

# Soaring

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## Soaring and PUBLICITY

In the past few months we have noticed a remarkable increase in public interest in the sport of gliding and soaring. Where formerly officers of the SSA had to make a considerable effort to obtain publicity for its activities, we now find that the press and the national magazines are coming to us for news.

What has brought this situation particularly to our notice has been the persistent demand for news about our Texas Soaring Expedition. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the public is really curious about this flying without power. Imagine our surprise to hear that Associated Press dispatches had gone out about our first ten minute test flights over the Wichita Falls Airport.

All this persistent demand for every item of news of what we are doing, or rather trying to do, brings us to the realization that any one of us in the soaring fraternity, who goes out to make some outstanding flights or set some records and thereby automatically invite publicity, has a really serious responsibility. It is within his power to do a great and perhaps lasting good for the whole soaring movement or a serious harm, depending on his attitude and his methods of dealing with the public and the press.

In the past we have noticed at times a distinctly frigid reception when going to city officials and airport managers, to ask for cooperation in sailplane tests or record trials. Without exception, this attitude has swiftly changed from coldness to enthusiastic warmth, when we have explained the scientific and aviation promotional value of our work, and the many safety precautions that we now take. That they have been unenthusiastic at first could always be traced to the fact that some reckless publicity seeker had operated without benefit of licenses or considerations of safety.

There are a few simple rules that a soaring pilot should always follow if he is to command the respect of his

fellow citizens and thereby give a boost to the soaring movement. First of all, he should get himself a glider pilot's license and fly a licensed glider. This will immediately give him the cooperation of the government officials and the commercial flying fraternity.

In the second place, if he is going to do some flying in a new locality where he is not known, he should make an effort to meet some of the leading citizens, the chamber of commerce and the press. Nearly everyone likes some publicity, and his chances of getting important help from those in a position to help are vastly improved if he will tell them everything he is trying and hoping to do so, that they will feel that they are a part of the picture.

In the third place, it is important to have the organization of any soaring activity, whether it be a record attempt, a testing expedition, an informal meet, or a national contest, run in as smooth a manner as possible. Each member of the crew of a sailplane pilot should know his job and do it as efficiently as possible. This is again the responsibility of the pilot or organizer of the particular activity.

There are many more details that should be considered but at this time we have only the space to mention the most important ones. The last one that we would like to mention is the matter of answering questions of the curious public. When a soaring pilot answers a layman, who has asked him what makes a sailplane fly, by saying that the wings are pumped up with lifting gas, he is doing something of which he ought to be ashamed. We cannot urge too strongly that each and every glider and sailplane student or pilot answer all such questions carefully and to the best of his ability. If you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to say so.

Out here in Texas we feel that we have a responsibility as great as anyone has ever had in soaring in this country. One of the purposes behind the organization of the expedition was the possibility of making new records and therefore obtaining a great deal of publicity for soaring to help build up the movement. Our chances of obtaining proper recognition and financial assistance are increased ten-fold if the vast majority of the people in the country have read of our exploits of flying without power.

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