

# The Comets' Tale

*The Official  
Newsletter of the*



**April 2014**

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Alastair Brennan, George Lanquist, Dale Nash, Lynn Breedlove, TJ Moran

**Instructor Pilots**

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George Lanquist TJ Moran Steve Steinmetz Alastair Brennan

The Comets' Tale is the official newsletter and record of the Ventura County Comets, AMA Chartered Club #173 and is published monthly at the Comets' Tale Plaza, somewhere in Ventura.

**Editorial contributions are welcome.**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, 15 MAY**

**7:30 PM at the Oak Park Community Center**

*Prez Sez!*

The Float Fly is front page news - We had over 50 pilots and decent weather. The pilots came from (in no particular order):

Simi Valley  
Henderson NV  
San Luis Obispo  
Quartz Hill  
Santa Maria  
Solvang  
Los Angeles  
La Habra  
Ojai

West Lake  
Thousand Oaks  
San Gabriel  
Oxnard  
Santa Barbara  
Goleta  
Reno NV  
Santa Clarita  
Burbank

Lake Hughes  
Woodland Hills  
Sherman Oaks  
Torrance  
Canyon Country  
Encino  
Moorpark  
Ventura

Everything went very smoothly thanks to all that helped. We had a new procedure from the Lake that had my hands smelling like bleach most of Saturday as I launched and retrieved planes.

Thanks to all that helped: checking in pilots, transmitter impound, raffle, BBQ and the folks working the flight line. And Thanks to John Dugan for being the CD and Dave Fishman for being the Line Boss. The guests had a good time and one took the time to write a quick email stating that.

The Electric and Small Gas Fun Fly is next on the agenda. This is May 17 and this event is before the next meeting, so heads up get your plane(s) ready for that and I'll see you out there. Then June is our annual Quaker day and balloon drop.

Did anyone get thrown off by last month's meeting? I hope not and we are back to normal in May.

See You at the Meeting!

*Alastair*

**Coming Up!**



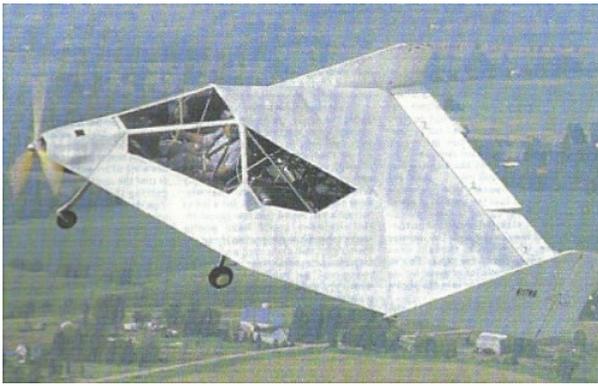
**Saturday, 17 May**  
Comets Electric and Small Gas Fun Fly at Lake Casitas

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**Sunday, 18 May**  
Fun Fly & BBQ, Camarillo Flying Circus

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**First Sunday of each Month**  
Open House at Santa Paula Airport  
Free Young Eagle rides for kids 8-18 years old  
*The May 4th Event will be big... see the poster on page 5*



