



# "FIRST \*\*\* \*\* NIGHT"

By JIM MOSELEY and JOHN GODDEN . . . This model is just the thing to get your young son or daughter started in modeling. Give it a try!

PHOTOS BY JIM MOSELEY

• If performance is what you crave, then turn elsewhere in the pages of **R/C Model Builder**. But if you require a simple, tough and reliable little airplane which flies stably and well, either as a first personal project or as a model to be quickly built for an upcoming small son/daughter/brother/sister, etc., then "First Night" is really the one for you.

Frank Zaic once said words to the effect that a youngster is not too interested in super duration, preferring instead a model which climbs like crazy, flies well enough to be satisfying but does not require too much chasing, and this model fills that need to perfection.

It was first designed and built by John Godden back in the early '70s as a suitable model for his younger son Martin (then five years of age) to throw around while Dad flew more exotic ships. Martin was flying his First Night for a full season before it came to my attention, and I promptly talked John out of a set of drawings and built a replica for my own boy, Kevin, who was approaching a similar age at that time. A couple years later a second version was built for younger brother Paul when he, in turn, reached the same ripe old age, and at the time of this writing (May 1979), both models are still going strong after five and three years, respectively, of hard and constant use without damage other than the occasional tissue patch, though a few rubber motors have been worn out during the period.

John's main objectives were strength, simplicity, and ease of assembly, and these are achieved to the full. Construction is basic, even for the beginner, and for once the weight problem is of no concern, as all stripwood is of hard stock. Even the ribs, fins, etc. are of firm balsa. It's economical, too . . . the tailplane is completely built from the leftovers from the wing spars, etc.

Wing panels are butt-jointed together, the angled ribs used on each panel providing the necessary dihedral and obviating the usual fiddly trimming of the l.e., t.e. and spars to fit one another and then to be ply braced (you'll be surprised at how much quicker and easier it is to assemble a wing this way. I now use the system on any sort of airplane now). The covering is of heavy grade tissue on the fuselage and flat center panel of the wing, with medium weight elsewhere.

Propellers can be a problem to the inexperienced. John solved this by using a 12-inch plastic propeller from the KeilKraft range, cut down to 11 inches, though this is not too critical. I forgot to do this on Paul's model, but as the model isn't aware of it, it flies just the same anyway. One thing to watch is the balance of the plastic propeller; some of them are way out of true and require quite substantial sanding of the heavier blade. An unusual item is the absence of a freewheeling assembly, so there's no tricky wire bending to bother about; when the rubber turns run out, the prop stops and down comes the ship in a safe, steep spiral instead of gliding away into the sunset.

The prop shaft size might appear flimsy, but it is quite sturdy enough for general use. John's philosophy was that thicker wire was more difficult to straighten on the field, once bent, whereas the lighter grade could easily be trued up with fingers and pliers if the need arose. On reflection, I think I have only once had to do this in the five years that Kevin has been flying his version, so don't worry too much about it . . . if it makes you happier, you'll go up a size

