

# 2006 Newsletter #2

M O U N T A I N E E R   H A N G   G L I D I N G   A S S O C I A T I O N

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## FROM THE PREZ

### Good News, Bad News

So, I'll let y'all figure out which is the good news and which is the bad news, etc.

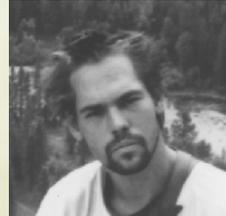
There are few things in life that are certain, and Change is one of them. Since our last newsletter, I've decided to accept a new job that will place me in the Rocky Mountains by August.

Living in this area for the past seven years has been a real pleasure, and I will forever cherish the memories of the Mountaineers: great pilots, awesome sites ... and good times.

Vaya con Dios, Amigos



P.S. I heard a rumor that Marvin might be your new Prez. If it's true, you're in good hands : )



### Going to Woodstock

*Written by Jim Rowan*

Thursday's flight actually began Tuesday morning when Tom McGowan called to say that based upon Dr. Jack's forecast, Thursday was going to be "a" day to go X-C from Cumberland, MD. He wanted to know if I was available to play. Being a skeptic when it comes to weather forecasts, especially those more than a day away, I hedged a little and said I'd be there if it was good. After all, it's not like I have far to go living only a few miles from the flying sites.

Thursday rolled around and the NWS forecast was for mostly sunny skies with winds NNW 5 - 10 mph, going NNE 5 - 10 mph at night. That's a reasonably good forecast for High Pt. (NW 1850' msl/1180' agl). Dave Proctor (Litespeed 5) called and said he was coming with a driver. He also said that Tom (Litespeed 5) was meeting John "Homer" McCallister (Talon 160FB), Adam Arkfeld (U2 160), and Bruce Engen (T2 154) in Winchester, VA and they were also coming with a driver. Everyone wanted to get an early start and Dave said the plan was to be on top by 11:00 AM. That sounded a little early, especially since it was a work-day for me, so I opted to meet recently-christened H3, Chuck Daus (Ultrasport 166) at the main LZ so we could set up a shuttle. We got to launch about 11:45 AM to find everyone partially to mostly set up. The sky looked great!

The Cumberland sites all have grassy launches and set up areas. That makes them very user-friendly, but it also means they're high-maintenance during the warm months when they need mowed periodically. The Gardinator and I had already mowed High Pt. once this year, but it was getting pretty shaggy and was close to needing it again. That's why I brought both of the club mowers with me to launch. I reasoned that with everyone pushing a mower for 10 or 15 minutes while the rest set up their gliders, it would get done quickly and everyone would be

## ... GOING TO WOODSTOCK CONTINUED

ready to launch about the same time. There was a great outcry from the masses, many of whom felt that it was something of a sacrilege to even consider mowing on a flying day. Of course, I had to remind them in my typically diplomatic way that while I agreed with that sentiment in theory, in practice it never works that way. I said something like, "You assholes don't show up to work when we have a mowing day, so we'll just have to do some mowing on a flying day". Most everyone pitched in to help, but as usual there were some slackers.

Bruce, Tom, and Dave launched first around 1:00 PM and were quickly climbing away from the ridge and heading OTB. Adam and Homer launched next while Chuck and I finished setting up. They didn't get up as easily or as quickly and the conditions on launch had gotten weaker. This was Chuck's first flight from the High Pt and since he's still a low-time pilot, I offered to help him get off the hill. While sitting there waiting for him to pick a good launch cycle, it was hard for me to bite my tongue and not push him as I listened to Homer and Adam starting to get up better and urging us to get off the hill. Chuck eventually had a good launch and I wasted no time getting suited up and off the hill myself.



It was then I also noticed a glider still in the air low over South Branch Mtn in survival-mode. I kept an eye on him as I continued slowly drifting ever closer to South Branch Mtn. My thermal hadn't gotten any stronger (25 - 100 fpm), but at least it was consistent and I was climbing. At the time, I thought the glider low over the ridge was Bruce, but it turned out to be Tom who had been stuck there for an hour trying to get back up. I heard his voice once on the radio, but he was virtually unintelligible as his PTT switch had broken and he was trying to use the radio without it. I was hoping I'd see him start cork-screwing skyward so I could leave my weak climb and run to him, but as I slowly drifted across South Branch Mtn, he was still going back and forth low over the ridge about a thousand feet below me. He eventually got up enough to dive OTB towards Three Churches, WV (14 miles from launch) where he got to meet Mr. Nixon after landing in the only known DNL field OTB from Cumberland.

