

The NASA Flyer

Newsletter of the Northeastern Air Sports Association - Chapter 221
November 2010

MILESTONES

First Mountain Launches - The brisk mornings of Nov 6 & 7 saw the continuation of the Mountain Wings fledgifest, with **Josh McMillan** and **Ric Norman** completing their maiden mountain launches from the North Knob in Ellenville. Again **Tom** was on top sending them off, with **Greg** guiding them in from below. A number of fellow pilots and others were on hand to give support, including **John Reeves**, **Timo Friedrich**, **Patti Herman**, **Victor Alvarez**, **Carl DiPiero**, **Cody Norman**, **Jim** and **Lil Georg**, **Elan Schultz**, and **Cathleen O'Connell**.



A joyful Ric in the LZ after his exciting flight



A smiling Josh ready to launch!



*Greg debriefs Josh in the LZ
(photo by Victor Alvarez)*



*Instructors and new mountain pilots:
Ric, Greg, Josh, Tom*

USHPA Awards - Once again this year the hang gliding luminaries of Ellenville made a great showing among USHPA Award winners: With **Bryon Estes** being named Instructor of the Year for 2010, **Tom Galvin** now transitions to **IOTY Emeritus**. Congratulations Bryon! **Greg Black** received a USHPA Commendation officially recognizing his heroic leadership of Cathleen's tree rescue in March. **Wayne Neckles** also received a Commendation for his role in the tree rescue, as well as for his extraordinary efforts to improve launches

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at Ellenville and Brace Mountain.
Congratulations Greg and Wayne! Well
deserved!

LAUNCH IMPROVEMENTS

New Hang Check Platform - Carl DiPiero recently led a team to build a beautiful new hang check platform on the North Knob. Here he acknowledges the special contributions of each person to the project.:

First off, a special thanks to **Greg** for putting capital improvements back into the launch and our sport. He supplied all the materials to construct it. Additionally he recruited Dave Hopkins to help assist with construction.

Second, special thanks **Dave Hopkins** who took off a day of work help build it. His expertise in the persuasion of boulders made easy work of moving tons of rock out of the way. His knowledge of carpentry also ensured we have a well constructed platform to last for years. I really appreciated his assistance and can't thank him enough.

Master Builders – Dave and Carl, exhausted after their long day working on the platform



Third, thanks to **Mark TenPas** and **Lenny** for taking time away from the training hill to haul the building supplies up to launch and carry the tools down when we finished.

Fourth, thanks to **Steve Bailer** who donated the use of his battery operated impact screw gun and circular saw. Lugging a generator up to launch was not an option. A hammer and hand saw are just too slow and don't cut it in the 21st century because we all want instant results. We got it with the use of his tools.

And finally, thanks to **Sue Sparrow** who provided hot chocolate and lunch to keep us warm and energized throughout the day.

Inspecting the new platform are Mark, Lenny, Dave, Greg, Dave H, and Carl



Timo and Tom try it out – Perfect!



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Comfort Station - A 1250 gallon septic tank was recently installed in the Mountain Wings shop and now that the tile work has been completed by **Dave Hopkins**, it will soon be hooked up in a very welcome and fully appointed (toilet, sink, shower) bathroom. These improved facilities should go a long way toward attracting more people to flight training! Stay tuned for further updates on bathroom progress.



A beautiful blossom: the new septic tank

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Snow Birds, by Tom Galvin

Most people assume hang gliding is a summertime sport and for the most part this is true. However for many pilots in Ellenville, New York hang gliding is a year round past time. While there are certain considerations to make on account of the temperature, or the snow covered terrain, the basics of flying remain the same. That said; let's dig into what you need to know to fly safely and enjoyably in winter.

You have to be prepared with the right gear for cold weather. Wearing layers of silk, wool or synthetics that wick, with the outermost layer

being windproof are vital for staying warm. Cotton is a poor insulator when wet, so should not be worn. You should also invest in a balaclava or neck gaiter and good wind proof gloves to provide maximum protection to your most exposed areas. Bar mitts are almost a necessity in the depths of winter in northern latitudes. A pod harness is hard to beat for blocking the wind, but if you do fly a cocoon, then strongly consider a full body snow/flight suit. Ski goggles or a full face helmet with visor will keep your eyes protected. Cat Crap, found in any ski shop, applied to the goggles or visor will prevent fogging. Hand and foot warmers, also found in ski shops, will keep your extremities warm. The key is to be miserly with your body heat, and vigilant in minimizing its loss. Hypothermia and frostbite are very real dangers that will strike the unprepared quickly. To complete your wardrobe, Invest in a good pair of waterproof boots with a sole material that grips, like Vibram.

