

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



February 2009

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

Instructor Pilots

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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, 19 February, 2009,
7:30 PM at the Oak View Community Center**

Root's Rambling

I believe that most of you who have been in the Ventura County Comets model club for any length of time have met or have at least heard of my oldest grandson Ben Cremer. He is very knowledgeable about airplanes, and can generally name any one he sees. He is also a very good model pilot. I have mentioned him from time to time (okay, so I am very proud of him). This month I thought I would let you all know a little more about Ben. It's my rambling, so you're stuck with whatever comes to my mind each month. Besides, you don't have to continue reading this, do you?

Ben has always been interested in airplanes and I'm sure my influence didn't hurt. When Ben was small I had a Cessna 182 which he got to ride in occasionally. I took him to air shows and airports every chance I got. I believe picture 1 was taken at the Santa Paula airport when he was about 5 years old. The Pitts biplane he is in front of, with its traditional Pitts paint scheme, was one of our favorites at



1



Coming Up!

21-22 March
SBRCM Float Fly at
Lake Cachuma

18-19 April
Comets' Float Fly at
Lake Casitas

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



the time. Soon after this I sold my airplane and retired from Northrop Grumman. Some toys are just too expensive to keep around. After retiring, my wife and I moved to Ventura. The next Christmas I built a trainer for Ben. Later we added floats and Ben and the plane are shown in picture 2 when he was about 8. At some point later in the flight training process I managed to put it straight into the lake at one of our float fly events. Ben tried to blame himself, but I had taken over and pulled when I should have pushed (sound familiar?) I built another trainer and Ben picked the colors. This plane and Ben are shown in picture 3 when he was

about 13. This is only the second green and red model I've ever built. As a kid the club members in my Portland Oregon club made a lot of fun of my first one and called it the Christmas plane. I never forgot this, but when Ben wanted those colors he got them!

By this time Ben was getting to be a good pilot. I decided that he should have his own aerobatic model and also he needed to learn how to build. I got him a Sig Somethin' Extra kit. He built it in my shop and it took him a long



time. When he came to visit he found all kinds of excuses to keep from building. However, it eventually was near enough to completion to get it finished in a week. He came for a week visit and I helped him a little and by the end of the week it was ready to fly. Picture 4 shows him and his new model before first flight. He is about 15 in this picture. Even with the poor weather Ben was able to make the first flight of his new airplane. What a great experience (for both of us). He still has this model. It now has a new engine and he has worn out at least one servo. We changed it when he complained the plane was doing funny things in roll.



When he brought it over it was so bad I was surprised he could even fly it.

A little while after this I won an OS .46 at a club raffle. I decided I wanted to build a WW II scale model for this engine. When Ben was visiting I asked him what airplane he thought I should build. He felt strongly that it should be a Spitfire and he would help. I scaled up and modified

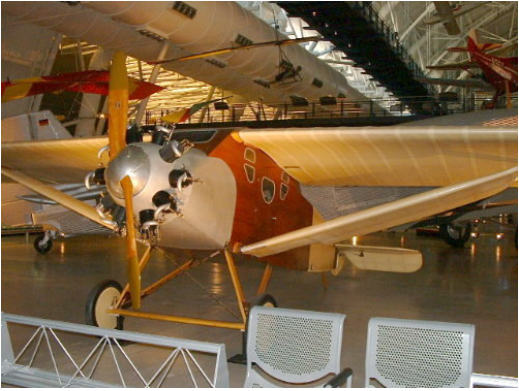
some old plans I found in my file and then Ben mentioned that we also needed retracts and scale split flaps. Gee, why not make it complicated? Anyway, he cut out a bunch of the parts and I built it. We are shown holding this model in picture 5. Ben is about 17 in this picture. I still have it and we both fly it when we get the chance.



Where is Ben now? He is in the United States Air Force. He graduated from boot camp in early January and we were able to attend the graduation ceremony at Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio Texas. Instead of being a 19 year old kid he is now a handsome young man. Picture 6 shows him at his graduation. He is in training to be a loadmaster which will allow him to fly all over the world. It will be several months before he knows where he will be stationed, but wherever he ends up all of us back home wish him the best. I'm going to miss my flying buddy.

Bob Root

For Sale! Flying Quaker, framed with 8" wingspan extension. Call Dick Hanna at 805-649-3246. \$250



Last Month's Whatzit plane is a Bellanca CF. This is an interesting airplane. It was designed by Giuseppe Bellanca and built in 1921. You can't see it in the photograph, but the



open cockpit is located in the top of the fuselage aft of the wing and offset to the left so the pilot could lean out and peer under the wing for takeoffs and landings. The very wide wing struts were intended to add wing area and lift. Power was from a 90 hp Anzani. This airplane set lots of records for speed and efficiency in the 20s, but the \$5000 price tag scared away buyers. The airplane did lead to a series of later high-wing Bellancas that saw better financial success.