As I drifted over Three Churches and towards Little Cacapon Mtn, my thermal got a little better and I was climbing back through 4000'. I heard Homer say he was at Levels at 4500' and while I couldn't see him, that meant we were only about five or six miles apart.

I launched between 1:45 - 2:00 PM and got up almost immediately, but had to spend the first half hour looking for that ticket to ride. Homer had gotten to 4500' earlier, but came back to the ridge to find something better. At one point, I was climbing pretty well over the ridge when I fell out of the thermal and momentarily thought I was going to tumble. Homer reported having a similar experience a little while later when he was climbing over the airport. That was the only spooky air I found all day. I was watching Chuck climb pretty well behind the NW Cliffs so I joined him there and that turned out to be the one that I left with. After climbing to almost 6000', I went on a long glide over PCR north of Ft. Ashby, WV and then over Valley Mtn. just north of Springfield, WV heading for clouds. Adam had radioed that he was on the ground at Ft. Ashby (5 miles from launch), so I passed the message onto his driver. I was down to 2600' (about 1800' agl) at Millison's Mill just short of South Branch Mtn when I finally heard my vario begin to beep ever so slightly. I started turning in this bug-fart thermal and just hanging on as I slowly drifted towards South Branch Mtn. It was then I heard Dave's voice over the radio saying he had landed at Millison's Mill (12 miles from launch) and was trying to coordinate his retrieval with his driver.

My climb quit at about 5000', so I went on glide towards North River Mtn, specifically to the rock slide/bare face behind Mr. Miller's place (a trigger with a nice LZ if you can't get back up). I got there about 2800' and found weak lift right over the ridge. I climbed slowly as I drifted downwind towards Capon Bridge, WV and eventually got to 6500' just south of there. I could see Homer had reached Miller's place and was doing well there, so I just kept climbing slowly under a nice cloud while waiting for him to catch up. He eventually did and at about 7000', we went on glide together across Great North Mtn and towards Stephen's City, VA. We stopped for a couple climbs on the way, but basically we just stayed high and flew from cloud to cloud (cloudbase was about 8000' by then). When we reached I-81, we were at 7000' and could have fallen on Front Royal, VA, but decided to make a 90 degree right turn and head south towards Strasburg, VA and the Massanutten Ridge to try and avoid the restricted airspace OTB of the Blue Ridge behind Front Royal. We flew right down I-81 in light to moderate sink stopping occasionally to work weak bubbles, but made the ridge at about 3200' (Homer was a little lower).

## ... GOING TO WOODSTOCK CONTINUED

We bopped south down the ridge stopping to climb a few times in thermals as it didn't seem like there was much in the way of ridge-lift. I reached the Woodstock launch with about 3500' and paused there to climb back to 4500' on the north finger. Homer and I had been discussing our strategy. We had planned to try and get back to cloudbase and then dive OTB towards the Blue Ridge. It was getting later (it was well after 5:00 PM), but the clouds still looked pretty good. *We were both getting tired and beer-suck was starting to kick in, so after a brief debate on the merits of continuing our journey, we decided to land at Woodstock, but it had to be in proximity of a beer store.*

I flew over the main LZ so I could say I was the first hang glider pilot in the history of the universe to fly from Cumberland to/over the Woodstock LZ and then I continued on southwest towards town trying to decide what fields looked suitable for landing. My initial choice turned out to be the fairgrounds, but after I got closer, I could see that Homer was right about it being a questionable call (poles, power lines, posts, fences, etc), so I continued on south of town and picked a long narrow field about a mile south of the I-81 interchange.

That's when I had my second scary moment of the flight. My chosen LZ had a power line on the downwind edge, but with my altitude that wasn't much of a consideration until I made the bonehead decision to practice using my drogue chute. I deployed it prematurely and the glider immediately entered a steep, slipping right turn that had me aiming at the ground. I finally got the glider turned around back into the wind, but by then, the power line between me and the field became a serious consideration.

