

Soaring Readers Write

(The opinions expressed under this heading are those of the writers, and are not, necessarily, the opinions of The Soaring Society of America, Inc., or of the Editor.)

2239 Rosendale Rd.
Schenectady, N. Y.

"Every time another issue of SOARING arrives, I want to write you regarding the material and its presentation.

"Since you became the Editor of SOARING the quality of the magazine has improved considerably. Many new features have been introduced, some of which definitely should not find their way into a semi-technical magazine devoted to the art, science and sport of motorless flying. The fact that SOARING is published only bi-monthly dictates that the material be carefully selected, and articles which are trying to or are representing soaring in a false way should never be printed. I have in mind articles dealing with the popularity of soaring and making comparisons with yachting (The Yacht-Club Approach, No. 2, Vol. 18) or mountain climbing (Spiraling, No. 5, Vol. 18), just to name two of them, which are quite childish. I haven't heard yet of a four to six place 'family' type sailplane capable of a take-off on the lawn and which could be flown without a CAA license all day long, as long as the wind is blowing. As you may well know soaring is not a cheap sport, not even for a soaring group, for it takes money to obtain the equipment (regardless if the plane is home built or purchased), a field to fly it and cooperation and 'soaring spirit' to keep the sailplane in the air. For this reason soaring is and will stay a sport of a small group of selected people having a sincere and durable interest in soaring, unless the state provides the necessary equipment and support for all those who may have some interest in soaring. History and past experience are confirming the above statement.

"For some unknown reason SOARING is full of pictures (and even cartoons) which have nothing to do with soaring: 'family, girl-friends and children,' also 'beautiful girls' which to most of the readers could not mean anything. Consistently, there are very few, if any, pictures of 'flying families' whose members are flying; there are no pictures of those few girls who are soaring pilots and do their flying. Even if they do not look beautiful they deserve the right more than anyone else to be publicized.

"Consistently, important information including some semi-official report about the contests is for some reasons missing. The tabulation of results pertaining to the Nationals and Internationals was very incomplete (who flew what sailplane?) or it did not appear at all. On the other hand an unimportant item such as the prayer at the 21st National was published as the headline. Just how many religious magazines print a word about soaring? Let's keep all these weeds out of SOARING for there are innumerable magazines (and good ones, too) devoted to such things as

yachting, religion, pin-up girls, mountain climbing, family life and mother-in-law.

"I am an ardent soaring enthusiast since the days of my youth, years ago. At present I am not soaring and the reason for joining the SSA was primarily to keep informed about soaring activities not only in this country but also abroad. Articles of interest and value, such as written by Raspet, Lippisch and others, like some home built sailplanes utilizing new techniques or revived shapes (the 'flying plank'), descriptions of new high performance sailplanes and descriptions of interesting cross-country flying, only to name few of them, are getting very scarce in SOARING.

"For this reason I would appreciate it very much if you would inform me if the present trend of SOARING is to be continued. My subscription is due next month and I should base my decision on your answer."

SAM O. JENKO

(Your comments are noted. No doubt those who control the Society will read this letter and will inform you, and me too, I hope, of the future trend of this magazine. At the moment it has no obvious trend—it just happens during the time available after such diversions as earning a living, supporting a family, watching TV, and, oh yes, a little gliding and soaring on Saturdays, and Sundays. Ed.)

8405 Stroelitz St.
New Orleans 18, La.

"I am all set for another big year of 'SOARING.' My subscription is enclosed.

"I don't know what the others think along this subject, but here is one that would be willing to pay more to get the magazine monthly. After a two-month long wait I'm biting my nails in anticipation. The magazine is just great, repeat great!"

DON E. HOWARD

New South Wales, Australia

"Enclosed is a renewal of my subscription to SOARING.

"You may be interested to learn that the advertisement for 'Australian Gliding' which appears periodically in SOARING has brought in a total of 35 subscribers during the past 18 months. These have come mainly from the U.S.A. and Canada, but there have also been letters from France, Belgium, Holland, Argentina and even one from Australia. The ad also brought welcome news items and photographs from overseas countries.

"May I ask, however, that people wishing to subscribe to 'Australian Gliding' should remit by cheque or money order. A number of people have sent dollar bills and even coins. U.S. currency is not legal tender in Australia and cheques are much easier to cash.

"I would also like to mention that I enjoy your feature, 'Spiraling' which appears in SOARING. I especially liked and agreed with your comments in September-October issue, just arrived here.

ALLAN ASH
Editor "Australian Gliding"

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"I am writing this letter in protest to an article which I feel is an excellent example of pseudo-scientific gobbledygook. I refer to the article 'The Low-drag Sailplane' by Raspet and Parker which appeared in the Nov.-Dec. issue of SOARING. It is time to call a spade a spade instead of an instrument of varied construction used for the translation of earth and rocks either parallel or normal to the mean reference plane of the earth.

"Without venturing into the realm of empirical aerodynamics, in which I have no claim to unusual knowledge, I would like to cite examples where a little rewriting of the article would both reduce its wordage and make things clearer.

"The article begins:

'The strife for low drag in sailplanes became intensified with the introduction of techniques for geometric control of the laminar boundary layer. By geometric boundary layer control we imply careful reductions of all curvatures, including those in the direction of flow as well as those normal to the flow. Where a change in curvature occurs, geometric boundary layer control would require a smooth transition from one curvature to the next. The transition curvature must be such that the curvatures within the transition lie between the curvatures at the extreme.' (89 words) Would it not read better:

"A seldom used means for reduction of drag in sailplanes is geometric boundary layer control. By this we mean the use of external contours of large radii which blend smoothly. Where possible the radii of transition curvatures should lie between the radii of the contours it blends. (47 words)

"Later on the authors fall into the popular trap of creating new negative versions of words for which perfectly good words exist. For example:

'These waves cause successive pressure variations which in a short distance *destabilize* the flow so that a turbulent boundary layer is soon developed.'
"could be written:

"These waves cause pressure variations which disrupt the flow and soon cause a turbulent boundary layer to develop.

"I don't want it thought that my only objection is the unwieldy sentence structure used throughout the article. I find it objectionable to refer to dimensionless numbers as 'profile drag' instead of profile drag coefficients. I can only guess that a 'chalked spline' is a contoured pattern using chalk to mark the high spots. Would it not be more useful to say the sink of the Tiny Mite at 100 mph is only 70 per cent that of the 1-23 instead of just stating that the sink of the Tiny Mite is 4 fps less. Wouldn't it give a truer comparison of the Tiny Mite and 1-23 to continue the Difference in Sinking Speed versus Indicated airspeed curve below 40 mph where the advantage would be on the other side. Or rather a truer comparison would be to correct for the difference in wing loading of the two sailplanes. A less subtle example of the shortcomings of a curve of the above type would be a comparison of a sailplane with a jet aircraft in the clean configuration.

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