

In The Air

Welcome back. We really missed you.

[Terence C. Gannon](#)



The original R/C Soaring Digest masthead designed by its Founder, Editor and Publisher Jim Gray, which appeared in Volume 1 Number 1 back in January of 1984. The beautiful contemporary update is by Editors Emeritus Bill and Bunny Kuhlman.

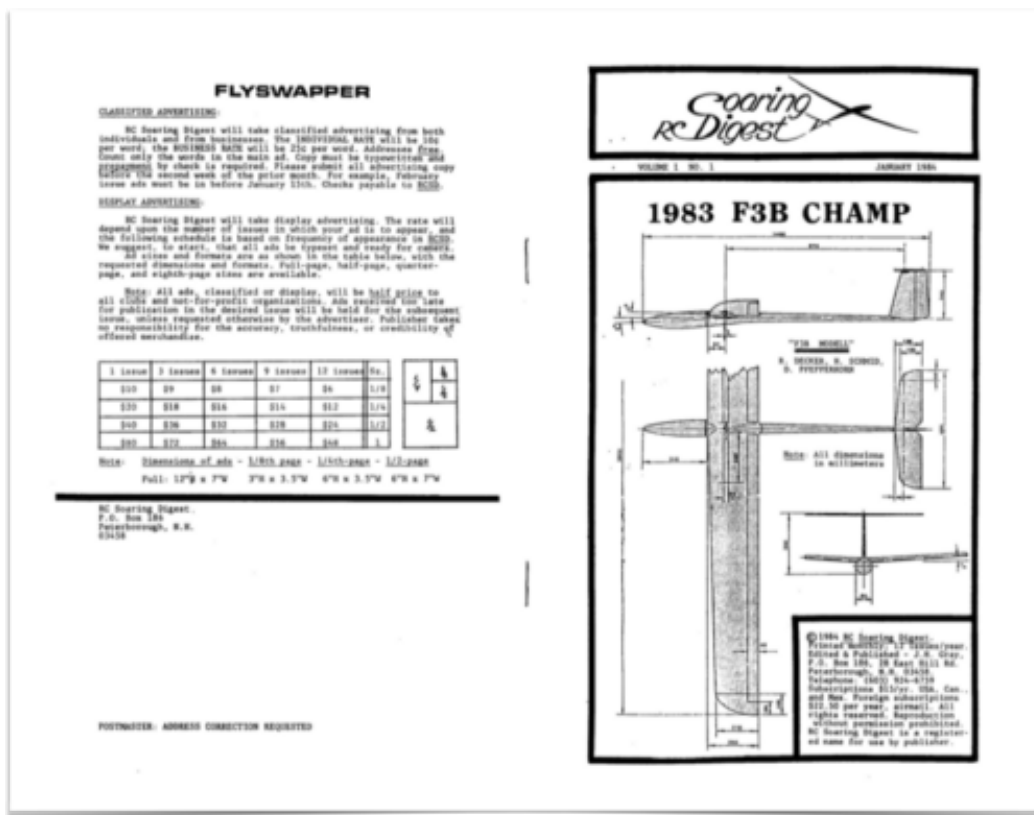
In his first monthly editorial, Terence C. Gannon, the recently appointed Managing Editor of the NEW R/C Soaring Digest, pays tribute to the past and talks about the future of the publication.

I am both humbled and honoured — and a little nervous — to bring you the very first issue of the NEW R/C Soaring Digest. Officially, this is Volume 36, Number 1 which means that RCSD published for an unbroken run of over 400 issues sweeping across 35 years concluding in December of 2018. Most recently, it was very ably published by Bill and Bunny Kuhlman. My first happy duty, therefore, is to thank them for their years of hard work in

producing a beautiful publication we all loved to read every month. I am delighted to announce they have agreed to stay on as Editors Emeritus of the new publication. I would also like to thank them for making the assumption of this new role a true pleasure. I only hope I can do their legacy proud in this and future issues.

I'm anxious not to get in the way of your reading the articles I have curated for you this month, but a few preliminary comments are in order:

The first and most obvious is that RCSD is being delivered in an entirely new way. It's now a fully digital publication suitable for reading on your desktop or laptop. But is also designed to flex so it can be read just as easily on your tablet or phone where a staggering amount of online material is consumed these days. Candidly, the new format may initially be a little jarring to readers, but I also believe that its benefits outweigh any disadvantages over the long term. The new platform is also an integral part of a new mode of operating which keeps costs low — that translates to a vastly improved reading experience. I am committed to keeping advertising — particularly those truly awful pop-up ads — out of the journal **permanently**. We have some innovative revenue programs in the works which I will talk about in future issues.



The first page of the very first issue of the R/C Soaring Digest published in January, 1984. The entire archive — every single issue — is still [available for free download](#). (image: Jim Gray)

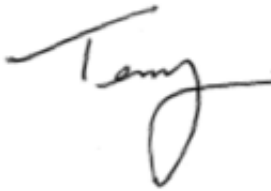
However, beyond this new method of delivering RCSD to you, my objective is to bring forward as many of the values and as much of the culture of the original publication as I can. First amongst these, RCSD will continue to be a **free** — there will be absolutely **no charge** and no other encumbrance to simply reading the publication each month. Second, RCSD was and will continue to be a **reader written** publication: it will depend on your story contributions to fill out each issue. If you have enjoyed articles in the past, please consider contributing one of your own in the future. From how-tos on high tech composites, to photo essays, to personal memoirs and everything in between, anything goes. To help you start on your writing journey, this issue features [Writing for RCSD: Steps, Guidelines and a Few Pro Tips for Authors](#). At just eight minutes, it will still take longer to read than it will actually take to go through the steps to get started.

Another exciting capability that we'll be rolling out in the coming months is richer content. RCSD has always been greatly admired for its text and

photographic content. In the future the journal will also be adding video content and a great way of embedding large format PDFs such as detailed plans and three views. Spoiler alert: you'll need to brush up on your panning and zooming skills. I'm planning on using future *In The Air* editorials to talk about some of the other exciting additions to the publication.

Before I turn you loose on the rest of this month's issue, a couple of groups to thank: first, thanks to all the authors who contributed to this issue. Finally thank you, the treasured reader, for your support of RCSD both in the past and in the future. If there is anything on your mind that you would like to discuss, by all means, please [get in touch](#). I really hope you enjoy what we manage to cobble together for you each month.

Fair winds and blue skies!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a loop at the bottom.

The beautiful cover photo for this issue is provided through the tireless efforts of Ian Cummings. Please check out Ian's work at [Ian Cummings Photography](#). Now, read the [first article](#) of this issue or go back to the [table of contents](#).

Spencer Lisenby Clocks Record-Breaking 882 km/h at Parker Mountain

The dynamic soaring legend notches the bar up. Again.

[The NEW RC Soaring Digest Staff](#)



Bruce Tebo, a former dynamic soaring record-holder himself, launches Spencer Lisenby's 3.3m (130") Kinetic Transonic DP on its record-breaking flight at Parker Mountain, California on January 19th, 2021. (image: Spencer Lisenby)

In a remarkable advancement of the state-of-the-art Spencer Lisenby, the renowned practitioner of the [dynamic soaring](#) (DS) flight regime, has broken the outright speed record for a model aircraft. On January 19th, 2021 Lisenby's Kinetic Transonic DP hit 882 km/h (548 mph) at the famed Parker Mountain location which is the home of a number of record-breaking DS flights.

