

# CLUB NEWS

by BERTHA M. RYAN

(Editor's Note: In inaugurating this new feature column of SOARING magazine, it is hoped that each U.S. soaring club will appoint a reporter to send in items of national interest for publication in this section. Until they do, we will attempt to present, in summarized form, some of the more interesting pieces of news from the club publications along with an occasional comment.)

A newsletter from the MIT Soaring Club (more formally known as the Aeronautical Engineering Society) reveals that the club has had a rebirth of enthusiasm which promises to pull it out of its slow years of the middle 50's. The club (whose origin is hazy but probably goes back to about 1910) has claimed to be the oldest continuously active soaring club in the Western Hemisphere. The renewed soaring activity at MIT promises to help the club retain that distinction.

The members are attempting to tie in the club activities with academic life at MIT and, to this end, students are encouraged to carry out research projects that have a bearing on soaring. (A recent bachelor's thesis was written on flight testing methods with the Club's 2-22.) Their main project is going to be the design of a completely new all MIT made sailplane.

We are glad to see this club, whose name is so prominent in the history of soaring, once more set their goals high and continue to introduce America's future engineering and scientific leaders to the sport and science of soaring. Among the former members of the AES are Dick DuPont, Jimmie Doolittle, and Eddie Allen. A more recent alumnus is Lloyd Licher, your SSA Executive Secretary.

The early AES members were active in the first Intercollegiate Flying Meet ever held in this country. Later they were the first to design and build their own glider and bring it to Europe for competition. Even famous Harris Hill in Elmira is named after an AES member who was killed when the tow car he was driving overturned on the hill (the only fatality the club has ever had).

We wish good soaring to the mem-

bers of this club who are carrying on a fine tradition.

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Now let's move further west and see what news TEXAS SPIRALS has to offer this month. Texans are all ready for their Gypsy Contest (all over by the time you read this). The first four days were planned as a task tour consisting of four task flights from Grand Prairie to Ranger, Sweetwater, to Ranger, and back to Grand Prairie. The last three days were planned as task events originating at Grand Prairie.

Social events were considered in this contest also. Dick and Alice Johnson planned to host a watermelon cutting in their back yard. Another night, a Texas Style Beer Bust at the Wiberg Flying W Ranch was scheduled.

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In the Far West and more on the serious side, we were very much impressed with an article in TOWLINE (Seattle Glider Council) by Pete Bowers on the subject of soaring instruction. He states that competent instruction for the individual in an isolated group is non-existent and very often a power pilot checks himself out and then the others in his group, often leading to disastrous results.

"Even in the areas where soaring operations are relatively heavy, the problem of obtaining professional—standard instruction is a difficult one . . . Since any glider pilot with a commercial rating can instruct, he has little or no incentive to go for a flight instructor rating except to advance his own proficiency. The majority of the glider 'instructors' then, stay in the amateur category. Some do as thorough a job as any professional while others, even though good pilots, are not at all qualified to teach." Many commercial pilots are "drafted" into instruction work for which they have no enthusiasm. And the pilot who is willing is usually over worked until his recreation becomes an all day chore.

"The small size of the soaring movement and its amateur status result in a 'stalemate' that threatens to keep it (soaring) in the status of a minority amateur activity forever—it needs professionals in order to

grow, but it has to grow before it can begin to support the necessary professionals."

Pete doesn't give a solution for this problem. Perhaps there isn't one. What do you think?

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Still in the West but further south we read in the SCSA THERMAL that two of Paul Bikle's sons are making soaring news. His oldest boy, Hugh (age 16), flew from El Mirage to Bishop on August 2nd to complete his Gold C and earn one Diamond (goal). A few weeks later, on August 23rd, John Bikle (age 14) made his first solo. Congratulations to all three Bikle's.

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We close this month's club news with a poem from WIND AND WINGS, the publication of the Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California (San Diego).

## "Flat On My Face"

or

## "The Glider Guider's Lament"

by WALT

(I hate to sign this thing)

MOONEY

Cloud streets are building up in the blue,  
Crossing the sharp clear sky.  
Behind the mountain, lenticulars too,  
I can see if I try.  
Down on the lake bed dust devils twirl,  
Gracefully twisted awry.  
And up above, the buzzards awhirl,  
Circling, rise in the sky.

Cloud streets are building up in the blue,  
I'm off on a glorious tow.  
Where are the bumps that we should fly through?  
They must be somewhere, I know.  
The Cub up ahead is wagging his wings,  
To tell me, I must let go.  
What's with these variometer things,  
Why does the red pellet show?

Cloud streets are building up in the blue,  
I'm back in the pattern again.  
This short little flight is almost through,  
And how will I ever explain,  
With all the soaring signs so darn good,  
(The kidding will give me a pain),  
How I got so sharp and skillful  
I could touch down before the tow plane?