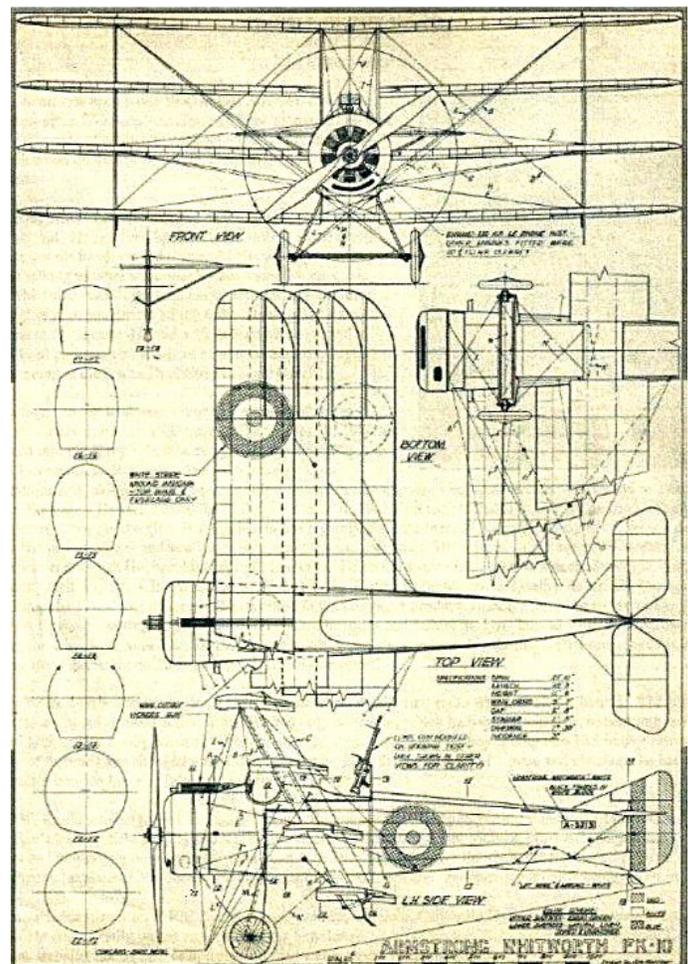
## Root's Rambling

This month I have included a couple of pictures (pictures 1 and 2) of an unusual home built airplane. It was designed and built by Barnaby Wainfan, an engineer I used to work with at Northrop-Grumman. The concept is that if the wing loading is low enough, a low aspect ratio (short wing span) configuration can be designed with surprisingly good cruise performance. This is because the drag due to lift (which increases as aspect ratio is reduced) is small because the lift coefficient is low. The other

feature contributing to cruise performance is low wing loading resulting from the extreme low weight associated with an airplane with essentially no wing. The structural density is very low. The airplane was quite successful and seemed to support his theory. The flat surfaces were utilized to facilitate construction. A smooth surface vehicle would have been more efficient but much harder to build. Barnaby flew this airplane (which he called the Facetmobile) to Oshkosh in 1994 and was given a Special Award for innovative design.



Pictures 3 and 4 show the Armstrong-Whitworth F.K.10. This airplane has been on my list for a long time. I like to build wings! Surprisingly Hobby City was selling the ARF shown in picture 5 at one time. I don't know if it is still available. Anyone need an airplane with 8 ailerons and an all fly-ing tail?



*Bob Root*

## MINUTES of the March 2014 MEETING

Meeting was called to order by Club President, Alastair Brennan, at 7:33PM.

### New Members & Guests:

- No guests or new members were present.

### Treasurer`s Report: ( T.J. Moran)

- Treasurer`s report was given – major expense was 10 gallons of Black Jack 57 runway adhesive.
- T.J. stated that we signed up a couple of new members and the membership now stands at 72.

### Safety Officer`s Report: (George Lanquist)

- George reported that the wind blew off the runway covering – seams were opening up on Thurs. & Fri. – covering was against the orange fencing.

### Park Liaison Report: (John Dugan)

- The park maintenance will have a road crew working on the road between the creek bridge and the park store. Field will be closed this week. Work should be completed by Sat. the 22nd. (update: the crew will let you by but you may have some delay)
- J.D. described the new float spray procedure. Floats may be wiped off right after the spraying. Ranger to apply the spray.

### Reminder:

- April 1st – the lock combos will be changed on all the locks at the field.

### Old Business:

- Continuing problem with the runway membrane. T.J. again got 8 volunteers of to get the membrane off the fence and aligned back on the runway. Then they installed 18” strips of the left over membrane on the seams with the Blackjack 57 material. T.J. said it seems to be holding up better than the original crap they gave us.
- Thanks to all the volunteers.

