



# VHGA NEWS!

The Vermont Hang Gliding Association Quarterly Newsletter  
Summer 2003

## Hampton beach area invaded by hang gliding horde!

"I'm the king of the world!...uh, how do you land this thing again?"

By Rodger Furey

Well, maybe *invaded* is overstating things a bit - unless you consider the impact craters on the beach. And a couple scruffy hang glider pilots might not exactly rise to the definition of a *horde* - unless you consider the infrequency of XC flights to the coast as of late. It's all relative, and two flights to the beach within a couple weeks of each other is a veritable explosion of hang gliding prowess these days, particularly if you put on your consideration cap one more time and ponder the fact that these two pilots were both beach flight virgins. **Greg Hanlon** and **Tim Hoopes** are the two newest members to the exclusive VHGA beach club!

If you were a betting man or woman then Greg might have been considered one of the favorites to become the next member of the beach club. His cross country exploits had shown a steady upward trend over the last few years, 28 miles in 2001, 63 miles in 2002, and 80 miles in June of 2003. Clearly, here was someone who couldn't quite comprehend the concept of *convenient retrieval*. Near the end of the flight Greg managed to ignore the cries of despair from his flying buddy, Dan MacMonagal who was to slowly loose the L/D race (with a not-to-shabby 77 miles), and make Hampton Beach with 2800 feet to spare. The distractions of a crowded beach,

some damn kid's kite, and an acute case of mind numbing euphoria resulted in a full VG landing, with predictable results.

Tim was more of the dark horse in this saga. He first appeared on peoples radar screen in 2001 with an impressive 68 miler, but suffered through an undistinguished year in 2002. All the more sweet when he leapt from the center of the pack and left all the other XC jocks in the dust one fateful day in July, scratching their heads and wondering how on earth anyone could still maintain a decent sink rate with balls that big. 18:1 was Tim's final glide over inhospitable terrain and a possible sea breeze before he squeaked into Hampton Beach at 800 feet and punished the sand with his face.

All kidding aside, these are two outstanding flights by two up and coming New England pilots.

7/6/03 **Greg Hanlon** -  
92.7 miles (149.2 Km)

7/17/03 **Tim Hoopes** -  
91.1 miles (146.6 Km)

## Greetings from the Pres.

By John Arrison, VHGA president

Summer is well under way and after a slow start some fine flying have taken place. Congratulations to the two new members of the VHGA Beach club, Greg Hanlon and Tim Hoopes who dipped their feet in the surf recently. Many others have had personal best long flights and some new pilots made their first cross country adventures.

Thank you to all who helped out at the Mt Ascutney foot and bicycle races this summer. These events have become quite a big deal for the park and our help is very much appreciated.

Nick, the park ranger has been offered a new job within his department and will be leaving soon, which means breaking in a new ranger. Please do all you can to make the transition smooth.

Remember the mountain toll road closes at dusk. It is up to you to make arrangements to get your vehicle down before then. No one is allowed on the road after dark with out permission form park staff. If you can not get your vehicle down before dark it is important that you call the park and let them know. They check the parking lot at dusk and to them cars that are still in the parking lot could be lost hikers. The park number is 802-674-2060.

This will be my last year serving as club president. The next election will be at the October meeting and I am hoping someone will come forward to fill the vacant spot.

That's it for now. *Fly high, go far, and pound in.*



...to come to the next VHGA meeting and VOTE for the officers for next year. John Arrison is stepping down as our president so here's your chance to become the leader of the most powerful hang gliding organization in the northeast corner of the western hemisphere!

**THE NEXT VHGA MEETING WILL BE HELD  
ON OCTOBER 11, 2003 AT 7:00 PM AT  
MORNINGSIDE FLIGHT PARK.**

# HEY! THERE'S A PARTY AT TIM'S HOUSE!

- What are you talking about?

*It's the V.H.G.A. SUMMERTIME BASH!*

- Tim who?

*Tim Donovan, he just bought a new place in Springfield, VT. It has a huge LZ within gliding distance of Morningside and Ascutney!*

- When are these festivities to take place?

