



The *SENIOR PATTERN ASSOCIATION*

Official S I G (Special Interest Group) of AMA

Dedicated to the Building, Flying and Competition of Vintage Pattern Model Aircraft

SPA NEWSLETTER www.seniorpattern.com JAN-FEB 2018

PRECISION AEROBATICS from PATTERN'S Golden Age

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Bernie Olson fine-tunes his Blue Angel



Ken Knotts and latest Dirty Birdy



Join our Discussion list from within the webpage or inform any officer and we'll "sign you up". It's like a gigantic Mailing-list, but at NO CHARGE. A service to membership and potentials from SPA.



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since my last column we have had a very successful annual Board of Directors meeting. This will be covered elsewhere in the Newsletter, so I won't repeat the summary here. Instead, I will describe what should be a pivotal year for SPA. The action will start with the annual GAMA Swap Meet at Perry. As I write this we will be leaving for that in just a few days from now. This is our first opportunity of the year to publicize SPA, to recruit new members, and to catch up with old friends. Shortly thereafter comes the Toledo Show and we will have a table there thanks to the efforts of Scott Anderson. This will put SPA on a national stage. I again would like to call for any SPA members who would be able to come to help us with the publicity effort. Come help us if you can.

Dan Dougherty has put the finishing touches on the contest schedules for the year. The season kicks off on April 21-22 at Roberta, Georgia and on April 21 at Fort Worth, Texas. Time to finish setting up the new planes and to get some practice in! The season openers will be followed closely by the first ever East-West Shootout in Toone, Tn. on May 5-6. The field there looks great and excitement is building.

I said that this should be a pivotal year for SPA. We are taking steps to increase our visibility nationally with the hope that this will stimulate interest in vintage pattern competition. Planning has already started for a contest at AMA Headquarters in Muncie, Indiana in 2019. This will be accompanied by more advertising and by an expanded web presence for SPA.

I wish everyone a fun-filled and exciting contest season. See you on the contest trail!

Jeff



FROM THE EDITOR

During the contest season, you can predictably count on plenty of competition coverage of the East/West events in the newsletter, (as long as I receive write-ups from either the CDs or another designated "someone" with a desire to write.) The winter issues however are different and more challenging to do. Like something out of the movie *Forrest Gump*, they are "like a box of chocolates"—you never know what you're going to get". Yes there will always be the annual Board of Directors meeting, reports, and the associated minutes, but what besides that? With less going on to report, what is available to fill in the extra space? I depend somewhat on our SPA membership, both East and West, (no pressure here), to make some creative contributions all year long, but especially in winter. I believe that your articles have spiced things up with a variety of writing styles and ideas to keep the newsletter from getting stale, (or more stale), and I certainly welcome any future topic that you think your fellow SPA flying buddies might be interested in, (about SPA-related stuff however.) Don't worry about the writing—I'll help with that if you'd like. That said, for **this** issue, nothing materialized, so I'll warn you in advance that there is *more of "me"* in this issue than any other newsletter I've done, but keep reading anyway :) I hope you will enjoy my two personal article contributions to this issue discussed below.

1) I was going through old boxes of slides. Some were of airplanes taken in the 60s when my Dad and I first got into the hobby. Some of these photos from slides have stood the test of time remarkably well, and look like they could have been taken yesterday—amazing! In my case, these earliest R/C pictures are all 50+ years old. That got me thinking about the subject of our "**first planes**". Each of us in SPA started out with that first trainer, first low-wing trainer, then our first pattern job. Though this article is about our, (my Dad's and my), first planes, please think back to **YOUR** first plane in each of those categories—do you still have pictures or stories about your early days you could share with the group on the Discussion List or newsletter?

2) I have really enjoyed helping NOVICE(s) over the years, and I give the same pointers to each. Again, as Newsletter editor, I often get e-mails from newcomers, (mostly prospective NOVICES.) While answering one of those e-mails, it dawned on me that it might be useful to write up some basic pointers directed toward NOVICES and their maneuvers. This issue contains "Part I". Part II will be in the next newsletter. I hope these will prove helpful as a reference source for present and future NOVICE(s) getting started in SPA.

Finally, we have our first **MEMBER PROFILE** from overseas as **Reidar Johansson from Norway will be profiled.** Enjoy!!

