Cell phones work but calls are not cheap.

Most of my flying consisted of getting beat up in front of launch (it can get pretty rowdy out there mid -day) and trying to catch PK and Joe -- mainly PK. Joe was up there and on course with him fairly frequently but I was mostly eating their dust and listening to them talk on the radio. PK probably had the flight of the vacation. He got into something over the lake: "I couldn't get down". Pobrecito! I had an interesting flight where I flew over the edge of the lake and then in a wide circle intending to land back at Casa Viejas. But I didn't make it and landed out. I figured no problem -- got radio comms, got GPS. But on the ground a GPS isn't much help without a map. No Delorme for Mexico. Duh. I listened as my companeros tearfully despaired of ever finding me and decided to go home and drink

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beer. They were 2 miles away but had no idea how to get to me. Finally saved by Jeffo who had me hand the radio to some kids who told him where I was. Kids, by the way, are a ubiquitous feature of the Mexican landscape. A turn to final and the field that was empty seconds before is suddenly filled with a phalanx of children running directly into your path. You need to have faith. They are very small and very quick and will get out of your way. They will also help you take your glider apart and carry it to the road for you for practically nothing. No, they didn't try to swipe my stuff.

One day we took a break from flying and went to the Monarch butterfly sanctuary. More butterflies. Butterflies everywhere. When we got to the sanctuary our guide told us we had to be very quiet. Shsssh! We assumed this was to avoid disturbing the butterflies but it turned out that our guide was not a licensed butterfly guide and he was sneaking us in the back door. The whole expedition was quite a work out. The parking area is at 8500 and we climbed to over 10k. Pant pant puff puff. Ruth and Hannah shared a horse. One of our number, Jim, the aforementioned San Francisco Bay area pilot who is my age went flying after we got back. I was impressed. I took a nap.

The Fly Mexico operation is very professional. Jeffo is great. He kept it all going reasonably efficiently without being officious. They have a good stable of gliders. I flew a Sport 2, a U2 and an Eagle. (Never flown a U2 or an Eagle. Liked the U2. Thought the Eagle was a total truck.) They also have some Ultrasports and some Falcons. The conditions range from challenging mid-day rowdy (think uncommanded turns) to H2 smooth. So there is pretty much something for everybody.

The trip back was uneventful. Back in the good ol' (if somewhat uptight in comparison) USA and the tender mercies of the Transportation Security Administration. They seemed stunned that I had for once remembered to pack my latest Swiss Army knife in my checked baggage (I have provided the TSA with 4 of them so far). However, they immediately cheered up when they found terrorist contraband (Hot Sauce or something) in Joe's carry on.

All in all we had a great time. Check it out. [www.flymexico.com](http://www.flymexico.com)



## **CHGPA MEETING: 1/25/07**

(meeting minutes by Karen Carra)

**Location:** Takoma Park Municipal Center

**Attending:** David Bodner, Matthew Graham, Mark Cavanaugh, Ellis Kim, Karen Carra, Hugh McElrath. Discussion re changing to one annual meeting per year. Decision made to keep 4 meeting schedule

**Officers for 2007:** President: Hugh McElrath, Treasurer : David Bodner, Vice President/Media: Matthew Graham, Secretary: Karen Carra, Flight Director: Tom McGowan

**Meeting Schedule for 2007:** Locations to be announced. Jan 25: BOD elections, April 24: Safety Meeting, June 27: Plan for Pulpit Fly-in, possible presentation from another aviation sport, Sept : slide show from trip? Dec 14<sup>th</sup> (Xmas party): Awards

**Other 2007 events:** Pulpit Fly-In - 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in Sept (15<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup>) Possible Woodstock fly-in – to be organized by Joe Schad & Zelda, March - Central VA parachute repack - Hugh will contact Greg Mick and get date, Canaan Wind Fest - need dates, Hyner dates, Ridgely flyin, High Rock flyin, West Virginia Fly In, Cumberland Fair, newsletter will carry calendar with event dates

**Work Parties:** Pulpit PG launch. Matthew will organize a work party for the end of April/beginning of May. Retaining wall needs to be reinforced

Chapter renewal to USHGA due first week of February, roster requested . Roster has not been updated for quite some time. Plan made for meeting with Ralph to get roster and paypal info. BOD will close current paypal account and set up new one that bank will recognize (with correct name). BOD will remove Daniel Broxterman from signature cards and put Hugh on.

**Newsletter:** Every 1<sup>st</sup> non-flying Sat - newsletter party at Ellis's house. 4 newsletters a year- one before each meeting

Motion made to have club pay for food & beverages at club functions such as newsletter get togethers, works parties, etc. Motion carried.

