



Photo by A. B. Schultz

Margaret Needham of L-K takes Mrs. Rhodes for an airplane tow in a TG-4A.

THIS is not an account of the National Soaring Contest of 1945 but a bird's-eye view of a very informal, though very successful, get-together of a bunch of glider pilots and enthusiasts at Elmira during the fortnight usually devoted in prewar days to the highly competitive exhibition of motorless antigravitation.

In whose head the idea for the get-together first germinated it is hard to tell. A few of us Airhoppers decided way back in April that we would bludgeon our bosses into vacationing us off during the last week of June and the first week of July and that these two weeks would be spent by us in gliding. Our caravan arrived at the Rhodes Farm around 8 P. M. on July 30. Here we discovered that we were not the only ones who intended to spend two weeks gliding in Elmira, but that an imposing array of glider pilots and their flying machines was expected the next day. This promised to have all the earmarks of past contest attendance without the usual nervous tension which accompanies highly competitive flying. The boys and girls were out for fun and relaxation.

By Wednesday, July 4, thirty glider pilots were gathered at Harris Hill—some flying, some reworking their TG-4As into a licensable state and some just talking and reminiscing. Contrary to the old days the majority of ships were of the sailplane type with the TG-4A predominating the field. Practically all ships were individually and not club owned. Four clubs attended the gathering of which only two, the Airhoppers and the Hudson Valley glider clubs had flying equipment. The Philadelphia Glider Council represented by Lew Hull, Ben Cohen, Libby Schrack and Ray Kindt did not bring theirs, while the Canadian guests, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Noonan and Al Carter, of McGill Glider Club, Toronto, came with the sole purpose to attend Maury Waters school, which unfortunately ran into difficulties and could not get started. All others were without club affiliations, flying their own sailplanes.

The most elaborate "equippe" was that of the Laister-Kauffmann Aircraft Corporation which arrived with three TG-4As; two airplane towed and one on trailer.

# ELMIRA

By ALEXIS

The outfit was headed by Bill Nesbitt, sales manager of the company. The two TG-4As, piloted by Madge Needham, ex-WASP, and Bill Sampson, were towed by two bright yellow Boeing N2S (Army PT-17) flown by Adele Sharr and Art Herring. Dick Moore, crew chief, drove the third trailered TG-4A. This last one was to be generously presented by the Laister-Kauffmann company to the Soaring Society of America.

One of the highlights of the event was Parker Leonard's two-place glider designed and built by him, according to rumors, in his own living room. It is a large and roomy two-seater, tailored to Parker's sizeable frame, simple in construction and showing exceptionally fine workmanship. Unfortunately I have no details concerning its performance characteristics, as it was just undergoing flight tests at the County Airport. One one occasion, however, Parker stayed up for 15 minutes after being towed up to an altitude of 3,000 feet on a day not very favorable for soaring.

It cannot be said that the weather was generous as far as soaring conditions were concerned. The wind blew up the ridge only three days out of ten and thermals were not over abundant. Flight activities were therefore divided between Harris Hill and the County Airport. This, nevertheless, did not dampen the enthusiasm of participants as this was an occasion for which we had been waiting since the beginning of the war. Familiar faces, many absent for several years, were seen again on Harris Hill accentuating the feeling of "old times." Bob Stanley and Cleveland Hyde dropped in for a day of ground flying, while Floyd Sweet, resplendent in an AAF major's uniform, took the Schweizer boys' TG-3A for several hops. Emil Lehecka alternated his time modifying his Laister for licensing and flying the Schweizer TG-3A or Clarence See's TG-2A. Clarence himself, meanwhile, established

## Parker Leonard's New Two-Place

Photo by Alexis Dawydoff