OFFICIAL 2018 SPA Contest Calendar

SPA East Schedule

March 2-3	2018 Southeastern Model Show Georgia Nat'l Fairgrounds, Perry, GA McGill Bldg, Tables K21-23	Perry, GA
April 6-8	2018 Toledo RC Model Show (First time)	Toledo, OH
April 14-15	Roberta SPA Classic Dan Dougherty CD	Roberta, GA
May 5-6	SPA East/West Shootout S. Anderson, CD Clover Creek Aerodrome	Toone, TN
June 9-10	Prattville SPA Matt Griffitt CD	Prattville, AL
July 21-22	20th Cullman SPA Steve Byrum, CD	Cullman, AL
Aug 25-26	25th Knoxville SPA Phil Spelt, CD	Knoxville, TN
Sept 29-30	SPA East Masters S. Anderson, CD	Chattanooga, TN

SPA West Schedule

April 21	Ft Worth Thunderbirds Spring Ken Knotts & Gary Alphin CO-CDs	Benbrook, TX
May 5-6	SPA East/West Shootout S. Anderson, CD Clover Creek Aerodrome	Toone, TN
May 19	Golden Triangle SPA Frank Cox CD	Grand Prairie, TX
June 9	Texas Wings SPA Pat Ensign CD	Newark, TX
Sept 15	Wichita Falls SPA Bob Redmon CD	Wichita Falls, TX
Oct 13	Seagoville SPA (?) Pat Ensign CD	TBD
Nov 10-11	SPA West Open Ken Knotts & Gary Alphin CO-CDs	Benbrook, TX

2018 Senior Pattern Association Annual Board of Directors Meeting

The annual meeting of the SPA Board of Directors was held at a new location this year, Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse in Cartersville, Ga. on February third. First, congratulations and a special "shout-out" should be given to Keith Watson for finding this fantastic location; it's the best place we've ever met (opinion of editor), partially because it's not an active restaurant-it's a venue for meetings of all sorts. We were actually able to hear each other without having to shout over the normal hustle and bustle of restaurant chatter, and the clanging of cookware. Thanks Keith!



ABOVE: Johnny Mitchell's meeting room LEFT: Board of Directors and guest attendees at this year's meeting L-R: BOD member Phil Spelt, Carolyn Spelt, Beth & BOD member Scott Sappington, Scott Anderson, President Jeff Owens, BOD members Jerry Black, Duane Wilson, Dan Dougherty, and Bruce Underwood, Beverley Lubbe, BOD member Jim Johns, (seated) Bob Wilkes, and Bobbie Johns. BOD member Pat Ensign phoned in from Texas. It was quiet enough to hear and be heard.



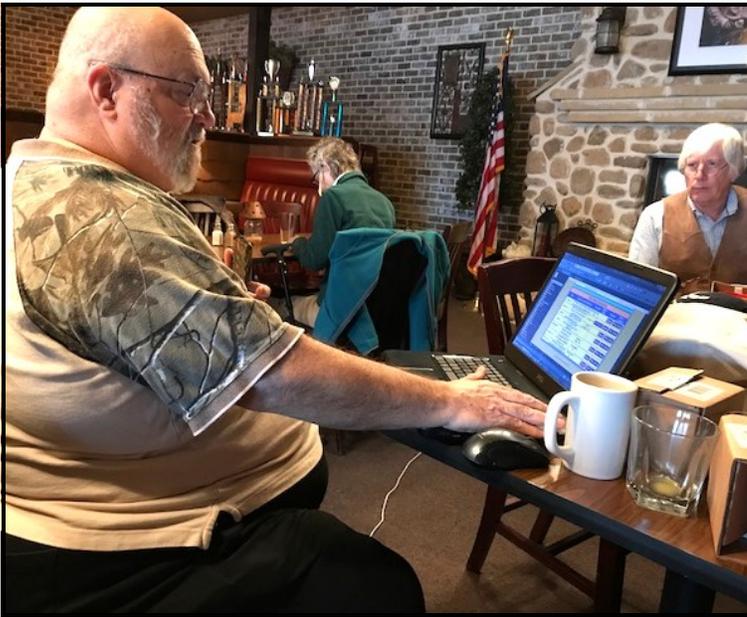
Agenda Topics of Discussion

In addition to the normal reports of the officers, (see complete, official meeting minutes on page five), we dealt with several issues on this year's agenda:

- East and West contest schedules
- The legal airplane approval process (establishment of new committee.)
- Monetary support for hosting clubs
- East/West shoot-out details from Scott Anderson
- Initial planning for a first ever SPA national HQ contest in Muncie for 2019
- The annual Perry, Ga. Swap meet
- The first ever exposure of SPA at the famous Toledo show generates major media attention.
- Election of Officers this fall (how about you...)

Right: Chairman of Special Projects Dan Dougherty is the guy who schedules all the East contests, (and this year fits in the combined East/West Shoot-out contest), and coordinates with the West representative on West events. Here Dan reviews his tentative list of event dates prior to presenting his report. They are made final after discussion. Dan must also watch out for conflicting AMA events. A lot of "balls in the air at once" eventually come together to become the 2018 SPA East/West schedules.





Webmaster Jim Johns adjusts the tentative schedule for 2018 on the fly as each date is dialed-in and made final during the BOD meeting, while president Jeff Owens conducts the meeting at the front of the room (on right).

