

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF PETE BOWERS

Peter M. Bowers, new associate editor of *SOARING*, probably holds the world's record for "Most Frustrated Glider Pilot." In 1936, at the age of 18, he started to help others build gliders. At Boeing School of Aeronautics, where he studied aeronautical engineering, 1940-1942, he was in a club that started and had nearly completed a BG-6 when Pearl Harbor ended the project. What with schooling, wars, matrimony, making a living, and glider shortages in his area, Pete did not get off the ground in a sailplane until September, 1950, fourteen long years after he became associated with the activity. By this time, thanks to the World War II G. I. Bill, he was a powerplane instructor with land, sea, and multi-engine ratings.

Aviation has been a way of life for Pete rather than just a hobby, starting shortly before Lindberg flew the Atlantic in 1927. He has always been an avid collector of aircraft pictures, starting with magazine clippings pasted in a school notebook and culminating in one of the world's finest private collections, numbering some 24,000 carefully-filed negatives. As manual dexterity with razor blades and "Ambroid" cement developed, Pete advanced from cardboard cut-out models to solid balsa scale types and on into the stick-and-tissue flying types. He became fairly well known on the national modelling scene in the Junior Birdmen and IBMAA days of the 1930's, and plans for many of his original gas model designs were published in the model magazines from 1936 to 1946.

Writing for publication began in 1934 as a sideline to model building, when he would send a photograph of his latest model and a writeup in to the "What the Readers are Building" columns of the model magazines. Reader response to a good picture and writeup brought requests from the editors for plans of the model and instructions on how to build it. Several years of this type of work brought about a wide acquaintance with the magazine editors and the requirements of magazine writing, and led naturally to an output of articles on other aeronautical subjects that still continues for half a dozen well-known magazines. Editori-

al and publication experience were gained while turning out flight and maintenance handbooks for Boeing and over the five-year period that he edited *TOWLINE* for the Seattle Glider Council, raising it from a postcard to one of the country's leading club papers. In recent years, Pete's writing has been extended to books. He is



now completing a massive technical history of all the Boeing airplanes back to 1916 and is working as time allows on a soaring manual that will be a cross between the classic "Flight Without Power" and the SSA "American Soaring Handbook" now in preparation. He has been a member of the professional Aviation Writers' Association since 1949.

After finishing school in 1942, Pete spent five years in the Air Force as an Aircraft Maintenance and Technical Intelligence officer, and has been an engineer at Boeing - Seattle ever since. A pilot since 1948, he now has approximately 2500 hours, 600 of them in gliders, and holds glider flight instructor and Commercial Flight Examiner ratings. This contributes further to his "Most Frustrated Pilot" status in that he has to put in 50 hours of instruction in a year just to maintain the rating, with the result that he spends so much time instructing that he doesn't get

much chance to go cross-country. He got his Gold C altitude in 1953 and has been after the distance leg ever since. Pete is determined that the younger generation will not be as frustrated, and his son David soloed his dad's 1-26 last year at the age of 14.

In addition to his glider-flying and writing activity, Pete has held office in one or more glider and powerplane clubs continually since 1951 and has been an SSA Director-at-Large in addition to serving on several national committees. He is presently SSA State Governor for the state of Washington, and is deeply involved in the antique and homebuilt airplane movements, owning several antiques including a replica of a 1912 Curtiss pusher, and holding part-interest in two home-builts. He recently traded his 1-26 sailplane for a Weihe, and also owns a 1930 Detroit Gull primary, XTG-3 No. 1, which needs new wings, and half-interest in the oldest Bowlus Baby still flying.

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## ADDRESSES NEEDED

The following members and recipients of *SOARING* have had SSA mail to them returned for one reason or other, generally "moved, left no forwarding address." They all have Newsletters and/or magazines coming to them, so it is desired to locate them if at all possible. Anyone knowing of the present whereabouts of any of them are urged to notify SSA. The address listed for each is the last one known.

- Robert A. Abrams, 353 Commonwealth Ave., Boston 15, Mass.
- Ora J. Blaw, 1806 Laurette Lane, Belleville, Ill.
- Everett E. Davis, 10434 E. Marginal Way., Seattle 88, Wash.
- Lloyd H. Frank, 3611 Holmes, Kansas City 9, Mo.
- Joachim P. Kuettnner, 985 Metrepal Ave., Boston 36, Mass.
- Wilton E. Patterson, RCAF Station, St. Hubert, Que., Canada
- Noel G. Peterson, 47-K E. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, Calif.
- Orin Pflieger, Box 26003, Chef Menteur Sta., New Orleans, La.
- Lt. Doss L. Smith, Dept. of Flying Trng., Soaring Div., USAF Academy, Colo.
- Wm. E. Volk, 1st Lt., 2nd BCT, APO 31, N.Y., N.Y.
- James A. Weeden, 1117 E. Fairview Blvd., Inglewood, Calif.