



An RC Model Aircraft Club, Ojai, CA
Founded in 1955

TJ Moran

May 2019

Where We Fly?

- Comets AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics) club #0173 operates from a model flying field in the Lake Casitas Recreational Area, adjacent to the Lake. The field is open for flying from 8 am until dusk, 7 days a week.
- The Lake Casitas Recreational Area requires pilots to have AMA membership to fly at the Comets' club field.
- The field is about 2.3 miles from the Lake's main gate. Club membership includes the combination to the field padlocks.
- The field was developed, and built entirely with club funds and members "sweat equity."

Where We Fly?

- The model flying field has a paved 440 feet long by 39 feet wide runway, oriented to the prevailing winds, and is relatively unobstructed - no trees or power lines. Most of the flying is over the water (such as it is.)
 - Do the aircraft go in the lake? ...sometimes.
 - Do we get them back? Yes.
- The Comets have had a flying field at Lake Casitas since 1968. Currently we operate from the club's third paved runway - as the lake was initially filled, it covered our previous two paved runways.

Where We Fly?



Where We Fly?



A Google Earth photo of the Ventura Comets Field at Lake Casitas taken about 2005.

Where We Fly?



Where We Meet

- Club meetings are held at 7:00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of every odd month at the Oak View Community Center, 18 Valley Road, in Oak View. It is an open meeting; anyone is welcome to attend.
 - Discussion is usually the state of club affairs and event planning
 - Refreshments such as pizza and sandwiches are served with coffee and light beverages
 - December is a Pot-Luck Dinner Meeting
 - Model of the Month (monthly except December)

Club Officers

- The Comets are a non-profit organization
- The elected officers are:
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
- Other club positions are Field Safety Officer, Park Liaison, Webmaster, Board of Directors, and Instructor Pilots
- The club has 74 members as of May 2019

Events

- Club Events Include:
 - Fun Flys
 - Quaker Flys
 - Electric Powered-only Flys
 - Warbird Flys
 - Balloon Drops
 - Scale Contests
 - Float Flys (water permitting)

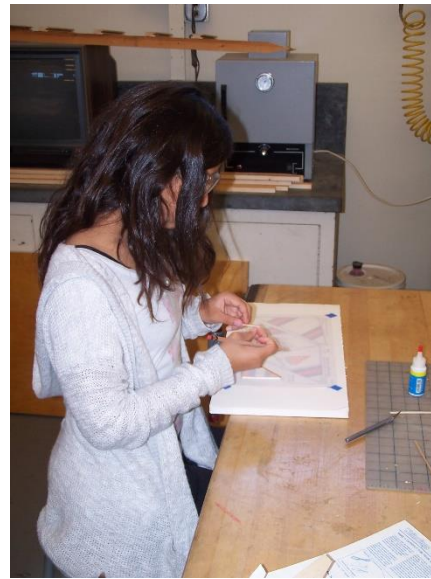
Community Outreach

Girl Scouts introduction to RC model flying



Community Outreach

School class Introduction to RC Modeling



Community Outreach

Comets Ojai 4th of July 2016 and 2019 parade float



What We Fly?

- Mostly fixed-wing aircraft
- A few helicopters
- A few quad-copters (drones)
- A few FPV (First Person View)
- A few gliders
- Gas-turbine powered aircraft are prohibited for fire-safety reasons

Types of Fixed-Wing Aircraft at the field

- The fixed wing airframes, run the gamut. Big/Small, Slow/Fast, Sport, Scale, Gliders.



More Airplanes



More Airplanes



Aircraft Power Systems

- Popular Aircraft Power Systems
 - Glow Engines – 2 and 4 cycle using Nitromethane/alcohol based fuel
 - Electric Motors – Brushless types with Lithium-Polymer batteries
 - Gas Engines – 2-cycle using “pump” gasoline with an oil mixture

What's Generally Available?

- Aircraft Printed Plans – All wood and other components must be purchased separately. This is generally referred to as “scratch-built.”
- Kits - contents can vary and usually require some additional materials to complete.
- ARF/RTFs - (Almost Ready to Fly / Ready to Fly)
 - Buy and fly – contents are generally very complete, requiring minimal labor and assembly skills to complete the aircraft

Plans and Scratch Built Airplanes

- RCX4



Kit Built Airplanes



- P-51D Mustang



ARF's and RTF's



- Great Planes Revolver 40



Who can do it?

- All ages, the Comets club (average age 63) is mainly “older guys” (Retired folks)
- One club member has been building/flying since age 13.



How to get started

- Trainers
 - Easiest to build and fly



- EDF jets and scale models should be initially avoided



Training

- Real model planes/simulators.
 - There are a number of people that can teach you to fly fixed wing. There are also computer simulators available to practice on (you buy them)
- Club members' plane?
- AMA Introductory Pilot Program
- “Buddy Box”

Where to buy Aircraft and Supplies

- There are a couple of well-stocked local hobby shops.
- California Hobbies – Goleta
- Marty's Hobbies – Thousand Oaks
- Lots of on-line vendors. Some of the favorites are Tower Hobbies, Horizon Hobby, General Hobbies, and ebay "stores". But there are many "little" on-line shops that sell parts, kits, engines, and ARFs/RTFs

Costs

- Comets annual dues:
 - Senior Member \$50 per calendar year
 - Each additional family member \$25 per calendar year
 - Junior member (under 18) - \$10 per year
 - Also a \$100 one-time initiation fee for first-timers
 - Lifetime Memberships are awarded to members 80 years old with 20 years of membership in the club
- Casitas Lake Recreational Area
 - \$10/day-use fee or
 - \$120 annual day-use pass good for 12 calendar months
- AMA annual Membership good for 12 calendar months (Includes \$2.5M liability insurance, and a monthly magazine):
 - \$75 - ages 19 to 65
 - \$65 - ages 66 and over
 - Free - ages 18 and under
- A good beginners trainer-type aircraft, and support equipment generally costs around \$100 - \$400

More Costs

- FAA sUAS (Small Unmanned Aerial System) Certificate of Registration (not a license) is currently required to operate most model aircraft and drones in the US airspace.

Myths

- The airplane cannot be controlled if the engine/motor stops – Yes it can!
- Range – How far can you fly away? You can control it farther than you can see it.
- Planes (or parts) sink in the lake. Yes, but you really have to have a major crash, such that heavier parts break off.
- Real pilots make great model pilots. Yes and no. There is no “seat-of the pants” feel with models. Good eye-hand coordination helps.

Questions?



Thank you

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- AMA - <http://www.modelaircraft.org/>
- Comets - <http://vccomets.com/>
- FAA sUAS Registration - <https://faadronezone.faa.gov/#/>



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