Motion made to make certain club members liaisons to land owners  
Possible liaisons (pending acceptance of below): Shawn Ray – Pulpit, Woodstock - Christy, Gary Smith, Joe Shad, High Rock: Steve Kinsley, Bob Buchanan, Smithsburg: Eddie Miller

Motion made to buy gas powered weed wacker with blade, Motion carried to buy 2. Need to investigate what to buy - need volunteer to go to Home Depot to look

Motion made to move flying stories to end of meeting. Motion carried.

**Membership:** Approx 200 people on forum, Approx 80 paying members - big discrepancy. Discussion re using forum to urge people to renew. People need to be reminded of what they get in their membership, such as High Rock waiver. Board members will split up names of non-members to try to up club membership.

Discussion re putting site guide on web in the members-only area with a rotating password Password would be given out at meetings (incentive to attend meetings)

## **Next Meeting**

Note: the next meeting is April 25<sup>th</sup>. Next Wednesday.

Location: Ellis's house at: 6319 N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Arlington, VA 22207. Use mapquest.

For more info call Matthew at 301.270.1862 or Ellis at 703.536.3209

For this annual safety meeting, we will have a tree rescue demonstration conducted by our illustrious and experienced tree rescuer Pete Schumann.

We will be ordering pizza. I heard something about beer as well.

## **Change to Skyline work party**

Note, that the skyline work party turns out to be impractical due to Ellis's erratic schedule. Work parties will be announced on the CHGPA forums.

If you have time to spend on the newsletter, you can always give Ellis a call. She'll be sure to have stuff to do for you or you can drop in and she'll be happy to drop everything (if home) and work on the newsletter.

**Local HG schools and instructors:**

Blue Sky  
540.432.6557

Richard Hays  
410.527.0975

Highland Aerosports  
410.634.2700

John Middleton  
703.533.1965

Santos Mendoza  
703.994.1320

Bruce Satatis  
410.482.2798



photo by ellis kim

**Local PG schools and instructors:**

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Stephane Pascal  
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Erick Sampaio  
301.922.7384



photo by ellis kim

**Learning to Fly Paragliders as a Hang Gliding Pilot  
Outgoing Prez Sez  
(by Daniel Broxterman)**

I'll try to go beyond the obvious comparisons and talk about how students' learning experiences differ between the two crafts. I've only had a hand full of high flights on a bag wing, so consider these my initial thoughts.

**More in Control**

Spend enough time with student hang gliding pilots on a training hill and you will inevitably witness the scary scene when someone regresses from progressing pilot to hapless passenger: left wing gets lifted, glider goes right, instructor radios "Body left! Body Left!! BODY LEFT!!!" to no avail. The student fails to correct course and the glider careens into a hard reunion with terra very firma.

The moments of being out of control on a fast moving hang glider comprised my worst experiences as a student. As a new pilot, things happen quickly and it's easy to loose control: you fly too slowly (mush mode) and lose roll authority, you produce ineffective or contrary turn inputs by cross-controlling (moving your upper body one way and your lower body the other), and you can simply think you're weight-shift turning when you really aren't. In contrast, learning to control a paraglider has been much less stressful. You pull left brake to turn left and right brake to turn right. Easy. As you progress, you learn to add weight shift to coordinate a turn, but the initial skill is so straightforward that I never had to experience that awful feeling of just being along for the ride.

**Less Integrated with the Wing**

To get comfortable with my hang glider, I like to pick it up on top of the hill and weathervane in the wind: allowing the nose to turn into the current, rotating my torso as the waist, as the direction changes. In that moment, I feel like an organic extension of the wing. Even in my best kiting experiences, when I'm really on top of things, I don't feel one with my paraglider. My purpose is to counterbalance the forces on the wing, not become a part of it.

**Flaring is a Joke**

The timing is easy and the consequences of missing it are usually minor. You can land a student paraglider in a turn, sitting back in the harness, without flaring and without damage to pilot or equipment. I've seen that happen to a hang glider and it was very, very ugly. For that reason, instructors make students spend a lot of time and effort on landings and as a student you sweat each and every one. As learning to land is so much easier and the consequences of screwing up so much less on a paraglider, it takes less time to learn and you feel more comfortable in the final phase of flight, right from the start.

**New Pilots in Our Midst, Who Are These New Pilots?**

I like to look at the rate we are producing new H/P - 2's to get a grip on the state of the sports in our area. I pulled the following names from the USHGA website. They are the folks in our area (MD, DC & No. VA) who earned an H-2 or P-2 in 2005, listed under their respective rating official. I left off Hugh McElrath and two pilots rated by James Coblentz who I think were learning powered paragliding.

**Note:**

Janni Papakrivos is now  
a H3.  
Congratulations!  
Herzlichen  
Glueckwunsch!

