

- February 2023 -



Members at the January KWRAA meeting were treated to a great presentation on electric aircraft by Paul Parker from the Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics at the University of Waterloo. Paul's presentation highlighted current electric aircraft projects by some of the commercial aircraft manufacturers as well as the Pipistrel Alpha Electro undergoing testing at CYKF by the University of Waterloo. The Alpha Electro, based on the Velis, is an electrified version of the Pipistrel Alpha Trainer. This plane provides a very low drag stable test bed in order to achieve the longest flights possible.

President's Message

A tropospheric circumpolar vortex or "Polar Vortex" is a relatively new term we are hearing far more often. First described in 1853, it did not become part of our popular culture until the winter of 2013–2014, when it became a common way of explaining abnormally cold temperatures. It was further popularized when we had the extreme cold snaps in 2019 and 2021 that lasted weeks right across Canada.

The cold snaps were actually caused by a weakening of the polar vortex that holds most of the colder air within an area over the pole and extends down to about the arctic circle. When the vortex breaks apart, it allows the colder air to move towards the equator, sweeping slowly across the country from West to East, allowing most of Canada to share the pain of extreme sub-zero temperatures. I mention this as we are escaping the cold in BC and Ontario temperatures are plummeting.

Winter flying can be exciting and exhilarating as aircraft performance improves due to air density and engine dynamics, but it is also a time to be aware of the increased risks in the event of an engine failure far from help. If you are flying this winter be prepared for the cold, especially if there is a polar vortex! Whether these events are caused by climate change or not, they seem to be happening more often.

In this issue I will try to explain what goes into writing a good article for the Leading Edge Newsletter or the Recreational Flyer Magazine. I am always looking for your input, whether it's a tip for other builders, a technical review of a product, maintenance on your plane, or maybe an article on winter flying... hint, hint. Full-length stories related to your amateur-built aircraft project are especially welcome. 😊

2023 is going to be a great year for KWRAA!

- Dan

Do You Have What It Takes to Write a Great Article for the KWRAA Newsletter or Recreational Flyer Magazine?

I certainly don't claim to be an expert in writing articles. In fact, I barely scraped through English classes in school. I do, however, have a bit of experience of late and hope that I can pass on a bit of what I have learned.

I will preface this article by saying that everyone has a story to tell, including you. Please share it... IF you have what it takes!

In order to generate reader interest, there are a few components you must have and several that just make the article more interesting.

First and foremost, the reader must see himself/herself in the article. By this, I mean that there must be something of interest to them personally in order to continue reading it. Sometimes, the title alone can have this effect, or sometimes a special photo will do it, but more often, interest is captured in the first few sentences. If you have not captured interest by the end of the second paragraph, you will probably lose the reader. Personal appeal makes your article far more interesting.

Second, in our genre of articles, at least fiction can be ruled out. Your readers will want facts and probably specs, depending upon the topic. To clarify, articles related to specific aircraft, engine, or avionics will require facts related to the specifications, installation, maintenance or operation. If your article is based on an experience, such as a trip you took in your plane or how you dealt with an unexpected issue like bad weather or technical failure, or maybe a training issue or other experience you had, you will need a factual account of what happened, how you dealt with it, and what you would do next time.

In either case the readers need to see themselves going through a similar experience and knowing what to do because of your accounting of what happened to you.

The third component to consider is sometimes referred to as the 'law of service'. Readers not only want to find it interesting; they want to know what's in it for them. Consider how the text reads from the reader's point of view. With

that in mind, consider that every reader has different interests. Simply putting in the effort of writing is not enough to capture everyone's attention and simply stating 'this is interesting, you should read it' will not work. The trick is to figure out how to include something for everyone. Some readers will want technical details and others will want broad strokes on how they can use your information themselves.

You must first decide why people would want to read your article and second, address these reasons as convincingly as possible and as soon as possible.

Fourth, you can generate interest in a number of ways. You can often generate interest early on by asking some pointed questions that challenge the reader to answer for their own situation. The question can be asked outright and then answered in your article or it may be implied by the title or situation described in the article. A recent article in the Leading Edge, written by Lee Coulman, was titled, "35 seconds to Quiet Terror". The title alone raises a number of questions that garner interest immediately. What terrifying thing happened? Could it happen to me? Why 35 seconds?

Contrasting, yet complementing, topics can also generate interest. An article Lee and I wrote in 2016 told a story about a bucket list trip we took to the Bush Plane Heritage Centre in Sault Ste. Marie. It was titled, "Journey or Destination?" This title raised the age-old question about which was more important, but the article told the story of how enjoyable both were and included photos to illustrate our point.

In order to get the interest of technical readers, offer concentrated bursts of detailed specs, but not so prolonged that the wide-strokes readers get bored with details they will never use. I have personally used this technique when I wrote the lead articles in the Recreational Flyer covering the construction of both of my Highlanders. Bursts of details and specs were interspersed within the story to try to keep everyone interested and engaged.

Keep your readers in mind when relating facts. Very few, if any, of the readers of this newsletter or even the Recreational Flyer are

expecting to see academic, research or graduate level articles, so in most cases you will not require footnotes and references to support your information. However, if you are using proprietary information, specific facts, or direct quotes from other published articles, you 'must' give credit to those sources and on occasion get permission to use and republish the information. It's been said, 'if you use information from one source it's plagiarism, from many it's research'. That said, do not use unverifiable information that could be considered "Alternative Facts".

Everyone has a slightly different style when writing, but almost all of them are acceptable. In most published articles, contractions are never used, but I often use them so the article will read the way I talk. What's my point? Don't be afraid to express yourself how ever it comes naturally to you.

