



High Times At Highland

(by Lauren Tjaden)

Paul and I roared into the town of Ridgely Friday evening, eager to arrive at the Highland Aerosports fly in. Our CD player blared old rock tunes, and I danced in my seat like the girl in the Mitsubishi commercial. I'd never been to a fly in before, but I was ready. Then, lights flashed. Blue and red ones. An officer marched up, his lips as tight as if he sucked on a pickle. He told us how folks with hang gliders strapped on their trucks always seemed to be the worst speed limit offenders.

"How surprising", I offered. "They're so safety conscious." I did my best imitation of a nice girl. For some reason,

my ploy worked. After we tricked the officer out of ticketing us, we cranked up the music again, and bolted towards

Flying was out of the question because of the wind that howled across the runway

the airport. Flying was out of the question because of the wind that howled across the runway, so I opted for a spin on Christy Huddle's motorcycle instead. Her boyfriend Rich offered to take me for a zip around the block.

I loved my ride. Rich and I tooted through towns filled with houses with

gingerbread trim. We blasted down the highway and crept over railroad tracks. We arrived back in time for cocktail hour – but the partying was limited. I crawled into my sleeping bag by eleven, so I would be fresh for Saturday.

Saturday morning, I assembled my glider – the Gin Eagle – near the front of the line. I knew the lift might not be great so early, but I wanted a chance to fly without quarts of adrenalin spurting through my veins. Lots of pilots and rowdy air might make conditions challenging for me.

However, even in the calmer air, with the sky almost empty, I still managed to

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Ralph Sickinger

Pre-Flight



You know, it seems like lately people have been asking me a lot of questions; in fact, it seems like the same questions keep coming up again and again. So, this month, I've decided to provide responses to the most common ones. Here they are:

- 1) It's a Nikon Coolpix 995.
- 2) It's 4 megapixels; and it can shoot just under 2 frames-per-second in continuous mode.
- 3) It has a 256MB flash card, and can store 350+ images at 1280x960 resolution.
- 4) \$600.

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Aerial View of Highland Aerosports' "3rd Flatlands Fly-In"

(Photo by Ralph Sickinger)

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5) The weird grippy stuff on my downtubes is "overgrip" wrap, used for tennis and racquetball racquets. (*Get it at any sporting goods store.*) I used Prince "Dura-Tred" for my glider.

6) It comes in packages of 3 strips each, and I needed 8 strips for my glider (2 for each location: 2 shoulders and 2 hands) Of course, I also have attack tubes - with round tubes you should only need 4.

7) It's for carrying a Hang Glider.

8) 18 feet. (*Actually, 17'6".*)

9) The cheetah.

10) 11 years.

11) Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

12) Would that be african or european?

13) 145 pounds.

14) Because I LOVE my Falcon!

15) (*sigh*) No, it's not.

16) It's absolutely amazing...

17) Shenendoah, Richmond, southern Pennsylvania, and Maryland's eastern shore.

18) Anywhere between 4 minutes and 4 hours. Between 30 and 90 minutes is common.

19) Between 1000 and 8000 feet; I've been as high as 4500 MSL.

20) Because I can!



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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Joe Brauch

Prez-Sez



I hope this June day finds everyone in good health and spirits. I had a wonderful, though late day at the High Rock fly in. Work has kept me away from flying for a couple of key Saturday's. I ended up having to be at work during the Fly-in till 2PM on that Saturday. But a determination to get there and a need for some airtime got me flying at the pulpit by 7:30. I had a wonderful glass off flight. Although I did not fly to the High Rock LZ as I was hoping on Friday night, I did enjoy a nice long ridge run with Marc C. With a small miscalculation on my landing direction I did manage a safe high grass landing. I quickly packed up and headed to the High Rock LZ. Got there and Bruce was still cooking and Brian was still making Mint Juleps. Good music from Bob and a blazing fire to unwind next to. Good friends to share stories and a beautiful sky to sleep under.

All I can say is that I hope everyone had a good a day as I did.

Thanks to all involved and I am glad that we could help out Emma Jane while having so much fun!

As this column progresses I hope that it does not seem too preachy but, as the head of this club I feel this weird need to expel my insight about hang gliding in the hopes of sharing some tidbit of information that will help someone out during their flying career. What brought this thought to mind was what seemed to naturally kick in after I noticed that my landing was going long. Tom McGowan had shared with me his insights into the LZ at Fishers. One thing I thought was strange at the time, but have come to appreciate is the Foot Drag. If you need to slow while on a glide you can extend a foot to the ground, which will slow you down a bit. This is another good reason to wear boots. What I want to express is that all that time sitting on launch, checking out LZs or, chatting post-flying, is to listen to more experienced pilots and although you might not think you will ever get yourself into a "situation", you might hear something very helpful that seems to come from your own bag of knowledge when you really need it. Thanks again Tom. In addition to running long, I found myself looking at a strip of high grass to land in and again, Bob G. had shown me how to

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scare myself. Let me backtrack for a second. Last week, when practicing multiple (eight) pattern tows, I used a cart for launching that angled Ginny's nose down. Because the keel rest was set high, Ginny kept sticking in the cart. I would let go of the rope holding me down, and wiggle around some, but Ginny would just lay there like a dead fish. We'd be howling along at the speed of a Stealth bomber before she flew. Not fun.

