



Les Arnold stands in the door of his new pick-up (note 1-26 model on roof) surrounded by the men and machines that make Sky Sailing go. At extreme left in the photo is John Slingerland, the genial general manager and Les's right-hand man. Bob Fisher, who soared a 1-23 across the country some years ago, is the fellow leaning on the rear panel of the truck. Behind Bob (hands crossed) is Wendy Brown and, at the extreme right, a tantalizing sliver of one of the country's most able tow pilots, Cecil Lasher. Anyone desiring to see more of Cecil is invited to make the trip to Sky Sailing.

THE SAGA OF SKY SAILING

MAYBELLE ARNOLD

Les Arnold's Sky Sailing operation didn't spring up overnight into a full-fledged soaring center. It has been the result of dreams, plans, hard work and sacrifice. The dream began when Les was a young boy helping his dad on a chicken ranch in Hayward, California. In the midst of his chores he could often be found gazing skyward in fascination at vultures circling without effort or at seagulls swooping and gliding over newly ploughed fields as they searched for tidbits. The marvel of flight took root in his mind and has been with him ever since.

In 1928, when he was 14 years old, Les found a set of plans for a hang glider in a book of *Things a Boy Could Build*. Being of a practical nature he had to know if this glider would really fly, so he built one out of available materials. He did get off the ground in it, and made quite a number of short gliding flights before one of his friends had a minor mishap with the machine. After that the glider was grounded by parental fiat. Soon Les was busy on another project, a sailboat. This satisfied him temporarily and it was certainly a good deal more convenient for courting than a glider would have been.

By 1937 Les's interest in gliding had revived and he finally made contact with a group of other interested individuals in the Bay Area. Several of these people are still active locally. Gliding was just getting off the ground when, following the air attack on Pearl Harbor, all air activity in California was stopped. So it was back to dreaming again until 1947 when Les bought a war-surplus TG-3 from Eugart Yerian. Redwing was the joy of Les's life and he finally felt he was really living. He entered contests with the ship and usually brought home some sort of trophy. A trip to the 1949 Nationals at Elmira and a talk with the Schweizers further fired his imagination. Now he began to think in terms of really becoming involved in the soaring movement. A couple of years later Les began teaching daughter Jean, age 13, to fly and found it a rewarding experience. Soon he found others wanting to learn and before long his week ends were devoted to instruction.

By the middle 1950's it was evident that the population explosion in the Bay Area had doomed the poultry business and Les decided it was time for a change. So, after 30 years of helping to build up the chicken