

# *The Yankee Flyer 2004*



## *Connecticut Hang Gliding Association*

### Hang Gliding in the Middle East

By Mila Jungmann

Last week I got this Email from a soldier stationed in the Middle East. He got my address from our web site and it turns out he is a local guy, maybe you know him. His letter is very informative and may be of interest to pilots contemplating some exotic desert flying, you know how good thermals are over the desert. So here is his letter:

#### Club Officers

- **President - Mila Jungmann**
- **Vice President - Andrew Fiertek**
- **Treasurer - Sharon Roys**
- **Secretary - Ron Kohn**
- **Site Director - Deane Williams**
- **Flight Safety - Richard Tenan**
- **Newsletter Editor - Andrew Fiertek**

My name is Bob Smith, and I am a sanitation specialist in the 812 company of the armored mobile infantry. I am stationed in Saudi Arabia in a small town named Gagadudu, the people here are nice, and the food is good, but the flying is really tough here. I am originally from Wawayanda, and flew Ellenville a lot, and have my 4H rating. One day after my shift of sanitation engineering, I happened to look up and saw a couple of old Comets thermaling south of the base. They were doing pretty good too, so I started thinking about where they could have launched from. Well they were getting closer to the base and a couple GIs got trigger happy and all of a sudden I see a stream of tracers going towards the unfortunate pilots. I saw one of them drop something and both of them dove away for their life. In the meantime The PA announced Ceise Fire as the two pilots had apparently secured the proper clearance. I watched the object drop slowly and I walked toward the edge of the camp to see where it landed; I was surprised to see a private cleaning what looked like chocolate from his hummer. I looked around and saw nothing but watched the two pilots do a low save out over the desert and finally fly out of sight. A couple nights later I was at one of those ethnic goat barbecue joints and saw a couple of dusty bearded men with helmet hair and a stupid looking smile welded to their faces. Obviously they were fellow hang glider pilots so I went over and introduced myself. It turns out alcohol is not allowed in this part of the country, so we had to settle for really really strong coffee. The pilots were Habib and Ciasp Majid, brothers belonging to the royal family, That answered my curiosity how they secured clearance to fly. They were real nice and said there are quite a few enthusiasts in the Middle East. I asked them to describe the hang gliding scene here in Saudi Arabia; Habib, wired from the coffee replied.

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“You American pilots, so fat and rich with your fancy gliders and fancy harnesses, always pounding your chest about the cross country flights you are making. You haven’t experienced flying if you haven’t been tumbled by wingtip vortices from a B52 or thermaled an oil well fire or come in to land during a sand storm. That I tell you is what real hang gliding is all about.” He took a slug of coffee and got that far away look in his eyes. “Last month, Ciasp and I had towed up behind a team of camels, I tell you there is nothing more beautiful. Once over the top of the dune we ridge soared until a dust devil came and we got high and went over the back. A couple of A10s flew past and only shot a couple of holes in my wing, the glider still flew great with only a little turning tendency so we decided to go XC. We had to pass over a supply column and they knew we were civilians so they only shot a couple of sidewinders at us half assed. Ciasp had luckily brought his fire extinguisher with him so he was able to put out his harness very quickly. After that we started getting low and scrounged for lift over a Beduin town. Just then a suicide bomber knocked out a tanker truck so we got some pretty good lift and soon we were at five thousand again. After that it got difficult. We spotted circling vultures so we flew over there only to find it was only a bunch of bodies in an SUV. Then we spotted

some black smoke and made a beeline for that, but it was only a smoke screen and some terrorists skirmishing with some GIs. Then a couple of Blackhawks flew over us and their rotor wash blew us down a thousand feet in a few seconds. We waved at the pilots and they waved back with your American one finger sign of good will." Ciasp chimed in "remember the time they interred us at the Elzee?" "Oh yeah, two weeks before that we landed out at the oasis and the Czech coalition force surrounded us, all five of them. They confiscated our gliders and stuck us in the detention center. It took a week before my father, prince Abdul found us and got us out. I'm a little ambivalent about the pretty girl guards giving us all those cavity searches. The other inmates were all 'innocent' but the girls kept them busy doing naked calisthenics all the time. It's just as well since it was so hot in there, and exercise is important. Before we left we got the girls' phone numbers but I tried calling a bunch of times and the phones were always busy. They must be using the camera phone function, you know how notoriously slow those are."