Sunny wondered if I was getting "pulled through" the control frame, but when Adam flew Ginny he had the same trouble. We finally switched carts and solved the problem, but not before I had worked to make sure I wasn't holding on too long or losing my position.

Saturday I remembered my lessons (though I chose a different cart, that angled Ginny's nose high). I let go early and tried to keep my arms in front of me. Big mistake. Ginny stuttered into the air immediately, and then banged back onto the runway, her wheels rolling. We'd gathered enough airspeed that her wings straightened and she grabbed at the sky again right away, but the experience woke me up faster than ten cups of coffee.

...the world had never looked quite so clear and perfect before.

My heart dislodged itself from my teeth and crawled back down my throat while Lisa Cain towed me. She deposited Ginny and I high enough that I could see the Chesapeake Bay glimmer on one side. It reflected the morning sun, orange as a pumpkin. Clouds dotted the sky on my other side, strangely white, as if they had been soaked in Clorox. I had to wonder if I had always had a piece of Saran Wrap stuck over my eyes before, which had somehow been stripped away just before my flight, because the world had never looked quite so clear and perfect before. I couldn't find lift, but complaining about this would be like someone complaining because he won the

lottery when the jackpot was only four million.

As soon as I had landed – a miracle, on my feet – I hustled over to launch for a pattern tow. I always need to practice landing. This time I didn't nearly kill myself off the cart. Nothing like pants-wetting fear to convince you of the need for change. Lisa waved me off at a thousand feet. I intended to set up for landing almost immediately, but my vario interrupted my plans. It screamed that I had hit lift.

So I've had the rub from Brad Pitt – does this mean I wouldn't take one from George Clooney? Duh.

A thermal billowed under my wings, floating towards heaven. I shouted with delight and cranked Ginny into a circle. I soared to twelve hundred feet – higher than my release point, and a new first for me – but the wind was blowing my magic column of air away from the airport. I yearned to follow, but I need to get better at landing before I tackle the tribulations of cross country. Twenty five minutes later, Ginny and I found ourselves back on the planet, again shackled by the earth's surly bonds. The story repeated itself my next flight – another extendo. Tired and sated, I gave up for the morning.

After a brief nap in the grass, I offered (was coerced) to pick up the pilots who wanted to fly cross country. I drove Dave Proctor's truck all afternoon, collecting not only Dave, but Christy, Tom, and Mike as well. Dave and Christy bickered constantly. You would have sworn they were married. Funny, listening relaxed me, sprawled alongside them in the pickup seat. But as the day progressed, I had a hard time not gazing at my watch. I reminded myself that I had lots of time to fly again.

We stopped for ice cream on the way back to the airport. Whenever I got bored, I glanced in the rear view mirror and watched Tom and Mike roasting in the back, cream dripping down their chins. Really, it could have been worse. But I never dreamed how much better it

was going to get. When I finally piled out of the truck, I could see gliders spiraling in the sky. I intended to dash towards the Gin Eagle and inhale some more pure air.

Cindy Rousseau interrupted my plans. She traipsed up and asked if I wanted to go fly in her Decathlon. The Decathlon is green and white, with stars decorating her wings, and she can perform all sorts of aerobatics. I knew I should tell Paul I had arrived back, but getting offered a ride in the Decathlon was like getting

offered a back rub by Brad Pitt. I sprinted towards the plane.

Cindy handled the take off, but then offered to let me fly. I protested that I was thrilled to just sit and watch, but Cindy only laughed and said to grab the stick. Talk about dreams. I banked one way and another over a river. I don't know the river's name, but it was dark and wide and curved like the ribs of a deer. When we landed, I was filled with joy and the love of all mankind and Cindy and the Decathlon.

Then Cindy asked if I wanted to fly her Cessna 180, a tail dragger. So I've had the rub from Brad Pitt – does this mean I wouldn't take one from George Clooney? Duh. We climbed skyward again. I had watched the Chesapeake at sunrise, and now I got to watch it again as the sun dove behind it.

