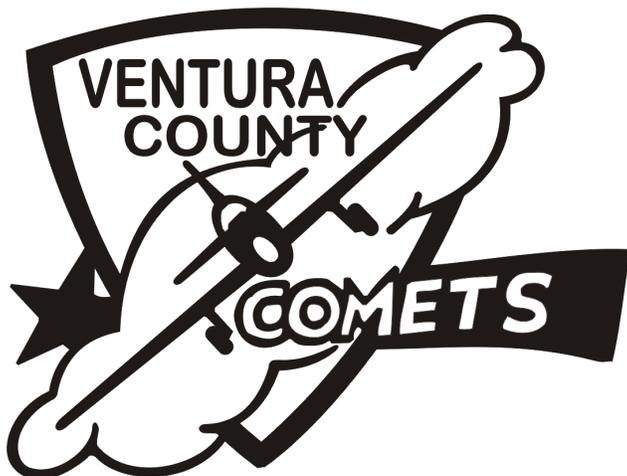


The Comets Tail



**August
2015**

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Lanquist, TJ Moran, Steve Steinmetz, Alastair Brennan

The Comets' Tale is the official newsletter and record of the Ventura Count
Comets, AMA Chartered Club #173 and is published monthly at the Comets'
Tale Lair, in Camarillo, CA.

Editorial contributions are welcome.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, August 20, 2015 7:30 PM
At the Oak View Community Center

**Upcoming
Events:**

Aug 22-23
Camarillo
airshow (Full scale)



Sep. 26-27 Point
Mugu airshow -
Blue Angels

Pres Sez:

Thanks to all who participated in the War-bird Fly and swap meet, you know who you are! A big special thanks to Mike and Steve Steinmetz who not only cooked for us, but they shopped and picked up the food for us too! Mike and Steve, your efforts really made a difference. Having a B-B-Q lunch is such a great addition to any event out at the Comets Field. Thanks again!



Photos by R. Scott

Don't miss the August meeting! T.J. will hold another auction! A relative of a past Comets Member has donated some of his planes and from the pictures, they look great! Don't be shy; bring some cash or a check to the August meeting. See below for pictures and descriptions of the planes, as well as a write-up from Alastair and Jerry about the builder, a man named, "Doc."

T.J. has written Mike Ledbetter a thank you letter for the donation of his R.C. airplanes, helicopters, parts and equipment. T.J., thanks for thanking Mike, and thanks for organizing such a successful fund raiser for the club.

For those of us that miss our float planes, we could just look at pictures of them and wonder if we'll ever get enough rain to ever fly them at Casitas again. Or, you could travel to Lake McSwain Recreational Area near Snelling, CA this September 25-27 for the Turlock RC Club's Float fly! I've never been, but I hear it's a "Hoot." This year will be my maiden year at Lake McSwain.

The "Wings Over Camarillo" airshow is coming up this August 22 and 23. I'm planning on going, are you?

See ya at the field,

-Dave Fishman

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 We had 16 members, no guests and the meeting was chaired by former prez George Boston...Seems Dave neglected to expand on his absence in his summary, but I digress.

Safety officer said everything is going well and brought up the new airfield sign at the entrance. The minutes were approved. Treasurer's report was approved as well. 80 members at just past the yearly half way mark is the story.

Park Liaison said we are doing well.

Discussion of the Warbird / Swap Meet Day was next up. We organized who was bringing what to help with the BBQ, plus a show of hands of who planned to attend.

TJ brought up that a donation had been made to the club to auction off as a fund raiser. TJ said that he planned to have the auction at the August meeting.

Club-President-for-the-Evening George dismissed the group at 7:56.

-Alastair Brennan



Roots Ramblings

Since some of us are flying Quickly 500 racers in mock races I decided to spend a little time looking for airplane racing articles of interest. I came across several interesting sites. An interesting site for Reno race pictures:

www.calimikephotography.com/Airplanes/. A couple of examples are shown in pictures 1 and 2.



Picture 1



Picture 2

Radio control model racing in 1970 is shown in a 5 minute video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=99eEPWaVaZk.

A very nice 10 minute video has been put together by the Valley flyers club of a modern race at Sepulveda basin:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBa1g-QnxNo.

An interesting technical discussion of Pylon racing from the early days:

http://www.mh-aerotoools.de/airfoils/pylon_engines.htm.

