

West Words

by BERTHA M. RYAN

Soaring activity in the West is reflected in the activity at its soaring sites. One of the nicest from a ground crew viewpoint is also one of the newest—Ted Nelson's Hummingbird Haven near San Francisco. It is not often that a place you have heard good things about turns out to be as good as "they" say. But according to Paul Bikle and others who have been there, Hummingbird Haven is an exception—it is all that we have heard and much more. There is a swimming pool and barbeque for the enjoyment of all and a good size hanger to house the sailplanes when they are not flying. The Southern Californians who attended the Northern California Soaring Meet in May had a really good time.

Another meet that promises a good time to all who attend is the Northwest International Contest in Wenatchee, Washington. The contest will have taken place by the time you read this article—June 30 to July 6.

Elsinore, California, is the scene of some interesting flying during the weekend regatta-type contests being held once a month. During one such meet Roger Ruch (about whom you will hear more) flew the Cherokee II more than 100 miles to Desert Center which is East of Palm Springs. These weekend flying meets give the local pilots a chance to get together for some competition flying and give them incentive to attempt some really good flights. The coming of summer conditions should bring interesting news from Elsinore.

El Mirage provided a few spring time soaring days with altitudes to 16,000 feet and pilots are eagerly awaiting the good summer thermals. There have already been many Silver C legs earned but the Gold C days are coming. The Southern California Soaring Association is moving ahead with its plans for the West Coast Contest at El Mirage the last week of August. We are trying to do a good job in organizing this contest because we secretly consider it a dress rehearsal for the 1958 Nationals. A group is expected from Northern California and it is hoped that the pilots competing in this contest will truly represent the West as a whole (East-

erners and Texans are welcome also). There will be two contestants from one family, Kenny (age 15) and Ross (age 18) Briegleb flying a Cinema and a BG-12 respectively. Stan Hall will compete with his Cherokee and it is expected there will be special events for the 1-26's.

Wave flying at Bishop this year got off to a slow start but picked up in the Spring with some good flights in a 1-26 and a 1-23. Sven Anderson, Duke Mancuso, Frank Kerns, Sterling Starr, and Roger Ruch all flew to altitudes between



John Bock's original design fuselage and empennage nearing completion.

28,000 feet and 35,000 feet. Sterling Starr took the 1-23 on a cross country to Utah for about 330 miles. Duke Mancuso and Sterling Starr both completed their Diamond C's.

The smaller clubs of the West seem to be growing at an accelerated rate now that summer is arriving. Most of them are looking for sailplanes to supplement those they already have. One of the newer clubs is also one of the most active—the Santa Barbara Soaring Club—spark plugged by Helen and Graham Thomson and Bob Carlson, among others. Most of their members are already checked out in the club TG-2. Conditions around Santa Barbara hold great promise for the future. Waves have been spotted with as many as nine lennies extending out over the ocean.

Speaking of the Thompsons, the RJ-5 is flying again after a winter spent in Ray Parker's care. He completely stripped and recovered the ship and fitted a new one piece canopy. He also covered the fuselage with fiber glass and the whole ship

is finished with an "off white" lacquer and dark red trim. Ray's workmanship is certainly that of an artist.

Another ship ready for the flying this season is the Prue 215 belonging to Harold Hutchinson. Hutch plans to concentrate on cross country flying. Harner Selvidge (recently moved west from the Vultures in Michigan) has a 1-26 that is well-equipped for any conditions the desert can offer. We'll be watching these and other Western pilots and will keep you posted on their activities.

There are a lot of new sailplanes being built on the West Coast with the three kits being the most numerous. Approximate statistics are thirteen Cherokee II's ten BG-12's, four 1-26's, and even three Flying Planks. But the most interesting ships are the one or two of a kind. John Bock is building the Bock I sailplane seen in the accompanying picture. There

are a lot of interesting design features incorporated in this ship by John who is an engineer in the controls section of Douglas Aircraft. Wing span will be 34 feet with an aspect ratio of 11.3 and gross weight of 500 lbs. The basic structure is 24 ST aluminum with about 60% fabric covered surface and the remainder aluminum skin. Performance expected is an L/D "over 20" at 50 mph, minimum sink of 3.3 ft./sec. at 45 mph, stall at 38 mph, red line at 125 mph, and limit load factors of + 6 g and - 4 g. The scheduled completion date is early 1958.

Dick Eldredge, another Douglas engineer, has designed the BOOG and he and Jane Harvey are each building one. Dick is a proponent of miniature sailplanes and the BOOG is planned to weigh 300 to 360 lbs. gross with a span of 32 feet. It is a pod and boom type with steel tube pod structure and fiber glass superstructure. The expected maximum L/D is over 30 with minimum sink around 2.5

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