After that, it was time to celebrate. Already higher than a 747, stoked like a forest fire in a fifteen knot wind, I was at my most dangerous. I guzzled martinis and had a piece of Phillip (the pig). I played spoons and hugged everyone, until they began to sidle away from me. Brian accused me of humping his leg. I watched some fire-jumping, and was disappointed to see that the boys kept on their clothes. Christy photographed the tattoo that decorates my butt. The crowd yelled for me to throw a frog I captured

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First Flight!



Last month I experienced one of the greatest feelings in the world, I got to fly like the birds. This was my first time hang gliding and it was truly unbelievable. I have been sky diving before, but the two are incomparable. Skydiving is free falling back to the earth; hang gliding is soaring through the air with style and finesse. I must say though, it is a bit scarier than skydiving. At least with skydiving you know you are heading straight back to the ground and you don't need any skill with heading in that direction, except when landing. Hang gliders seem to want to stay up in the air as long as possible, and I will admit that the altitude does scare me just a bit. It is really something to be



able to float through the sky as if you were a bird, maneuvering through the wind currents and going faster or higher whenever you want. I, of course, was not so inclined to do either of those things, since it was my first time. Sonny, my tandem instructor, continued to assure me that everything was safe, but much to his dismay, I was still not interested in being a daredevil. I'll leave the fancy turns and dives to all of you professionals and I will gladly admire you safely from the ground.

Happy soaring!

Laura Clarke, fond admirer



Laura Clarke is a friend of mine, who took her first [tandem] hang gliding flight at Highland Aerosports in Ridgely, MD, on May 11th, 2002. (RS)



Photos by Ralph Sickinger

CHGPA Photo Album



An evening tow over Ridgely - off into the sunset!

(Photo by Ralph Sickinger)

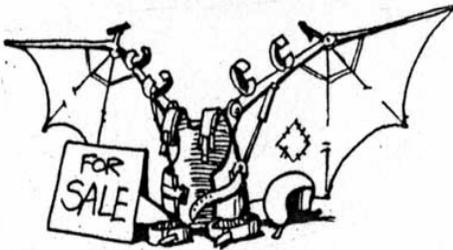
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into the flames, but I snuck him out into the meadow and turned him loose, instead. Life was perfect.

I awoke around three to find that someone had poured squirrel dung in my mouth and beaten me about the head. I removed a foot from my sleeping bag and plunked it on the ground, but the tent kept spinning. I thought I might feel better by morning. I didn't.

I lazed by the office and saw sights so incredible they seemed like wisps of dreams you only half remember in the morning.

I'll try to keep the rest short. Sunday, I drank lots of water. Breakfasted at the Riverside. Nearly puked, but didn't. Motorcycled again. Flew my Gin Eagle. Was so happy I told Paul he could buy a glider and a GPS. Pinched Adam and broke his glasses (sorry). Was overcome with the love of all mankind.

I lazed by the office and saw sights so incredible they seemed like wisps of dreams you only half remember in the morning. The yellow and red Dragonflies barreled down the runway together, touching down only seconds apart. The two Decathlons – little Corvettes of the sky - took off as one, while I forgot how to breathe. Joe Gregor carved turns in formation with the tandem glider, carrying Joe's father, celebrating his birthday in the air with his son.

What a weekend. After the fact, I am as glugged and sick as a kid allowed to feast on endless candy. But I'm not sorry. Not even slightly. When can we go again?



(Continued from page 2)

land in tall grass without wacking about a year ago. Listen to these more experienced pilots they know what they are talking about.

Finally, being new to the 2 meter band, I am not all that familiar with its protocols, but I have heard a couple of times this spring pilots getting annoyed with the traffic on specific bands. It would be nice for everyone to share one of the two "club" frequencies but with all the needs for different communications that is not going to happen. My suggestion is that if what you are talking about is not directly about flying and conditions please try to switch to another frequency. If doing retrievals, make contact then switch to another frequency or use a repeater that is local for quick but

very efficient longer range communications. (*They are on our website*)

Note: keep it short on the repeaters. The ham clubs that operate them do incur operating expenses.

Enjoy the summer flying. I have video-

tape of some launches from The Pulpit and Woodstock (the following day) to show after the meeting. Please feel free to bring video or photos to share after the meeting.

See you there! ~Joe



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If you have anything along these lines, please send it to:

webdev@chgpa.org

~Mark Cavanaugh



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Next CHGPA meetings will be held:

June 26, 2002

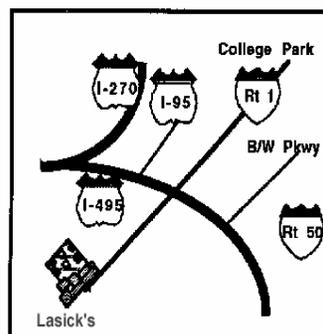
July 24, 2002

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Pulpit Ramp at Dusk—Photo by Susanna Clapsaddle