"How many sites do you guys have here?" I asked. "Well basically you can fly anywhere you want, you just have to be careful about your vehicle getting looted, why last year my truck got looted fifty times. Now I drive sitting on an old ammunition box and steer with vise grips clamped to the column. You drive over to the dunes and pick one facing the wind, drive up and park out of sight; you just have to shoo the goats away while you set up so they don't eat something vital. My vario got eaten half a dozen times already and it's no fun cleaning it when it comes out I tell you!"

Ciasp had some good stories too he said "last year we were flying way out over the desert and not an oasis in sight, we both got low and Akhim was with us. We saw a bunch of burned out vehicles below and figured it was a mine field so Akhim threw down some expended uranium pieces he had for ballast and a couple of the mines went off. It worked like a charm and triggered the best thermal we found that day. We got way up to ten thousand and after that it was a piece of cake. Two hours later we were over an oil fire and after that we did a low save over a freshly carpet bombed terrorist stronghold. We were so low they were spraying us with their AK47 s, but that was no problem since we always wear body armor under our harnesses. We landed near the road and had Akhim's leg sewn up in five minutes, then back here by seven.

"Do you guys ever get in trouble landing out on the desert?" I asked. "No that's not a big deal," Habib giggled, "if you don't mind drinking your own urine. Last year I landed out at least a half a dozen times, the worst thing is the long walk back. You have to be real careful so you don't scare the cobras when you are catching them for food. Sometimes you get lucky and find some camel chips for fire so you can cook the cobras too. Once in a while you can get a ride, if you see a Blackhawk you flash him your American one finger greeting. After they strafe you they usually send back a Medevac who takes you back to town. Yup that's what hang gliding is all about!"

It was getting late and I had to get back to camp. Before I left we exchanged Emails and I promised to go fly with them as soon as I get my glider shipped over here. After all, the war has been over for over a year already.

## CHGA Minutes

By Ron Kohn

### December 2004

- The meeting was attended by few (6) members presumably due to the Holidays and inclement weather.
- The president, secretary and treasurer were present.  
West Rock launch update - Sharon reports that it will cost \$160 to insure this site. (CHGA 3rd insured site)The state is preparing a cutting license that should be received in January 2005 Ron is meeting with Town officials regarding liability issues.
- Sharon is awaiting details on Named Insured, will be provided as soon as finalized by Ron. Members will be requested to vote for or against insuring this new site by e-mail. To be coordinated by Mila.

The Social Gathering/Winter Meeting was held on Saturday, January 15th in Wallingford at Mila's house.

- Treasurer reports \$787 plus \$160 in cash (prior to receiving any 2005 dues).
- Nomination and election of Officers for 2005 was postponed.

## October 2004

- The meeting was opened at 8:03 pm with a limited number of attendants.
- No Treasurers, President or Site Directors reporting.
- Ron indicated that regarding the West Rock proposal there was a meeting scheduled with the W.R. Advisory Committee and Dean W. and John G. will join with Ron to attend. There was a name for the launch in the proposal, "Tags Launch" in recognition of Rons dogs help in locating the site.
- It was brought up that the Brace launches now have installed flags and windsocks at the upper and lower launches thanks to the efforts of Paul and Deane. October 16th is a pig roast at Brace. Beer, Food and possible towing for the day or weekend. Possible winch towing as well.
- It was pointed out that a new windsock is needed at Talcott and that mowing was again done by Dave. Thanks.
- Some discussion including motorized hang gliding and paraglider towing was interesting before the meeting was adjourned.

## August 2004

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- Welcoming John Willson as new hang glider pilot.
- Treasure reports 756\$ cash and 2160\$ aero tow savings.
- USHGA region director Gary T attending requesting club input for an upcoming directors meeting. Discussion on the establishment of a committee to discuss and advise, assisting the director with decisions. A motion was made by Mila nominating Andy F as CHGAs' committee member. Second by Ron K. The majority voted for the motion. Andy accepted the nomination.
- Site work was done at Brace and Graylock. Meeting adjourned.

