

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



February 2010

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



**Coming
Up!**

20 February

Dawn of Flight at Condors
Field

April 9-11

Santa Barbara R/C
Modelers' Float Fly at
Lake Cachuma

April 17 & 18

Comets Float Fly at Lake
Casitas

**1st Sunday of Each
Month**

Open House at Santa
Paula Airport
(except April)

A Note From The President

Hello all. Sorry about having to cancel the meeting last month, but it proved to be the right decision. I went down to the meeting room around 6:30 the evening of the meeting, and a major storm cell came through just as I was posting a cancellation notice on the door. Shortly after I got there, nothing but thunder, lightning and rain coming down in sheets for about an hour. I wouldn't want anybody out on the road in these conditions. If you didn't get the word and went to the meeting to find the room dark and locked up, with my note on the door, sorry, but we tried our best to get the word out to everybody on Wednesday.

Because of canceling the January meeting, we have a number of items on the agenda for this months meeting. Ron Scott will be going over the 2010 Calendar of Events. We have a potential conflict with the October 22-24 float fly. This year we are planning to hold the float fly one week later than last year. Because of the way the days shift between 2009 and October 2010, the third Thursday of the month falls on the 21st. We have always held the float fly the weekend following our monthly meeting. However, by moving the date back to the 22-24th we will be scheduling our float fly the same weekend as the Lake Cachuma float fly. Traditionally, we have quite a few members from the Santa Barbara R/C Modelers attending our float fly, and likewise, a number of our members attend theirs. I would like to hear your thoughts on this. We also need to

discuss possible changes to the Field Use Policy, regarding guest attendance. And, if you haven't paid your yearly dues yet, now is a good time. The combination numbers on the locks have been changed.

So, please note the February meeting date on your calendar, and we will see you there.

George Boston

Root's Rambling

With the rain we've had lately I've become a little nostalgic about the (good?) old days growing up in the Pacific Northwest. It got me to thinking about old airports I have seen which are no longer around. I found a great internet site on this subject (http://www.members.tripod.com/airfields_freeman/).

When I was a baby my parents would take me down by the old airport in Portland Oregon after dinner to watch the airplanes until I would fall asleep. This would have been when I was 2 or 3 (1939 or 1940). I didn't like to go to bed and apparently I liked to watch airplanes. The airport near our house was the Swan Island Airport. In 1925, like many growing urban areas, Portland insisted on having an airport.



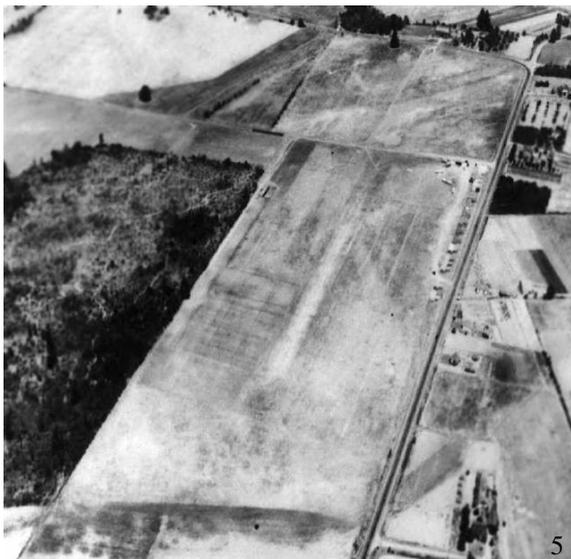
Aviation interests proposed that the swampy Swan Island (northwest of downtown Portland on the Willamette River) be used as an airport, and the Port of Portland purchased 253 acres. Construction of the airport began in 1926. Even though the airport was not yet completed Charles Lindbergh flew in & dedicated the new airfield in 1927. The earliest photo available shows the airport in 1929 (picture 1) with a total of 4 runways. Construction of the airport was actually completed in May, 1930. By 1935, it was apparent that the Swan Island Airport was becoming obsolete.

The small airfield could not accommodate the larger aircraft (like the DC-3!) coming into service, and it couldn't easily be expanded (due to its location on an island). The airport in 1935 and some of the airplanes of that time are shown in picture 2 and 3. As a result the Port of Portland an-



nounced that it would begin building a "super airport." The airport was situated on a 700 acre parcel known as the Columbia bottoms near the Columbia River. The Portland-Columbia Airport was one of the largest Roosevelt-era work projects in the nation. It was heralded as one of the nation's most well-planned airports with plenty of room for expansion. It is now known as the Portland International Airport. The Swan Island airport continued in use until about 1942 at which time the area was converted to





building ships for WW-II. A 1945 aerial view looking south at the shipyards which covered Swan Island by that time is shown in picture 4, with not a trace left of the former airport.

