

MODEL BUILDER

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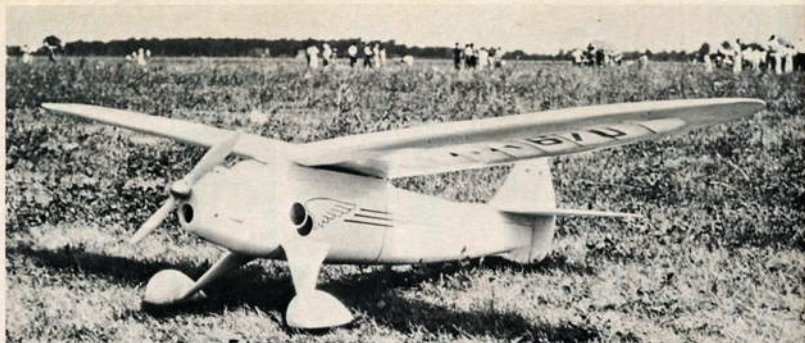
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volume 12, number 123



The REAL
"SNOW WHITE"
Story and PLANS !!





THE REAL SNOW WHITE!

By AL HOLMES . . . Instead of *OLD TIMER of the Month*, this is "OLD TIMER of the Century"! Joe Raspante's classic Beauty Winner has been the center of some controversy as to her parentage. This article, and the accompanying plans, should straighten it all out.



Joe Raspante at the console of his ham TV station.

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

This article has been in the works for quite a while. In fact, Al Holmes has worked on the plans over a period of five years. Until recently, there didn't seem to be any controversy involved. . . . Snow White was simply a very beautiful gas model, designed and built by Joe Raspante in 1937-1938, which went on to win many beauty contests, where flying

ability was also an important factor. Its beauty has remained timeless, and down through the years, it has been considered by many modelers as something very special, something revered, something with a mystique and aloofness, mostly because it could not be duplicated. . . . no plans, no kit.

Beginning with the April '82 issue of *MB*, Bill Effinger's *W.E. Technical Services* advertised the Snow White "20", stating that it was a 3/4-size version of Joe Raspante's model, as designed by Bill Effinger. *Model Builder* also published a photo of the original Snow White in the March '82 *R/C World* column, in which the caption, supplied by Bill Effinger, "clarified" the fact that Snow White was his design.

Meanwhile, discussion with Al Holmes, who was in the process of finishing up the labor of love published herein, indicated that he believed S/W was Joe's design! We asked Al to get with Joe and try to clear up the confusion before we published the Snow White



Joe looking at a set of Snow White plans for the first time in 45 years.

plans.

However, along comes the June '82 issue of *Model Aviation*, with a story on Snow White which adds more confusion to the situation, particularly the three-view which is supposed to be a 3/4-size version of the original model. This lit a fire under Al and *MB's* editor, to get the real Snow White published as soon as possible. With that introduction, we



Al Holmes using a razor saw to remove a wing rib. Each one done the same way.



Using thinner to remove spar pieces from rib. Cap strips removed with model knife.



Sanding rib smooth before tracing. There were no short cuts to this job!



After removing half of stab, rudder could be laid down flat to trace outline. Everything was traced directly from model parts.



Using thinner to remove planking from top of wing. Note truss bracing between ribs, a typical method of the time.

now turn the podium over to Al Holmes.

• • •
**"MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...
 WHO'S THE FAIREST OF THEM ALL?"
 "SNOW WHITE!"**

Yes, SNOW WHITE is alive and well on Long Island!

To my knowledge (and I've been building models for more than 40 years), there has never been a model to attract so much attention with so little exposure.



Joe Raspante with his hand made four-cylinder marine engine. Yes, it runs.

Consider this, only one Snow White has ever been built, that was 45 years ago. Its contest record was nothing short of astonishing. In every contest the Snow White has entered, it won! This includes the prestigious Berryloid competition at the 1939 Nats.

