



NEWSLETTER - January 2009



President's Page:

Hello -- It's me again. With wishes for a joyous and prosperous new year.

It looks as if my good by and farewell message as President of the Mountaineers was a bit premature. Due to my outstanding inabilities to duck and the lack of any competition

for the job, I am once again at the helm of our cutting edge organization.

We will all continue to have fun with it I am sure. Send Stories. Send Pictures. Ben and I are off to Mexico tomorrow. This year we are going to Colima. It will be a new place for us. The hope is to get tons of flying and camaraderie which will boost us on through the winter and into spring. Unlike what has been happening at the local sites. We did manage a desperate cross wind launch and subsequent sledder off of Bald Knob last weekend, but that has about been it.

Hope to see you in the air soon.
L.E. Herrick



**Mountaineer Hang Gliding
Assoc. Secretary/Treasurer's
Report 2008**

Presented By: Douglas C. "JR"
Niedermeyer

The annual MHGA meeting was held on December 6, 2008 at the LaVale Public Library. Present at the meeting were: Ben and LE Herrick, Marvin Presley, Jim Rowan, Mark Gardner, and Greg Beyer. This relatively low turnout was partially due to the dismal flying forecast for Cumberland on this day.

We started the fiscal year with \$2523.09 in the club's checking account and ended it with \$2652.40 (as of 12/11/08) for a net gain of \$135.31. We had 32 members in 2008 compared to 27 in 2007 (and as a further comparison, we had 46 members in 1997). Our primary expenses were: the Seneca Shadows campground fee (\$377.98, although we received a \$113 credit for late cancellation of Labor Day camping due to rain), landowner donations (\$300), site insurance (\$250), hams for landowners (\$154), calendars for the landowners (\$140), and website domain name registration (\$46.14). After some discussion and a slightly errant report from an unprepared Secretary/Treasurer, we decided to raise the annual dues from \$40 to \$50/year and increase family membership from \$60 to \$80/year. There had not been a dues increase for a number of years and with membership numbers trending lower over the past several years, we decided it was time. Your President (LE) suggested we wouldn't need to raise dues if we'd just be nicer to visiting pilots, but after some discussion, it was decided that a dues increase would be the preferred method to increase revenues (we wouldn't want to besmirch our bad reputation).

We voted to give Christmas hams and/or calendars to the same group of landowners as last year. Greg and I handled that mission on Dec. 20th and it sounded like all the landowners were doing well and still happy to have us (the flying community) around. Larry and Lesa Ball played Santa Claus for the Spruce Knob and North Mtn landowners and LE delivered calendars to the folks who own the Spruce Knob PG LZ.

Please pay your 2008 dues of \$50 (\$80 for a family) by writing a check to: MHGA and sending it to: Jim Rowan, 13818 Florida Ave, Cresaptown, MD 21502.

You'll be glad you did!!!

Club officers for 2008:

President – LE Herrick

Vice President – Mark Gardner

Secretary/Treasurer – Jim Rowan

Board of Director – Greg Beyer

Board of Director – Marvin Presley

Upcoming events

The parachute pack will be at the Allegany County Fairgrounds. The primary date will be 4/17/08 with the back-up date of 4/24/08 (in case it's not looking good for flying over the first weekend). We'll put out a "go - no go" announcement a day or two before the primary one and if it's a "no go", we'll do it on the secondary date, regardless of the weather. Starting time will be between 5 - 6 PM.

John Hamm (1941- 2008)

JR received an e-mail from John's partner, Terri Gould, advising him that John had passed away. John had been a paragliding member of the Mountaineer HGA for the past couple years, so JR thought he would pass article about John along to the group.

“On October 24, 2008, John Hamm, a long time member of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting passed away at age 67 from heart failure after spending the day paragliding in New Hampshire. He was born March 12, 1941 in Pittsburgh and was the second oldest of 7 siblings. After graduating from Duquesne University, he was drafted into the army and spent 2 years in the service at Fort Knox, KY. He met his wife Kathy in Louisville and they moved to Pittsburgh where John attended graduate school in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Pittsburgh. John was always an environmental activist and in the early seventies he and Kathy cofounded GASP, Group Against Smog and Pollution.

They began attending Pittsburgh Friends Meeting in 1970, along with their two children Gretchen and Damon and joined Meeting shortly after that. John served for many years on the House Committee and was often the convener. He used his sense of humor and

considerable performance skills to promote Work Days at the Meeting House. John was very handy. He had great mechanical skills, which he used to do plumbing, electrical work, roofing and painting. John returned to graduate school for a second Master's degree in Library and Information Sciences, which helped him start a second career. After John and Kathy divorced, John met Terri Gould, his partner for the last 17 years. John and Terri were often seen in the Meeting House kitchen preparing hospitality for after Meeting. John and Terri had their own (unofficial) assigned seating which is associated with their presences. We will miss his quiet unassuming way, his earnest heart, and his years of care reflected throughout the Meeting House.

John worked with many organizations on issues related to conservation and educating people about respecting the environment. He supported many local conservancies by serving on their boards, writing for their newsletters, raising funds to foster environmental programs, planting flowers, leading boating trips and getting people involved in creek clean-up projects. He loved the outdoors and was an avid sportsman. He had many hobbies, including dancing, hiking, kayaking, camping, skiing, paragliding and performing.

MHGA Airtimes – the only edition

1/3/09 – High Pt; WNW 5 – 8 mph; We didn't get to fly on New Year's Day, but two days later a forecast of NW 5 – 10 mph with temperatures in the low to mid 40's (plus it was a Saturday) convinced Pete and new Mountaineer, Steve Walko, to drive from Pittsburgh to Cumberland to join Gardinator and JR in an attempt to commit aviation. Pete (Sport2) was off first followed by Steve (Sting), JR (Sport2), and Gardinator (Talon). Conditions were light, but surprisingly good for the beginning of January. Steve was anxious to make the LZ after being warned about the Dogpit and he ended up with an extended sled of about 10 minutes. Pete and JR found the nicest thermal of the day (pieces of 4 – 500 fpm) with Pete getting the best gain to 3800', but most of the lift was light and broken, until later in the afternoon when the conditions got really "poosh-out". There were also some sailplanes out enjoying the day, but they weren't doing as well in the weak lift. Gardinator got scraped off the West Face after about 45 minutes. JR chose to land after 1.5 hrs due to cold fingers and Pete hung out the longest, getting a little over two hours. After getting everything packed up, they toasted the New Year with champagne in the LZ. A very fun day and a desperately needed dose of airtime!!!

Tennessee Tree Toppers

Team Challenge

2008





**Pat Halfhill
getting ready
to Launch**



Will and John await the conditions.