



VHGA NEWS!

*The Vermont Hang Gliding Association Quarterly Newsletter
Winter 2003*

Greetings from the Pres.

By John Arrison, VHGA president

The Holidays are over and now comes the real winter. The month of January appears to never end. Oh well, at least we have snow for lots of outdoor stuff. Winter is a good time to get your glider into the shop and have that annual inspection you've been putting off for the last couple years. Also, don't neglect your poor lonely parachute that has been wadded up for longer than it should have been.

Progress on the lease or purchase of West Rutland is progressing slowly. I hope to have a proposal for the membership to vote on in the spring.

As I'm sure most of you all know Carl Morin was killed in a landing mishap at Burke Mt. last August. Several years ago Bob Atwood died from a similar incident. They both appeared to have hit an

obstruction during landing and both died of severe trauma to the chest.

Is there anything we can do to prevent a similar mishap? During a landing gone bad a lot can happen in a short period of time and there is only so much the pilot can do to mitigate the problem.

1. Be prepared for the worst during all landings. Turbulence near the ground can be encountered on any day.
2. If things go bad make every effort to land feet first, in a run. Broken legs heal. Internal injuries may not.
3. If you find yourself landing in a field that is shorter than optimum do not try to burn off altitude while on short final. It is far better to run out of field and flair into a bush at 10 or 15 feet than to catch a wing tip in a tree 80 feet up and nose over into a dive.
4. Gliders today take more room to land - period. If you fly topless consider using a drag chute.

Some fine flying

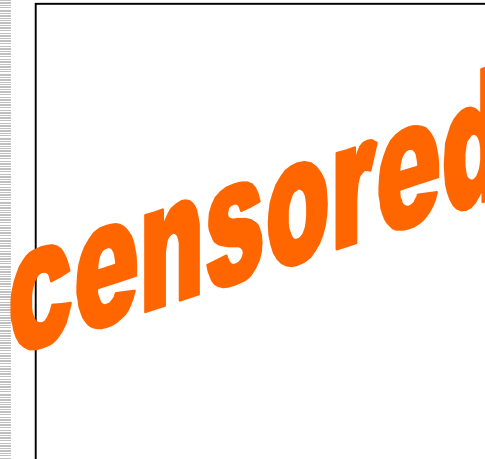
By Rodger Furey

The annual VHGA cross country award dinner will soon be upon us and I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge some of the fine flying from last year. The following are some of the more noteworthy flights. These guys deserve our admiration if only for a moment or two. We don't want to give anyone a swelled head! If you see one of these guys at the dinner give 'em a slap on the back and maybe if they'll buy you a beer... It's worth a try.

Open distance class and a new New England hang gliding record of 131.6 miles (211.7 km), Curt Warren.

Curt is not a local pilot. As far as I can determine he is sort of a gliding vagabond who wanders the globe flying his hang glider. Last year he wandered into our little neck of the woods to find employment as a tug pilot and just happened to break the XC record in his spare time. As one pseudo-disgruntled pilot so eloquently put it "Who is this guy? He comes here, eats our food, steals our women and breaks our records!" Curt's flight was characterized by booming thermals at launch, ("I looked over and Dave Strusik is clinging, arms and legs, to my left side wire. He was out there logging some airtime of his own, the madman!"), a 5k ceiling, and some sort of urinary logistical problem near the end of his flight. Regardless of the fact that he ain't from around these parts, it was a most excellent flight and a new benchmark for New England XC.

Gary Trudeau, our new regional director



*Our newly appointed representative?
Please say it isn't so!*

Gary Trudeau is the new regional director for region eight, replacing Doug Sharpe who had held that position for the past few years. This is not the first time that Gary has volunteered his time to help preserve the sport we all hold dear. He has

been an active officer in both the Vermont Hang Gliding Association and the Massachusetts Hang Gliding Association. He is a USHGA examiner and an observer for region eight. In addition to these fine hang gliding credentials, Gary is also one of the original Burning Woman architects and is a frequent instigator of various Camp Rob shenanigans. It looks like we are in good hands. Gary has explained his new job as a three part mission.

