

A NEW REGIONAL CONTEST PROPOSAL

by P. H. ENTZ

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following proposal was prepared for presentation to the SSA Board of Directors at their meeting of August 7, 1958. Unfortunately, the Directors did not have time to give it proper consideration so tabled action on it until the next Board meeting. In the meantime, they thought it would be a good idea to publish it in SOARING so that the general membership could have an opportunity to comment on it. Please direct all comments to your Regional Director(s), with copies to the editor for publication consideration and to the author at his new address, 3723 W. Kenyon, Seattle 6, Wash. The proposal was prompted by a feeling that the present system of competitive soaring in the U. S. is not of the standard it should be, nor conducted in a consistent fashion by using the existing method of sanctioning contests by SSA. Emphasis is placed upon the belief that adoption of this proposal would demonstrate a real interest on the part of SSA in individuals and local regions. Attention is also called to the article by Jon Carsey in the May-June, 1956 issue of SOARING, "A National Scoring System."*)

Discussions at the last Northwest Regional Meeting of Soaring Pilots brought up the subject of regional contests, national contests and international teams, as usual. Also, recent reports in SOARING indicates possible major increases in the number of active pilots and ships, if the Cherokee II list is any indication. This implies an increase in contest activity on both a local and national level. Some talk of limiting the number of competitors in national contests, because of the cost and limitation of facilities available for these contests, has been heard. Apparently it is difficult to launch a large number of contestants within a reasonable competition time and provide each with equal competitive opportunity. Many arguments have been waged over which local "champion" is equal to or better than the national contest competitors.

There also is the problem of "what is offered to the member by the SSA organization," a question every mem-

bership drive has faced. It is beneficial to the organization to provide as many services as possible for its members. Regionalization of the SSA is a proper step to make local areas aware of the national organization. But more must be done. Interest in SSA can be stimulated by recognizable SSA sponsored activity in the local area which caters to all persons interested in soaring and provides discrimination in favor of SSA members.

One means of providing these things is through organization of annual Regional Soaring Contests under the auspices of the SSA. These should be conducted to a uniform set of rules established by SSA and equivalent to the rules of the National Competitions. Discriminatory entry fees for pilots and/or equipment favoring SSA members should be established. The SSA should establish a set of minimum standards for conduct of the competitions and recognize the winners on a regional basis—say regional single-place champion and regional two-place champion.

The scope of the annual National Competitions should be altered by establishing a maximum number of participants to be permitted in competition—say 20 to 25. Place competition on a regional team basis of 2 single-place ships with one pilot each and one two-place ship with two pilots. This gives 30 ships and 40 pilots under the present regional division. Require pilots of the two-place entry to alternate flying as pilot and passenger with no rest day. Allow pilots of single-place ships to have rest days. Require participants to have met minimum standards of participation in regional competition prior to entering a "national." Make national contest participation selective by making participation open only to 1st and 2nd place winners of regional SSA contests and the 1st and 2nd place winners of the past year national contests. In case these are unable to attend, participants could be selected in descending order of their standing in regional competition until a regional team is obtained that can at-

tend. From this competition select the single-place, two-place and team champions. Then we will see what regional soaring area develops championship material. Perhaps a way can be found for regional activities to support wholly or in part the expenses of its team entry in the national contest.

The international team should then be selected by recorded performance rather than by mutual popularity or opinion polls. The SSA records of the 1956 international contest appear to indicate that ability to finance the travel and subsistence costs were not a factor of participation in that international contest, since donations covered all expenses. The International team could be made up of the single-place and two-place winners of the two years preceding the year of international competition.

Recognizing the vacation, expense and travel problems of contestants, the national contestants need not participate in both regional and national contests in the same year. This requires that the regional winners of 1958 would comprise the national contest competitors in 1959, etc. National contest winners in 1956 and 1957 would be the U.S. team in the 1958 Internationals. The time of Regional Contests should be left to the decisions of each region because of regional factors of schools, vacations, job considerations, etc., and should not exceed 8 consecutive days in duration. Direction of the organization of regional contests should be a responsibility of the regional SSA directors, State Governors and a regional member of the SSA Contest Board. These people working under a uniform SSA regional contest code would represent the SSA in a demonstration of national organization interest in regional activities.

FLIGHT TESTING

(Concluded from Page 2)

For the modified 1-26, the author utilized this optimum airspeed selector during the 1957 Nationals and was thus able to complete the seventy-seven mile run from Elmira to Sidney, New York, in one hour and twenty-one minutes as compared to the best time of one hour and two minutes by RJ-5.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *This sailplane is now for sale. The modifications have been certified so that it is still licensed in the standard category.*)