

First Mountain Launches

Fledge Fest -There was a host of first mountain launches in September, beginning over Labor Day weekend. **Timo Friedrich, Daniel Zegers,** and **Steve Bailer** all were launched from the North Knob by **Tom Galvin,** and guided in to safe landings by **Greg Black** who was waiting in the LZ. Pilots and friends who turned up to cheer them on, included **Wayne Neckles, Elan Schultz,** and **Cathleen O’C** on launch and **Carl DiPiero, Victor Alvarez, Patti Herman, Tonia Tagliaferro, Sue Sparrow, Lee von Krauss, Charleen, Ryland,** and **Caleb** waiting below in the LZ. A week or so later **Konstantin Ventrenko** also made his maiden flight. Congratulations guys!

Super-Instructor Greg Black posing with new mountain pilots Dan, Steve, and Timo



(photo by Patti Herman)

Konstantin preparing for flight



(photo by Timo Friedrich)



Tom, looking proud but relieved, relaxes after pushing all the baby birds out of the nest

Impressions of My First Launch

by **Timo Friedrich (Ellenville, 2010)** It began like the previous Training Hill weekends; the wind wasn't coming from the right direction for the B-Hill again and I was looking forward to watching the Labor Day spectacle from the top of the T-Hill. When I hit Ellenville I was surprised: No gliders on the field, no cars crowded in front of Greg's shop and a massive wind blowing down the valley. With an ironic smile I pulled out my book and spent the day practicing Hang Waiting or the art of relaxation. And had a really good Saturday lying in the grass, reading. In the evening I joined Tom and Greg in the shop to watch some videos. We talked about the forecast and a potential window for the B-Hill on Sunday evening. And Greg mentioned that I could get my clearance for the mountain doing a tandem in Middletown. "Two flights for 240\$ should see you through if you are in a hurry." At first I was a bit annoyed. Not another three figure bill... But curiosity won and I scheduled a flight for the next morning together with Daniel. One of the best decisions I made. The morning was cold and we went early to avoid the strong wind the forecast had talked about. We failed and hit that wind when the ultra-light pulled the tandem glider off the ground with a gut wrenching lurch. The air was more than "textured" and I remember a split second thought that the harness would be all that held me up. But it felt as if the fear and worries were falling away with the ground beneath me and seconds after launch I found myself in the best rollercoaster-ride of my life. The wind in the face, the view, the speed. How could there be space for worries or fear being full of excitement and wonder?... and when we released at 4000 feet and Martin above me let go of the down-tubes it was me flying! That piece of tubing and sail

did what I wanted it to do! We went through speed exercises, stalls, turns and the figure 8 approach and finally landed. Too soon. Not enough of that feeling. Walking back to the hangar I felt heavy. I wanted back up there. Back where I made my own roads, my own invisible railways. But the grin was glued to my face for the day.



Timo preparing for his first launch

I totally didn't expect that Tom offered to launch us from the Mountain that very evening. I'd spent a year on the training hill and all of a sudden they used the M-word? But there were these memories of how it felt up there... We drove up to Greg's launch. What a view! I'd been up here before but this would be my time! Turned out it wasn't. The wind came from behind and cross and I watched the sun vanishing behind the hills. We pancaked and I found myself on the hill in my tent. I slept well and was ready the next morning. I did my preflight and hang check but that just wouldn't do it. I checked and rechecked myself getting more and more nervous. But then the memories of the tandem flight came back. I calmed down and accepted, that I would have to trust my checks and my training to get back up there, back to those feelings. And a moment later I ran down that ramp without worries. And there I was. In the air. In my own glider. By myself only this really calm voice in my ears telling me to relax. The air was so smooth... I followed the flight plan, heading to the farm, following the tree line turning above the T-Hill... I fell in love with the sound of the air during the first 180 degree turn... this gentle woosh... And I would have that same warm feeling every time I turned in all of my flights. Finally I was two tree heights high and turned to the LZ. Nice direction I thought slightly detached of the world... Another

voice in my head told me to pull in. Why should I do that? It's so nice up here and all seems well... That voice again. "Pull in more!" I noticed that I was above the middle of the LZ and still gliding. The air was nicely buoyant that day but that porta potty was really coming uncomfortably close now... and coming closer... and closer. I had come at an angle across the LZ to maximize my approach but there was just that pumpkin field to the left and the porta potty in front. I turned right, leveled out and landed some nine feet from the porta potty. I unhooked and carried the glider over to where Greg was waiting. I must have lost a couple of years during that flight because I ran to Greg like a schoolboy shouting "That was awesome; now I know what it's about!" Greg smiled: "Dude; you know shit. There is so much more." And he was right.

During the little experience I have so far it was always that moment of surrendering to the immediate launch that I enjoyed, the view, the feeling of following invisible roads that assemble in front of me and fall apart behind that make me go back up there. And of course the "Woosh!". In every flight I love it and seek it just like I did in that first flight.

