

# SNOWBIRD MEET

The 1958 version of the Elmira Area Soaring Corporation's closing meet was truly a "Snowbird" Meet, with snow starting Thursday night, blanketing the Northeast along with increasing cold weather as the weekend progressed. The snow and near zero weather kept many from the Northeast area, including Canada, from starting or caused many who had started, to turn back.

In spite of this, at least ten sailplanes pulled in to frozen Harris Hill at different times to join the ten locally based ships for the Snowbird Competition. The usual large turnout of ships and pilots from the Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa areas boiled down to a lone 1-19 brought by a hardy group from the Southern Ontario Soaring Association.

supplement his rather tropical clothes. Other foreign visitors were Mr. & Mrs. Heinz Lehmann of Lima, Peru. They are visiting in this country and both are active glider pilots and are hopeful of starting some soaring activity in Lima.

Later in the evening, there was a session of slides shown by the various clubs in the Northeast. A newly formed area of activity was represented by Ernest C. Boufford who owns and operates a BG-6 in Springfield, Vermont.

Friday saw no flying activity at all due to the increasing amount of snow. The traditional plant inspection and supper at Schweizer Aircraft was the main activity. Along with the display of three different sailplane models in various stages

other forms of "thermal finders" and ended when someone offered the opinion that when these instruments were developed to perfection, it would be necessary to legislate against them so soaring would remain a sport.

There was reminiscing about the early days in soaring and two old-timers, Earl Southee and Gus Haller were present. Earl was one of the founders of the SSA and was director of many early soaring contests and later President of the SSA. Gus was one of the early competitors at the Nationals and was known for developing the Haller Hawk sailplane.

On Saturday, although the snow tapered off, the temperature dropped and a strong cross wind on Harris Hill made soaring marginal. Various flights were made by Steve Bennis, Brad Straus, and Ed Seymour, but most of the pilots wisely kept their ships on their trailers in the hangars due to the very strong wind and tricky currents. The Snowbird is always the test grounds for new contest rules. This year the task was to have been a flight of a prescribed length of time with penalty for exceeding or undershooting the time. In addition to this, a spot landing had to be made at the completion of the flight. The rules also encouraged clubs to keep their ship in the air with different pilots and this factor was to be an important one in choosing the winning club.

In the evening, the traditional Snowbird Banquet was held and 120 people braved the wintry night with two roads to Harris Hill closed, to attend. Only the hardy enthusiasts attempted to navigate the trip to Harris Hill. The Snowbird Championship was won by Brad Straus and the Club Championship by the Rochester Soaring Club. The Sargent Award, given each year in recognition of sincere efforts devoted to the advancement of motorless flight was awarded to Walter B. Hausler, for the work that he has done over the years in building up the SSA Film Library to its present excellent status. The C. J. Smith Memorial Trophy, for the greatest number of flights made from Harris Hill during the year at other than contests, was won by Dale Gustin of Elmira.

The EASC Directors have had considerable controversy over the arrangements for banquets of this type. Over the years, in deference to some of the wives and children, they have



Photo: Ed Seymour

It looks cold on Harris Hill as Brad Straus is about to be launched in a Schweizer 1-26. The Snowbird Meet was snowed in more ways than one.

Thanksgiving Day, not officially one of the Snowbird Contest days, found an increasing number of out-of-town soaring enthusiasts gathering at Harris Hill. A ridge wind made possible "warm up" flights by contestants, including members from the Rochester Soaring Club, Metropolitan Airhoppers Soaring Association and local EASC pilots. The evening found a group of 60 people seated for Thanksgiving Dinner, which included a visitor from India, Vishwa Gupta. He is visiting this country on a State Department Leader Exchange Program and, being an active glider pilot with the Delhi Glider Club, he made a special trip to Harris Hill to attend the meet. EASC members quickly hustled up some winter clothing to

of production were the experimental 1-30 airplane and the steadily growing production line of the AG-CAT, duster airplane that SAC is building for Grumman. The snow made travel to Harris Hill very difficult and almost impossible so the evening meeting was held in the plant cafeteria. This included the usual reports from the various clubs in the NE area and Canada. Technical discussions followed running all the way from practical, every day operation problems to optimum variometers and thermal finders. On hand, in the ranks of soaring enthusiasts, were engineers from GE, American T&T and Kodak, all getting into long hair discussion on the use of electronics, infrared and optics on future rate of climbs. The discussion got into