



# FLIGHTLINE



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Uncle Collin at Mission Photo by Joy Dutta

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## Spring 2015 Flying Rumors and Stuff

- \* WOR meeting 16 June
- \* June 5 - 7 Yosemite with C. Valley and **PM Lightning**



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**May 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Entertainment**

Roy Spencer showed video of close encounters with hawks shot from the top of his glider.

**New Members and Guests**

Diev Hart

**Great Flights**

Diev and numerous others flew the Coyote Howl fly in at McClure. The first day was epic, the second day was a bit windy. There were several X-C flight conditions every day and a number of big name pilots in attendance.

Wayne Michelson flew at the Wills Wing Demo Daze; there were glass-off conditions every day and a number of big name pilots in attendance.

Carmela Moreno soared at Ed Levin, Mission and Funston for the first time since her knee injury.

Paul Gazis flew Ed Levin on his new PG

**.President:** Robert Booth

A burn was contemplated for the Ed Levin LZ. According to Jesse, no burn is scheduled. The purpose of the burn was to kill Medusa Head weed, which has been cut down using weed whackers. It typically takes 2 years of burning to get rid of the weed. Jesse also reported to road grading is planned. .

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Details are not known at this time, but the road will be closed for 2 months when it does happen

Robert noted that the Coyote Lake committee voted to make Ben Dunn site chair and officially appointed him to the post.

**Vice President:** Patrick Pannese  
 Patrick Pannese was not at the meeting, but rumor has it he placed 9th at the Quest Nationals.

**Treasurer:** Don Herrick  
 Income exceeded expenses in the past month. The club's balances are stable.

**Member Services:** Don Herrick for Phyl Hamby

There are 315 paid members for 2015..

**Flight Director:** Ben Dunn, Paul Gazis

There are a lot of rattlesnakes at all sites this year, so watch where you step. A returning pilot who had been inactive for some time dislocated her shoulder. The response to the incident was inadequate in that nobody called 911. A good rule of thumb is that if the pilot can't lift the wing onto a vehicle, the injury is serious enough to call 911, even if it's clearly not life-threatening. The club should post emergency procedures, including the ranger's phone number in a convenient place at Ed Levin.

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**Secretary's Report – Paul Clayton**

The April minutes have been posted on the discussion board and had gotten 86 views as of the time of the meeting.

**Ed Levin – Phyl Hamby**

Phyl and Don have been researching a new system for controlling access to the site. Don showed a padlock that works with a key card or smart phone. If this lock is used the club would issue plastic membership cards that contain a chip to communicate with the lock. Don noted that the locks are weatherproof and have a 2 year battery like. If the lock system were implemented, the site committee would periodically swap the locks so they could be recharged.  
 Mission – Chris Valley by e-mail

**Editorial #####**

Hello Flightline Readers  
In this issue you can find a valuable and informative article from Paul Gazis. Paul is a long-time WOR officer, previous Flightline editor, and Ed Levin senior pilot. We should listen to what he is saying. (At least in this article.)

The front cover photo features our own Collin Perry. Senior Mission pilot, previous Flightline editor, and all-around scruffy guy.

Next month I will write a little about flying Yosemite in June. It were fun **Xword Puzzle Solution**

Here is the solution to the Xword puzzle in the May issue:

- Across
- 5. Steve Miller said to fly like an EAGLE.
- 6. Roy always lands next to the BEER
- 7. A PG pilot's term for a HG pilot. - PLUMBER
- 8. The big club - USHPA
- 9. ALTITUDE airspeed or brains. You need at least two.
- Down
- 1. Best newsletter money can't buy. FLIGHTLINE
- 2. Where George of the Jungle landed. TREE
- 3. A HG pilot's term for a PG pilot. BAGGER
- 4. A good thing to bump into in flight. THERMAL
- 6. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a BANANA.

**April 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Continued**

**Mission:** Chris Valley

There are reports of rattlesnakes in the LZ area and up at launch – be careful when laying out your gear and keep an eye open when walking about the area.