Upcoming Clinics

There are a number of clinics planned for this winter. Topics and techniques will include a **parachute** throwing (prior to repacking), **tree landing** technique and **rescue** protocol, first aid, **radio communications** including a test to allow legal use of certain frequencies. This may also be combined with camera mounting techniques. Most important of all is the planned **H3seminar**, which is a must for ALL pilots, even those already with or beyond their H3 rating. The knowledge to be gained from participating in this clinic is priceless. Details will be announced as the sessions are scheduled. Note that associated with each clinic will be a potluck party and any flying the conditions allow!

Launch Improvements

Brace Update – Work to fix one of the bridges along the trail to launch was completed on October 9. That morning **Wayne, Carl, Ian Hochstetter** and his son **Griffin** worked diligently to remove the rotted boards and replace the entire structure with new materials, secured in place with 21st century power tools! **Tom, Timo,** and **Cathleen** arrived later in the day to help with the finishing touches. That day **Carl** and **Tonia** also wacked their way through miles of mountain laurel, widening the path.

**On the new bridge to launch (10/10 work party):
Timo, Tom, Cathleen, Carl, Wayne; Not pictured:
Ian and Griffin Hochstetter, Tonia Tagliaferro**



(Photo by Tonia Tagliaferro)

On the following weekend **Carl** organized another garden party of **Timo, Steve, and Jackie Faust** to continue widening the trail to allow scratch-free passage of medium-sized trucks. See photo below for the impressive results. (“Hooray!” says the Little Blue Ford Ranger That Could.)

**The path to launch after the 10/17 work party
spent another Sunday taming the mountain laurel**



(Photo by Steve Bailer)

**The mighty trailblazers of Brace: Jackie, Timo, Steve
(with Cain), and Carl**



(Photo by an unknown but obliging hiker)

TREES AGAIN



Mike Longo As you may have heard, our friend Mike Longo was recently rescued by pilots, EMT/Paramedic crews, local firemen, and concerned others after he was seriously hurt in a fall from a tree branch. He experienced an accidental chute deployment then skated across the tree canopy until he came to rest about 60 feet up in the branches of a tree on Jerry Felice’s property. Many pilots and concerned others raced to the scene or took action remotely but before aid arrived (as it grew dark) he tried to extricate himself by getting out of his harness to try to climb down. Unfortunately he fell from a significant height and injured his spine. Pilots,

friends, and rescue personnel from several towns including Cragmoor, Ellenville, and Walker Valley all did what they could to keep him comfortable and then bring him out of the gully to a waiting ambulance and medivac helicopter. Mike is now recovering from back surgery. He's expected to return to flying in a few months. All the best, Mike! We were really worried about you!

A Tree Tale

[This item was contributed by *Jim Georg* a while ago for this newsletter. The piece was written in 2004 but the topic is always timely and the information is useful for new and seasoned pilots alike.]

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in the far away land of Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, a minor goddess and guardian angel named Lil went to a WRHGC meeting where an arborist gave a presentation about how to get people out of trees. She listened very intently, then, because she could see the future, she made a tree rescue kit of her own. She kept it in the back of her truck for a long time and nobody ever used it. But then somebody landed in a tree and Lil brought her tree rescue kit to the scene and the pilot was helped to get safely to the ground.

I got jealous, went to Rochester, NY, and tried to take out a steel windsock pole with my glider. I didn't do any damage to the pole at all, but I did get to use a cold pack from her tree kit on the way to the hospital.

If you WANT to fly into a tree, here's what to do:

- Choose conditions beyond your capabilities
- Launch with full VG because somebody with less experience than you suggests that it's the best thing to do with your glider
- Return to gliding after a long hiatus without a shake-down flight in easier conditions
- Fly in winds that are too strong for your glider to penetrate
- Scratch too low
- Push out to get more altitude
- Cross control
- Panic
- A combination of the above

Here are some pointers to help keep you out of the trees:

- Always fly with a buddy or have a ground crew that can come help you get out of the tree.
- Always fly with a radio or telephone so that you can contact your buddy or ground crew to let

them know that you have successfully landed in a tree.

- Additional items that may be useful are a GPS, a whistle, dental floss, a hook knife, something to eat or drink, and a change of underwear.

[Note: All Mountain Wings H2 Students must fly with 100' masons line and carabiner, a whistle, and a charged radio AT A MINIMUM.]



Jim Georg with minor goddess & guardian angel Lil

But if you cannot avoid landing in a tree, do it safely.

[Note: See the Pagen textbook and consult your instructor for technical advice about tree landings.]

Once safely in the tree, do the following:

1. Grab something substantial and hold on tight
2. Evaluate your physical and mental condition
3. Contact your buddy or ground crew, let them know your position and condition (your instructor did tell you to pay close attention to where you were on approach, didn't he?)
4. Serious injury can result from a fall out of the tree, so you may have had to secure yourself before making that call, but if you didn't, secure yourself now with whatever you have handy.
5. Stay in your harness. That will make it easier for your friends to help you out of the tree. Keep your helmet on.
6. Evaluate remaining hooked to your glider. Chances are that it's wedged in pretty good. There is also a good chance that if you/it falls it will snag something on the way down, cushioning your fall. On the other hand, if it looks like it's going to fall soon or if it's pulling on you, you might want to unhook. Just make sure that you're secure first.
7. Locate your whistle. It's easier to blow it when your rescuers come than it is to yell.

