

# Unleash Your Inner Hemingway

Answers to the age old question "what should I write about?"

[The NEW RC Soaring Digest Staff](#)



(image: on )

The NEW R/C Soaring Digest is a reader-written publication. We mean that quite literally: if you, the reader, don't write anything then there will be nothing for the rest of us to read. We understand the toughest part can simply be getting started: what some call 'the tyranny of the blank page'. However, you'll likely find once you get rolling the words come naturally and in prodigious quantities. So here are some ideas to get you past that merciless white sheet of paper sitting in your Smith Coronamatic.

## My Best Day Flying Ever

It is this very subject which served as the original inspiration for *Unleash Your Inner Hemingway*. RCSD Writer Jim Carlton submitted his article *What*

*a Day for Soaring!* which is just as the title implies. But then we started talking about some of the other things he might write about in the future. Hence this article which hopefully many will find helpful.

Keep in mind the 'best day' in the title is relative. If you only ever had one day flying then, by default, that has to have been your best. If you have had two, then it's a coin toss — it was one or the other. All we're trying to say is that if asked "so what was your best day flying ever?", virtually **everybody** has an answer. So write that down and submit it as an article. Include any pictures and videos you captured on that day so you can transport your readers to that exact place and time and what it was that made it so special.

## **What I'm Building Right Now (AKA Build Logs)**

There was a time not *that* long ago when the only way of getting a plane to the field or slope was to build one. Those days are long gone but there are still lots of people out there who have some amazing projects on the go and, rest assured, the rest of us want to hear about them. We think *The Fokker FG-2* by Vincent de Bode in the February, 2021 issue officially set the bar for this type of article.

You are welcome to break your article into multiple parts and publish it over a few issues. The only word of caution we offer in this regard is that you should feel fairly confident of being able to finish in a timely fashion. A tough question to have to answer from some future reader is "so whatever happened to your ... project?" If you assess yourself as a better project **starter** than project **finisher** then consider writing *all* of the parts before publishing *any* of them.

One other question we get quite often is "how much detail should I provide?" In short, as much as you want! The digital-first platform RCSD has chosen imposes exactly **zero** limits on how much you write or how many photos, videos and other material you include. That said, there's no guarantee that *everybody* will read *everything* you have written, but that's

no reason to deny them that opportunity.

## Product Reviews

Any sort of product review are always of interest. Newly-released products are best in this regard. However, before you put pen to paper a few words of caution. First, if it's *your* product about which you want to write a review, the reader needs to be informed of that. If you want to claim your product is the best thing that's ever been designed that is your right to do so. The reader, on the other hand, also has the right to take that comment with a grain of salt given you clearly have a vested interest in not saying the product ain't so hot. Probably a better course of action would be to find someone *e/se* to review your product. Somebody who has paid full retail for it is likely the most objective reviewer and we think that's best if it can be arranged. Our goal is to make sure that when something is reviewed in RCSD, readers are getting the straight dope without any distracting encumbrances that may make the review less than trustworthy.

## Deep Tech

Amongst RCSD's readership we have many who have developed a deep understanding of a particular R/C soaring-related subject, coupled with an ability to convey that understanding in a way that makes it accessible to a broader audience. If you are lucky enough to have those gifts then we strongly encourage you to write a Deep Tech article on your particular subject of expertise. There is no limit to the amount of detail you can include: column inches in our digital age are officially free. A great example of an excellent Deep Tech article is *The Aerodynamics of a DLG Unravelled* by Theo Volkers and Tjarko van Empel in the February, 2021 issue.

## Competition and Event Coverage

While these stories don't write themselves (actually, few do) the plot is

already there, it's simply your job to capture it effectively. There's usually lots of great photo and video opportunities whenever people and planes gather en masse. The biggest challenge can be capturing the details accurately so when one of your subjects sees their name in print they're not disappointed when they see you spelled their name wrong. But the good news is the same device you're using to capture all those photos and video is also pretty good at recording voice notes. Consider using it for that, as well.

While it's not a perfect science, event stories are a little more time sensitive than other subjects. You should really strive to report 'news' of the event while it's still — well — **new**.

The other thing which might conceivably happen is two people covering the same event and both submitting stories about it. That becomes a tough editorial call where at least one person is going to have their heart broken. If this becomes a common problem, we can adopt some method (probably using the still-in-development RCSD Event Calendar) where you can put your name on the event so as to at least provide fair warning that you intend to cover and report on the event. Until that is in place, we can use the RCSD Twitter to announce your coverage of a particular event, if you want. Just let us know if we can help in that regard.