*Continued on page 86*

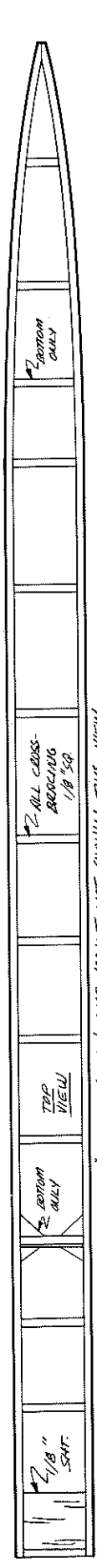
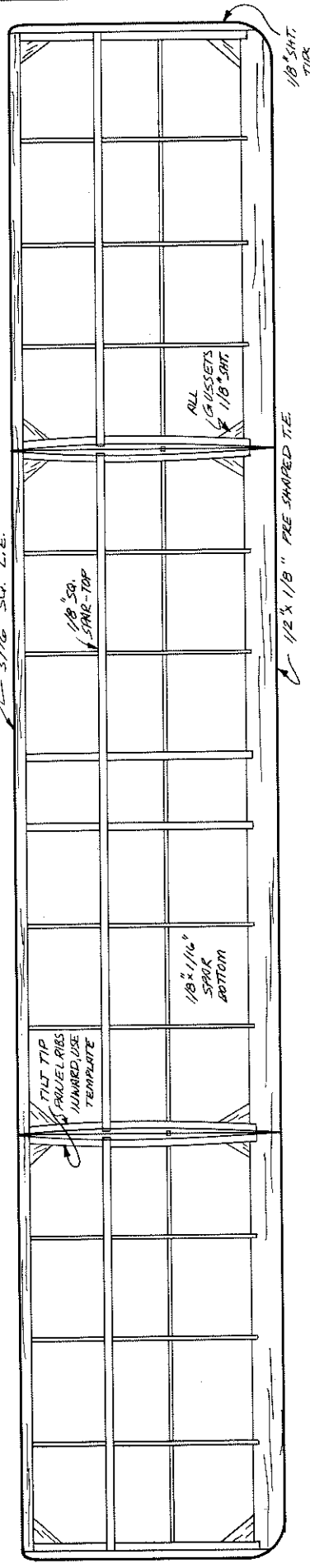


"Hurry up and take yer pitcher so I can launch." Paul Moseley, 6, with First Night.

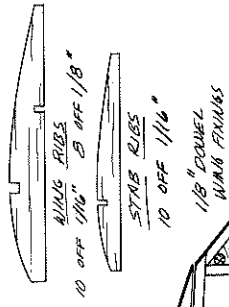


Kevin Moseley (right) and younger brother, Paul, are the picture of professionalism as they ready Kevin's model. Big Keil Kraft prop may be hard to find, can use 9-1/2" Peck prop.

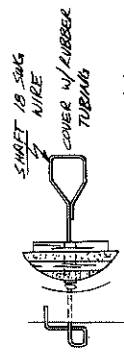
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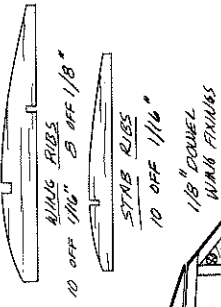
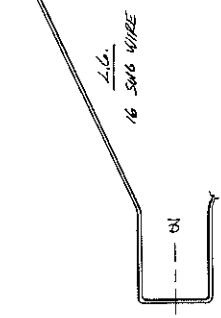
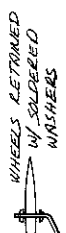
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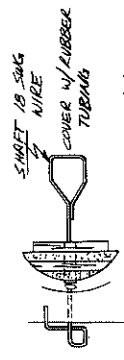
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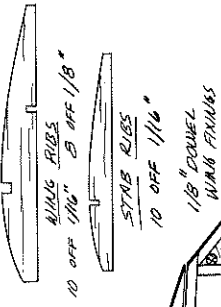
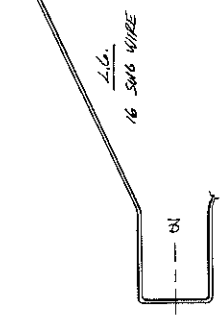
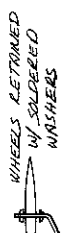
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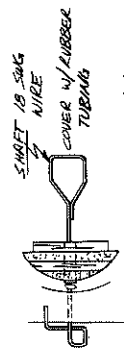
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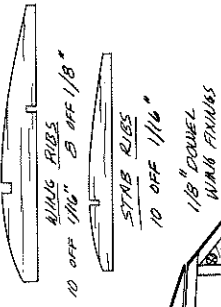
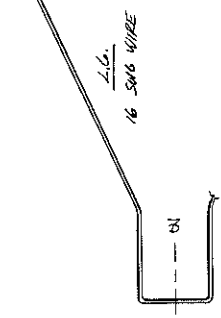
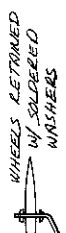
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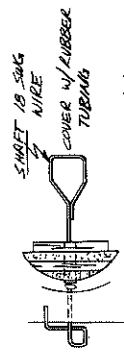
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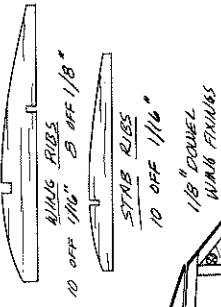
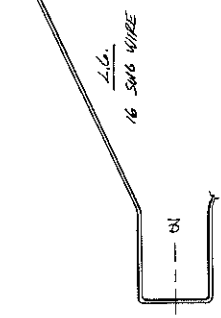
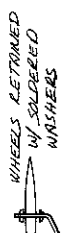
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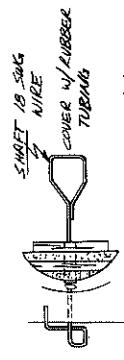
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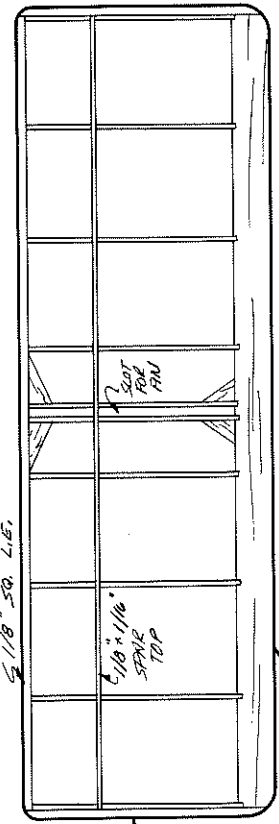
# "FIRST NIGHT"