To fully appreciate the speed, Lisenby recommends watching full-screen. (video: Spencer Lisenby)

To put this speed in perspective, if you theoretically put the Transonic DP side-by-side with a 737NG at economy cruise, the sailplane leaves the 737 behind at about 28 km/h (18 mph). All without a drop of fuel.

Although we hope to have a more detailed article in a future issue of RCSD, the 3.3m (130") span Transonic DP had an all up weight of 9.0 kg (319 oz) during the flight, which works out to a wing loading of 183 g/dm² (60 oz/ft²). Lisenby estimates the maximum G-loading during the flight was in the region of 60 to 90 G. He credits Dirk Pflug, with some assistance from Stuttgart University in Germany, with the design of the airfoils. Thomas Pils did all of the CAD work and machined the fuselage molds while Jaroslav Čermák of the Czech Republic made molds for the wing and stabilizer.

When asked for comment subsequent to the flight, the unassuming Spencer Lisenby simply said:

“That was fun!”

We have so many questions for Spencer not only about his record-breaking flight but the path that led him to it, and where it leads from here. Which make us think he would be the perfect guest for a prototype episode of the still-in-the-concept-phase of the R/C Soaring Digest podcast. Please [let us know](#) if that would be as interesting for you, the potential listener, as it would be for us.

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Seven Stages of Slope Evolution

Will the circle be unbroken.

[Dave Garwood](#)



1. Dave Garwood flies a Pat Bowman Models Comanche over the Pacific Ocean at Davenport, California. (image: Jim Harrigan)

A classic from Dave Garwood as it was originally published in the October 1998 in R/C Soaring Digest.

This article proposes a taxonomy of seven developmental stages that we have seen in slope soaring pilots as they progress through the hobby/sport. It is offered for the review and reflection of readers, and we hope that others will contribute to scholarly research and scientific knowledge in this area of study.

1. Primordial Awareness

In this stage, the subject has a dim cognizance of slope soaring flight. He has heard of it, has seen photographs of it, and may have even read a book or an article on slope soaring, but hasn't actually built or flown a slope sailplane.

The most important equipment at this stage of slope development is a computer terminal and an AOL account. His most recent quote: "Honey, I can never log onto the service. It's always busy. Maybe we should get Web-TV."



2. Dave Garwood flies a Dave's Aircraft Works Schweizer 1-26 from Francis Peak, overlooking the Great Salt Lake, during a Soar Utah event. (image: Joe Chovan)

2. Early Emergence

Fully aware of slope flying, a representative of this stage has watched RC slope soaring or hang gliding, has studied gulls and pelicans and has developed an understanding of the atmospheric dynamics involved in slope lift. He has tossed a Carl Goldberg Gentle Lady or DynaFlite Skeeter off a hill, and amazed himself at the longest flight in his soaring career.

Development in this stage involves building stronger polyhedral sailplanes, maybe a Great Planes Spirit or Culpepper Chuperosa. His most important

building tools are T-pins and X-acto knives. His field kit includes five minute epoxy and bits of balsa and plywood. He learns to turn only into the wind, to land shiny-side-up, and can be heard asking his wife on windy days, "Honey, do you think it's okay if I mow the lawn *tomorrow?*"



3. Dave Garwood flies a Dave's Aircraft Works *Kawafoamie Ki-61* at Wellfleet, Massachusetts. (image: Jim Harrigan)

3. Primary Adaption

Exuberance increases and an exploratory urge develops. The seeker builds an aileron slope plane, perhaps a Sig Ninja or CR Aircraft Turbo, and begins looking for slope flying sites. His shop now includes a moto-tool and a jig saw, and he is willing to travel up to 20 miles to fly slope.

He's not happy unless the wind is blowing 10–15 MPH and his most impressive maneuver is an inside loop. The most important items in his field kit are fiberglass cloth, CA glue, and kicker. He thinks to himself, "On our family trip to the beach (or mountains), maybe I'll take a slope plane and do a little flying."



4. Dave Garwood turns and burns over the Atlantic Ocean with a DAW *Kawafoamie Ki-67*. (image: Jim Harrigan)

4. Secondary Selection

The pre-addiction stage. Here the seeker accumulates several planes for several wind conditions, and may make a trip to the coast or the mountains with slope soaring as the primary focus of the trip. He can handle 20 MPH wind and fly aerobatics, including rolls and inverted passes. He may become interested in full-contact combat if he has discovered EPP-foam planes, and he's willing to travel 200 miles to fly at a good site.

At this stage the subject is not happy unless he has three planes ready to go with servos and receivers mounted. He has four long sanding blocks to save construction time. His newly discovered adhesives are hot-melt glue and Goop. Typical sailplanes are the Sig Samurai, Bob Martin Coyote, and Bowman Ruffneck. As he leaves the house he says, "I'll be back from the hill a little after dark."



5. Dave Sanders, designer of the DAW *FoaMe-109*, flies one over Cape Cod Bay in Truro, Massachusetts. (image: [Dave Garwood](#))

5. Early Specialization

Now mildly addicted, our man is not content unless he has four new kits on the shelf, and four planes ready to fly in winds up to 30 MPH. His shop equipment includes an airbrush and Rapidograph pens because he's not destroying his planes on landing so much any more. He has begun to

destroy planes during aerobatic practice. He may become interested in racing or in four meter scale planes, and now has a ModelTech P-51, Charlie Richardson Renegade, a Bob Martin SR-7, or a Brian McLean Vindicator. If aesthetically inclined and hooked on combat, he'll have a Lex Liberato Yak-3, a Merrill Farmer Saberjet, or DAW warbird.

He loves speed runs, stall turns, and low inverted passes. He can fly point rolls in both directions. Not afraid at this stage to leave his home valley to fly with other tribes, he'll travel up to 400 miles to participate in a weekend slope event, and says to his wife as he leaves, "It's only a two day event, my sweet baby."



6. Dave Sanders flies a Wade Kloos Durable Aircraft Models *P-51 Mustang* at a Southern California PSS Festival in Cajon Summit. (image: [Dave Garwood](#))

6. Progressive Homologation

Characterized by full addiction, our subject may spend a mortgage payment on a slope plane, either a five meter scale ship, or a fully molded unlimited racer with premium servos. He understands the use of ballast in sailplanes and he's got five ships ready to fly in five wind conditions. In addition to building planes, he now builds boxes to ship them to distant slope sites.

The slope pilot in Stage 6 has gotten over his fear of crashing his airplanes or putting them in salt water on those low beach runs. He understands the fighter pilot's credo "Death is a small price to pay for looking shit hot." He must have either two Brian Laird iron horses or a pair of John Higgins F-20s (one light and one heavy) ready to fly at all times, and can build another one and have it glassed and painted in a week if necessary.

He can now fly clean pylon turns and outside loops. He flies close-formation stall turns and knows combat strategy and tactics. His most-used shop tool is a hot wire foam cutter and the most important item in his kit bag is a fast field charger.

He spends *all* his vacation time flying slope, and has flown by two oceans or inland seas. He is willing to cross the Sierra Nevada range, or the Mississippi River, or travel 1000 miles to join like-minded slope heads at Los Banos, El Cajon, Point of the Mountain, Wilson Lake, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Jockey's Ridge, or Cape Cod. As he leaves, he promises his significant other, "I'll call you every night."



