SOARING AT NORFOLK?

David Boone gives us some observations on soaring conditions in Norfolk, Virginia

On several occasions I have seen huge cumulus clouds form in this vicinity, and smaller cumulii have formed at least two days out of each week since August 1, which is the day I came to Norfolk.

I have watched hawks, buzzards, and even gulls soar with ease as they worked thermals at low altitudes (200 ft.) The gulls have done their soaring by making spirals, directly above the shore line. This has been interesting to me as I expected down drafts would occur over water.

In this section there are a few Bald Eagles, and I have had the pleasure of watching these lordly birds do some masterful soaring.

I witnessed an interesting incident last week, in this flat country, when I noticed no less than 25 or 30 Turkey Buzzards working a thermal. After about five minutes only 3 seemed to have attained altitudes of over 1000 feet, while the majority were circling at about 300 or 400 feet.

It seems they all realized together that their thermal had spent itself, for they all left as a swarm of bees in a direction where I now observed a few strays circling and gaining altitude rapidly. This second place was about 1500 to 2000 feet downwind from the first thermal. Reaching the second thermal at their various altitudes they began circling as soon as they were in the lift. So many birds and circling at an altitude of from 200 feet to 500 feet gave me one of the best pictures I have had of a thermal.

There was no cloud at the top and it was not long until six of the lot were mere specks in the sky. My guess on their altitude was at least 5000 feet.

Now here is something that should be worthy of your consideration. There is a strip of sand that starts at Virginia Beach, Virginia, and extends south to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. This beach is about 100 yards wide and very straight and smooth. I drove my automobile down the beach last Sunday for a distance of 48 miles right by the side of the ocean at low tide. The beach was very hard and I drove at a speed of 80 miles per hour for a distance of 22 miles. This is to show you how smooth the beach is.

Now I was thinking that if someone cared to bring a ship down here, we could hook a nice long tow line on an automobile, and with either a north or south wind, I think some spectacular altitude could be made behind a tow car. This would place the ship in fine position to use thermals if they were active on that particular day.

Scene: Lady passenger strapped in two-seater, ready for flight. Pilot Kaye standing by, waiting for winch cable. Elderly mother of passenger rushes up and announces in subdued tones:

"My dear, I've made enquiries about the pilot, and I hear he's a man called Kaye, married, with one child, and quite respectable. You'll be quite safe, darling!"

The Sailplane and Glider.

EASTERN STATES

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Sunday Call prize of $25 for spot landing, $3.00 for first place, and $2.00 for second place for each of the five days of the meet: first, Brookhart, Errickson, Pollacek, Orban, Orban; second, Errickson, Brookhart, Orban, Barringer, Lawrence. Gordon Wightman prize, $10.00 for special spot landing event, to Harold Pollacek.

The Scheurer, Conklin, and Fowler prizes, which had been intended for soaring performance, were divided evenly among the ships and pilots, at $5.00 to each ship and $3.50 to each glider, since there was no soaring performance above the minimum requirements. The following pilots and gliders were officially entered: gliders, Schweizer sailplane, Airhoppers; Waco primary, Aero Club Albatross, (flown by Gus Scheurer); Kestrel sailplane, Barton and Hruslinski; Franklin Utility, Errickson and Pollacek; Cadet Utility, Lawrence and Orban; Lawrence Sailplane, Lawrence; Schweizer Utility, Hauck and Sargent.

SOARING BAROGRAPHS

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feet above the base-line altitude. The highest point is 5,280-1770 or 3,510. Ye gods! it's a "Silver C" flight!!

You will note that in the foregoing calculations, we carefully refrained from measuring the distance in inches on the trace between the point of release and the maximum altitude, and then converting this distance into feet of altitude from the evaluation chart. Instead, we determined the altitude of both points above sea level, and subtracted the release altitude from the maximum. The reason for this is that the calibration curve is not a straight line. In our particular case, the neglect of this fact brings dire results. The distance between the point of release and the maximum altitude is 10.3 squares. Converting this into altitude from the calibration chart, gives us 2825 feet above point of release. We lose 685 feet by doing it the wrong way.

Time evaluation of a barogram is very simple. Merely measure the number of inches of flight trace on the barogram and multiply this by the number of minutes per inch that your barograph draws. If you don't know what this value is from your calibration chart, let the instrument draw a line when sitting still on a table. If you let it run just one hour, divide 60 by the number of inches of trace that it has drawn and use this as your time factor. If the instrument has a good clock, durations measured this way are very accurate.

In another article the art of calibrating the instrument will be discussed. This job requires more equipment and skill than servicing and evaluation; so until you get this article on calibrations just send me your barograph and I'll do it for you. You just pay the shipping costs, and unless I get too swamped, my charges will be nothing—my address: Frankfort Sailplane Mfg. Co., Frankfort, Michigan.

If you have any questions, just write to me at the above address.

THE THERMAL

(*Continued from page 11*)

California in the meeting of a sharp demand for gliders, instructors, sailplanes, engineers and technicians. This demand will be laid at *our* door, for to whose else can it be taken?

Let's look at the requirements, then see where we fall short. The public, or the government, as the case may be, will demand *good* ships and *good* instructors and technicians, all on short, specific notice. Are we prepared? Let's look about us. Take any Sunday, for instance. A group of fellows and a ship traipse off to Arvin. On the other side of the hill are a couple of ships soaring on the Dry Lakes. Shandin Hills, Palos Verdes and the airports all have their quota of Sunday afternoon sailplaners. Spectacular? Not quite! A solitary dime in your pants pocket feels pretty thin. A pocketful arouses sudden notice. It works the same way with the public and gliding. One glider, or one individual, arouses little comment. Call in those boys from Arvin and Shandin Hills, and let them all fly at Palos Verdes and see how the public responds! In testament, see what the contests have done for gliding! Witness the development of powered aviation. It isn't being done by one or two, its being done by . . . o r g a n i z a t i o n !

We have, within our own group, a mass of both technical and practical talent. We have an organization of potential specialists. But the sad truth of the matter is that each "specialist" is whizzing along on his own orbit unwilling to apply his talent to coalescent benefit. W H Y ? Gentlemen, we're spiting ourselves! We desperately need a closer-knit organization. We desperately need increased man-power, and above all, we *must* lift the yoke of the desire for personal attainment and work toward our goal as a unit. The handwriting is on the wall, members, the iron is hot! What are we going to do about it?

ACCIDENT REPORT

This letter will report a fatal accident which occurred on August 13, 1939, at Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Joseph Steger, president of the recently formed Glenbard Glider Club—a high school group—was auto-towed to 150 feet for a routine practice flight and gentle turns. As the car slowed up at the end of its run, Steger dipped the nose, banked into a turn to the left with the tow line still attached. The glider, a licensed Mead primary, was jerked so violently that Steger was then unable to release.

Findings were as follows:

1. No experienced glider pilots were present at the airport at the time and the practice flights by new students were being made with no supervision.

2. The release mechanism on the glider was of a design often criticized by more experienced pilots. It had no safety feature allowing automatic release from a backward pull nor was action absolutely positive with sharp sideward pull. Installation of a better release had been recommended but not insisted upon.

3. No auxiliary release feature was provided on the tow car.

R. F. BLAINE, *Secretary,*
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