William Luckie and Comet Dave Watson both submitted correct answers to this quiz, Dave remarking that this would make a great subject for a scale model.

Thanks to Cap'n Leo Jaskoski for the submission!

From Wiregrass RC, Enterprise, Alabama

Charging That New Battery

by Stan Grett and Jim Kale

In recent months, we have heard a lot of discussion on how to charge a new airborne battery or transmitter battery. Charge times have been recommended from 12-24 hours. Dave Thacker of Radical RC is the battery guy I listen to.

He recommends charging the new battery packs at 1/10 of the mAh, which is normally referred to as "C." This rate is often referred to in magazine articles and manufacturers' directions as C/10. He recommends that rate for 16 hours. Most NiCD manufacturers also recommend this.

So, if your battery is rated at 1500 mAh; then charge it at 150 mAh for 16 hours.

Be careful, if your charger charges at less than the C/10 rate, you will have to charge it longer. However, extremely long over charges are bad for the battery pack and will shorten its life. Also high charge rates can shorten the battery life if there is anything overcharging at all.

Cycling a new battery pack will help it get off to a good start in its new life. A good regiment to follow is to cycle it for three charge/discharge cycles over a week-long period. If it passes this test, it should give a good long life if maintained and charged properly.

Cycling a new battery pack before the start of each flying season and after the flying season will give you a good idea how the battery pack is holding up over a period of years.

Generally speaking, any battery that is more than three years old is on borrowed time. However, I do know of cases where battery packs lasted as long as seven years. You are betting your airplane though if you try to squeeze just a little more out of your battery pack than it has to give. Battery packs are cheap when compared to replacing airplanes. →

January 2009 Minutes

The Comet meeting was called to order by President Mike Ambarian on January 15, at 7:30 pm, at the Oak View Community Center.

There were no December minutes to be approved – since we had a party instead. We had no guests and no new members.

Treasurer's Report: We have 41 members and finances are in good shape. The report was approved.

Field Marshall/Safety Officer: Steve Billings was not in attendance to report.

Park Liaison: Kenny Marsh thanked all volunteers because they are what keeps the Club going.

Old Business: Ken Marsh had a question about the Club By-Laws and the placing of the Board of Directors. Ken was given a copy of the current Comets' By-Laws. Members are reminded a copy was also included in the June 2008 Comets' Tale newsletter, released prior to the July meeting where they were voted on to accept them as amended.

New Business: Joe Horswell reported on his brother's prop accident, in which he broke 3 bones and severed tendons in his hand. Once again, the members were quick to react to an emergency. Joe suggested some ideas to prevent this happening to others, such as:

- Paint ends of prop
- Set-up plane, material and equipment same each time you set up.
- Maintain an established start-up procedure
- When training – dedicate time and attention to student alone.
- Don't wear neck strap when bending over plane.
- Have an In Case of Emergency (ICE) number programmed into your cell phone.
- Keep insurance information with you at all time.
- Keep left hand in pocket so you don't inadvertently place it where it should not be.
- NEVER fly alone.

Jerry Deanda reported on the passing of John Gorham, a pioneer of RC Helicopters, designer and owner of Gorham Model Products. A memorial service was held for him at the Unitarian church in Newbury Park on January 24th followed by a celebration "hover" at the Condor field in Camarillo.

Ron Scott submitted a 2009 Calendar – R/C Flying Events. The Float Fly on April 18 and 19th is a sanctioned event of which Ron will be the Contest Director (CD). There will be a Balloon Drop at the field on May 9th. There were a few changes made and the members agreed on the scheduling calendar for events. El Mirage Giant Scale Air Racing event, coming on October 22 – 25, was also discussed.

Big Yahoo went to Marilyn for setting up the Christmas Party, she outdid herself again. Thanks to all who brought the food.

It was brought to the Club's attention that there is a noticeable increase of non-members flying at the field. Mike Ambarian asked to be called if a member happens to see this occur.

Model of the Month: Jimmy Harvey brought in Granville Gee Bee, which is electric, has a shock on the landing gear, a pull-pull rudder, and is run on a 2.4GHz radio.