In 1956 and 1957 I was going to Portland State College, living in north Portland, and had a girlfriend living in Beaverton Oregon. On my route from my house to her house I had to drive by a great little airport with a grass runway and old wooden hangers full of interesting airplanes. I spent a lot of time walking through these hangers looking at all the neat airplanes. I just found out on the internet that this airport was called the Bernard, Beaverton airport. Picture 5, taken in 1931, shows the runway with a row of individual hangars at the northeast corner of the field and several aircraft. The date of construction of Bernard Field has not been determined.

Picture 6 is a 1934 photo looking east towards Cedar Hills Boulevard, showing a few planes in front of the hangars. This is how it still looked in the 50's. Picture 7 is a 1966 aerial view of the airport looking north along Cedar Hills Boulevard. It appears as if



the runway had been paved at some point. I know it was still a sod runway in 1957 when I used to visit it. Picture 8 is a 1980s aerial view looking south at what is now the Bernard Beaverton Mall!

In 1960 I went to work for Boeing and after a couple of years my wife and I bought a house in Bellevue Washington which is on the east side of Seattle. Bellevue had a great little airport which we liked to visit and take pictures. According to the Seattle times, Arthur Nordoff founded the Bellevue Airfield in 1941, but because of the war it didn't open until 1945. Nordoff had been an Army aviator during WW1, and his daughter, Nancy Dunnam, flew in the Women's Air Corps during WW2.



Picture 9 is an aerial view looking east at the Bellevue Airport in about 1963. The field had a single 2,250' asphalt Runway, and the photo shows a large number of T-hangars with an assortment of light aircraft. I dug through my photos and found a picture of my two girls holding my Phony Folkerts racer at the Bellevue airport in 1973 (picture 10). I moved from Seattle to southern California in 1974. In approximately 1979, the Bellevue Airport property was acquired by a property development company. They left the airport open for a few years but it was closed in 1983. At that time they developed the site with office buildings.



9



10

Picture 11 is a 1990 aerial photo of the airfield. Several lengths of the former runway & its parallel taxiway were still plainly recognizable.

The other Seattle area airport we visited regularly in the mid 1960's was the Sand Point Naval Air Station. For several years the U.S. Navy put on a great air show at Sand Point. This always included the Blue Angels. There was also a big model competition at this airport every year.

King County

began acquiring small farms on a peninsula along the western shore of Lake Washington in the late 1910s. In June 1920, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for King County's first airfield. Purportedly, Bill Boeing flew his first airplane from the field. Picture 12 shows the area in 1922. In 1924, aircraft squadrons of the "Battle Fleet" established a camp at Sand Point. In April-September 1924, four Army Air Corps planes began & ended a "round-the-world flight" from Sand Point. On September 28, 1924, a World Flight reception was held at Sand Point, with an estimated public attendance of



12



11

40,000. In September 1925, King County authorized clearing of a 2,640' landing strip followed by grading, leveling and sowing in grass. In 1926, Sand Point was still no more than a series of farms, a field served as a runway, the station commander worked out of a farm house, and Naval Aviation Cadets were billeted in a chicken house. In mid-1926, King County jail inmates were used to clear trees & undergrowth to ex-

pand the airstrip. In October 1926 King County deeded the entire peninsula (approximately 411 acres) to the U.S. Navy for developing a Naval Air Station. On September 13, 1927, a visit by Charles Lindbergh & his aircraft, the "Spirit of St. Louis", drew an estimated public attendance of 50,000 to Sand Point.

In 1929 a seaplane runway was constructed near the shore of Pontiac Bay. In the early to mid-1930s the Navy trucked in hundreds of loads of fill to develop expanded landing facilities. Hundreds of WPA workers filled in most of the point's "gently rolling land", buried what remained of Mud Lake & the marsh, and eliminated Pontiac Bay. This fill material was graded & much of it covered with a slab of concrete for landing strips (picture 13). A typical user of this



13

area in 1939 is shown in picture 14. In 1939 Commander A. W. Radford noted in a memo that grading of the airfield involved more than 1,500,000 cubic yards. Picture 15 is a 1941 aerial view looking north at the Sand Point runways while under construction, with the existing hangars visible at the top-left. By 1941 the urban development of surrounding Seattle had come close enough to the base that aircraft were no longer permitted to carry live bombs.



