

West Words

by LLOYD M. LICHER



A new sailplane has made an appearance on the western scene. It is the Bonnie Jo, designed and built over the past five years by Vern Hutchinson, brother to Harold. This sailplane is an all-metal, two-place, side-by-side design that has a small P-R look to it only with a more faired fuselage. Not a rivet can be discerned in the beautifully filled, laminar section, high-aspect-ratio wing. Each panel weighs 250 pounds. The empennage is of the vee configuration. First test flights were attempted over the Labor Day weekend on El Mirage dry lake. Unfortunately the wheel had been placed too far aft, preventing adequate take-off control, so the ship was returned home for alteration. Performance should exceed that of most existing two-place designs, making its future flights worth waiting for. Walter Klemperer has been flying the family L-K a lot at El Mirage. He recently completed his Silver C requirements which, at 17, makes him one of the youngest pilots in the country with this award. He also obtained his private glider rating from Gus Briegleb. While Walter was accomplishing all this Kenney Briegleb got into the act by soloing shortly after his fourteenth birthday. Kenney's big brother Ross will have some competition from these two in the coming years.

The September SCSA membership meeting featured World Soaring Champion Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Jr. as guest speaker. He described the international competition flying day by day and promised to show his color slides of the meet at a future gathering.

The SCSA contest awards were also made at the September SCSA meeting with Paul Bickle once more receiving top honors. The "Desert Fox," as Paul is affectionately called, scored maximum points on the first three days of the five day, two week-end meet thereby securing first place. He very kindly loaned me his 1-23

on the fourth contest day in which I earned Silver C altitude and distance with a 45 mile flight.

Bob Schnelker also earned the Silver C distance and altitude legs during the contest in his recently acquired 1-26. Then on September 30th he flew it from El Mirage to Dry Lake, Nevada, 199 miles, to earn Gold C distance and Diamond goal.

A set of motel units has recently been started at El Mirage by the Brieglebs. The desert soaring resort is slowly taking shape and promises to become one of the best soaring sites in the world, both for flying and facilities.

SCSA members are assisting in the production of a TV film on gliding and soaring for the Globel Zobel show. This is now a local show but is expected to be on a network by the time the film is shown next February.

Some basic soaring needs are worthy of definition and fulfillment, if we can muster enough support. Southern California is like most large metropolitan areas. There are no close-in training sites. Both El Mirage and Elsinore are 90 to 100 miles away from Los Angeles through large, populated areas. We must accept going beyond the coastal mountain ranges to find good soaring conditions but should exploit the stable, marine air of the Los Angeles basin for the circuits and landings that make new pilots. Although SCSA has a lease on most of El Mirage day lake it is used very little for auto towing because of its remoteness and dust. We need some close-in winch sites, the winches and light, two-place trainers to use on them and finally the people who would be willing to devote the time necessary to build a sound, comprehensive training program. We are not doing justice to the basic job of raising sustenance for our sport. The crop is poor and we cultivate it with seeming apathy. We must irrigate and foster

new growth or suffer a slow degeneration of the species.

We need radios. No one will deny that more radios would produce much more cross-country soaring. This is especially true in the desert areas where telephones are non-existent or only along main highways. Good VHF sets are available. Now we must get good, cheaper sets in the hands of ship owners. If it is possible, a schematic of a simple single-channel set should be made available to those who could build from it; better yet would be kits of the same nature. It would be best to have a single proven design to standardize upon in order to avoid too much variety and duplication of effort. The need is evident, it should be satisfied.

THE VULTURES WINCH

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for the Air Force for use in towing aerial targets. It is made up of a lot of fine strands of wire wrapped with a steel tape armour. Its diameter is only slightly larger than the solid wire and is very flexible and hard to kink. It is much too expensive to buy new, but long lengths can probably be scrounged at Air Force Bases where they tow targets and can't use odd lengths. We have spliced it by the use of "U" shaped "dogs," but we understand the Denver club has used "nico-press" fittings with good results.

THE 23rd THROUGH POLAROIDs

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contest committee with the inference that the tasks they selected were, in general, too severe. Actually, the fact that the Jenny Mae needed its trailer after only one task flight bears witness to the reasonableness of the committee's selections. I think they did a terrific job.

Suggestions for improvements in future contests are hard to come by. I think we have found the scoring system. In my opinion it puts just the right amount of emphasis on speed; not too much; not too little. It emphasizes consistent quality of performance; one cannot blow hot and cold and still win with this system. As to the schedule of events, how about: task, task, open, rest, task, task, open, rest, task, task? This knocks off one flying day, but after averaging 192 miles per day (233 without the three shortest tasks), I for one will settle for a little less flying. But then all Nationals aren't held at Grand Prairie, Texas, are they?