*Sunday, August 31 2003. rain or shine. 4:00 pm until whenever!*

- Any other pertinent info you'd like to share with us?

*YEAH! Pig roast at 6:00 pm*

*Entertainment by 'Brown Trout and the Lunkers' - it's a live band!*

*Tim's Phone number (603) 558-2514*

*BYOB*

- Sounds cool, how do I get there?

*Driving directions from Morningside: Go south on Rt. 12, cross bridge, follow Rt. 11 into Springfield. First right after the light in town (Valley Street).*

*Follow Valley Street about 1..5 miles. Look for Valley Mobile home park on right, take left on Trombley Road. Follow to the end, and out into the field.*

*From Ascutney: Take 131 west (towards Teddy's). After about a mile, look for the sign for Wellwood Orchard. Go left on Weathersfield Center Road. Go about 6 miles, look for the Crown Point Country Club on your right. Go down the long hill, and turn right at the bottom (across from the Traylor Park) onto Trombley Road. Follow to the end, and out into the field.*

*CAUTION: Children and livestock in barnyard at end of road - please drive slowly!*

*Flying directions from Morningside: head W*

*From Ascutney: head SSW*

*GPS N43-19.85 W72-28.75, 1050 MSL*

*It's located a couple miles east of the Springfield airport.*

## Newbie Corner

These may not be flights to the coast but they are significant millstones for the beginner pilots that have left the Morningside nest and are playing with the big boys now.

### Kip Stone:

Ascutney to Morningside. 5/10/03  
9.6 miles (15.5 Km)

*"... the thought of launching from that rock face was far more intimidating than I'd previously imagined. Even after wire crewing for the first few pilots, I was still working hard to suppress my anxiety when it was my turn to launch. I don't remember a thing about the launch, other than feeling a huge sense of relief as I flew away from the hill..."*

### Randy Brown:

Ascutney to Morningside 7/6/03  
9.6 miles (15.5 Km)

*"... I made it back to Morningside with only 450 ft. but I made it! I'm still grinning from ear to ear! Gary, Eric, Suzanne, and Kathleen all threw me in the pond for a nice cool*

*down. Couldn't you guys have just given me a t-shirt or something!"*

### Sontra Yim:

7/19/03 Morningside to Newport  
14.8 miles (23.8 Km)

*"...Ret tows me out towards the factory and lets me off in a nice 300+ fpm thermal. That thermal took me to about 4500 AGL. Next thing I know, I'm over Claremont. At this point I've decided that I can't make it back to Morningside (it was SW and I'm on a Falcon), so I decide to see how far I can go, hitching as many thermals as I can and always keeping a potential landing field in view, I make my trek along Rt. 11. At one point I was at 2k and ready to land, when a nice 500+ fpm thermal hits me and I take it to the highest point of my flight - 4800 ft..."*

### John Nichols:

Ascutney to Morningside 7/6/03  
9.6 miles (15.5 Km)

### Sean Sargent:

Ascutney to Morningside 7/6/03  
9.6 miles (15.5 Km)

## Camp Rob Fall Bash!

Hey all, we're going to be having our annual fall bash at **Camp Rob** on **Saturday August 30<sup>th</sup>**. We're looking to get the big 12' video screen again this year and there will be a tearful goodbye for our pal Stevie Prepost who's moving to Wallaby this fall to be the hang gliding bum we all wanna be. We're gonna be barbecuing on the brand new grill Marlin is building for the camp, and I've heard there will be quite a few out of town visitors from the comp scene. Come one - come all!  
Rob

# Zen and the art of hang gliding

By Dennis Cavagnaro

We all are aware of the uniqueness of the hang gliding experience, the feeling of free flight, the out of body experience of soaring high over mountain and valley unconnected from the fray below, not knowing where or when the journey will end. Yet in many ways, hang gliding emulates other sports and activities. It gives us the drive to excel, the fierceness of competing with your colleagues, and to take an old phrase from television, "the thrills of victory and the agony of defeat."