7. Dave Sanders and Joe Chovan fly DAW *Foam-51* and *FoaMe-109* over Wilson Lake in Lucas, Kansas during a Midwest Slope Challenge. (image: [Dave Garwood](#))

7. Total Immersion

This stage is characterized by hopeless addiction. He must have faster and heavier planes, and won't go to the slope in less than 25 MPH wind although he is not really happy unless the wind is blowing 40 MPH or better. The only thing he wants to do after a slope flight is grab another plane and launch again. He mindlessly performs complex aerobatics, flies diving rolls for relaxation, and can bring tears to the observer's eyes with a big sky aerial ballet.

His shop now includes a production vacuum bagging setup and ventilated paint booth. He buys epoxy by the gallon and carbon fiber cloth by the yard. His most important field accessory is a selection of lead bars. By this point he's flown full-house HLGs, unlimited racers, scale sailplanes, PSS warbirds

and slope jets, tailless planes, and a Pterodactyl or R/C Gull, but is unfulfilled unless he has a personal relationship with a slope plane designer and has something on his workbench that approaches a wing loading of 40 ounces per square foot.

This pathetic creature takes leave without pay to fly, if he has been able to keep a day job at all. Eastern region Stage 7 *Homo Slopiens* have been known to modify the landscape with a chain saw to improve slope sites. These guys travel thousands of miles to fly the legendary hills, can handle any winds from 5–75 MPH. They may say over their shoulder as they head out of the cave, “I’ll call you from the airport when my flight gets in.”



8. Dave Sanders and Dave Garwood plan a slope flying trip over the hood of an exceptionally comfortable glider hauler cruiser. (image: Paula Garwood)

The End Game

Ultimately, this single-minded machine of a man will continue to drive himself to explore the limits of technology, biology, and wanderlust to satisfy needs for more exotic machines, more extreme thrills and more unusual sites.

Upon arrival to any given flying site he will calmly and deliberately move to the edge of the slope and hold out his arms palms down to feel the magical vapors of slope lift climbing the face, noting subtleties in the air, determining the strength of the lift and imagining how he will pick through its intricacies with all manner of pure-bred, wind-driven hardware.

To the casual observer this appears ritualistic, but his Stage Seven fellows know the wry smile and burning fire in the belly of another fully developed *Homo Slopiens*, and will confer not with speech, but rather with gestures and motions as an Indian shaman would communicate with another tribal elder.

The Stage Two or Three slope flyer will look at them and see a glimpse of their own fate, sealed in the crumpled remains of countless airframes, and the injuries acquired from long hikes to recover aircraft flown into lower slope faces at terminal velocity.

As the grizzled veteran walks back to his vehicle with a 40 MPH wind at his back to select an aircraft for his initial sortie, he may be heard to say, "No guts, no glory. Let's rock."

About the Authors

This article began as a dinner discussion on Eagle Butte among wilderness chefs Dave Reese and Ed Cypret, along with Joe Chovan and Dave Garwood. It was continued in a late night discussion with Sanders, Chovan, Garwood and Alden Shipp at the Lucas County Inn during the 1998 Midwest Slope Challenge, and was finished in the Kansas City International airport by Dave Sanders and Dave Garwood.

©1998, 2021 [Dave Garwood](#)

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Two Days of Sublime Soaring on the Great Orme

A full report of the UK's Power Scale Soaring Association Fly-In, 5th/6th September, 2020.

[Phil Cooke](#)



Superb Fouga Magister built from the Island Models kit by Bob Jennings. (image: Phil Cooke)

This article is reproduced through the kind permission of the PSSA. It originally appeared this past fall on their [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages. Special thanks to Phil Cooke who not only wrote the original report and took all the photos, but also pulled together all the details to make this available to the NEW R/C Soaring Digest.

2020 has been a very odd 'stop/start' sort of season with no planned flying events running at all until July due to the Covid-19 situation. We've since run a couple of quite low-key events — with some good PSS flying achieved at

the Orme but very little at the Lleyn due to high pressure conditions — this weekend certainly made up for our losses and got us well back on track with non-stop flying both days on two of our most favoured slopes. Overall attendance was still a little down on what we had become accustomed to over the past couple of seasons, but for me our September event will be remembered for the sheer amount of maiden flights completed over the two days and the impressive range of new models on show. Maybe one twisted benefit of the lockdown period!?

Saturday dawned with good strength WSW winds which prevailed all day. The winds were measured at 25–30 mph, just perfect in strength really — plenty of energy without the buffet and turbulence near the edge you'd get if the winds were any stronger — and although the direction was a few degrees off the ideal SW heading this did not impact the lifting ability of the Great Orme's main slope. The Sunday brought slightly calmer conditions, 12–18 mph winds from the NW which saw us flying all day in gorgeous sunshine from the lower café slope.



Rich Henderson and Clive Gudgeon had joined us on the Saturday morning and were quick off the mark in rigging their fantastic new Lancaster duo! Finished over the past few months these 'Lockdown Lancs' were designed and built jointly by Rich and Clive, with Rich making the wings and Clive the fuselages in separate workshops remote from each other. The airframes were all jig built and very accurate in construction — in fact the wings have proven fully interchangeable between the two models! At 110" span, the wing uses the well proven Clark-Y section and incorporates a carbon tube main spar right through the fuselage and out to the dihedral break. The models are both fully built up conventionally using balsa and ply and weigh in at ~15 lbs ready to fly.



Superb detailing on the large PSS bombers! (image: Phil Cooke)

The level of detail was really impressive on both models, right down to rivet detail on the fuselage — the airframes are littered with scale features like

machine guns and glazing and both models even have a working bomb-bay with an array of ordnance inside!

Rich's Lanc was finished to represent the BBMF's PA474 as it flew in the 2007 display season in the colours of 'Mickey the Moocher' a famous 'ton up' Lanc with over 120 missions to its name. Clive's airframe is finished in the colours of 'Just Jane' — the ground running example currently being restored in Lincolnshire to flying status.



Rich Henderson's Avro Lancaster captured during it's maiden flight at the Orme. (image: Phil Cooke)

Rich was first to get airborne with a little help from Andy Meade who provided a good launch into the 25 mph winds. The model soared away immediately with ease and from the look of it required very little trim or adjustment, Rich was quickly settled in with the bomber in the ideal conditions we were enjoying. Clive wasn't too far behind and Tim Mackey provided the launch to ensure we got to see the two new Lancs in the air at the same time — fantastic stuff! Both models had a great 'sit' in the air and

looked most realistic cruising up and down the slope, particularly at low level over the water towards Conwy. Two really impressive new models, great to see them in action for the first time at a PSSA event!

Another eagerly anticipated maiden flight was that of the F-100 Super Sabre built for PSS by Andy Meade. We had seen this model at the Lleyrn event in August but the conditions there were far from right to test fly a model of this type, so all eyes were on Andy from mid-morning once the slope lift had been well proven. Thankfully he didn't make us wait too long!

The model was built from an Art Johnson plan downloaded from Outerzone — the fuselage is built up and planked as per the drawing with the omission of the internal power ducting and some focus on weight reduction, but Andy redesigned the wing completely with a revised slope proven section and had that commissioned in veneered foam by Cloud Models. The model spans 56", has an AUW of 8 lb and as with all of Andy's models is superbly finished with glass resin and paint. I was particularly taken by the heat affected panels around the engine exhaust where clearly some talented work with the airbrush had gone in to create the final look.



