

RC SAILPLANE

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Committee Chair

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Submitted by David Webb

Hello! My name is David Webb, and I am currently assisting Fabien Gagné as the co-chair for the MAAC Sailplane committee. I have been an avid R/C enthusiast for roughly 20 years and competing in various national teams since 2004. I have had the honour of representing Canada as a national team member in nine (9) World Championships as a supporting team member, pilot and team manager roles. I would like to speak to the entire membership on some very important challenges many of you may not be aware of.

COMPETITION BENEFITS EVERYONE

I have had the pleasure of being involved in a number of clubs in Canada, the U.S.A. and a dozen other countries and have had the opportunity to observe the impact that elite contest pilots can have on an organization. In every case, what I see are pilots who, while personally driven to improve their own skills, are taking significant time to raise the skills and enjoyment of anyone willing to ask for help. That help is regularly given freely, regardless of the novice's intent to fly contests or just enjoy the day. The vast majority of the pilots I know rejoice as much in helping a new pilot catch their first thermal as they do in themselves standing on a podium.

I know this is entirely true for myself. I have spent hundreds of hours teaching and repairing and I've travelled tens of thousands of kilometers to events where I might not even fly, all in support of other pilots. I have had the opportunity to not only train several young pilots in Washington state but also felt the pride in watching

them take the podium in 2010 when the entire Junior F3J team was composed of junior members I had flown with. From 2014 to 2019, I had the opportunity to work with junior members of the U.S.A. F3K team. Watching those kids take the podium was one of the best highlights of 2019 for me. It is my deep desire to see Canadian youth on that podium one day, soon.

Given my positive -- and those of thousands of others -- you could imagine my dismay at the recent push by specific Board members and executive leaders to weaken or sever Canada's connection to the Fédération aéronautique internationale (FAI) which is the governing body of international air sports. I found this to be a true disconnect from what the general membership wanted. That was shown when the membership voted to keep the language that ties us to the FAI in its current place in the Constitution. That landslide vote is a clear message to current and future Boards to stay the course and protect our connection to the FAI.

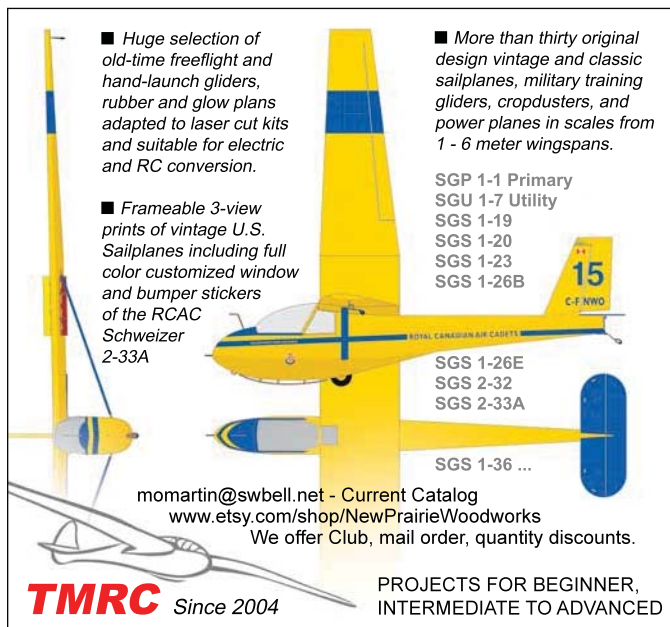
Let us ensure that of the many goals of the Board, one of them is to unequivocally support Canada's participation in international events as it has, for over 70 years. I know many of you will never compete, but I also know that most of you will share the joy when Canada wins in any event.

It is with this pride in Canada in mind that I respectfully ask each member to consider a renewed interest in how MAAC is being run, who is running it and how, as an organization, we can make positive changes that strengthen MAAC. Please attend your upcoming Annual Zone Meetings and voice your opinions to your Zone Director about the value of representing Canada globally.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

The last topic I would like to speak to is at the core foundation of democracy. There can be no effective democracy without clear, unfettered communication and freedom of speech. My experience is that MAAC appears to have some issues with this topic and that has unfortunately resulted in the silencing and stifling of new ideas, new energy, and advancement of this organization. I have reached out to our leadership directly and through approved channels at AGMs and have received few, if any, direct responses to my questions.

I am asking each of you to write to our President and your ZD to demand that members have a clear and unfettered channel to communicate in. While it can be difficult -- and even ugly, at times -- without freedom of speech, I personally believe that MAAC will continue down a very dangerous road that has already created significant conflicts and a lack of growth. ✖



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