Three generations of Pearsons with as many Hobie Hawks, L to R: James L. Jr., James L. III, James L. Sr. Does that little fellow fly?

From Around the U.S.A.

San Fernando Valley Silent Flyers, CA. A great idea to get novice fliers to compete with the more experienced club members comes from Ed Slobod. It works this way: Everyone signs up and flies as an individual in the normal fashion. At the beginning of the contest, the experts will put their names on slips of paper, and interested novices will draw (sight unseen) a name. The expert drawn will fly as a team with the novice for a combined score. The novices' individual score will count in the contest as a whole, but the awards to the winning novice-expert team will be made to the novice. A novice is anyone who has not placed higher than fourth in a contest with 20 or more entrants.

More on the North-South meet, CA. 120 contestants—40 declared themselves North and 80 declared themselves South. Because of the imbalance, 25 contestants were chosen to represent the North and South teams. North won—barely—2318 to 2313! Rick Pearson designed a landing area that looked like this. This was to de-emphasize landings. See Fig. 1.

Chris Adams with 9-lb., 11-ft. Caproni. It took him three years to design and build. Rudder, ailerons coupled. A releasable tow hook.

Rick didn't mention the size or angle of the pie shaped sector that earned the flier bonus points, but you get the idea.

On the theme of novice-expert class or classes comes a report of a contest—their first—from the Tri-State Soaring Society (TS^3). This group, which covers West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, and Eastern Ohio, is the only hub for soaring activity in those states outside of the York-Lancaster area.

Their contest combined sailplane classes into one; but competitors were divided into expert and sportsman categories. To graduate to the expert class, one has to earn six points (1st place three points, 2nd place two points, and 3rd place one point).

Fifty members make up the TS^3, and those interested in joining should contact: Dave Burt, 180 South Eight St., Indiana, PA 15701.

Dave has also come up with a battery charging system that you might find handy. Let Dave tell it:

"Tired of hauling winch and battery out of your car after each flying session? Live where it's impractical to haul the winch for charging? Leave it in the car and charge it from the car's battery. The car is on 12 volts and the winch is on six. A good husky dropping resistor between the two will allow you to recharge at a slow overnight rate. For about $5.00 buy yourself a 'Trailer Brake Current Adjusting Resistor.' One make is a Kelsey-Hayes available through recreational vehicle and trailer equipment dealers. It's a three-coil nichrome-wire resistor unit mounted on an insulated block. Its resistance depends on how you hook up to it—instructions are included. By hooking it up as in Fig. 2,

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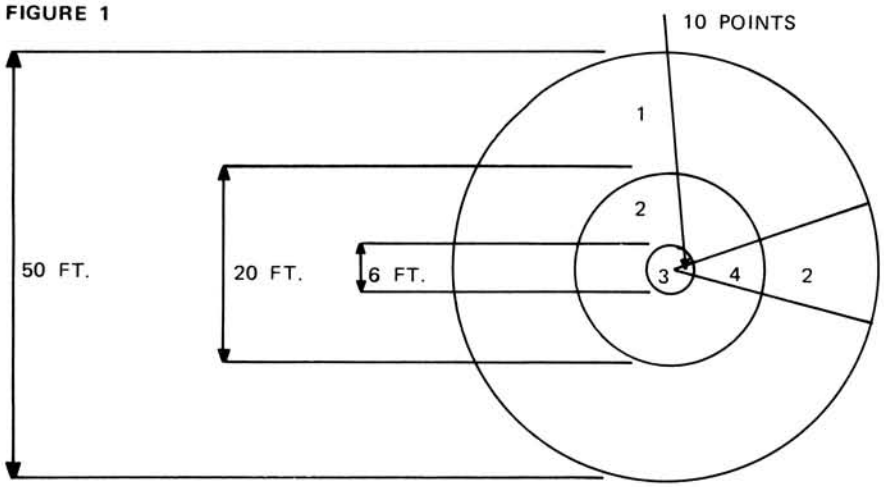
FIGURE 1



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you should get 1½ to 2 amps of charging current—low enough not to run down your car battery overnight. One to two nights should bring the average battery up to full charge.

The RMSA—Rocky Mountain Soaring Association—Denver area. This is a recently formed club. If you're interested in joining contact: Stewart Bergner, Treas., 3160 West 71 St., Westminster, CO 80030. This club will be hosting the FAI finals over the Labor Day weekend and the top three finalists will earn a slot to South Africa in 1977 for the World Championships.