I opted (had no choice) to land in a plowed field short of the power line that was narrow and perpendicular to the wind. I stuffed the bar and the glider came almost straight down proving that drogue chutes really do work when they're not trying to kill you. I pounded my landing, but luckily there was no damage to the glider or to the pilot. I had flown 53.3 miles. By best gain was to 7545' msl and I was in the air for 3 hours, 45 minutes. Homer landed much more gracefully about a half mile away for 53.2 miles.

An hour or so later, we were eating pizza and drinking beer at a nearby restaurant when Tom showed up with my truck. He said that Bruce had made it to Front Royal and was picked up there by Gary Smith. After finishing supper, we drove back to Winchester and I dropped Tom and Homer off at their vehicles. It was almost 10:00 PM and I still had to make the hour plus drive back to Cumberland. I needed gas, but decided I'd wait and stop along the way to fill up. Every gas station I passed was closed and as I pushed on into the boonies of West Virginia watching the needle on the gas gauge go below the empty-mark, I started getting worried about running out of gas. That's when I remembered the lawn mowers and gas can in the back of my truck. I stopped and emptied the can into my tank and that extra gallon or so of gas is what got me into Cumberland running on fumes. I don't know whether things happen for a reason, but I'd like to think that my flight and the fact I happened to have extra gas on hand when I needed it was some kind of karmic reward for mowing on a flying day and helping a less-experienced pilot launch. At least that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

C A N D I D   S H O T S  
P H O T O S   P R O V I D E D   B Y   J R



## ... CANDID SHOTS CONTINUED



## AIR TIMES - BY JIM ROWAN

**1/28/06 - High Pt; SW 5 - 10 mph; Kelvin joined Adam and JR on a cross, but soarable day. The thermals were in the 3 - 400 fpm range and the West Face was the place to be if you were low and trying to survive. Adam launched first and got up, but bombed out early on. Kelvin launched next followed by JR and they were soon joined by several sailplanes. The winds were light enough that it was possible to chase the sailplanes around the valley and JR got to 3900' over the Cresaptown ball fields working weak lift below a sailplane and to 4168' behind the West Face with a gaggle of sailplanes (one above, two below). Kelvin got scraped off the ridge after about 1 1/2 hours and then JR augered down from 3100' after a couple hours when Adam got tired of waiting started to whine.**

**2/8/06 - High Pt; WNW 5 - 10 mph; JR, Pete, and Homer take a weekday flight on what turns out to be a reasonable, but cold day. Pete got an hour and 3500', Homer got 45 minutes, and JR got a half hour before heading out to land due to frostbitten fingers (past and present).**

**3/5/06 - High Pt; WNW 10 - 20 mph; JR test flies his new T2 154 and Pete test flies Larryboy's new T2 154. Joining them were Larryboy on his Litespeed, John Fenner flying JR's Sport 2, and Gardinator on his Aeros Ground-**

**pounder. Everyone got up without problem, but no one was getting very high. Larryboy was the first one to head south down the Knobleys and then out to Barton's LZ. JR headed that way after getting to 3550', but ended up getting stuck at Zirks working weak lift. Pete followed Larryboy's lead and flew from Knobleys directly to Barton's. John and Gardinator joined JR bumping heads low over Zirks. Gardinator and JR finally got a reasonable thermal to 3500' and were able to fly straight out to Barton's LZ and showing great perseverance; Mr. Fenner was able to claw his way up and made it out to what is becoming the main Mountaineer LZ.**

**3/7/06 - Zirks; NNW 5 - 12 mph; new Mountaineer, Chuck Daus, makes his debut and gets the longest flight of the day at 2:20 hrs on his Falcon. Pete (Falcon) and Pat Halfhill (Sport 2 FB) join JR (Sport 2) in sharing air with Chuck on this late afternoon weekday flight. JR got to 3700' before flying out to Barton's LZ. Pat flew to High Pt before returning to Zirks. He and Pete were then able to make it out to Barton's (barely) and poor Chuck was left alone on the ridge wondering where everyone had gone. He landed in the "main" LZ at Charlie's where his car was parked.**