**Pix from Rusty T:**

Launch line at Bill's  
Hill:



Joe Schad:



your editor:



And Rusty T. himself.  
Photo by Ellis Kim:



(--outgoing prez sez continued--)

Richard Hays  
H2 Glen Hardy  
H2 Kurt Hirrlinger  
H2 Janni Papakrivos

John Middleton  
H2 Bob Peterman

Christian Thoreson (Lookout Mountain, TN/GA)  
H2 Deborah Langheld (Manassas, VA)

Eugene Bumbacco (Ontario, Canada)  
H2 John Grote Jr (St. Louis, MD)

Allen Sparks  
P2 Jens Broll  
P2 Andy Harrah

Bill Armstrong (Torrey Pines, CA)  
P2 Paul Geddes (Warrenton, VA)  
P2 Charlie Givans

Ken Hudonjorgensen (Utah)  
P2 Pete Strinden (Quantico, VA)  
P2 Donna Burge (Warrenton, VA)

Dwayne McCourt (Fly WV)  
P2 Chaz Stevens (Brunswick, MD)

Seven out of 13 received their training from instructors outside of our flying area. Only one of those seven, Charlie Givans, is known to me. I wonder about the other six who are off my radar. Does anyone know them? Would they be interested in flying here if they knew about the resources available: observers, sites, site guide, clubs, web forums, educational, flying and social events, etc.? Unfortunately, USHGA does not make member contact information available. We have no national directory. As a result, it is difficult for me to reach out to new pilots and provide or arrange for mentorship.

Why no national USHGA roster?

I have recommended by e-mail to our Region IX directors that USHGA begin publishing full contact information in the members' only section of the website. Prior to having a pilot's contact information listed, he or she should, of course, be given an opportunity to opt-out of the on-line directory when he or she completes the annual renew/join paperwork. The easier we make it for new pilots to enter the fold, the more will progress to H/P-3.

If you support this idea, please send e-mails to our directors at:  
[dr.amunategui@att.net](mailto:dr.amunategui@att.net), [tomthecomputerguy@yahoo.com](mailto:tomthecomputerguy@yahoo.com) and  
[pagenbks@lazerlink.com](mailto:pagenbks@lazerlink.com). Dennis has already stated he will push the idea at the next USHGA board meeting in March.

**Remember: 25 April (next Wednesday!)  
CHGPA meeting  
Watch Pete Schuman demonstrate a tree rescue!**

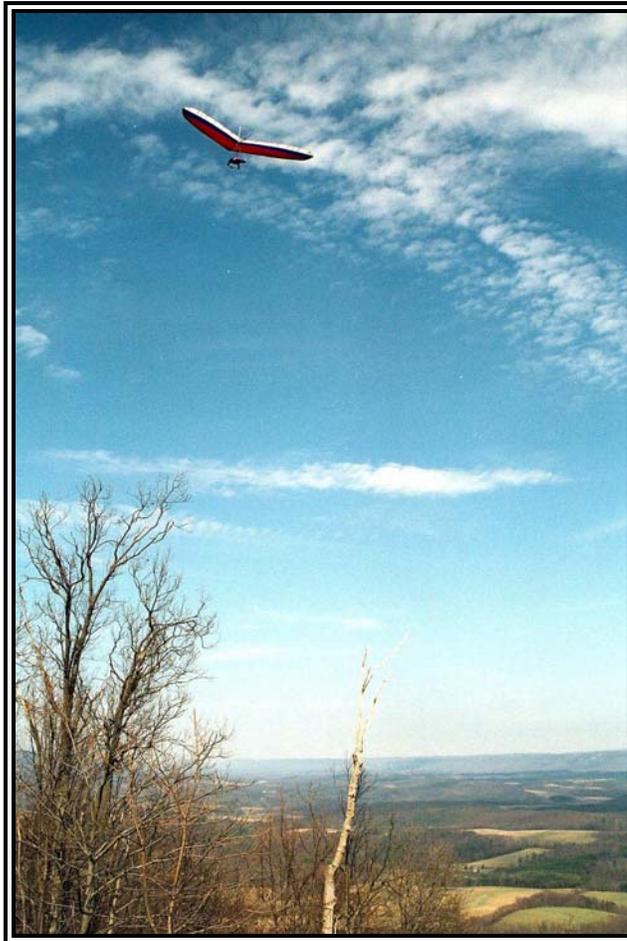
At 6319 N. 31<sup>st</sup> street, Arlington, Virginia  
(Ellis's house)

Ellis says: mapquest reliably points to the correct street, unlike yahoomaps or google. Number is a bit off though.

We can order pizza and there will be beer. Otherwise bring your own beverage.

For more info, call Matthew at 301.270.1862

See you there! In the meantime (i.e. this weekend) speck out!



Bill's Hill Soaring, March 2007  
Photo by Rusty T.