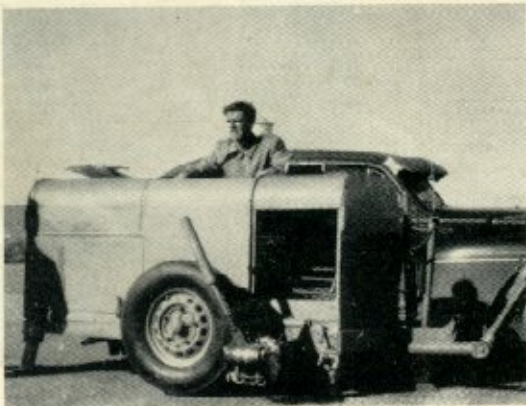


JANUARY-  
FEBRUARY  
1 9 5 4

# Soaring

Youngsters Learn to Fly the Easy, Safe  
and Inexpensive Way  
Snow Bird Soaring Meet  
Home Built Glider Plans and Kits



TSA's Pfeiffer Winch



Bill Hoverman and his new Schweizer  
1-23D at the Snow Bird Meet

Elsinore Valley California, as seen  
from approximately 15,000 feet, site  
of the 21st U. S. National Soaring  
Competitions. The Gliderport is  
outlined in black.



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

by JUNE SARGENT  
*An Amateur but Ardent Observer*

AS I wheeled along in my earth-bound automobile, I watched, marveled, and disbelieved. So we stopped, got out, and cricked our necks at the appropriate angle, gawking with open mouths.

There above us, many hundreds of feet, soaring like a group of graceful hawks, we counted six gliders playing follow-the-leader around and around

ironing out the details as flight manager.

The statistics are interesting—26 sailplanes on the field, 30 glider pilots registered for competition, a total of 315 air hours during the course of the meet, the services of 4 tow planes, making 175 tows.

The longest straight line flight—56 miles to Palm Desert; goal and return (source of best point value)—94 miles to Warner's Hot Springs and return to the Gliderport, a 27-mile

air miles for soaring to a declared goal and return, and for altitude.

A table full of trophies, plaques, and pins, plus the assurance of official recognition for any records made, or requirements met during the meet, lured the pilots into serious competition. Monetary prizes were offered by the Riverside and Hemet Airports for first gliders to set down on their fields—they were willing to pay to be shown.

The pilots included Diamond "C" holders Paul Bikle and Bill Ivans; Graham Thompson, one of Great Britain's outstanding glider pilots; Don Stevens, former stunt pilot and one-time holder of the record for consecutive loops in a glider; visiting but not competing M. R. Liddell, honorary secretary of the Ulster (Ireland) Gliding Club, and America's Betsy Woodward, feminine glider champion, down to look over the possibilities of the area; and a group of soaring enthusiasts and sportsmen from more than 14 Southern California communities who have found Elsinore convenient and well suited for soaring activities.



Elsinore  
Gliderport  
during the  
Champion-  
ships

the edge of the funnel of a thermal. A seventh was about to join them, being towed by plane into the orbit of the lift.

No sound, no confused swishing of props, only the glorious appearance of freedom which communicated itself even down to us there on the ground below.

It happened the second day of the first weekend of the Annual Southern California Championships, and I later learned from the initiated and informed that the thermal in question was familiarly named by those who use the area for their sport—Thermal No. 2. Three other steady and almost completely dependable thermals are spotted around the valley, with a fourth not quite so constant, but available a large part of the time.

The meet was held during two week-ends, the 24th, 25th, and 31st of October, and the 1st of November, in Elsinore, California.

It was under the capable direction of Pete Bonotaux, president of the Elsinore Glider Club, with Johnny Williams, veep of the same group,

Evan Loen  
and Comm.  
Gordon  
Firebaugh  
Present  
Awards to  
Cecil Leshner,  
DeVaughn  
North  
and  
Paul Bikle



precision team flight to Riverside Airport under adverse air conditions.

The meet was arranged under a handicap system to level the differences among the classes of ships in competition. There were three classes: high performance ships, like Paul Bikle's and Bill Ivans's 1-23's; surplus ships, the Schweizer TG-2's and -3's; the babies in the third class.

Points were awarded for spot landings, for accumulation of distance in

Class I winners were Paul Bikle, who received the two-foot Sweepstakes trophy presented by the North Ireland Recreation Association and 1st place in class I, the Gordon Memorial Trophy; Bill Ivans, 2nd—The Ted Nelson trophy; and Bill Bowmar, 3rd.

Class II: 1st to Cecil Leshner, the silver bowl donated by the Helms Foundation; 2nd, Bob Schenbeck, the S.S.A. trophy; 3rd, Tom Clark. Leshner flew a Schweizer TG-2; Schenbeck,

an L.K., and Clark, a Pratt-Read. Schenbeck also completed the final leg on his Silver "C."