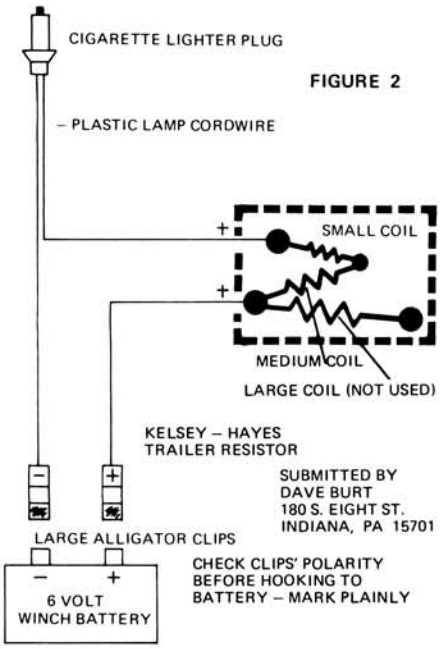

FIGURE 2

On a lower and club level of competition, a couple of more ideas. . . . the following came from several. Didn't know which club originated the idea, but it's based on the "King O' The Hill" concept.

By lottery, a club draws its members' names and establishes a series of levels and names in a pyramid type of pattern. The first name is on top. The next two on tier two; the next three, tier three; etc., etc., until all of the members' names are drawn. This initial list is, of course, by mutual consent.

The basic idea is to become the club's top dog by challenging a member which is on the next higher plateau than you. The challenge is met mutually within a given time and the task either decided upon by the individuals or established by the club.

Variations exist (depending on the number of members on a club roster; using specific tasks only, etc.); larger clubs (a club of 106 members would have a pyramid of 15 tiers) allow a member to challenge any other member from one or two higher tiers. Smaller clubs distort the pyramid by having a 1-2-3-3-4-4-5-5-6-7 or modified pattern in order to have more steps to the top of the "hill."

S.O.A.R., a Chicago area club, has a series of achievement awards. From January 1 of each year until the annual Thanksgiving "Turkey Shoot," members vie for honors in five various categories. Traveling plaques are awarded at the annual Christmas banquet to the top fliers in thermal duration, straight line cross-country, speed, most points in club contests, and original design.

Each January 1 competition starts for all again at zero. This was designed to encourage new members to compete without having to challenge a three-hour duration mark or some 50-mile cross-country record.

If your group has a unique intra-club competition program, why not send it this way and we'll pass it along via this column.

It's Time to Make Waves Department

Through the years, the concern for more realistic landings has been met with systems that haven't come close to solving the problem.

Where landings were de-emphasized by placing lower values on the landing zones, the system worked to some degree but people still "pranged" their sailplane if they felt the scoring was that crucial.

Where landing judges gave a thumbs up or down for landing quality, that system produced more enemies than better landings.

A large, generous landing zone with a fixed value for landing works for the majority—that is, realistic landings are made—but for those that might overshoot, the sudden "nose-her-over" technique still prevails.

Giving zero points for flipping over or for shedding parts has taken care of those obviously bad landings, but an inequity still exists. And that's the reason for this soap-box stance.

A flier can make a what would be considered acceptable landing only to pop a rubber band or unravel a landing skid and, by definition of "shedding parts," be disqualified from earning any landing points. Meanwhile, a fellow competitor with his boiler-plate special aiming for a spot bounces. The rest of the approach could more closely resemble Olga Korbut's gold-medal Olympic act than any sailplane performance, but if the plane lands upright and sheds no parts, it's bonusville for the flier.

There is also the case of the bird that lands so hard—but sheds no parts—that the only things holding the fuselage together are the receiver harness and the pushrods! But landing points are earned.

Why not—and here comes the wave—have a landing judge (the timer could also serve as judge). Shedding parts or flipping over would still automatically render zero landing points. But, should the sailplane's integrity be in question due to a hard landing then without making *any* adjustments to the plane the flier would be challenged to an immediate launch. If the flier refused it would be zero landing points.

The launch could be a simple shoulder-high hand launch or a winch or high start with a reduced line length set up only for this test.

The thought of a cocked wing or cracked tail section earning no landing points would encourage approaches and landings that could be as graceful as the planes are in a July thermal.

Support your FAI team.

(My address is: Rt. 2, Box 490, Plainfield, IL 60544.)