## ... AIR TIMES CONTINUED

**3/20/06 – High Pt; NW 10 – 15 mph;** Larryboy gets his maiden voyage on his new T2 154 with JR (T2), Pete (U2), and John Fenner (Litespeed). After an early climb to 3150', JR cruised south down the Knobleys and ended up getting stuck low at Zirks. Pete and John worked lift along the ridge and flew well over JR's head as he groveled low over Zirks on his pig-glider. They continued south down the ridge, ultimately getting past Keyser and New Creek to land together along Rt. 93 for 25 miles. Meanwhile, Larryboy joined JR at Zirks and after bumping heads awhile, they were able to get high enough to at least make it out to Barton's LZ. Larryboy got up pretty good and made it on down the ridge to Pinnacle before turning around and joining JR at Bartons after a three-hour flight. Larry seemed pretty happy with his new T2 (he had run the Woodstock ridge on it the day before).

**3/23/06 – High Pt; NW 3 – 8 mph;** Pat (S2 FB) and Pete (U2 160) join JR (S2) for a weekday flight on a cloudy day. They got to 3750' early on climbing together, but after that things began to shut down and soon they were scratching below the ridge just trying to survive. Pat, then Pete, and then JR were all scraped off the ridge after a little less than an hour.

**3/27/06 – High Pt; NNW 10 – 15 mph;** JR and Larryboy both flew their T2's. JR launched first and struggled, almost sinking out at the NW Cliffs before getting back up to 3000' and cruising south down the Knobleys. He made it to Zirks without difficulty, but ended up getting stuck low their (again) and ultimately had to land in Charlie's field (the main Zirk's LZ) after an hour. Larryboy followed JR down the ridge a little later, but got a nice on the way and was able to get to 6000' before eventually landing near Slanesville, WV for 19 miles.

**4/6/06 – Fairgrounds; W 3 – 7 mph;** Chuck Daus launched his Falcon first and was initially able to get above the ridge by 150', but ended up in the LZ after about 10 minutes. Adam launched his U2 next and it looked like he was on his way to a sled when he started circling low over the racetrack. JR watched him slowly begin to climb and timed his launch so he could intercept Adam at the proper height. That strategy paid off and they were both able to climb out. JR got to 3950' in that one and was able to pimp off Adam one other time when he marked a thermal in the very same spot after they got low again. Adam (45 min) and JR (50 min) were both eventually scraped off the ridge, but considering how weak it looked at launch, they were both happy with their flights.

**4/9/06 – High Pt; N 5 – 10 mph;** Adam (U2) launched first and was able to get up reasonably well, but was soon scraping along the top of the ridge. After watching Adam for about ten minutes, JR (T2) launched just after saying, "If he can stay up, I should be able to". He and Adams landed within about 20 seconds of each other about 15 minutes later. For awhile, everyone else was reluctant to launch, but eventually John Fenner (Litespeed), Pat Halhill (S2FB), Homer (Talon FB), and Larryboy (T2) all cast their

fates to the wind. John was the first one to get up good and after getting to 6000', he went south down the valley, but that didn't work out. He landed 4.5 miles away along Rt. 220 about a mile past Barton's. Meanwhile, everyone else back on the ridge finally found better lift and were able to go OTB together with Larryboy reporting a gain to 7100'. They landed as a group 16.1 miles away near Three Churches, WV.

**4/13/06 – High Pt; NW 10 – 15;** Pete called it, "One of the best-looking cross-country days I've ever seen in the East". He (T2), Adam (U2), Tom McGowan (Litespeed), and Bruce Engen (T2) catch one of those boo-wah days while all the locals (JR, Will Jenkins, and Greg Beyer) are in Florida for the Wills Wing party. Pete's account of their flight should be found elsewhere in this issue. He landed at Winchester, VA for 48 miles, Bruce also landed near Winchester for 44 miles, and Tom landed near Harper Ferry, WV with 58 miles (and got Christy Huddle to give him a ride to his car in Winchester). Rumor hath it that Tom's total flight time was one hour, 47 minutes!

**4/19/06 – High Pt; NNE 5 – 10 mph;** Pete (T2) and JR (S2) take a weekday flight in cross conditions. Pete squeezed out 25 minutes while JR waited to launch. JR finally got a reasonable launch cycle and manage to get to 2001' before sinking out after 18 minutes.

