

NOTES FROM A PERIPATETIC PRESIDENT

Like many other soaring editorials, this one is being written en route — jetborne at 31,000 feet over Albuquerque headed west. The altitude is not impressive. After all, sailplanes have soared 13,000 feet higher. As to the noise, the wind outside is like that rushing past the 2-22 canopy in a dive, and back aft where I am sitting with the other peons, the noise of the jets makes it very apparent that there is lots of horsepower running around this vicinity.

With some considerable justification I have been accused of prejudice against new kinds of flying machinery, particularly those which utilize such unnatural means of support as engines. But I must admit the truth of a remark Bill Ivans made at the Northeastern SSA meeting "When you have flown across the country in jets a few times, you are really spoiled for any other kind of travel." It certainly is a far cry from my first trip across in a DC-3.

The occasion for this trip was the annual meeting of the National Aeronautic Association. The president of SSA is automatically a member of the Board of Directors of NAA along with the presidents of other NAA affiliates such as the Parachute Club of America and Aero Modelers. There are other directors elected by the NAA membership at large which numbers over 5,000. As the national aero club of the United States, it is NAA which delegates to SSA the right to administer FAI soaring rules in the USA. Thus we have a vital stake in the present and future operation of the NAA. Its influence on general aviation matters in this country has never achieved the heights of which many think it is capable, but you may be assured that the officers and directors are keenly aware of this and are making efforts to remedy this situation. As to matters affecting SSA, we have no major complaints.

I am sure all SSA members will be gratified to learn that the famous aviatrix Miss Jacqueline Cochran, one of soaring's best and most persuasive friends, has been elected president of NAA for 1960. As an articulate and vigorous supporter of soaring causes in the highest circles, both here and abroad, she has many times in the past rendered invaluable services to the SSA and its members. As many of you know, she is also president of the F.A.I., an honor of great international significance. We salute and thank her.

During this NAA board meeting conversations started last year were continued on plans for closer cooperation among the various affiliated organizations. An active committee has been appointed with representation from all groups and we expect to have more to report on this in the near future.

While only about 40 members showed up for the Northeastern SSA meeting in New York, there were five Directors present and an extremely varied number of topics were discussed, including the renewed interest in soaring in the Civil Air Patrol. It is hoped that the New York meeting will continue to be an annual function and will increase in stature and attendance. It affords an excellent chance for SSA members and the national officers to meet and talk things over.

During the last 12 months I have been able to visit soaring groups in San Diego, Seattle, Denver, Phoenix, Wichita, Tulsa, Odessa, Dallas-Fort Worth, Miami, Kansas City, Detroit, Elmira and New York City. Everywhere I have found tremendous enthusiasm and devotion to soaring, sometimes under the most discouraging circumstances. Many SSA members have given generously of time and money to make soaring more rewarding for us all, and as I wind up a full year as president of SSA I want to thank the many who have assisted me so much.

I feel highly honored that the Directors have re-elected me for a second year's term and will do everything in my power to justify their confidence. It is my hope that I will be able to visit other soaring groups in other parts of the country in 1960, but whether I see you in person or not, your comments and suggestions on ways to improve the SSA and soaring are always welcome. As for now — best wishes for the Holiday Season, and may 1960 be full of good lift and safe landings!

H. S.