Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn W. Watkins

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Entire Model Was There, We Just Failed to See It

The entire idea and even a workable model was there all the time, right under our collective nose; we just failed to see it. We had to go all through the blueprint, drawing board and slide rule stage. We figured and fussed, measured, calibrated and built expensive and time-consuming models, and came up with an idea that the porpoise and the whale have been successfully using since they first swam in the oceans of the world.

The heavier-than-air airplanes had to have flat surfaces in order to stabilize the machine. Those surfaces had to be behind the supporting wings themselves. To begin with we visualized an airplane with wings like those of a bird, itself a pretty good flyer, that flapped in an up and down motion, but at the same time exerted a forward pull.

We couldn't do that; guess we figured bird or insect flight just wasn't practical; we wanted to do them one better. We didn't admit it but nature's way was much too complicated. We had to accept second best, solidly anchored wings, curved to give necessary lift against the air.

Needed Rudder

Then there was the steering apparatus, a rudder, a movable flat piece hinged vertically at the stern to afford right and left turning. We very early foresaw the impossibility of imitating the birds in this department, for that creature increases and decreases one wing or the other in order to turn right or left, and at the same time bends its flexible body, thereby accomplishing perfect and graceful turns, and all without a rudder.

But the rudder for the plane was no serious problem. Long before man aspired to ride through the air in a machine, he was operating boats with rudders, so all that was necessary was to copy the boat idea; just make the rudder larger. It would need more surface in this less medium, but mount it the same, in a vertical position.

Needed Stabilization

The rudder taken care of, it was the necessary to stabilize the rear section with horizontal surfaces that could press against the air to steady the machine and assist in directing it up or down. This all took time and a great deal of serious figuring and slide-ruling.

It was all worked out rather beautifully, vertical rudder for right and left steering, and horizontal planes for stability and up and down directions. The engineers in aeronautics were justifiably proud of what had been accomplished, for it worked. All the measuring, planning, blue-printing and slide-ruling had paid off; the tail assembly was well nigh perfect.

Then, what should have been a considerable shock to human ego came home to taunt us. Someone noticed the striking similarity between the tail assembly of the airplane and the tail assembly of the porpoise; they were exactly the same.

Ban on Castro Raids Endorsed by Morse

Washington — (UPI) — Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) Monday endorsed the administration's crackdown against anti-Castro raids from U.S. territory. He said if the more militant Cuban refugees "were so anxious to fight against tyranny, they should have stayed in Cuba."

He said in a Senate speech that the hit-and-run raids against Cuba and Soviet ships there would involve the United States in another bristling showdown with Russia. His comment followed the administration's Saturday announcement of the crackdown.

If the United States is to be forced into such a confrontation, he said, "it should be on behalf of ourselves and not because we were forced into it by a hot-headed group of guests in our own country."

Morse, chairman of the Senate Latin American Affairs subcommittee, said the exile raids only give Russia a "justification for remaining to 'protect' Cuba." The forays also give Fidel Castro justification for boosting his armed forces and repressive measures against the Cuban people, he said.

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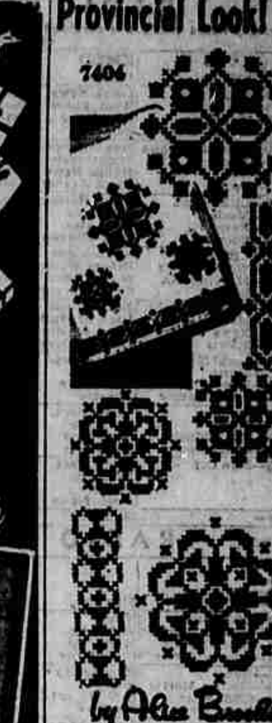

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