

THE S. S. D. AND THE FUTURE

by JULIAN H. ALLEN

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A question brought up at the last meeting was "Has any thought been given to the future course of the SSD?" The members who have been active in bringing the organization to its present status feel that the SSD has been given continuous thought and effort since its beginning in 1951.

The purpose of the organization is pretty well outlined in the SSD Code of Regulations and the objective is a part of the introduction to the SSD Handbook. The objective and thus the future course of the SSD is stated as follows:

"THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS NON-PROFIT CORPORATION IS TO PROMOTE INTEREST AND ACTIVITY IN SOARING BY PROVIDING COMPLETE FACILITIES AT A MINIMUM COST TO ITS MEMBERS."

To date we've made considerable progress toward this goal, but we're still far behind many soaring clubs. Some of our members think of the future in terms of next week's soaring, some next month's, some next year's. It's just as easy to have goals over the horizon . . . say five to ten years from now.

For a look at the future consider the following:

1. SAFETY IS OUR FIRST CONSIDERATION. Toward this objective we must improve our operations and properly inspect and maintain our equipment. We must stress standard towing, instructing, and emergency procedures. Auto towing traffic must be strictly controlled. Every member can contribute to this most essential effort.

2. TRAINING PROGRAM ESSENTIAL. An organized training program is essential to enable the organization to grow. New enthusiasm is the life of a soaring club. As pilots become more experienced they get better flights from fewer tows. Without a training program the number of tows would soon fall below the number required to carry our towplane overhead. This is quite obvious when you consider the total number

of tows made to date this year by private gliders. The number is twenty. This would not pay the towplane hanger rent for January alone! The training glider made 159 tows during this same period. So it is either assessments, increased towing charges, or a training program. Experience has taught us that a training program is an asset to a glider club in more ways than one. It benefits every member of the organization—not just the new members. Our existing equipment in this area is adequate. Our efforts should be directed to use it more effectively.

3. ASSIST MEMBERS IN ACQUIRING GOOD SAILPLANES. Our first try in this area was the 1-26 club which is just getting underway. The SSD bought this kit, started construction and arranged to sell it to a group of members at \$10/mo./member to form a new soaring group. This is certainly the easiest way yet to improve your equipment. The SSD will probably initiate future programs to help members acquire better equipment.

4. ACQUIRE CLUB OWNED EQUIPMENT TO FACILITATE ADVANCED SOARING. We anticipate the SSD acquiring equipment that can be practically owned and operated by the club. The first item in this area has just been bought. This is a ground radio station on glider frequency to facilitate XC retrieves and meet operations. Having this available should stimulate interest in cross country flying. It will certainly make retrieves easier.

5. LONG RANGE GOALS. The following are our current long range goals:

HANGARS—Anyone who has encountered the problem of finding a satisfactory shop, renting it for a long period hauling tools, etc. to recover a glider will not question the desirability of having sailplane hangars. This is the most effective method of reducing our individual maintenance problems. Having shops set up and ready to go year round should also

increase our activity to some extent.

CLUB HOUSE—The biggest problem of the glider pilot is keeping the family happy while he soars. At the present time all we can offer is a long wait at the airport and this goes over like a lead balloon. They don't look forward to it many times. The only way to make the activity interesting to them is to provide facilities for social activities at the field . . . picnic areas, swimming pool, etc.

SHOP—Anyone who has been in on rebuilding, repairing, recovering, etc., can certainly appreciate the desirability of a centralized club shop. We have enough equipment to occupy a shop practically year around now. Future projects such as the 1-26 could be handled easier and more conveniently.

FIELD—A quick review of the records show that the Chicago, Dearborn, Toledo, Texas and many other soaring groups have recently had or are having airport problems. The permanent solution is obviously that of the Philadelphia Glider Council! Own your own soaring site! With this comes security!

WE DON'T EXPECT TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS IMMEDIATELY. WE CAN'T! FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES MAY CHANGE OUR COURSE. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO WORK ACTIVELY TOWARD THESE GOALS. OUR RATE OF PROGRESS DEPENDS UPON YOU!

E.M.G.A.M.

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