F-100 Super Sabre built and flown by Andy Meade. (image: Phil Cooke)

Although Andy has modelled and 3D printed a huge array of wing stores for this Vietnam mud mover, he elected to test fly the model clean. Bob Jennings was called into action for the launch and the model set off smartly enough — however it was quickly apparent the F-100 was nose heavy. Thankfully Andy was able to land the model out safely onto the lower shelf below the launch point with only minimal damage to the all moving tail. Back up on top Andy set about the minor repair work and adjusted the balance point with a little shuffling of the hardware within the cavernous fuselage. After an hour or so the model was reintroduced to the launch point. This time the model set off superbly, and Andy enjoyed a lengthy flight putting in a spirited performance with this rarely modelled jet — another impressive addition to the ever growing fleet!



Chris Barlow provides a textbook launch for Bob Jennings's new Fouga Magister. (image: Phil Cooke)

Bob Jennings' stunning Fouga Magister was another model we'd seen at a previous event earlier this year but was still yet to be test flown. Built from the well proven Island Models kit, Bob has gone to town with the airbrush and finished the model in a complex French airforce 'Tiger meet' scheme as the aircraft was seen representing 3rd EIV at RIAT 1991. It looks stunning! Today the conditions and location were ideal for a test flight and Bob enjoyed a lengthy sortie flying his model at times with the two other Magisters of Jez Billington and Rich Henderson. The model was well flown and looked superb in the sunshine with the contrasting colours and stripes.

Having made the required balance adjustments following a difficult short maiden flight attempt at the Orme in July, it was great to see Jez Billington back at the launch point with his 150% scale Jet Provost, built from the new Andy Blackburn plan and SLEC woodpack. Finished in an RAF training scheme the model soared away well this time much to the relief of Jez and all who were watching. Jez's example has turned out a bit heavier than the

models of the same type built and flown by Peter Garsden and Steve Kemp, but this seemed to have little effect in the conditions, the model just as smooth as its stable mates. A number of Jez's models including his new JP are fitted with some really impressive lighting units from Flytron — producing high visibility strobes and nav lights that work really well even on good sunlight! Well worth a look for any PSS model of this sort of scale.

Having delayed our Sabre Mass Build event until 2021 we are naturally starting to see the first completed models at the slope being cautiously test flown in readiness.



Martin Gay launches the NASA F-86 Sabre built and flown by Rob Sketches. (image: Phil Cooke)

Rob Sketches chose to take part in our Mass Build project with his first PSS build and he's certainly done a lovely job! His F-86 Sabre is built to represent an F-86F that was used by NASA at their Ames research facility to investigate boundary layer control. The striking silver and red scheme is sprayed over a glass and epoxy finish, resulting in a model with an AUW of

just over 4 lbs. Rob's pre-maiden nerves were calmed somewhat by Martin Gay who allowed Rob some time flying the prototype model before helping him with a launch of the NASA bird. The maiden flight appeared to go very well, a little up trim was needed and Rob later reported he felt some additional up elevator movement would be required to tailor the controls better for the correct feel throughout the speed range. Certainly the crow brake system was seen to work very well, Rob bringing the Sabre safely home for a smooth landing at walking pace. Congrats Rob on your first PSS build!!



Unusual types work well from the slope too — the Arado 555 is a good example! (image: Phil Cooke)

Martin Gay and Gordon Studley successfully flew their far from conventional Arado 555, a Luftwaffe X-Plane design built from the Chris Golds EDF plan but heavily modified for PSS. The model spans 42" and has an AUW of just under 3 lb. An initial launch and flight proved the Arado to be a little nose heavy. Martin landed out and tweaked the balance point before another launch was performed followed by a much lengthier and successful flight!

The obscure shape in the air takes some getting used to and Martin reported it was difficult to maintain orientation at some points of a turn. That said it was flown really well and the model was eventually brought in for a smooth landing right where you'd want it on the short grass in the LZ. Excellent stuff chaps!



Arado 'parasite' fighter designed and built by Gordon Studley, flown by Tim Mackey. (image: Phil Cooke)

Tim Mackey was seen flying a new, rather strange looking model in the shape of the Arado Parasite fighter — the Ar 381! Another airframe expertly built by Gordon Studley — at 1:6th scale it spans just 35.5" span and has a 30 oz flying weight. It's flown simply on two channel aileron and elevator and looked an absolute dream to fly across a large speed range, it was really nippy and Tim was clearly loving his new model flying it with gusto throughout the two days!

The second hand market for model aircraft of all types is so vibrant these days with the ease of marketing through forums and Facebook pages, and

the PSS market is no exception! Al Gorham has recently acquired a trio of new airframes all designed and built by a modeller named T. Walls. Sadly beyond that not much more was known regarding the designs' heritage — but clearly all three models were finished to a high standard and Al enjoyed successful 'maiden' flights with his N.A. P-51B Mustang, Hawker Tempest and Shorts Tucano.



Hawker Tempest flown by Al Gorham. (image: Phil Cooke)

Each model was built to a practical scale giving them a wingspan of around 45" and they were all simple two channel models, aileron and elevator. They all utilised fully built-up construction and were covered in Solartex then painted. I quickly grew quite fond of all three of these little models — I've a big soft spot for any rendition of the Tucano and it was lovely to see another O/D of the type. The Mustang was a lesser modelled 'tropicalised' P-51B variant which looked great in the RAF's desert camo scheme. And for me the Hawker Tempest was a lovely twist on the more commonly modelled Furies and Typhoons which looked superb darting about in the sun with its

distinctive allied invasion stripes and the big 'bull-nosed' yellow spinner. Well done AI on your three successful maiden flights!

Of course there were many more models flown throughout the two days in very good conditions, too many to mention here but there are some more photos of other types in action in the [events photo album](#).

So now our focus turns to the last planned event of the year **10/11th October**. As I write, the UK is seeing another surge in the Covid-19 'R rate', with local lockdowns and curfews being put into place in numerous regions. Work is well underway to ensure our Fly-In will be fully compliant with the latest guidelines from both the Government and the BMFA and we will do everything we can to ensure we stage the event in a safe manner, assuming of course we are allowed to travel into North Wales. I will see you there of course — fingers crossed!!

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Champion of Something

Dad did his fair share of dreaming big. Particularly when it came to his kids.

[Terence C. Gannon](#)



Barron Shurn prepares to launch his model sailplane at a Seattle Area Soaring Society contest in June of 2008. This would have been very similar to the competition described in the essay. (image: Bill Kuhlman / RC Soaring Digest)

This article from 2019 originally appeared in [The Selected Curve](#) and is reprinted here with the permission of the author. It includes new material not found in the original article.

On a whim in the summer of 1976 — no doubt in part because he wanted to drive his shiny silver Alfa Romeo on the twisty and dangerous road through the mountains — my father suggested I have a stab at the Model Aeronautics Association of Canada National Championships held that year in Calgary, Alberta. This was on the strength of some spotty success at similar

local model airplane competitions. Dad did his fair share of dreaming big. Particularly when it came to his kids.

For my part, I thought it was a perfectly fine idea, and duly registered to compete in the 'Standard Sailplane' category. These were models of around eight foot wingspan, without any sort of motor, controlled by the pilots located safely on the ground and connected to their plane by radio link. The gliders were towed aloft by a winch which spooled up the towline and the small, graceful aircraft rose into the sky like a kite. Once free of the towline, competitors demonstrated their ability to perform a series of pre-determined maneuvers. The pilot demonstrating the greatest competence in these events won the competition, which typically ran over a series of days.

