



Photo by Eugene Bartos

The Austria Standard sailplane owned by Les Benis of Los Angeles, Calif. This photo placed seventh in SSA's recent contest for photos of sailplanes in flight, earning a prize of \$5. The sailplane is of all-wood construction with a maximum glide ratio of 34 to 1. It is being manufactured by the Schempp-Hirth Company in West Germany. A comprehensive article on this design was featured in the September issue of Soaring Magazine.

TWO SILVER BADGE LEGS

by BARNA TOEKES

(Editor's note: These flight descriptions were submitted with the applications for the badge legs. The two legs completed Mr. Toekes' Silver Badge, U.S. No. 597.)

Duration

July 9th was the second day of our (Icarus Flying Club) one week soaring vacation at Elmira. A somewhat gusty NNW wind of about 15-25 mph prevailed, providing fair ridge soaring at Harris Hill. The sky became more and more overcast as the day wore on. Our Club Instructor, Pierce Fellows, started his five-hour flight in the L-Spatz around noon, and it seemed that he would have no difficulty completing the task.

Our 2-22A became available at 2:00 P.M. and I decided to give ridge soaring a try, as I had not much experience in this. I did not have much hope for five hours duration since the wind was gusty and even the L-Spatz came quite low over the ridge occasionally; besides, the late hour of take-off (2:15 P.M.) was discouraging.

I released at 1000' above the field and learned by necessity, real fast, how to manipulate the 2-22 in order to get the most out of it. As the hours went by I had more and more hope to make the duration, even though it became increasingly difficult to stay up. On two occasions a slight drizzle fell, but it did not interfere much with my visibility; however, it became obvious that this 2-22 leaks in rain! After release, I never again was able to reach 900' altitude, and especially the last hour was a real struggle.

By this time, I was quite determined to fight for every inch of altitude and every second of time, getting more encouragement from my club friends who were shouting and waving like a bunch of tipsy Indians. This display of enthusiastic friendship helped me really through the last few minutes and I even gained enough altitude for a regular pattern landing, after five hours and five minutes of the most exciting ridge soaring. Pierce, who had completed his five hours by then, the rest of the "gang" and their wives, greeted me with an ovation which shook the hill.

I am certain that I shall never forget this experience—the joy of soaring, the warmth of friendship and the satisfying feeling of accomplishment.

Distance

July 15th was the last day of the one week soaring vacation I spent at Elmira with several members of the Icarus Flying Club. Actually, most of my friends left the previous day, but Art Zimmermann and Egon Niemeyer offered to stay one more day in order to act as crew for my distance flight attempt.

Egon made the first flight in the L-Spatz around 11:00 A.M. and he found good thermals at 2000' above the hill. I had to release below 800', however, to make a qualifying 32-mile flight to Towanda Airport and I did not find sufficient lift to remain airborne during my first attempt. For my second attempt, I took off at 12:50 in a 10-15 mph north wind, released at 680' above hill level and found a weak thermal which took me to 5,200'. From here I proceeded across Elmira and the Chemung Val-

ley, losing about 3000' altitude. I was about to prepare to land when I contacted first a weak, then a strong lift. With a little "cloud-hopping," I reached my maximum altitude (around 7900') at about 4 miles south of Waverly. From here I glided down to Towanda, Pa., and allowing time for picture taking before pulling the diving brakes and descending to the Towanda Airport. The Towanda Airport manager was gone for the day, but fortunately I found two witnesses. After calling my crew at Harris Hill and dismantling the ship, a second sailplane arrived from the Schweizer School. This was a 1-26 with Laurent Cannon finishing the same distance flight as myself.

This flight was a wonderful and enjoyable experience.

Betsy Woodward Joins M.R.I.

The internationally known U. S. soaring pilot, Miss Betsy Woodward, has joined the staff of Meteorology Research, Inc., in Altadena, California, as a meteorologist. During the past two years she has been engaged in research concerned with the structure of thermals while at Imperial College in London. Her research work at MRI will continue to be in the convective field, particularly related to the physics of convective storms.

Betsy holds eight of the nine established U. S. national soaring records for women, and the world's absolute altitude record for women of 39,993 feet, made at Bishop in 1955 when she was a pilot and meteorologist for the Sierra Wave Project.

At MRI she joins numerous other soaring pilots who work for that rapidly expanding organization. Of its 35 employees, nine are soaring pilots. Besides Betsy, these include Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Jr., President and founder; Dr. Harner Selvidge, Vice-President and General Manager; Harold Hutchinson, Physicist; Bill Bowmar, Mechanical Designer; John Lake, Engineer; Jack Gretta, Field Engineer; Wally Wilson and Max Skovgaard, Machinists. In addition to these full-time employees, Bill Ivans, President-elect of SSA, is a member of the MRI board of directors. The company also has four power pilots on its staff, but naturally they don't count.