

Soaring

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Year Round TROPHIES

In the past ten years of motorless flight in America, the flying activity has been concentrated largely at the National Contests. This is due principally to the real inducements offered the pilots in the way of cash prizes and trophies. These prizes have been for the best distances, altitudes and durations won during the contest.

This year, we have seen a great increase in year 'round activity. Largely through the discovering of the possibilities of thermal soaring in level country, we no longer have any difficulty in filling our pages of Club News with accounts of really worthwhile flights. From coast to coast, clubs and individuals are carrying on week-end activity that is adding many new pilots to the ranks of soaring enthusiasts. Why don't we establish some fine trophies and substantial cash awards for the best performances made during the year?

In Great Britain, the three outstanding prizes are the Wakefield, DeHavilland and Volk Trophies for best distance, height and duration flights accomplished during the year, whether these have been made during the national contest or not. There can be no question that similar inducements for pilots in this country would result in a real increase of soaring activity.

Frequently, these days, we hear of pilots climbing up

on thermals caught over their local airports after auto or winch tow launchings, rising to heights of five thousand feet and staying up several hours. In most cases, they remain in the vicinity of the airport and land back on it. This is usually due to the time, trouble and expense of retrieving after a landing many miles distant. What we want are some real inducements to make these pilots go cross country for distance and altitude and be willing to risk the consequent expense of the return trip.

In months gone by we have made strong appeals to our members to help us raise the funds necessary to carry on our work. The results have been discouraging and many possible donations have been passed up because we could not possibly be in all parts of the country at the same time. As it was, we approached several hundred people able to contribute in helping to raise some of the funds that are now carrying the SSA. Once again, we direct a strong appeal to our Directors and other leaders of regional motorless flight activity to approach business and industrial leaders in their communities for contributions. We remind them that all donations to the SSA can be deducted from taxable income, as we are an educational, non-profit organization.

In raising this much needed money, it may be possible, also, to obtain trophies and cash prizes for the best performances during the year. In the case of manufacturers with nationally known names, these names on fine trophies would carry real publicity value. First manufacturers to be approached are probably those in the aircraft field. As most of these are now located in California, we suggest that our active West Coast members ask them to help the progress of gliding and soaring.

The time for the presentation of such trophies could be either at our Annual Meeting or at the final ceremonies of the National Soaring Contest. It is probably preferable to choose the latter time, when national attention is focused on the annual Elmira event. Already, we have the Warren E. Eaton Memorial Trophy for the most outstanding contribution to gliding and soaring throughout the year. Let's also have trophies for the best individual performances.



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