8. Secure your dental floss/masons line someplace handy so you can drop it to get a rope and rescue equipment back up.
9. Locate nearby branches that are at least as big around as your wrist (as big around as your fist is better) and figure out how you might be able reach them safely. Branches above you are better. Tree trunks up to a foot in diameter with no nearby branches coming out of them can be used with the equipment in the kit.
10. Relax and wait for help.

If you are physically and mentally OK, you are secure, you have reasonable mobility, and if you can reach acceptable branches, here's what will happen when help arrives:

1. You'll confirm your condition
2. You'll drop your masons line for your friends to attach a rope and you'll pull it back up.
3. You'll confirm that the rope is of adequate length and strength to belay you down
4. You'll confirm that your friends on the ground not only know what belay means, but also that they have experience doing it.
5. Your friends will attach straps, carabiners, and a pulley to the rope. (Make sure that the one that knows how to belay ties one of the biners to the end of the rope with a figure eight knot.)
6. You'll pull the rope up again, returning the first end and confirming that there is enough to reach all the way up to you and all the way back down to them.
7. You'll stow the straps pulley and spare biners so that they don't fall back down.
8. You'll hook the biner tied to the end of the rope to your *harness*.- not your hang loop or anything else, your *harness*.
9. You'll wrap a strap two or more times around that branch or trunk you found while waiting and secure it with a biner or two.
10. Depending upon what your friends have done to get this stuff up to you, you may also have to put the rope through the pulley. This can be done without unhooking the biner from your harness.
11. You'll make sure that the rope is through the pulley, the pulley is closed and operational, there are now two biners going through both sides of the pulley, those biners pass through both ends of the strap, the strap is secured to a healthy branch or trunk that is at least as big around as your wrist.
12. Holding the rope on both sides of the pulley, you'll make sure that the pulley and strap assembly are secure by putting weight on them.
13. By pulling the end of the rope that is not attached to your harness, you'll make sure that it really is

attached to your harness. Also make sure that the biner is locked.

14. You'll ask your friends to confirm that they are ready to belay and you'll confirm it by having them pull the rescue rope tight. Then get a second confirmation by saying, "Ready to belay"
15. You'll cut your hang straps on your glider not your harness) and trust your friends to belay you to safety.
16. You'll thank everybody for coming to rescue you
17. You'll tell them you're OK
18. You'll change your underwear as soon as possible.

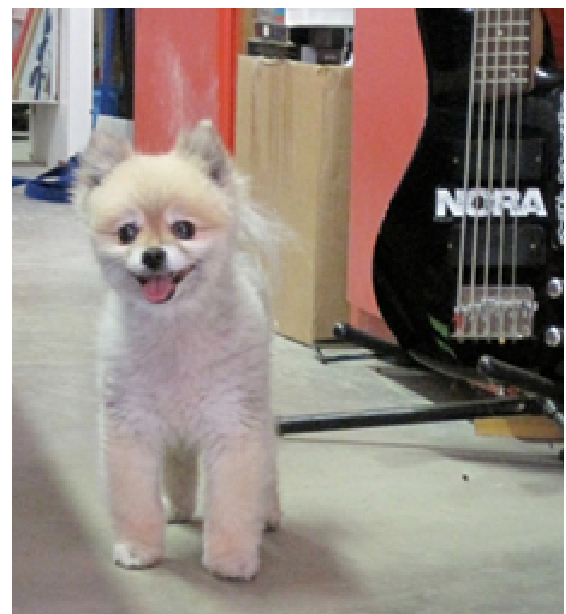
If, when rescuers arrive, you are not OK, you are not secure, you don't have reasonable mobility, or you can't reach acceptable branches, your friends or the emergency rescue squad will risk life and limb to save your sorry ass... just because that's what they do.

[Note: Wayne Neckles stands ready with his climbing gear to assist in tree rescues and we can call on him for help with safe tree extrications.]

DOGS OF THE FLIGHT PARK

Tinkerbell!

Her puppy-like energy and bright-eyed eagerness belie surprisingly mature years. She last visited in the company of Elan Schultz and Delilah for a triple dose of charm!



Newsletter continues next page

VIDEO LINKS DIRECTORY

Timo:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/blankfield42>

Wayne:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/waynneckles>

Cathleen:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/cathocopter>

If you upload your flight videos onto the internet share the links via this growing "video directory".

CLASSIFIEDS

Now available from Mountain Wings – DRIFT cameras available in HD or standard format, with easy mounting and wireless remote. Check them out at this link. For details ask Greg.



<http://www.driftnnovation.com/>

Contributors to this issue: Thanks to the following members and friends for their contributions to this month's issue: **Patti Herman, Jim Georg, Timo Friedrich, Steve Bailer, and Tonia Tagliaferro** - Thank you all!

"Those who trust to chance must abide by the results of chance."

-- Calvin Coolidge, 30th U.S. president

Goya- Los Disparates Pl 13 - One Way to Fly



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!