

## Ramblings

by Bill Cavanaugh

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This is my first chance to speak out since our December Awards Banquet, and I want to say up front how much I appreciate the honor of having a lifetime BASS membership bestowed upon me at the Awards Banquet. This was a total and complete surprise to me. I usually know what is going on in BASS, being a member of the board of directors and involved in club decisions, but this was kept from me not the least hint was detected in advance. The CIA has job openings for people like this. So, again I want to thank all who were involved in this and the board members in particular for this wonderful honor.

My number one new year's resolution for 1996 is to go through all my stuff, reorganize it and dispose of what I, have not used for years and probably won't in the foreseeable future. Not just my model stuff, but everything I own. I call this effort G-STRREP (Grand Stuff Reorganization & Reduction Plan for 1996). A formidable undertaking for a confirmed packrat that has been saving stuff for literally a lifetime. I have started and it is already evident that it is going to be much tougher than I first thought, though some rewards lay in hiding. Take my collection of modeling books, for example. Not magazines, but books. Each one I pick up I sort of riffle through, and I often get stuck reading some section. It is really amazing how much good stuff has been written about modeling. Take this gem for example:

"The miniature aircraft we are flying now are the creatures of evolution. We may delude ourselves into thinking that we design them, but an honest appraisal will disclose that our design procedure is similar to nature's way of developing species which will survive in a particular environment.

When we are ready to build a new model, we look over the field and select the one with a performance which we would like to match or improve. To ensure a better design, we emphasize the feature we believe gives the prototype model its particular advantage. We do this without finding the real reason why the prototype model performed so well.

This is the exact method used by nature in its trial-and-error "designing," and we cannot help but compare some of its dinosaurs with the models we have seen during our time"

This thought-provoking excerpt was written in 1964 in the preface to CIRCULAR AIRFLOW, one of a series of books authored and edited by Frank Zaic, a model pioneer and a true genius of the modeling world.

And isn't it the truth? Frank was talking about designing new models, but how many of us build even a kit exactly according to the plans? We all have our pet ideas for structure and features, to "make it better." We have our own ways of attaching canopies, installing radio equipment and running control lines. How about adjusting control surface throws, dihedral angles and fin areas, not to mention flying adjustments such as c.g. location and incidence adjustments. Each aircraft

is unique and reflects the ideas and craftsmanship of its builder. This explains why two models of the same sailplane. design fly differently. Our own stamp is on our planes. Remember the Pussycats? Club members built a dozen or more of these happy little two-meters to fly in our Pussycat one-design contest. They all flew well but some flew better (or differently) than others, reflecting not only the flying skills of the builder, but the feature-tweaking that we all do.

One of the many benefits of this hobby is that it encourages the creative juices to flow. some of us get around to designing our own sailplane, which is the ultimate expression of creativity, but even those of us who stick with kits get our creative itch scratched in lots of small ways. And when our little inventions work well, the resulting satisfaction adds a modicum of enjoyment of our hobby. When someone admires our ideas and maybe even copies them it is most gratifying. The moral of this monologue is we should not hide our successful ideas. Bring them to a meeting for show and tell, or better yet, write them up for the newsletter. Like all of life's endeavors, the greatest reward comes from sharing.

I've just started G-STRREP and already I've gotten some mental stimulation. Maybe this project will not be as dreaded as I thought. I'll keep you posted.