DESIGNED BY: JOHN GORDEN  
FLIGHT TESTED BY: MARTIN GOODEN,  
DRAGAN BY: JOHN MOSELEY, PAUL MOSELEY  
FINISHED FOR A.B. BY: S.R. CARTERSON

MODEL BUILDER magazine  
127 West 10th St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627  
Plan No: 10712

SPAN 24 3/4"  
(FEET)  
LENGTH 25"  
APPROX

\*NOTE: ALL PARTS BEAR UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.



POWER: 3-4 VRS 1/4" RUBBER  
6 STRAINES  
PROP: KEEL KRAFT 12"  
PLASTIC CUT DOWN  
TO 11" DIA.  
BALANCED

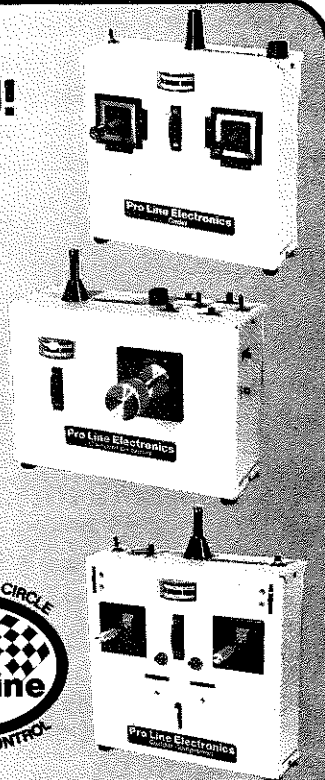
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First Night . . . Continued from page 54  
anyway!

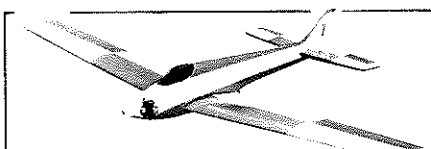
Flying First Night is a cinch! Three or four yards of 1/4-inch rubber, made up into six strands and tensioned, is adequate and trimming could not be easier. Try a hand glide or two over soft grass; they won't tell you too much due to the fixed prop, but at least they'll show that it is not going to stall violently or dive straight onto your toes. Both of our models required a small piece of modeling clay at the rear to help the glide after the model had been up under power.

