Next Meeting: Thursday, 18 December, 2008, 7:00 PM at the Oak View Community Center
This will be the Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner Meeting. Call Marilyn Nash at 805-532-1433 and find out what to bring.

Root’s Rambling
It’s time for another ramble. If you out there want me to continue this monthly dribble please let me know. This month I will cover various subjects.

I get the feeling that a lot of our newer modelers don’t understand how to adjust their relatively simple model engines. A model airplane engine (either 2 cycle or 4 cycle) just needs fuel, air, and a working glow plug to start and run. A proper mixture of air and fuel is obtained by adjusting the needle valve. The amount of air is set by the carburetor design so the amount of fuel is adjusted. We talk about the mixture being rich (excess fuel) or lean (excess air). Since part of the engine cooling is supplied by the fuel it is important not to run an engine too lean. The included graph (picture 0) shows a typical plot of engine RPM as a function of the needle valve setting. Cylinder head temperature in degrees Celsius is also shown. This graph was presented in a glow plug advertisement so three different plugs are shown. As the engine is leaned out notice how rapidly the temperature increases with very little RPM increase. For sport flying we don’t need that last little bit of horsepower and the engine will last a lot longer if it is operated at a lower temperature. Remember, if you run your engine a little rich it will run better, more reliably, and last longer. The optimum setting changes with air temperature and humid-
ity. If you run the engine at max power one day it may be too lean the next time. If it is set a little rich it probably won’t have to be adjusted much one day to the next. To set the needle valve open the throttle for maximum RPM while the engine is running and slowly lean out the mixture by turning the needle valve in (clockwise). Stop when the engine starts to slow down or stops. Turn it back out to what sounds like the max RPM and then a couple of clicks more. You are trying to operate a little on the rich side. When I was racing we usually backed off about 200 RPM but for sport flying I try to run a little more on the rich side. Some engines smoke at this point and some not so much.

Some of the new planes I’ve seen at the field lately include the following. Ken Marsh has a Chipmunk shown in picture 1 built by Murray Cooper. The Hellcat shown in pictures 2 and 3 is a Hanger 9 ARF put together by Ron Golding. This is a great flying model. George Lanquist rebuilt a Staggerwing Beechcraft that Dennis Fingold had crashed. It is shown in picture 4.
Last month the Condors club held a war birds fly-in which I attended. Unfortunately the wind was blowing a gale (see picture 5). It was blowing so hard I didn’t get my planes out of the car. I took a few pictures of planes on the ground and a couple in the air. Most models that flew were damaged at least slightly during the landing. Typically a gust of wind would pitch the model up at touch down and it would then stall in. Static models are shown in pictures 6, 7, and 8. Picture 6 is of a beautiful big Curtiss P-40 Warhawk built from a Yellow Aircraft kit. I think the unusual German unsymmetrical Blohm & Voss BV 148 shown in picture 8 was built from a kit I have seen advertised lately. The large B-25 in picture 9 was able to handle the wind pretty well. The Fokker D-VII in picture 10 did not fare as well in the wind losing its gear on landing. Picture 11 shows the proper wheel landing technique needed with the large gusting wind. This P-51 was flown expertly by one of the Condor members who practices flying in the wind every chance he gets.
The last pictures this month are from our club only float fly we had a few weeks ago. Pictures 12 and 13 show Tom Wolf’s beautiful Boeing Clipper flying boat. This original design model is powered by four OS .53 4 cycle engines. It looks very realistic in the air. The last picture 14 is of George Lanquist’s Quaker on floats.

I hope everyone can make it to the club Christmas party. Have a great Christmas and see you next year.

Bob Root

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**Miscellaneous Stuff**

If you have items to offer for sale to Comets members, let me know. Please provide details, and photos if you like. I’ll run your ad!

The email address of the Comets’ Tale Editor (hey, that’s me!) has changed… it’s now deandamid@charter.net. The old Verizon address is no longer valid.

If you’d like to get the Comets’ Tale on your computer, just email me a request at deandamid@charter.net and I’ll email you a .pdf version instead of the treeware/snailmail one. You’ll get it a day or two earlier and it will be in glorious color. And you’ll save the club a stamp, too. Pretty nice huh?

Be sure to contact Marilyn Nash about your food contribution for the Comets’ Christmas meeting. Please note the time… it’s 7 PM, not 7:30, OK?

*Jerry*
November 2008 Minutes

The Comets meeting was called to order by Mike Ambarian on November 20, at 7:30 PM, at the Oak View Community Center.

The September minutes were approved. We had guests from the Conejo Valley Flyers, Joe Martin and Wesley Minear. We had no new members.