14

The base turned into an air transport & ship staging area for Western Pacific operations during WW2. It also continued to be used for training, with schools for aviation metal smiths, machinists & radiomen. At times, Boeing used the field, as did Pan American Airlines. In 1943 the main runway was lengthened to 5,050'. During World War II, NAS Seattle's peak work force encompassed 7,400 military & civilian personnel. By 1946, 4,600 Navy, Marine Corps, and civilian personnel called Sand Point home or worked on the base (picture 16). During the years following WW2, the Navy was choosing its permanent post-war bases. Many closed because they couldn't meet the requirements of the jet age: 6,000' runways were now the



15



16

minimum standard. In 1949, the Navy decided that NAS Seattle, the pre-war major naval installation in the Northwest, was suitable to train Reserve forces and support a moderate number of aircraft, but could not be expanded as a major fleet support station. The location of the base, with the length of the runways constrained by Lake Washington, sealed its fate. It was thus designated a Naval Reserve Air Station.

In 1950, the Korean conflict renewed base activity. In 1952, the Navy closed the base except for Naval Reserve



17

activities. The 1953 Master Shore Development Plan for NAS Seattle estimated the physical plant value at \$70 million, and estimated the station size at 450 acres (picture 17). This is what the airport looked like in the mid 60's when we attended full scale and model air shows. In 1957 Seattle's Comprehensive Plan identified Sand Point Station as a site for a major public park. The city stated that a general aviation airstrip was totally incompatible with Seattle's plan. In 1960 Seattle NAS was listed as having two paved runways (5,050 Runway 14/32 &

3,110' Runway 1/19), as well as two other abandoned runways. Runway 19 was listed as for light aircraft only. In 1966 the station population included 482 active duty, 1,471 reserve naval personnel, and 318 civilians. In 1967 Sand Point gained a Coast Guard Air Station, which was relocated from Port Angeles. The last photo which has been located showing NAS Seattle in operation was a 1968 aerial view (picture 18). It depicted 23 aircraft of various types on the ramp, and a Fairchild R4Q on the runway.



18



19

In 1970 the Navy announced that it would retain a small portion of Naval Air Station Seattle and 347 acres would be declared surplus for other purposes. On June 30, 1970 the U.S. Navy deactivated the Naval Air Station, ended all flight operations, and renamed the base as Naval Support Activity – Seattle. Plans to convert part of the site to a general aviation airport were defeated in a referendum. Picture 19 is an August 1974 aerial view looking north at the abandoned runways during the Gold Cup Hydroplane

Race. The race was held in the waters adjacent to Sand Point, drawing an estimated attendance of 30,000-35,000. Event parking was held on the remaining airfield tarmac. In 1975, a total of 312 acres were declared surplus: 117 acres were transferred to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and 196 acres were transferred to the City of Seattle for Sand Point Park. Sand Point Park was dedicated in December 1975. In the late 1970s, demolition was conducted of runways, tarmac and taxiways, encompassing approximately 120 acres. Building 1, which had been built as Sand Point's first hangar in 1923, was demolished by NOAA in the 1970s or 1980s. In October 1986 the base was redesignated as Naval Station Puget Sound. In April 1991 the Naval Station Puget Sound was recommended for closure under the Base Realignment & Closure Act (BRAC). Sand Point's former hangars were reportedly used in the 1993 movie "Sleepless in Seattle" as soundstages to film Empire State Building scenes. The Navy ceased its use of its remaining portion of the base in 1995. Picture 20 is a circa-2000 aerial photo of the site of the former Sand Point NAS. Another air field gone!

A lot of airports have been closed over the years. Let's do what we can to keep our Lake Casitas field in operation.

Bob Root



20

2010 CALENDAR - R/C FLYING EVENTS

(VENTURA COUNTY & AROUND By: Ron Scott as of 2-5-10)