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



Respectfully Submitted, *Sandy Brown*



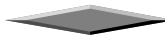
2009 CALENDAR - R/C FLYING EVENTS

(VENTURA COUNTY & AROUND By: Ron Scott as of 1-22-09)

- January** 9,10,11 AMA Convention & Hobby Show @ Ontario, CA
 17 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 8:00 PM
 21 Swap Meet @ Mecoa Engines in Monrovia on California St.... www.mecoa.com/contact_us.htm
 22-25 Electric Festival @ Apache Junction Arizona ----- <http://www.rccraze.com/azfestival/>
- February** 7 Night Fly/Fun Fly 4 to 9:00 pm – Valley Flyers..... www.valleyflyers.com
 14 IMAC flying competition @ San Diego ...check www.mini-iac.com for details.
 21 Dawn of Flight – World War 1 thru preWW2 airplanes, fun fly – breakfast, etc. – Condors field
 21 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 8:00 PM
 22 Simi Valley Flyers - Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
 28 Float Fly @ Santa Fe Dam . . . www.sfdrcm.com
 27-28 Scalemasters Qualifier – Gunsmoke 2009 – Arizona Model Aviators ..www.azmodelaviators.com
- March** 21 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 7:30 PM
 22 Valley Flyers – Giant Scale Fly-in & Night Fly
 21-22 Float Fly – Lake Cachuma – SBRCM club, No Charge, no BBQ or raffle
 27-29 Float Fly – Visalia Russell Pond – for directions - www.CVRCSoaring.com
- April** 3-5 Q40/Q500 pylon racing – Valley Flyers
 12 Simi Valley Flyers – Electric Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
 18 IMAC flying competition @ Las Vegas www.mini-iac.com
 17-19 Western States 3 day Electric Fun Fly – Valley Flyers
 18-19 Float Fly @ Lake Casitas – Ventura County Comets
 21 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 7:30 PM
 25-26 Lake Hemet Float Fly – Hemet Model Masters – www.hemetmodelmasters.org
 18-19 RCX Hobby Show @ Pamona Fairplex - - WWW.RCX.COM
- May,** 2 IMAC flying competition @ Riverside/Perris www.mini-iac.com
 2 Fun Fly & Engine Clinic by Hobby People – Valley Flyers
 2-3 Red Bull Air Races in San Diego
 2-3 IMAA Giant Scale Fly-In" - Fresno Radio Modelers
 9 Balloon Drop – Lake Casitas – Ventura Comets
 10 Mothers Day
 16-17 20th Annual Gathering of the Giants event @ Condor field – Camarillo (orig scheduled on May 2-3)
 15-17? Spring Fling – Silent Electric Flyers of San Diego www.sefsd.org (Called 1-14-09)
 23-24 L A Jets Fly-in– Valley Flyers
 ??????? West Coast Giant Scale Festival @ Chowchilla Airport – Ken Shapiro – Director 510-414-4953
 see web site @ www.fly-ima.org for more info. (Per Ken 1-16 application was denied)
 25 Memorial Day (Monday)
 31 Electric Fun Fly & Glowpower ≤.15". + BBQ @ Comets Field.

June	5-7	Float Fly - Lake Cachuma – Santa Barbara R/C Modelers. No BBQ, or raffle
	6	Giant Scale Fly-in & Night Fly – Valley flyers
	14	Warbird Event – Condors Field
	14	Simi Valley Flyers - Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
	21	Fathers Day
	19-21	Q40/Q500 Pylon racing – Western Championship– Valley Flyers
	28	Quaker Fun Fly – Comets – Lake Casitas
	28?	All scale Fun fly @ Canyon Crosswinds – Lake Castaic
July, .	12	Second Annual Warbird Race – Valley Flyers
	26	Warbird day & BBQ + Swap Meet @ Comets Field \$10 Entry fee includes lunch
	25-26	IMAC flying competition @ Camarillo – Condors field..... www.mini-iac.com
	25-26	L A Jets – Valley Flyers
	28	Night Fly & Club Meeting – Valley Flyers
August	7-9	Western States Scale Masters Qualifier Event – Valley Flyers
	15	3 rd Annual Electric Fun Fly & Swap Meet @ Condors Field
	16	Simi Valley Flyers <u>Electric Fun Fly</u> , BBQ, & Swap Meet
	??	Static model display, Ventura County Fair
	15-16?	Camarillo Air Show
	29-30	Float Fly @ Lake Cachuma, No BBQ, or raffle.
September	5	Swap Meet @ Hemet Model Masters – www.hemetmodelmasters.org
	13	Giant Scale Fly-in and Night Fly – Valley Flyers
	11-13?	Float Fly @ Lake Mc Swane – contact Tom Moore @ 209-606-6546... itmoore2@sdcglogal.net
	19	<u>Big RC Swap meet</u> @ Condors field in Camarillo – open flying
	19-20	Float Fly @ Lake Castiac Lower Lake– Canyon Crosswinds
	26-27	Lake Hemet Float fly – Hemet Model Masters – www.hemetmodelmasters.org
	27	Fun-Fly & BBQ – Valley Flyers
October	3	Helicopter Day & Swapmeet @ Condor field
	3-4	Glider Festival @ Visalia, CA (www.CVRCSoaring.com)
	9-11	Helicopter Fun-Fly – LA -3D - Valley Flyers
	9-11?	Tucson Aerobatic Shootout (Sent E-mail 1-14)
	17-18	Float Fly @ Comets - Lake Casitas
	18	Simi Valley Flyers – Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
	23-25	Float Fly @ Visalia – Russell Pond for directions check www.CVRCSoaring.com
	24-25	Lake Cachuma Float Fly – Santa Barbara R/C Modelers – No BBQ or raffle
22-25?	Giant Scale Air Races -El Marage dry lake (Unlimited planes flying @ 150 + MPH) www.usrainfo.org	
November	7	Night Fly – Valley Flyers
	8	Warbird Day @ Condors Field + Toy Collection
	11-13?	Float Fly, @ London Bridge, @Windsor Beach Park, Lake Havasu, Az. (Desert Hawks Club) (Called Jim Maguire 1-14-09 @ 928-855-9738) web site www.deserthawksrc.com/
	20-22	Float Fly @ Comets – Club members only.
	29	LA Jets – Valley Flyers
December	13	Toys-for-Tots Fly-in – Valley Flyers
	17	Comets Christmas party
	25	Santa Claus brings <u>new stuff</u> to replace all the planes & engines that Murphy broke during the year.