A few months ago, there was a report of a “film crew” up at launch filming hang-gliding activity... touch base with CRV before hiring a film crew to document your exploits such that he can explain permitting requirements and get you in touch with the correct Park personnel. Use of your typical Go Pro does not require a permit.

No further update on the parking options – the EIR is still in the works and may be released for public input in late 2015.

Make sure your driver is aware of park rules and knows how to close the gates properly – there haven't been any reports lately of unlocked gates (knock wood), but a reminder doesn't hurt.

Fly safe!

**Diablo** – Robert Moore by e-mail, Robert Booth

Long-time Diablo driver and good friend Janet Williams passed away suddenly on May 5th. Janet had been the Diablo Team's capable launch assistant and driver for 20 years, happily chasing wherever we chose to fly. Many pilots have benefited from her generosity, warmth and humor over the decades, and we now ask anyone she helped to think of her from time to time. She will be greatly missed.

**Site Acquisition** – Pat Denevan, Jim Woodward, et al

The \$1100 fee for the engineering report is due at the time the application for access is filed. Don Herrick mentioned that the proposed site for the parking lot was the site of an old building, which may simplify the process of getting approval to put in the parking lot.

**Old Business** Roy Spencer noted that an issue of Flightline has been published. Tom Rudolf noted that he has been to Ed Levin and has recovered from his hip surgery.

**New Business**

Jesse noted Ranger Brian at Ed Levin has complained of people driving too fast on the access roads and that there is often litter in the parking lot.

Robert Booth mentioned that the WOR Facebook group is now public and should not be used for club business.

Don Herrick noted that club events should be announced on the WOR website.

Colin Perry volunteered to update the website to announce events. He also mentioned that the Firehouse in Sunnysvale has a separate meeting room.

Don Herrick moved that the club take a vote at the next meeting to consider alternate venues.

**END of Meeting Minutes**  
#####

## A New Pilot's Guide To Ed Levin

by Paul Gazis

Ed Levin is a great place to fly, demo gliders and equipment, work on tasks, and hang out with friends. On some days, it can even be soarable. It's also one of those fortunate sites that becomes unpleasant long before it becomes dangerous – sites where the reverse is true can be much less fun. If you're a new pilot, just getting used to the place, you may be wondering, "What comes next? What should I watch out for, what should I expect, and what shouldn't I expect?"

Here are some of the answers.

### Things to Watch Out For

I'll talk about the bad things first. There aren't many, but it's best to get them out of the way before moving on to the fun stuff.

1) *Don't get slow on landing.* Speed is your friend, particularly in the afternoon, when there may be a strong wind gradient. Fly a fast clean approach and tell yourself you're practicing for the Owens.

2) *Don't launch nose high.* For that matter, don't even stand on launch with your nose high. If you're having problems keeping your wings level on launch, try dropping your nose a foot or two and see if your life gets better.

3) *Don't try to scratch close to the hill.* Yes, some pilots who've been flying the place for decades manage to stretch out their flights for a few minutes that way, but you aren't one of them, and neither am I... even though I've been flying the place for decades. Also, why go to all that trouble and risk for a few lousy minutes? Why not just land, have a beer, and head for the Sierras next weekend, where you can stay up for hours?

4) *Do not get downwind of the LZ when the wind is strong.* You might not make it back, and bad things might happen. I won't do it, and I fly a high performance glider. Think about this if you're on a Falcon.

5) *Don't get behind things that can produce rotors, such as hills or trees.* They will, and you will not be happy about this.

6) *Don't get low in the canyon behind the 600' hill.* It's a trap. We end up fishing someone out of there every three years or so. If you become one of them, we'll all make fun of you.

7) *Don't wait for the paraglider ahead of you to dive down and land.* They can't. The concept of 'dive' and 'paraglider' are mutually exclusive. Get some horizontal separation, dive, land ahead of them, and feel smug about your foresight and skill.