- February 6 Combat – Battle For The Empire – Corona R/C Club – info see www.RCCOMBAT.com
 9 Night Fly/Fun Fly 4 to 9:00 pm – Valley Flyers Apollo Field www.valleyflyers.com
 20 Dawn of Flight – World War 1 thru preWW2 airplanes, fun fly – breakfast, etc. – Condors field
 20 Swap Meet – Cactus Park, Lakeside-Weedwacker flying field – Information call Don Madison
 619-296-1510
 20 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 7:30 PM
 27 IMAC flying competition @ – San Diego Miramar - www.mini-iac.com
 27 Float Fly @ Santa Fe Dam ... www.sfdrcm.com
 28 Poker Fun Fly – Camarillo Flying Circus
- March 20-21 RCX – Model Airplane Expo @ Pamona Fairplex - www.rcx.com or phone 203 529-4649
 20 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 7:30 PM
 21 Valley Flyers – Giant Scale Fly-in www.valleyflyers.com
 26-28 Float Fly – Visalia Russell Pond – for directions - www.CVRCSoaring.com
 28 Electric Fun Fly – Condor field Camarillo
 28 T-28 Races – Stock – Camarillo Flying Circus
- April 3-4 Q40/Q500 pylon racing – Valley Flyers www.valleyflyers.com
 9-11 Float Fly – Lake Cachuma – SBRCM club, No Charge, no BBQ or raffle
 18 Electric Fun Fly - Valley Flyers – www.valleyflyers.com
 17-18 Float Fly @ Lake Casitas – Ventura County Comets
 17 Electric Fly (indoor) @ Simi Valley Rec Center 5005 LA Ave. @ 7:30 PM
 24 Simi Valley Flyers – Electric only - Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
 25 Warbird Day – Camarillo Flying Circus
 24-25 Lake Hemet Float Fly – Hemet Model Masters – www.hemetmodelmasters.org
 30 Pre-21st Annual Gathering of the Giants event @ Condor field (for out of town guests who
 arrive early)
- May 1-2 21st Annual Gathering of the Giants event @ Condor field – WWW.CICONDORS.COM
 1-2 Float Fly – Millerton Lake - Fresno Radio Modelers – John Lockwood 559-298-1606 or
 www.frcm.org
 1 Fun Fly & Engine Clinic by Hobby People – Valley Flyers
 1-2? Red Bull Air Races in San Diego
 9 Mothers Day
 22-23 L A Jets Fly-in – Valley Flyers www.valleyflyers.com
 23 Fun Fly & BBQ – Camarillo Flying Circus
 29 IMAC flying competition @ Bakersfield www.mini-iac.com
 28-30 Memorial Day – Giant plane Fly-in – Fresno Radio Modelers–John Lockwood 558-298-1606 or
 www.frcm.org
 30 Electric Fun-Fly & Glowpower < .15". + BBQ @ Comets Field
- June 4-6 Float Fly - Lake Cachuma – Santa Barbara R/C Modelers. No BBQ, or raffle
 4-6 Western States All Electric Fly-in see www.valleyflyers.com for details
 5-6 Model Airshow - Prado Air Park – Chino. For info see www.scalesquadron.com
 12 5th Annual Helicopter day @ Condor Field
 12 Scale Fun Fly at Crosswinds Field - Lake Castiac
 13 Simi Valley Flyers - Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
 20 Fathers Day
 18-20 Q40/Q500 Pylon racing – Western Championship – Valley Flyers www.valleyflyers.com
 27 Quaker Fun Fly & Balloon drop - Comets Field - Lake Casitas
 27 War bird day –CI Condors Field – all clubs welcome. WWW.CICONDORS.COM
 27 Glider & Electric Fun Fly – Camarillo Flying Circus

July	11?	Swap Meet San Diego – Don Madison
	18	Swap meet @ Crosswinds - Lake Castiac
	24	Warbird day & BBQ + Swap Meet @ Comets Field \$10 Entry fee includes lunch
	23-25	IMAC flying competition @ Camarillo – Condors field..... www.mini-iac.com
	23-25	L A Jets – Valley Flyers www.valleyflyers.com
	25	T-28 Day – Camarillo Flying Circus
August	6-8	All Scale Event - www.valleyflyers.com
	15?	3rd Annual Electric Fun Fly & Swap Meet @ Condors Field
	14	IMAC flying competition @ Santa Maria www.mini-iac.com
	15	Simi Valley Flyers Electric only - Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
	14-15?	Camarillo Air Show
	21-23	Float Fly @ Lake Cachuma, No BBQ, or raffle.
	29	Fun Fly & Swap Meet – Valley Flyers www.valleyflyers.com
	29	Fun Fly & BBQ – Camarillo Flying Circus
September	4?	Swap Meet @ Hemet Model Masters – www.hemetmodelmasters.org
	12	Giant Scale Fly-in – Valley Flyers – Apollo Field www.valleyflyers.com
	24-26	Float Fly @ Lake Mc Swane – contact Tom Moore @ 209-606-6546... tlmoore2@sdcglocal.net
	19	Big RC Swap meet @ Condors field in Camarillo open flying
	18-19	Float Fly @ Lake Castiac Lower Lake– Canyon Crosswinds
	19	Poker Fly – Camarillo Flying Circus
	25-26	Lake Hemet Float fly – Hemet Model Masters – www.hemetmodelmasters.org
	26	Fun-Fly & BBQ – Valley Flyers
October	2-3	Glider Festival @ Visalia, CA (www.CVRCSoaring.com)
	9	Simi Valley Flyers - Fun Fly, BBQ, & Swap Meet
	8-10	Helicopter Fun-Fly – LA – 3-D - Valley Flyers
	8-10?	Tucson Aerobatic Shootout
	5-17	Giant Scale Air Races - Rabbit dry lake (Unlimited planes flying @ 150 + MPH) www.usrainfo.org
	17	Combat – Camarillo Flying Circus
	23-24	Float Fly @ Comets - Lake Casitas
	23	Float Fly @ Otay Lake San Diego www.vcmrcc.com
	24	All Electric Fun-fly - Valley Flyers – Apollo Field www.valleyflyers.com
	22-24	Float Fly @ Visalia – Russell Pond for directions check www.CVRCSoaring.com
22-24	Lake Cachuma Float Fly – Santa Barbara R/C Modelers – No BBQ or raffle	
November	6	Night Fly & Fun Fly -Valley Flyers – Apollo Field www.valleyflyers.com
	7	Warbird Day @ Condors Field + Toy Collection
	5-7	Float Fly, @ London Bridge, @Windsor Beach Park, Lake Havasu, Az. (Desert Hawks Club) web site www.deserthawksrc.com/
	19-21	Float Fly @ Comets – Club members only.
	21	LA Jets - Valley Flyers – Apollo Field www.valleyflyers.com
	21	T-28 Day – Camarillo Flying Circus
December	12	Toys-for-Tots Fly-in – Valley Flyers – Apollo Field www.valleyflyers.com
	16	Comets Christmas party
	25	Santa Claus brings new stuff to replace all the planes & engines that Murphy broke during the year.

