

NORTHEASTERN SOARING CONTEST

by FRED LAWRENCE

The 1954 Northeastern States Soaring Contest held at Harris Hill, Elmira, New York, July 3, 4, and 5, and sponsored by the EASC attracted a total of 32 pilots who brought with them 24 ships; 14 of which were Schweizer's, 6 LK's, 1 Martin, 1 Pratt-Read, a Wolf and a very clean little BG-6 flown by Fred Obarr. Seven clubs participated.

The Contest Committee included Howard Burr, Director; Robert Distin, Meteorologist; Donald Ryon, Statistician; Harry Wilkins, Operations Chief; Ben Shupack, Task Master; Miss K. Jones, Registrar; Miss Betty Wickham, Nurse; Bob Union, Tower; Bill Placek, CAA; Ed Thomas, Communications.

Weather conditions on Saturday made soaring impossible so a spot landing contest was arranged. There was no official credit given for this event, but it proved a pleasing show for the hundreds of visitors on the Hill. Howie Burr in the 1-24 and Bernie Carris in the 1-26 tied for first place when they stopped "0" inches from the mark. Second place went to Dana Darling, 11 inches; third to "Moe" Lehecka, 12 inches; and tenth place to Larry Gehrlein, 13 feet. Saturday evening the pilots, crews and interested spectators (about 300 in number) enjoyed the annual Schweizer Lawn Party. The food was fine and as an added attraction, many got a glimpse of the 2-25 on its trailer, ready to leave for Montreal and England.

On Sunday with the weather and just about everybody else looking up, a task was set up by the Contest Committee. It was a goal and return to Martin Airport at Montour Falls. Class A ships had to make two round trips and were given additional points for distance beyond. Class B ships were expected to make one circuit and were also given additional points for distance beyond and Class C ships had to make one leg of the circuit. Burr took top honors for the day making the circuit $3\frac{1}{2}$ times for a total distance traveled of 114 miles.

Bernie Carris also completed the course 3 times—a distance of 97.5 miles for second place. Bob Smith and

Larry Gehrlein completed the task and were tied for third place; they covered 65 miles.

Many of the club ships were used to hop passengers Sunday and a few notable flights were made in that department. Ed Seymour really flew the pants off the Rochester Club's 2-22. Dale Gustin had a four hour plus flight in his Pratt-Read.

Monday started out very nicely. A task was set up similar to Sunday's with Tioga Airport at Owego, a dis-

"Han" Van der Blink of the Netherlands assists Bill Frutchy while Schweizer A/C nurse Betty Wickham and Schweizer A/C Qual. Cont. Mgr. Bob Distin look on.



Photo—Elmira
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tance of $30\frac{3}{4}$ miles being the turning point. A thundershower halted operations for about an hour after several ships had been launched and generally ruined chances of anyone completing the task. The best distance of the day was a $42\frac{1}{4}$ mile hop by Bob Smith in his flat top LK. Howie Burr and Bernie Carris both made it to the turning point and part way back, their distances were 40 and $34\frac{1}{2}$ respectively. Bill Frutchy, Larry Gehrlein and Hal Bovenkerk all landed their 1-23's at Owego. Don Taupier made a respectable $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles in his 1-19.

About 100 persons partook of the splendid ham dinner at the Awards Banquet Monday evening. Jerry Cavanaugh of the Elmira Association of Commerce acted as Master of Ceremonies. Merchandise prizes were awarded by Bob Distin to the Winners

in each of the three Classes: Howie Burr, Class A; Dick Ball, Class B, and Frank Lane who flew the 1-20, Class C. Paul Schweizer also presented to each of these winners a trophy from Schweizer Aircraft Corporation. Howie's prize was a beautiful wrist watch which will be an annual award donated by Alpert's Jewelers. Prizes were given for the first two places in each category. Also, special prizes were awarded to Berta Opperman for her fine performance on television; to Dana Darling for having participated in just about every meet held here at Elmira and to the Placeks and the Ryons for their assistance with the Contest. The Elmira Area Soaring Corp. took top club honors.

A total of 106 tows were made, only 24 of them being credited as contest flights. A total of 780 miles were flown in these 24 contest flights.

Considerable credit should be extended to meteorologist Bob Distin for his advice of short tasks, as 30 miles south rain prevailed for all three days. Around the Finger Lakes there proved to be no thermal development. This meant that the contest was limited to a narrow band of usable conditions running east and west.

FINAL SCORES

Place	Name	Ship	Points	Class
1	Howie Burr	1-24	180	A
2	Bernie Carris	1-26	159	A
3	Bob Smith	L-K	133	A
4	Larry Gehrlein	1-23D	122	A
5	Hal Bovenkerk	1-23D	64	A
6	Bill Frutchy	1-23	64	A
7	Dick Ball	L-K	46	B
8	Jim Klein	1-23B	43	A
9	Frank Lane	1-20	20	C
10	Emil Lehecka	Martin	16	B
11	Del Miller	1-23	16	A
12	Fred Obarr	BG-6	11	C
13	Earl Brooks	L-K	10	B
14	Don Taupier	1-19	10	C
15	Otto Zauner	1-19	7	C