It's an obscure skill, by any measure, but I was actually pretty good at it.

From our home in Vancouver, it would have to be a quick turnaround trip shoehorned into a summer already packed with other family holiday obligations. Dad would have to drive for as long and as hard as he dared until fatigue and good sense prevented him from driving any further. I had not yet achieved the parentally-imposed 17 year minimum age to drive, so my father would be on his own as the sole *piloto*. This would leave me to navigate in those pre-GPS days. That and keep an eye on Dad should he start to nod off, as I promised my mother I would. Even if I had been able to drive, I doubt I would have been able to pry Dad's hands from the wheel. He *really* loved that Alfa.



The competitors at the Model Aeronautics Association of Canada National R/C Soaring Championships, held near Calgary, Alberta in 1976. (image: R. Patrick Gannon)

The four lane Coquihalla highway was still nearly a decade in the future, so we were forced to drive the old and treacherous Trans-Canada through the Fraser River Canyon. We still managed to get all the way to Golden, British Columbia, on the first night. We pitched our tent at the KOA campground just east of town. It was after dark by that time which is why we didn't realize our otherwise idyllic spot backed right onto Highway 1. We were just below the ramp where the semi-trailer trucks have to accelerate the hardest as they press eastward out of town. Their frequency, that night, was timed perfectly with the amount of time it takes a normal human being to drift off to sleep. However, exhausted by the thrilling rally stages earlier in the day, we slept soundly despite the all night truck drag races raging just a few feet above our heads.

From Golden, we were only a couple of Alfa hours away from where the mountains finally tumble down onto the prairies and where the road straightens and stretches out to the eastern horizon. An hour more beyond there, Dad and I were on 16th Avenue in Calgary and I was trying to figure out where to turn right, southward, to a turf farm near Aldersyde where the

competition was going to be held. This was early August, which is normally hot and dry on the Canadian prairies. We were instead greeted by a biblical deluge. We arrived at the flying field and the adjacent mowed area designated for competitors to set up camp. We pitched the tent in torrential rain and just tried to keep things dry while we prepared for the first event scheduled for the morning of the next day.

We had just gotten everything squared away and the punctuation mark for virtually any activity for Dad was a cup of tea. Wanting to avoid the continuing downpour outside we fired up the veteran Campingaz Bleuet camp stove right inside the tent to heat up a pan of water. Once it had boiled, Dad filled up the teapot and with both hands now full, he glanced around the floor of the tent — it was strewn with a combination of sleeping and eating accommodations as well as model aircraft parts and related paraphernalia. He eventually chose to carefully place the brimming full teapot on a roll of paper towel which had been placed *on end* on the spongy canvas-over-wet-grass floor. I can remember we both looked on in silent horror as it stayed upright for maybe a whole second and then luxuriously keeled over in slow motion and dumped the steaming hot, permanently staining contents over — well — everything.

At least the paper towel was close at hand.

We recovered from that catastrophe and somehow made it to the competition flight line on the following day. The rain had let up a little. Given that many of the competitors had come a long way to attend the event, there really was no putting off the competition to wait for better weather as good sense would have dictated. So fly, we did, slightly adjusting the start times of the competition rounds to avoid the worst of the rain and wind. Much to my surprise, I did fairly well in the first couple of flights which consisted of 'Two Minute Precision' and 'Five Minute Duration' events. I was comfortably in the middle of the pack and advanced a little with each round as the weather gradually improved.



Guy Johnson winches his elegant Soarcraft Magnum 12 into the (by then) clear blue prairie sky. (image: R. Patrick Gannon)

For each competition flight, the pilot is accompanied by a volunteer who keeps time and other details which are subsequently fed into the scoring calculation. Dad did *not* perform this task for me. I don't think there was a rule prohibiting it but we wanted to avoid any hint of fudging the score — an unbiased third party was the only way to go. By the last day of the competition, however, it had become increasingly apparent I was actually going to be the outright winner. Not by a huge margin but enough that if the last competition flight was reasonably well flown the result was not really in doubt. As such, Dad chose to be the timekeeper for that last flight and I can still remember the slight nervous tremor in his voice as the flight progressed.

When I landed successfully and the competition was over, all I remember is that Dad was prouder of me at that moment than he was at any other time either before or after that day on that soggy turf farm south of Calgary.

We were so pressed for time we couldn't stay for the award ceremony which was held later on that last day of the competition. The big, gaudy trophies would somehow have to find their own way to Vancouver. We drove

impatiently westward, eventually calling it a night in Big Eddy right across the river from Revelstoke. We pitched the tent, once again long after dark, at the appropriately-named Lamplighter campground. This time, we carefully chose a spot away from the highway but close to the CP Rail tracks which skirted the camp sites.

Because this was a long before cell phones or text messaging or even cheap long distance, no word of our accomplishment in Calgary had yet filtered back to the family left behind in Vancouver. Later that evening we found a phone booth and called home collect. To whoever picked up the phone, Dad simply said "so, do you want to speak the Canadian National Soaring Champion?" and handed me the phone.

It should have felt great. But strangely, I simply felt embarrassed.

Later that night, the prudence we had demonstrated picking out our camping spot backfired on us. It started out quietly at first — the distant sound of the diesel train coming down out of the mountain passes as it approached Revelstoke. The sound got progressively louder and we could eventually see the dim but growing light from the locomotive's headlight. The train's horn sounded periodically and it was clear it was going to get *really* close as it passed by. Exactly how close, we weren't sure. Eventually, the light from the train clearly illuminated the inside of the tent. Dad and I glanced at each other nervously, wondering if that beautiful flat spot we had picked out was actually an overgrown level crossing. We eventually peered outside to see the locomotive's light bearing straight down on us. At what seemed like the very last second, the huge black snake of a train slid by just a few feet away with a taunting last blast of the horn. I suspect the engineers enjoyed waking up the campers, seeing them emerge from their tents and running for their lives.



The author with my Airtronics Aquila shortly after the competition concluded. (image: R. Patrick Gannon)

When we arrived home in Vancouver *The Courier*, the community newspaper, came around to the house, took some pictures and asked me a few questions. They published a nice little article describing the competition in Calgary. I was famous for fourteen-and-a-half minutes, at least on a community newspaper scale. That was enough to impress some kids at high school when I returned in September for Grade 10. They asked me to tell the story which I was only too happy to do. But other than that, the story faded pretty quickly. Except at the Gannon dinner table, of course, where Dad never grew tired of telling the story over and over again as the years went by. Much to the dismay of my older brother and sister, I'm sure. Of course, the story grew a little more spectacular each time Dad told it.

What I omitted in my subsequent retelling of the events of that summer is that model sailplane competitions are notoriously fickle. Winning and losing on any given day is determined by who shows up, the weather, the starting order — in other words factors over which the competitors have absolutely no control. To emerge as the winner really means you made the absolute best of the cards dealt completely at random on the days of the competition.

It's *Wheel of Fortune*, not *Jeopardy*. To win a competition is still something, for sure, but no where near as much as others take the accomplishment to be. I was complicit in that even into adulthood, I never volunteered a complete, more pragmatic assessment of what I had actually accomplished, which was way less than how it sounded.