Today, the Snow White is in the center of a controversy. That is; who *truly* designed her? At this point I won't try to sway you in any direction, or bless you with the pearls of my conclusions. Rather, I will list what I have found out about Snow White over the past five years (that's how long I've been working on the plans). Keep in mind how difficult it is to uncover a 45 year old truth.

THE BEGINNING

Early 1937, in Joe Raspante's radio repair shop, on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, New York, Joe sat racking his very inventive brain for some inspiration for a new airplane; one with a new look about it, classic, graceful, and large. In walks a friend and member of the same model club (Majestic Gas Model Club), Bill Effinger (Bill was the moving force behind Berkeley Models).

As Joe recalls, it went something like this: Joe said, "I've been sitting here trying to come up with something new to enter in next year's Beauty Contests. I want something big, like Ben Shershaw's 'Cavalier'. What do you think?" Bill took

out a pencil and on a slip of scrap paper sketched the outline of a likely model. Joe took the sketch home after closing the shop that night. Over the course of the next two or three weeks, Joe engineered, refined and gave birth to Snow White on the backs of old, flattened out, brown paper bags. Joe said, "**Indeed, I give Bill Effinger credit for the idea, the inspiration, that gave me Snow White, but in NO WAY did he ever contribute to the actual design of the Snow White!**"

Now that I have everyone's hackles up and divided into two camps, let's define "DESIGN".

DESIGN: used as a basis for anticipating practical problems and solving them at the engineering stage.

DESIGNER: one who plans, produces, or creates utilitarian or aesthetic objects. (Ref. Webster's Third International Dictionary)

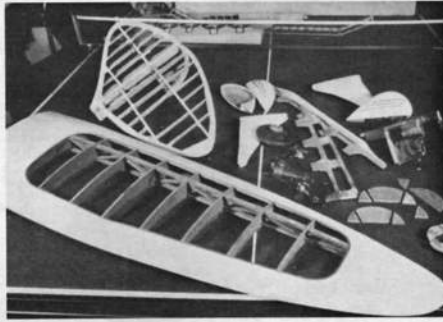
I would say, if this is what "DESIGN" means, then Joe is indeed the "DESIGNER".

Now if you haven't guessed already, I firmly believe, that without a doubt, Joseph M. Raspante is the one and only designer of the famous SNOW WHITE! This is not intended to shoot anyone down, least of all a man who has made the kind of contribution to model

Continued on page 98



Nearly completed Show White in front of Joe's radio repair shop in Brooklyn, N.Y. The original of this photo is dated March 1938.



All that remains of Show White after Al resurrected its construction on the drawings shown with this article. Now you can build her!

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The Twinn Driver is manufactured by C & D Enterprises, 10042 Merimac Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646, and is priced at \$89.95. There is a nice descriptive brochure you should write for. Tell 'em MB sent you.

DON'T JAM IT

One of the avoid-at-all costs rules during a R/C system installation is to never permit a servo to continue to operate against a mechanical stoppage. To do so makes the servo pull some pretty stiff currents, as much as half an amp for a normal servo, and surely much more for those high power jobs that have ap-

peared recently. This can damage a servo amplifier, but even worse, it can run down the receiver battery long before its time, leaving you up there in the wild blue yonder without enough electrons to get you home in one piece.

Probably the greatest culprit in this respect is the throttle servo, and the fact that the exact amount of throw required by the throttle is not always available from the fixed amount obtained from the servo output arm. What is needed is an adjustable length servo arm, furnished by some of the manufacturers who recognize this problem, but so far, not available from all of them. However, relief is spelled "Robart", in the form of its Super Trim Arm, which is variable in length, plus a large number of adapters by means of which it can be used with most popular servos. A sketch of the arm and how it works is included. The Super Trim Arm is Robart No. 397, four for \$1.98, while the Adapter of your choice is 98¢ each. Tested and recommended.

HATS OFF TO WORLD ENGINES

For some months, World Engines, Cincinnati, Ohio, ran an ad asking that we "Help us find the R/C Service Expert in your area", and offering schematic diagrams of its R/C equipment to "technical type model builders who fix R/C systems of club members and others in their respective areas".