Treasurer’s Report: We have 111 members and finances are in very good shape. The report was approved.
Field Marshall/Safety Officer: Steve Billings had nothing to report.
Park Liaison: Kenny Marsh reminded all, who would be attending the Club only Float Fly, that the inspection of floats was still a requirement for all participating planes. He also reported about a shoreline clean-up that would be going on at the Lake the same weekend. He has bags and equipment for picking up garbage.

Old Business: Lynn Breedlove obtained possession of the Turkey award for crashing his foam.

The guests from the Conejo Valley Flyers (CVF) reported about all the assistance the AMA gave their Club in obtaining a new field. Joe and Wesley brought copies of the article from the September 2008 issue of the Model Aviation magazine, along with some information about membership to the CVF. When the Condors were recently threatened by a golf course and municipal park use, the AMA assisted in their retention of their site. During a visit to the Condor filed, the National Audubon Society president was very impressed in how the wildlife and the planes interacted.

The Club members will power wash the field, December 8, prior to the paving company applying a slurry to fill in cracks and the final reseal on December 9. The field will be striped on December 10.

New Business: Pres. Mike Ambarian asked for volunteers for a new Treasurer. There were no volunteers and Emery agreed to stay on as Treasurer. Mike Ambarian will be filling in for Emery when he, once again, goes into the hospital.

The recent Frisbee golf competition, after agreeing to stay away from the field, set up a basket at the end of the runway. The field had to be shut down due to the interference with take offs and landing. The Club will be asking the Lake to move the Frisbee baskets to a location that is agreeable by all.

Next month’s meeting is the Club’s Christmas Party. Marilyn Nash (805-532-1433) is in charge of the list of foods we will all be bringing. We will be starting at 7 p.m.

Comets’ Tale Editor Jerry Deanda received a letter from a member requesting a page to be added to the Comets Tale for sale items. We voted to include any notices we receive from members who want to place items for sale.

Model of the Month: Lynn Breedlove brought in a YAK 54 Blacknose model, with a 34” wingspan. The model weighs 2 lbs 5.5 oz and uses a 2 cell 4000 miliamp battery.

Steve Billings brought a 3 1/2 lb Twin Jet. It uses a 3800 Ma, 4 cell, 40,000 RPM draws 80 amps at 16,090 watts.

Bob Root brought in his 1925 Curtis 3R2C plane, having a 66” wing span weighing 15 lbs and powered by a Saito 1.50. The plane was originally built for racing and won an open race in the mid 20’s.

Steve Billings was voted the winner.

The raffle was held and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandy Brown
Leading a Club is More Than Doing the Job Yourself

by Dave Mathewson, AMA President

The year 2008 is winding down and this is the time when many of our clubs elect new, or reelect current, officers for the coming year. I’m going to begin this column by shamelessly plagiarizing an article I recently read about being an association officer: “Filling an officer role does not mean that you are required to do the job alone. Being an officer simply means that you are responsible for ensuring that the job gets done. As an officer, you are allowed to ask other members of the club to help you fulfill your duties.” How true is that? I’ve been a member of a number of different organizations, and far too often I’ve seen cases of burnout because club officers feel a need to carry the load of running a club or association entirely on their own shoulders.

Sure, there’s a responsibility that goes along with being a club officer, but that responsibility doesn’t include doing all of the work yourself. In fact, over time, many clubs eventually fail because the club officers allow themselves to be put in a position where they had to do all of the work and simply accepted this as the way things were done. In other words, it was easier to do the job yourself than to solicit the help of others. At least that sounded good at the time.

As club members we should accept the fact that we all need to play some part—even if only a small part—to ensure the well-being of our club. That’s what being part of a club is supposed to be all about. At the same time we recognize that those who have volunteered their time to be club leaders have accepted a greater level of responsibility; however, that responsibility should lean more toward creating an atmosphere of teamwork and cooperation within your club.

As a club officer you also have an opportunity to influence the direction of, and culture within, your club. Your members depend on you, as well as the other elected officers, to help set and meet goals and objectives for your club during your term. How you do that can mean the difference between success and failure, not only for you, but for your club.

In some cases, if things go extremely wrong, it can result in an officer eventually leaving not only the club, but modeling all together, because the pressures of holding a club office have taken the fun out of what was supposed to be an enjoyable activity.

Please keep all of this in mind as we move into the new year. Being a club officer doesn’t mean tackling every project or activity yourself. It doesn’t have to feel like a job. Most often, it can be an enjoyable experience if approached the right way. Enlist your members to do their part in support of your club. Most want to be a part. They just need to be asked.

Since this is the last issue of the AMA Insider for 2008 I want to close this month by wishing everyone a happy holiday season and the best of luck in the coming year.