**4/27/06; High Pt; NW 5 – 10 mph;** Pat (S2) and Pete (T2) launched first and quickly climbed out to 7500' in good-looking conditions. Pat flew back upwind to the ridge after having lost the short-straw contest to see who got to be driver. Adam (T2) and JR (S2) launched about that time and find ratty conditions on the ridge. JR got to 4000' early on, but soon he, Pat, and Adam are scratching in survival-mode. Adam gets scraped off the ridge and Pat and JR bump heads between 1400' – 2300' (launch is at 1850'), while Pete reports that he's 20 miles OTB at 10,170'. He eventually landed next to a soccer field in Middletown, MD for 68 miles. After a couple hours of getting beat up in the ratty lift, both Pat and JR chose to land in the main LZ. To prove that hang gliding is safe and life is dangerous, JR almost gets into a fight with a (big) knucklehead who drove over his glider as it was on the ground in the bag. No apparent damage to the glider or JR.

**4/29/06; Bill's (F'ing) Hill; E 3 – 8 mph;** A typical Bill's day with a large cast of characters, most of whom took sleds or extended sleds to the LZ. The Mountaineers in attendance including JR (sled), Chuck (two sleds), John F (one extendo and one sled), Pat (one extendo and one sled), Sparky (soared PG), Hugh (extendo and a couple sleds on PG), Tom (got to 6000', but stayed local), Pete (one sled and 10 mile x-c almost to Ritchie's Knob), Gardinator (15 miles to Rt. 26 near Everett, PA) and Sheila (DNF).

... AIR TIMES - (CONTINUED)

**5/3/06; High Pt;** NNW 10 - 25+ mph; It was 4 PM and JR got as far as the top of the launch slot before deciding to back off and wait for more mellow conditions. At 6 PM he started tearing down. Naturally, a few minutes later conditions seemed to be mellowing slightly. Homer and Adam decided to launch at 7 PM and both got off the hill reasonably well in the howling conditions. After watching awhile and listening to the radio chatter, JR was happy to be driving down the hill to the LZ where the winds were basically dead to light SE despite the strong northerly component aloft. Homer and Adam both survived their landings, but said it was pretty spanky over the LZ.

able to stay high boating around the valley even with the overcast skies. Gardinator got to 5000' at one point and JR flew down the ridge a few miles towards Pinnacle, but they both ended up landing at Barton's LZ. Chuck was headed out to land there, but wasn't sure if he had the glide to make it, so he wisely chose to head back and land at the main LZ.

**5/5/06; Zirks;** W 5 - 10 mph; Chuck, Gardinator, and JR get good late-afternoon weekday flights despite the cloud cover and left-cross conditions at launch and on the ridge. JR launched last on his Sport2 and initially had to scratch to get up, but he soon joined Chuck and Gardinator at the SW-facing bowl across the gap (behind the SW Cliffs) and they climbed to almost 4500'. They flew upwind and we

**5/7/06; Pinnacle;** ESE 3 - 8 mph; JR does his best impression of speed-gliding as he plummets from launch to the LZ in record time on his Sport2. Marvin follows shortly thereafter on his Falcon and gets a sled. Finally, Gardinator shows that there is some lift if you know where to look and manages to get an extendo for about 15 minutes. He and JR had mowed High Pt the preceding day and after retrieving vehicles from Pinnacle launch, the three of them cut and mowed Zirks. As a postscript, the following weekend (5/13/06), Marvin and JR mowed Pinnacle and Fairgrounds launches.

BAJA TRIP (BY 'SPARK')

For the past six years, I have been able to take a week or two off for a summer flying trip. I've always pondered a spring-time trip to Baja and the southern CA flying sites, and was fortunate in March to accompany some really great people on an outstanding and memorable trip.

On subsequent days, both PGs and HGs were able to fly, although conditions were too strong for the tastes of some of the pilots.

Each of these past 5 Trips West have been memorable and this trip was no exception. I arrived on Friday, March 10, shortly and met a few of the tribe. Soon after picking up our gear, we were retrieved and deposited at Torrey. Initial conditions were a bit sketchy (sunshine mixed with occasional squalls and rain), but eventually we were able to fly.



