

**Gordy's Travels #5**  
RC Soaring...  
It's Not About Flying!

So often I get asked, "Why sailplanes versus helicopters or powered planes, or even electrics?"

To start at the beginning, I started with glow powered planes like so many of us. I had a ball with it but it always left me just a little bit short of being satisfied with my hobby. I did build a new model, fly it and being looking for something faster, bigger or fancier.

When I got into RC soaring, it was the same thing all over again; before I had the latest and greatest model finished and flown I'd be looking and lusting after the next new sailplane. From balsa to bagged to molded, from E214, 3021, 7037, 7035, to MH32, it was a mistaken quest.

It took a lot of miles of soaring in order to understand the answer to the question and the that it was misguided to think that some new 'gimmick' would give me an edge toward 'enjoying' my hobby.

The answer? Simple,,,,, or maybe I should say, it is now, after all these years in the hobby. The difference between flying power planes and sailplanes is that one is about building and flying and one is about building and HUNTING....with the emphasis on HUNTING.

It really came to me the other day while flying with Bruce in Nashville at the Percy Priest Dam site. The wind was slightly sideways to the dam, Bruce had one of Dave's Aircraft's amazing 60" EPP Sweitzer 126's, a foamy suited for rough landing sites. But I only had my Fred Sage 126" Compulsion Thermal Duration contest ship, so needless to say I wanted to make sure conditions would warrant launching.

I watched Bruce's launch closely, but it was his comment that gave me that sort of Zen realization. He tossed the plane and headed out along the dam face, but what he said was, "I think the lift will be right over that corner".... THAT WAS IT!

Thinking back over every launch I made or watched with sailplanes, slope or thermal, it was always about *finding* air.... It was about the HUNT.

When we step on a field, we scour the area for clues signaling lift. When we come off the winch our thoughts are, "Where is the air, which way to turn?", never about 'the flying'.

RC soaring is about the hunt for lift, because we don't have a motor. Sure we can do rolls and loops and virtually all the stuff the powered planes can do, but

because there is no motor or fuel tank, finding more energy to fly is a huge part and in fact the primary goal of each flight.

We all can think back (and remember vividly!) to that first huge thermal that sky'd us out...and it's that memory that drives our yearning each morning of a flying day, and our day dreams on those rainy days.

The Hunt, that's what separates RC soaring from all the other variations of RC (well maybe not so different that RC sailboats☺!)

Good luck on your next 'hunting' trip! I'm off on another of mine...

Gordy Stahl