The other thing I omitted was how easily the winning had actually been. Sure, Dad and I had diligently practiced for a month or two prior to the competition. But it was not, in any way, the unrelenting training some might think a national champion would have to endure to finally achieve victory. There weren't years of obsessive practice. There was no merciless, winner-take-all round of 64 elimination or qualifying events or anything even remotely like that. There were simply a total of six flights comprising 21 minutes of flight time. Anybody who paid the entry fee was welcome.

In retrospect, Dad was a much more resilient competitor than I ever was. When I crashed the elegant white *Maestro* sailplane I intended to fly in Calgary, Dad and I looked at the scattered, matchstick-sized pieces and came to two totally different conclusions. I was prepared to walk away from the whole endeavour at that point. Dad, on the other hand, was having none of it. He built a replacement *Aquila* aircraft in record time. The punishing schedule required doing some of that construction while our family of five was crammed into a small sailboat cruising Desolation Sound up the coast from Vancouver. "We are going to fly in Calgary, damn it, no matter what" Dad must have thought.

As time went by afterwards and I gained some adult objectivity, I remember feeling increasingly like a fraud when telling the story. I had tried other subsequent competitions and my performance was ordinary by comparison. The other competitors were all getting better, through hard work, and I was staying the same and being left behind by being lazy. I eventually concluded the win in Calgary was a fluke. A bi-product of random events conspiring in my favour to beat out the only other 22 competitors who had shown up.

There have been long lasting consequences from feeling I had won everything at a very young age and without trying all that hard. I expected everything else in life to be similarly easy. When confronted by weightier matters — school and career mostly — if the results didn't come as quickly and as easily as they had back in the summer of 1976, I was subconsciously inclined to give up and move on.

Winning something — anything — is transformative. It's one of life's indelible punctuation marks. Everything else is categorized as either 'before' or 'after'. I felt the exaltation of victory most intensely at the moment of that final flight. It has decayed with a miserably short half-life even since then. I quickly forgot how it felt on that day, but can never forget it actually happened. Winning something satisfied nothing. It simply made me crave more winning, of which there has been precious little since that day. That, coupled with a lingering doubt that a solitary victory, 43 years ago, was nothing more than dumb luck.

But win I did, and for a brief shining moment, I was the undisputed national champion of something.

©2019 [Terence C. Gannon](#)

RIP Dad. It was a hell of a ride, wasn't it? Thank you so much for reading and if you feel so inclined, write a response! You can also [listen to this essay](#) as an episode of the [Not There Yet](#) podcast, read by the author. ~TCG

Read the [next article](#), return to the [previous article](#) or take me to the [table of contents](#) for this issue.

Community

The many ways for RCSD readers to keep in touch.

[The NEW RC Soaring Digest Staff](#)



In all of the social media platforms where RCSD participates, we're striving to create the online equivalent of the conviviality of a really good fly-in event. We can think of no better example after which to model ourselves than the Power Scale Soaring Association of the UK, pictured here at the Great Orme in September of 2019. (image: ©2019 , all rights reserved, used with permission.)

There have never been so many ways to connect online and we are committed to be on those social networking platforms where significant numbers of RCSD readers can be found. We attempt to use each platform in a distinct way so that we are simply not repeating content from one platform to another. But inevitably there will be some overlap. Note that our use of all of these platforms is guided by our [Social Media Policy](#). Here are all the platforms we're either on, are planning to be on, or are under consideration (in alphabetical order):

Facebook

This is one of the primary platforms that Bill and Bunny Kuhlman used to keep in touch with RCSD readers since the last issue rolled out in December of 2018. Bill Kuhlman, one of the Editors Emeritus of the NEW R/C Soaring Digest, will be the primary poster. If you're on Facebook we encourage you to like and follow [RC Soaring Digest](#) there as it will be a reliable way of getting updates on both the new publication as well as the amazing archive of past issues of R/C Soaring Digest along with other interesting, related artifacts.

Groups.io

This was the primary mailing list for the original R/C Soaring Digest and we will continue to use it for the new publication. If you want to be sure that you receive notifications — such as when new issues are released — then you'll want to add your email address to the [Groups.io](#) list.

Instagram (not yet active)

As most everybody knows, Instagram is primarily for posting an image, a group of images or short videos and then adding some pithy commentary along with some hashtags to aid in discoverability. Obviously, these media are all highly aligned with the content objectives of the R/C Soaring Digest and the interests of its readers.

One of the features (some say limitations) of Instagram is only one hyperlink can be active at any given time. What's more it can only be found in the profile as opposed to the individual posts themselves where **no** hyperlinks are allowed. There are some hacks to get around this limitation but we won't be using any of these.

Our eventual objective for Instagram, therefore, will be to present images and short videos related to the current issue. When Instagrammers discover

our posts they can use the 'link in bio' to navigate to the current issue and in doing so, perhaps become a new, regular reader. We will read and respond to any comments, so long as they fall within the parameters outlined in our [Social Media Policy](#).

Once we are active on Instagram, we will always have the current issue linked through the profile so you can expect that to change as each new issue is released. We'll gauge the timing of our launch on Instagram by the number of followers, so [follow us on Instagram](#) if you want that to happen sooner rather than later.

LinkedIn (under consideration)

We've heard LinkedIn described as 'Facebook but for business', which we think is partially true both in a favourable and unfavourable sense. But it does tend to be the platform which is used to research companies and organizations as well as the people associated with those entities. Given that RCSD provides coverage for what is primarily a *hobby* for most, what place would it have on LinkedIn?

Candidly, we're not sure R/C Soaring Digest *does* belong on LinkedIn. But if and when it does, it will be primarily to provide further information which will be of interest to advertisers and sponsors of the publication. If and when we decide to move onto LinkedIn, we'll announce that in the publication as well as on our other social platforms.

Medium

Medium is the primary home of the NEW R/C Soaring Digest. It will be used by authors to write their articles, submit them for editorial review, manage any updates required and then host the content once it is published. This process is covered in detail in [Writing for RCSD: Steps, Guidelines and a Few Pro Tips for Authors](#).

In addition to the role it plays as described above, Medium has some of the characteristics of a social media platform which is why you'll find discussion of it here in this article. Specifically, readers of any article on Medium, including those in RCSD, can rate the article with one or more [Claps](#). As you likely can guess, this is one way to show your approval and endorsement of the article to other potential readers. Like an article? Give it one clap. Like it a lot? Give it, say, five claps or maybe more — as many as you feel it deserves.

Another characteristic of social media found on Medium is the ability to write a response to an article which in turn, becomes its own article to which further responses can be written. In this manner it's possible to 'converse' through a series of linked stories. We will read all responses to articles in RCSD and where appropriate we will write responses to these. We will also encourage authors of the articles found in RCSD to read and where they feel its appropriate write their own responses as well.

Finally, the one additional social media characteristic of Medium is the ability to [customize your interests](#) which is accomplished by following publications, topics and individual authors.

While we are talking about Medium as being the home of the [NEW R/C Soaring Digest](#), it is also important to mention our web home as well: <https://new.rcsoaringdigest.com> which Bill and Bunny Kuhlman will continue to maintain for the foreseeable future. First a bit of explanation: there is one potential and significant flaw in RCSD being hosted on Medium — **ultimately, it is not a platform we either own or control.** While highly unlikely, it's not impossible for Medium to go away in the future for any number of reasons. Or it may have a change of policy which diminishes or eliminates the benefits of its use. <https://new.rcsoaringdigest.com> is our strategy to protect against any of these contingencies. As new RCSD content is published on Medium, a version of that content will also be hosted on <https://new.rcsoaringdigest.com> so we have a bulletproof, long term home on the web of our own.

