

# The Comets' Tale

*The Official  
Newsletter of the*



**August 2011**

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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, 18 August, 7:30 PM at the  
Oak View Community Center



**20, 21 August**  
Camarillo Air Show

**26-26 August**  
Fun Float Fly, Santa  
Barbara R/C Modelers,  
at Lake Cachuma

First Sunday of each  
Month  
Open House at Santa  
Paula Airport

Pres. George is on vacation, so there will be no comments from him this month... but here are the Field Closures for the next few weeks:

Closures are due to Cross Country Races scheduled for the remainder of this year.

The dates are as follows:

**September 17<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, closed all day.**

**October 5<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday afternoon only**

**October 28<sup>th</sup>, Friday afternoon only**

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Thursday afternoon only**

Please highlight these dates on your calendar.

## ROOT'S RAMBLING

It's August and it's time for another Rambling (sorry). The club held the annual war bird fly-in. George Boston took a few pictures which I am including. I wasn't able to attend and I hear the attendance was down this year. However, those in attendance had a good time.



George Lanquist brought his Antic Biplane shown in pictures 1 and 2.

Don Ashworth flew his Fokker D. VII (pictures 3 and 4).



TJ Moran brought the Focke-Wulf 190D shown in picture 5. He has refurbished after 11 years in storage. He scaled it after one of the airplanes which were used to protect the early German jets which were vulnerable during take-off and landing.





To prevent being shot at by their own anti-aircraft guns around the airport their bottom was painted pink as can be seen in picture 6.

He added a nice cockpit as shown in picture 7.



One of the more popular scale models these days is the Vought F4U Corsair. Picture 8 shows Dennis Fingold, Ron Scott, and George Boston with their Corsairs.

## Competition summary

Date	Location	Winning Aircraft	Nation	Pilot	Speed (km/h, mph)
1913	Monaco	Deperdussin	 France	Maurice Prevost	73.56, 45.71
1914	Monaco	Sopwith Tabloid	 United Kingdom	Howard Pixton	139.74, 86.83
1920	Venice, Italy	Savoia S.12	 Italy	Luigi Bologna	70.54, 43.83
1921	Venice, Italy	Macchi M.7bis	 Italy	Giovanni de Briganti	189.66, 117.85
1922	Naples, Italy	Supermarine Sea Lion II	 United Kingdom	Henri Biard	234.51, 145.72
1923	Cowes, United Kingdom	Curtiss CR-3	 United States	David Rittenhouse	285.29, 177.27
1925	Baltimore, United States	Curtiss R3C-2	 United States	James Doolittle	374.28, 232.57
1926	Hampton Roads, United States	Macchi M.39	 Italy	Mario de Bernardi	396.69, 246.50
1927	Venice, Italy	Supermarine S.5	 United Kingdom	Sidney Webster	453.28, 281.66
1929	Calshot Spit, United Kingdom	Supermarine S.6	 United Kingdom	Richard Waghorn	528.89, 328.65
1931	Calshot Spit, United Kingdom	Supermarine S.6B	 United Kingdom	John Boothman	547.31, 340.09



This month's rambling continues with the fascinating (to me) history of a seaplane race which was run from 1913 (winning speed 45.7 mph) until 1931 (winning speed 340.1 mph) called the Schneider Trophy race. The winner of each race is shown in table 9. The Trophy (and race) was retired after the United Kingdom won it three consecutive times.

As I have mentioned in the past the 1925 race was won by the Curtiss RC3-2. As you know I built a quarter scale model of this airplane (picture 10) as it was when it won the land based Pulitzer Prize race a few weeks

before the Schneider race. The reason I got interested in this model is because of a 1/3 scale version I saw at the Lake Havasu Giant Scale Schneider Cup Reenactment in about 1990. There is a great series of articles on the internet about these scale models and this event (which is unfortunately no longer held). Google "building and flying the 1/3rd scale Curtiss R3C-2". I have included a couple of pictures from this article (pictures 11, 12, and 13).





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1925 was the last year that a biplane won this race. In 1926 Italy won with the Macchi M.39 monoplane. This airplane is now in a museum near Rome (Picture 14).



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The 1929 Schneider Trophy Race was the last competitive race. The Great Britain entry developed by R.J. Mitchell (Supermarine S.6) and utilizing the rapidly developing supercharged Rolls Royce engine was coming into its own. The Italians were equal with a new Macchi M67 having sleek lines but lacking in power. The race was held despite Italian efforts to postpone it. The beautiful but untried M.67's were forced to retire after a few laps. The old Macchi M.52R placed 2<sup>nd</sup> when one of the Supermarine S.6's cut a pylon. It was estimated that a million people watched these races (The planes didn't actually race together but were started at 20 minute intervals). One of

the S.6's was flown to a new speed record of 358 mph a few days later. The 1931 winner was the refined Supermarine S.6b shown in picture 15.