Winter air is denser, so while it takes less velocity to soar, your maximum launch wind speed should also be reduced. A pleasant 12-15MPH at launch in summer, can provide a few grey hairs during a January flight. The effects of turbulence tends to be more pronounced with cold dry air. One common misconception is that there are no thermals in winter. It is not the temperature that produces lift, but rather the temperature difference between a parcel of air and the air around it. A blacktop parking lot surrounded by snow fields will provide that difference nicely. In winter thermals can be every bit as strong as in summer, but edges tend to be sharper, and the climb may snake more. The main difference is that days with good thermal lift are generally less frequent with lower ceilings.

Preparation is key. Allow extra time for the setup of your glider. Assume you will have to clear your launch of snow and ice. Arrive with shovels, scrapers and ice melt if applicable. An old carpet securely fastened can provide sure footing over otherwise unusable icy launches. Wear one set of clothes for setup, and leave your dry flying clothes in a warm car to change into just before launching. If at any point in your flight you start to feel cold in any part of your body, begin your descent immediately and land as soon as possible. It can take some time to get down and a slight chill can turn into full blown frostbite or hypothermia in the

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10-15 minutes it takes you to reach the LZ if you are high, or the lift is strong.

You may know your home LZ like the back of your hand in summer, but winter can turn a grassy lawn into a skating rink, a icy slush pool, or a waist deep crunchy pit of albino crème brule. I advise walking the LZ each flight. On many days no step landing skills are practically required. Finally, stage a vehicle with good heat in the LZ to act a mobile warming hut. Stock it with a thermos of hot chocolate or soup for welcome end to a winter flight.

Some of my most memorable moments in hang gliding are from winter flights. Soaring thousands of feet above the ridge after an ice storm provided a surreal view of a crystal forest stretching to the horizon, dazzling bright on a sunny day. Snow flurries can envelop you in a sparkling dance of ten thousand prisms. A little forethought can open up a whole new world of flying for you. With this guide I hope to provide some insights, but they cannot replace the guidance from a local with experience flying in winter. Join us and become a snow bird too.

H2 Corner, by Flarabella Goodlanding

Look at all the H2s there are now! There are the “veteran” H2s, like **Carl, Cathleen, Tom L.**, and **Elan**, as well as a fresh crop that includes **Steve, Timo, Josh, Ric, Nikolay, Konstantin**, and **Daniel Z.** Well, my pretties, Auntie Flarabella wants to remind you of some important things every H2 pilot should know.

Tree kit – All Mountain Wings students **MUST** carry the following items in their harness when they fly from the mountain: a charged **radio**, **whistle**, 100 feet of **masons line** tied to a **carabiner**. You should attend the upcoming clinic on tree landing and rescue techniques. (Stay tuned for details.)

You should **mark your equipment** with your name and contact information. Your name and telephone number should be taped inside your harness bag, for example. That way if someone

finds it left behind somewhere they’ll know how to get it back to you. Also mark your radio and base tube (if it is removed from your glider).

Chad’s Law means that H2s must have ALL of the following conditions in place: 1) flying conditions must be suitable, 2) our instructor must be available to launch us, and 3) we must be ready at the appointed time and in the appointed place. Guess which is the only one of these that we can control?

Given the coordination and interdependence the sport requires, you should share **contact information** with your fellow pilots and instructors, and keep this information with you while planning and then negotiating yourself and your equipment to launch and from the landing zone.

Non-Flying Friends

In this issue we feature **Sue Sparrow**, who is familiar to us as a regular presence at Mountain Wings, usually accompanied by her long-haired chihuahua, Mimi.



Sue (person) with Mimi (dog)

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While she didn't pursue flight training herself after taking a few lessons, Sue is deeply involved in the sport through her active support of students and pilots of all levels. In addition, she's a certified EMT on the Cragmore and Mohonk Search and Rescue team and on the Ellenville First Aid Squad. In fact, she played an important role in the rescues of **Cathleen O'Connell** in March and **Mike Longo** a few weeks ago, where her calming presence was as important as her emergency expertise to ensure a positive outcome in both situations. (Both Cathleen and Mike are very grateful that Sue was there for them.) Finally, you may have noticed Sue among the regular contributors to this newsletter, as she is often on the scene when something interesting is happening and never fails to snap a photo with her iPhone to share with us. Thanks for everything, Sue!

Erratum - In the October 2010 issue the post-flight photo of Greg, Steve, Timo, and Daniel Z was mistakenly accredited to Patti Herman. Patti graciously notes that it was in fact **Victor Alvarez** who took the photo. Thank you both!

Children of the Flight Park

Ryland & Caleb frequently accompany Daniel Z & Charlene to the flight park, keeping themselves entertained and being generally charming and helpful. Hope to see you again soon, boys!



(Parental permission given for inclusion of photograph)

Contributors to this issue:

- Carl DiPiero
- Tom Galvin
- Victor Alvarez
- Cathleen O'Connell

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Happy Thanksgiving! (Flare, turkey, FLARE!!)