The beach was the ideal spot to land, although there were suitable HG and PG landing fields closer to launch. My favorite spot was a grassy area near our abode. I was able to land in the grass twice, with PG.



That night, we packed up a Toyota Highlander (to the brim) and headed to La Salina. LaSalina was a repeat of Friday at Torrey, with increasing westerly winds and scattered showers.

A cool thing about landing at the beach is that it's near cold refreshments, and fish tacos.

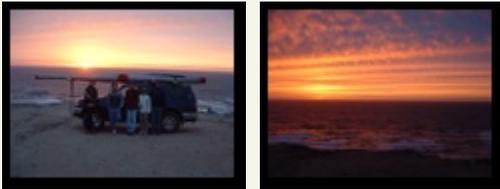


## ... BAJA TRIP (CONTINUED)

I flew my recently acquired U2 a few times, and really enjoyed it.. Flying to the beach was a bit easier in the U2 than in the PG :)



One afternoon, the group took an afternoon drive to a coastal cliff site at San Antonio Del Mar, south of Ensenada. It took a bit longer than we thought, but we enjoyed a spectacular sunset.



On Thursday, we returned to California and a few of us flew Otay Mesa while the remainder headed to Torrey for some PG flying and kiting. On Friday, we flew Marshall Peak. Joe and Bruce nailed their spot landings ...



Flying in the pacific coastal region is nice... I'd probably do it again...



More photos are available at <http://www.nostepper.com/west2006/Spark/> Many thanks to [Alek Beyenson](#) for the server space and web page customization.

## HIGH POINT XC DAYS BY PETE LEHMANN

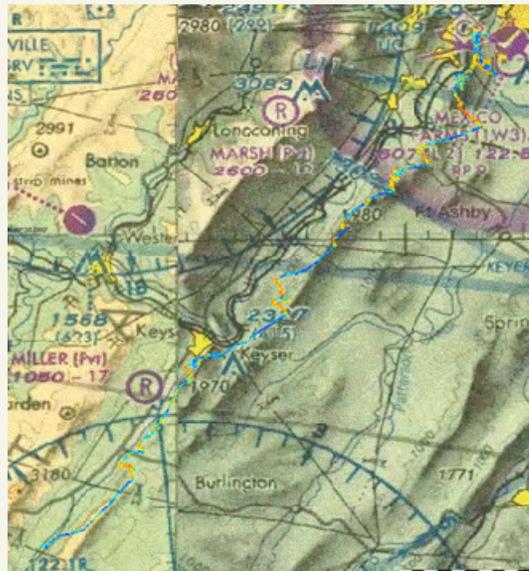
### MARCH 20 HIGH POINT: Ridge Running the Dreaded Knobblies

John Fenner delegated work to his lawyerly minions and accompanied me down to Cumberland to fly with Jim Rowan and Larry Ball. The latter two were test flying their new Wills T2s after a bit of tuning aimed at loosening up the gliders' stiff handling.

The day was not terribly attractive; cold and with a high scuz layer blocking much of the sun. Nonetheless, the ridge was utterly soarable in light winds, and everyone flew for as long as they liked. Eventually Jim and Larry landed at Bartons after long flights, having determined that their gliders did indeed handle a bit better. In the meantime, John and I (flying Pat Halfhill's big U2) had decided to continue further southward along the Dreaded Knobblies toward the town of Keyser. The lift was generally mediocre, and seldom much over 300fpm, but it was consistent, and even once got us to 5,000msl just when we needed it to cross the Keyser Gap. Once past Keyser we became seriously low on the small ridge above the Wal-Mart before climbing high enough to continue on course and jump back onto the main ridge.

By now it was after five thirty and we were running out of landing fields as the valley narrowed and became a tree desert, so after well over three hours in the air we called it quits in one of the last good valley fields 25 miles from launch. I capped this lovely flight with a botched landing when I missed both downtubes while trying

to rotate upright. Fortunately, the U2's faired basetube skipped happily across the grass and no harm was done. JR then came to retrieve us and administer medically-prescribed, malted adult beverages.



