Washington (75 miles), then back to Richland, and then out to the southwest along a projection of the course line which would eventually run right into Mt. Hood (a formidable distance stopper) about 150 miles out of Richland. Most of the competitors found it easy going to La Crosse, thanks to a strong tailwind, but coming back was another matter—and a place where the high-speed performance of the Libelle was very impressive (or was it simply the superior skill of the Libelle pilots?). McClanahan was the first back over Richland, followed shortly by Klein, and much much later by Moore. No one else got back, although Peter Van Gruen fell short only by the width of the Columbia River. Ed and Carroll, meanwhile, continued up the Yakima valley, summoned up their courage and pushed across rugged Status Pass where there is no place to land for a long, long way. Carroll landed late in the day at Goldendale, Washington, while Ed *slope soared* down the wild Kickitat River Canyon and snunk into the Dalles Airport as the sun set in the West (where else?) for a total distance of 255 miles and his second 1000-point day.

The last day it rained, and although a speed task was set no one could stay up, much less get away. When the scores were added up Carroll Klein was found to have held onto first place and to have won the title of Pacific Northwest Soaring Champion. Ed McClanahan earned a hard-fought second. In Class Two (for LK's and lower-performance gliders) Cec Craig won top honors, with Portland's Ken Wheatley second. So ended the third Northwest Regionals. We hope that everyone had fun, even though the weather was not up to expectations.

SAFETY CORNER

In a number of recent safety articles I have tried to review the various dangers encountered as a sailplane nears the ground in preparation for a landing. Since statistically this is by far the most dangerous part of every flight, this month I will try to bring together all the rules and suggestions in order to outline what is considered to be good safe practice in preparing to land back at a familiar airport (as differentiated from an away or field landing, which will be discussed in a later article).

Generally speaking, at 1000 feet altitude, a pilot should be making his plans for the landing, and one should always arrive back in the vicinity of the airport with sufficient altitude to make a proper entry into the traffic pattern. Also, at this point during each flight one should make a conscious effort to become alert so that complacency, inattention or fatigue won't contribute to some silly but costly mistake. Now too is the time to check the wind direction, for it is surprising how many times one can return to the airport to find the wind direction and traffic pattern changed since take-off. The traffic pattern itself is of course important, particularly at airports also used by power airplanes, because the pattern is where other pilots expect to see any aircraft preparing to land. If a sailplane comes sneaking in at the wrong altitude and from the wrong direction there is going to be confusion at the very least. Where the traffic pattern for some reason is not known, an entry at 45 degrees into the downwind leg to give 600 feet altitude opposite the intended point of touchdown is good practice.

At this time three important steps should occur: the airspeed should be increased, a hand should be placed on the spoiler control, and the altimeter should be disregarded thereafter. As previously stated over and over again, slow speed near the ground is a major cause of accidents, so fly at an increased airspeed all during the landing pattern—not just during final approach—to at least 15 miles an hour over the stall and more under conditions of strong wind and turbulence. The spoilers should be tested briefly now and the hand should remain on the control during the entire landing, for if you remove your hand then the moment it may take to find the control again might prove costly. This close to the ground your altitude can be estimated accurately from the heights of buildings and trees, and it is essential to develop this facility so that you can continually adjust your pattern as lift or sink requires. The dependence on the altimeter at various known points in a landing pattern is entirely wrong for it leads to inflexibility and inability to meet unexpected changes, and can be misleading if a changing barometric pressure has affected the altimeter during the flight.

On the downwind leg fly parallel to the runway, correcting for wind drift if necessary while alerting yourself that you will have to be careful not to drift in the opposite direction while on final. Keep glancing at the landing area, watching out for obstructions and gauging your height. A constant airspeed while in the pattern is helpful, since it contributes to the accuracy of your estimation of glide and touch-