

# KNOW YOUR DIRECTORS

There continues here a series of biographical and autobiographical sketches of the 28 SSA Directors.

## WILLIAM F. PLACEK

Bill Placek is one of three Regional Directors for region 2, the New York metropolitan area. His three-year term runs through 1964. He resides at 35 S. Prospect Ave., Hackensack, N.J. There follows his soaring autobiography.

I started flying primary gliders in 1932 after building one and learning to fly it by auto-towing. My age at this time was 17 to 18 years old. I flew the primary for two summers.

Shortly thereafter, some time in 1934 or 1935, I purchased a Franklin PS-2 and flew it at the Teterboro, N.J., Airport for several years. I first visited the Nationals at Elmira, N.Y., in 1932 and was introduced to Martin Schempp at the old Canton Street Airport where the contest headquarters were located. I first flew in the Nationals in 1934 when I received by C Badge number 117 in a Gull-wing Franklin entered by the Stevens Institute of Technology. This sailplane was later damaged during a thunderstorm and I purchased and rebuilt it to fly again at Elmira in the 1936 Nationals. I was also active in soaring at the Ellenville and Wurtsboro, New York, soaring sites during the shock cord and winch-launching days in 1937. I flew in many local weekend meets with Lewin Barringer and later sold the Gull-wing Franklin to the Wings Soaring Club of Philadelphia where Barringer started this club.

William F. Placek.



I remember carrying out initial test flights of Schweizer's 1-7 from Harris Hill although I can't remember the dates any more.

I was employed by Sikorsky Aircraft Co. in Bridgeport, Connecticut, from 1935 to 1938 on the early boats for Pan American Airlines which blazed the routes in the Pacific. Later I was employed by Eastern Airlines when they were based at Newark, N.J., and then during their inaugural flights from La Guardia Field, New York. Following that I began flying as a flight instructor at Roosevelt Field, Mineola, L.I., N.Y., for approximately 1½ years. From there I went to instructing in the Civilian Pilot Training program in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. During the early war years I was a flight instructor in the War Training Program. Early in 1943 I was employed by C.A.A., now F.A.A., as a flight inspector and was assigned as supervisor of flight schools where Air Force Cadets were being trained as pilots in advanced cross-country and instrument flying.

At present, I am still with F.A.A. at Teterboro, New Jersey.

During the year 1947 I purchased an L-K 10A from War Assets and owned it for the next seven years and earned Silver Badge number 183 at Elmira during the 1953 Nationals.

In 1955 I purchased a 1-23D kit and together with wife, Betty, completed it in eight months of spare-time work. I still own the 1-23D, based at Wurtsboro, New York.

My son, Wayne, age 14, soloed in gliders the day after his 14th birthday (Saturday, October 7, 1961) and my son, Bill, age 18, is also interested in flying. He seems more adept in power planes. My entire family are presently members of MASA at Wurtsboro, N.Y., with Betty as Secretary-Treasurer.

My age is 47 and I have been soaring for the past 28 years. I hold an airline transport pilot certificate and flight instructor certificate in airplanes, gliders and helicopters.

## JOHN D. RYAN

John Ryan is chairman of the newly created SSA Governmental Rules and Regulations Committee and the current National Soaring champion. There follows his soaring autobiography.

Born May 17, 1925, New York City. Raised in Butte, Montana.



Photo by Ken Shake

John D. Ryan.

Served in U. S. Naval Air Service during World War II. Started flying (power) while attending Dartmouth College and received private license in 1945. Have continued flying since that time for both pleasure and business. Logs presently show about 6500 hours of power time in many makes of aircraft in the "under 12,500" pound class, and a very few hours in some larger ships, mostly DC-3 and 4. Still continue to fly power for business reasons but the "fun has been put back into flying" for me through soaring, though I do act as tow pilot for the Arizona Soaring Association when I can be coerced into leaving the sailplane home. I'd rather be on the rear than the front end of the rope!

I'm self-employed as a consulting engineer in the field of radio communications and also keep hopping as a director on the board of a business investment group in Phoenix.

I now reside at 8040 Mojave Road, Scottsdale, Arizona, with my wife, Betty, and daughters Sally (8) and Betsy (1½), Sally's dog, Pepper, and desert life in abundance, including a tortoise named Humphrey who recently moved in under the front hedge. In November, 1958, just two months after we moved to Arizona from Montana, I was sitting in a barber chair listening to the usual unending stream of talk coming from behind my head when the word SOARING was heard. A little questioning on my part brought out the fact that a group was active in the area and that a "fellow named Joe Lincoln" was the man to see. I gave Joe a call upon returning home. By coincidence, Joe was at home, and another coincidence was that there was a meeting of the Arizona Soaring