## ... HIGH POINT XC DAYS (CONTINUED)

### APRIL 13 HIGH POINT: A Perfect Spring Day

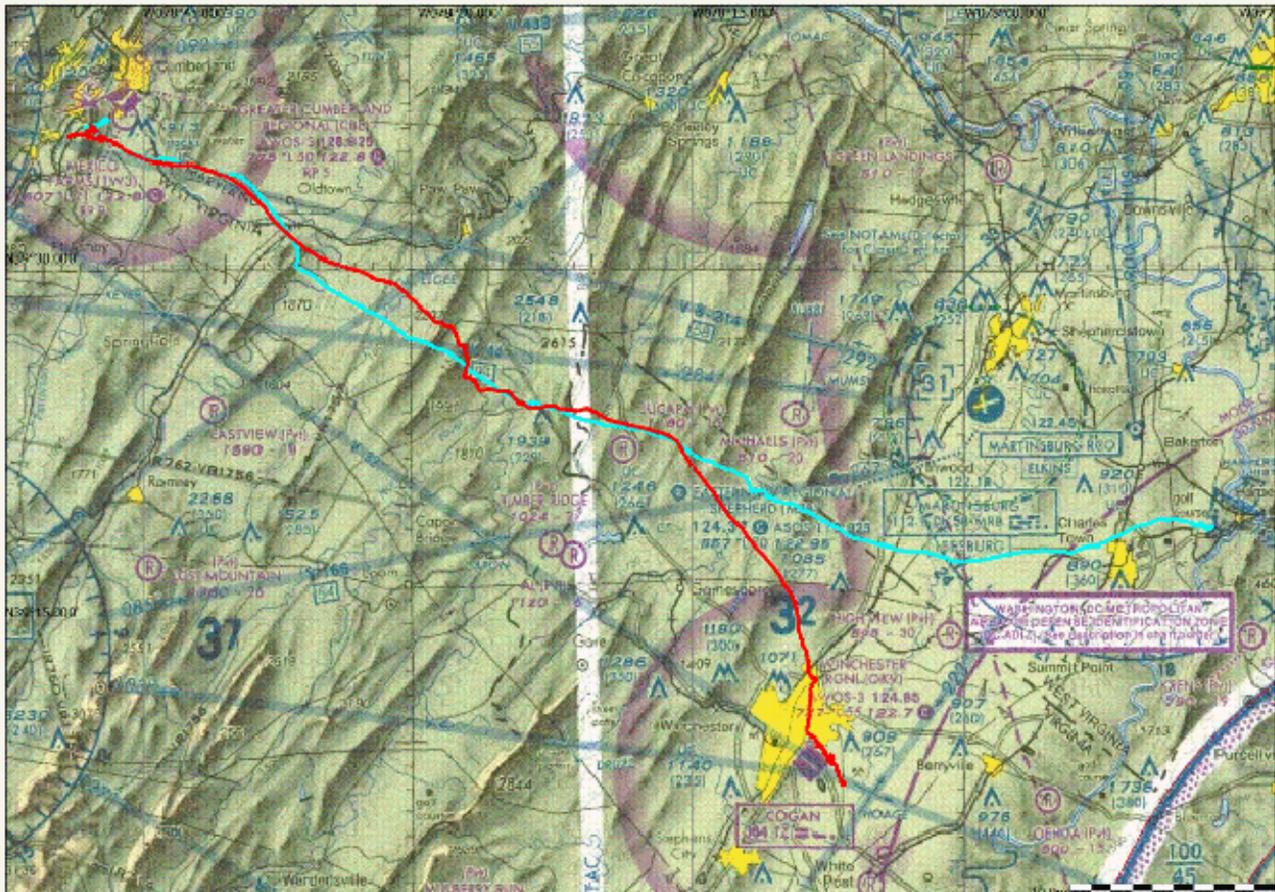
Spring is here in a big way. With JR absent in Florida at the Wills Wing fiesta, I went to Cumberland to fly with Adam, Tom McGowan and Bruce Engen on what turned out to be one of the easiest XC days I've ever seen. Despite not immediately climbing off the ridge, I was at 7,000msl thirty miles over the back exactly an hour after launching.

