

## JON D. CARSEY (1961) ( -1962)

Soaring had all but disappeared during World War II. However, SSA membership was slowly growing in the chaotic circumstances of the country re-adjusting to peace time. The 580 members in 1946 grew to 700 in 1949. The most visible membership benefit, *Soaring* magazine, was still on a bi-monthly schedule; timely publication was



difficult. The job of editor was uncertain. SSA needed a leader with the necessary qualifications to grow, renew and stabilize the organization.

Often it happens with the SSA and even our country, that the right person comes along at the right time and renews the purpose of the organization. Jon Carsey was such a man. Jon Carsey served the soaring community as President of SSA from 1950 to 1954 – an important time in the history of the Soaring Society of America.

As a lad, he and some friends built an early primary glider from a magazine picture. Fortunately, they were unable to make it fly. He

was more successful in later years when he became the spark plug for soaring in the Southwest starting with being a Charter Member and primary organizer of the Texas Soaring Association in the post WW II period. It was his leadership, enthusiasm, organizational talent and financial aid that kept TSA going until it could stand alone. He demonstrated how a newly-formed local soaring club could successfully organize and conduct a national competition and, perhaps more importantly, how it could be favorably financed. When he realized the problems with *Soaring* magazine and the serious questions as to when or whether another issue would appear, he moved the entire operation into his home. Under his drive and leadership, the magazine took on a new look and was timely published.

Jon Carsey was heavily involved in organizing the First Odessa Records Camp in 1951 where Dick Johnson made the outstanding world distance record of 535 miles. He helped organize and direct three National Contests and many regional ones. He introduced the practice of Daily Bulletins at National Soaring Contests. Until 1952 the USA had never sent a team to a World Soaring Championship. That year Jon Carsey organized a team and the financing to send the U.S. Team to Spain. As President of SSA, he and Mrs. Carsey visited nearly all the soaring clubs and groups in America. Their home in Dallas became the “Mecca” for soaring people.

To quote his friend, E.J. Reeves, “Jon was not the 'hot rock' pilot type, although he was a licensed power and glider pilot. But he loved the game genuinely. Fortunately he chose to assist it in a more effective and needed way. He labored long and strenuously at this love in order that other men could fly. By reason of his devotion, other men have flown further, faster and better than ever before.”

H. Marshall Claybourn quotes about Jon Carsey – “He worked quietly, almost behind the scenes, and his contributions to our activity are almost beyond count. . . . Unlike too many of us, who won't take the time, Jon always had time to talk to the newcomer; patiently answering his questions and explaining how it all works.”

Jon Carsey always took the time to talk soaring with people from new-comers to world-class pilots. This writer had the honor and pleasure of meeting him at the 22<sup>nd</sup> National Competition at Harris Hill, Elmira, NY in 1955. This meeting was among my early opportunities to meet the wonderful people of our sport and be inspired by Jon Carsey among others. Here he meets with visitors from Australia.



Jon Carsey received the Warren E. Eaton Memorial Trophy in 1952, the highest award SSA gives. It can perhaps be said that , because of Jon Carsey, there is an SSA to give him this most prestigious award.

(Note – Much of the above information was adapted from articles in *Soaring*, November 1962)