## July 2004

- Treasurer reports 756\$ in the cash account and 2160\$ remaining in the aero tow account.
- Discussion about towing at Brace and an upcoming flying weekend.
- Attempts were made by Paul N to demonstrate paraglider flight at Talcott. With the help of several attending hang glider pilots it is concluded that paragliders will not be flying Talcott without further research.
- Discussion was initiated regarding the CHGA 30 year celebration. Possibly at Brace combined with aero towing or at Talcott as a public relations event. Tentative date is in October.
- The meeting closed with Deane presenting recent photos of his latest XC from Ellenville.

## June 2004

- The meeting was called to order around 7:45 pm.
- Discussion was lively regarding insurance by CHGA for Brace. Concerns raised by Sharon over the requirement to supervise and monitor insured sites. Who and how could this be accomplished was questioned. Paul mentioned that the Brace club is no longer a school and therefore not a business. This also related to insurance. According to Paul the site is independently insured for this year. Motion was made to table this issue, second by Dan and passed by vote unanimously.
- Paul indicated Plymouth is open and essentially a drive up site. One can drop off gear within a couple hundred feet of launch but must then park along Rt 3a according to a post on NEPHC Flyline by John G.
- Gary T. purchased a couple of GPS receivers and donated them to the Pittsfield Ma fire department for their efforts during the recovery of tree top member Tom.
- Sharon and Dan reported that the documents requested by the DEP for Talcott permit have been delivered and corrected address has been received. Ron reports no news regarding West Rock except that the proposal is being reviewed.
- Reports are that Talcott has not been mowed. Sharon has called to have it done but it has not happened.
- Dan initiated discussion about using aerotow money (kitty) to purchase a decent mower. It was stated that it costs 300 \$ each mow. A budget for a good used commercial mower was estimated between 1500 and 3000 \$. A safe place to store the mower will be needed and the police range was suggested. Agreement will be needed from all contributors to the kitty for a change in its use. Those contributors not agreeing with the majority shall have the option of being bought out by someone else's contribution.
- Treasurers Report on cash: 756\$ including a 250\$ contribution from Dave Cannon. 2100\$ are in the aerotow kitty. Meeting Adjourned

## May 2004

- Attendance was of cosmic proportions. Members that have been absent appeared according to Andy.
- The meeting was opened by Mila with an announcement that the CCSU hang gliding club has been reinstated and functioning with many first timers hopefully taking up this sport. <http://clubs.ccsu.edu/hanggliding/>
- The treasury reported that to date 18 members have paid their 2004 club dues. There is \$696 in cash. \$2158 in aero.
- The Site Director reported that we are in the process of proposing West Rock State park as a new flying site to the DEP. The proposal was signed by all attending members while a brief description of the site and approval process was given by Ron.

- A motion was made to create the position of liaison to CCSU to exchange activity and information. The motion was accepted by Ron , second by Andy and accepted. (Or something like that) Mila was nominated as liaison and by vote accepted.
- A Wallaby report was given by the attendants with data on the longest flight other than Deane (100+) by Mark at 50 miles. You asked the questions - fill in the rest of the answers...
- The meeting adjourned and became open discussion.  
A few lucky members in the parking lot afterwards had the opportunity to see a glider transporting device built by Peter.

### April 2004

- It's a safe assumption that due to extenuating circumstances of an unprecedented activity this meetings attendance was less than normal.
- Gary Trudeau presented Tim Locke with a framed plaque comemorating Tim's unusual landing, rescue and recovery last fall.
- Mila Jungman was recruiting members for the CCSU hang gliding club.
- There was discussion about various flying sites, West Rock, Mt Tom, Graylock, Petersburg and Skinner. Access and flying rules. The posting at sites of a plaque with rules, contact numbers and emergency procedures was discussed and recommended.
- Gary Trudeau asked that all members update their information, especially email addresses, at the USHGA web site. This would insure that members receive regional mailings. Gary and others through USHGA have developed Standards for Emergency Procedures. We were handed some copies and it will be published in an upcoming issue of USHGA magazine.

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## Lime Rock, Sharon Mountain Launch

By Deane Williams and Mark Rickert (DEP)

Hello Rick,

It has come to our attention that someone has removed our launch ramp at the flying site overlooking Lime Rock. This site is usually only active in the Fall when we get more North winds. One of our newer members reported this to me.

Do you have any knowledge of this? Was it done by the State or the AMC?

Thanks for any information.

Deane Williams,

\_ Site Coordinator, CHGA Inc.

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