
THE R/C FLYER

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Next Meeting - January 13, 2000 at 7:00pm - Clear Lake Park Bldg.

From The Editors Desk

By: Preston Hunt.

New Millennium! Y2K! For me it was the biggest dud the world has ever seen. After spending more than a year as one of our hospitals Y2K team leaders, the big day (night) came and went with nary a whimper. Well they will tell us it was because of all our hard work that nothing happened. Tell that to Italy. They hardly did anything for Y2K and nothing quit working over there. If you ask me, it was the scam of the century. No pun intended. At any rate, I spent my new-millennium night babysitting the hospital facility. I also spent my flying day's at the Texas City club because NASA decided that either the aircraft that belonged to the civilian side of the club was not Y2K compliant and could therefore cause a problem or that we were just a security risk for Y2K. Needless to say, I had a wonderful time flying with several of my heli friends at Texas City. Enough said.

What does the new century hold in store for us? It's anyone's guess but I can imagine tremendous advancements in our radio equipment over the next ten years based off of what I have seen in the last ten. I also predict that we will see new building materials that are lighter and stronger. The advent of truly functional model avionics affordable to the hobbyist is also in the realm of possibilities. I also see the day that we will be flying our models from the cockpit viewed on something similar to an ordinary pair of sunglasses. Hey, how about force feedback sticks so we can really feel that crash. ☐



Building from Kits

By Herman Burton

Sig Four-Star 60 Kit

Last month the newsletter showed photos of the framed but uncovered Sig Mfg. Co. Four-Star 60 airplane I built from a kit, describing the pleasure I get out of the challenge of building from sticks, laser-cut balsa and lite-ply. I decided to log my hours to determine just how much time I spend on a typical airplane from opening the box to having it ready to fly at the field. I had thought that the framing was the more time-consuming activity, rather than the covering, hinge preparation, balancing, and radio equipment installation. By logging my hours, I would know which activity took longer. Also, the total hours spent building a kit might be helpful to prospective kit builders so they would have some idea of the time required. The finished frame shown last month took me 25 1/2 hours. Now we would see how much longer it would take to finish the plane.

Hinge preparation alone, with 6 hinges per aileron, 4 for the rudder and 6 for the elevator, required nearly 3 hours. Covering all the control surfaces with Monocote took another four hours (that includes the vertical fin and stabilizer). The accompanying photo shows a Cub yellow airplane. The bottom of the fuselage is jet black. There are 3 four-inch wide strips of jet black covering on the full chord of each half of the wing, to assist in determining orientation of the plane at a distance. Painting the inside of the cockpit, fuel-proofing the engine and fuel tank compartments, spray painting the landing gear (yellow on top and black on bottom) and spinner with matching Lustrecote all took several more hours. After covering the wings and fuselage, I had accumulated nearly 25 more hours beyond the framing, but thought surely I was essentially through and ready to install the R/C gear, engine, fuel tank, tubing, spinner, muffler and wheels. Well, close, but no cigar. The plane was rather plain, so I decided to add the furnished decals. Several more hours bit the dust, but the decals really did add a nice touch. Tedious, is the best description for installing decals. Even with extremely soapy water, they require meticulous attention to put on somewhat straight. And when you get the water out from underneath them with a balsa paddle, a credit card or other type of squeegee, they are there - period! There is no moving them.

I decided to install all the radio gear and balance the model before installing the cockpit, hoping to prevent unnecessary scratches to the clear cockpit material. A "gadget" I had bought several airplanes ago turned out to be very handy, and that is a C.G. balancer from Great Planes. It is very easy to use, and allows the builder to determine whether the plane is nose heavy or tail heavy. Usually the C.G. is very close to the main spar centerline, and in the case of this plane that is the recommended balance point. With everything required for flight temporarily bolted or installed, the C.G. was right on the spar (with an empty fuel tank, of course), so I had no need to add additional weight. Such was not the case for lateral balancing, though. The location and weight of the muffler on the starboard side of the plane causes that side to be heavier than the port side, so about an ounce of lead was added in the port wing aileron servo tray. After the other three servos were in place in the fuselage, the batteries pushed up under the tank, the receiver connected to all the servos and secured in place with scrap ply, I finally was ready to cut out the cockpit and glue it in place. Except for one small thing - it didn't fit. Rats! So, sand the edges down, check the fit and glue. Well, that only works if the cockpit touches all the way around. Have you ever been successful gluing air? I haven't. So, take the cockpit off, sand and carve some more, and eventually, all the edges finally touch the airplane. Now, cut out a 1/16th strip of covering so the glue will have bare balsa to adhere to, rather than the covering. I use RCZ 56 adhesive for this task. It dries clear and leaves no residue. CA always clouds up the butyrate cockpit material, in spite of the manual saying it can be used successfully. I am sure some people have success with CA on butyrate; I am just not one of them.

Finally, I am ready to fly. I look at the log of my time and I have spent a grand total of 62 hours.

So now I know I spend a little less time framing than for everything else. Intuitively I believe the framing should take about the same time as the remainder. Perhaps I am just slow on the covering (which I admit I am), but all in all, it was fun to build. Don Fisher helped me get it into the air and trimmed out, and then handed the transmitter to me. It flies very good, tracks straight, and wonder of wonders, I managed to land it safely on the maiden flight. Will wonders never cease! I'll see you at the field. Happy landings

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Club Homepage

<http://www.orbitworld.net/mlaible/jsc/index.html>

