



Schweizer TG-2 goes aloft from Harris Hill.

James Walsh

Snowbirds, 1948

By HOWARD BURR

THANKSGIVING DAY again opened the annual Snowbird Meet at Harris Hill, Elmira, N. Y. Early morning found Del Miller of Millersburg, Pa., and Lynn Daggett of Trenton, N. J., on deck with their TG-2's. The wind was right on the ridge, but to our dismay, of only five miles an hour velocity. A high overcast discouraged thoughts of thermals so we went about the business of helping Lynn and Del assemble their ships in the hope conditions would improve. In the afternoon the cloud cover persisted and the wind velocity seemed to ease off a bit. In order to determine if conditions were as bad as they seemed Norm Griswold, with his Franklin, and Bill Frutchy, with his 1-23, made several tows but to no avail.

Friday found a strong South wind with a high haze developing into an overcast by noon. The day was spent checking ships and instruments and a good old-fashioned bull session added to the warmth of the administration building. Later Mr. and Mrs. Tonking of Paterson, N. J., Howard Klitgord and Don Ryon of Rochester, N. Y., joined the rest in a trip to the Schweizer plant.

In the evening a discussion of standing waves was led by Paul Schweizer and we had a preview from SOARING of Harland Ross' article, "Standing Wave," which was sent to us for the purpose by Dick Comey. Barney Wiggin accommodated us with sound movies on thunderstorms and cold fronts. Prof. McLean of Cornell University contributed to the discussion. Thus we spent a pleasant and educational evening.

Saturday found eager pilots up on the hill anxious to tackle a 25 mph. Northwest wind. Our official timekeeper and recent "C" pilot, Tommy Smith, was busy recording and arranging takeoffs. Del Miller was first

off as he was anxious to try for his five hours to complete his final leg of his "Silver C." Dale Gustin in his Pratt-Reed and Howard Klitgord in his TG-3 took off next in hopes of gaining their "Silver C" duration legs.

The wind velocity increased as thermal activity started and sixteen takeoffs were made. Once in the air most pilots stayed there; landing conditions were hazardous due to the turbulence in back of the hill. Cumulus formed all day and despite an estimated wind velocity of 50 mph. at 3,000 feet it was not too difficult to get up to the cloud base.

Howard Klitgord was the last man in landing just at dusk. Thus Howard and Del Miller completed their Silver "C" duration legs.

Hot coffee was available all day in the administration building with Gene Bardwell at the controls.

An excellent day of flying was followed by a picnic supper. Tribute was paid to the late Mrs. "Ma" Rhodes by Youston Sekella, President of the Elmira Area Soaring Corporation.

A high point of each Snowbird meet is the presentation of the Herbert Sargent memorial plaque. This year the plaque was presented to Caretaker Lee Wood, one-man ground crew, for his tireless efforts in helping those who come to Harris Hill to soar. Those who have been to Elmira to fly can appreciate the wisdom of the Hudson Valley Glider Club, sponsors, in selecting Lee as the recipient of this award.

Following supper, slides on early American aviation were entertainingly presented to the group by Mr. and Mrs. Willis Oldfield of Bath, N. Y. Mr. Oldfield's collection of slides is reputedly one of the best and most complete in the country. His presentation was very well received.