Class III: 1st, De Vaughn North, in a 1-19; Walt Franz, 2nd, in a Baby, and Dave Vonderahe, 3rd, likewise.

Highlights of the meet included a breath-taking spot landing by Paul Bikle — pree-cisely on the spot; Bill Bowmar's return trip from Warner's Hot Springs, during which he coaxed his Rigid Midget from levels as low as 300 feet, from lift to lift, until he finally picked up one of 800 ft. per minute, that brought him up to 6000 ft., and home to the Gliderport at Elsinore; David Vonderahe, Class III winner of 3rd place, claiming his trophy in his stocking feet, because, no less, he had lost one shoe and his canteen while righting his ship from an inadvertant nose dive while soaring over the meadows near Wildomar, California!

Bikle and Ivans flying wing to wing over Lake Matthews and the country between the Gliderport and Riverside, California to land on the Riverside Airport almost simultaneously; and the thrilling over-the-field flights of several of the pilots for the viewing of the large crowd gathered below on the final Sunday of the meet.

It remains only to mention the very successful banquet which marked the giving of the awards, graced with Hollywood glamour, Navy brass, and S.S.A. Southern California Governor Jim Spurgeon as masterful master of ceremonies.

Paul Bikle received the sweepstakes trophy from Commander Gordon Firebaugh of North Island Naval Station, and the Gordon Memorial Award from Hollywood's Miss Evan Lowe, who made the presentations to the award winners also.

None of the pilots went away without a prize of some sort, however, because the business people of the entire Lake area donated entry prizes of merchandise or service, which were given to every pilot as he registered, on the first day of both week-ends, with official registrar Mrs. Vera Williams, wife of vice-president John Williams of the Elsinore Glider Club.

The Elsinore Business and Professional Women provided food, coffee and cold drinks during all four days of the meet, and an over-all feeling of pleasant satisfaction and good-fellowship marked the meet from beginning to end. Many of those who had come to Elsinore to try soaring for the first time expressed their determination to return soon and often.

## YOUTHS "CHECK-OUT" VIA RADIO

By LES ARNOLD

During the West Coast Meet at El Mirage this past August, I had the opportunity to teach my daughter, Jean, age 15 years and her friend, Don Kildebeck, age 16, to glide.

They were crewing for me during the contest so in turn I gave them a chance to learn to fly. Each morning we were up at dawn and practiced till the contest started. The dry lake, which is 4 miles long, was ideal for car tow and we used about 700 ft. of wire with 50. ft of nylon rope for shock absorber. In my ship "Red-



Jean and Don

wing," a TC3, and also in my car are Mitchell Avigator Jr. radios which proved to be a big help in this training.

Jean and Don took turns in the front seat as I instructed from the rear cockpit. With the help of one other adult to supervise the tow car we got along very well. Each student would take about six tows in succession, usually to 400 ft. where a 360° could be made and we would then land near the end of the line, all ready for the next tow. By contest time we were usually able to get in 15 to 20 tows. The radio contact was a great help during this time in directing the tow car and driver through unfamiliar terrain, also for regulating tow speed and taking up slack in the line.

Jean had had some glider time previously — mostly air work, and Don had had a little time at our home base in Centerville. Both were enthusiastic, however, and quick to learn. By the third day I believed they would be

able to solo before the end of the week but didn't mention it to them.

One morning Jean had made a couple of tows and had done so well I decided to let her try it alone so I got out and closed the rear hatch. Jean was surprised when I told her she was ready to solo. I rode in the tow car with the "mike" in my hand to give her advice if needed but to my own surprise all I did was to speak a few words of encouragement. She made a beautiful 360° and landed near the line end. When we got over to the ship she was all smiles and ready to go again. Her second flight was just as good as her first.

Now it was Don's turn and he wasn't going to be out-done by a petticoat. After three flights with me I felt he was ready for his first solo. Since it was getting later in the morning the air was getting rougher, too, but Don made a very good flight. On his second solo as he was landing, a dust devil hit him and turned him off his final approach but he mastered it and made a good landing anyway.

On Sunday, the final day of the contest, I took Don up for soaring practice. He did very well, reaching over 12,000 ft. m.s.l. This was his first real soaring flight and he reached cloud base over the San Bernardino Mountains. Later in the day when Jean was up with me doing soaring practice, she asked if we could enter the Yo Yo contest which was scheduled as the final event of the meet. It was 3 o'clock at the time and the contest closed at 4:00, but we decided to give it a try. Jean watched for dust devils as we descended to 4500 ft. so we went directly into one and would climb up to 7,000 ft. in the thermal, then out of it and down to 4500 and into another and up again. In the one hour we were up and down seven times. Jean was a big help in observing and pointing out thermals and, though the air was very rough at times, and we did a lot of circling, she really enjoyed it and had no trouble with air sickness. We were very much surprised to learn later that we had won the Yo Yo trophy.