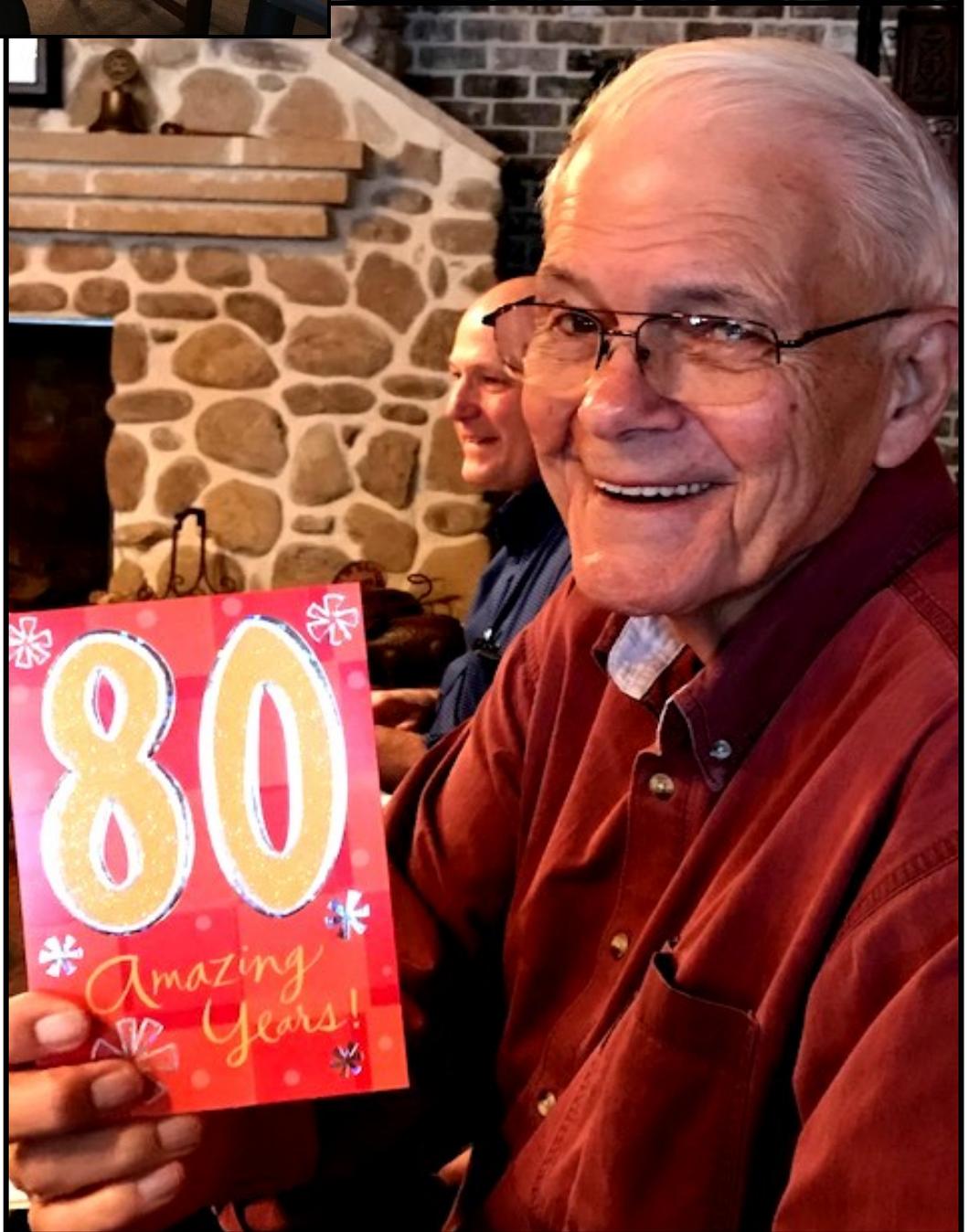
Since becoming the webmaster a few years ago, Jim has modernized the SPA website from top to bottom, and inside out, while adding a number of brand new features. Jim has also revamped the scoring system and served as scorer at contests when nobody else did, making many contests possible. Thanks so much for your ongoing dedication to SPA—you're one of the ones who makes SPA work.

Birthday boy....

Long-time SPA president and former newsletter editor Bruce Underwood's birthday on Jan 28, 1938 always falls on or around the time of the SPA Board of Directors meeting.

Last year current SPA president Jeff Owens gave Bruce a great birthday card to mark his 80th birthday milestone—but it was a year early. Now he has “earned” that special “Happy 80 Amazing years” card.

Happy Birthday Bruce, and thank you for being such a dedicated servant of SPA over the years. In addition to holding down two jobs, you've attended nearly every SPA event. More importantly, you've always been the first to reach out and take newcomers under your wing. You've always served as an example of what we in SPA should be doing. You were the first person I met at my first SPA contest. Thanks so much. Appreciate you!!



SPA Board of Directors Meeting February 3, 2018

The 2018 Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 9:15 AM at Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse in Cartersville, GA, by President Jeff Owens. Jim Johns read the Treasurer's Report submitted by Keith Watson, as Keith was unable to attend the meeting. The report was approved.

