

ALTOSAURUS COMES OUT OF HIBERNATION

by Dunbar Carpenter

As far back as last February, when we first began wondering if maybe we shouldn't start gliding the next week, the date of May 4 had been set as our own particular ground-hog day and whether our Schweizer all-metal utility, Pterodactyl, saw its shadow or not there was to be no return to hibernation. There was no need for worry, however, for May 4 dawned bleak and rainy. Although our feet may have been dampened, our spirits were not, and with Lew Barringer as a worthy guest, we set off for Nashua, N. H., all the same. In fact, one or two of us even smiled a bit as the clouds showed signs of breaking and the sun of peeping through as we left. Nashua, however, we found was still shut in.

On arrival, there was much to do, what with putting the ship together for the first time with new bolts for all parts, checking and rechecking, minor adjustments and all. Thus it was that for the first two hours we were able to pretty much ignore the perverse drizzle outside, confident, of course, that it was going to clear. When at noon it started to downpour without remorse, we loudly proclaimed the clearing shower and went off to lunch. Upon returning, conditions seemed to warrant taking the ship out and starting off the season with a few ground tows. After three short preliminary tows the rain set in again, and a bespattered log reads "Rain followed by clearing showers followed by rain."

Having received an official prediction that morning for clearing weather from a meteorologist of some renown, we put in a telephone call just to make sure we had understood him correctly. Upon learning thereby that all reports indicated the sun was shining all over New England except in Nashua, we cursed all meteorologists and, succumbing to other entertainment, departed for the day.

Ever hopeful, we returned the next morning to a cloudy but dry sky with continual expectations of the sun's breaking through. The first item on the program was to set up our new toy, a winch, conceived, designed and constructed during the winter by the Club. The windward corner of the field, however, turned out to be the wettest, and before attaining our aim, our concoction of wheels, gears, and axles was wallowing hub deep in the mire. A couple of tow cars, rope, planks, jacks, manpower and an hour or so of time all went toward returning the contraption to dry ground.

The winch was then set up and pronounced ready for trial. With some trepidation and much excitement, tow number one was organized, the rope laid out, the Pterodactyl attached and the signal given. Loud whines and volleys of smoke exuded from the engine, piercing screeches, stray nuts and odd bits of wood flew out of the winch, but the rope came ever in and the glider climbed heavenward on the far end. Then just as the smiles began creeping over our faces replacing the expressions of anxiety, came the loud bang and rope flew in all directions. When the excitement settled, a brief glance indicated the guillotine had permissuously and inadvertently assumed its duties. Whether the trig holding the blade up had been set too fine or whether someone in his enthusiasm had pulled the guillotine release, no one knew, but at least we had proved without a doubt that the guillotine had been quite satisfactorily designed.

After a few minutes we had the rope spliced and the Pterodactyl ready for a second try at winch launching. Once more the whines, smoke, screeches and superfluous equipment issued forth, and once more the glider rose on the other end. At about the same point as in the previous launching, unprecedented events once more began occurring with amazing rapidity. Unfortunately this time our difficulty was more fundamental. The drum of the winch had been bound with plywood flanges which had undergone a severe strain as a result of the expansion of the wet rope. One of these flanges had come off during the height of the activity and allowed the rope to wind, snarl, tangle, entwine and decussate around the axle as only rope can do. A certain amount of time was spent bringing order out of the resulting chaos, the winch was sent back to the shop to have steel flanges welded on, and the rest of the day was spent gliding a la tow car.

While we were blessed the rest of the day with total lack of precipitation, we did not enjoy much sunshine and found very quiet air, no lifts, no thermals, nothing to ride on at all. Even Barringer failed to lodge his sky hook into anything for longer than four minutes. It's an ill wind, however, that blows nobody good and the general lack of conditions gave us all an excellent chance to iron out the winter's crimps and creases. Smoother flying and spot landings were practiced and before the day was through six more intrepid birdmen had officially acquired their B licenses.

THIRD ANNUAL SOUTHWESTERN SOARING CONTEST

June 2nd-16th

The site of the meet will be the Staley field at Wichita Falls, an abandoned airport of 550 acres. The field will have room for two take off runways and one landing runway. This will allow the launching of two ships from the same site without interfering with each other. The two take off sites will be one mile apart yet in the same field. The landing runway will be between the take-off points. The contest is to be held June 2 to 16.

The boys are to be housed in six man regulation army tents with army cots. The contestants must furnish own bedding. Many luncheons and picnic suppers as well as other entertainment has been planned for the contestants.

Each contesting pilot will be allowed ten days of flying out of the fifteen. This will eliminate the human endurance angle of the meet.

The points award system will compare favorably with that of the Third Annual Western Championship Soaring Contest. There will be a few changes to suit the locality. Multi-seater sailplanes will be given a ten per cent handicap if the weight of the pilot and passenger conform with the F. A. I. regulations of 331 lbs. minimum load.

All flights are made official only by barograph. Special points will be awarded for obtaining "C," Silver "C," or Golden "C" licenses.

Several \$100.00 goal flight prizes have been posted by neighboring towns. Other smaller goal flight money will be offered.

Merchandise and special flight and distance prizes will total \$600.00.

Point award money will be \$1,000.00.

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