NEWS BRIEFS

Mention was made in the last issue of Soaring that World Soaring Champion Paul MacCready was on his honeymoon. A wedding announcement has since been received which reads as follows: "Mr. and Mrs. Parker Leonard announce the marriage of their daughter Judith to Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Jr. on Saturday, May 18, 1957 in Woodridge, Conn." Judy's father was a former SSA President who, together with Vic Saudek, introduced Paul to the sport of soaring during 1946 at Old Saybrook, Conn. when Paul had returned from being a Naval aviator. This summer Paul's work will take him to Mt. Withington, New Mexico on Project Sky Fire; research on lightning. From there he will again go to Missoula, Montana for more of the same, this time making traverses in clouds to seed and observe the effects of seeding with the purpose of preventing lightning and the forest fires it generally begets.

* * * * *

A third son was born to the Dick Johnsons in Arlington, Texas on July 17th. This one was named Cyrus Stanley. He joins his brothers Mark and Nils in growing up in the shadow of a father who has become famous in the soaring world. Dick is busy now making progress on his original two-place design. It is of all wood construction with a two piece wing, a tandem seating arrangement and will feature a tee (Y) tail. The fuselage is about half skinned at present.

* * * * *

A brand new Schweizer 2-22 two-place training glider has been given to the Memphis Soaring Society by a benevolent benefactress. The group is confirming its tax exempt status so that the gift may be deductable for the nice lady. The 2-22 will supplement a 1-26 already in action by the group and should enable them to expand with a practical training program.

* * * * *

It is with deep regret that we must announce the death of Captain William T. Bowley, USAF, on July 29th in a Lockheed jet T33 landing accident. No further details are known other than it happened at his home base of Stewart Field, West Point, N. Y. while a thunderstorm was in progress. He is survived by his wife, Claire, and four week old son.

Bill was owner of the Schweizer 1-23 F, in which he competed during the last part of the recent National contest. He was also President of Sail Flights, Inc. and very active in activities at the Wurtsboro, N. Y. soaring site. His next official job was to have been at the Air Force Academy where he was expected to be an important helper with the cadet glider training program there.

The soaring movement will sorely miss Bill Bowley. There is never enough of the kind of enthusiasm and dedication to the sport that were his.

* * * * *

One July 12, 1957 Francis Hohm of Toledo, Ohio was killed when the prototype Airmate HP-7 sailplane which he was flying broke up in cloud. Hohm had a private power rating with approximately 300 hours of flight time, mostly in airplanes. He was on a cross-country tow from Elmira, N. Y. to Toledo, Ohio on the day after the Nationals. Both glider and towplane had radio.

Thirty minutes out the tow was still climbing at 6500 feet near the tops of a patch of cumulus. A broken layer of cloud appeared on course which could not quite be topped. The tow pilot, Robert Rower, headed for a low point in the cloud which he thought would allow a continued VFR climb and obtained an approval of the heading from Hohm. The towplane was unable to remain in the clear and apparently Hohm tried to remain above the cloud by climbing. This lifted the tail of the towplane which forced it into an uncontrollable dive, pulling the glider with it. The tow bridle broke shortly thereafter. The glider must have entered a spiral dive which resulted in a structural failure when recovery was attempted, evidently when coming clear of the cloud at a very high speed, estimated by the CAA and Dick Schreder to have been 300 mph.

The exact sequence of failure could only be surmised from a study of the wreckage but has little significance because all failures were well in excess of the basic design loads. The left outer wing panel broke upwards at the joint, the right wing broke downwards near the fuselage, the remaining wing structure separated from the fuselage, one stabilizer broke off as did the tail cone with the other stabilizer attached.

The pilot was either thrown from the cockpit at the time of failure or jumped, but the rip cord of his parachute was never pulled.

The HP-7 was described in the May-June issue of Soaring. It is a very high-performance design but had no adequate speed limiting device. The flaps were very difficult to deflect at high speeds due to excessive air loads.

Hohm had made one previous flight in the HP-7, an abortive attempt to tow from Dover, Del. back to Elmira on the previous day, after Dick Schreder's last contest flight. He had trouble early on that tow, broke the rope and returned to Dover.

This accident received much unfavorable publicity in the newspapers across the country. It was in marked contrast to the safety record just completed during the Nationals when a few landing mishaps, inherent in competitive soaring, were the only incidents.

The lessons to be learned from this accident are almost too obvious to mention but should be listed in case they are not.

In designing clean, fast aircraft make sure the stick forces build up with deflection enough to prevent inadvertent overloading of the structure. This is called stick gradient. If it is low, as in the HP-7, only a small force on the stick can induce very high G loadings on the structure at moderate to high speeds. In the hands of an inexperienced pilot, possibly panicked by an IFR spiral dive, the result can be fatal.

Know your flying ability and limitations, and don't exceed them without adequate instruction or supervision. A high-performance sailplane on climbing tow in turbulent air is a difficult horse to ride. It is impossible in a convective cloud.

If you must expose yourself to possible flight in cloud, only the experience of an instrument rating can be expected to let you interpret your instruments correctly and act accordingly.

No matter how good the pilot is on IFR, a sailplane in a turbulent cloud can be expected to be out of control part of the time and the only safeguard against subsequent overspeeding is an adequate speed-limiting device. Make sure your ship is so equipped before losing your reference, or you may lose something more valuable.