R/C Groups

We do not have a formal presence on RC Groups but it is huge community of interest and it is inevitable that RCSD readers and potential contributors will be found there. As such and from time-to-time, you will find posts from RCSD in the [Sailplane Talk](#) forum. We also do our best to keep up with the questions and answers which flow from these posts.

Slack (not yet active)

Many readers will already be familiar with Slack in their work environment. It is described by the company as “a channel-based messaging platform” which really isn’t all that helpful is it? Think of it a multi-user chat system where each text message is assigned to a ‘channel’ roughly analogous to a forum on *R/C Groups* for example. Slack is intended for highly interactive chat and the sharing of files and other artifacts. The [RCSD Slack workspace](#) has been setup but is not currently active. That said, if you are familiar with Slack and would like to join the RCSD workspace to get the ball rolling, go for it. We’ll see you there. If you’re not familiar with Slack but are intrigued, there is a good [Getting Started](#) guide available which kicks off with [What is Slack?](#)

An exciting future possibility is multilingual chats on Slack. Participants will select the language in which they would like to read and write messages and all the translation happens real-time and on-the-fly. We’re currently evaluating add-in applications to facilitate this feature. This is seen as a nice complement to our intention to publish The NEW R/C Soaring Digest in the various languages submitted by authors.

Twitter (not yet active)

Often thought of as *l'enfant terrible* of social media — often much deserved — we still believe the platform has considerable merit and we intend to develop a presence on Twitter in the near future. The primary initial use will

be to use a series of tweets, linked together in a thread, to create an index of the current issue. The first couple of tweets will highlight the first article, the next couple will feature the second article and so on until all articles have been covered. Twitter makes it relatively easy to scroll back and forth within a thread so it's an effective method of increasing the 'surface area' of the current issue and hopefully increase readership as a result.

We will also use Twitter to publicize other newsworthy information both about RCSD itself as well as other news about R/C soaring in general or anything we feel will be of compelling interest to RCSD readers.

As with all of participation in social media, our use of Twitter will be guided by the [Social Media Policy](#) and we will use the tools recently introduced by the platform to keep the conversation civil, smart, focused and accountable. Similar to Instagram, we will time our launch on Twitter based on interest, so [follow us on Twitter](#) if you would like us to move that up the priority scale.

Vimeo (not yet active)

Similar to Medium, Vimeo really isn't a social media platform in a traditional sense. However, also similar to Medium, it has characteristics of social media which is the reason why we include discussion of it here. The Vimeo [Like](#) is the equivalent of the Medium Clap. There is also the ability to leave comments on Vimeo as well as 'follow' other Vimeo users. We will also read and where appropriate respond to all comments with that interaction, of course, guided by our [Social Media Policy](#).

Incidentally, we expect a significant number of contributors to RCSD will want to embed video content into their articles. We also expect much of that video to already be hosted on platforms like YouTube, for example. For those authors who do **not** have their video content hosted on the web, we offer the [RCSD Vimeo account](#) as a home for that. Once video content is hosted on the web in this manner, it can be embedded in a Medium article with a single line of text.

In addition, we will also be putting together a series of our own in-house videos, initially to provide training support for authors on some of the trickier aspects of using Medium for article creation. These how-to videos will also be hosted on our Vimeo account.

Is there a social media platform out there where a significant number of RCSD readers can be found? If so, please [let us know](#) about it. We want to be there, so long as its capabilities and participants are consistent with our [Social Media Policy](#).

We looking forward to meeting up with you somewhere out there on the social media landscape!

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Writing for RCSD

Steps, guidelines and a few Pro Tips for authors.

[The NEW RC Soaring Digest Staff](#)



Thanks to for making available freely on .

The NEW R/C Soaring Digest is a reader written publication to which any and all are invited to contribute. Here's an outline of the basic steps (with more detail on each provided below):

1. Sign up for a Medium account making sure you use your real name — no aliases, handles or nicknames, please. You'll also need to upload a reasonably current head-and-shoulders image of yourself.
2. [Contact us](#) to let us know you want to submit one (or more?) stories and we'll add you in the role of RCSD *Writer*.
3. Write your story but **make sure you keep it in Draft**. This is where you can also add images, videos, plan-size or simple page-size PDFs and other rich content.
4. Submit your story to RCSD, at which point an *Editor* will review, possibly

suggest edits, and then schedule your story for publication.

5. Wait for the publication date to roll around and then admire your handiwork! Once published, you'll have access to some cool readership statistics.

That's it. It's intended to be a very easy process to follow. Of course, if you have any suggestions as to how it can be improved or if you have any specific questions we would [love to hear from you](#). Now, here's more detail on each of the steps.

Sign Up For a Free Medium Account

The best place to start is with Medium's own Help Center article [Sign In or Sign Up to Medium](#). For this there are two options: you can use an existing social media account such as Twitter or Facebook or you can use a simple email address. We have no preference as to which you use but — and this is **important** — your Medium account must show your **real name**. Aliases, handles and nicknames that disguise your real identity **are** permitted by Medium, but they **are not** permitted when contributing to RCSD. We also ask you to upload a fairly current head-and-shoulders image of yourself. There is no charge for either setting up or maintaining a Medium account and you are never required to provide a credit card number.

Once you have your basic account setup there are some additional customization options of which you can avail yourself if you so choose. In particular your Medium [Profile Page](#) is a great place to let RCSD readers know what *else* you do other than write great articles for RCSD. There are too many options to go over them all here so we suggest you simply go and [browse](#) your options and tinker here and there over time. **Pro Tip:** if you have a side business (or even a main business?!) selling products or services which are of interest to RCSD readers, your *Profile Page* is a great place to link to this information. When readers click on your attribution at the bottom of your articles, they will be taken right to your *Profile Page* putting your neat

stuff just two clicks away from any of your articles.

If writing for RCSD unlocks your inner Charles Dickens and you decide to write the next great Dickensian novel on Medium, you are free to go ahead and do that with the same Medium account you setup for RCSD. That said, we probably won't add your magnum opus to an issue of RCSD (but then again, you never know).

Get Added as a Writer to R/C Soaring Digest

RCSD is a [Medium Publication](#). You relate to the world of Medium Publications through a role of which there are three: *Owner* (that's us), *Editor* (that's also us but it's possible it *could* be you at some point) and *Writer* (that's definitely you). Being identified as a *Writer* for RCSD is all you need to write and publish for the publication. However, it is something that needs to be set up at our end. It doesn't take long at all but you will have to [email us](#) and let us know your account is setup and you are ready to go. **Note:** if you simply want to *read* RCSD, you do not need to set up a Medium account (unless you want to [Clap](#) for a story or write a response to it).

There is little formality in assigning you the role of *Writer*. The one thing we'll check — *for sure* — is that you're following the cardinal rule of RCSD *Writers* and that is you are using your real name. We'll also check there is a current head-and-shoulders image. Once that's established it's literally a 30 second process and we'll ensure you're notified once it's complete. With that done, you're ready to start writing. Actually, you could have started writing your article before being added as a *Writer* but there will be no means for submitting your article once it's ready to go. And that would never do.