The barograph showed a couple of climbs (over 2,000ft or so) that had average climb rates of plus/minus five hundred feet per minute, something very unusual in this part of the world. The clouds were exceptionally reliable, but I then made a foolish decision to try and work around Washington's airspace to the south. I didn't know how the airspace extended on a northerly track, and I was fixated on possibly working far enough to the south to get onto the Massanutten ridge. However, attempting that southerly route entailed flying across an immense fifteen

mile blue hole in the Shenandoah Valley, unlike Tom McGowan (7,800msl) who wisely chose a northerly detour under the clouds.

Bruce followed me into the blue hole, and consequently we both decked it around Winchester, I was on the south east side of town for 48 miles, and Bruce on the north-west side for 44 miles. On the other hand, Tom worked his way northward after driving along beneath a magnificent street, finally landing at Harper's Ferry for 58 miles. Local resident Christy Huddle came to give him a ride back to Winchester where Tom's car had been left in the morning.

Making the retrieve complete, Bruce had landed almost within walking distance of the car, and I was only a few miles away as well. Finally, Adam got something over 25 miles, which worked out well as he'd left his car in Paw Paw, a short ride from his lz. A day of very efficient retrieves.



Pete and Toms Track logs (Pete is blue, Tom is Red)

## ... HIGH POINT XC DAYS (CONTINUED)

**APRIL 27 HIGH POINT: Ten Grand to Frederick**

Pat Halfhill and I went to Cumberland to join Adam and JR on a day Dr. Jack forecast to be blue, but with good altitudes and climb rates. In the event, there were cumies forming as we arrived in Cumberland, and by the time every one was set up to fly the sky was full of them. The only problem was that while the sky above launch looked good, downwind of launch to the SSE there was a high layer that suppressed all cumulus clouds. In other words, to get very far one would have to fly cross wind towards the east in an attempt to avoid the negative effects of the high clouds. But by so doing we would be aiming at the forbidden Washington Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), necessitating an even more radical crosswind struggle to the east.

Lacking a driver, we drew straws for the honor of retrieving the others, and Pat "won". He launched first and very soon got to 7,500msl in outstanding lift, but couldn't leave due to his having drawn the short straw. I had launched shortly behind Pat and gotten to a similar altitude whereupon I bailed over the back. Adam launched JR's T2 in an attention-getting fashion before getting a

flight of about half an hour. That freed Pat from his driving obligation, but neither he nor JR could ever again get high enough to leave the hill. Both flew for about two hours before landing in the LZ below. Jim was treated to a typical Fairgrounds LZ wind switch, but he pulled off the resulting downwind landing thanks to his Sport2's exemplary landing characteristics.

In the meantime, I was getting ever higher with each successive thermal after first struggling a bit to find the first thermal behind launch. My initial intention had been to make a dogleg to the northeast to reach I-68 before heading east, essentially following the interstates past Hagerstown and on toward Frederick. However, the cloud I relied upon to accomplish that northeastward jump died and stranded me for a while. After a minor struggle with teaser clouds I got high again, and after that things steadily improved. Climb rates occasionally touched 700fpm and my altitudes increased progressively until finally I got to base south of Paw Paw, twenty miles over the back. And what a cloud base it was: 10,100msl. It is only the second time I have ever been ten thousand feet in the east. After that the clouds became larger and generally reliable, enabling me to fly hard cross wind in an attempt

## ... HIGH POINT XC DAYS CONTINUED

to get around the northwest side of the DC airspace, as well as to avoid the cloudless area that became apparent to the southeast. At Martinsburg I angled to the ENE under an apparent convergence line of clouds resulting from an onshore sea breeze. The convergence cloud line continued until I was southeast of Hagerstown, but at that point it became overdeveloped and the clouds became amorphous with little lift beneath them. As it was getting late, and knowing I wasn't going to get too much further, I began to again angle eastward toward my desired destination of the Fredrick airport. At the last ridge, South Mountain, I copped a final weak climb, but it just wouldn't turn on and bailed over the back in the hopes of reaching

sunshine and lift, but it didn't quite work. I landed about six miles short of the airport, landing into the southerly sea breeze in Middletown, MD's city park to the applause of a boy's soccer team, 68 miles from take-off.

*Editor's note: The soccer field where Pete landed is where my Son practices. We heard about this soon afterward from the local soccer coaches.*

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