



December 2020

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Jeff Killen



Last December I began a winter project with one of my “hangar queens”, the Calypso, a model given to me by a former club member, Randy Hatfield. The project took me past my desired finish date, which was June 2020. But I’m happy to report that a few weeks ago, I was able to get the finished re-work project into the air. It flew well, much like I remembered from years past.

So I have been thinking about any other possible projects awaiting in my garage. One immediately came to mind; it is my Piper J-3 semi-scale model. Like the Calypso, the J-3 has been hanging there in my garage unflown for several years. The model, and things associated with it, trace back to many important stories, and fond memories for me. So I will endeavor to relate those to you now, along with a few pictures that I hope will bring the story to life. I bought the J-3 as a Sig kit early in the 2000s, and worked through the build over one winter. The plane was powered then by a glow .40 engine and had wing

struts which I felt were needed as the wing always impressed me as being somewhat weak structurally. The .40 was adequate for the light weight and low wing loading the plane had. As I recall, the weight was around 4-5 lbs, and with a wingspan of 70 inches it flew slow and was a bit of a floater. Here’s an old picture of it, as it existed then.



Picture of first J-3, with me kneeling next to it.

When I first built the model, I had a specific reason for covering it in orange, and then using blue for windows and trim. The reason is that I wanted to have a plane pointing back to my college years. So I think of this model as my “UVA memorial” airplane. From 1970 to 1975 I attended the University of Virginia. I wanted a memorial airplane because two very good things happened in my life during those years. The two things were:

- I received what would turn out to be a very good education that would prepare me for my future career. I studied applied math engineering, and also was in a Navy ROTC program. After my 4 years in the Navy, one of my future jobs, upon applying for the job

required me to bring in my diploma and show them proof of the degree I was claiming. That was a bit of a surprise. But it seems that I was always able to do an adequate job in my work. Those days at UVA were an important preparation for those jobs.

- My spiritual life, which was at the time I arrived in 1970, going nowhere received a significant boost which has followed me throughout my life. I will be purposely vague at this point and say no more about that now. If there is an interest in what that's about, just let me know and I can discuss that with you over a cup of coffee or lunch.

The first story of flying the J-3 comes from shortly after building it. I took a friend of mine out to the field, and got the J-3 up in the air. Near the end of a flight, I turned the transmitter over to him, and let him take a try at flying. My friend, with no experience, was not a smooth flyer. Just as I was going to take back the transmitter, the unthinkable happened. The wing snapped in two! We watched as the two wing panels fluttered down to the ground, and the fuselage plummeted straight down like a lawn dart !

Surveying the wreck yielded the following information. The wing panels were in-tact. As I recall, the struts were such a pain to attach that I sometimes flew the model without them, and I believe they were not attached on that fateful day. A curious (and fortunate) thing occurred with the fuselage. We found it hanging by the tail in a small tree of about 7 foot height. There was a clean snap separating the fuselage into 2 pieces, with the break occurring around some ¼ square balsa that encircled the forward cabin just before reaching the fuel tank. The tail was undamaged. So repairing the fuselage was rather simple; just attach the two pieces back together with some glue, and the repair was complete.

The wing rebuild posed a much greater problem. Realizing that the structure was weak (the only sheeting was the leading edge of the top of the wing), I decided to revert to a building skill from my past. Years ago, as a teenager when I flew R/C with my dad, we got into the habit of building foam wings for our planes, and then sheeting them with balsa. So I

purchased a hot wire foam cutter and some foam panels. This was around 2006. My dad (pictured below in his barber shop with a violin he loved to play when he had breaks at work) lived in Virginia Beach. I took the panels and the cutter to his home, and one weekend during a visit, we cut the wing panels for the J-3. It was one of the last great memories for me of my dad, as he passed away early in 2007. Back in the day (1965-1968), we were members of Tidewater R/C, and my dad even served as President of the club one year.



Picture of my dad in his barber shop in Norfolk, VA

As I recall, it took me several months to complete the foam wing. I had to cut the appropriate spar slots in the panels, build the V wing braces from plywood from scratch, and craft the servo mounts and wire slots to service the barn door style ailerons I employed for the wing. Then I sheeted the wing on both sides, and covered it. In all, the weight of the wing was much more (maybe 1 lb more) than the first wing, but it was much stronger.