Oh, yes, one additional thing: once it's complete it's best you familiarize yourself with the (currently under construction) [Editorial Policy](#). That will be used as a guide for what material is encouraged, what's simply acceptable and a few things which absolutely will never make the cut on the way to publication in RCSD. It's common sense for the most part. If, however, you

eventually read the *Editorial Policy* and can't live it for some unlikely reason, it's unlikely RCSD is a good fit for your otherwise excellent work. We may even be able to help you find a better place for it.

Write Your Story

The best place to start before you start to write your story is Medium's own [Writing and Publishing a Story](#). However, when you get to this part...**STOP:**

Publishing your story

Story Preview

Include a high-quality image in your story to make it more inviting to readers.

Write a preview title

Write a preview subtitle...

Note: Changes here will affect how your story appears in public places like Medium's homepage — not the story itself.

Add or change tags (up to 5) so readers know what your story is about

Add a tag...

Meter my story so it is eligible to earn money.

[Learn more](#) about what happens to your post when you publish.

Publish now Schedule for later

- 1 When you're ready to publish your story, click the **Publish** button in top-right corner to bring up the publish menu.
- 2 From this menu, you can optionally add tags, customize your title and subtitle, schedule to publish your post later, and more.
- 3 In the Story preview section, you can change the preview image on your story, and customize your title and subtitle. Please note that your image must be added to your post if you want to set it as your featured image. [Learn more](#).
- 4 If you're enrolled in the [Medium Partner Program](#), you can also select your story to be eligible for revenue based on the engagement you post generates once it's published. To make sure your post will be monetized, select the **Meter my story so it is eligible to earn money** checkbox.
- 5 When you're done making changes, click **Publish now** to make the story immediately visible on Medium and available for anyone to read.

What we're specifically saying is do **NOT** Publish your story quite yet. Submitting your story to RCSD requires a slightly different workflow as described immediately below.

Before we move on, however, one additional article we would highly

recommend is the Medium Blog's [Best Practices for Writing on Medium](#). Not everything in this article is 100% applicable to writing for RCSD but if you *do* follow all of their recommendations your writing will likely only get better as a result. After all, if you're going to do something you might as well do it as well as you can, right?

Pro Tip: As a reflection of the international nature of our collective interest, you are welcome and encouraged to submit articles in **any language** supported by [Google Translate](#). We'll publish them in the language submitted. The only proviso is that our *Editors* are currently fluent in exactly one language: English. Therefore we'll be using Google Translate to edit your article. What that means, of course, is that our notes back to you will be based on the Google translated text as opposed to the original text.

Submit Your Story to R/C Soaring Digest

For that, you should review Medium's Help Center [Add a Draft or Post to Publication](#) article. At that point an *Editor* will be assigned and will promptly review your article.

The *Editor* will use a light editorial hand, common sense and the (currently under construction) [Editorial Policy](#) to review your article. While there's a chance it will be perfect upon submission, it is more likely that you'll be provided some actionable, constructive feedback to help improve the suitability of your article for RCSD. You can then edit as you see fit and in turn let us know when you're ready for us to take another look. It's even possible there may be a couple of iterations of this editing process. Rest assured that we will only make substantial and material changes to your article with your permission which we will obtain in advance.

The only other item which will automatically be appended to your article is the navigation links which enable the reader to find the previous and next article within a given issue.

Once the article is ready to go it is then scheduled for publication which will likely be within a 24 hour window prior to release of the issue in which appears. At this point, there is not much more to do that wait until that time rolls around.

Note that you are 100% in control of the process up until your article is published. If, for any reason, you choose not to publish you are welcome to withdraw your article from consideration. Once it's published in an issue of RCSD, however, we ask that it becomes a permanent artifact of RCSD although copyright remains with you, the original author.

How Your Article Goes Live

It's important to note that we are striving to make The NEW R/C Soaring Digest have the same high quality look and feel Bill and Bunny Kuhlman carefully curated over the years.

However, the NEW R/C Soaring Digest is 'digital first' online publication which — at least for now — has no physical equivalent. There is no absolute notion of being [off stone](#), no huge printing presses roll, no beautiful smelling, tied up bundles ever hit the paper shop's floor and you never get to experience of accidentally 'discovering' a new issue a bit before you expected it. Sadly those days, for the most part, are gone.

Fundamentally, an 'issue' in this new digital first world is simply a collection of your's and others' articles assembled into some sort of logical sequence all of which are made available and are presented together at a given point in time. This means that we may schedule your article for release slightly in advance of the release of the issue. This is so we have the final unique and permanent URL for your article which can then subsequently be included in related artifacts like the email notification and the issue's feature page. You may even find that Medium's discovery tools result in a few readers even before your article 'officially' comes out in an issue. Grab 'em if you can, we say!

While we will be putting together a separate article on the analytics for your article to which you have access, suffice to say for now that you'll be able to know how your article is doing both in terms of the number of readers, how much of your article they have collectively read and lots of other interesting information which you can use to guide your future writing efforts.

In Conclusion

Thank you so much for reading. We are going to do whatever we can to make your writing experience for RCSD as easy and fun as possible. If there is anything we can do to make it even easier and even more fun, by all means [drop us a line](#).

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The Trailing Edge

What's coming up in the next issue.

[The NEW RC Soaring Digest Staff](#)



"La photo a été prise a Lourdes dans les Hautes-Pyrénées, France. Cette pente est très réputée. Mon chien sur la photo ma suivi pendant 15 ans sur cette pente, il est mort le 9 decembre 2020." — Regis Geledan (image: ©2012 , all rights reserved. Used here with permission.)

In *The Trailing Edge*, the article which will wrap up the current issue of R/C Soaring Digest and foreshadow the next, we hope to find a particularly inspiring image to send readers on their way 'til next month. Perhaps it was beginners luck, but we think we found an absolute dandy our first time out. It's a truly gorgeous photo by Regis Geledan taken in les Hautes-Pyrénées in southern France just adjacent to Spain. But it turns out there is a bit more to the photo than first meets the eye. Our Managing Editor Terence C. Gannon picks up the story:

"I was simply browsing through Flickr when I came across Monsieur

Geledan's photo and it stopped me dead in my tracks. I realize I wear my love of R/C soaring on my sleeve, but less obvious is I'm also a great lover of our four-legged canine companions. What better picture to wrap up my first issue. When I asked Regis for his permission to use the photo — which he kindly granted — he mentioned that the dog featured in the photo, his beloved Jack Russell terrier Rubis, was his constant companion for 15 years when flying at this location and others. Very sadly, Regis also mentioned Rubis passed away this past December" (see image caption for Geledan's original text in French).

"So the photo is an even better fit for this issue than I could have ever imagined. It's a perfect metaphor for how our hobby becomes inextricably woven into our lives along with all those other things we know and love. I can only imagine that while shredding new holes in the sky with *FRA 671* mercifully pushes away all the extraneous little annoyances in his life — as flying tends to do for all of us — there will be a little space left over for Geledan's memories of Rubis getting into some sort of delightful terrier trouble while the plane is in the air. This intoxicating mixture of being 'in the moment' combined with happy recollections of Rubis is a perfect example of the things which make our lives most beautiful, fulfilling and and rewarding."

That's it for this month's RCSD. How did we do? Please don't hesitate to [let us know](#). Also, do you have the next inspiring image and story for *The Trailing Edge*? If so, we want to [hear from you](#). We also again encourage you to put '[pen to paper](#)' and share your expertise and experiences with RCSD readers around the globe. Deadline for submissions for the February issue is **2021-02-21** so there is still plenty of time.

Until next time...fair winds and blues skies!

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