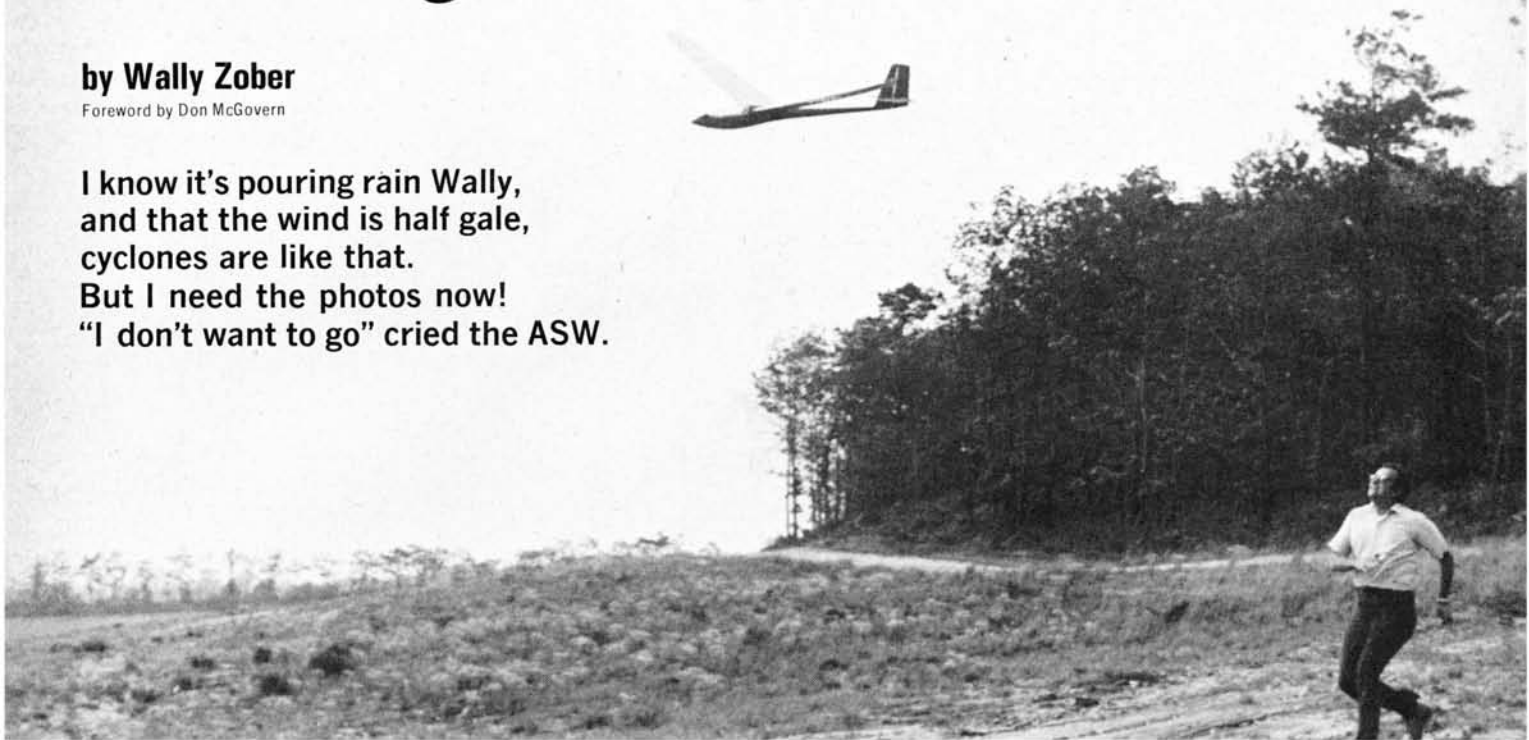


Astro Flight's "ASW-17"

by Wally Zober

Foreword by Don McGovern

I know it's pouring rain Wally,
and that the wind is half gale,
cyclones are like that.
But I need the photos now!
"I don't want to go" cried the ASW.



FM Photos by Wally Zober, Don McGovern

I shall write some of this for him. Wally's still in shock. Some days dawn great for testing. Some days start with a summer's mist, dew on the grass to boil off in the thermals. Some days don't. Some days, like Saturdays get rotten. Disaster as you know is a black cloud which out beloved Wally carries above himself on a leash. It is fitting and proper then that every time Wally finishes a new aeronautical toy,

a new and violent weather system should sweep across the nation, inundate six counties and wind-shear all loose branches off the forest. Nature must cleanse itself, it's part of the big-brain's equation.

Naturally Wally procrastinates. He's only human, though our club had to vote on it. There are family things to do, walk the chicken etc., which I understand, but time was running out. I needed flight

photos. "I need them now Wally, today, Saturday!"

It would have been alright if he hadn't glanced out the window. "But it's pouring rain, my basement's leaking, the cat's floating down the gutter and the trees are listing in the wind." He'll try any excuse. "I'll meet you in ten minutes." Magazine deadlines are relentless, we have no heart. I shovelled Wally's new "ASW" in the wagon and we drove out to our distant field. Enroute we picked up Gene Rogers to man the cameras.

If you live right, stir the epoxy and remember the clothespins, somebody upstairs watches over delicate gliders in typhoons. As we neared the field, the storm clouds parted like the Red Sea deal and a strange glow appeared. The sun? On Long Island, if you don't like the weather, wait ten minutes. To compensate, the wind picked up another five knots. So much so that all thoughts of hi-start and even hand towing was forgotten. The south end of our field rises 20 feet, so I suggested we just heave it. I first tried the theory with my "Wild Blue" which rose on the lift and swept up and down the ridge of air. The wind was fierce, so much so that at times (from a later hand tow) I had to dive for hundreds of feet at 45 degrees to penetrate forward over the tree line.