Dan Dougherty reported on the 2018 East and West Contest schedules. Several adjustments to dates were made. The final schedules for each division have now been posted on the SPA website. It was decided that the Chairman of Special Projects (currently Dan Dougherty) would serve as the single point of contact for scheduling of contests for both divisions. The West representative (currently Pat Ensign) will forward the West Schedules and any alterations to Dan as needed.

Jim Johns reviewed how points are awarded. Generally, they are awarded to participants in which ever division sponsors the contest. An exception is the East/West Shootout. Points at that one contest will be awarded to all participants in both division, i.e., all contestants will have points awarded in both divisions.

Jeff Owens reviewed a change to the legal aircraft approval process. In order to relieve Mickey Walker from the job of reviewing routine requests, all requests will instead be submitted to the President. Requests that are well-documented and meet the stated criteria will be approved by the President. Ambiguous cases or those asking for an exception will be forwarded to the entire Board for action.

The issue of support for clubs sponsoring contests was discussed. Both the East and West divisions have been authorized to purchase a scoring computer and printer for contest work (the East has already done this and the West is in process.) Furthermore, a payment of \$100 is now authorized for each club putting on a contest. For the Masters and the West Championship this payment will be in addition to the \$100 already paid for those two contests, i.e., those two contests will earn \$200 for the host club. This is intended as a return of member dues to support those clubs that support us.

Planning for the Muncie 2019 event has started. Scott Anderson will find available dates. It is intended that we shall choose a date within 30 days so that publicity and other planning can be started.

The Perry Swap Meet was discussed. We have three tables in the McGill Building K21-23. Members who can bring display models will be appreciated. Members are encouraged to attend and help support our publicity efforts.

The Toledo Show on April 6-8, 2018 was discussed. We have a table there and some members have committed to attend all or part of the show (Jeff Owens, Scott Anderson, Duane Wilson, Les Smith with several others possible.) It is a long show and we need all the help we can get. Interested members should contact Scott Anderson for details and check his posts on the Discussion List.

The status of the approved aircraft list was discussed by Jeff Owens. While the main intent of the list is clear, there are some glaring inconsistencies that have crept in. For example, the Phoenix 8 and all of its predecessors are allowed, but aircraft designed before the Phoenix 8 but after the 1/1/1976 cutoff are not. It is stated that aircraft should be built according to the available plans, yet any and all variants of the Kaos series are allowed, even ones that came after the cutoff date. This includes versions that are Kaos in name only (different fuselage, different wing, different tail surfaces.) A subcommittee consisting of Jeff Owens, Jim Johns, and Dan Dougherty will examine the inconsistencies and see if a new set of rules can be formulated that stay true to the intent of the rules Mickey Walker set up while still allowing for ARF models that many members fly and also removing some of the glaring inconsistencies.

Jeff Owens reminded the Board that this is an election year for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and the East and West Representatives. It is also time to appoint the Pattern Committee to select the patterns to be flown in 2019-20.

Scott Anderson reported on planning details for the East/West shootout and discussed options for hotels. Details will be updated on the Discussion List.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM.

First Planes-What's Your Story...

Start looking through all those old photos for your R/C "roots".

By Duane Wilson

A few weeks ago, I was going through a box of old family photographs, some I had taken in college, some had been taken by my Dad. I had inherited all the family photos taken as slides, (see the small side bar on slide film verses negatives and photo prints). My father converted almost exclusively to slides by the late 50s, and I followed suit in college as photography became an informal life-long hobby of mine. My father had this big, impressive-looking slide projector, and a small portable viewer to view the pictures. From time to time, we'd watch these photos projected on the wall when we'd have a family picture night. But an unknown (to me), quality of slide film at the time was that some slide film would not degrade nearly as much in quality over time as negatives or prints.

These photos from slides show our "first planes." Like many, I followed my Dad into R/C. The first plane I actually flew was a model we saw in RC Modeler, (I believe it was RCM-it was a long time ago), called the Tri Squire Mk II, or simply **Squire Mk II**. We got plans, and both of us built our versions of the same plane for the summer of 1967 when I was sixteen, (naturally mine was prettier.) It was an original silk and dope job in the colors of my R/C hero Tom Brett. Everyone used rubber bands, (of course), and the control surfaces were sewn on, (as was the custom of the day.)



51 year-old photos of my Squire Mk II

SLIDE FILM: Way back before digital photography there was print film, and at least two kinds of slide film Ektachrome and Kodachrome, (remember the Paul Simon song—I don't know if these are still being produced for film diehards). While nearly everyone developed negatives and had print pictures made, slide film had a few advantages if you could put up with the lack of a print to hold in your hand, put in an album or throw in a shoe box. Without prints, slide film was cheaper. The developed film was mounted in a cardboard slide frame. A happy side effect of Kodachrome especially was the color rarely faded, or deteriorated over time the way color film negatives did, so 50-60 year old photos often look like they were taken just recently. The older the photos, the more valuable slide film becomes to produce quality old photos.



