

the Soaring Society. In order to help show the possibilities of youth in gliding, 15-year old Dicky McPherson was trained for the contest and took part in the show each day. He also won one of the \$100 Northrop awards (only one to a customer) for best altitude by pilot under 21. *The \$400 balance of the Northrop award has been set aside for next year's National.* This should encourage SSA members to do all they can to bring in new pilots and to promote soaring among the youth. This can be highlighted by having the best new pilots take part each year in the National.

Two accidents marred the otherwise very successful meet. Larry Creighton, who has flown almost everything with and without power, tried his first shock cord launch. He pulled the 1-19 up a little too high and dropped it in kind of hard. Although very little damage was done to the 1-19, Larry did not do so well. An X-ray showed that he had compressed three vertebrae. However, he attended the awards banquet sporting his new cast.

The other accident resulted in the death of William Mayfield, the first fatal accident ever to happen at Harris Hill. Due to the malfunctioning of the DLV release or pilot error, during an auto tow, the rope failed to release and caused the Kirby Kite to dive to the ground. To most of the American soaring fraternity who are sold on the self-releasing type of tow hook used on all American types, this accident seemed so unnecessary and adds further to the justification for the elimination of, or special precautions with, the DLV type of release in use with auto, pulley, or winch tow.

One of the toughest nuts to crack is that of financing the National Contest. All National Soaring Contests held before have gone into the red several thousands of dollars. This year it was the hope of the Elmira Area Soaring Corporation to break even at least, and all planning was directed in that direction. This was done in spite of the fact that this year's budget was much greater than any previous contest held in Elmira, due mainly to the necessity of guaranteeing a point award of \$5000 and the general rise in costs. The Contest Management reasoned that there was little that could be done to reduce the operation budget, so the alternative was to increase the income. This was to be done by using the many ways employed in past contests — selling programs and advertising — selling memberships in the E.A.S.C. — soliciting contributions — but mainly by building up the attendance at the meet by having a real professional show each day at a set time.

A regular program was put on each afternoon and from the reports, comments, and general reception, it was by far the best that had ever been done at a glider contest. The acts included a glider radio demonstration by Dick McGrath in a Pratt-Read, and at the ground station by Elliot Hood and Mr. Crabill. Team aerobatics were put on by Clarence See, Larry Creighton, and Maury Waters; a demonstration of shock cord, auto, and pulley tow launching; Johnny Nowak's Whistling Bird Act; an Army cargo glider snatch take-off and aerobatic demonstration; flying demonstration by 15-year-old Dicky McPherson; parachute jump from glider by Dick Ward; trials for the Aerobatic Championship; and special aerobatic exhibitions generously put on by Kim Scribner, Maury Waters, Frank Hurtt, Paul Tunt-

THE WEATHER

BY B. L. WIGGIN

The weather cooperated with the 15th National to the extent that flights meeting the requirements of the contest rules were *possible* every day. Not the least important reason for this was the factor sunshine.

The period June 30-July 11, at the latitude of Elmira, rates from 910 to 919 minutes of "possible" sunshine a day. The daily maximum for the year is 922 minutes around the Summer Solstice (compared with 795 minutes during the Northeastern States Meet which was held at Elmira in late August, 1947). In other words, the pump that raises the thermals completely ignores the 8-hour day.

The steady parade of cold air masses was the next important factor. Only twice, July 4-5, and again over the closing week-end, were they interrupted by invasions of very warm moist air from the southwest — and even this air was convectively unstable. One cold mass extended to over 10,000 feet which is rather unusual for the season. It produced a "super" lapse rate to that altitude.

It was a stop and go parade. High pressure centers accompanying the cold air masses would crest over the New York-Pennsylvania area and cause light variable winds throughout all the convective levels. In previous years high pressure centers have kept to the southwest, for the most part, putting Elmira into a far-carrying drift of unstable northwest winds.

This cresting of the highs was really a third factor which explains not only the lack of carry in many of the flights but also why on some days the contestants would soar off in all directions at once.

No use of new weather information was made although barrier waves were discussed in meeting. On July 6 a trough wave was considered possible and indeed one was formed. It was marked by a cirrus arch extending to the limits of vision, oriented northeast-southwest. Small cumuli formed under it while all the remainder of the sky was free of cloud.

land, Youston Sekella, Kemp Trager, and others. On the last day, two P-84 Jet Fighters from Maine buzzed the field as an added feature of the show. Hugh Wheeler was the "man at the mike" and turned out an excellent job on the PA system.

In spite of this excellent show, the attendance was nowhere near what we hoped for. This meant that the Contest went into the red and the Contest Management had not achieved its goal. There is some consolation in knowing that no one else ever has broken even either, but there are serious angles to this. Any community that sponsors such an event is willing to spend (or lose) a certain amount for the publicity and business that such a National event will bring to a community. However, this amount invested must be in line with the benefits to be received and frankly, there is a considerable number of people in each of the two communities which have sponsored National Soaring Contests, who question whether it is worth the price.

It seems that the nature of the Contests must be changed when held at cities with a population of 70,000
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