Well, I for one think this is great, and wish to thank John Maloney and crew on behalf of all of us "tinkers" out here. Now I am the last one to recommend gambling an airplane and the people and property in its vicinity to a questionable radio, and the experts on a certain system are those who have the most experience working on them. But there are some rather basic things to electronics, and all inoperative radios don't necessarily need a trip back to the maker, with the subsequent expense in time and money, to get them back in the air. Toward this end, a schematic diagram is a tremendous help to a technician. I sent for mine, it arrived promptly the next week, and has been filed in the information file until the day it is needed to help someone make it to that contest he has been waiting for.

If other companies have similar programs, we'd like to hear about it so we can spread the word.

Snow White... Continued from page 20

aviation Bill Effinger has, but to give credit where it's due!

I believe Joe would have given the Snow White to anyone who wanted it, providing they could come up with a set of plans. After all, he gave her to me... all I did was ask!

Now take a look at page 47 of the June '82 issue of *Model Aviation* and you will see where Bill Effinger said the Snow White was not a great flyer, powered with the Brown Junior. Bill would be more than correct in his estimate of

and types, but they all have one thing in common, they require power for two glow plugs during starting.

There are any number of ways to furnish this glow plug power, but those of us who have experience with electronic supplies, glow-drivers, plug-drivers, or whatever name they bear, can attest to their superiority over a plain 1.5 volt battery, especially for those engines that are a little critical to get going. C & D Enterprises, manufacturer of the very popular Glo Driver that bears its name, now has available a driver for twins, two completely independent driver circuits,

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flight performance if the large and heavy Snow White was indeed powered by a Brown. The fact is, it was powered (and very ably) by a Forster "99". Surely, the designer would remember that! (Sal Tabi recalls that Joe did try a Brown, found it was inadequate, and went to the Forster 99. Sal says it was a fine flier, wcn) Joe's reason for not flying Snow White every weekend and in open free flight competition was a simple one. The ship was a "Beauty" model and he didn't want it smashed up, or end up in the trash as did most competition ships (then and now).

For you under 40 types, who may not know about "Beauty" events at contests, I have to mention that even "Beauty" models had to make qualifying flights. In other words, you had to fly to win, it was not a static display!

Let's turn to page 107 of this M.A. feature, paragraph two, where it states, the full sized Snow White has a 96 inch wing span. Wrong again, it has an eight foot wing span (that's '96").

Last, but by no means least in my case for Joe Rapson, turn back to page 46 and take a casual (not careful and close) look at what Bill Effinger calls the

"re-designed Snow White 20". O.K.? Now look at the plans pictured in this Model Builder article, I say to you, there is no way that the "20" is a copy of the Snow White, re-design, reduced or otherwise! You be the judge! As far as I am concerned, one is Snow White and the other the Wicked Witch!

There can be no doubt about the authenticity of the Snow White plans herein, they were drawn by taking apart the only Snow White ever built and tracing the parts.

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Now that I have the debate out of the way, let's talk models.

I first saw the Snow White in a book at the Baltimore, Maryland Public Library, when I was a boy. The book in which it was pictured was *The Theory of Flight* by Air Age Inc. This was late in 1941. I know it was in December 1941, because I had asked my Mom and Dad to give me this book as a Christmas gift. This was not just any December, way back when, but December, 1941. You see, my Dad was a

career army officer, and I recall he was more concerned about the war we had just entered, than model airplane books. (I got the book anyway). In this book, on the first page, was a full page photo of Joe Kaspante's "Snow White". It was love at first sight. However, some 36 years would go by before Snow White would enter my life again.

It was the summer of 1977. I was reading a 1938 copy of *Model Airplane News*, that belonged to a collection of a

good friend, Tom Felico. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Joe Kaspante's name in the caption. The next day I called Joe and asked if he still had the plans. My heart sank when he said no. He explained the drawings were done on brown paper bags, and after the model was completed, they were discarded. I understood how that could happen, because in his own mini-sport world, I used to tape pages of loose-leaf notebook paper together to make sheets

large enough to draw plans on. I designed and built a lot of airplanes back then, and if my life depended on it, I couldn't come up with a set of plans today. Needless to say, I felt great disappointment. However, Joe's next statement was, "I think I still have the Snow White somewhere up in the attic. If it's still there you can have it."

