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Soaring

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WINTER SOARING

Last April, there appeared in SOARING a letter from Les Barton describing some thermal flights at Stephensburg, New Jersey, on January 8. Since at this time spring was already half gone, little interest was shown. However, winter is again well on its way, and it is time to start gathering more information about soaring during the cold months.

As examples of the possibilities that exist, witness the following flights. Les Barton and Stan Hruslinski both flew constantly at 1200 feet in their Kestral in January. Floyd Sweet flew for over an hour at Elmira in his Rhonbuzzard on lift of over 10 feet per second found between snow squalls. The strongest thermal your editor has ever encountered under 1000 feet was in January in Michigan in a snow squall. John Robinson, in his Robin, cloud hopped on Feb. 8 from the Pacific Ocean, near San Diego, to the mountains 33 miles inland, where he was forced to abandon excellent lift because of the low ceiling. He landed during a snow storm. (Story next month). "The Art of Soaring Flight" contains several interesting accounts of winter soaring flights, with distances up to 88 miles. This seems to be pretty positive proof that we are making a mistake in putting our ships away for the winter.

The first large scale test of the effect of the seasons on thermal activity will be the Thanksgiving contest at Elmira. It is well known in the vicinity of that city that the steadiest and strongest northwest winds blow in the late fall, so good ridge soaring, at least, will be assured. However, we have only the scattered experiences of a few pilots to indicate that the thermals will also be good. The results of this contest will be scanned with interest by soaring enthusiasts throughout the entire country. We wish to urge all those with ships capable of thermal soaring to attend.

Meanwhile we are issuing another call for stories by pilots on their experiences with this type of soaring. It is only by collecting such information from a variety of sources that we can add materially to our knowledge of the subject.

MORE CLUB NEWS

We are somewhat puzzled as to what it was about our last editorial that produced so much better results than all of the previous ones. However, if the club news continues to flow in, we won't investigate too closely. You can see from this issue the improvement that has been made possible by your generous response to our last request.

As the cold weather sets in, it is going to be harder to find enough news to keep up the standard of this month. As flying activity becomes less, we can turn to descriptions of "shop kinks," constructional items, etc. Meteorological observations and research also afford good material. There is plenty of activity, other than flying, that goes on during the winter, so let's keep up the good work.

Another suggestion is afforded by "The Thermal" and "The Chicagoland Airbubble." By means of such bulletins, regional associations can keep their members informed on local problems and developments, and maintain interest in organized activity. Some of these associations have begun sending us news releases each month. Why not make the bulletin a little more comprehensive, and distribute it among your own members.

GLEN ELLYN

In the last month's fatal accident report there appeared a serious error. The location of the crash was not Glen Ellyn. Although the victim was a resident of that town, he was flying at the Air Activities Airport, at St. Charles, Illinois, fifteen miles away. Because of this mistake, it has been erroneously assumed that Glen Ellyn was guilty of negligence by failure to enforce the necessary safety precautions. This is not the case, since nobody in the town had any control over the flying in question. Furthermore, the people of Glen Ellyn are to be commended for their insistence that no gliding or soaring activity be conducted in their community except under expert supervision. As long as this attitude continues, there need be no fear of any serious trouble. We wish to extend our apologies for having caused this misunderstanding.

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