## **For What It's Worth**

We're pretty sure we're not the only ones who read Don Dewey's *R/C Modeler* magazine (it's been gone for a couple of decades, at least) but there was a section in there called *For What It's Worth*. Today, these would be called 'life hacks': little, simple ideas intended to save time, money or both. As we write this we're not 100% sure how exactly how we will adapt this to RCSD but the concept is valid so we'll figure it out.

For example, we could never quite get a grip on how to Monokote those inverted Horner wingtips that were all the rage at one time. If somebody

had a little trick or two on how to do that, we would have read that story or (these days) watched that video in a heartbeat. The nice thing about this type of article is none would (or should) require a lot of time or effort to write. A short video, a page of text and maybe a couple of pictures. Again, if there were enough of them, we could have a *For What It's Worth* subsection in each issue to cover all of those received in a given month.

## **R/C Soaring Adjacent**

A hobby is just that: something we do in our spare time because we enjoy it. For most of us, it's a break from our everyday, work-a-day lives. However, there are some still admittedly quite rare examples of where the core technologies we use have found their way into areas which are 'adjacent' to the hobby. Some of these are commercial in nature. For example, in the February, 2021 issue we introduced a project called Silent Arrow<sup>®</sup>, which is a commercial cargo carrying glider. It's built at a scale not all that different from the quarter and one-third scale monsters which are out every weekend somewhere in the world. The Silent Arrow<sup>®</sup> is not R/C soaring, per se, but it does not require much imagination to see the substantial overlap between the two domains. That's what makes it 'adjacent'. So if you come across a project or activity that would seem to fit this description by all means write it all down and let's get it out there.

Ready to level up from writing one off articles? Here are some more substantial commitments to multi-part and/or an ongoing series of articles. Candidly, we want you to think long and hard before you take on one of these. Or consider involving a partner (or two) to help create some continuity over the long term without having to shoulder all the burden yourself. By the way, putting your name to one of these officially makes you a 'columnist' which is both a blessing and a curse.

## **R/C Soaring 101**

Although realistically it's a ways down the road, we do have the ambition to get some sort of beginners series going. It would start with the very basics of construction of a really simple design and eventually proceed to flight testing and then mastering the basics of soaring flight. Of particular interest would be those who, either out of choice or necessity, may not have access to a club or other enthusiasts from whom to get some help.

For the life of us we cannot understand why R/C soaring isn't **way** more popular than it already is. We truly believe that it's waiting to be discovered by the paragliding, windsurfing and kiteboarding crowd and if they do... watch out!

We should also mention that if you flip through any issue R/C Soaring Digest you will likely notice something pretty obvious about the demographics of a vast majority of the participants. We want to encourage diversity of any and every kind. If a beginners' program can be put together which helps achieve this goal in some way, then so much the better.

## **CAD/CAM/CNC 101**

Somewhat similar to the above, we would love to have a series that would walk through the whole, cradle-to-grave computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing process. In other words, start with a glimmer in the designer's eye, capturing that in a preferably free CAD tool like Onshape, then creating the output files which could be fed into CNC equipment like laser cutters or 3D printers. It is our hope we can convince a real expert (or experts) to share their vast knowledge with the RCSD readership. Maybe in conjunction with some vendor support? For instance, we could feature Onshape as the tool, and they can help us with content and inexpensive (free?) pro licenses. Again, not a fully developed concept but we're happy to share the idea with you so you can noodle on it.

## **Composites 101**

Essentially the same exercise as immediately above but as it relates to using the miraculous materials to which we have access these days. Again, we might seek some vendor support for this where we employ materials out of their catalogue as well as have access to their in-house expertise to help create the content.

## Mass Build

Our good friends at the Power Scale Soaring Association in the UK have done a magnificent job with their mass build projects. In short, these are exercises where everybody builds the exact same design at exactly the same time. They tend to have a single location mass fly-off to cap off the event which may be a little impactful for RCSD's global readership. Maybe that could be expanded to multiple sites on a given day or some such thing? On a day where the 'shoulder season' weather may be similar in both the northern and southern hemispheres? Again, this is not a fully developed idea but something worthy of discussion we believe. We may simply ask the PSSA if we can somehow piggyback on their efforts — they do so much of it really well.

Did we miss something? By all means, let us know and we'll add it to the list above. Or maybe you have something amazing which doesn't fit into *any* of these categories. We want to see those, too! So, are ready to get started? Check out [Writing for RCSD: Steps, guidelines and a few Pro Tips for authors](#) for all the details.

Finally, a good rule of thumb: write that articles you would want to read and you won't be far off the mark. Good luck and we look forward to seeing your first (or next) submission really soon!

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