There are a few special pilots that rarely fail, that do the right things at the right time, that always seem to land on their feet so to speak. Then there are the rest of us. I saw a movie a long time ago with my eldest daughter, it was a Robert Redford movie called *A River Runs Through It*. It was probably best known for the early emergence of Brad Pitt, but a theme that flowed throughout the story was the idea that one can see and learn life's lessons through the experience of fly-fishing, in which the struggle to perfect ones casting and the strategy behind the hunt teaches us about our own lives. As I watched this movie, I thought that hang gliding could also be a metaphor of life. It has certain principals that in a Zen like manner reflect on our own life patterns. Things like,

- Wherever there is lift, there is sink close by. That the existence of one relies on

the occurrence of the other, that life feeds off instability.

- To be successful it is important to have long-range vision, as long as your keep short-term solutions within your reach.
- The formula for success is preparation, persistence and opportunity, and you really only have control of two of these, so focus on preparation and persistence as you wait for your chance.

The other day I landed in Sommers Connecticut, having hit the 100-mile mark once again. I did the usual, I packed up my equipment, made family and retrieval calls, and talked to locals who offered cool drinks and a picnic table to sit and wait for my ride. I went over the flight in my mind thermal-by-thermal, decision by decision again and again. I compared it to my other down the river, cross wind experiences adding new information and insight into the memory bank.

After a while I began to enter a happy/sad state of mind. You see, personally, last year was a very rough one for me, full of struggle, disappointment, and bad breaks. For better or worse I am an emotional being and I allow my state of mind to interfere with my flying at times. This year has brought positive events and better times. I guess after 30 years, my life and flying are connected - they are one and the same. It's a great feeling to be in the *flow* again.

**XC Tips presents:**

## Introduction to Speed to Fly

By Dennis Cavagnaro

My best flights have required sound speed-to-fly technique, especially my more recent flights. Knowing about S2F really helps you max your glide, it's just an enormous asset. The premise is simple enough, there is an ideal speed range to fly that changes with the wind direction, wind speed, and lifting and sinking air. It is based on slowing down in lift to maximize your time in the lifting air and speeding up in sink to move on from the sinking air. The more you are aware of these factors and adjust your speed, the better the efficiency of your glide. Most pilots don't speed up or slow down enough or they under react to the air they are flying through.

In New England, we have less LZ's and much more inconsistent lift than in many other areas of the country. I have found that adjusting your flight path to a track that balances lift production with LZ availability allows for greater freedom to find lift and long glide paths that cover ground quickly. This is when flying crosswind using S2F is very helpful. I know I'm stating the obvious to many but covering as much ground as you

can during the peak of day makes long flights. It's hard to make much ground when the thermals weaken later in the day.

Many instruments make S2F easy. My Bruaniger GPS Comp tells me when to speed up or slow down with arrows and sound. It works off the polar of the glider and takes lift/sink wind speed and direction into the equation. In essence, you make subtle speed adjustments for the air you are flying in.

Pilots have a tendency to fly too slowly in cross/headwinds and too fast downwind. The thrill of making ground overcomes the need to be efficient, the fear of sinking fast prevents us from increasing speed to penetrate air and go further and arrive higher in upwind conditions. I have provided an excerpt from Chris Arai's web site to further illustrate the advantages of S2F. His articles and website explain this technique best.

**SPEED page 4**

## In The Beginning

By John Arrison

My first exposure to hang gliding was in 1975. I went to watch a meet at Magic Mountain in Londonderry, VT. The big deal back then was who could do the most 360s and get into the small parking lot surrounded by 90 foot trees. I remember several people did not make it. One look and I had to get me one of those things. At the time there was a company called Track and Trail who was actually making standards in Bethel, VT. Chapin Pratt was the owner, sale maker and just about everything else. I placed my order and for \$400, harness included, I had me a new standard. No cover bag, no anodized aluminum, no folding control fame, no battens, and a bikini harness that could make a soprano out of any man.

Now it was off to the training hill for some extensive instructions. "Well this here is a hang glider... this is how you set it up...this is how you run with it... good luck!" end of lesson. Any of you that have never had the privilege of trying to fly a standard should be aware that you are never really quite knew if and when the thing is actually flying. During the run you would lean carefully forward to see if it was flying. If it wasn't a 'bang-down tube', if it was your feet might actually leave the ground.

