

More Soar Stuff!

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At the BASS awards banquet last December, I gave a little talk about modeler's stuff which was primarily an appeal to our spouses to be tolerant of that which is important to us, even though it competes for space in the house. Since then, I have received a number of comments about this talk, which indicates to me that I touched a nerve here and there. So herewith I will expand on this vital subject and get more into the highly technical aspects of stuff.

Stuff can be broken down into several categories. These categories are

- (a) Essential Stuff
 - (b) Good Stuff
 - (c) Stuff that has Value for Sale or Trade
 - (d) Stuff that is Obsolete and Unneeded
- (or category (c) stuff that has been around for at least five years)

We will analyze each category in turn.

Category (a) Essential Stuff.

This category includes all of our flyable sailplanes, radio gear, hi-starts, winches (if we have one) and all shop tools and test equipment. It includes field equipment, such as canopies, folding chairs, field box and chargers. Some advanced competition pilots even have RVs, which definitely fall into category (a). And, lastly, there are a few lucky pilots around whose wives are so supportive of our hobby that to be fair, we have to make them honorary members of category (a).

Category (b) Good Stuff. All usable supplies are in this category, including balsa, plywood, fiberglass, carbon fiber sheets, covering material of all kinds, and at least six kinds of glue. Extra parts such as servos, receivers, batteries, switches, connectors and wire are category (b). Also sandpaper, music wire, spare control cables, clevises, and lots of little items that come in small plastic bags. Epoxy paint (two cans for each color), thinner, alcohol, solvents and various liquids that come in cans and bottles are all category (b).

Category (c) Stuff that has Value for Sale or Trade. This category of stuff includes kits, whether started or not, that you will never finish. It includes your old non-computer radios no longer in use. Much category (c) stuff is generated when a pilot moves from one part of the hobby to another, such as from power to sailplanes, down grading stuff from categories (a) and (b) to category (c). Collectibles are in this category, unless you are into a related hobby of collecting, say, old kits or engines, in which case this other hobby stuff must be treated separately and is therefore, not within the scope of this analysis.

Category (d) Stuff that is Obsolete and Unneeded

(or category (c) stuff that has been around for at least five years).

There is considerable overlap between category (c) and category (d), and this category is established because there is some stuff that simply has no use to anybody, but a true modeler has an inevitable psychological barrier to putting it in the trash can. Category (c) stuff that has been around for five years or more automatically migrates to category (d). If it hasn't been sold or traded in five years, it no longer is privileged to reside in category (c). Examples of category (d) stuff would be Nyrods, releasable tow hooks and bungee cord for hi-starts. Also old boxes of balsa scraps, hardened paint and razor planes. Old kit plans of ordinary sailplanes are category (d), as are surviving pieces of crashed sailplanes.

Extensive polls and statistical analyses have shown that the average modeler's stuff breaks down as detailed in the box below. What can we learn from this

Stuff	By Value	By Volume
Category (a)	47.5%	34.0%
Category (b)	36.5%	39.5%
Category (c)	13.5%	16.7
Category (d)	2.5%	9.8%

NOTES:

Category (b) Volume assumes two bench or floor power tools. This percentage would be higher for modelers with full basement workshops, and the other categories would be correspondingly lower.

Magazines are not included since most households have multiple subscriptions and it would be unfair for the modeler to include model magazines as being occupied by hobby stuff until they are five years old, at which time they can be justifiably consigned to category (d).

RVs and wives are excluded from category (a) since neither take up specific household space and their value includes certain non-hobby parameters.

Analysis? The most important fact is that 73.5% (volume-wise) of existing stuff is the irreducible minimum that can support our hobby. Only 9.8% of stuff could be disposed of without impairment of our hobby and the resultant psychological distress. The other 16.7% (category (c), might be reduced somewhat, but not entirely, since there would be some "float" as category (b) stuff is downgraded to category (c) while stuff from this category is traded, sold or downgraded to category (d).

"A good idea is to put all of this stuff into a large box even if its not full to maximize the psychological impact Of this selfless act."

The bottom line is that no matter how conscientious a modeler might be in keeping his hobby stuff to a minimum, the best that can be done, on the average, would be a reduction of approximately 18.15% to 81.85% of his present complement of stuff. Space wise, the space recouped for other household usage would be almost negligible. In financial terms, if he actually threw away all his category (d) stuff, he could only recoup 6.75% of the total value of his investment, hardly enough to warrant the effort.

This extensive analysis leads to the rational conclusion that the most logical procedure is to sell off bits and pieces of category (c) stuff (see classified ads in this issue), throw away category (d) stuff and maybe reduce volume of the remainder by packing it in smaller boxes (but under no circumstances should category (a) and category (b) stuff be jeopardized). All reductions in hobby stuff should be accompanied by a loud announcement such as, "Look, dear, I am getting rid of all this model stuff, ain't that nice?" A good idea is to put this stuff into a large box even if it is not full to maximize the psychological impact of this selfless act. This obvious voluntary effort should provide the necessary harmony in the household required to pursue our wonderful hobby.