

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



December 2009

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Mike Ambarian, Dale Nash, Sandy Brown, Emery Balasa and Steve Billings

Instructor Pilots

Emery Balasa Steve Billings Andrew Carlson Bob Root Ron Scott

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.

**Christmas Potluck Dinner Meeting: Thursday,
17 December, 7 PM at the Oak View
Community Center (note earlier time)**



**Coming
Up!**

**Comets' 2009
Christmas Meeting and
Potluck Dinner**

Call Marilyn Nash at
(805) 532-1433 to find
out what's needed for the
potluck!

**1st Sunday of Each
Month
Open House at Santa
Paula Airport**

ROOT'S RAMBLING

The first thing to fess up to this month is what has happened to the nice looking Extra 330 I showed off at the last club meeting. Pictures 1, 2, and 3 are of this 1/4 scale model. I probably had 200 to 300 flights on this model over the last 8 years before I decided to refinish it. It started out pretty beat, but when it was finished I thought it looked pretty nice. On its first (after refinish) flight I got it trimmed out and then started flying passes so my buddy Don Ashworth could take pictures. About the third knife edge pass I tried to show it bottom toward us (the checker





2



3

board looked great) with the result I got messed up mentally and crashed in spectacular fashion. Don called it a two bag crash. I got one takeoff, no landing and a bag of small parts. What did I learn? I should have flown it awhile to get used to it again before getting fancy close to the ground. I keep relearning some of the obvious rules of this hobby. Oh well, on to more enjoyable flying discussions.

The Ventura County Comets held their float fly for members only over the weekend of November 20, 21, & 22, and I felt it was a huge success. The weather was perfect with essentially no wind throughout the day on Friday and Saturday. I couldn't attend on Sunday but I heard it was still nice. There were a significant number of members camped at the field enjoying the perfect weather. I took a bunch of pictures. If anyone who couldn't attend wants to see them let me know. A few pictures follow.



4

My Skybolt, which I put on floats for this event, is shown in picture 4. Actually Don Ashworth talked me into putting his old Skybolt floats on my airplane. I'm sure glad he did. I had a ball. The other models in this picture include John Dugan's blue & white Quaker, George Lanquist's red & white Quaker and Ken Marsh's white, purple, and aqua Quaker.

Someone (I can't tell who) is sitting on Ken's flying stool.

That's a nice relaxing way to fly and matches the way everyone is enjoying the float fly.

Ken Marsh is starting his Quaker in picture 5 with John Dugan assisting.



5



6

Ron Scott is launching his Stik in picture 6. Note the calm seas and rubber boots. The sign of a great float fly.



John Dugan is enjoying his flight in picture 7. Looking at his clothes I would guess this was still in the morning before it warmed up.



Picture 8 shows Dale Nash with his Sea Master or whatever. All the flying boats look the same to me (except high or low horizontal tail).



Don Ashworth is shown in picture 9. He is apparently flying his Quaker or one of the many floaters he has in his eyes (getting older is not for sissies).



In picture 10 Tom Wolf is assisted by TJ Moran as they launch Tom's beautiful Boeing Clipper flying boat.



George Lanquist has his Sea Monster ready to go in picture 11 with John Dugan handling the launching chores. Bob Gilliam is ready to fly his Stik in picture 12 while Tony Delgrosso takes care of the launching duties. Note the Quaker flying above.





Lynn Breedlove is taxiing his yellow and purple Quaker in picture 13 as Dale Nash retreats after the launch. It is required by club lore to mention that this yellow Quaker is the same one Lynn managed to crash into one boat and land in the next one a couple of years ago. He has rebuilt it nicely and expects us to mention its history (at least I think so because I hear it all the time).

Another member I was happy to see come out for

this event (Dennis Fingold) is shown preparing his model in picture 14. Dennis has been working too hard! I find it's hard for me to get a good picture of this pretty two tone metallic blue flying boat which I think is a Mariner.



My last people picture (15) shows Dale Nash and someone I don't recognize in George Lanquist's boat rescuing a stalled airplane. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this an enjoyable weekend. Notice the calm water. It was like this all weekend!

There were some very nice airplanes flown at this event. TJ Moran was flying his very light weight, very high powered low wing Stik type airplane on floats as shown in picture 16. This airplane will go in any direction at any speed including zero to *fast*.



The opposite of TJ's Stik is George Lanquist's beautiful Quaker shown during a touch and go in picture 17.

Don Ashworth's Quaker (picture 18) has been modified to utilize ailerons. Because the Quaker wing is relatively flexible and ailerons tend to cause wing twist he added wing struts to stiffen it. He has flown it this way for awhile. On this day the plane was badly out of trim. The wing seemed to be twisted so he was going to adjust the struts to straighten it. However, while he had the wing off I accidentally stepped on one of the struts breaking it badly. All I could do was apologize, but he was done for the day.



