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Soaring

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Can We Become SELF-SUPPORTING?

In January, 1937, the membership of the S.S.A. was slightly over 300. In a country of 130,000,000 people with some of the best mechanical facilities and soaring terrain in the world, and whose population is noted for its aggressiveness and ingenuity, 300,000 would have been a more reasonable figure. With this in mind, certain individuals who believe in the future of soaring, agreed to supply the Soaring Society with a magazine and a general manager. They believed that, with these assets, we could eventually increase our membership to proportions where we could stand on our own feet, and make a name for ourselves. How far have we advanced toward this goal?

Our membership has been increased and varies from 800 to 1,100, depending on the time of year. This number, at a casual glance, does not look very impressive. However, it is not a true measure of our progress. During the last two years, the groundwork has been laid for a Soaring Society that is many times larger and many times more active than ours of today. Slowly, the significance of the art of soaring has begun to dawn on the general public. Thousands have read magazine articles by prominent pilots. Millions have seen advertisements featuring sailplanes. Every year, at meets throughout the land, pilots have flown thousands of miles to carry an accurate picture of our sport across the country. Although most of our people have never heard of the Soaring Society, the great majority of them have been impressed by the wonder of soaring flight. A good deal of this new interest has been caused by the activities of the S.S.A. and its members. Much of it is due to factors beyond our control. However, it has

advanced to sufficient proportions so that it is time for us to take action in the matter.

We have three sources of income: membership, advertising in SOARING, and donations. The time is now ripe for us to change the classification of the donations item from necessities to luxuries. Let us consider some of the steps that are being taken, and can be taken, to accomplish this result.

We are preparing an advertising campaign, the purpose of which is to completely pay the printing cost of SOARING. In view of our small circulation, we must make some compromise as a step in our transition from dependence on donations to self support. Among manufacturers of aircraft products, there are many who believe in the future development of the soaring movement, both as a grand sport, and as a potential market. We can ask these men for donations of a series of advertisements. In this way, we can offer them some return on their money. As our circulation and activity increases, their space in our magazine will change from a contribution to an investment. Meanwhile, it is up to every member to see that our membership does increase. If we receive help on the promise of increased circulation, we are morally obligated to fulfill that promise.

Our membership goal is 2,300. This figure, in combination with our advertising plan, will put us out of the red. We have not sufficient space to completely cover the campaign that is under way, but we do have room to elaborate on one phase of it which requires action from everybody. We will give no more pep talks this month on the merits and necessity of nobly doing our part, but will say, for once, just what action will be most helpful. Our membership today includes four public libraries. The libraries of every city of over 20,000 inhabitants should have the magazine, SOARING. Even a small portion of them would not only increase our numbers well over our goal, but would place our name before thousands of potential pilots and members. In order for our plan to be successful, every member must go to his library and act as our salesman. We can tell them what we have, but you alone can persuade them to buy it. Through your action in this matter, we can jump the greatest hurdle on the road to financial independence.

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