

F2D News - September 2013

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Much has happened since the last installment of the F2D News. In July, we had an F2D triple elimination double-header, with the Team Selection Finals for the 2014 US F2D Team and the Nationals back-to-back in Muncie, Indiana. Four days, six metaphorical lives, 95 degree heat, high humidity, and no wind. It was a recipe for exhaustion. It was a recipe for awesome. It was combat. Attendance was great (possibly the biggest Team Trials in 20 years), and the level of flying quite high. Congratulations to all the winners of both contests (US Team: Josh Ellison, Mark Rudner, Richard Stubblefield, and junior Sasha Nadein, and National Champion Andrey Nadein), for hard-fought victories. August brought on the European Championships in Bekescaba, Hungary, and with it more heat and, more importantly, more combat. Your faithful reporter joined the Latvian team as a mechanic. I witnessed some very good flying, quite notably from the Russian junior pilot, Denis Esaulkov, who came in second overall. A big congratulations goes out to him.

In the aftermath of the European Championships, an intense debate ensued with regard to Igor Trifonov's use of an abrasive "polymer microsphere" coating on his leading edges. The stated purpose of the coating was aerodynamic, but common sense and clear video and photo evidence tell a different story: the coating is great for cutting streamers with the wing. This would be fine, if not for the fact that the F2D Sporting Code, section 4.4.5.h, states: "The model aircraft shall not carry any artificial aid to assist the cutting of the streamers." During the competition, the judges allowed these models to fly. However, now there appears to be broad support from the F2D community to ask for much stronger enforcement of this rule, to keep the playing field more fair at future contests. If not, we will end up with a distracting "arms race" in wing coating technologies, which most pilots do not want to see and which is against the spirit of the rules.

In the midst of these exciting events, tragedy struck on August 24. On that day, we lost a great friend and fellow aeromodeler, Victor Stamov. This column is dedicated to Victor.

Victor Stamov was an amazing individual, of a type that most of us are only lucky enough to meet once in a lifetime, if we're lucky. To the great fortune of many, Victor's passion for aeromodeling brought him to us. For those who don't know him, Victor was one of the world's top pilots in F1A (towline glider free flight). However, the trophy count doesn't even begin to capture the essence of Victor. While competition often seems to bring out the worst in so many, in Victor's case competition provided a platform for him to show the world what it means to be a true sportsman. Although he was a fierce competitor, Victor never hesitated to help another modeler. His models were technological masterpieces, constantly under development and reaching new heights. He was not alone in advancing the level of F1A, but I think it's safe to say that Victor's models propelled the event forward and kept a large number of pilots aloft worldwide, for many years. His impact on the field is clearly visible in the outpouring of support for his family, and the many wonderful stories shared on the facebook page dedicated to his memory.

I first came to know Victor at the 1998 Control Line World Championships, in Kiev, Ukraine. At that time I was the junior member of the US F2D team. Shortly before my dad and I left for the contest, Randy Weiler, a friend and local free flight pilot in California, arranged to get us in contact with his good friend Victor Stamov in Kiev. Victor and his family took great care of us throughout the trip, and helped make sure that things went smoothly for the whole US Team. If it had only been the English translation that he and his daughter Olga provided, it would have been enough; they went way beyond. One of my fondest and clearest memories of that trip was when Victor, who we had only just met via Randy, invited me and my dad to his house for a warm visit and some delicious food (also my first experience with "kvass"). That was where a long and lasting true friendship between our families was born.

For those who have been following along with the F2D News, you may remember Victor from the November 2009 issue, which detailed my experiences at the Dnipro Cup (F2D World Cup event) in Novomoskovsk, Ukraine. Upon hearing about my logistical nightmares the previous year, Victor graciously offered to pick me up at the airport in Kiev, and to help me throughout the competition. Sadly I wasn't able to find a picture of us together (he was behind the camera all weekend), but the included photo shows Victor (next to Igor Milenin) holding my planes as we were getting ready for processing. It didn't matter that this was not his event; Victor was engaged

and enthusiastic about all aerospports. It was a very memorable and enjoyable trip, in no small part thanks to Victor's help. I also had a really great time staying at his house, and talking, cooking, and touring around with his wife Liuda. To this day I still remember the recipes that she showed me, and always think of that visit when I'm putting dill and toasted sunflower seeds onto a salad. My thoughts are with her now.

Back home in California, Victor would visit our family twice a year when he came for the big semiannual free flight competitions in Lost Hills. After moving away, my chances to see him became fewer and further between. However, it always brought a smile to my face when my mom or dad would mention that he was visiting, and especially when I got to talk to him on the phone or over skype.

My apologies for the somewhat personal nature of this month's column, but it was the best way I could find to serve the memory of Victor Stamov, a great man, sportsman, and gentleman. Thanks, Victor, for all the joy that you brought to so many others over the years. May we all strive to follow the example that you set for us.