

# NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ANNUAL MEET

By FRED MATTESON

The 1954 Northern California Soaring Association annual meet was a huge success. It took place over the three-day Memorial Day week-end from our home field—Center Gliderport at Centerville, California. We were blessed with soarable weather all three days. The first day, Saturday, was a good day for bluff soaring. Les Arnold in his "Redwing" TG-3 was first off and when he did not come down there was a scramble for tows. Dr. J. B. Sawyer flying his Mitchell sailplane took off and immediately headed cross-country. Others present included the Warm Springs Club with the "Ridge Runner" TG-3, Harry Perl with the "Penetrator," George Congdon with his "Cultured Vulture" Baby Albatross, and Earl Menefee who was frantically trying to get the "Super Albatross" licensed after four years of gluing the pieces together. After 6½ hours Harry Perl landed to claim first place. In second place was Walt Bybee flying the "Ridge Runner." Dr. Sawyer made a good cross-country only to suffer severe damage to his fuselage when he caught his wing and ground looped on the landing.

Sunday brought renewed attempts to better previous performances (the best flight only was counted towards the championship to give club members a chance). Some cross-countries were attempted but no outstanding performances were made. Vic Swierkowski came down from Sacramento to compete, but a broken rudder suffered on the trailer kept him on the ground until Monday.

Monday started out weak, and some pilots remained on the ground. Les Arnold had tried a few times before to go towards the Sacramento valley only to eventually lose out and have to land before getting very far, so he was up trying to make a flight which would put him in the money. About 3 p.m. the weather changed—the sky filled with lenticulars. At 5:15 the



Top: Walt Bybee, Les Arnold, and Harry Perl. Middle: Dr. J. B. Sawyer and his Mitchell, George Congdon with his "Cultured Vulture." Bottom: Starting line on Saturday, and Les Arnold taking off behind 2 LK's, Penetrator, Super Albatross, and Baby Albatross.

"Ridge Runner" landed leaving Les up as the last one trying to beat his previous best. And then it happened . . . he caught the wave and having reached 4000 ft., he headed south. Over Santa Barbara he still had 4000 feet and then he started the glide down the valley over San Jose landing at 7:00 south of Coyote, California, thus making the winning flight during the closing minutes of the contest!

The Championship Banquet was

held at the International Kitchen on the 2nd of June. The guest speaker was Mr. Bob Fowler, the famous pioneer pilot. He showed pictures made of him during his accomplishment of the first west-east transcontinental flight, and others of early planes and pilots who made history during the first two decades of powered flight. Mrs. Fowler, the first lady glider pilot in California, shared the place of honor.

| Position | Pilot          | Trophy                  | Ship       | Points |
|----------|----------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|
| 1st      | Les Arnold     | 1st and Distance        | TG-3       | 74     |
| 2nd      | Harry Perl     | 2nd and Duration        | Penetrator | 37     |
| 3rd      | Walt Bybee     | 3rd and Altitude gained | Club TG-3  | 36     |
| 4th      | Dr. Sawyer     | Mitchell                |            | 26     |
| 5th      | George Congdon | Baby Bowlus             |            | 15     |
| 6th      | Dick Delafield | Club TG-3               |            | 14     |
| 7th      | Earl Menefee   | Super Bowlus            |            | 3      |
| 8th      | Kent Wanlass   | Club TG-3               |            | 2      |
| 9th      | Bob Tobey      | Club TG-3               |            | 1      |