The first trainer I flew, (age 16), was a Squire Mk II built from RCM plans. Both my Dad and I built one at the same time.

The engine, (looks brand new), was a K&B Green head (my guess a .35.) The first two pictures, (this page), were taken with the plane new right out of the shop, and the final one (next page), at the old RCCD, (Radio Club of Detroit), field.

My first radio was a Micro Avionics 6 channel proportional in its shiny dark green metal case, (my Dad bought the simulated wood (yuk), version).

I worked my very first job that summer in a grocery store as a stock boy/packer to buy that early proportional radio which cost more in '67 than you can get a much nicer computer radio for now-especially when you consider I was paying in 1967 dollars. Please note the "classic" mid-60s Mustang our neighbor had as his "every day driver." Too bad we couldn't just store them away, but who knew they would be "classic".



At the field the picture at left proves I used to be pretty thin. So here I am with my Squire Mk II decked out in a Tom Brett color scheme with transparent gold open areas in the wing and stabilizer. I can't remember how long this plane lasted, but it probably wasn't too long, although I don't distinctly remember crashing it.

Later in my teens I built a yellow, black and white Jensen Ugly Stik, and a VK Cherokee, (covered in Monokote), but these had to wait until I got back into R/C in my early 30s.



Like many in R/C, I followed my father into the hobby. At first, I watched him and helped when I could. My Dad and I were not very much alike, and I can't honestly say we were close, but R/C was something we could both share.

My Dad's first plane was a trainer called the *Crackerjack*, (See below-I'm not sure of the spelling), but it was your basic trainer. Although at first he bought some old escapements, and Galloping Ghost, by the time he was ready, (thankfully), reed transmitters had taken over. I remember he bought a Citizenship reed outfit in its typical burgundy metal case. I was thirteen, maybe fourteen at this point, so my memory of the details may be spotty, (remember I was just watching and that was part time.) I do recall that when the Crackerjack was ready, he checked the C/G and it was hopelessly tail-heavy. My Dad (as an engineer), decided to add lead to the nose, (a lot of lead), to balance it. I remember he coated the nose section with aluminum foil and poured molten lead directly into the nose section below the engine which assumed the shape of the nose and hardened into a ball the size of a "Grade A" Extra Large egg.

I don't remember the engine he used, but it labored to get the plane into the air. If you remember video footage of the Spirit of St. Louis lumbering down the runway laden down with fuel, you'll get some idea of the Crackerjack's first flight. Finally it managed to lift off on its first lurching flight. Like most of my father's models, the



Unidentified dorky 13-year-old holds Crackerjack prior to its first flight—like the Spirit of St Louis.



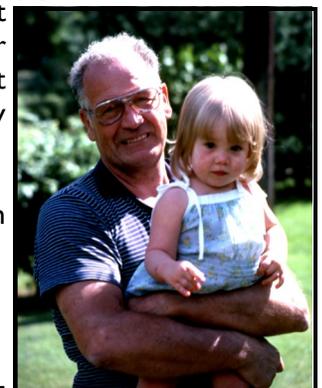
Above: My younger, (now 60 y.o.) brother holds one of Dad's early de Bolt Jenny trainers

plane survived, but it had a short flying life. I remember it hanging in the basement years later.

My Dad's real workhorse trainers were a series of identically painted Hal de Bolt Jenny(s). Later versions had ailerons. The Jenny was a decent looking, no-nonsense design engineered to go together quickly, similar in concept to the Kwik Fly series by Phil Kraft that would soon follow. He had at least two and probably three Jenny models to learn the riggers of R/C flying.

I only flew a year or two followed by long stretches of inactivity, being totally out of R/C, (my longest flying stretch started in 2005 when I joined SPA). In contrast, my Dad continued to fly on a regular basis into the late 1980s before finally leaving the hobby. I now have his planes.

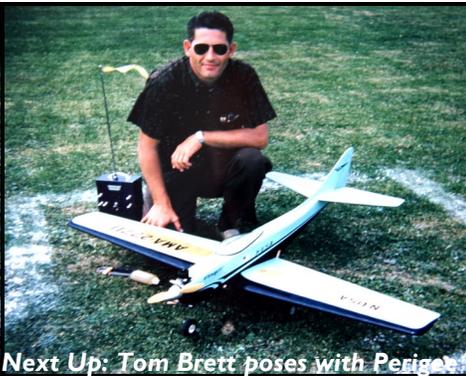
One of my biggest regrets is that I don't have a single solitary photo of my father either flying, or holding a plane—he was always the one behind the camera. Nobody thought of turning the camera on him. I've included a picture of him at right as a small tribute.