### New Business:

- Richard Clark was our guest speaker this month. He is a local business (R Signs) and can make vinyl decals for models large or small. They are lightweight and can be multicolor. He had a display with examples for everyone to look at. He couldn`t give prices without seeing what is wanted but he did give some ballpark prices for a couple of members.
- Next meeting is March 10th at 7:00 pm. This is early due to the Float Fly starting the next day.

### Model of the Month:

- Harry Sanchez presented a red “jos stik” powered by 4 cycle .91 engine.
- Andy Carlson presented an electric flat foamy. In addition, he presented a very nice Aeroworks Edge 540, also electric with 170 KV motor, 120 amp. esc (Turnigy). The battery is a 10 cell 5000 mAh. (big mama). Andy said it flies like it`s on rails. Nice plane and the winner.

### Raffle:

- All that can be said about this months` raffle is that all the club officers won except me. What`s up with that!

Meeting adjourned at:

- 8:34 pm



Respectfully submitted:

*Lynn Breedlove* - Secretary

## The Mystery Plane Unveiled



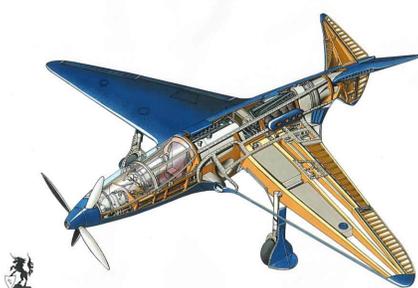
I only got one answer on this here Mystery plane but I'm sure there were others who know what it was... especially Bob Root, who was the aero guy on this project.

This is the Northrop **Tacit Blue**, a research airplane developed for the U.S. Air Force. First flight was in 1982 and it flew 250 hours over a three year period when it was retired and placed in storage. It went on display at the Air Force Museum at Wright -Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton Ohio in 1996, where it remains to this day.

The idea here was to show that a stealthy airplane could operate close to the fighting with an advanced sensor system

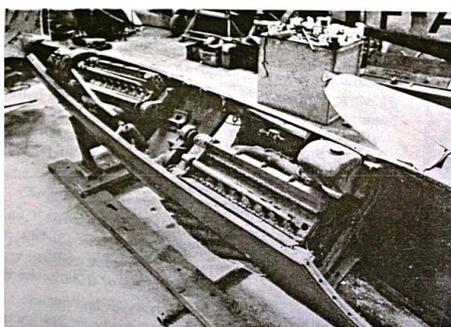
without being detected or shot at. Although the basic idea did not work out well, the sensors are still in use on the E-8 Joint STARS airplane, a Boeing 707 heavily modified by Northrop-Grumman. It was nicknamed the Whale and sometimes called the Alien School Bus (I wonder why?). Wingspan is about 48 feet, length is just under 56 feet and it was crewed by one pilot. Two Garrett ATF3-6 high-bypass turbofans made it go, providing 5,440 lbs of thrust each, to a top speed of 287 mph, and a service ceiling of 30,000 feet.

One of the project engineers named John Cashen was quoted in 1996 as saying "You're talking about an aircraft that at the time was arguably the most unstable aircraft that man had ever flown." In fact, there was a quad-redundant digital fly by wire flight control system in the airplane to "help stabilize the aircraft about its longitudinal and directional axes." Quite an accomplishment, I think.