The important point here is that you have someone else read through your article to make certain that it reads well. They can check for grammar and spelling mistakes too. I am fortunate myself to have a spouse with 20+ years of teaching experience as my proof reader. Trust me when I say that even after several years of article writing I still make mistakes in every article and newsletter that I write. Don't expect the perfect article on your first attempt. I generally re-read and re-write them a few times before I think they are complete and correct. Don't be afraid to ask for help... I do. And...hit the 'Save' button often!

Another item that can improve your writing is the use of a template or guide. No matter what you plan on writing, someone has done something similar, so writing templates or guides are often available. The simplest form of this would be to copy the style and format of another similar article you read and enjoyed. For a more complex article or lead story, a template or writing guide can often help.

I have generated a guide that can be used for writing an article about a recently completed amateur aircraft and another for partially completed aircraft at the pre-cover stage. Both of these guides ask all of the key questions most readers will want to have answered in your article. By answering each question with a

couple of sentences you will have the basis for an excellent article on your completed project.

Whether it's a lead story about your aircraft project or an adventure story about a flight you took, or even just a short technical article, you can use the points mentioned herein to generate an interesting article that most, if not all, of our readers will want to explore with eagerness to see what's in it for them.

If it's your first time writing an article, much like a musician learning a new song, do it in chunks and repeat it several times. Don't expect to sit down and write an article all in one sitting. It can be done, but that's very rare. Spend a bit of time jotting down ideas about content, write a paragraph or two then take a break and come back to write more later in the day or even the next day. Then repeat... think about content and write another paragraph or two. Before you know it, you will have an article that's ready for the window dressing of photos, graphs and/or illustrations.

As an interesting counterpoint to the last statement, on occasion I will start with a number of interesting photos and write the story around them, but I find most times generally the writing comes first. The exception usually happens when I am covering an event like a fly-in or the KWRAA Christmas Party. These events are centred around the people and planes so the pictures generally tell the story and I supplement it with a few words.

I hope this instills a little confidence and motivation to anyone sitting on the fence about writing an article. It's not difficult and the time spent pays off in confidence and self development. There's no feeling like seeing your article published and hearing the positive comments from others of how much they enjoyed reading it or how much it helped them.

Writing is a challenge not because it's hard; because I'm busy, you're busy, and there's always something else to do, but like Nike says... Just Do It!

You'll be very glad you did!

- Dan

PS: Write-On Dude! 😊

Completed Amateur-built Aircraft Project – Newsletter Article Writing Guide

If you can write a few sentences describing each of the following items, you will have the makings of a great article for the local newsletter and likely even for the Recreational Flyer Magazine. Generally, one good overall photo showing the project (with the builder in the photo if possible) and a few technical photos showing some of the assembly or specific things that differentiate the project from others will draw interest to the article.

- Describe who you are and your background/history of flying, aircraft ownership and building
- Why did you choose the plan or kit you did? ie: reputation, manufacturer support, mission
- What is the primary construction material? ie: composite, aluminum, tube and fabric, wood, etc.
- Did you build it alone or did you have a partner (or partners) in the process?
- Did you have the benefit of a local RAA chapter or flying club to assist you if needed?
- Did you use builder-assist for any part of the project? If so, what part and why?
- How many of that kit or plan have been sold and how many are completed and flying?
- What optional items did you install on your plane? Why?
- Did you modify the basic design of the kit... what, how and why?
- What engine and propeller did you install? Why that engine? Why that propeller?
- What is the empty weight and MTOW?
- Did the CG fall within the desired range? Did you add or shift weight to meet the design spec?
- What are the performance specs based on your engine and prop, when flying solo and at MTOW?
- How long did it take to build the aircraft? Were there challenges in meeting your time goals?
- Where did you build it? ... ie: size of shop or workspace and any challenges you may have faced in it?
- Are there any special features in the workspace or jigs you made to complete portions of the build?
- When did you have the pre-cover and final inspections done?
- Were there unexpected snags in completing the inspection process?
- When was the first flight? Who did it?
- How did you log or record your progress? ...ie: written logs, photo log, checklists, etc.
- What was the assembly manual like... was it easy to follow? Were there photos, templates, etc.?
- Did you use any builder forums, chat groups, or websites during the build? What and why?
- Were there other challenges you faced in regards to time, weather, resources and parts availability?
- What avionics did you decide upon? Why?
- Did you install ADS-B IN/OUT when you built your panel... why or why not?
- Have you flown off the mandatory 25 hours within 25 nautical miles? If so, have you flown any longer flights since? Do you have any plans for longer flights within the next year or so? Any RAA Fly-ins?
- Now that you have been flying it, what is your overall impression of your new aircraft?
- What is the stability like? How do the controls feel?
- Are there items you would like to change or things you wish you would have done differently?
- Any other comments about your new plane?
- Where do you keep your plane now? Any plans to change locations? Why?

Upcoming Events in 2023: (Highlighted lines are KWRAA Events*)

January 12	-	January Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
February 9	-	February Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
March 9	-	March Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
Mar 28–Apr 2	-	Sun-n-Fun 2023
April 13	-	April Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
May 11	-	May Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
June	-	KWRAA Fly-Ins - TBD
July	-	KWRAA Fly-Ins - TBD
July 24-July 30	-	Oshkosh Air Venture 2023
August	-	KWRAA Fly-Ins - TBD
August 18-20	-	UPAC Convention 2023
September 14	-	September Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
October 12	-	October Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
November 9	-	November Meeting at 7:30 in the Cadet building at CYKF
November 24	-	KWRAA Christmas Party – Details to follow later in 2023

* KWRAA events are fly-in and/or drive-in.

KWRAA Executive Contact Information:

Due to an increase in spam emails, please reach out to me directly for the latest contact information for the KWRAA Executive members. Thank you, Dan Oldridge (519) 651-0651.