

The author's Astro-10 powered electric aircraft completing a loop. Ektachrome transparency by Randy Kidd.

A QUIET REVOLUTION

ELECTRIC POWERED R/C.... THE CONCEPT OF TOMORROW.... IS HERE NOW! ITS FUTURE IS UP TO YOU. BY DON DEWEY.

PART ONE

Since radio control became a reality, it has been the dream of a great many RC'ers to design and perfect an aircraft that they could fly from the local schoolyard or from a good sized vacant field that would be an every day ship, trouble-free, and above all - - - quiet.

As we look back over the history of lost flying sites, it has not been the hazards of RC aircraft that have led to the loss of these sites - rather, it has been one factor alone . . . noise.

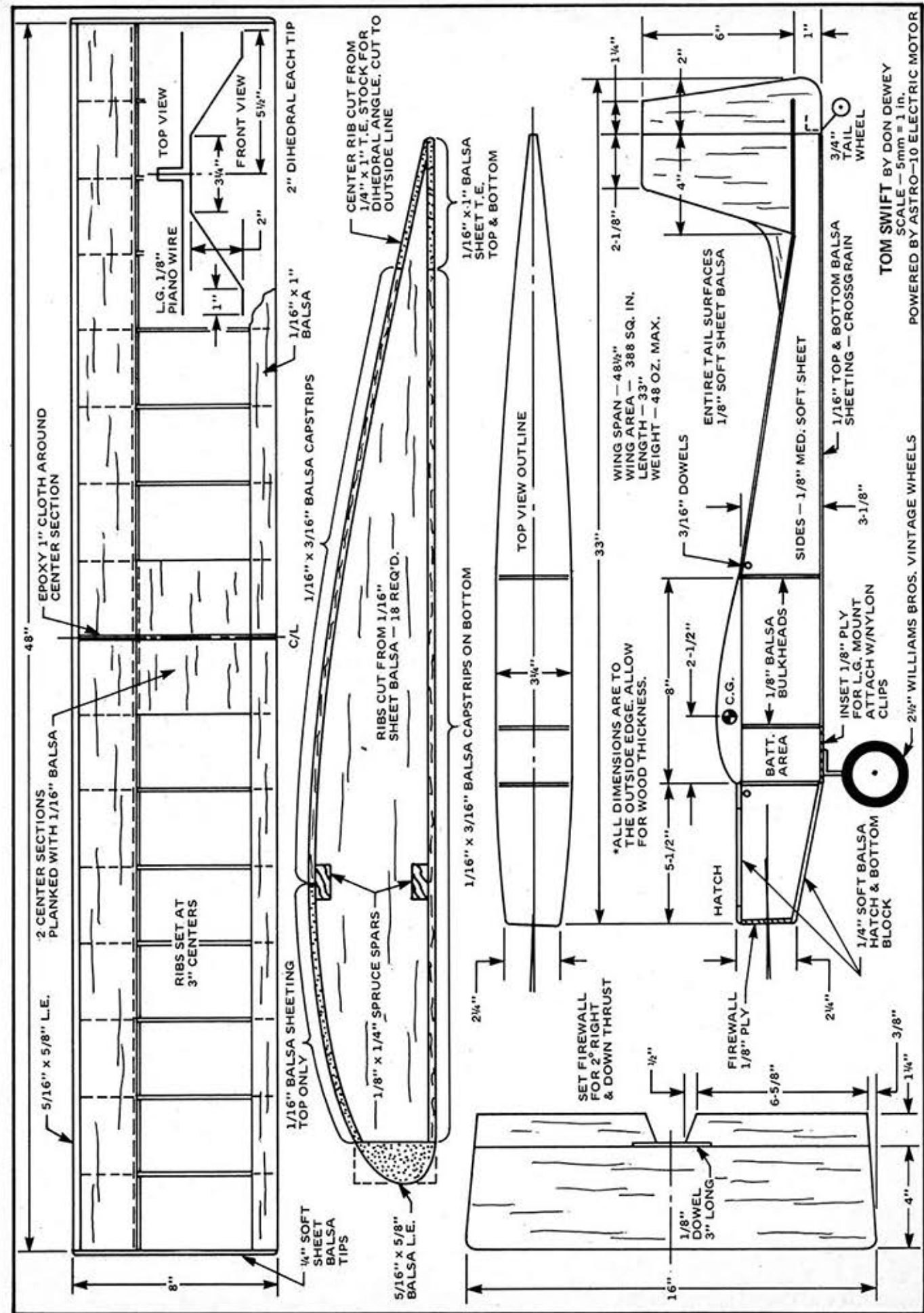
Think for a moment, if you will, about being able to go to a vacant field a few blocks from your house and put in two or three flights right after dinner before darkness settles in. Think, too, of doing this in a completely noise-free way with no clean-

up problems, very little field equipment, and none of the associated problems attendant to today's present fuel-gulping two-cycle engines.

What we're talking about, of course, is electric power plants for RC. While there have been sporadic attempts during the past few years to develop a practical electric engine for RC aircraft, most of these efforts have been centered around the use of a geared, re-worked toy, or slot car motor. The results were, for the most part, definitely unsuccessful and quite impractical. One company, Mattel Inc., even produced a ready-to-fly electric aircraft using this concept, and, in our opinion, the results were something far less than successful. Word of these attempts soon spread, and the idea of electric propulsion for

RC has been, more often than not, dismissed with pure disdain.

It wasn't until Bob and Roland Boucher of Astro Flight Inc., 13377 Beach Ave., Venice, California 90291, began to develop their Astro-10 and Astro-25 electric propulsion systems that a breakthrough in this field seemed possible. The Boucher brothers gave their first demonstration flight of electric powered RC in April of 1971. In November of that same year they entered an electric powered pylon racer in a Quarter Midget race using their Astro-10 system. Their development of the electric power plant continued until they made a twenty mile world record flight for electric powered aircraft in February of 1972. Five months later they introduced the Astro-10 and 25 at the MAC's show in



TOM SWIFT BY DON DEWEY
SCALE - 5mm = 1 in.
POWERED BY ASTRO-10 ELECTRIC MOTOR

2 1/2" WILLIAMS BROS. VINTAGE WHEELS