

LEST READERS GET THE IMPRESSION READING THE AEROCCLASSIC STORY THAT FRANCOIS LOUIS HENRY IS LIGHT HEADED AS WELL AS LIGHT HEARTED WE HASTEN TO PRINT THE FOLLOWING, TRANSLATED FROM A FRENCH MAGAZINE BY JUDY SELVIDGE, IN AN ATTEMPT TO PRESENT THE MORE SERIOUS SIDE OF THE WORLD STANDARD CLASS CHAMPION.

For most people soaring is only the art of keeping aloft, by mysterious and gratuitous means, a glider which should logically fall to the ground as fast as an autumn leaf or a stuffed bird. As for the technicians, they think that a motorless aircraft is an excellent instrument for scientific (meteorological) research, a remarkable tool for the aeronautical training of the young, or a never obsolescent war machine. But for those of us who practice it, soaring is above all a marvelous recreation which is rapidly developing into a sport more exciting than all others.

Our initial aspiration, both vague and powerful, is most often a desire to escape. The things which attract us are the wide horizons of the air fields, the scarcity of people, and the infinite sky which we learn to study. With our eyes we follow the birds—that fascinating embodiment of spontaneity.

With the experience of the first few flights the neophyte gains assurance and discovers, instead of a mathematical or mythical universe, an unsuspected world of turbulence, clouds, and sun-drenched vistas. At the same time, he relearns the art of working with his hands and discovers the pleasure of working and playing as a member of team.

The first surprises past and the last apprehensions overcome, the soaring enthusiast makes himself at home in his new domain. He perceives for example that, passing the same spot at different times of the day the exterior conditions are not the same; to the traditional three dimensions of space he will add a fourth, and not the least of these, time. Once the apprenticeship which conditions his reflexes is complete, he attains a new degree of liberty which permits him to try competition, the summit of the sport of soaring.

At this level the soaring enthusiast rejoins the sportsmen of other disciplines: The human factor becomes extremely important. He must have great physical resources, rapid and sure physical reflexes, but above all incessant concentration—concentration which is all the more difficult to maintain when the trial lasts many long hours, the contest many long days. In his battle against himself and his adversaries he must continually excel himself.

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I remember that my first competitions, after good beginnings, were characterized by painful finishes. Having become aware of this fault, I forced myself to correct it (while trying not to err in the other direction).

I have also learned that nothing is ever easy, since one month after winning the World Championships I placed only eighth in the *Huit Jours d'Angers*. And yet I wanted to win then also, just as I want to win every competition in which I participate. But I believe I was no longer sufficiently well prepared physically and above all mentally. During the first task, at the beginning of my flight, I made an error in judgment which sent me straight *aux vaches*—that is, into a pasture. This error left me without any chance of finishing high in the final scoring.

This misadventure has reinforced my confidence in the sporting world of soaring. In order to win it does not suffice to have a large number of hours of serious flying and a good sailplane; one must also, like an athlete, keep in peak form up to and during the competition.

This is why, in my opinion, as much and more than any other sport, soaring builds men.

BOOK REVIEW

AVIATION WEATHER, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., Price \$2.25, 299 pages.

This government publication is a joint product of the FAA and the Weather Bureau. It supercedes and replaces the 1954 volume, *Pilot's Weather Handbook*, and is written for pilots and flight operations personnel. It is full of practical information on aviation meteorology and is recommended reading for all pilots because of its broad coverage of the field.

It is divided into three parts, the first, comprising about half of the book is entitled *Some Lessons on Weather* and thoroughly covers all the basic aspects of aviation weather such as temperature, pressure, wind, turbulence, clouds, icing, etc. The reviewer felt that power pilots would benefit from a more explicit description of where turbulent areas are found in wave

conditions, but this is well covered for soaring pilots in Chapters 5 and 6 of the *American Soaring Handbook*.

The second part, entitled *Present Aviation Weather Services*, includes a very informative discussion on the accuracy of aviation weather forecasts as well as many details on how meteorological observations are made.

The third part, *Supplementary Lessons on Weather*, has chapters on high altitude, arctic and tropical weather, followed by the last chapter a seven page discussion of soaring weather. This chapter was submitted to SSA for comments prior to publication (for which we got an acknowledgement in the foreword) so it doesn't contain any important inaccuracies, although how the statement on page 260 "... fairly strong undrafts may extend into the clear air well above the cloud tops" got past us is a mystery. This is probably a very rare phenomenon.

HARNER SELVIDGE