

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sigma Progress

Sir:

Project Sigma is beginning to fizzle. Despite what you will have heard about the difficulties of our aviation industry, the airframe and engine (!) manufacturers are supporting the project most generously. We also have finance and offers of help in kind from various component and instrument manufacturers. We now have enough certain backing to appoint the Chief Designer within the next few days, and the design work can really start.

FRANK C. IRVING

Imperial College of Science & Technology
London, England

Nationals Coverage

Sir:

One of my past gripes with *Soaring* has been that the account of the Nationals was often surpassed by coverage elsewhere. I have just finished reading the August issue and feel that this criticism will not be true for 1966. Congratulations on an excellent record of *The Historic* 33rd, both in terms of style and content.

WILLIAM M. FOLEY

Glastonbury, Conn.

Sir:

Orchids to Sylvia Colton and Doug Lamont for *The Historic* 33rd, one of the best written, most interesting and informative accounts of the contest ever!

ALFRED H. UHALT, JR.

MacDill AFB, Florida

Sir:

Please accept my congratulations for the excellent report on the Nationals in the August issues of *Soaring*. It is by far the best I have ever seen, which is in keeping with the outstanding weather and flying in that remarkable competition. Congratulations as well to Sylvia and Doug and, of course, to George Uveges for the photography.

MARSHALL CLAYBOURN

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Glattly's Report

Sir:

I had been told many times that so long as you get them into the air and the flying is good, all else can be forgiven. With this in mind I set about to organize the 1966 Nationals.

I first discovered that it was seemingly easier to reach the Creator (for weather) than it was the towplane owners. Sterling Starr's estimate of the towplane situation turned out to be basically correct. His computation was slightly long, but when followed provided the standby ships which are always needed. Two tow ships arrived unexpectedly and the pilots asked if it might be possible to do some towing.

(I told them that I would see if they could be worked in!) With many thanks to the two drop-ins and all the other tow pilots and plane providers, the launches went according to schedule.

Organizationally I made one huge error: I overestimated the reception to be provided in the Reno area, a reception that I do believe would be 100% improved the next time around. Reno, being a tourist city, was not too excited by the prospect of another 300 to 400 persons drawn in by the contest, not with 8,000 Shriners coming in the following week. Consequently finances proved a huge burden from the start, and I'm thankful of my decision to raise the entry fee to \$75.00. I didn't like putting all the burden on the pilots, but without the increased entry fee financial chaos would have resulted.

I can say that it was great fun, and a wonderful experience for me, and that I would not do it again unless I had more help during the pre-contest days. Once the contest was underway I found that I had at hand many, many wonderful, dedicated people who took over the numerous chores that had to be done. Once again, many thanks to all those (and they know who they are) who kept the contest office and the start line running smoothly and efficiently during the 1966 Nationals.

And to the Great Meteorologist in the Sky, many thanks for the beautiful weather.

CHARLES D. GLATTLY

Parcell Post

Sir:

Gil Parcell's letter in the September, 1966, *Soaring* suggesting that local committees establish local standards for badge awards was extremely entertaining—as was his excellent cartoon. It is true that it is easier to get certain badge legs in certain areas. However, it seems to me that acquiring badges of different materials is not the idea of gliding. True, one tries for them because, like mountains, they are there, but the real contest is between man (or woman) and nature. I have derived far more joy and satisfaction from flights which did not count toward a badge than from those that did. I think a person who is in gliding just for the badges is missing the best part, the inner part.

Furthermore, most glider pilots recognize that a Silver badge earned over a swamp is a cut above the same badge earned on a thermal, a wave or a ridge. It might even be possible to be ashamed to wear a Silver badge because earning it was so easy, but I bet Gil Parcell will be mighty proud of his.

R. H. WENTORF, JR.

Madison, Wisconsin

★ Amen.

To Mr. Gil Parcell:

I have just spent the greater part of 30 minutes searching the atlas to locate the exact position of Scarborough in your fair state of Ontario, without success. My curiosity has been immensely piqued to see wherefore and wherefrom such talent

emanates. It also strikes me that you are a very able cartoonist, and your exhibit in the September *Soaring* displays your rather pixieish sense of humor to still greater heights.

I do agree with you that an inequality certainly exists in earning badges. Great guns, man! after reviewing the terrain of Ontario on a map, I would vote to bestow upon any pilot who had nerve enough to even go aloft in that wilderness a full three-Diamond badge with Oak Leaf clusters and the DFC thrown in for lagniappe. I am most certain that yours must be a beautiful country, but what do you do with all that water? To us desert rats in West Texas it seems sinful that you should have so much water and we so little. We must call that to Lyndon's attention.

Now I will make a deal with you. If you will invite me up there to go fishing or duck hunting, I will invite you down here to go soaring. We have had many visitors down here from the nether regions, Canada included. Also several from England, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, India and a place called New York. They have hugely enjoyed themselves and unwittingly provided us with a great deal of meteorological and geographical data that we lacked. Our *modus operandi* is to select and plot a course for them over some terrain of particular terrifying geography which we have never been able to muster the courage to attempt ourselves and gleefully send them on their unsuspecting way. Oh, we lose a few, but you would be surprised how many make it! After all, sometimes science exacts its toll, but *c'est la guerre*. On those who do make it we bestow the loyal order of the Myth of Odessa, with full fanfare, and a free trip to the LBJ Ranch to eat barbecue. It they still survive, we add a cactus leaf cluster to their medals, some posthumously.

Now in the coming year of 1967, we are going to have a shindig called the 34th U.S. National Soaring Championships down in Marfa, Texas, which is about 150 miles southwest of here in what we call Commanche country. However, the Commanches are reasonably peaceful now (since the last double-crossing treaty we perpetuated upon them) and I think you would enjoy a sojourn there along about that time. I will personally be glad to lay out a course for you for your Silver badge distance and *guarantee* you that you will make the trip. Heck man, once you start you've got to make it.

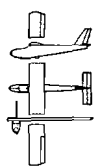
For your duration flight we can release you over Mount Livermore and I will also warrant you that it will take you a full five hours to pick your way out of that maze of rocks and find your way back to Marfa.

Once again, let me say I hugely enjoyed your letter in *Soaring*. I think our esteemed editor did you an injustice by labeling it "Soar Grapes." Ole.

J. C. "RED" WRIGHT

Odessa, Texas

★ The "Sour Grapes" label, which seems to have put several sets of teeth on edge, referred not to the tone of Mr. Parcell's letter, but to the bitter-fruit taste in the mouth of poor chap standing in water up to his knees and hammering his wing in despair. A poor choice all in all, however, so ten lashes this month for the editor.



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