

# NEWS NOTES

**SIC ITUR AD ASTRA** The Colorado Soaring Association went on a little outing recently, some miles away from home to the southwest. Took along a bunch of gliders, and ran smack dab into Sunday, May 22. There was a wave forming off the Sangre De Cristo Mountains and a gusty cross-wind made take-off conditions difficult. As a result only 11 tows were made. Results? Well, let's see here . . . hmmm. Ten Diamond-altitude gains (Ivan Jaszlics went to 30,000 feet in a 1-26, was back on the ground in 37 minutes); three two-Lennie altitude gains (Louis Feierabend went to 37,500 feet in his K-8, turned down-wind and got to Cheyenne, Wyoming to complete a Diamond-goal flight); four new state records, two in the open class, two in the junior category. Fellow name of Michael Burger set off on a cross-country flight at 10:00 A.M. (fairly late under the conditions) in a K-6CR he owns with Dave Johnson. After a gain of 20,500 feet in wave he headed east. Out over the plains he encountered thermal lift of 1500 ft./min. Because of the high winds Mike figured an airport landing would be prudent (it was only his second cross-country) so cut the flight short at 5:10 P.M. with a landing at Mankato, Kansas, 410 miles from home. The boys from Colorado aren't exactly apologetic about their performance but they do feel, given similar conditions, they might do a little better next time.

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**CAPE COD CAPERS** For a certain few individuals the idea of flying with an absolute minimum of gear seems to have an uncommon lure. For this quaint breed the experience of one Ping Crawford, a Park Ranger at Cape Cod, may stir some half-felt longings. During a recent gale Ranger Crawford set out to check erosion on a section of beach near Wellfleet. The wind was so strong in this instance that he was forced to crawl the thirty feet between the shelter he occupied and the cliff edge. Then, when he tried to peer over the edge, the wind billowed under his poncho, picked him up, and rolled him back to where he'd begun.

Not having been damaged by this unexpected solo, and being a sporting type, Crawford worked his way back to the cliff edge a second time. Now he jumped off, spreading his poncho as he went. The result was a launch to six feet, a duration of five seconds and a cross-country flight (albeit backwards) of 30 feet. He experimented further from a point down the cliff face. By deploying his poncho here he would be carried promptly up to the top of the cliff again. With time he was able to effect a certain measure of control by manipulating his primitive wing.

The sport of cliff soaring seems to date back a while. In Thoreau's *Cape Cod* a passage mentions updrafts in the area of Highland Light and the manner in which they were used: "Both boys and men often amuse themselves by running and trying to jump off the bank with their jackets spread, and being blown back. Hall (a telegraph man) confirmed this. Hall said he could not possibly jump off."

**FIBERGLASS FANDANGO** Advance reports from the German Nationals, which is the one to watch this year, indicate that approximately one-third of the competing sailplanes are of fiberglass, most of these in series production. The results, following the first four days of competition, have shown once again that the new supersailplanes have a significant lead over their competitors: The first three positions in the Open Class were held by Waibel (D-36), Spanig (BS-1) and Kremer (Schleicher's son-in-law, flying an AS-12). Grosse and Huth were the leading pilots in the Standard Class.

At the mid-point of the contest the K-6CR and Foka appeared to be the poorest placing sailplanes in the Standard Class! The battle for supremacy here appears to be between the Phoebus, the K-6E and the Scheibe SF-27, although no clear lead has emerged among them. A complete report on the event will appear shortly in *Soaring*.

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**PROJECT SIGMA** The history of the progress of mankind, according to historian Philip Toynbee, is intimately tied up with the master principle of Challenge and Response. The D-36, and the reactions to it, have provided the gliding world with an excellent example of what Toynbee had in mind. The impact of the new soaring machine has been deeply felt in many places, but nowhere has the response to the Challenge been more energetically and enthusiastically expressed than in Toynbee's own England.

When the British had the German supership in their front yard during last year's Internationals they took a long hard look; after they had flown against it they thoughtfully analyzed the outcome; when the lessons were clear they took appropriate action: The result is Project Sigma. The aim of Sigma is "to deliver on October 1, 1968, to a British pilot selected to compete in the 1969 World Championships, a system having the highest probability of enabling him to win, within the limitations of finance that may be raised to achieve this aim. The system will include a glider, its instrumentation and a trailer. A secondary aim is to produce drawings and a type record for further production if the design is successful."

The heart of the system, of course, will be the sailplane. In all likelihood it will feature a variable-geometry wing. Although this does not involve anything radical in the way of aerodynamics it is expected to present some rather knotty structural problems to be solved. (One of the three designers of the D-36 occupied himself uniquely with the air brakes.) As often as they will suffice, conventional methods of construction will be used. When these prove to be inadequate apparently genius will be used.

Sigma's chances of success, if they are judged from the individuals participating in the project, would seem to be excellent. The group is led by Captain Nicholas Goodhart, RN (Project Manager) who receives support from an Advisory Board comprising George Burton, Frank Irving, Beverley Shenstone, William Slater, Cedric Vernon, Lorne Welch, Kenneth Wilkinson and Michael Gee. A Chief Designer and staff are to be appointed.