The Italian designer Castoldi designed the ultimate racing seaplane, the M.C.72, for the 1931 race but like most of their new designs it wasn't ready in time for the race. However, Benito Mussolini took an interest and directed state funds to continue development. Five were built and for two years the plane suffered from many mechanical defects, as well as the loss of two test pilots in crashes. Finally, with the use of counter rotating propellers and a modified FIAT V24 engine generating between 2500 and 3000 hp (with supercharging) the aircraft lived up to expectations. It set a new world speed record (over water) on April 10, 1933, with a speed of 424 mph. On October 23, 1934 the Macchi M.C.72 raised the record to 440 mph. Google "Hydro Macchi Castoldi MC 72 1934" to see a movie of this record flight. Picture 16 shows one of the Macchi M.C.72 airplanes in a museum now. This record remains the fastest speed ever attained by a piston-engine seaplane. After this success, the M.C.72 was never flown again.

The M.C.72 held the world speed record for all aircraft for five years. The land-based record in 1934 was held by the Hughes H-1 Racer at 352 mph. Then in 1939, two German racing aircraft passed the M.C.72. The first was a Heinkel He 100 which reached the speed of 463 mph. The second racer was a Messerschmitt Me 209 which set the new world speed record of 469mph in August – just days before the start of World War II. The current world speed record (as of 2010) for a piston-engine aircraft is 538.3 mph set by a heavily modified



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F8F Bearcat named Rare Bear in 1989. However, the M.C. 72 record still stands today as the world's fastest propeller-driven seaplane. Another title to Google is "Schneider Trophy Races" for more interesting information and pictures.

The Schneider Trophy races were very significant in advancing aeroplane design, particularly in the fields of aerodynamics and engine design, and would show its results in the best fighters of WW2. The streamlined shape and the low drag, liquid-cooled engines pioneered by these races are obvious in the British Supermarine Spitfire, the American P-51 Mustang, and the Italian Macchi C.202 Folgore.

*Bob Root*

## MINUTES OF THE JULY 2011 MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:38. Small group this time - 15 members. There were no new members or guests.

Even our Treasurer's Report was small or quick. It went like this: "Lots of money. We spent some, we took some in". Treasurer-TJ had the board to prove it and the consensus was that the report was agreed to.

The report from the Field Marshall was a reminder to have your name and AMA number in, or on your airplane. Mike Ambarian also mentioned that the field would be mowed for the warbird fun-fly.

The Park Liaison reported that there was evidence of people swimming in the lake next to our area. Therefore the Lake is most-likely going to add "No swimming" signs in our area.

### OLD BUSINESS

Reminder: Road closures – 9/17, all day, 10/28 afternoon only, 11/3, afternoon only.

There was a quick mention of the Quaker fun/fly/balloon drop. All went well; nobody crashed anything. We all know the game by now, right? Watch the plane...not the water balloon. Congrats again to Bob Root for being the closest.

The Ventura County Fair is near. We have 2 tables for 2 days on the hobby/crafts room. The dates are Aug 3rd and 5th. We have volunteers to man the booth:

George Boston and Bob Root

Mike Burns and Don Ashworth

John Dugan and Mike Ambarian

Dennis Fingold and T.J. Moran

Thanks to these guys for helping promote our hobby. I am sure it will be fun for them too.

To help with the duties at the fair. Pres. George put together a brochure that highlights our club and makes mention of the hobby shops and other flying clubs in the area.

### NEW BUSINESS

Start thinking about who you would like to see running the club. Positions for President, Vice-President and Safety Officer will be up for grabs. The election is in November. So you only have a couple months to throw your hat in the ring...or someone else's.

### Model of the Month

OK so we have seen the progress, talked, ad nauseam, about costs of material, design elements, added features and build time. And it is just another Quaker. Alright, maybe it's not.

T.J. has completed the Super Quaker. This project was started February 2010 and the first flight was the beginning of July. I think I gave some details of the aircraft in a previous newsletter. But here are some details (again?).

T.J.'s 'model' is double the size of the original 1938 Quaker. Powered by a Brison 6.4ci (9-10hp) which runs on 100LL (Av gas). It weights in at 44.5 pounds. 3 piece wing to help with transportation issues. Glider release on top and banner tow on the bottom. Added ailerons and a 27-soda-can bomb bay. "Lots of carbon fiber" was used and finished in Solartex.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25.



Respectfully Submitted,  
*Alastair Brennan*