

Interrogation of a Sport Soarer

I flew a contest in St. Louis and got into a discussion with the pres about why lots of guys show up if they call a 'fun soar' day, but not many show up for contests.

I knew why but heck its just my opinion...so I asked him who would be a representative 'sport soarer' in the club. He told me and I got the guys address, and proceeded to head over to the guy's house to find him cutting the grass. I snuck up and conked him on the head with my Super Stand pole, then stuffed him in my truck.

When I got to the motel, I tied him to a chair with wing tape, then took off his shirt and applied the new really aggressive hinge tape that I got from Don Richmond at Visalia...all over his hairy chest and back.

I brought him back by spritzing some CA Kicker under his nose and began my interrogation (for an RCSD article of course :-)...asking the same question over and over...

WHY DON'T YOU FLY YOUR CLUB CONTESTS!

"I'm not interested in competitions" ..

.yep I could see it was going to be a long night before I'd make it thru the usual canned 'reasons'.... RIPPPP! I pulled off a piece of tape.

YEOW!!!! he exclaimed

"its too much stress" RIPPPP!

"No full size plane sticks its nose in the ground for a landing" RIPPPP!

"I don't need to prove anything" RIPPPP!

"It's not 'fun' " RIPPPP!

I finally ran out of Hinge tape, so I clipped a long length of carbon pushrod and began shoving them under his finger nails....then inserted some elevator bellcranks in places they don't fit too well....and finally I was close to him finally fessing up with the truth... he replied,

"Cuz I don't own a stop watch!!!!" ...

It was getting late and I had a 8:30 pilots meeting the next day so it was time to get serious, pull out all the stops, yep the one thing that will break any sailplaner....

I reached for his wallet....

"Okay Okay!!!! I'll tell you why we sport soarers don't come to contests, it's because we aren't PREPARED!" We never practice.... heck we aren't sure how to practice! When we come to the field, we don't have a talking timer to count down specific amount of minutes of flight time, and we never have a target to land at. SO when contest day comes up we aren't comfortable suddenly being expected to control the sailplane on purpose! We just aren't prepared and that makes us feel like we aren't welcome.... We love to fly and want to fly every opportunity, we want to join in the fun those contest guys seem to have! We just haven't practiced and don't have the confidence to feel we belong.

Now that I had him talking, I couldn't get him to shut up...

He continued...

"When I turned 16 there were 8 of us in our town who went down to get our drivers licenses... when we got there, there was some government guys there who separated us into two groups....I was in the 'Sport Drivers' group of four, the other group was called the 'Elitists'.

Those poor Elitists really got screwed! Us Sport Drivers were taken to a 100 acre driving area that had no obstructions and was surrounded by thick soft rubber bumpers. The instructor assigned us each a car, showed us how to start it and make it go, but that was it....he may have mentioned something about a 'brake', but there really was no need, mostly all we had to do was to stay away from each other. IT was a ball; we could drive anywhere, anyway, fast or slow. On weekends we go out and drive around for hours on end, we'd do circles and figure 8's, and pretty much just drive around....it was great.. And we did it for about 2 years...near the end it got kind of boring"

The Elitist had it really bad, they had to go to classes, and were force to place their hands on certain spots on the steering wheel, even had shift their hands in a certain way when turning. They had to drive in skinny lanes, could only drive one direction in certain lanes too...and were restricted to specific speeds...uck, seemed like a lot of work for nothing.

The instructors would make them do really hard boring stuff over and over and over....things called U-turns, Y-turns, Parallel parking,, then even made them back up with trailers hooked to their cars. As the 2 years went on, the Elitist group was made to do more and more boring and scary stuff like drive in rush hour traffic with lots of other cars packed in really close, and really fast on freeways. Or drive downtown and park in really tight spots (we couldn't figure out why they would bother with stuff like that, since mostly all we did to stop was just let the car coast till it stopped somewhere on the driving area. Sure it was a hassle cuz it could be a long walk back to the entrance, but it sure was a lot easier than what those poor Elitist had to put up with...imagine this! Their driving area had lots of weird obstacles called stop signs and stop lights, and their instructors would make them practice making their cars stop with its front wheels on a thick white line...EVER TIME and if they missed it they would get penalty cards called 'tickets'....which they had to pay fines for!

While we got bored with driving near the end of that 2 years, the Elitists were soooo brainwashed by the government men, that they couldn't wait for the next driving class, they'd actually run to get there!

The abuse to the Elitists group didn't stop there, their instructors even had them doing math , they'd have to figure out how long it would take to get from one place to another, traveling at specific set speeds which only varied pending on signs posted along the ways.

Anyway, near the end of those two years, we Sport Drivers pretty much hardly ever went to the driving area. Sure we had fun driving around with no rules, no requirements, and no need to fine tune our control...for a while,

Little did we realize the atrocity the diabolical evil of this government experiment. But that wasn't to be revealed till just before Senior Prom....

This gorgeous girl who I had been in love with since grad school came up to me and asked me if I would take her to prom, she said she planned on having all the fun that was the stuff of dreams! However, she'd only go with me IF I agreed to drive her.....

How could I? I mean, I had never had to keep my car in a lane, or at a specific speed, and what would happen if I had to do one of those parallel park things and ended up smashing into something....I couldn't bear the pressure and possible embarrassment...I just wasn't prepared!

I told her, thanks for offering...but I was only a 'sport driver. I just do it for 'fun'.... I couldn't admit that I wasn't ...prepared....she ended up marrying one of the Elitist Drivers. :-)

Club Leaders...Here's the secret to increasing club participation.... start holding club 'clinics'. One night offer landing classes.... you know, the 30sec pass over your shoulder, 20 second turn on approach, then work the 'throttle' to a spot. Make it fun, offer rewards for best averaged score for the month of clinics! Vary the shape of the landing zones. Heck, assign each participant the duty of coming up with a different zone for each clinic.

Set a night of time flights, each participant alternates as a timer and a pilot. Same sort of reward thing for best average precision time for the month of clinics. Take some of the club money and get some cheap stop watches for the clinics. Issue each participant monthly clinic score cards..

Set an example....you always flight with a clock, and always toss a hat or put down a tape.

Help your members learn to control their sailplanes...and maybe they'll be part of those *elitists*...the guys who have so much fun in the hobby that they get up at 5am to drive hundreds of miles in the rain to make a 9 oclock pilots meeting to find out that the landing is a crazy shaped spot and the time tasks are all minutes plus seconds, in a weird add em up of a limited number of flights...who have so much fun that even after losing a \$1,000 plus plane, are on the phone that Monday ordering another. A week later back on the phone threatening the supplier that if the plane doesn't show, he's going to expose his lousy service on the RCSE. Shaking in the throws of TD withdrawal symptoms :-)

Build your club by helping sport flyers learn where to *place their hands on the steering wheel*, and how to launch with their left hand, while keeping their right thumbs on the control stick. Teach them launch techniques, and coach them in the logic of 'there is never a good reason to have a downward component of a thermal turn! They're supposed to be falling UPWARDS :-)".

....Damn, I forgot to untie that guy when I checked out....Oops!

Gordy