

## Gliding And Soaring Schools

The history of training centers, as captioned, is just about as old as gliding and soaring. That is, the members of almost any well-organized group of glider fans just naturally gravitate toward helping one another acquire all the skills essential to being a glider pilot. The scope of training includes: 1—Use and Care of Flying Equipment; 2—Preparation, Care and Maintenance of Tow Lines; 3—Flight Instruments; 4—Use of Launching Equipment, winch tow (using enlarged reel), automobile tow, automobile pulley tow and airplane tow plus familiarization with other phases of ground operations; 5—Practice launchings; 6—Approaches to, and actual landings to a mark; 7—Air practice either on airplane tow or in free flight; 8—Soaring techniques; 9—Aerobatics (not for exhibition purposes) to familiarize student with various attitudes in which a glider may safely be placed during flight.

The Soaring Society of America, Inc., conducted training centers in the years 1933 and 1934 at Elmira, New York, under regulations as follows: No student accepted unless physically fit; recommended that students take physical examination required of private power-plane pilots; no flying unless head instructor on duty; operation of training center to be in strict compliance with Society contest rules and in accordance with regulations of the federal supervisory agency, the Civil Aeronautics Administration. Courses offered were: 1—Beginner's course, taking a student up to the point where 360-degree turns could be performed; 2—Advanced course, for pilots having completed first phase, consisting of qualifying flights at airport using automobile tow, hill, ridge, or mountain, launching with straight glide to valley below, a soaring flight of five minutes or more to qualify stu-

dent for "C" soaring certificate, after which another soaring flight of fifteen minutes was required.

Obviously the standards set forth above involve considerable equipment, personnel, and launching areas, with all their attendant economic problems. However, The Soaring Society of America, Inc., recognizes that there are individuals interested in learning to glide and soar, not affiliated with an association or club. Consequently, the Society lists in the 1953 "Soaring Directory" available soaring schools as follows: 1—Vernon L. Atkins, Santa Barbara, California; 2—Gus Briegleb, El Mirage Field, Adelanto, California; 3—Mohawk Valley Aviation Company, Inc., Harriman Airport, North Adams, Massachusetts; 4—Fred Ruble, Jr., Federal Heights Airport, Denver, Colorado; 5—Karl A. Schaarschmidt, Aero Park Airport, Pewaukee, Wisconsin; 6—Schweizer Aircraft Corp., Elmira, New York; 7—Joe Steinhauser, Mundelein, Illinois. By reading between the lines of reports emanating from the Soaring Association of Canada, the possibility of a soaring school, at Kitchener-Waterloo Flying Club, appears to be good!

Completion of an advanced glider training course prepares one for participation in the science-sport of motorless flying on an international basis, such as at Madrid, Spain, in 1952, where U.S.A. pilots competed. There is no question but that gliding and soaring can be a factor in enabling all nations to better understand one another! This is best borne out by considering the study of meteorology—a most important subject—included in item eight of scope of training above. To go back a bit, we find Dr. Albert F. Zahm's treatment of "Aeronautic Meteorology" in his book "Aerial Navigation" published in the year 1911! Five chapters are devoted to the subject: "general properties of free air; general distribution of heat and pressure; permanent and periodic winds; cyclones, torna-

does, waterspouts, thunderstorms, wind gusts." Today the glider student has access to a world-wide system of weather information, and at contests this data is available from the same source the Wright Brothers used when they were determining where to conduct their first gliding flights, namely, the U.S. Weather Bureau.

At early contests held at Harris Hill, Elmira, New York, a group of scientists from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by direction of Dr. C. G. A. Rossby, supervised by Dr. Karl O. Lange, assisted by Dr. Horace Byers, Gardner Emmons, Chris Harmantas, F. A. Arsenault, Steve Lichbau, Mr. Namais and Henry ("Hank") Harris (power-plane pilot of weather plane) established on Harris Hill a weather station for glider pilots. In later years this same service has been provided by cooperation of the U.S. Weather Bureau's Barney Wiggin. Before each day's soaring activities the glider pilots are briefed by the weather forecaster as to when and where the potential soaring conditions may be expected. After each soaring flight pilots are interrogated at the next pilot's meeting, and from these individual experiences student glider pilots soon learn more of the techniques of soaring. Later, stories of outstanding soaring flights appear in "Soaring," the Journal of Soaring Society of America and here again the student glider pilot adds to his (or her) store of knowledge.

Baby Bowlus



The citizens of Elmira extend their hospitality to you.