Put on about 50 hand turns and the model will climb away to the right; from then on increase the number of turns,

using a winder and stretching the rubber. In general, First Night likes just a touch of right thrust as the power increases and, given about 600 turns on good rubber, it will barrel up in a spiral that causes a surprising number of people to walk over and inspect it afterwards. On full turns it climbs extremely fast and is guaranteed to cause a mild sensation when launched amongst a gaggle of Wakefields or Coupes, when it initially outclimbs the whole pack.

It is by no means a fair weather machine, either; when the wind is flattening the grass and all self-respecting model airplanes lie snug in their boxes, First Night is still going strong . . . albeit a long way. Stability is exceptional, the gusts bounce it around the sky, but it keeps on going regardless and is tough enough to keep coming back for more.

Naturally enough, performance is modest. On full turns it will hit around 35 seconds, and youngsters don't need full turns anyway. Twenty-five to thirty seconds does not seem too much to the experienced F/F man, but it is more than enough for the kids . . . but don't expect to get in too much flying with your own models, for every couple of minutes or so the small fry will be panting back wanting you to hold or wind once again. If you really want more time to yourself, then go ahead and put a freewheeling prop on the shaft and thus let it fly longer and farther, but remember that the prime purpose of the airplane is to satisfy and encourage the youngsters,



### WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

It looks like a high-performance pattern airplane, and it is! What's "wrong" is that it doesn't use retract, or a pipe, or a fuel-gulping .60. But there's nothing wrong with hassle-free flying—find out for yourself! The Fun-X kit includes an epoxyglass fuselage with firewall installed, foam wing cores, and instructions. All-up weight 23 oz. with 2-channel and Tee Dee .049. Price \$35.00 p.p.d.

Order direct from:  
J & M Glascraft Co. **JMGLAS**  
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phone (313) 773-7069  
(Michigan residents please add 4% sales tax.)

and they just like to fly and fly . . . and often!

Simple though it might be, it has won contests. Set up a simple precision event where each entrant establishes a target time and attempts to equal it on each of a further four flights, differences being calculated as percentage errors and totaled. Simple and good fun . . . and surprisingly hard to achieve. First Night excels in this. In one event the boys took first and fourth, with Dad making 3rd after borrowing one of the models(!).

Try the model, you'll like it . . . and good flying!

Choppers . . . Continued on page 47

require an additional tail rotor control input whenever the main rotor is speeded up, or when the collective pitch is changed, or both. In the past, this has been accomplished in a satisfactory manner by mechanical mixing levers and pushrod arrangements; however, the new transmitters supercede these contraptions by electronically controlling two or even three servos simultaneously at an adjustable (pre-set) rate. Last but not least, they made it possible to reverse the direction of servo rotation by setting the appropriate controls on the transmitter . . . no more left hand/right hand servos to mess around with!

We really have to give the radio manufacturers credit for all the research and development in the past couple of years or so. Admittedly, the new gear is rather expensive, but does represent a tremendous step forward in precision control of R/C model helicopters (and airplanes, too!).

A few months ago, I heard of a do-it-yourself dual rate control system for those who have a little knowledge of electronics and who dare to get into their transmitter for a slight modification or two. After checking around, I finally got a lead from John Gorham, who had seen it on a friend's transmitter, and decided to do a little experimenting myself. If you care to try it out, as I did, you should recognize that this schematic will provide a reduced servo rate when the switch is moved on, and a normal servo rate when the switch is off. It will not give you an increased servo movement, therefore you must adjust the pushrod/bellcrank system on your chopper to provide the desired high rate/low rate control inputs. Another thing to be aware of is that it might not work on your particular transmitter.

You'll just have to experiment and see for yourself. The first one I tried was the Orbit transmitter, and the results were excellent. The Kraft transmitter accepted it OK, but was a little more difficult to trim out in a linear fashion on both sides of servo center.

The modification consists of installing two small trim pots inside the transmitter case and a switch on the outside which can be flipped on or off conveniently with your free finger (on a helicopter??). Location of the components is not