18



19

My Skybolt, powered by an OS .91 four cycle engine, is shown in picture 19. As a land plane it weighs about 9 1/2 pounds and certainly isn't over-powered. I was worried about how well it would fly with floats. I didn't weigh it but it's heavy. As can be seen in picture 19, I mounted the floats so the wings are at an angle of attack (more like full scale than typical model set up). This seems to help water handling. However, because of the high wing loading, it still takes 300 feet or more for take off. I

found that this float angle resulted in an unusual flying characteristic. When inverted the plane tends to fly an *outside* loop on its own. At one point (luckily at high altitude) I performed a climbing outside 1 1/2 half snap roll and the model went into an inverted spin *on its own*. I had a terrible time getting out of it even at full throttle. I pulled out about 2 feet above the water and everyone was impressed with my flying stunts. I had to sit down for awhile! I don't do any outside maneuvers with this airplane set up anymore.



20

George Lanquist's t-tail Sea Monster flying boat is shown in 20, and the metallic blue low tail Mariner belonging to Dennis Fingold is shown in picture 21.



21



The cute electric Taylorcraft taking off in picture 22 belongs to Tony Delgrosso. It was a great flying model and looked very realistic.



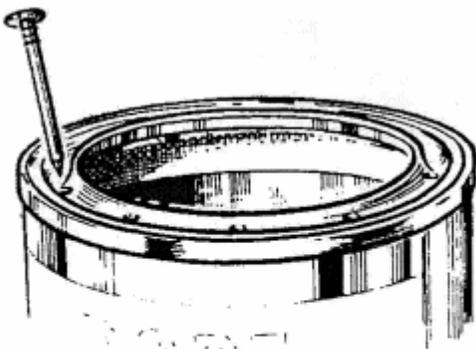
The Mariner 120 in picture 23 is a large flying boat which Ron Scott rebuilt and modified into a nice looking and flying float plane.



Tom Wolf's Boeing Clipper scale flying boat is shown in picture 24 just prior to touchdown. This is a beautiful sight to end the float fly description.

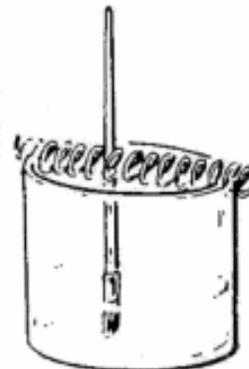
I hope everyone has a great holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Bob Root



AVOID A MESS

Punch holes around lip of dope can to allow overspill to drain back into can. Also reduces splatters when resealing.



BRUSH PARKING

A spring stretched across a jar of thinner provides a convenient spot to park the dope brush clear of the bottom.

Minutes of the November 2009 Meeting

The Comet meeting was called to order by President Mike Ambarian on November 19, at 7:30 PM, at the Oak View Community Center.

The October minutes were approved. We had no guests and no new members.

Treasurer's Report: We have 90 members and finances are in good shape. It was shown that the Club made a profit of \$878 off of the October Float Fly. The report was approved.

Field Marshall/Safety Officer and Park Liaison: Rangers gave favorable feedback to the Club about the Float Fly.

Old Business:

Two past/current members have passed away in the last month. Ed Ankney suffered a fatal heart attack while riding his bike. Carl Dewees' has passed and his son has contacted the Club to donate his fathers' flying equipment to a young flyer.

The clubs' selection committee for 2010 Officers has selected George Boston for President, Marilyn Nash for Vice President, and Mike Ambarian for Safety Officer. Motion was made, and seconded, to close nomination and all the selected Officers were voted on and approved. 2010 new officers will take over at the Christmas meeting.

Ron Scott voiced his appreciation for all volunteers who helped with the Float Fly. He received a lot of positive feedback from flyers. There were a total of 73 flyers with no major incidents.

New Business:

Marilyn Nash is putting together the list of what foods are being brought, along with your significant other, so we don't have too many duplicates or end up with nothing but desserts, for our wonderful, delicious Christmas Dinner on December 17. If you haven't checked with her to see if we are missing something, be sure to contact her ASAP at 805-532-1433.

John Dugan decided to pass the coffee duty on to someone else. Steve and Sandy Billings have volunteered for the duty.

Berny Hammer received miscellaneous flying stuff from an old time member and is selling to anyone who may want it. He will be bringing it again to the January meeting.

Model of the Month:

We had two Model of the Month entries:

Leo Gabriels brought in a Goldberg German model plane, made in Viet Nam, it is all metric and weights 2 1/2 kilos.

George Boston built a Sea Fury plane from a kit he won 3 Christmas Parties ago. It was the first plane he built since he was 19 years old. Bob Root assisted him. He glass coated it and had problems with fish eyes, uneven coloration, etc. Now has way too much paint. Weighs 12 pounds 9 ounces and needs 2 more pounds in the nose due to being tail heavy and needs a 1.20 engine.

