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**5 DIAMOND ALTITUDES**  
**EARNED AT TEHACHAPI**

Five soaring pilots earned altitude diamonds on the weekend of April 7th and 8th at Tehachapi, Calif., using Schweizer 1-26 sailplanes rented from the Holiday Soaring School there. The five were Jack Nees, Thornton Ladd, Carl E. Burson, Jr., Dietrich Neef and Gable Ray. A sixth diamond gain was made by Bob Seaman but the Peravia barograph he carried ran out of paper shortly after release, invalidating the flight. Another pilot, Chuck Moore, made his Gold gain as the wave weakened on Sunday.

The Diamond gains ranged from Ray's 17,717 feet to Burson's 23,469, for which he is claiming a new California state record in the Senior, single-place class. Burson's top was 30,869 ft., after a low point of 7400 ft. asl. He had towed to 10,000 ft. asl from the airport which is at an elevation of 4000 ft. Most of the tows were from 9,000 to 12,000 ft asl. Flight durations ranged from 1:45 hr. to 2:30 hr. and Seaman's was 4:10 hr.

Nees, Ladd and Burson made their

flights on the Saturday, all using the same ship. A large lenticular was at about 32,000 ft. in about the same location as when Paul Bikle set the world soaring altitude records a year ago. All gains were just under or in front of the cloud. Neef, a German test pilot, attained the highest altitude, 31,200 ft.

It is of interest to note that only two altitude diamonds were earned in the U.S. in all of 1961 and only eight others in the preceding four years. With the availability of tow-planes and suitably equipped sail-planes in a location where waves are prevalent this "drought" is now over.

**ASH CHAPTER 6 DELAYED**

Unfortunately, some delays cropped up in the effort to get chapter 6 of the *American Soaring Handbook*, "Cross-Country and Wave Soaring," to the printer in March. As a result, copies were not available when the ad for this chapter appeared in the April *Soaring* and this was not determined until after the magazine had been printed. All orders for chapter 6 now on hand will be filled just as soon as the books are received from the printer.

**POSTAGE RATES**

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill, HR 7927, which would increase the postal rates as follows: 1st-class (letters), from 4c to 5c per ounce; 2nd-class (magazines, including *Soaring*, and newspapers), a 1c surcharge per piece; and 3rd-class (other printed matter), from 2½c to 3½c per piece. These provisions are meant to help balance the Post Office budget which is in the red 850 million dollars per year.

The 2nd-class increase will raise only 53 million dollars per year but in the process may ruin many publications and be a great burden to the others. This postage increase exceeds the gross annual profits of the entire magazine industry. Publishers consider this unfair because the 1st-class rate will be only 67% above its 1945 value while the 2nd-class rate will be 178% above its 1945 value (3rd-class will be 250% higher). In SSA's case, the cost of mailing *Soaring* magazine would nearly double—from approximately \$60 per month to \$110.

Since the time of George Washington, it has been part of the national philosophy to have a free press. Below-cost rates for the editorial content of 2nd-class mail is a public service to encourage the dissemination of information and advancement of education and culture. *Soaring* magazine plays a small part in this scheme of things and would be hurt by a postage increase.

What to do? Knowledgeable students of the problem advocate increasing 1st-class rates only, to 6c per ounce. This would completely wipe out the Post Office deficit since 48% of all mail is 1st-class. Considering inflation, the 3c per ounce 1st-class rate in 1932 should be worth 6½c today. Modernization to cut costs is part of the long-term solution and so should be advocated with the 1st-class increase.

For further information on this subject the reader is referred to more eloquent articles in the April *Reader's Digest*, pp. 81-87, and the April 6th *Time*, pp. 46, 49.

To me the conclusion is clear. This is a representative government. If you agree, write your Senators, Representatives and the President to defeat HR 7927 and replace it with a 6c per ounce 1st-class rate backed up by a modernization program. It isn't often we take up space in *Soaring* to deal with non-soaring subjects but this exception is self-explanatory.

LLOYD M. LICHER, *Editor*

**FLY WITH THE FLYING GEHRLEINS**

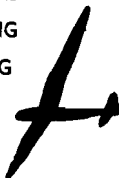
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