And while making improvements seemed to be the thing to do, I traded out the .40 glow motor for an electric motor. I settled on an Eflite Power 32 using two 3s Lipo batteries, and swinging a big 14/10 inch propeller. I have flown the model a few times (years ago) since making these changes. The plane flies OK, but with the heavier wing and higher wing loading, it must be flown at a higher speed; it is no longer a floater ! With the added strength of the wing, the struts are no longer needed, although the look of the plane is not as appealing (a J-3 without struts ?). Maybe I will put some struts on it just to improve the appearance.



Picture of the rebuilt J-3, without struts

So, the plane is basically flyable. I will look over the wing for hangar damage, and also to tighten the covering. This project may not need a lot of repair. I have to use the older of my two remaining Airtronics radios, as I have Airtronics servos with their special connectors which locks me in to that radio unless I'm willing to do a lot of connector conversions.

So there it is, a few stories, pictures, and thoughts about one of my models. I think many of us have such stories (thanks, Dave Rothbart, for telling us the one about your dad in your article a few months ago). I will be glad to add these into the newsletter anytime you send them to me.

Jeff Killen

EDITOR'S NOTES – Upcoming Events

Jeff Killen

- 1. Club Meeting, virtually, 7:00 PM, 12/22/2020**

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Jeff Killen

The club meeting was held virtually on November 24. About twelve members were present during the

zoom call/meeting. Hurray, my connection remained strong this time; it was much better than last month.

News

We discussed a few news items. Nic Burhans reminded everyone to get your dues in for 2021, if you have not done so already. Charlie K. chimed in with a reminder to renew your AMA as well.

We sent the Fauquier Food Bank \$100 in October, and an additional \$165 in November. Last year we gave \$275 to the food bank.

Thanks to Dick Sutton for the nice tribute to Tom Chipley on the web site. At the meeting, we reminisced about old times with Tom, how he did AMA art work for the national magazine, his work with Mud Ducks, and his aversion to technology. To all of this I would add that Tom provided frequent articles to the club newsletter in my early years of preparing it. He was a neat guy and will be missed.

Thanks to Charlie Koustenis for cleaning up the porta potty with a power wash liquid by Rustoleum called JoMar. It stops mold, and the results were good !

The crusher award for the year was discussed. There was no clear consensus on who should get this award.

Board Member Reports

Vice President – Bill Towne noted that the Christmas Party has been cancelled, but we will have a December monthly meeting on 12/22. Mowing is done for the fall; batteries will be put on trickle charge.

Treasurer - Nic Burhans reported that we have \$6037 in the bank currently; this includes \$500 from the balloon folks who recently ran their trucks on the field. We are doing well for the year, as we had low expenses this year due to cancelled events. A final bill for the porta potty is outstanding. We have 19 renewals so far for 2021.

Field Marshall – John Gilbert – nothing to report

Secretary – Jeff Killen – nothing to report

Safety Officer – Ernie Padgette – nothing to report

Member-at-Large – Charlie Koustenis – nothing to report

Dick Sutton – Web Site – nothing to report

Presentation

Nic Burhans did a nice presentation on his experiences in the Navy flying in the P-3 Orion aircraft. Nice job, Nic !

MORE GREAT MODEL HISTORY

John Hunton

The Guillow model airplane company had its beginnings as Nu Craft Toys in 1926. The company was founded by Paul K. Guillow, a World War I U. S. Navy Aviator. His experience as a Navy pilot kindled in him a great interest in aviation and eventually lead to the creation and marketing of a line of small balsa wood, shelf model construction kits of famous World War I combat aircraft.

In 1927 Charles A. Lindbergh flew the "Spirit of St. Louis" from New York to Paris, France on the first successful solo flight across the Atlantic. National interest in all matters pertaining to aviation peaked. With that came the success of his card game "The New Lindy Flying Game" Paul K. Guillow found his model airplane kits in great demand.

The company which originally started in the barn of the family home soon required a larger facility and subsequently was moved to the second floor of a service station in downtown Wakefield, MA. In 1933 his rapidly expanding business was again moved to its present day location at 40 New Salem St., Wakefield, MA. Then started operating under the name of Paul K. Guillow, the business sold its first shelf model kits to a national chain and was besieged with orders catapulting Paul into his role as a major player in the balsa model industry.

The first line of Guillow balsa shelf model kits offered consisted of 12 different W.W.I biplane fighters with 6" wing spans that retailed for 10¢ each. Each kit contained a 3-view plan, balsa wood cement, 2 bottles of colored dope, a strip of bamboo for wing and landing gear struts, all in all a great value even in those distant days. For several years up to the mid 40's, this initial line of balsa shelf model

kits sold well all over the country and, during the time, many more models were added including a line of 50" wing span models that sold for \$1.50.