The judges voted for George Boston – maybe he will be encouraged to build more planes.

The raffle was held and the meeting was adjourned at 8:10.



Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Billings

RENEWAL NOTICE 2010
Ventura County Comets
Dues payable on or before January 1, 2010

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

AMA Number _____ Date of Birth _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

RC Frequency Channel _____

Type of Membership Senior _____ Spouse _____ Junior _____ Lifetime _____

Membership renewal fee: Senior \$50, Spouse \$25, Junior 17yrs and younger \$10

Please include a copy of your 2010 AMA membership card.

ON THE SAFE SIDE

The Lighter Side of Safety

by Don Nix, Insider Safety Column Editor

My last column about self-appointed, rude, and dangerous hotdogs in RC drew more mail than any previous one. With one exception, all the letters were not only in agreement, but most gave examples of similar incidents at their own fields and how they had dealt with it.

The lone dissenter was not only indignant (“Nobody is going to tell me what I can and can’t do”), but at the end of his e-mail stated he could tell I was probably pro gun control and a few other unspeakable sins, none of which were true or had anything to do with flying model airplanes. Oh, well.

As I was debating subject matter for this issue, it occurred to me that funny things related to safety do happen

from time to time. They are only funny when no person is injured or no property is damaged. The following incidents took place years ago at a very popular RC flying field in Southern California.

Late one Saturday afternoon, one of our most regular and experienced pilots was flying an Ugly Stik and began yelling, "I don't have it! I don't have it! No control!" then watched open-mouthed as "his" model gracefully climbed into the pattern, turned downwind, turned again and passed in front of everyone, continuing on around again, seemingly on its own. This field was a very busy one with 12 pilot stations, and most had models in the air at the moment.

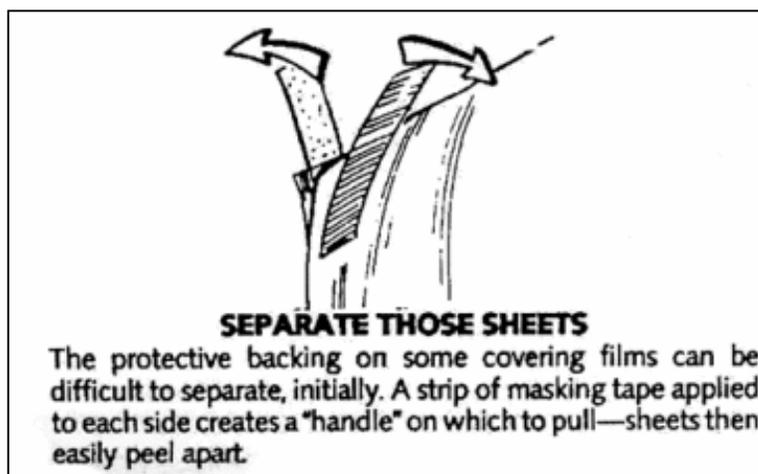
Gradually he realized what had happened. This particular fellow liked to fly low and in the weeds (literally), but was always careful to do so well past the far side of the runway, at least a hundred feet from the flightline. As he made one of his low and slow passes into the afternoon sun, an almost identical Stik was taking off at the far end of the pit area and starting to climb into the pattern. At that time of day, at that particular point and general altitude, models tended to become silhouettes briefly.

Ah, you can see it coming. Just as our friend was approximately abreast of the model taking off, his eyes picked up the other Stik as his own. In the meantime (as we discovered an hour or so later), his model had continued unhampered and uncontrolled straight ahead, crashing into a golf course several hundred yards to the west. I might mention the golfers were not amused.

On another occasion, one of my friends who did a lot of training of newbies was helping a beginner with his brand new trainer, checking everything, starting the engine, tuning it, and explaining what he was doing at every step. After getting the engine tuned and idling properly, he told the proud owner that he wanted to check the engine at full power with the nose up to be sure it wasn't too lean. The owner, eager to please, held the airplane vertical while the engine test was made, and was still holding it in that position when the instructor reduced the power to idle.

Yes, the fellow was a beginner, but he had been at the park for a couple of hours, and certainly must have seen what others were doing all around him. No doubt nerves pickled his brain at that moment, because when the instructor nodded at him, assuming the fellow would put it down at the edge of the runway, the poor guy simply tossed it straight up into the air, nose pointed skyward, engine at idle.

Incredibly, the stunned instructor, having more skill and presence of mind than most of us, punched the throttle forward, managed to get the thing wallowing into the air and flew it out into the pattern. Another fine example of what happens when we assume something.



After getting into this subject, I realized I have some more funny ones that ended up safely, but they'll have to wait until next issue. In the meantime, if you care to add to the list, or suggest another safety subject, I'm always available: flyerdon1@yahoo.com. →

The photos of the float fly last month were handed to me by Ron Scott, and were taken by Jeff Maxwell of the Condors. -ed