

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Life With Fodder

Sir:

The free-distance task (being governed by Murphy's Law) always seems to result in a long and tedious retrieve and the loss of the following superb day (Murphy's Law again). Inasmuch as the rules and task committees persist with this anachronistic (in a contest) task, the pilots must be properly equipped. Prompted by the current Slingsby advertisement, I therefore propose a solution to the recurring problem. What pilots need is the combination of the Dart 17R and that trailer "capable of being towed at 100 mph" . . . perhaps with a British license plate to assist in explanations to the cops, who may become difficult (if they can catch you).

The Dart's 87-mph rough-air speed should assure that any competent trailer driver can keep up, at a modest 90 mph, on the road (unless the Dart is flown by a pilot with the courage and ability of Moffat). The return can use the full 100-mph capability of the trailer which should get everybody home by midnight.

As one concerned about the current British balance-of-payments crisis I feel the resulting exports of "starved horses" to the U.S., where abundant fodder exists, will ease the crisis and gladden the hearts of fellow animal lovers.

JOHN FIRTH

Ottawa, Canada

Thanks

Sir:

I would like to thank all the wonderful people who sent letters and sympathy cards after reading my husband's obituary in *Soaring*. I've always said that glider pilots are a very very special breed. God bless them all!

BETTY PLACEK

Hackensack, New Jersey

Winter Wind Warning

Sir:

After the tiedown-windstorm accident of an HP-10 sailplane at Elmira in 1963, Helisoar Aircraft, Inc. advised owners of HP-10's to tie down the wheel axle as well as the wing tips. The accident mentioned above was attributed to the very flexible wing bending and permitting the nose to raise up and increase the angle of the wing, thus causing the aircraft to tear up its tiedowns. The tiedown points were also at the wingtips, rather than inboard as on many gliders, this to avoid drilling through the honeycomb wing. Owners of the HP-10 as well as those of other flexible-wing gliders should take note. Fall is here and the winds do blow in the fall.

STEPHEN DUPONT

Fairfield, Conn.

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More Parcell Post

Sir:

I do not normally write letters to editors, but Mr. Gil Parcell's letter and cartoons in the September issue has pulled the trigger. I laughed myself sick.

Last night I opened the October issue and first read "Red" Wright's letter. After recovering from that, I came to "We Awta Towed It Diffrent" with drawings by Mr. Parcell—and went completely hysterical.

Please don't let him get away. I think he's the best thing that's happened to *Soaring* in 20 years.

CECIL LESHER

Union City, Calif.

★ We agree with reader Leshner, and are holding on as tight as we can.

Sailplane Fleet

Sir:

I want you to know that I appreciate the listings of sailplanes being built, new sailplanes, and sailplanes changing owners. Thanks for this informative column in *Soaring* magazine. It helps keep me current on what's going on in soaring.

MEL LAIRD

Inglewood, Calif.

D-8 Evaluation

Sir:

The D-8 has been sold to Mr. John E. Jenista, 8302 Bucknell Drive, Vienna, Virginia 22180.

I cannot say that the blueprints are not workable because we did construct the ship and built most parts according to the plans—and we did consider ourselves amateur builders then. However, we probably do have mechanical and engineering ability which is better than average which enabled us to complete the job despite missing details in the plans. It was fun to fly the D-8 on the ridge here in Salt Lake City. My partner and I did have the feeling, however, that the effectiveness of the ailerons was so poor that it could cause a serious accident. This is also the reason why we asked only \$400 for the ship and the trailer. To enlarge the ailerons involved more work than we were willing to undertake.

I still like Ken Coward's design and only regret that he sold plans without having built a prototype. Human error in this case, I believe, is causing damage to the enthusiasm of some of our amateur builders. Ken could have eliminated most of it by trying to determine how well the plans worked, and making corrections before offering them for sale.

Coalville, Utah

KLAUS HILL

Looking Backwards

With reference to your request to identify un-named persons in the large group photograph on page 19 of the September issue of *Soaring* let me note that Warren Merboth, of Glen Rock, New Jersey, is the individual at Emil Lehecka's shoulder in the rear row, right hand side of the picture. Also, in the back row, to the left of Percy Pierce and to the right of Emerson Melhose is the writer. Warren and I represented the

North Jersey Soaring Association which had seven members. Warren Merboth was the fifth U.S. pilot to earn a Gold badge. He later served as a glider instructor at Twentynine Palms during the war. In recent years, I believe, he was an executive at Aero-Jet, but for the last couple of years I've lost track of him.

The meeting at which the picture was taken was held in the New Yorker Hotel. Barnaby did a fine job in organizing it. Keeping things going became particularly difficult following Warren Eaton's death in Miami, Florida (I was his mechanic there at the time) about five months after the meeting. He had money, position and good political contacts in New York State, but after his death almost no one had even the necessary postage money to keep in contact with the few who were struggling in gliding at that time.

L. A. "PETE" BONOTAUX

Granada Hills, Calif.

Unfair Competition

Sir:

Subject: Long Soaring Flights
Sailplane: H-301 Libelle, N90082
Pilot: Elemer Katinszky

August 20, The Feast of St. Stephen, first King of Hungary. Goal flight to Yucca, Arizona, from El Mirage. First cross-country flight with the Libelle: 199 miles in 4:37 hours. This was my third flight to Yucca. Best previous time, with L-Spatz, in far more favorable conditions: 6:17 hours.

September 3 (Second part of the Southern California Regionals) El Mirage, Daggett, El Mirage, New Cuyama, 219.5 miles in 5:20 hours. Could have gone further, but lack of maps and the view of the Pacific Ocean on the horizon had a discouraging effect on my decisions. Landed from 7,000 ft., instructed my crew to go to Needles. Tragedy! No money, no identification and not even credit cards. I slept at the fire station. Caught cold.

September 5, El Mirage, Daggett, Twentynine Palms, El Mirage, Mojave, 264 miles in 6:10 hours. The day before this flight culminated my selling efforts. I tried desperately, but in vain, to sell a 500-km. triangle task to the task committee. My reasons were not entirely selfish, I admit that first of all I wanted to complete my Diamond badge, but I also wanted to show J. C. "Red" Wright that we can fly such triangles occasionally in California. Someone could have claimed the U.S. speed record even? I was bitching all morning about the chicken-hearted task committee until I got chewed out royally by some more conformist Libelle drivers who already had Diamond distance.

September 16, Pearlblossom, Rice and return, about 355 miles in 5:19 hours. One of the best days I've ever experienced. Made no circles from the vicinity of El Mirage to Twentynine Palms (about 90 miles) and speed was 130 m.p.h. sometimes. Whether it will qualify for Diamond-distance flight remains to be seen, as #*!?!*!?!*!# photo lab cut the film between the third and fourth turn-point pictures!

That's all folks—four flights only, total mileage: 1037.5! There ought to be a law against Libelles.

ELEMER KATINSZKY

La Canada, California