I was fearless, so the transmitter was handed to me. Why should I be nervous in a gusting-moaning wind with a forest of glider-eating oaks at my back? It was Wally's glider, let him be nervous. Wally's white knuckles clutched at the slippery fiberglass as the wing's danced to the wind, Gene below with the camera. "Did you get the picture Gene?" "No, it was

Above: Making the grade. Long Island is not exactly the Alps, but a slight slope is sufficient.
Below: Where are your feet Wally, or are those tree trunks? "ASW" and Citizen-Ship at rest.



only a foot high." Well, that was true, the first launch went contour-soaring. A gust fell off and the big ship dipped to within a foot of the slope all the way down. Try again.

It rose on the lift as if born to soar. Magnificent! Understand this was terrible lift as slope winds go. The hill was not more than 20 feet, with a relatively short fetch across a clearing. And the winds were fitful, in unsteady blasts, the aftermath of a storm. Still, this graceful glider, designed for more moderate weather swept the ridge as an eagle. It's huge span gave it a degree of smoothness I could not match with the smaller ship in such marginal lift. Cameras clicked and hopefully we have some flight shots herewith. Within the hour skies darkened again and the windshield wipers were our music homeward bound. We have no doubt that the "ASW-17" would have risen on a hand line that day, and on calmer moments on a hi-start launch, but such would have been too much for the 132" wings in the wind that blew that day. This, by east coast standards, is a glider for calm to moderate air. No one design is superb for all, as sites and winds and weather vary so dramatically. It would be at it's best in 0-10 mile an hour zephyrs, but the 20 mph winds we tested it in were pushing it to the structural limits. Gusts were probably much higher. It was smooth, even in the bad air, responsive to the controls and needed but a sinker removed to achieve balance. Some beefing up around the wing mounting wires in both the wing and fuselage root area is in order if you anticipate pushing your performance to the outer limits.

Say something Wally, it's your article.

"McGovern, keep your Irish-Catholic fingers off my sweet sweet glider, you're a madman! You bent my transmitter sticks! I threw my back out with body-english and you skinned the ridge so close the toads evacuated."

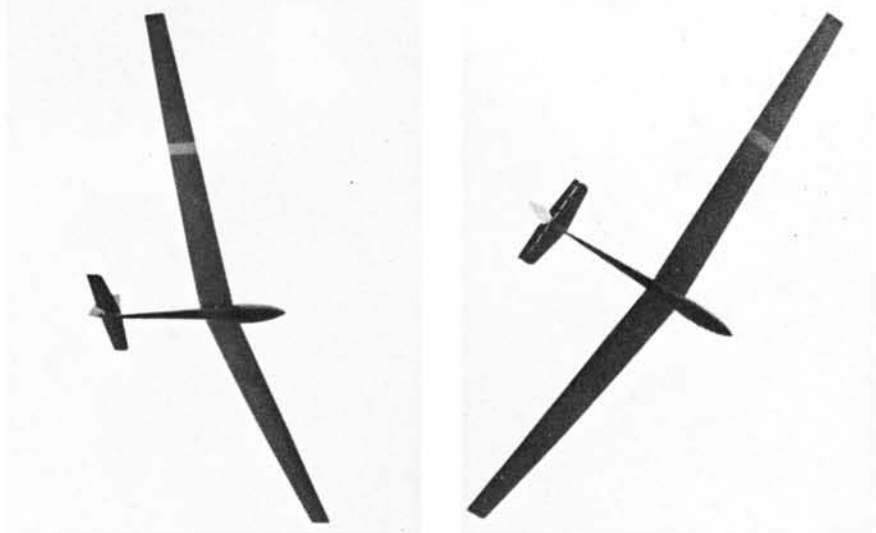
Actually, I put highlights in his hole day. When that big Polish boy is older he'll appreciate me. Go on from here Wally, tell it like it is...you've got 20 more lines, don't stutter.

Wally here to give you some background: The full size "ASW-17" sailplane was designed by Dr. Alexander Schleicher of ASW-12 and ASW-15 fame, manufactured by Schleicher Aircraft Co. The R/C model version was designed by Bob Boucher, Bill Watson and Willie Richards. After the LSF Soarlympics of 1971 they felt the need of a greater wingspan to carry the extra weight of a fiberglass fuselage and servos for spoilers and landing gear etc. Inspired on by the then new full scale ASW-17, a two-inch to the foot scale-down produced a design of 132" span and a 49½" length. Three were built and flown in the next LSF North-South Challenge meet and the design swept the top three places.

Some statistics: Total wing and stab area is 1050 squares, 132" wingspan in two 64" panels for small auto travel. The fuselage is 49½", of molded fiberglass. Flying weight with two servos is about 64 ounces and it is intended to carry up to two additional pounds in ballast for speed and cross-country work, though we feel it is for milder forms of thermal soaring. ☞



Switch left on? Forget today's delightful thermals Wally, we'll try it in next week's typhoon. **Beneath:** Typhooning. Gusting slope winds and fragile gliders make strange bedfellows, fine fun.



Apart from all that... big as it is, it fits in any car. A fiberglass fuselage, a sheet tail. As on all gliders, nose down for fast response to rudder. Don't overdo it. A capable performer.