After several down tubes I headed to Magic Mountain to try my skills. I did not even think of going to the top but instead tried the bunny slope. Usually the flight would end somewhere before the bottom. On one flight as I approached the bottom I realized I was still in the air and I was going to have to turn the damn thing, which I wasn't quite sure how to do. Slam! into the parking lot.

Another flight at Magic I went into a big pile of mud and got covered from head to foot. On my way home we came across a bad car wreck and I got out to assist the victims until EMS arrived. When EMS arrived I had a hard time convincing them I was not a delusional victim of the car crash.

That was the very beginning for me. I graduated to a Seagull III and then on to the Meter series from Seagull, incidentally the Meters were quite a good glider. Many years and many down tubes later hang gliding is still as much fun as it was in the beginning.

One further anecdote, when you're at Morningside next time ask Jeff about the pigs he was raising in what is now the shop area. I remember he was feeding them stale Hostess Twinkies.

# V.H.G.A. meeting minutes

The general membership had a meeting on 7/19/03. This is a really brief summary.

## Ascutney:

- ❖ Many volunteers showed up for the foot race. The organizers were very thankful for the help.
- ❖ Jake Pierce is planning a flying event at the resort, which will take place sometime in October.
- ❖ The south launch needs some maintenance.
- ❖ A suggestion was made to investigate the possibility of providing a N or NW launch on Ascutney, which would accommodate paragliding.

## West Rutland:

- ❖ Membership box on launch needs new VHGA membership applications.
- ❖ Astro-turf rug on ramp needs replacement. A motion was made and accepted to purchase and install a new astro-turf rug. The cost not to exceed \$300.00.
- ❖ Negotiations to purchase or lease the launch from Jake are still in progress.

## Burke:

- ❖ No keys are needed to access launch from the toll road. Cost is \$3.00 (honor system).
- ❖ The club is still looking for a site director.
- ❖ The site is insured for the year with no changes in status anticipated.

## General Discussion:

- ❖ No one has volunteered to organize regional competition for hang gliding and paragliding. As such, competitions may not take place for 2003.
- ❖ Tim Donovan has offered to host a party on 8-31-03. A motion was made and accepted to apply \$300.00 of club funds

towards Tim's party, which will be the VHGA summer party.

- ❖ It was agreed to provide an award for cross-country distance in a paraglider as is done for hang gliding. The specific goals will be determined.

## Report from Regional Director Gary Trudeau

- ❖ Gary discussed potential changes in USHGA to include power and towing. Vote will be in magazine this year.
- ❖ Emergency procedures - a proposal to develop national standards which would include use of standard radio frequencies and GPS was discussed.
- ❖ Gary is putting together a program to introduce Hang Gliding to high school students and is looking for ideas. Please contact Gary.

## SPEED cont. from page 3

Excerpt from Chris Arai website. <http://www.araidesign.com/>

...If someone told you that you could improve your glide angle by 10% would you be more interested? How about if you heard that 15% glide speed improvements could be had? If you are an XC or race pilot then you are probably paying more attention. The main purpose of this article is to demonstrate that speed-to-fly is important for all XC pilots of hang gliders and paragliders, not just the competition pilots...

Glide Improvement for Hang Gliders		
Average Speed	Percent	L/D
Near best glide speed	15%	1.8
Speeds near 32 mph	10%	1.2
Speeds near 37 mph	6%	0.6

## Radio Chatter

Match the chatter with the correct pilot and win a kewpie doll\*

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. "Cloudbase is 7100 MSL, wind is from the NW at 17.8 knots, air temperature 55.2 degrees, I'm leaving." (All this before anyone else has even launched.) | A. Rob Jacobs                   |
| 2. "This is brutal."   | B. Tom Lanning                  |
| 3. "Yeehaw!!!"   | C. Dan MacMonagle               |
| 4. "Will you guys shut the f*ck up!"   | D. Dennis Cavagnaro and his VOX |
| 5. "Click, buzzzz, crackle, click"   | E. Jake Pierce                  |

\* Relax, there is no kewpie doll. Hell, I don't even know what a kewpie doll is.