Bill Wilson & first grandchild Kelly Lynn

Our "REAL" First Planes

I just finished talking about my Dad's and my first planes,...and they were our first planes...the first planes we actually flew. But they weren't the first planes that were built by us. What drew us into R/C were not the simple trainers, no not at all...what attracted us were the exotic, sexy, and high performance pattern planes (now vintage), we saw at the field or read about in the magazines. Though not that much alike, it's a bit surprising that we independently ended up doing basically the same thing a couple years apart. My Dad and I were highly influenced by the Detroit club president, (and ex-world champion), Tom Brett who had won the 1962 W.C. with his Perigee a couple years earlier. Dad soon got a Perigee kit, (and as an engineer used to drawing and deciphering plans), he plunged into the Perigee project before he had logged a minute in the air.



Next Up: Tom Brett poses with Perigee.

The Perigee was, (and still is) a "hot" airplane with only a 61" wingspan and very thin airfoil. It was by far the sleekest plane around in the early 60s, much hotter than the easy-to-fly Taurus. It was also a complicated kit to build—I still have those original plans from '65.

When finishing the Perigee, Dad used his own hair (he was 42 then—I'm 67 now), clippings to make a very lifelike pilot figure carved out of balsa to grace the canopy. From a normal distance and viewed on the ground, you'd swear a real person was piloting that plane. He's in my Taurus—same guy.



Lost some hair, but I still have this 53 y.o. pilot

The Perigee was finished in a solid yellow Hobby Poxy color scheme, (I never asked him why it was all yellow.) Wisely, the Perigee sat for a substantial period until my father could handle it. While never lost, it had its share of "battle scars." I still have it to this day. I've been thinking about cleaning it up and flying it. Even if it crashes, it beats hanging there gathering dust. I've never flown a Perigee.

Fifteen years later in the mid 80s when I briefly flew AMA Novice, my Dad visited my home field three hours away with the Perigee, and I saw him fly it that one time. The area behind the flight line bordered an interstate highway. On the other side of the highway was an upscale residential area. The Perigee was FAST. Somehow it got away from him and wandered over and behind the flight line, across the interstate, and into residential airspace with him fighting for control. He was in trouble, but to his credit, he didn't panic, (like I might), and wrestled the Perigee back over the interstate to a safe landing. I'll never forget it.

I've wanted to build my own Perigee for personal reasons for some time. I've even met with Helen Brett to get Tom's original color scheme perfectly traced on paper, but so far, I haven't begun the project, probably because it was designed for reeds and isn't a good candidate for SPA. I wanted to build one this winter, but other things got in the way.

My own first plane was a Phoenix I, the first in the Phoenix series by Don Lowe. The plane had come out in RCM and with those swept wings, I thought it was the coolest thing ever and ordered plans. I had fractured my ankle falling into the boards at full speed while doing speed laps with my hockey teammates, and had time on my hands once school let out. The school librarian happened to fly R/C and was a club member, so I built the wing on one of the library tables—no dihedral. That summer I saw Don Lowe at the Detroit Invitational and showed him the picture of his Phoenix done up in an authentic F-86 Saber color scheme. He just gave me a wry smile. He knew I couldn't fly the thing—not even close—but who cared. I



Above: Don Lowe's original Phoenix I from 1965 photo. Below is my first-ever built plane with an authentic F-86 scheme. If you look carefully, you can see that big chunk of lead from Dad's original "Crackerjack" trainer holding down the nose. We didn't weigh it.

just liked looking at it and dreaming of when I could fly it. The wing was finished in 1/16" balsa and finished with a "new" method of using Hobby Poxy glue to fill the balsa, then scraping off the extra with a razor blade—what a chore that was! I was only fourteen, and this was my first plane, so it was quite crude. I never did progress to the point where I could fly the thing, and ended up selling it when I moved to Asheville some twenty years later. It was dry and brittle. I understand from talking to club members years later that it was "faster than hell" and made a spectacular crash when it went in, breaking into a thousand pieces. At least the guy got to fly it.



NOVICE Coaching Guide-Part 1

The Basics

By Duane Wilson



Being on the SPA Board of Directors, as Newsletter Editor, I sometimes get e-mails from the membership, particularly newer or prospective members asking basic questions or asking advice about SPA. I recently got an e-mail from Ralph Rogers, (who is planning on flying with us this season), a newer member from Florida. He has flown many of the NOVICE maneuvers informally in the past, and was wondering the best way to string them together as a pattern sequence. As I was answering him, it occurred to me that a concise NOVICE reference guide might make a good resource for new NOVICES as they work on the pattern. Having worked with a number of NOVICES over the years, I

often find myself offering the same basic pointers to each pilot. This article will concentrate on **basic points or fundamentals** to keep in mind while flying. In the next issue we will walk through the NOVICE maneuvers step by step, highlighting what to focus on, and what pitfalls to avoid. Although the maneuvers may change slightly every two years, the essentials of the NOVICE pattern remain constant over the years.

If you should come to a contest and I worked with you, I'd first talk you through the fine points of each maneuver before you even took off for a basic 'game plan', then in the air, I'd give you a few set-up hints for each maneuver before you do it, (not during unless you asked—you have enough to think about while in the middle of a maneuver). If you'll learn a few presentation basics, you'll improve your score almost instantly-guaranteed!

