

The Ships Unfinished

Some of the best flying time of all is with your own good buddies on the local turf. The club contest! Just a dozen guys out flying for points and glory in a relaxed and casual atmosphere. Let's face it. 10% of any club's membership may be pretty new to the game and inexperienced, and an equal number may be really of regional meet contest calibre. That leaves the vast bulk of the members more at home on the local pea-patch. We all feel more relaxed at our own club field, but why then do so few even turn out for the club's own little contest events? "Let's have a glider meet next month," says one, and the motion is carried. On another occasion it's a biplane, or pattern, or a pylon meet. Good idea!

The date arrives, and a scant few ships show up. Ten guys planned on flying in it, ten are on hand to watch, but five models on the line. Why? They didn't finish building on time? Who does? I wonder if part of the blame shouldn't be levied at the clubs for once, in scheduling things too soon. "You've got a whole month to build," they say. Well, is this really enough? We think back and base our experiences on yesterday, when we were carefree teen-age students. Lots of time for building then, and less complex structures. Built a model in a week then. Now we spend a day or so just aligning pushrods.

"Let's have a glider meet next month." Well, this fellow that suggests it has his glider ready to go already, but the other ten souls that agree it's a wonderful idea are already running out of time. It will take them a week to settle on a design, a strategy in their mind, and perhaps longer to raid the cookie jar for the wherewithal. Three weeks left? Sounds like enough time, but is it really? Prior family commitments intrude, down-time on the car, overtime, radio servicing, a hang-up for wood. All these things make the calendar's days flick past like pages in the wind. And so, on contest day, a disappointed would-be flyer stands and watches while a spider on the bench spins the first threads over an 88% complete super-soarer. "Little incentive to finish it now, what with the biplane event next month, why the club winch doesn't get out all that often." In desperation the would-be flyer turns thoughts to the next of coming events.

FLYING REPORT



Dodgson Designs HiJacker II

Wouldn't it be a little better to have a scheduled plan months ahead for a club's affairs? Exact days could be left flexible a bit, but to know in April or May that a seaplane meet is due in August, a scale event in September, pylon in October, and a visible running count-down of days remaining on display at every club meeting. "10 more shopping days to Christmas" kind of thing might keep all aware and alert to the proximity of the date. And maybe a practice day to fly the event might be scheduled a week ahead, a chance to fly out the bugs, gain some confidence. All the more incentive to finish a ship earlier. How about all would-be contestants in the planned event bringing their near-completed aircraft to the meeting before, sort of a "show and tell" session on their progress, and another bit of inspirational pressure on their glue-encrusted bodies to get things finished up. It all adds up to a bit of gentle encouragement from the club level to get the ships built in time, and out upon the field in a competitive environment.

Product Notes

DODGSON DESIGNS, 2904 South, West Camano Dr., Camano Island, WA 98292, has recently informed us that as of January 6, 1976 they have purchased all rights to the Gull and HiJacker sailplanes from T&H Enterprises. They are currently kitting improved versions of the two ships called the Gull II and HiJacker II. HiJacker II features a clear fiberglass fuselage, foam wing cores and balsa sheeting, complete hardware package including Dodgson Designs L-3 Aileron Linkage and all the wood parts (except sheeting) is machine cut. The Gull II features complete hardware including the new optional spoilers, clear fiberglass fuselage, quick shape stabilizer, a stronger wind and stiffer wing wires. The new HiJacker II and Gull II both cost \$69.00 retail and are available at hobbyshops.

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FRONT COVER: Examine the details and careful weathering and coloration on Jerry Puleo's detailed version of the Dave Platt Models FW-190 D9 kit that is featured in a review on page 33. This plane won first in Post World War I Military Scale at the 1976 WRAM Show. Dave Platt won Stand-Off Scale at the 1974 NATS with his own version of the same plane. Kodachrome by Richard Uravitch.

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I am a Thermal

Ninety-three million miles cannot quench the fire. The radiant energy of the burning sun focuses on a meadowland and I, a thermal, am born.

The field heats and an upwelling of air marks the beginning. From the tree line and all about a breath of wind filters in to fill the vortex, and the cyclone is born.

Come fly your model with me, find me if you can. I am invisible, but all about. Fickle as the wind. Maybe I will take you up, or shall I let you down? My spiraling currents may rise faster than your downward glide, then trimmed within me you will rise to the cloud I am building. If you fail the test I will whip you ever tighter in a graveyard spiral and send you back to the earth where you belong.

I am a thermal. I am a tornado. As gentle as a spinning leaf, or when angered, a 500 mile an hour messenger of death. And all things inbetween. I am a thermal, an elemental force of nature, born of star heat. Give your wings to me and I will fly you with the hawks into the silent world that is the ominous black belly of a building thunderhead. Dare you come higher? My winds within reach 200 miles an hour, a whirling world of straight-up hail.

