

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sour Grapes

Sir:

It must have occurred to many of us jokers engaged in this soaring business how strange it is that tests for soaring badges should be standard across the atlas.

How can a five hour duration over Odessa or El Mirage or some such (I assume) booming area be exactly the same 300 agonizing minutes over, for example, the Okefenokee Swamp? I've no experience with either but no doubt you see what I mean.

We sports, half way to the North Pole and still displaying our winter palor, can only picture you chaps with the permanent suntans taking *all* Saturday to complete your "C" badge and Silver C, and wrapping up the Gold and the rest of the stuff on Sunday, after church.

This dream emerges while once again we contemplate leaving the kids without shoes to finance the umpteenth go at that duration jaunt, knowing full well that the cu we glimpse through the office window will never last till Saturday and probably not even throughout the lunch hour.

Perhaps, for an instant, we toy with the thought of leaving the little darlings without even Beagle-boots, and journeying vast distances to the nearest wave-soaring spot in search of sizeable height gains. This idea is soon dispelled in favor of leaving it to the rich people.

Compare, if you will, the performance of a mythical (loaded) Texan in his fully equipped Super El Overdee, or that of Comrade Igor flying his State-owned bomb, to the plight of Average-income Joe over his home field among the marshes, in the club's ancient bucket (the one with the penetration of a half-deflated blimp) seeking desperately for a sky-hook for several minutes before plopping down.

Goofy, isn't it? Nevertheless, these frustrating triple-seagulls (?) are the yardstick by which we judge and class ourselves. No doubt, when first introduced, these tests seemed like a good idea to someone, somewhere, at the time (you'll note that I'm a whiz at history!) but isn't it time we did a little levelling with a rubber yardstick?

Of course it doesn't seem feasible for everybody to trade in their flying machines on a bundle of 1-26's, but we could conceivably classify everything into types, much the same way as they grade racing cars into formula this and formula that.

Also, while waiting for the warlike chaps to even up our geographic structure, why not have a minimum and maximum requirement for each soaring-badge leg?

Thus, a five or six hour duration over Big Thermal, Someplace, would equal, for example, one hour over Big Sink, Anyplace, with similar allowances for the rest of the larking around.

Who's to decide which area has what? Well, who else but committees made up

of local soaring experts, local weather experts and local any-other-experts—that's who!

Their decisions, naturally, would be recorded with the central governing body.

There now, doesn't that strike you as being too, utterly sensible? Don't you feel a simply mad urge to write your friendly OSTIV man? Don't you, huh! No, not *you*, you Diamond-encrusted eagles, you!

GIL PARCELL

Scarborough, Ontario, Canada

Oops!

Sir:

I notice in the July issue of *Soaring* that you listed my first name (in the ABC Program) and then my *street* as my last name. It is Kayo Loudon, 1603 Tyler, Lexington, Nebraska.

Kayo Loudon

Lexington, Nebr.

★ Periodically we line the entire staff up out at the back fence and flog them. Next time around we'll give them ten lashes for you Kayo.

Oops Again

Sir:

I noticed that in the Sailplane Fleet article in the July *Soaring* that my name is misspelled Kion, *vice* D'on. This in itself is not important, but if someone in the Bay Area wanted to contact me by phone about the glider, or wanted to swap materials (or lies) he would be hard pressed to find my number in the directory. I believe this is the purpose of the article, so I'd like to see this error corrected in the near future, if possible.

MALCOLM C. DION

Daly City, Calif.

★ Ten more lashes.

Pen Pal Anybody!

Sir:

I wonder if you would be good enough to be of assistance to me through the medium of your fine magazine which is so popular with us pilots in Finland. I am anxious to obtain a pen friend to correspond with who is a qualified light aircraft pilot and also perhaps interested in gliding. I am a qualified pilot both in gliding and normal aircraft and I feel much useful information could be exchanged which would be of interest to all concerned.

I would be most grateful if you would insert a small advertisement for the above purpose in your magazine in the column provided for this purpose. We, here in Finland are keenly interested in following the latest developments and personal contact brings nations and people closer, thus benefiting everybody. Congratulations on a fine magazine!

MR. MATTI LAAJANEN

Raitalahdentie 3
Helsinki 57
Finland

Overseas Sites

Sir:

I think an article, or perhaps continuous advertising on the soaring spots available to visitors in Europe and other parts of the world would be in order. Some of our more affluent members might like the opportunity to participate and the rest of us poor boys could read about it.

ROBERT C. GRAHAM

Akron, Ohio

