

LEASE A SAILPLANE!

by ROBERT LEE MOORE

A common problem which confronts any new soaring club is what two-place sailplane to buy and how to pay for it. This can be a real dilemma. The War-surplus trainers, which are relatively inexpensive, are almost twenty years old and have flying characteristics which leave something to be desired for ad-initio training. The Schweizer 2-22, the ideal ship for gliding and soaring instruction, costs more than many beginning groups can afford. There is also the consideration that once the members have earned their ratings they may soon become dissatisfied with a trainer and want something of higher performance. These problems confronted six members of the Columbia Basin Soaring Association (CBSA) this spring. The solution was provided by Bob Chase and Tom Davis, who live in Seattle.

Bob and Tom have the Northwest Schweizer Aircraft distributorship and operate under the name of Chase and Associates. In order to comply with the terms of their Schweizer franchise, they had to take delivery on a new Schweizer 2-22 — but were too busy to operate it, since their Schweizer dealership is a side line which must compete with their regular jobs. They accordingly hit on the idea of leasing the 2-22 to responsible NW glider clubs or individuals. Key to success of their plan was the clever requirement that the renting group *pay in advance* for a certain number of hours of use each month. This guaranteed Chase and Associates at least a certain reg-

ular return on their investment and also provided the renters with a powerful incentive to fly the ship — in order to get their money's worth. The rental was set at \$125 per month for 25 hours minimum. If the ship were flown in excess of 25 hours in any one month, the rate dropped to \$4 per hour, an added incentive for even more flying. In addition, the renting club was responsible for conducting all instruction under the supervision of qualified instructors. The students, of course also paid for their own tows.

CBSA, or rather six of its members (John Budd, Don Hoba, Ira Jacobson, Molly McClanahan, Fred Porter and Bob Smih), were Chase and Associates' first customers. The new 2-22-C, resplendent in two-color paint job plus Day Glow trim, was delivered directly to Richland from the factory on March 1, and operations promptly got under way at Vista Field, Kennewick, Washington. Instruction was provided by CBSA Commercial Glider pilots Rudy Allemann, Ed McClanahan, Paul Pallmer, and Bob Moore (all Gold C pilots too, incidentally). Because of airplane traffic at Vista Field, all training was done by aero tow — with the exception of a few early-morning, short-rope auto tows. Since everyone involved had a full-time job (Molly insists being a housewife and mother is a full-time job!), training was limited to weekends and, when the days got longer, to the hours after work.

Because of rainy weather in March,

we were lucky to eke out the 25 minimum, and even that required some flying in the rain, when we had the airport—and the air—strictly to ourselves. However, enthusiasm and rate of progress were most gratifying. The six students had widely differing aeronautical backgrounds, ranging from extensive power plane experience to none at all. As expected, the experienced power pilots soloed first, two during the first month. April saw 41 hours flown and May, 48, bringing the total for the three-month lease period to 114. Chase and Davis used the ship for an additional twenty hours of demonstration rides and personal soaring for a grand total of 134 hours!

Before the end of the third month, everyone had soloed, all six had earned their C badges, and were ready for their FAA ratings. Numerous soaring flights of two hours' duration (a self-imposed limit to allow everyone to have a chance each day) had been made. Despite this large number of flights, only one involved a landing away from the airport, and the only damage to the glider was a minor slit in the fabric caused by a bush. All-in-all a very successful operation.

The blue and cream 2-22 has now moved on to Moses Lake, where Duane Allen (the local air service operator) will use it for student training. After that, other groups have spoken for it. So, it appears that the Chase and Davis lease idea has proven highly popular — and that it is an idea which other dealers, or anyone who happens to have an extra glider or some idle money, might do well to consider. More 2-22C lease arrangements would do much to help the growth of soaring in the United States!

Robert Chase and Tom Davis with their new Schweizer 2-22C rental sailplane at Vista Field, Kennewick, Washington

Photo by Robert Lee Moore



FAA PILOT STATISTICS

On Dec. 31, 1960, the FAA had the following numbers of certificated aircraft pilots:

Airline Transport	18,279
Commercial	89,904
Private	138,869
Student	99,182
Helicopter Only	616
Glider Only	802
Lighter-Than-Air Only	410

Total 348,062

Numerous of those in the first four categories hold glider ratings, also, and if these figures can be determined they will be published in *Soaring* at a later date.