



CARSEY

# YOU AND SOARING

## An Open Letter

From JON CARSEY,  
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SOARING! There's something in the word that is an invitation to adventure. *You are invited!*

Soaring! In its first definition, *to soar* means to fly as a bird flies. The Soaring Society of America, of course, takes its name from this meaning. Its members fly as the birds fly.

As a matter of fact, a Soaring Society member has been studying (at the Sailplane Research Center, Mississippi State College) the flight of buzzards and other soaring birds by actually flying along with them in their own way, which is soaring.

But there's another meaning to the word. Poets are said to soar in their rhymes. That is, they rise above the commonplace and prosaic.

Talk to any member of the Soaring Society of America (or of the many local and regional clubs scattered through the land, or to anyone who flies a sailplane anywhere in the world), and you'll realize that soaring as a sport, or as a branch of aviation, or simply as a hobby, partakes of both meanings: You fly as the birds do (*sans moteur!*) and you rise above the ordinary.

Hand in hand with the training, the techniques, the science and the skills of soaring go quite unmatched thrills: *Yours* is the open sky, the winds of heaven, the kinetics of the atmosphere; pure, beautiful, unrestricted motion.

WHEN I was a youngster, before the days of modern aviation, in Oak Cliff, Texas, now a western suburb of Dallas, there lived a fellow who was the idol of the boys and young men of the town.

He wasn't popular because of his wit, or his handsome looks, for he was a cripple. He didn't have a convertible, for this was long before their day.

He was popular because he fashioned from bamboo, sticks, wires and cotton cloth, machines that my grandmother called "Flyin' Contraptions."

*I thought I had discovered immortality one day in 1938 when the heather-clad crest of Sutton Bank slowly began to recede below me. It was a triumph in three dimension—physically over those whose white faces grew smaller and smaller as I rose away from them, mechanically over the force of gravity from whose grasp I was slipping, and spiritually over the bonds which bind the soul to the earth.—*  
TERENCE HORSLEY, IN "SOARING FLIGHT," PUBLISHED BY EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, LONDON, 1944.

He knew nothing of shock cords, hill winds or thermals (as you do, or *should*). But when enough of the boys pulled the long calf rope, or when some adventurous spectator would tow it with his Maxwell, his "aeroplane" would rise to a height of five or six feet, and either settle back for another "pull," or tumble over on the pasture in a heap, to be repaired or rebuilt by the hunch-back and his eager and happy followers.

From such crude beginnings, reflecting a zeal shared by thousands of Americans, has come today's conquest of the air, both with power and with motorless craft.

Sleek, beautiful sailplanes climb and soar over the hills of New York, the hot prairies of Texas and the green valleys of California with a perfection of motion that dazzles the uninitiated beholder.

This year, a member of the Soaring Society of America, Dick Johnson, will endeavor to break the world's soaring record for distance, said to be held by a (*naturally*) Russian. Think of flying nearly 500 miles, and never use a drop of gasoline or any power other than the air's restless currents, the sun's warmth, the earth's pull of

gravity.

Headline writers frequently label people who fly sailplanes and gliders as "soaring enthusiasts." They're not wrong. Soaring merits unlimited enthusiasm.

As with all life's experiences, sharing, fellowship and cooperative effort, bring greater rewards and joys, so it is with soaring.

That is why there is a soaring Society of America, and various local and regional clubs and societies over the Country.

Soaring is open to everyone. It is for the girls and ladies as well as the boys and men. Husband-and-wife teams are not uncommon at soaring sites.

To you who are interested, wherever you may be, the Soaring Society of America stands ready to assist you in getting started—get into the Society and soaring—broaden your horizons, enlarge your bid for all the pleasures and joys of our time.

