

CROSSROADS

The Soaring Society of America has virtually pulled itself up by its bootstraps. We are now in a position to carry out our basic functions properly, undertake new projects to expand your sport, bring more and better gliding and soaring to more people. Whether we are able to realize these objectives depends entirely upon you.

Up to the present time, the Society has been operating on such a limited budget that its work has been severely hampered. However, to carry out our activities on a current basis we have recently invested every penny available in setting up a central office with a secretary, an Associate Editor and a full-time General Manager, all of whom are now familiar with the problems and work of the SSA. This staff is underpaid to the extent that it practically is on a volunteer basis. Nevertheless, it is *doing* the work, and during 1949 it will go all out to keep SOARING up-to-date, and process new membership applications promptly.

Whether we are able to keep this staff together in 1950 to coordinate activities, publish SOARING and handle the day-to-day functions of the Society will depend directly on how many new members you are able and willing to sign up this year. The SSA is your business. Today we are at the crossroads.

Publishing costs have climbed 100 to 300 per cent during the last few years. The fact that SOARING has completed twelve years of continuous publication and is now a senior aviation periodical is due to the efforts of a few who have encouraged friends and acquaintances to join our Society. In 1948 some signed up as many as twenty new members. We need everyone's cooperation in 1949 if we are to consolidate our gains and be ready to advance further.

Instead of waiting until it is necessary to disperse and decrease our activities, act now while your efforts will be most fruitful. We have no financial problems that would not be cured by acquiring a thousand new members.

Right now we have the plant and the opportunity that has never been with us before. We have NC'd gliders, and manufacturers ready to produce more as needed. We have a goodly number of gliding and soaring schools. We have at least a framework of SSA Chapters, Affiliates, and other soaring groups covering large sections of our country.

Now is the time for soaring to expand. To get the ball rolling we need conscientious action on your part to bring new members into the Society and place it on a financial footing that will insure its future.

Presently, it costs the SSA over 50 cents to publish each of the slightly over 1000 copies of SOARING it distributes each issue. If we had 2000 members, it would cost less than 30 cents a copy. Were there 3000 members the cost would fall to about 20 cents. Think what doubling our membership would mean to the Society and its ability to help you.

The CAA has over 3000 licensed glider pilots entered in its files. Interest in our great sport is growing. We need every glider pilot, every would-be glider pilot, and every potentially interested individual as a member. *Our minimum goal for 1949 is 500 new Active Members.*

The field is fertile. Do your best.

R. J. C.

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