



Ted Pfeiffer of the Airhoppers goes aloft in his L-K behind the Fleet. Ship in foreground is Lou Feierabend's TG-2. Three tow planes were pressed into service during the meet, which greatly accelerated launching the fourteen participating sailplanes.

Wurtsboro Thermals

By ALEX DAWYDOFF

SOARING activity at Wurtsboro Airport, New York, has increased steadily since the formation of the Metropolitan Soaring Club a year ago and it reached a climax with the Columbus Day Soaring Meet, in which 13 sailplanes and 24 pilots participated on October 9-10, 1948.

For practically ten years Columbus Day has been marked by Metropolitan New York glider pilots as an occasion for a soaring get-together at Wurtsboro. This year's meet was a friendly non-competitive event with free tows and the excellent soaring site as inducements.

Don Lawrence, President of the club, supplied his Stearman and Tom Brodesser, airport operator, donated gas for the tows. One free tow to 3000 feet, or two free tows to 1000 feet in the event of good slope winds, were offered for each sailplane entered.

The weather on Saturday, October 9, was soaringly excellent. A guinea pig flight in which the author and Dave Malkemus rode a thermal from 1000 to 3500 feet triggered activities for the day and thereafter all gliders soared on every flight.

Best duration was by Allen Van Name of the Airhoppers, who put in almost four hours in his LK.

Best altitude for the two days was 5500 feet, made by Emil Lehecka in his Pratt-Read. Paul Tuntland put on an aerobatics exhibition in Emil's Pratt-Read which included ribbon cutting.

Clubs represented were: Airhoppers, New York City; Aero-Club Albatross, New Jersey; Philadelphia Glider Council, and Metropolitan Soaring Club. Among non-affiliated pilots were Lou Feierabend of Pearl River, N. Y.; Paul Tuntland, now TWA Constellation co-pilot; Rene Comte of Switzerland, Kim Scribner, National Glider Stunt Champion accompanied by Mrs. Scribner.

All participating pilots, who flew two-place sailplanes, were asked to take up as many passengers as they possibly could. This was done from a promotional point of view in order to get as many people interested in motorless flights as possible.

The entire Air Trails executive staff, consisting of Al Lewis, Editor; Bill Tyler, Art Director; and Aubrey Kochman, Associate Art Director, were given rides as well as friends of the pilots. Through the good auspices of Hans Groenhoff, television station WABD, Dumont Television, sent its director Bob Loewe and two cameramen to take motion pictures of the meet which were tele-broadcast on October 25, with Hans as commentator.

Participant in the meet was also Ruth Petry, daughter of Prof. Lauren Petry of Cornell University. Ruth is an ex-Wasp, and executive assistant of Crash Injury Research Office. She won her "C" just two weeks prior to the meet with an hour's flight in Emil Lehecka's Pratt-Read and has since earned her Commercial Glider Rating.