

## Gliding and Soaring Associations and Clubs

Since 1895, the year Percy S. Pilcher, of Great Britain, was building gliders named, "The Bat," "The Beetle," "The Gull," and "The Hawk," group activities have been the dominant force in the forging ahead of the science-sport of glider flying. The result has been that an environment may have been created that at times prevented a better understanding of what glider pilots were trying to accomplish. One factor in this negative situation has been the age of glider pilots; which may be difficult to understand because the average is in the high twenties. For that matter the Wright Brothers were well up in the age brackets when they started experimenting with gliders. Doubtless such is the case because of the earning abilities of those more advanced in age. Nevertheless, the latter statement is the very reason that glider flight has advanced to the high plane now occupied! Only through the resources of a few, plus the willingness to contribute some finances and a lot of pleasant work, has the science-sport been kept virile and expanding by many groups throughout the continent, with no government help!

The earlier organized groups had to display much ingenuity inasmuch as materials were difficult to find, as well as being costly. An early designer and builder of gliders, in Los Angeles, California, Louis Clark, is credited with building his first glider, a "hang" biplane, using only newspaper pictures as a guide. This eagerness to make the best of a situation has resulted in several thousand men and women indulging in the science-sport that has benefited aviation. A case in point is that of Edmund T. Allen, pioneer glider pilot and distinguished aeronautical engineer, who was the first club member from the States to participate in soaring contests at the Wasserkuppe, Germany in the year 1922!

Glider club plans have been drawn up and distributed by insurance companies, opportunists, magazine writers, the government, glider manufacturers, and by The Soaring Society of America. Included have been sample charters, by-laws, modus operandi, etc. An excellent presentation of the group plan is described in a brochure titled, "Birds of a Feather" distributed by Schweizer Aircraft Corporation of Elmira, New York.

E. F. McDonald, Zenith Radio, Chicago, Illinois, wrote, in Collier's Magazine, an article captioned "America Needs Soaring and Gliding Clubs." Reprinted from Collier's with permission of the author, and the publisher, "Air Youth of America" distributed copies of this article in pamphlet form. This story is of concern to all citizens! "Soaring"—the Journal of The Soaring Society of America, carries in each issue comment on every phase of glider activity; an exchange of theory and practice that passes along to approximately two thousand individuals, invaluable information gathered together from all parts of the world!

In addition to the national periodical, "Soaring" which treats of worldwide gliding and soaring news, some very impressive news publications are issued by many of the local associations and clubs; e.g., "Newsletter of The Chicagoland Gliding Council," Wooddale, Illinois; "Thermal" of The Southern California Soaring Association, Los Angeles, California; "Hot Air" of the Northern California Soaring Association, Mountain View, California; "Newsletter" of The Iowa Soaring Association, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; "Towline" from the Seattle Gliding Council, Seattle, Washington (State); "News Release" of The Philadelphia Gliding Council; "Wings and Winds" of Associated Gliding Clubs of Southern California, San Diego, California; "Convecton" of Mid-Atlantic Soaring Association, Washington, D. C.; "Newsletter" of the Vultures Club, Dearborn, Michigan; "Harris

Hill News," Elmira, New York; and "Spirals" of the Texas Soaring Association, to mention just a few.

"Up Canada Way . . . A Flight of Fancy Turns into Some Fancy Flying" by Brother Hormisdas, published in "Soaring," March-April, 1953, issue, tells a typical story of how a glider club comes into being. Brother Hormisdas, Catholic Lay Teaching Brother from Buckingham, near Ottawa, tells how the Buckingham Gliding Club was formed: "a glider pilot in black flowing robes soaring . . . his belief that a gliding club would be of much benefit to the local youths . . . was then 49 years old . . . not a single philanthropist would venture to sponsor . . . buy a used 1-19 (Schweizer) . . . club now had acquired a 2-22 (Schweizer) . . . initial purposes of the club's organization are being gradually fulfilled . . . regardless of the future of the Buckingham Gliding Club, it will nevertheless stand as tangible evidence that gliding is a very desirable high school activity!"

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