

# 9th ANNUAL 1-26 REGATTA

Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.

by TONY DOHERTY

When does a Regatta become a Contest? Can the friendly features of a Regatta be successfully blended with the more serious aspects of a closely-contested meet? This proved to be the case over the past Labor Day weekend at Harris Hill, Elmira, N.Y., when 20 1-26's and 7 open class sailplanes gathered for the 9th Annual 1-26 Regatta.

The get-together started out simply enough Friday evening with an informal smoker and hangar-flying session held at the Administration Building. The keenness of the competition evidenced itself with the first task Saturday morning. A special "Champagne Flight" from Harris Hill to Hammondsport, "The Champagne Capital of America" (Californians please check your statistics before besieging the editor), was planned but forecast winds forced the committee to settle on a 35.5-mile speed dash to Towanda, Penna. One of the features of the original program was retained, however. Upon landing each pilot was presented with a bottle of champagne. This proved to be a strong attraction as 17 1-26's completed the task.

Bill Frutchy was first to "pop a cork" when he covered the 35.5 miles at an average speed of 41.3 mph. Bud Briggs' 37.8 mph and Hank Herr's 33.2 mph placed them second and third.

Many soaring pilots who have flown at past Harris Hill meets have taken advantage of the free dinners offered by the O'Brien brothers to any contest pilot (and his crew) who flies his sailplane by the window of their restaurant lo-

cated high on a hillside overlooking the Chemung Valley. For a fitting climax to a very successful day all the pilots and crews descended on the O'Briens for a special soaring supper. Free dinners were given to Bill Frutchy and Bud Briggs for placing 1st and 2nd in the speed task.

Sunday was a busy day for everyone. It started off with an informal breakfast meeting of the 1-26 Association. This was followed by the now classic "Le Mans" assembly race.

The basic rules of this race require that the 1-26's be on their trailers in traveling condition with the crews lined up 100 feet away. When the starting signal is given they run to their ships and start assembling them. Each crew is assigned a "Timer-Inspector." Any improper connections or missing safety pins mean disqualification. There were 16 crews entered in the event, the largest field to date. The sight of 62 pilots and crews running for their sailplanes and the resulting activity was an exciting spectacle for the large group of spectators who braved the early morning hour to observe this event.

It is interesting to note that each year since the "Le Mans" event was first introduced in 1959, when Otto Zauner and his crew assembled their 1-26 in 7 min. 45 seconds, the winning crews have regularly bettered the previous year's time. This year the smart money was riding on the black-hatted Soaring Dutchmen team of Yund, Miller and Moyer. Nor were they disappointed when the team raised their arms to signal completion. The stop

watch showed that they had bettered their previous record by 21 seconds with the very excellent time of 4:21. The team of Walter, Laurie and Woody Cannon and Traff Doherty placed second.

A new "First-timer's" class was established in the assembly race for crews who had not previously competed in this event. First place was taken by the Tri-City Soaring Society team with a time of 8:45. The 2nd Soaring Dutchmen team was the runner-up.

The task for Sunday was an ambitious one. Harris Hill to Dansville, against a 25-mph wind, and then free distance in any direction. Bud Briggs took top honors for the day with a 182.4-mile flight that terminated near Scranton Penna. Ron Holliday of Montreal was second with a 167.3-mile flight. Stu Schweizer's 138.4 miles and Stan Welles' 121.7 miles gave them third and fourth.

It is interesting to note that the first four 1-26's topped all of the open class ships which were flying the same task and showed they could buck the 25-mph wind. The only pilot making a longer flight was Dave Welles who flew his 1-20 195 miles from Elmira to a New Jersey cranberry bog for Gold badge distance.

The Annual 1-26 Banquet, held at the Administration Building Sunday night, was attended by 125 persons. Following welcoming addresses by EASC official Bob Buchwalder and contest director Paul A. Schweizer, a number of special awards were presented. Roy McMasters and Don Wilford of Columbus, Ohio, were given bottles of champagne as the 1-26 pilots coming the greatest distance. A special accolade was given Vic Peres of Erie, Penna., who flew his 1-26 165 miles from Erie to Harris Hill to visit the Regatta.

Aerial view of Harris Hill showing 19 Schweizer 1-26 sailplanes lined up following the "Le Mans" assembly race.

