

Second Annual "SNOWBIRD" Contest

The Second Annual Snowbird Contest was held at the Warren E. Eaton Motorless Flight Facility on Harris Hill November 22 through November 24. The contest performances far exceeded those of last year, and the number of participants and ships was somewhat larger.

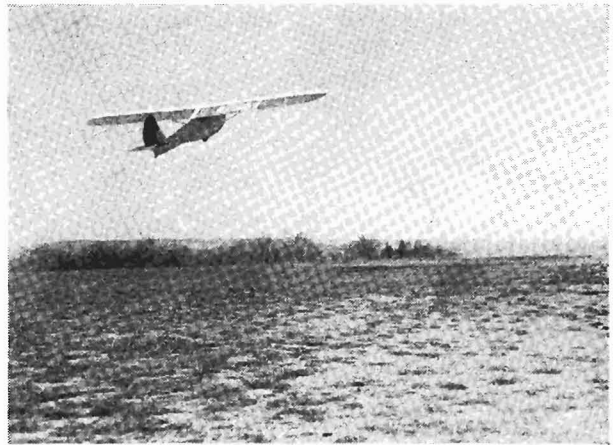
The Contest got under way Friday morning with the arrival of many of the contestants who had seen fit to spend Thanksgiving Day eating turkey. Others, who had arrived Thursday, were already on the scene and had their ships set up.

A 30-mile-an-hour wind greeted the pilots as they wheeled their craft from the hangar and, after dubiously checking the weather, they wheeled their ships back in and adjourned for lunch. After lunch the wind swung to a more favorable direction on the hill and subsided somewhat in velocity, so Floyd Sweet acted as "guinea pig pilot" and made launchings in his Rhonbussard to test conditions before the other pilots went aloft. He was followed closely by Don Lawrence of Newark, N. J., in the "Yellow Peril" and Stan Smith of Tonawanda, N. Y., in a Schweizer two-place. Other pilots making flights were Ed Quarterman of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Paul Schweizer and Paul Nissen of Elmira and James M. W. Martin of Greenwich, Conn., all of the Hudson Valley Club, in their Schweizer utility. Richard McGrath of Elmira made several short flights in his Franklin. The results of the day's flying were: Sweet, 1900 feet and 42 minutes; Lawrence, 1600 feet and 31 minutes; and Smith, 1450 feet and 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Among the late arrivals Friday was Chester Decker with his "Mini," and early Saturday morning Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Wise and Dallas Wise, Jr. of Detroit arrived to spend the day at the Contest. George Law of Nutley, N. J., arrived Saturday with his Huetter H-17 utility and later in the day Robert M. Stanley, Chief Test Pilot for Bell Aircraft of Buffalo, and Ted Bellak of Chelsea, Michigan, arrived.

Saturday was a typical "Ceiling Zero" day, and most of the pilots gathered in the administration building for a bit of "hangar flying" and to listen to the Saturday football games on the radio. The mist which was about 150 feet over the hill was so thick that, when Ed Quarterman attempted a flight, he disappeared from view momentarily and made a speedy dash for a landing. Richard McGrath of Elmira also put on a disappearing act but soon returned. The lull in activities gave Don Lawrence an opportunity to set up a new type of pulley tow which uses a pulley block attached to the bumper of the car. This caused a two-to-one reduction in car speed which was found to be much safer on the wet slopes of Harris Hill.

Saturday evening the Elmira Gliding Club entertained the pilots and Elmira friends of the pilots at a turkey dinner in the dining hall of the administration building. The entertainment following the delicious dinner consisted of colored movies of the 1940 National Contest and dancing until the wee hours of the morning. About 100 persons attended.



A Winch Launching During the "Snowbird" Contest

The weather Sunday, November 24, was favorable for soaring, the cold front which had passed during the night was followed by a 20-mile northwest wind which made ideal ridge soaring conditions. There were times when every ship was in the air. Every pilot made at least one, and some as many as three, soaring flights during the day. The first ship took off about 10 o'clock and soaring was enjoyed until darkness (and the CAA inspector) decreed that it was time to quit. Considerable passenger-hopping was done by Youston Sekella of the Elmira Gliding Club and Stan Smith of the Buffalo Club. Chet Decker very graciously passed the "Mini" about among the pilots after he had accumulated a few points. Those who flew his ship for half an hour and more were Ted Bellak, Stan Smith and Floyd Sweet.

The best altitude of the day was turned in by Sweet in Decker's Minimoa with an official altitude of 1430 feet above the point of release. The best duration for the day was again turned in by Smith with a 99-minute flight. He was closely followed by Don Lawrence with a 98½-minute flight. While it was easily possible to have soared all day long most of the pilots were content with half an hour to an hour and a half in the air since it was rather cold. Two "C" licenses were earned on Sunday; one by George Law who flew for 47 minutes in his H-17 and the other by Ray Casler who flew 51 minutes in the Hudson Valley "Crueller."

In all 21 hours and 9½ minutes of soaring were enjoyed by attending pilots. Point Totals are as follows:

Stan Smith.....	862	Richard McGrath..	266
Don Lawrence.....	659	Youston Sekella....	214
Floyd Sweet.....	545	George Law.....	94
Ted Bellak.....	318	Robert Stanley.....	82
Chet Decker.....	299	Ray Casler.....	78

316 points for the Hudson Valley Club whose pilots were Casler, Matrin, Quarterman and Paul Schweizer. All pilots shared in the \$200.00 point award fund.

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