1. To assist region eight pilots with any problems that could affect hang gliding in the New England area.
2. To represent region eight at the national level.
3. Preservation of the sport.

Gary can not operate in a vacuum. He needs your input. You can contact him with your comments and suggestions at,

GTET595@aol.com

(413) 743-0147 Home

(413) 822-4860 Cell

A request from Ann Morin

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the pilots who have expressed their sympathy and generosity following Carl's death. Christina, Keith and I appreciate it more than you know. Carl and I were truly lucky to have met such a great, fun, supportive group of people. My children and I have very fond memories of days we spent flying. I thank you all. But I do have one last request, I am trying to put together a scrapbook about Carl for

for Christina and Keith so they can have memories of their dad. I would like it if any of you who knew Carl, or flew with him at any time would write a little something down and email it to me. Flying was such a big part of Carl's life and I want the kids to know about it, not just in my words. Thank you all again.

Ann Morin amorin@ncia.com

Life insurance and the hang glider pilot

By Rodger Furey

Carl Morin's recent tragedy illuminates a problem that many hang glider pilots do not appear to be fully aware of. Life insurance. Most life insurance policies do not cover hang gliding. It is either specifically excluded or it is rolled into the verbiage excluding aircraft pilots and nonfare-paying passengers. *If you are counting on the life insurance you get through work you are probably not covered!* I know I'm not. That's why I had to go out and find an additional policy that would specifically include hang gliding. Most life insurance companies do not have any specific data on hang gliding so they lump it in with their most hazardous activities. I recall one company that wanted to charge me \$1000 per year for \$100k of coverage. Northwest Mutual Life Insurance is the only company I have heard of to date, that has done their homework on hang gliding and offers a reasonable life insurance plan for the hang gliding pilot. They charge their preferred rate for those with a hang four rating*. That is the exact same rate they charge your typical healthy nonsmoking wuffo. Hang three's and below, get socked with an additional penalty. It isn't astronomical but it is significantly higher. When I went from a hang three to a hang four I chose to double my policy value and now only pay half the premium I was paying as a hang three. Consider this an additional incentive to get that hang four.

Carl had a Northwest Mutual life insurance policy. He also had a few conventional policies that did not payout because of the circumstances of his death. Ann Morin has offered a few suggestions so that others may avoid some of the difficulties she has had to endure.

1. Review any and all life insurance policies and accidental death policies to determine if hang gliding is excluded. If it does not directly state *hang gliding* but does say *aircraft*, get a copy of what the companies considers an aircraft.

2. Meet with an insurance agent to

determine if you have adequate coverage in the event of death.

3. Have a will, durable power of attorney for healthcare, and a living will.

4. Keep a list of all accounts, investments, health insurance and other important documents in a place where someone in your family or a friend can find them. If we had both died it would have been absolute hell for the people who would have had to look for this stuff.

5. This is a hard one. Talk to your spouse or family about your wishes regarding your funeral. Many options are available. *Carl's memorial service was simple with no calling hours, except for the kids and I saying one last goodbye the afternoon before the funeral. The after service get-together consisted of donated food and drink. I was lucky to know that Carl wanted a simple casket, no visiting hours, and did not want to be cremated. He had seen a fancy etched headstone and thought that it would be nice to have one with a glider on it. I choose a custom etched stone that is beautiful. The front has our name and an etched picture of Mt. Washington with Carl flying his Litespeed over it. The kids helped decide on it.*

6. Meet with a financial planner or investment person, to determine your goals and financial status for both the good times and the bad.

Grim stuff but if you fly and have a family it is worth your consideration. Be safe and have your affairs in order.

