

West Words

by BERTHA M. RYAN

The annual Torrey Pines Meet took place near San Diego on February 22nd and 23rd of this year. This is a winter event that western pilots look forward to every year. Winner for the third time was Paul Bikle, flying his Schweizer 1-23E. A complete story of the meet will be featured in the next issue of SOARING.

We were disappointed to learn that the proposed soaring contest at Arvin on the Memorial Day weekend has been postponed because of legal problems. This was a traditional western soaring site before the second World War. The Kern County Soaring Society is hoping to revive soaring in the Arvin locale.



Les Clanton of SCSA is handling much of the red tape of securing a training site which will be close to Los Angeles. We of Southern California can boast some of the best soaring in the United States within a two hour drive, but we are lacking in a training site close to town. Good soaring is not being sought by these students, but rather a site for winch training where the fundamentals can be learned.

Dr. Harner Selvidge and his 1-26 have made several auto tows at the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin in San Fernando Valley just a few miles from downtown Los Angeles. The proposed site is very near a large airport but the preliminary flights proved there would be no interference problem. Les is well on his way in negotiations with the City of Los Angeles in the hope of having a strip of land set aside specifically for the use of glider training.

Just to prove there is really nothing new under the sun - not even in the West - the accompanying photograph of Gus Briegleb about to take-off in

the BG-5 was taken at the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin about 1937. Some of the other people in the picture are Harold Huber and Howard Morrison.

The West can boast of another training operation already proven highly successful, being carried on by the Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California at their Torrey Pines facility near San Diego (see article in this issue). It is hoped that their fine operation will inspire other clubs throughout the country to begin or enlarge upon their own training activities.

Soaring as a hobby is ideal for youngsters - they need to learn the

real feeling of flying early in life to prepare them for this air age we live in. Soaring can teach them the spirit of comradeship and cooperation that is so essential to any glider operation; and, in this day of movies and TV, soaring gets them outside into the fresh air again. The San Diego Group has many youngsters training with them, among them Roger Williams (son of John Williams) who made his first solo recently at the age of 14.

Les Arnold of the Northern California Soaring Association has made the interesting suggestion that there be a contest open only to juniors up to the age of 21 . . . NCSA may sponsor such a meet this Spring. NCSA and the Southern California Soaring Association, as well as the San Diego Group, can boast of many junior pilots. In Northern California there are LaVerna and Larry Perl, Jean Arnold, Jerry Nelson, Tony Lil-lak, and Tom Green. Southern California can claim Hugh Bikle and Kenny Briegleb both of whom earned their Silver C's on the same day at

the age of 15. Hugh took his private glider flight test on his 16th birthday and passed. Kenny has a few more weeks to wait yet until he is 16. (Incidentally, there is a rumor around that Hugh outclimbed his famous father, Paul Bikle, in a thermal - both flying TG-3's.) Of course there is always Ross Briegleb who, at the age of 19, has a Gold C with one Diamond, but most people think of him as an old timer by now.

California was determined to have the Nationals this year. We even put in two bids: NCSA sponsoring Bishop and SCSA backing El Mirage. The only dark cloud on the horizon is that our best pilots will be competing in the Internationals: Paul Bikle, Lyle Maxey and Stan Smith (a new Westerner). But we still have many excellent pilots left and we look forward to seeing you Easterners (and Texans) out here. The Soaring Society of America made the choice of site for us - Bishop. It should be an interesting contest - one that will really divide the men from the boys.

The Arizona Soaring Association is now flying at Turf Paradise three miles north of Paradise Airport in Phoenix . . . Facilities there seem to be very good with a motel and restaurant right across the road.

The Seattle Glider Council at a year end dinner made several awards for flying, non-flying, and "other" activities during 1957. Dean Reynolds won the Boeing altitude award for a flight above 19,000 feet; Bob Fisher was presented with the Arnold Carson Memorial Distance Award for an out and back flight of 200 miles; and the Fred Simpson Trophy was given to Bob Moore for the best flight over Labor Day at Wenatchee. Non-flying awards were the Pacific Northwest Aircraft Safety Award to Joe Robertson for his work as Chairman of the SSA Safety Committee, and the Youth Achievement Award to Charles Johnson, an air Scout Squadron leader. "Other" awards included the Dumbbell to Al Gregg for pulling the release instead of spoilers on an attempted spot landing during a flight test; the Intergranular Corrosion Trophy to Bob Joppa for certain remarks about L-K's and 1-21's; Cloudbuster Certificates (landing off the airport on local flights) to Paul Palimer, Wilson Ribeiro, and Don Adams; and Certificates of Knights of the Open Field (landing off airports on cross country flights) to Arlen Moore, Ken Deckman, Ray Deckman, Joe Carter, and Ed McClanahan.