8) Finally, and most important... *Don't make things worse!* If you've screwed up, don't dig yourself in deeper by trying to salvage a bad situation. Relax, take your lumps, find a safe place to get on the ground in one piece, and let people yell at you for being a dweeb. You'll be an uninjured dweeb, and that makes all the difference.

### Things You Can Expect

Now we can move on to the good stuff, like weather patterns. Ed Levin has three common ones. Here they are, in decreasing order of probability.

#### **Typical Summer Conditions (70% of the time)**

Most of the year, Ed Levin is dominated by marine air and the sea breeze that blows in from San Francisco Bay. In the morning, the site will be strongly inverted, with a highly visible marine layer below launch – some days, this looks almost thick enough to walk on. Wind at launch will be light, coming anywhere from SW to NW. This is a good time to get those Hang IV spots.

Sometime between 11 AM and 1 PM, the sea breeze will start pushing through. As this happens, the wind will pick up and turn northwest. On some days, particularly in the spring, the arrival of the sea breeze front can bring soarable conditions for up to an hour, but this is difficult to predict or catch, so don't break your heart trying.

If you take off and find yourself climbing, enjoy it. If you miss it by five minutes and flush while some undeserving friend gets up, this does not reflect badly on your worth as a human being. You worm.

As the afternoon progresses, the wind will keep on building and turn northing until Ed Levin lies in the rotor of all the minor ridges that run from the main ridge down to Fremont and Milpitas.

This is one reason the site is so relentlessly unsoarable most of the year. It's also why those wretched Hang IVs at Mission, upwind of those same ridges, are able to stay up. The jerks. There are two things to watch out for this late in the day.

1) Sometimes the wind can turn so far north that all of Ed Levin is in a rather unpleasant rotor. As I've noted, the site tends to get unpleasant before it gets dangerous, so you might want to take this as a hint and pack it in for the day.

2) The final moments as the sea breeze arrives in the LZ can get quite turbulent. I've landed at 2 PM and gotten hammered while friends landing at 2:15 touched down lightly, walked over, and said, "Gosh, Paul, is that downtube supposed to be bent like that?" If you end up landing during the Minutes of Turbulence, remember that speed is your friend.

#### **Typical Winter Conditions (25% of the time)**

In the winter, high pressure systems move in and the wind turns northeast, shutting the Ed Levin down. Sometimes this is obvious: you call the weather robot, hear some phrase like, "North-northeast at 65 miles per hour," laugh nervously, and decide it's a great day for a bike ride. On other days, the inversion layer rises enough to block the northeast winds, and the site may be flifiable for a brief period around noon.

?

When this happens, by all means go for it, but keep in mind that the northeast winds will return! They have not gone away: they've merely withdrawn for a few brief hours to lull you into a sense of complacency. If the friend in front of you gets off cleanly, but you feel the first cold whisper of wind over the back when you carry up to launch, the day's over. You missed it. Give up, break down, and go on that bike ride. The alternative – waiting for hours to launch into what turns out to be a nasty rotor – has little to recommend it.

**Pre-Frontal Days, Yippee! (4% of the time)**

On some days, typically in the spring, a front will push through from the west and the world will become a better place. The weather pattern to look for is a low passing to the north, moving west-to-east, somewhere between here and Ukiah, with a well-defined cold front sweeping down across the Bay Area. Typically, the forecast will call for rain late in the day. When you see something like this, call in sick, cancel that trip to Tahiti, postpone your wedding until next week, and get out to the Ed Levin.

The classic prefrontal day begins with moderate winds from the S to SW and light thermal activity in the morning. This is a great time for paragliders and Hang-IIs to fly, before the wind gets too strong. Sometime between 11 AM and 1 PM, a flush cycle will push through and put everybody on the ground. As they stand around the LZ cursing their impatience, the wind will fill in again, start turning west, and continue to build. The pilots who waited can now look forward to spending 2-3 hours boating around at 3500'.

