The Cape Cod Caper

Back during the summers of 1929 and 1930 a gliding school known as the American Motorless Aviation Corporation was operating on the sand dunes along the ocean side of Cape Cod, near South Wellfleet. It was there, in August 1929, I acquired my "C" soaring certificate, the first awarded in the United States.

In those days the gliders were launched by the old shock-cord slingshot method. The glider was hooked to the vertex of a V of heavy shock-absorber cord, about fifty feet long on each leg. Three to six boys, depending on the power desired, would group themselves at each of the two outer ends of the V, and while the glider was held back by its tail, and supported at the wing-tip, the boys on the ends of the cord would walk out ten paces, and then start running, stretching the shock-cord. At the proper time the command "Let go!" was given, the glider was released, and the launching was under way.

Toward the end of the summer, when one by one the boys started drifting homeward, a time arrived when there were not enough left to muster a launching crew. At this point some one suggested using horses for the purpose. By hitching a horse to each end of the shock cord the launching crew could be reduced to five—a rider for each horse, one man on the wing-tip and two to hold the tail.

This worked fine until one fateful day when we we giving short hops to a beginner. As the call "let go!" was given and the glider started forward, it immediately became apparent that there was not quite enough room between the horses for the glider to pass through. In addition the launching was not powerful enough to enable the glider to climb over them.

Hearing the excited screams of the onlookers, the riders looked back over their shoulders – saw the glider bearing down on them, and dove off the horses into the sand. The glider, whizzing by, was just high enough so that each wing-tip clipped a horse on the top of the head as it proceeded on its way to a successful, if somewhat shaky landing.

The horses, however, surprised and no doubt annoyed by this unseemly treatment, lit out at full speed in opposite directions – stretching the shock-cord between them. The further they went the slower their progress, until finally they were pawing the sand but making no headway. At this point, the shock-cord, which had become somewhat chafed at the center where the launching ring was attached, broke!

Did you ever see a horse turn a summersault? This pair executed two beauties, and then lit out for parts unknown.

That ended operations for the day, as it was long after dark before the horses were found and retrieved —and for the season, as far as the horses were concerned, for we couldn't drag them near a glider thereafter.

Thus ended the experimental application of real "horse power" to gliding on Cape Cod.

— RALPH S. BARNABY

Nationals Notice

Potential 1966 Nationals contestants are advised that it may be necessary to limit the number of entrants. If so it will be done in accordance with Rule 2.1.6 (see *Soaring* for March, 1963). Entry forms are available from NSA, Box 1064, Reno, Nevada.

THE SAFETY CORNER

MILES COVERDALE

In the last Safety Corner we reviewed the increase in stalling speed resulting from an increased angle of bank, and stated that in the landing pattern the flying speed should be *at least* 10 mph above the normal cruising speed. However this does not take into account special situations involving turbulence, high wind, wind shear or abrupt downwind turns, and we will review some of these factors below.

First, though, let us go one step further in our consideration of a possible stall in circling flight, which we will find can be triggered by aileron motion even though a moment before the sailplane was circling at a speed just above the stall. The distribution of lift along the wing when turning differs from that in level flight because the outer wing moves faster than the