I am a gentle thermal, so beautiful to see. A cyclone at practice. Do you trust me with your glider? Will I return your \$400 toy? Or shall I simply ingest it, and throw its broken bones so many miles away?

My winds are not for the faint of heart. To ride with me you must strain your sun-scorched eyes, and trust me far downwind. Always at the edge of range and on an ever-diminishing battery. A thin, frail bird whirling within my rising currents, flashing bits of reflections to your worried eyes so far below.

I am a thermal. I know no rules. A challenge to the spirit of the hawk. His wings lock steady in my winds and his eyes search for lunch. The pigeon that dies below may never see what hit him.

To the boatman, I am the last wave, a waterspout.

To the pilot, I am St. Elmo's blue-green hell and a hail of ice.

I am a thermal. Come fly with me.

AUGUST 1976



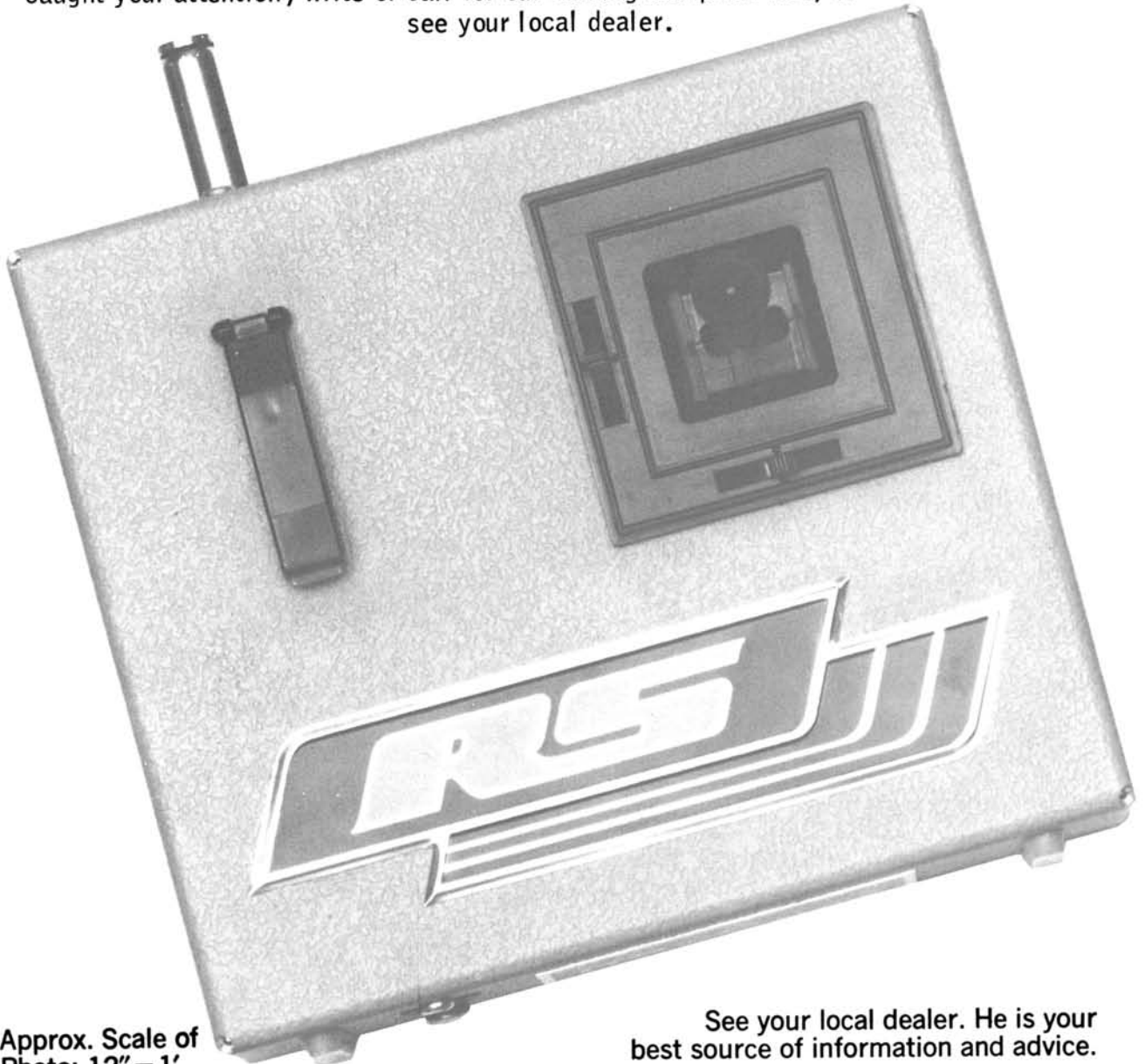
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