

Thursday, the 16th, no one made any attempts on remaining goal prizes, the day was again hot and hazy, everyone was waiting mostly for the banquet that night. Certainly there was much congenial hangar-flying on the Hill, and some flying, but it just wasn't serious.

Judging by the general spirit, it had been a good meet. The pilots and crews had a full work-out, yet weren't completely knocked out. The competition tasks had been close enough to home much of the time to allow a reasonable amount of sleep for all. Everyone was feeling satisfied, that seems to be the word for it.

The banquet that night at the Mark Twain Hotel in Elmira, followed through in the same spirit. It was a lot of fun. There was a big, congenial gang there, and "E. J.'s" em-ceeding flowed the affair smoothly through the evening.

Representation at the speaker's table included the New York State Senate, Senator Dutton Peterson; the USAF, General Lindsay; National Aeronautics Association, Mr. Donald D. Webster, who was also speaker of the evening; USN, Captain Ralph Barnaby, who was using dirigibles for a glider launching platform many years ago; Soaring Society, Jon D. Carsey, President; and officials from our host city of Elmira, and Chemung County. Elmira City Manager, Mr. Quinn, indicated the friendly esteem that the city holds for soaring and its pilots. Mr. Anson Saunders spoke for the county, which owns and operates Harris Hill's Warren E. Eaton Soaring Site (Warren Eaton was a founder of SSA).

Also on hand at the speakers' table was Bendix Aviation, represented by Mr. Maurice Whitney, manager of Bendix's Eclipse Machine Division at Elmira Heights. The Bendix Corporation has done a great deal for soaring. In addition to the Bendix distance trophies again presented this year, they have, for one example, contributed the excellent weather instrumentation at Harris Hill.

The Gannett Company newspaper syndicates was represented by Mr. Richard Seem. Their chain of newspapers includes the Elmira *Advertiser* and *Star Gazette*, and this year they awarded a trophy of considerable value for the fastest soaring flight between Elmira and Rochester.

Early in the banquet, we were entertained by a group of professionally talented fellows from the USAF Sampson Air Force Base, which is commanded by banquet guest Gener-

al Lindsay. The show included some highly enjoyable singing, piano, and ventriloquism. Sampson AFB had put the band concert on Sunday also, during the contest.

The big job at the banquet involved the array of trophies and money awards in front of the speakers' table. These are itemized elsewhere in this issue. They served up a gratifying climax to ten days of superb competition.

The 20th National Soaring Contest has done its job. It is now a milestone. It marks another occasion on which some people flew several thousand miles, equipped solely with wings, brains, and weather.

The Soaring Society of America has, through the travail of this event, done in its own way another deed to help man fly well. Furthermore, a sizeable group of people have had a whale of a time for themselves.

Soaring is no longer pure excitement, no longer a weird sport played with freak instruments. On the other hand, it is not, by any characteristic, a national pastime which employs popular standard sporting-goods implements. It is branching healthily in many directions. This contest was partly one of standard sailplanes against special ships. In its outcome it reveals a reward of piloting skill and intelligence, rather than an unbalanced dependence upon extraordinary mechanical virtuosity in the ships flown by the winners. In one instance especially, a relatively slow sailplane was guided into a final position well ahead of several more modern craft.

In such respect, this contest has been significant also. Soaring, and human flight in general, need unquestionably the ivory tower of research, developing rare breeds and strains of sailplane which will sow their strongest characteristics into future ships for general use. Soaring also needs, and this contest indicates that it is getting, strong competition that emphasizes flight skill and knowledge, and accordingly sharpens and evolves these vital attributes.

Soaring is many things, — an art, a game, a science, a sport, an adventure, a frontier, a rich education, an enigma to the impatient or unimaginative student pilot, a sky-deep super-world as far as the cloud-born soarer is concerned.

The 20th National Soaring Contest has served well to shade the skeptic's viewpoint, to mate soaring further with other acts of aerial civilization.

UP DRAFTS

You can learn about soaring from this.

by GLENN ROBINSON

I was getting my first taste of thermal flying. I had been used to flying the wind currents coming off the mountains near Salt Lake City. I was contestant No. 12 in the Western Soaring Championship held at Arvin, Cal., in April, 1941. It was the second day of the contest and I was making my second flight of the day. The winch towed me to an altitude of about 700 feet. Immediately upon releasing from the tow rope, I headed for some fields where I thought I might catch a thermal. I found nothing but down-drafts in this particular area.

I was rapidly losing altitude. I was now only 1200 feet above the ground and approaching a level field for a landing when all of a sudden I felt the ship lurch a little and begin to rise. I checked my rate-of-climb and saw the ship was rising 10 feet a second. I immediately put the ship in a tight spiral. I began to rise faster as the thermal became stronger, and I soon found myself very near the base of a small thunderhead that was forming.



I flew a safe distance away and found I had lost some altitude. I looked back and saw Howard Morrison, Dick Johnson and a couple of more well-known pilots of the day skirting near the edges of the cloud. I began to think I was missing out on something, so decided to fly back and join them. As I neared the cloud my rate-of-climb began indicating terrific lift. I glued my eyes to the instrument panel, thinking this was my chance to show these hot pilots that a beginner could soar right alongside them.

I hadn't been paying too much attention to what was going on around me. I was too interested in the terrific speed at which my Baby Albatross was rising. I was at about 4,500 feet when

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