This site includes engines, props, etc. In 1972 I attended the AMA nationals which were held in Chicago. K&B had just come out with a new engine which was only available to a few racers mostly in southern California. I was able to get two new highly rated Austrian HP 40R engines from an importer in Canada. I drove from Seattle to pick them up when he received them about two weeks before we planned to leave for Chicago. I guess I was serious in those days. Picture 3 shows the HP 40R and picture 4 shows the K&B 40R (K&B made just over 100 of these). I didn't win but it was fun racing the big boys.



Picture 3



Picture 4

The Southampton Model Airplane club in the UK has an interesting history report:

southamptonmac.org.uk/doc/RS_SMAC_history_2.pdf.



Picture 5 shows club members at a meeting in 1937 (the year I was born!). The large fuselage was for a 9ft rubber driven model which was never finished because the builder couldn't afford the large amount of rubber needed for the motor. He sold it to a fellow club member who has installed a 15cc Greytec engine owned by the club. The club was very active in Wakefield competition.



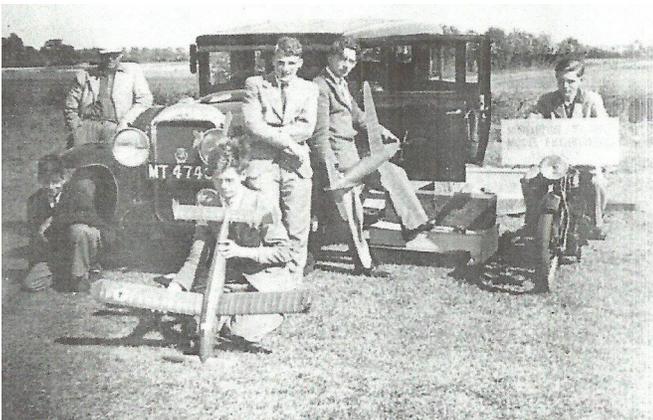
Picture 5

Picture 6 shows a typical model at the 1930 Wakefield time trials.



Picture 6

Picture 7 shows a typical Wakefield outing in the late 30's. Picture 8 is of four club members at the 1979 UK Nationals with their pylon racers.



Picture 7



Picture 8

The internet is a treasure trove of information. I hope you enjoy this. Happy Flying.

-Bob Root

Auction

This meeting there is another auction for a few planes. These belonged to the Comets member Doc Thomey. I remember Doc when I started with the Comets. Granted this was years ago and as the shy teenager I never said much to him. But used to watch with admiration as he would fly a pattern routine with the sleek airplanes, and that cool exhaust note from the tuned pipe, wishing that one day I could fly like him. Doc always seems to make a pilot for the cockpit that looked like him, and the pilot's head would turn to look left and right, driven by the rudder servo and some fishing line.

Doc designed his own pattern plane, the "Venturan", and from what I saw the plane flew great and I heard the name was a nod to the city of Ventura.

His family has donated some of his airplanes to the club; they will be up for bidding this Thursday at the meeting. I expect TJ will run the auction. Here they are:

40-Sized Low Wing

52 inch wing span
Fixed Tricycle Gear
5 Servos
Receiver
OS 40 FP ?
Built-up construction



House-of-Balsa AT-6

44 inch wing span
Fixed Taildragger Gear
4 Servos
Receiver
OS 15 RC Engine
Built-up construction



Curare (Vintage Pattern Aircraft)

64 inch wing span
Tricycle (Retracts not installed)
2 Servos
Rossi 61 2-cycle
FG Fuselage/Foam sheeted wing

Venturan (Vintage Pattern Aircraft)

(Designed by Doc)
66 inch wingspan
Tricycle Gear retracts installed
3 Servos
YS 61 2-cycle with header
FG Fuselage/Foam sheeted wing



A little more on Doc from Jerry D:

Yeah, I knew Doc. Great guy. He was a dentist and had a successful practice somewhere in Ventura. Doc was a self-taught R/C pilot and with no one to help him, he said he bought a radio and built an airplane and figured out the controls on his own. Not sure if he was flying digital stuff, he might have started with reeds, but he set up the controls as he felt was logical. So, to go up, you move the stick up, right? And he flew with a “backwards” elevator all his life. So he could not fly your plane and you couldn’t fly his.