To sum up our experience at El Mirage I would like to point out the following —

1. I believe the teen-agers learn very quickly and they seem to feel more at home in the air than most adults.

2. By daily practice and training the students do not forget what they have learned and are more enthusiastic.

3. The radio contact gave the stu-

(Continued on Page 22)

# 21st NATIONAL GOES TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Soaring Society of America has granted sanction to the National Soaring Committee for Elsinore Valley to organize and conduct the 1954 National Soaring Contest.

It is understood that the several large soaring groups in California and on the West Coast will join with the Lake Elsinore group in organizing the 21st National.

This will be the first time in the history of this national aviation event that it has been held on the West Coast. Heretofore the events have been held only in the states of New York and Texas.

As is well known, California has been a leader in aviation from the very advent of man flight in this hemisphere. The state probably leads all others in the design and manufacture of aircraft and aircraft components. No other single state of the union affords the variety of soaring sites that are found in California. A larger number of fully active soaring groups and clubs are domiciled in the 'Golden State' than any other.

Elsinore Valley is strategically lo-

## TORREY PINES MEET

**8th Annual Pacific Coast Mid-Winter Soaring Championships to be held at Torrey Pines Gliderport, San Diego, California, on February 27 and 28, 1954.**

This SSA sanctioned event will be sponsored again by the Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California and the San Diego Junior Chamber of Commerce.

The organizers of this event anticipate the entry of around thirty ships, with three or four new machines to be seen for the first time in active competition.

The Torrey Pines site is one of the most unique in the world. Flights are launched from atop the cliffs bordering the Pacific Ocean. Lift from the up-slope winds is utilized and the gliders often fly for extended periods on a level with the spectators on the cliffs, until thermal life enables them to "get away."

cated in the heart of Southern California's scenic and resort area and within an easy two hour drive of a population of approximately six million. It is centered by a large natural lake and surrounded by mountains, some of which tower more than eleven thousand feet in elevation.

Mr. Pete Bonotaux and Mr. John W. Williams, active SSA members and prime movers in the Elsinore

## SSA JOINS IAS AND AMS IN TECHNICAL MEETING

### IAS-SSA

The Institute of Aeronautical Sciences and the Soaring Society of America will again conduct a joint meeting during the Twenty-Second Annual IAS Meeting at the Hotel Astor, New York City. The time is 9:00 to 11:30 a.m., Thursday, January 28th.

Papers to be presented by SSA Members are:

*Design Studies for the Evolution of an Economical Tow Plane*, by Robert C. Kidder, Flight Research Department, Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory.

This design study investigates four configurations for possible replacement of the familiar Stearman and Wacos, and considers several versions of the J3C Cub and other ships. Determinations are the maximum possible performances available without restrictions on propeller diameters and RPM.

*Application of Sailplane Performance Analysis to the Airplane*, by Dr. August Raspel, Director, Aerophysics Department, Mississippi State College.

This paper will show how methods of progressive performance improvements employed on the Sailplane RJ-5 are applied to small utility and executive airplanes. Means of obtaining true measurements of propulsive efficiency, aerodynamic drag and cooling drag will be presented.

*Measurement of Vertical Air Motions from a Glider*, by Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Jr., Consultant in Meteorology.

This paper considers the various types of sensitive rate of climb indi-

Soaring Club, have spearheaded the movement to secure the 21st National for this area. Soaring conditions in Elsinore Valley have been proved unsurpassed in America, say those who use the facilities of Elsinore Glider Port.

Competent observers are predicting that the 21st National at this site may well see a greater number of participants than in any contest heretofore held in this country or elsewhere. Plans of the organizers of this contest are well underway and this journal will have much more interesting information on the subject in the forthcoming issues.

### AMS-SSA

This year for the first time the Soaring Society of America joins the American Meteorological Society in a meeting to be held the morning of January 28th, 1954, at the Hotel Henry Hudson, 353 West 57th Street, New York City.

A most interesting program has been planned, progressing from unorganized thermals to, and through, the various gravitational waves, as follows:

*High Elevations vs Low Elevations as Thermal Source Regions* by Dr. Paul MacCready, Jr.

*Cloud Streets* by Dr. Joachim Keutner.

*Standing Waves* by Prof. Robert F. Long.

*Forecasting the Sierra Waves* by Dr. Harold Klieforth.

*Travelling Waves* by Dr. Morris Tepper.

Mr. Bernard L. Wiggin of the U. S. Weather Bureau and internationally famous soaring meteorologist will preside at the meeting.

cators available, and, in thermal flight, improved methods of correcting for the rate of change of vertical air speed and for the sinking speed due to drag, and how results permit use of an improved Ringscale Airspeed Selector for between-thermal flight. It also describes an audio variometer to improve the ease, efficiency and safety of thermal flight.

Chairman for the meeting will be Ben Shupack, a Director of the Soaring Society and a member of the faculty at Adelphi College.