



Bill Ivans flashes across the finish line in his Sisu at the completion of a speed task at last year's Western Regionals. Photo by George Uveges

The following discussion of Western Desert flying was prepared by Leslie Gould of Reno, Nevada, in response to the letter from Ted Chandler which appeared in the February *Soaring*. It is intended as a briefing for those Nationals' entrants unfamiliar with the conditions of western soaring and as a general review for all pilots.

Nevada has approximately two hundred mountain ranges, most of which run roughly north and south. They are separated by broad valleys, only a few of which are cultivated. There are many ranges over 10,000 feet, and some with peaks to 12,000 and 13,000 feet. Northern Nevada is a relatively high plateau averaging 4,000 to 6,000 feet in elevation between mountain ranges. The Reno area, one of the lushest parts of the state, has an annual rainfall in the neighborhood of seven inches — approximately that of the Sahara Desert. Nevertheless, most ranges have creeks which run most or all of the year — and certainly in the early part of the summer in which the contest will be held. Don't expect to find water in the valleys if you fall out of a thermal. Carry some!

Northern Nevada isn't hot country. We usually have one or more days reaching 100 degrees in Reno. Last summer we didn't have any. The temperature doesn't often go above 95. The humidity is very low, so even days as hot as that are comfortable, and nights are cool or even cold. No one has air conditioning in this part of the state. One doesn't hear of travelers dying from heat exhaustion, but it would be prudent to take some kind of survival kit. One *could* land a long way from help in which instance good walking shoes would be welcome. If injured, food, water and warm clothing for the cold night would be imperative.

Nevada highways are excellent but there has been no reason to build them to many places, as your road maps will show. Dirt roads go most places but their

quality varies greatly. Next to Alaska, Nevada is the most sparsely populated state and you won't find lots of people between towns on Highway 40. But the smallest town can provide good food and liquor twenty-four hours a day. I remember a delightful night in Battle Mountain, population then approximately 1,000, in which three bars with restaurants remained open all night, each with live music until dawn. It's hard to get a bad martini in Nevada. And if any pilot thinks he can pay his way at gambling, almost every public place will be willing to help him try.

The other contributors to this symposium are John Marsh, meteorologist at the weather bureau station in Reno who was always right at the Sierra Soaring Championships in 1964 and at the Western Regionals in 1965. He will be the meteorologist in charge at the Nationals at Stead Air Force Base. Bruce Beebe must have flown hundreds of hours in Nevada, has all of his Diamonds, nearly broke the world's goal-and-return record three years ago, and won the Western Regionals last year. Bill Ivans, former President of SSA, flew his Sisu to several thousand-point days at the Western Regionals.

JOHN MARSH

A check of the past ten years for the period of June 28 through July 8 at the Reno Airport shows an average diurnal variation of 45° F. The average maximum is about 90° and the average minimum 40-45°. The maximum temperature during this period was