

Soaring

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A REVIEW of 1938

Some of us who are vitally interested in gliding and soaring are apt to become discouraged at the seemingly slow growth of the movement in America as compared with the subsidizing nations. However, this is usually because we do not keep in mind all that the SSA is doing and some of the results of its efforts. Let us examine the record and judge for ourselves.

An indication that our progress has been more rapid than in other nations before subsidy and even greater than some with this government help is the remark by Dr. Alan E. Slater in Wolf Hirth's latest book, "It may be said that the American and British gliding movements are very similar, with the Americans slightly ahead." This is not only true, but it has been done without an annual grant of upwards of twenty-five thousand dollars.

Just what is the SSA doing to help bring about this leadership? Naturally, we think first of the contests. In addition to our annual national contest, being the most outstanding one on record, we also staged, for the first time, a secondary contest—the 1938 American Open. Held at Frankfort, Michigan, this went a long way to build up new interest and enthusiasm. We have also helped with important regional meets in California and New Jersey.

To spread the word of the value of motorless flight, we have travelled this year over eight thousand miles to give speeches on gliding and soaring. These ranged from an address before the National Association of State Aviation Officials in Miami to business clubs in Philadelphia and vicinity. On most of these occasions, one or more of our films on soaring were shown. This year these films have also gone to all parts of the country for showings on more than thirty occasions before aviation clubs, business organizations, schools, and air shows.

In the way of national publicity, we have accomplished far more this year than ever before. In addition to fine stories in the press of new records and contests, there has been a wide coverage in national magazines

such as the *American*, the *National Geographic*, *Life*, *Time*, in addition to all the well known aviation magazines. The newsreels have also done their part and now we have the current Grantland Rice Sportlight, "Champion Airhoppers".

Perhaps the greatest value in creating new soaring activity have been our expeditions. The flights in Tennessee located one of America's greatest potential soaring sites and stimulated interest for gliding in that state's new aviation program. The Texas Expedition resulted in the first American distance record in four years, conclusively proved level country soaring possibilities and left behind it an active soaring club. Similar clubs starting in Texas and Oklahoma owe their existence to the interest that it created. The recent New Hampshire Expedition described in this issue, discovered wonderful conditions in the late fall and has already resulted in an active new soaring club and serious efforts to make a soaring center for New England.

Realizing that the gliding clubs form the backbone of the American soaring movement, we have assisted in the starting and guiding of many such organizations. A year ago, we listed 99 affiliated regional associations and clubs. In this issue we publish the names of 148 in the United States and eight in Canada which do not include many others now forming which will bring the total to about two hundred. Many of these clubs are now building their own gliders and sailplanes.

Of no small importance are the two much discussed manuals of glider construction and glider operation prepared by the SSA. The former was turned over to the old Bureau of Air Commerce to form the basis of new licensing regulations as well as a guide to builders. Due to considerable government red tape and the creation of the Civil Aeronautics Authority, this manual has not yet appeared but may do so soon, incorporated in new, reasonable regulations. The latter was also submitted to the government and after six months without action, we asked for it back and have had it privately printed as announced in this issue. It will form an invaluable guide for all glider pilots and newcomers to the sport, and should help keep accidents to a minimum.

Memberships continue to come in from all parts of the country firmly establishing this as a national organization.

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