Needless to say, this picture of a perfect day is not always realized in practice. Sometimes the fronts pass by too quickly, are too weak, or too overcast, and the day piffles out – this seems to be more common in the winter. Other times the low moves from north to south, and we go straight to post-frontal conditions with no pre-frontal day at all. Darn it. And sometimes the rain arrives early, stranding pilots, gliders, and trucks on top of the hill.vv

A good plan for prefrontal days is to get up to launch around 11, set up, then pause to evaluate the conditions.

If it looks like the day may go to pieces, punch off immediately to get what you can. If it looks like it's going to build sit under your glider, and wait... and wait... and wait, until you're sure it's turned on. You can pass the time by watching to see where people are getting up. Or flushing, as the case may be.

When it's time to fly, get a good strong launch, because it's going to be [insert your favorite expletive here] windy, get some terrain clearance, then copy what the people who are getting up were doing. You shouldn't need to scratch. On good days, lift will be everywhere, and there will be no sink. Still, there are some things to watch out for.

1) The wind can get [see comment above about expletives] strong. If it feels too strong for you to launch, it probably is, so don't go. The money you won't spend on broken equipment and/or medical bills can be put to good use later.

2) If it looks like it's going to rain and you might need your truck that week, get it down the hill immediately! Once the road gets wet, your vehicle is not going to make it to the bottom. Right side up.

3) Keep an eye on the air traffic. If forty other pilots are in the air, it's a good bet that at least one of them hasn't seen you. Make sure you see them.

**Things You Can't Expect**

The mathematicians among you will have noticed that the percentages listed above only add up to 99%. What happens on those other 4 days? There are any number of possibilities. I've listed four of the most common possibilities. Some, such as the Mythical Ed Levin Convergence, can be terrific amount of fun, but notice that they also come with more than their share of warnings. The moral of this story is, "If the day seems weird, keep your eyes open."

**Post -Frontal Days**

Usually the road up to the top is closed after a frontal passage because of the rain, but on those rare occasions when the front was dry, it is possible to fly Ed Levin in post-frontal conditions. These resemble the ordinary summer weather pattern with the important difference that... there are thermals! The key on these days is to get off as soon as it's soarable, since it might still shut down when the sea breeze arrives. Landing at Ed Levin on post-frontal days can be exciting. Give yourself plenty of room, come in hot, be prepared to get tossed around, and don't relax until you've broken down your glider and tied it on top of your truck.

**Those Weird Northwest Days**

I don't know what causes these, but sometimes, when the Central Valley is filled with wall-to-wall thunderstorms.

Ed Levin will be soarable even though the wind is parallel to the ridge. The first time I saw this, I flew from Ed Levin to Mission in an hour, without turning, and got back in five minutes.

These days seem fairly benign, but they tend to end with a sprinkle of rain, followed by clearing skies and a gust front. You probably want to be on the ground before that 'clearing skies and a gust front' part happens..

**The Downslope Convergence**

On some northeast days, Ed Levin will thermal block in the morning, then become marginally soarable in the afternoon as the northeast wind starts to overpower the thermals. These days are easy to recognize. The prevailing wind will be a cold breeze over the back, interrupted by fitful cycles up the front. Treat these days with considerable respect, and do not even think of scratching close to the terrain. Any 'liff' you feel near the hill will be rotor thermals, which can and have eaten people. The real lift band, if any, will be out over the valley, where the building downslope breeze meets the retreating thermal air mass.

On days like this, I'll launch, head straight out over the valley, and see what happens. The odds will be against me getting up, but who knows?

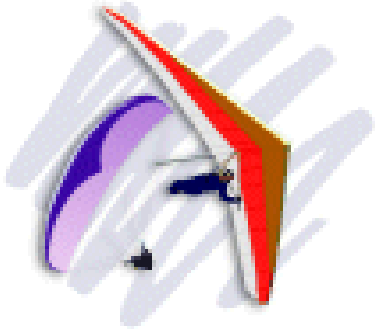


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