

Franklin landing

EACH year the flying bug bites more and more college students. The bite produces a high fever which is very contagious among ambitious youths and the only known cure or sedative is teaching the patient to fly. Inasmuch as most sufferers from this disease are not overly supplied with money, they band together and purchase a glider, with the result that each year sees more and more college and university glider clubs appearing on the collegiate map.

The University of Michigan Glider Club claims to be the oldest active club of its kind in the United States, a claim which to date has never been disputed. However, this is not its only claim to distinction, for it has had among its members such outstanding pilots as Stanley Smith, 1933 Soaring Champion, who with Heath McDowell, club president in 1932, helped design the Bowlus-duPont Utility. It was in this glider that Henry Wightman, present chief mechanic in charge of club equipment, made one of the most outstanding flights of the 1936 Soaring Contest when he flew 135 miles from Elmira to Middletown, New York. Nelson Shapter, club president in 1936, was named outstanding Junior Pilot at the 1935 contest. In second place that same year was Wightman.

Much credit goes to R. E. Franklin, who has been the "father" to the club. During the years that he was a member of the faculty at the University of Michigan, he assisted the students in building their first primaries,

University of Mic

by Floyd

and sold the club its first utility in 1930. He also instructed the members in the auto-tow method of training. It was that same yellow and blue utility which won so many prizes at the National Contests for the U. of M. Glider Club. When it was disposed of in 1934, it had well over 6,000 flights to its credit.

The University of Michigan Glider Club was formed in 1927, when it was known by the weighty title of "Glider Section of the University of Michigan Aeronautical Society". It held that name until 1932 when, due to the dissolving of the Aero Society, it took its present name.

In 1934, the club adopted a Constitution which provided for a board of directors consisting of the officers and instructors. The instructors are appointed by the board, as many being appointed as are deemed necessary to carry on the work of the club. It is their duty to keep up the equipment of the club, instruct the members in gliding, and to carry on the work of the club in general.

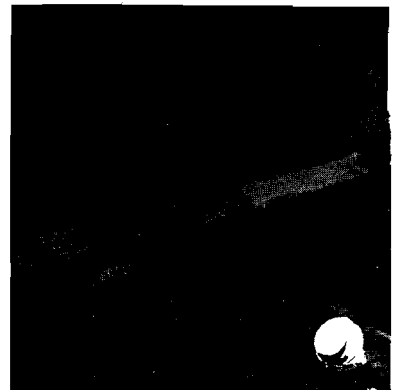
The membership of the club is made up of regularly enrolled students at the University. A physical examination and the parents' consent for minors are the only qualifications. The yearly dues are \$15 with a \$5 initiation fee for all new members.

Different groups carry on flying activities every afternoon and Saturday and Sunday mornings at the Ann Arbor Municipal Airport. Each group is supervised by a qualified instructor and consists of not more than six students. Inasmuch as there are only nine groups a week, the membership of the club is necessarily limited to 54, including the instructors.

The auto-tow method of training is used exclusively. This has been proven the fastest and by far the safest method of instruction. The instructors are given full charge of their groups and are held responsible for the instruction and advancement of their students. Each instructor pays full yearly dues, and, in return for his services, is entitled to the use of the ship at all soaring meets.



"Hank" Wightman (on right) unloading his Utility at Ann Arbor



The author looking d