See you next time.

Here’s some info on the Whatzit plane submitted by Cap’n Leo Jaskoski last month: In 1919, the H.& M. Farman Aeroplane Company of France produced the Farman Sport two-place sport and light commercial biplane. In 1922, C.T. Ludington and Wallace Kellett of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, formed the Ludington Exhibition Company as agents for Farman aircraft, and, in 1923, they imported their first two Sports. Their pilot flew this aircraft, serial number 15, C-72, in the 1924 “On to Dayton Race,” which included flying over the treacherous Allegheny Mountains.

After suffering severe damage in 1928, NC-72’s airworthiness certificate was revoked and it languished for years in Pennsylvania and New Jersey until Ken Hyde of Warrenton, Virginia, restored it. C.T. Ludington himself identified the aircraft, allowing Hyde to reclaim the NC-72 registration. This is the last remaining Farman Sport.
Soldering: It's All About Heat and Clean

by Tom Ball

When I was teaching school back in the 1950s, I got a summer job with the company that installed the first dial telephone system in Elk Grove. Eventually I moved on to other jobs as the work progressed, but initially what I did was solder each wire from a 200-pair cable to terminal blocks eight hours a day. By the end of the summer I had a pretty good idea how to attach two items together with molten metal while avoiding the dreaded “cold joint.”

I just finished doing all the wiring for a new 1/5-size Cub that I am converting to electric power. While I had all the gear out, I also changed the terminals on three batteries that I bought at the last swap meet. This seemed like a good time to write an article I had suggested some time ago.

Before I get to the preparation of the actual materials to be soldered, let me talk for a minute about irons, solder itself, and tools. My standby is an older model Weller 8200 rated at 100 watts. I love this gun because it is ready to go as soon as the trigger is pulled and I can lay it back down on the bench without wondering an hour later if I turned it off. For really heavy work, like joining 1/8-inch piano wire for landing gear, I have a conventional 100-watt iron made by a company called Drake. My third iron is a small Ungar, which does not show wattage, but it has a very fine tip and is good for jobs like re-attaching a broken wire to a speed controller.

For solder I used a good quality resin core 60/40. The last numbers refer to the proportions of lead in the mixture to tin. The flux I happen to have on hand at the moment is Otaey No. 5 solder paste. On hand means it has probably been around five or six years. With paste, a little goes a long way.

Many of the tools I use, like needle-nose pliers and small files, are just normal bench tools. A more specialized tool I almost always use is called a “third hand.” It consists of a base supporting frame with two opposing alligator clips, which can be twisted and moved to almost any position.

By gripping the two parts to be soldered and holding them firmly together through the entire process, it helps eliminate burnt fingers and failed joints because of movement before the solder has completely cooled. The last two tools that always come out when I set up a job are a simple wire stripper and a small bronze brush which I use to clean off the tips of the irons when they start looking a little dull.

For a perfect solder joint, both surfaces must be clean enough and hot enough that the solder will melt and flow evenly on both items. Any dirt, rust, corrosion, or other foreign matter on either surface will prevent the solder from sticking to the dirty area and will cause a weak or imperfect joint.

This is less of a problem when dealing with new components and fresh wire than when doing repairs or reusing old components. Sandpaper, files, a Dremel tool, and the wire brush I mentioned earlier can all be used to get a bright and shiny surface. When doing repairs, I cut back enough fresh wire if the wire is long enough to allow it.

One way to guarantee that you are dealing with two clean surfaces is to apply a light coating of paste and solder to each surface before you make the actual joint. This is sometimes called tinning and will show up any places that are not willing to take solder.

Once both surfaces are tinned, they must be held together in some immovable way through the entire process, from the application of heat to the final cooling when the solder itself turns from bright to dull. If you are going to do this without some type of jig, be sure to use pliers. There is no way you can hold something with your fingers close enough to the joint to be effective without burning yourself. For larger jobs, I use everything from small vises to C clamps.

The actual soldering is generally over within seconds. The trick is to position the iron so that both surfaces are heated to the point where solder melts and flows.

For small jobs such as soldering wires onto plugs or terminals, you can generally get enough solder on the tip of the iron before applying it to the area. If more solder is needed, for example when building a heavy-duty landing gear, push the end of the solder right into the heated area but don’t overdo it. Excessive solder buildup does not make for a stronger joint. Also, keeping an iron in an area until wire insulation and other components are melted does not make for a better job.

One last point to watch out for is the so-called cold joint. A true bond will be made only when both surfaces become hot enough to solder. Be sure that the tip of the iron comes in contact with both surfaces long enough for this to occur. Cold joints will often look fine and may even hold for while, but they have a nasty habit of failing on final approach.