Northwest Mutual Life Insurance
1-800-388-8123

For additional information concerning life insurance and hang gliding you can contact the United States Hang Gliding Association at 719-632-8300 or email jayne@ushga.org or natalie@ushga.org

* *hang four plus HGMA glider, parachute and helmet, less than 50 hours per year, no aerobatics.*

V.H.G.A. meeting minutes

The general membership had a meeting on 10/12/02. This is a really brief summary.

Rutland: The transfer of the lease from Jake to the VHGA will need more time to work out.

Ascutney: Special use permit in use. The bridge on the trail to northwest launch needs work. Jake Pierce to do repairs.

Burke and Washington: Try to land in the authorized LZs. If going XC please try to go and not just flop over the back of the ridge. Officers to talk to land owners to try to secure LZs. At the present time Kirby Rd is off limits to land (except for emergencies). Local residents read the VHGA forum. Please watch what you post on the forum.

There was a vote passed to change the apostle list. (*see below*)

Don Massoni is replacing Gary Trudeau as the VHGA secretary. There was no change in the other VHGA officer positions.

The next meeting will be at the Ascutney fire station, April 26th 2003 7:00PM

Ascutney repeater concerns

By Mark Vaughn (N1BLZ)

I had a nice chat with Bob Stewart, the president of the Conneticut Valley FM Association (CVFMA). He told me the club membership is down over the past couple years. If things don't improve soon they will need to have some sort of fund raiser to help cover the cost of maintaining the Ascutney repeater, or worse yet shut it down altogether. This repeater is one of the primary communication devices used in the retrieval of pilots who have gone XC in the Morningside area. If you are one of these frequent users, please show your support and appreciation for those who are in charge of running this repeater by joining their club. An application can be found at,

<http://www.cvfma.org/application.pdf>

Apostle List for 2003

Please contact one of the following people before heading to Mt. Ascutney during the off season.

John Arrison	802-674-2549
Jeff Benard	603-382-5551
Dennis Cavagnaro	603-529-2010
Tim Donovan	603-542-2277
Tom Lanning	978-486-3568
Kathleen McKenna	781-369-6282
Niece Miller	978-927-5363
Jake Pierce	802-408-8930
Steve Prepost	802-291-4832
Mark Vaughn	508-877-8545

THE V.H.G.A. ANNUAL XC DINNER EXTRAVAGANZA!

By Rob Jacobs

This years XC dinner will be at **T.R. Brennans** at **1037 Hanover Street** in Manchester, NH. on **February 22** at **6:30 PM**.

T.R. Brennans is the same place as Angelo's Restaurant, they just changed the name to confuse their patrons. The **buffet** is **\$15.99** per person and consists of sliced roast beef, bake/stuffed chicken, broiled haddock, chicken and beef brochettes (whatever the hell those are), seafood casserole (use your imagination), tossed salad, rolls, roasted potatoes, chefs veggie of the day and dessert. There is a cash bar (would we have it any other way?), and plenty of free parking! Pay at the door, but RSVP me if you plan to attend prior to Feb 18th.

Sandy and I are doing a PRE-VHGA dinner thing at our place, basically a skating party, so bring your skates. We'll have munchies, an open bar (until it's gone), and plenty of yummy finger food. We are located at **20 Killdeer Drive in Manchester**, which is **Exit 8** off I 93, then east on **Wellington Road** for 1.5 miles, then left onto **Lakeview Lane**. Go to the end of Lakeview and **Killdeer Drive** is on the left. It's a big brown house at the very end, lots of trucks with funny looking roof racks, can't miss it.

Mailways1@aol.com

603-629-6449 home

603-669-5252 work 9:30 am – 3:00 pm m-f.

for more information on the skating party go to,

www.mailways.net/vhga/skating.htm

Directions to T.R. Brennans

From points north

I 93 S

Take Hanover St. **Exit 6** toward Candia Rd.

Turn right onto Hanover St.

Go approx. 0.25 miles.

From points south

I 93 N

Take Candia Rd. **Exit 6** toward Hanover St.

Turn left onto Hanover St.