For Corrections or additions, Call Ron @ 805-522-5455
or Jerry @ 805-795-0532



<u>CLUB OR EVENT</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>	<u>PHONE #</u>	
:AVTI (Lancaster)	Jerry Budd	(805) 943-4970	
:Desert Hawks (Lake Havasu).	George Field	(928) 855-1197	www.deserthawksrc.com
:Comets (Ventura County).	John Dugan	(805) 646-6898	www.vccomets.com
:Condors (Camarillo).	John O'brian	(818) 991-2139	www.cicondors.com/
:Camarillo Flying Circus	(805)	
:Giant Scale Squadron	Dave Hendrix	(213) 758-2935	
:Las Vegas R/C Club	Tom Hart	(702) 566-0668	www.lvrconline.com
:Port-A-Potti Pilots (Sylmar)	Robby Hombre	(818)	www.RobinsHobbies.com
:R/C Marathon-	Corona R/C Club	(208)486-6063	
:Santa Barbara RC Modelers	Jerry Rivers	(805) 964-1370	www.GLIVERS@COX.net
WWW.SBRM.ORG			
:SGVRCL (San Gabriel Valley)	Jim Riccio	(310) 973-3696	
:The Unlimited (Torrance).	Lesley Burnett	(310) 320-8369	
:Torry Pines Gulls	Charlie Richardson	(619) 630-8775	
:Valley Flyers (Sepulvida)	George Finch	(310) 459-1577	www.valleyflyers.com
:Simi Valley Flyers	Al Hoff	(805) 581-2884	www.geocities.com/capecanaverl/cockpit/9515
Visalia Glider Festival	Ed Hipp		www.cvrcsoaring.com
Canyon Crosswinds	Wally Briggs	(661)722-0029	www.canyoncrosswinds.com
Web Master – Steve @ 661-263-0261			
Perris Lake	Oscar Weingart	(951) 684-8712	
- Santa Fe Dam R/C Modelers	Web Site / Calander	(626) 821-4133	.. WWW.SFDRCM.COM
Southern Calif - Slope racing Org.	-	-	-----
www.socalsloperacing.com			
IMAC(International Min. Aerobatic Club	Andy Portman	(805) 388-719	www.mini-iac.com/DesktopDefault.aspx
Riverside RC Club			
www.riversidercclub.org			
- Simi Indoor Electric fly Simi Valley - Matt Keennon	(805) ????????	Matt Keennon (AV)	keennon@avinc.com

Good Internet web Sites

- AMA Calender of events www.modelaircraft.org/contest.htm
- " Club Links . . . www.modelaircraft.org/templates/ama/clublinks.asp?sid
- " Newsletter . . . www.modelaircraft.org/templates/ama/newsletters.asp
- Gliders www.rcsoaring.com
- " www.sloperacing.com
- " Visalia Glider Club – www.CVRCSoaring.com
- " www.nesail.com
- " gliderking.com, combatwings.com
- Electrics www.sefsd.org
- Warbirds. www.rcwarbirds.com
- Airforce Pictures . . . www.topcover.com