First, let's talk about my "credentials" as NOVICE coach. I believe that experienced NOVICES, (and pretty much anyone flying in the higher classes), would be good candidates to give the pointers I'll present here, but since I'm here and willing, (and since I do the newsletter), why not me? Secondly, I flew NOVICE for at least five years before moving up to SPORTSMAN after I won some contests, so it might be fair to say that I'm an "expert" (so to speak), in flying NOVICE maneuvers. I know how to fly NOVICE, what to watch for, and the pitfalls of each maneuver, (from experience I've fallen in those "pits" myself a number of times). I'll try to put myself in your shoes, (I've been there), anticipate and answer your questions, and help you through the highlights of each maneuver the best I can. Others can add their insight on the Discussion List or at the field. The end result—you'll be a better NOVICE pilot sooner rather than later. Of course, it's one thing to know what to do and quite another thing to actually do it. Everybody gets all 10s on the ground. I face that problem in SPORTSMAN every time I fly, but we can at least know what to shoot for each time we practice. It's like you're on a mission with each flight.

First, let's discuss the term "NOVICE". Occasional comments surface from time to time basically saying that the term is somehow demeaning of the pilot's ability, and may actually keep some people from participating. Upon further reflection however, unless the individual has had previous AMA competition experience, no matter how good their flying skills may be, they are still a "novice" when competing in organized, **precision aerobatics**, (pattern). Almost everyone in SPA either starts out in NOVICE, **or has been a NOVICE** in AMA events sometime in the past.

The difference between competitive pattern and sport flying, (even by accomplished pilots), doing random unplanned maneuvers is found in the word **PRECISION**. When flying pattern you must guide or even force the plane to be in the **right place at the right time in a prescribed sequence, rather than letting the plane fly you**. It's more challenging than you might imagine, and flying pattern will make you a better pilot faster than anything else.

The better your flying skills are, the faster you will progress up the flying class ladder. Some pilots fly NOVICE in only one event, then move up quickly once they get basic experience in what flying the pattern looks like. Others like myself continue in NOVICE for several years, (this is also true of the higher classes), as they slowly develop their skills with practice. They move up when the time is right, or when they consistently win and are ready for the next level.

One of the nicest things for me about precision aerobatics is that **each flight has a purpose**. Each time you take off, you're working on something. We all may vary in the way we practice and how we choose to work on the maneuvers, but each flight matters. There is a cumulative effect over time as you practice. The more you practice, (and the more fuel you burn or electrons you use), the faster you progress.

Speaking of practice, it's probably best to practice the entire flight (including the turnarounds), as if you are flying "for real" during **each flight**, but that requires a level of self-discipline that I (at least), don't have. I will often run through the entire pattern, then in the time that remains, I'll concentrate on working on one or two weak maneuvers a couple more times. I've found in my own case that after flying a maneuver three consecutive times, that I get diminishing returns and get sloppier. Maybe that's just me. Whatever works after experimenting some—go with it.

So let's get started. For the sport flyer who has never competed, many basic questions will be answered in five minutes simply by **coming to a contest and watching** others fly. You watch, you listen to others, you make great friends, and you learn more quickly just by being there—don't wait until you think you're "ready" before coming out. that's why 10 it's so important to come to contests if they are within a day's driving range of your location.

THE BASICS: Let's discuss some "best practices" of competition flying that apply regardless of the maneuvers you fly—the sooner you learn these the better. Some of these will seem obvious to some, but to be complete, it doesn't hurt to mention them anyway. Let's list them one by one as bullet points. Keep them in mind as you practice, and especially when you are in front of the judges.

- **PROPER TRIM**— Properly trimming your plane with special attention to it being straight, having the proper C/G etc. becomes much more important when performing precision aerobatics. You are no longer just flying the plane around. Having to fight the model through each maneuver makes things much more difficult. Have an expert pilot help you trim if necessary to get your aircraft in tip-top trim, thus requiring much less in the way of corrections on your part during the maneuver. It's a joy to fly a properly trimmed-out airplane.

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH**- By all means please take full advantage of the SPA website, (seniorpattern.com), especially the Competitor's Guide under Rules and Regs. A lot of time has been spent by many in SPA compiling a full list of maneuvers, drawings, and a complete list of downgrades for the judges to follow. Look-up your maneuvers and study them before practicing. Many pilots print them out for reference at the field. This is the SPA maneuver "bible" (from AMA rulebooks), that we all must follow.

- **PATTERN SEQUENCE**-The maneuvers are done in the sequence listed on the calling card—you'll see a U or D to the right of the maneuver telling you which way to perform it. Our vintage pattern sequences are based on **ONE MANEUVER PER PASS**. There is a turnaround of some sort at each end which is not judged but is nonetheless very important. If the turnaround isn't done correctly, you will not be in the right place for the next maneuver. The turnaround method to set-up for the next maneuver is up to you. The method varies according to the situation. Sometimes you simply fly the plane to the right position for the next maneuver. In other situations you will do an Immelmann Turn if you need to gain altitude, but most of the time pilots use a modified Split-S in order to maintain both proper distance, and heading. When using the modified Split-S, pull up some first before the roll in order to come out flying the opposite direction at the same altitude as the last maneuver. In most cases, this is the easiest way to be properly set up for the next pass. This might seem a little hard to picture, but it will become obvious very quickly.