Go approx. 0.25 miles.

Letter from the Editor

By Rodger Furey, editor in the rough

This is my first attempt at a newsletter, hope you like it. For those who managed to miss the front page, Gary Trudeau has stepped down as VHGA newsletter editor and assumed the mantle of supreme regional hang gliding commander, or something like that. Apparently there was an election a few months ago, which Gary won, and somehow I managed to blunder into the vacant editor position. I hate when that happens. To his credit, Gary always tried to make the VHGA newsletter a respectable publication. I on the other hand do not feel so compelled. As punishment for making me the newsletter editor it is my intent to subject all who read this rag to my juvenile attempts at humor and bad taste until I am forced to resign.

As you may have noticed, I'm testing out a newsletter logo which if successful should amuse some and annoy others.

I would also like to initiate a few regular columns. *XC Tips* will be a column where veteran pilots can pass down nuggets of wisdom to XC newbies. I'm looking for New England region specific tips as opposed to the generic kind of info anyone can get from a Pagen book or the Yahoo hang gliding list. Dennis Cavagnaro has been kind enough to submit an introduction to this column. I'm hoping the rest of you XC titans can also make regular submissions.

Newbie Corner will be a regular column where I would like to acknowledge individual achievements of fledgling pilots. A first soaring flight, first flight off West Rutland, first flight from Ascutney to Morningside, all would be suitable candidates for this column. So if you do good, let me know. If someone else does good, let me know and I'll try to get in touch with them. Submissions and suggestions should be sent to furrod1@attbi.com

Bon appetite! **BURP!**

XC TIPS

By Dennis Cavagnaro

Cross country flying has a great tradition in New England. Being one of the original areas of Hang Gliding development we are very fortunate to be preceded by cross country pioneers who crafted their technique and judgment in the very challenging terrain of the New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont countryside.

Technically my first XC was off Temple Mt. in 1979. At that time a cross-country flight was defined as a flight that ended in a LZ you couldn't see from launch. Temple Mt. had a south-facing launch with nothing but tree in front. You have to wrap around the hill and land in a field that you couldn't see until the last few minutes of flight. It was a great thrill and introduced me to a type of hang gliding that I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Later that year I flew my Seagull Ten Meter off of Mount Ascutney, got high and went *over the back* with my friend Steve Arndt. We flopped over into a field along the road back to Morningside. It was only 5-6 miles but we were stoked and hooked into distance ever since. What makes it very difficult for new pilots in New England to get started going for distance is that you must fly over long stretches of non-landable terrain and use a great deal of judgment in your early flights. There are no easy gimmies around here and each decision to *leave the hill* is a commitment that offers stiff

penalties if poorly executed. In your first attempts, I suggest that you *leave* with a more experienced pilot who can help you find lift and avoid sinking air as you drift downwind to the nearby fields. Both Rutland and Ascutney offer easy fields within a few miles of the hill. You must always keep in mind the upper wind direction as well as the surface winds when you get below few thousand feet.

To this day every field I pass, whether I am flying, driving a car or walking down a road, I analyze for hang gliding purposes. "If I was going to land there, how I would approach it?" It is automatic for me and it needs to be a reflex thought process for yourself as well. I also strongly suggest that you make your cross-country flights a planned event. Yes, many of us in our early years got high and made a sudden decision to leave. We were either so high that it was obvious or we were lucky or both. Don't build bad habits and put yourself in a situation where you have to be lucky. You need to engineer luck out of your flights. Relying on luck is dangerous and will not provide you with a learning experience to improve upon.

This entire preamble leads up to the two most important areas of development for any student of Hang Gliding, *consistency* and *confidence*.

XC TIPS page 4

FINE FLYING cont. from page 1

Newest member of the Beach Club with a 91.3 mile flight (146.9 km), **Tom Lanning**.