Here's the Bugatti 100P race plane again. This airplane has been in the news recently as the replica built by a small group of guys in Oklahoma is now on display at the Mullin Museum right here in Oxnard. Short version, the original was designed and built in the late 1930s in France by Ettore Bugatti and Louis DeMonge to run in the Deutsch de la Meurthe Cup Race, but was not finished in time and when WWII started it was hidden to keep it from falling into Nazi hands. The airplane had an innovative structure for the fuselage and was powered by two Bugatti Type 51 engines mounted in the fuselage behind the cockpit, each engine powering one of the coaxial propellers thru a driveshaft running along one side of the fuselage, right under the pilot's elbows. There are plenty of other strange

things about the airplane, from its cooling system to the automatic landing gear and flap systems. It resurfaced later and was purchased by an American who pulled the engines for his Bugatti autos and the airframe eventually ended up in the possession of the EAA Museum, who did a non-airworthy cosmetic restoration and put it on display. The replica seems to be structurally complete but lacks engines although there are plans to add them and fly it, possibly as soon as late this year. Dianne and I visited the museum a couple of weeks ago and found the airplane among some spectacular Bugatti autos, furniture and artwork. The airplane has a few rough spots where they apparently got in a hurry to have it ready for the display, but nearly all of it is beautifully crafted. The original has seen some pretty wild speculation about what it would do with top speed running as high as 550 mph, and zero drag cooling. With 900 total horsepower, that top speed is clearly ridiculous and this country A&P doesn't see any such thing as zero drag cooling from this system, but I think the airplane is fascinating and the art deco lines are really seductive. I guess we'll never know how fast it really would have been since the replica will fly with just over half the horsepower the two Bugatti engines can make. They're planning on two Yamaha Hyabusa motorcycle engines, turbocharged to within an inch of their little 1.3 liter (80 cubic inches) lives to make 230 horsepower. The airplane is an interesting might-have-been although I still think it looks like a ball of



snakes to sort out and maintain. Oh well, the Mullin Museum is open 2 weekends a month and the \$15 admission fee is a bargain. Try not to miss this display!

jerry

Santa Paula Airport & Samy's Camera Present

# Wings & Wheels Day

Sunday, May 4th, 7:30-3:00 at the Santa Paula Airport



Step back into aviation history for Samy's Camera's next big contest! The historic Santa Paula Airport is inviting photographers for a rare opportunity to shoot vintage planes, cars and motorcycles on display for their "Wings & Wheels Day" Sunday, May 4th.

Snap photos of the vintage planes in flight, with the beautiful Santa Paula mountains as your backdrop. Venture into the Depression-Era steel hangars, where Steve McQueen once stored his Stearman Bi-Plane. The drive up is scenic, and there will be gourmet food trucks on site. Visit our website at: [www.aviationmuseumofsantapaula.org](http://www.aviationmuseumofsantapaula.org)



## Enter our Photo Contest for your chance to win!

- **Shoot:** May 4 (7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.), "Wings & Wheels Day," Santa Paula Airport
- **Submit By:** May 11, your best 3 photos, to the Samy's Camera Facebook Photo Contest page
- **Vote By:** May 30th, 2014 (11:00 p.m. PST) on the Samy's Camera Facebook Photo Contest page
- **Judging:** June 1 (1 p.m.), "Wings & Wheels Day," Aviation Museum, Santa Paula Airport.

(It is highly recommended that photographers picked as finalists for the June 1st exhibition, judging & awarding be present at the airport museum that day.)

**Prizes:** The top three photos selected by our judges will win, in order, a \$1200, \$600 and \$300 Samy's Camera gift card, compliments of the Aviation Museum of Santa Paula and Samy's Camera. The photo with the most votes on Facebook will receive the "Most Popular Photo" prize, a \$500 Samy's Camera gift card.

**Rules:** Entrants must be U.S. residents and 18 years or older. Younger entrants may enter with the assistance of an adult. The same photographer is able to claim more than one prize. Also, by entering the contest, the photographer grants permission to Santa Paula Airport to use their image in promotional materials. And to have Samy's Camera feature the photo on their website and social media sites in order to promote their contests. Credit will be given to the photographer when the image is used. Slight retouching is permitted but no major edits or alterations are permitted. Watermarking is permitted if subtle, and placed along at the bottom edge of the image. See contest page for complete rules.

JOIN US AND ENTER FOR YOUR CHANCE TO  
WIN A \$1,200 GIFT CARD FROM SAMY'S CAMERA