- **PRESENTATION**—is the art of putting the plane in exactly the right spot to best show off each maneuver. You don't want the plane to be too high "**WAY UP THERE**", or too far "**WAY OUT THERE**" or in **SO CLOSE** that you're flirting with the zero line, (I've done all three). You, (and especially the judges), shouldn't have to get a stiff neck by looking almost directly upward. In all these cases your maneuver will not look its best and your score will suffer. We are all different, so the "sweet spot" is subjective; just picture yourself as the judge, and keep all these factors in mind. I personally think most maneuvers look best (if done well), when they are close enough in to easily see all the fine points of the maneuver. Of course, cross-winds will either blow you out or in. Work on using rudder (at strategic points at a minimum), to help keep the plane where it should be. Good luck with the cross-winds.

- **THROTTLE MANAGEMENT**— It is common for NOVICE pilots to "blast" through the pattern at full throttle, but remember, the object is to do the maneuvers smoothly and gracefully, not necessarily quickly. I was taught "why the rush—where's the fire", and they're right. Slow the plane down to about 2/3 throttle during the "trim pass", and take your hands off to see if it needs trim. Flying a bit slower throughout the flight gives you more time to think and make small corrections. It better allows you to stay ahead of the plane, and closer in where you can see it better, (Straight Flight Out/Procedure Turn/Straight Flight Back especially-more later.) Throttle management is critical in some maneuvers like the Stall Turn. Full throttle however is necessary (or at least helpful), for an average weight SPA plane, when climbing at the beginning of any vertical maneuver. Many pilots also like to do their rolling maneuvers with a full head of steam for smoother rolls.

- **CALLING MANEUVERS**— Either you or your caller must announce each maneuver. Personally, I prefer to call my own in order to better instruct the judges on exactly when to start judging. Most do the same, but it's certainly reasonable at the beginning to delegate this task, and concentrate on flying. **Remember to allow at least 50 feet of straight and level flight** after saying "begin," and again before calling "complete". **Again, 50 feet-each end-minimum.**

- **HEADINGS**-Your direction, (heading), is critical for best presentation. Almost always your heading should be parallel to the flight line. This will take practice, (easier to say than do), as any number of factors can cause you to veer off at an angle. After all, we're dealing in three dimensions and multiple wind conditions. Again, it's a very important practice for most maneuvers to maintain a straight, non-deviating, and parallel heading, If your heading is off before beginning a maneuver, it becomes much more challenging to do, plus it will negatively impact your score. Steve Byrum wrote a great, (and funny), article that deals with common mistakes we all make. Be sure to click on the link below and read Steve's excellent advice, (**EASY POINTS, page 5**). There are other references listed. Check them out:

<http://seniorpattern.com/nl/2012-03-04.pdf>

Next time we'll discuss basic pointers as we walk through each NOVICE maneuver that are **guaranteed** to improve your score! Now it's time to start that prep work—see you soon! 11

SPA Novice 2017-2018	
	K
1. Takeoff (U)	1
<i>(Downwind Trim Pass)</i>	
2. Straight Flight Out (U)	1
3. Procedure Turn	2
4. Straight Flight Back (D)	1
5. Stall Turn (U)	2
6. Immelmann Turn (U)	2
7. 2 Inside Loops (U)	2
8. 2 Horizontal Rolls (D)	2
9. Reverse Cuban 8 (U)	2
10. Straight Inverted Flight (D)	2
<i>(Fly By For Landing - 2 Allowed)</i>	
11. Landing Perfection (U)	1
Total K Factor 18	
Notes:	
• No Fly-bys allowed except before landing	
• Maneuvers flown out of sequence will be scored ZERO (0)	

SPA Member Profile

Name/SPA Number: **Reidar Johansson**

City/State: **Sola, Norway**

Occupation/Former Occupation: **Aircraft technician/
instructor B-737**

Years in Model Aviation: **60**

When did you join SPA: **2014**



How did you find out about the SPA and why did you decide to join?: **Found it in connection with NSRCA.**

Are you or have you been a full-scale pilot? If so, when, where and what do you fly?: **No**

Favorite pattern planes and why you like them: **Curare, Joker, Taurus, Astro Hog, Mach 1, Jekyll PHD, Pattern models from good old days.**

Do you or have you competed in other organizations-have you gone to the NATs: **I am a member of Forus RC Club in Norway, www.forusrc.no , NSRCA 921, SPA 652, CPA 108**

Something others may not know about you (other or past hobbies and interests): **Love BMW cars**

Reidar Johansson's vintage pattern plane collection →



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