Burning rubber all the way to Joe's house, I arrived before the phone line had cooled off. There, in Joe's immaculate shop (more about the shop later) was that beautiful ship I had fallen in love with so many years before. It was like going home again. My thoughts filled with boyhood memories of the Sunday contests at Model Haven. Nostalgia dripped from every pore. The next step was to figure out how to draw an authentic set of plans, without destroying that magnificent old girl.

Snow White sat on a drawing table, in my studio, for two months or more, while I contemplated my next step. Finally I came to the agonizing conclusion; the only way to save Snow White for future generations of modelers was to systematically destroy her! The next morning, I called Joe with the bad news. Without any hesitation he said, "Do whatever you have to do, but let's make her live again."

The model was in fairly good condition considering it had spent the past 20 years or so in the attic, with temperatures as high as 110° in the summer and as low as 0° in the winter. At one point, it had even been used as a tricycle by his grandson! There was almost no silk at all on the open frame work, none at all on the wings. The exposed wood was in very bad shape, dry, broken, it almost crumbled at the touch.

The wing seemed a good place to start, so after selecting the one in the best condition, I carefully traced the wing outline, both panels. The rib locations were marked in position. Using thinner and model knife, I began removing the top planking, thereby exposing the structure beneath. Then the trailing edge and wing tip pieces were removed, dried, and sanded. A large razor saw was used to cut through the spars and leading edge to remove the ribs. The spar sections, leading edge chunks and cap strips were then removed from the ribs using thinner. Most of the ribs were in poor shape and care had to be taken not to destroy them. In a few cases the ribs had to be "rebuilt". After the set of ribs was assembled and sanded smooth, the wing parts were traced. None of the parts of Snow White, except those made of plywood, were worth saving, so no effort was made to save anything.

The other day I was talking with Joe and asked how he plotted the wing ribs. He laughed, and then described an incredibly simple procedure. I must confess it would never have occurred to me in a hundred years. After selected a suitable airfoil, you make one rib out of balsa or even cardboard. Using a D.C. light (A.C. will not work), you adjust the

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distance between the rib and the light. The resulting shadow will give you a perfect rib outline, of whatever size you want. This is an indication of how the inventive mind of Joe Rasparte works.

The tail group was next in line for disassembly. Using the same technique as with the wings, it proved to be much simpler to put down on paper. While we're talking about the tail, check the really neat Track and Key method used to align and hold it in place. The only rubber bands needed are between the two hooks, on the bottom of the sub-rudder.

The most difficult task was taking apart the fuselage. You can learn a lot about a modeler by taking apart his airplanes. The strip planking was just unbelievable, every strip was carefully tapered to an exact fit. There was not one trace of wood filler. All the fillets were carved balsa wood. All the markings on the ship were hand painted. No masking tape or decals were used; the pin stripes were hand painted. There were traces of an AMA number on the capstrips. They too were hand painted, red numbers and letters with a black outline. The entire ship was covered with white silk. The fuselage and tail were painted all white, the wing was painted white on the planked area only, the open area of the wing was clear doped. Around the edge of the open area of the wing was a hand painted red line, about 1/8 inch wide. This is "Craftsmanship" with a capital "C"!

It was just about impossible to remove the strip planking with thinner, without damaging the structure beneath. So out came the razor saw again. The fuselage was taken apart one bulkhead at a time, starting at the tail. The distance between the formers was carefully measured at the time of removal, and that information transferred to paper. This way the airplane kept getting smaller and the drawings kept getting larger. Using this method, there is no chance of missing or misplacing any parts. It also makes it possible to stop at anytime and pick it up again weeks later, without missing a trick! The bulkheads were disassembled using the same thinner, saw, and knife routine, then carefully sanding and rebuilding where needed. Making con-

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