I met him the first time when we were both flying a pattern contest (my first contest, in fact) at the former Oxnard Air Force Base, closed at the time, now Camarillo airport. He walked up and helped me fly better stall turns (actually, the info he gave me was wrong, but it was the way everybody flew them then). He flew either a Better Built Airplane Products Cuda or a Super Cuda in those days, and was a very tough pattern competitor. He was one of those guys who’d help everybody he could, freely share what he knew and then beat you hollow, because he was just really good. Doc was one of a number of Comets that flew pattern in those days, and the Comets were pretty well-known for being great pattern competitors. When I was a young, penniless flier with the Santa Barbara R/C Modelers, the Comets were my idols with those Super Cudas.

We had some limbo contests, and he had a red Ugly Stik that he’d modified with a really, really low, swept back vertical so it would gently lift the ribbon over the tail if it made contact, but the real reason he won those things was his skill at putting the airplane right where he wanted it. He could bust balloons with the very best, too.

Doc did the drawings used to build the sunshade at our Lake Casitas site, and before that he was a hard worker getting previous Comets flying sites up and working.

Doc went on to design his own pattern model, which he called the Venturan. I’m pretty sure he built the prototype in balsa, then made a plug and a mold for a fiberglass fuselage. I’m fairly sure it had foam core and balsa wings and stabilizers, which was normal at that time. It had an awkward-looking vertical (IMHO) and was a bit on the fat side, which actually made him a bit of a pioneer in that shape of pattern models. He sold at least a few and it was fairly popular around Ventura.

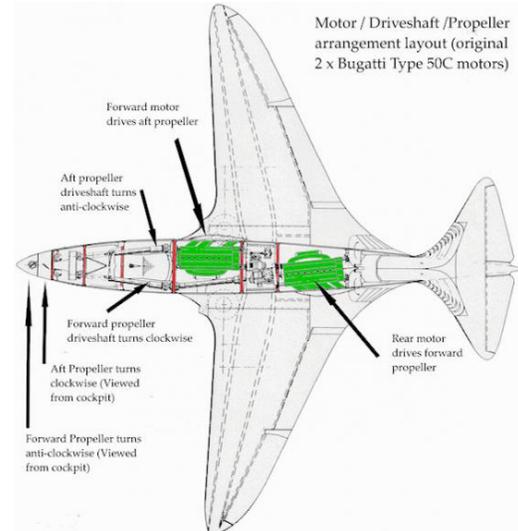
Randumb Thots :-)

I’m seeing stuff around the internet saying the Bugatti 100P racer should fly “in a few weeks.” I’ve seen a video of a medium speed taxi, which was fast enough to get the tail up and it looked encouraging. It looked controllable at that stage, so now there should be some more fiddling and debugging leading up to a real flight. With so little power, I guess we’ll never really know just how fast it would have been, but I am excited just to see it fly. As I’ve stated before, I have misgivings about the engines and now I just hope I’m wrong. Those poor little Hyabusa motorcycle engines are being pushed awfully hard and I’m not convinced the cooling system is enough. Then they’re closed up pretty tight and I worry about overheating, or even a fire. The little 80 cu. in. thing only made about 160 hp in the bike, (OK, so it’s still the fastest production, street-legal motorcycle in production anywhere in the world) but by turbocharging it to within a millimeter of its little life, they’re expecting 200 and that’s a LOT of power from such a small engine, and ill-suited to powering an airplane anyway. This is still far short of the 450 hp each that the originals would have made. And you know, I’m not sure what else would make the right amount of power and still fit inside that slender fuselage. Would a slant six work? Just wondering.

Of course the fanboy fantasies are still alive and well, with estimates of 500 mph, (Fat chance. Maybe, just MAYBE! 450, but probably not) zero drag cooling (I don’t think anybody even knows how to do that now, let alone in 1939) and of course, the military fighter version. (The airplane is too small to carry any meaningful weapons, and it would have been much too hard to mass produce.)

Ettore and Louis' automatic systems to control the flaps and landing gear are gone, too and I wonder if they could have been made to work. That stuff was a huge reach back in the day, and they did not have controllable propellers for it yet, so the takeoff run promised to be a cross country road trip.

But still, having said all that, I think this is one of the world's most beautiful airplanes, and certainly one of the most fascinating ones. I wish them well, and I wish them a series of safe, uneventful flights. And I really, really want a full data dump of anything they learn.



-Jerry Deanda

AMA Charter Club #173



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