

SIDELIGHTS of the 23rd NATIONALS

by FRITZ COMPTON

When competition began at the recent 23rd Nationals, it was immediately noted that only a few of the TSA'ers could compete in the contest—the majority were spending day after day, deep in the heat of Texas, keeping the Nationals running. Imagine—a National Contest right in your front yard, and all work, no fly. It was quite a display of generosity and the real soaring spirit by our Texas brethren. On behalf of the Florida competitors, our sincere thanks to TSA for putting on such a wonderful contest and series of social events.

An outstanding example of this soaring spirit was the Easley family—Phil running field operations, Gena answering the phone, and the little Easleys (David and Melvin) on the take-off line, hooking tow lines to tow-planes and sailplanes, and then dodging and ducking wings like ballet dancers. E. J. Reeves was a one-man army—Contest Director, Contest

Board Member, Mr. Fixit, tow pilot, father-confessor, editor of Spirals Special Bulletins. He was ably assisted by Jon Carsey. Among the others who lent their shoulders to the wheel were Al Backstrom, Dick Johnson, Betty Jean Reynolds, and June and Wally Wiberg.

Early in the morn of July 27th, there sallied forth from the South Florida area, the expeditions of Compton and Cavaiani. The three days of driving were uneventful—that is except for the temperature, which jumped up one degree every 50 miles. From the cool 70's of Florida it passed 100° on the last day. That which had been solid was plastic; that which was liquid turned into gas, especially the water in the radiator. In due course, we arrived in Grand Prairie, sitting on our respective cakes of ice.

Old friendships were renewed. The contest officially began. The Florida Flag along with flags of other represented states flew on the flag poles.

The Florida Flag looked best to us, because the emblem in the center (with the Indian standing on it) had a view of a lake with real water in it, and cool green countryside.

Baby and I were so proud of the Florida Flag that we saluted it every time we came abeam of it at the hot dog stand—but we had to stop saluting after Baby forgot she had a mustard bowl in her right hand and created an interstate incident.

On the first day of the meet, we set up our beautiful LK. Then we toured the tie-down area, inspecting the other sailplanes. There was the sleek Jenny-Mae, the RJ-5, 1-23F, and other super-sailplanes. When we got back to the LK, she suddenly looked like a plough horse at Hialeah. We stood in silence. Should we return to the cool green acres of the Flying "C" Ranch, or fly our Super Dragmaster in competition? The problem was resolved when Jock Forbes sauntered by with, "Chins up, ole boy, Carry On!"

It was a real thrill—there on the take-off line, in Super Dragmaster, ready to go on that first contest day. One of the little Easley's hooked the tow line to a Cub, and away we went. We released at 1400 feet, and began

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