

by Helen Montgomery

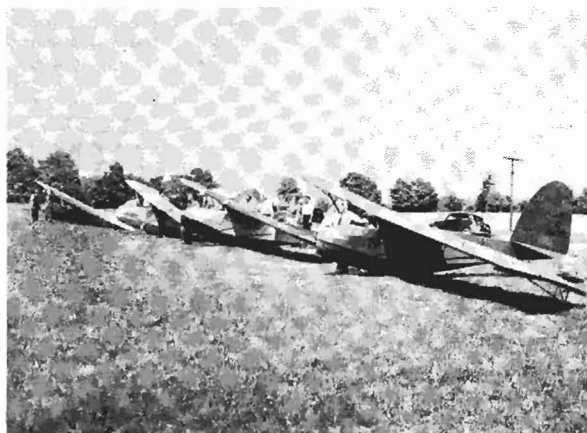
To soar through the air with the ease of a hawk has long been the ambition of man. Soaring is one of the most fascinating sports known. But how can the average person get initiated into the inner sanctum, past the stage of wishful thinking and day dreaming into the realities besetting every glider pilot? Easy, you may say—sure, just buy a glider and start flying. But, fortunately for the embryo pilot, perhaps, there is more to it than that. There is to be considered the little matter of a ground crew, also launching equipment and proper gliding instruction. The average person interested in learning to fly a glider is not financially able to buy a ship for his own private use. This leads into the discussion of how to secure the financial aid and cooperation of other interested parties by means of joining an existing glider club or organizing a new one.

If you live in a vicinity where some gliding is being done, it might be well worthwhile to consider joining the group doing the flying. However, at this point let me admonish you to study the setup thoroughly in order to save yourself any chance of disappointment later. First, make frequent contacts with the human element of the club, scrutinizing each member and observing how well they get along with one another and whether or not they cooperate well. Look over their equipment and delve deeply into their financial setup. Ask them the following questions: What provision is made for maintenance and minor repairs on the equipment and how is a crack-up handled? What is the pilot's financial responsibility in case of a crackup? How much repair and maintenance work is each member expected to do on the ship? Is the financial set-up adequate to handle any emergencies that may arise? I could go on and on with similar questions with the thought in mind that this investigation cannot



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Successful GLIDER



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be too thorough. Every question should be answered to the full satisfaction of the prospective member.

Oftentimes the only possibility of breaking into the gliding fraternity is to organize a club, following the pattern set forth by the successful operations of other clubs. Foremost among the deliberations and discussions in connection with starting a club is the matter of how to finance it. To begin with, the big item of expense is the matter of how to buy the glider itself. However, don't let the magnitude of this expenditure blank out several lesser ones of equal importance, such as for instance, towing equipment, trailer, hangar rental, field rental, and instructor's fees. But beware! This isn't all! After this initial expense is met, some plan must be made for flight costs, maintenance, accidents, insurance, and additional equipment such as instruments, barograph, and parachute.

In order not to leave the above expenses just dangling in the air, and dazzling the prospective club member, I'll be specific and review the procedure followed in organizing and operating the XYZ SOARING CLUB OF MICHIGAN, of which I am a member. Each member buys a share in the club equipment for \$60.00, which we call the membership fee. If he wishes, he pays \$35.00 down and \$2.50 per month for ten months. The money paid into the club by the first few members went as a down payment on our training ship, a Franklin, which we arranged to purchase on time payments. At the same time, we were making payments on our Haller-Hawk sailplane. (I mention this purely as an incidental in this discussion, because I don't want to convey the impression that this is recommended as a successful method in organizing a club, even though our club succeeded in carrying this additional financial burden. The books should be kept out of the red as much as possible.) In our club the money coming from membership fees has always been sufficient to purchase new gliders and additional equipment. We figure on a maximum of ten members per ship, and this seems to have kept everybody satisfied as to the number of flights as well as the financial setup.