

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The year's end, which brings me elevation to the rank of past president, gives me reason to look back upon two years in office and to attempt a distillation of what appears important in retrospect, and to offer as well a few comments on the current status of your Society.

Membership growth has been remarkably steady. During the past seven years membership has increased nearly five-fold, from fewer than 800 to more than 3,800 voting members. It is by no coincidence that this growth began just after Lloyd Licher took office as Executive Secretary.

Financial operation of SSA remains at a breakeven level. Any excess funds, resulting from the economies of a growing membership base have been devoted to the funding of more services to members. The increase in membership charges put into effect this past Summer was voted by your Board of Directors so that we could at once make a long-awaited addition to our permanent staff—a full-time editor for *Soaring*. The new rate structure should provide still more services per member as the membership grows, and permit accumulation of a modest contingency fund as well.

Publication of *Soaring* is probably the most important single function of SSA. Our full-time Edi-

tor, Alex Dawydoff, took over the job in mid-year and is now in full command. I look upon the creation of this post as a most significant milestone in our Society's growth.

Our frequent contacts with FAA during the past few years have been well reported in *Soaring*. Positive gains include establishment of legal high-altitude soaring areas and the elimination of arbitrary cloud flying restriction on experimentally licensed gliders. As a negative "gain" we added our voice in no uncertain fashion to the chorus of protest against a proposed lowering of the positive control altitude floor, and the proposal has been withdrawn. Still pending are SSA prepared rules covering a simplified cloud flying rating, minimum instrumentation requirements for such flight, and a request to eliminate the present towing waiver restrictions.

We are a Division of the National Aeronautic Association, and through NAA we derive all of our FAI record, sanction, and badge privileges. Our present relationship with NAA is entirely satisfactory, in my estimation. This is in sharp contrast with the situation of a little more than a year past, wherein an impending financial crisis within NAA threatened its very existence and seriously strained ties with its Divisions, including SSA. The change has been brought about largely through the extraordinary efforts of NAA President Bill Ong, whose energy and devotion to the task are beyond praise.

The recent award of the 1965 Na-

tionals to Adrian, Michigan recalls the close contest of a year earlier, which saw the good citizens of McCook, Nebraska win narrowly over Adrian. I am certain that there is general satisfaction with the choice of Adrian; there is every evidence that the sponsors will hold a first class championships in all respects.

In the field of competition soaring, there is no questioning the increasing numbers of high performance equipment and the higher standards of pilotage seen at each succeeding Nationals, and in regional competitions as well. We can look forward to a good performance by the U.S. team at the coming World Championships.

I must once again acknowledge the enormous amount of volunteer effort which contributes to the progress of SSA. Much of this work is done by committeemen whose efforts range from sometimes routine scanning of badge applications to highly charged confrontations with government agencies, preceded by intense preparation and cross-country communication, on questions involving our basic freedom to fly. I am certain that President-elect, John Ryan, will enjoy the full support of these same competent and enthusiastic volunteers, and others who wish to make their contribution to the Society's growth.

As a final note, I can say that the burdens of office have been greatly eased by the generosity and understanding which is so characteristic of soaring people everywhere.

WILLIAM S. IVANS

A Ka-6 in its natural element beneath the cumulus clouds formed by the thermals of the Washington State countryside.

Photo by Robert L. Moore