Paul Guillow, as a recognized authority on aviation history, supplemented his production of model airplanes with the publication of four aviation books. His first in 1941, "Tom's Book of Flying Models" was followed by "Flying Models - How to build Them" in 1942, "Building An Airplane" in 1943 and his final "Flying Model Airplane Plans" in 1944.

During the Second World War most of the balsa wood was being diverted for military use in the production of rafts and life jackets making it nearly impossible to acquire. Balsa wood comes from Ecuador and the war effort and German U-boats conspired to make life difficult for balsa model builders. This did not deter Paul from supplying his customers with model kits. Anxious to build the new WWII aircraft Hellcats, Avengers, Mitchells, Mustangs, Messerschmitts, Stearmans, Corsairs and Lightnings model builders were forced to switch to paper cardboard and pine although not always successfully. Guillow also served the war effort by supplying the armed forces with a number of drone aircraft to help U.S. gunners sharpen their skills.

Post war prosperity and the new plastic models caused a decline in the "stick and tissue" business. With plummeting sales in the kit business Guillow's concentrated on producing inexpensive hand launched and rubber powered gliders.

A dozen new gliders were merchandised in a large variety of attractive displays to suit the needs of all customers from the "mom and pop" stores to the larger department stores. In the 1950's a resurgence in the demand for "stick and tissue" kits brought new prosperity to Guillow's.

Paul K. Guillow passed away in 1951. His widow Gertrude H. Guillow incorporated the company and became both President and Treasurer. With the help of Paul's brother Roscoe and Earl Smith as officers of the company William Colwell production manager, Lou Andrews design engineer, they carried on Paul's dream. In 1953 the "Jetfire" glider was introduced as the first glider to be mass-produced and packaged on a high speed packaging machine.

This new technology enabled Guillow's to keep up with the booming economy and place its gliders in the up and coming chain stores. As America's war veterans had children of their own, the baby boomers started to become model airplane builders. Guillow answered their call by producing hundreds of thousands of flying model airplane kits to satisfy their building and creative needs. As the 60's approached, Guillow's furthered their marketing by introducing many different counter and floor stand displays, using their vast assortment of hand launched and rubber powered toy planes.

Not all of Guillow's customers were happy and devoted to their new hobby as stated by this excerpt from a letter, dated 7/14/59, that still hangs in the lobby of Guillow's today - "I think that you have the lousiest planes made from the lousiest wood (please take this as an insult). If you make planes like that put extra parts in them so I can fix the broken, rotten, lousy, dirty, crummy airplanes... if your planes aren't better I will sue you for fraud. Sincerely, Robert Higgins... P.S. drop dead!"

Fortunately, Guillow's has millions of loyal and satisfied customers and has received many complimentary letters over the years.

Mrs. Gertrude Guillow retired as President in 1980 and was succeeded by Earl Smith as President. Retiring in 1983 Earl passed the gavel to Vice President William Colwell with National Sales Manager Alson Smith becoming Vice President. William Colwell retired in 1989 promoting Alson Smith to President and Thomas Barker and John MacDonald to Vice President. In 2009 Alson Smith returned to National Sales Manager and promoted Thomas Barker to the position of President. The year 2013 and 2014 brought many changes to the management of Guillow's. John MacDonald moved on and Alson Smith retired. In early 2015 Ivan Resnick became Vice President of Sales.

In the mid 1980's Guillow's diversified its business and entered into the promotional products industry by custom printing messages on the wings of inexpensive hand launched gliders. With the purchase of Tiger Incorporated in 1994, Guillows acquired foam products to enhance this division of its business.

In early 1998, Guillow purchased long time competitor Comet Industries/North Pacific of Chicago. This purchase transformed Paul K. Guillow, Inc. into one of the world's largest toy airplane manufacturers and created one of the most complete lines of flying toys available, as seen in the pages of this web site.

Paul Guillow's dream still lives on in the company today as we continue to strive to keep young and old happily building and flying toy and hobby airplanes models. For the past 85 years nearly every American boy, girl and young at heart have enjoyed the inexpensive balsa wood gliders of the Paul K. Guillow Company. Sunny afternoons flying Guillow gliders have created fond memories and helped imaginations soar.

In the past 85 years we have gone from "one man's dream" to a leader in the toy industry! With our continued growth we now have state of the art machinery and facilities to produce millions of planes a year !!

We would like to thank you for your past support and hope to continue our relationship for many years in the future.

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