Tom probably wants to give Curt a blanket party. (That's where you throw a blanket over someone's head and beat the livin snot out of them.) This was Tom's first flight to the coast, the only one last year, and he comes in second. Well, at least he gets a nice jacket for his effort. Tom returned from the Wallaby Open and Flytec Challenge last year a changed man. He must have learned something down there because he nonchalantly pops off this noteworthy flight to Hampton Beach, NH soon afterwards. Tom is going to be competing in Florida again this year and I'm almost afraid of what he'll do when he returns. Curt better be watching his six!

25 to 50 mile Class, **Greg Hanlon** with 62.8 miles (101 km)

Greg didn't have much competition in his class last year but even if he did he probably would have waxed their tail with this 62.8 mile flight to Northwood, NH. Near the end of his flight he could see the ocean but unfortunately he managed to box himself in and ran out of LZ's, either that or he was just hungry for some ice cream. (He landed next to an ice cream stand.) Greg is in the open class now so maybe it's a little easier for the rest of us shmucks in the 25-50 mile class to get one of those nice boomerangs next year.

0 to 25 mile Class, **Steve Prepost** with 55 miles (88.5 km)

Someone needs to take this guy aside and explain to him that it is bad etiquette to jump all the way from the newbie class to the open distance class. It makes the rest of us look bad. Stevie must be able to smell beer from 5k because he landed at the

Wolfsboro triathlon party and became an instant celebrity there, which apparently included free beer. Some guys have all the luck. What's unusual about this flight is that it was a high pressure blue sky day in August. Not exactly a textbook day for going long.

Paraglider Class, **Dave Morris** with 41.5 miles (66.8 km)

41.5 miles is a pretty good flight in a hang glider around here and this guy does it with his laundry. I guess it's a good thing that the northwest launch of Ascutney doesn't accommodate paragliders or there might have been a few hang glider XC jocks with egg on their face last year!

Honorable Mention, **Mark Vaughn** with an out and return from Morningside to Sunapee.

I know this isn't an official type XC flight. In fact some guys might be scratching their heads and wondering what possessed this guy to turn around and fly into the wind once he got to Sunapee. (Did he forget something?) Mark's flight gives hope to a those that wish to fly long and still land near their vehicle and the beer.

XC TIPS cont. from page 3

One is the child of the other. Try to eliminate unnecessary surprises by preparing your gear the same way every time. All batteries are charged, all radios are adjusted, the right clothing, retrieval arrangements and communication of the plan with your flying buddies.

My desk is a mess, and looking for tools around the house is like searching for buried treasure but I am very anal about my uniform and equipment when I fly. You will be surprised how a minor mistake (no radio, no gloves) will play on your mind,

using up valuable analyzing resources. When everything is right you feel more confident to take on new challenges. This leads us to the most important *muscle* you must work to develop, *your level of confidence*. You can't buy confidence. You can't fudge it or borrow it. It is the difference between the new H3/P3 and the XC masters. It will come eventually, but not by experience alone. What do I mean by this? If you don't start with a basic plan, you don't learn about the capabilities of your equipment, and you don't study the conditions as the day moves on. When you land you will have achieved an experience but gained little knowledge or information to add to your skills. XC flying is chess like in that you don't get better by simply pushing the pieces around the board.

Many times a pilot will get a new harness or glider that offers more performance but this can also reduce his comfort level. He has to put in some flying hours to get used to his new equipment. Reduction in comfort will affect confidence and reduce miles. I can't tell you how many times I have seen someone with lower performing equipment out fly another because he had rock solid confidence in his equipment. For this reason I try to avoid equipment changes at the beginning of the hang gliding season.

Consistency, confidence and good thermals are the fuel that will propel your cross country career. Gravity always wins in the end but the further you delay the inevitable (landing) the better the flight.

There will be a few of us who will be contributing to this column in the future. If you have any questions about XC flying please let us know. (*editors note: email me at furrod1@attbi.com*) We might not have all the answers but we will be happy to put our heads together to get the best information to you that we can.

Long Flights