CLUB OR EVENT	CONTACT	PHONE #
<input type="checkbox"/> AVTI (Lancaster)	Jerry Budd	(805) 943-4970
<input type="checkbox"/> Desert Hawks (Lake Havasu). www.deserthawksrc.com	George Field	(928) 855-1197
<input type="checkbox"/> Comets (Ventura County). www.vccomets.com	Ron Scott	(805) 522-5455
<input type="checkbox"/> Condors (Camarillo). www.cicondors.com/	Ron Scott	(805) 522-5455
<input type="checkbox"/> Camarillo Flying Circus	Dave Hendrix	(213) 758-2935
<input type="checkbox"/> Giant Scale Squadron	Tom Hart	(702) 566-0668
<input type="checkbox"/> Las Vegas R/C Club	Robby Hombre	www.RobinsHobbies.com
<input type="checkbox"/> Port-A-Potti Pilots (Sylmar)	Corona R/C Club	(208) 486-6063
<input type="checkbox"/> R/C Marathon-	Jerry Livers	(805) 964-1370
<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara RC Modelers www.GLIVERS@COX.net	WWW.SBRCM.ORG	
<input type="checkbox"/> SGVRCL (San Gabriel Valley)	Jim Riccio	(310) 973-3696
<input type="checkbox"/> The Unlimited (Torrance)	Lesley Burnett	(310) 320-8369
<input type="checkbox"/> Torry Pines Gulls	Charlie Richardson	(619) 630-8775
<input type="checkbox"/> Valley Flyers (Sepulvida) www.valleyflyers.com	George Finch	(310) 459-1577
<input type="checkbox"/> Simi Valley Flyers www.simivalleyflyers.com	Jeff Raven	(805) 527-8779
Visalia Glider Festival www.cvrcoaring.com	Ed Hipp	
Canyon Crosswinds www.canyoncrosswinds.com	Wally Briggs	(661)722-0029
Web Master – Steve @ 661-263-0261		
Perris Lake	Oscar Weingart	(951) 684-8712
- Santa Fe Dam R/C Modelers WWW.SFDRCM.COM	Web Site / Calendar	(626) 821-4133 ..
Southern Calif - Slope racing Org.	www.socalsloperacing.com	-
-		
IMAC(International Min. Aerobatic Club	Andy Portman	www.mini-iac.com/
Riverside RC Club	www.riversidercclub.org	

Good Internet web Sites

- AMA Calender of events [www.modelaircraft.org/events/calendar/Flying Events/wc012010.htm](http://www.modelaircraft.org/events/calendar/Flying%20Events/wc012010.htm)
- " Club Links . . www.modelaircraft.org/clubsearch.aspx
- " 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

"Wanted"

Japanese Mitsubishi "Zero" RC airplane - 60 size (or 40) ARF

New or used but in good condition.

Ron Scott - Call 805-522-5455, or E-mail www.ronscott@dslextreme.com

Last month, Bob Root described the flight of Andy Carlson's A-10. Here's a link to a video of that flight: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2yW3pwjWIM

Announcing a new addition to the Williams/Deanda family: Meet Lola, an RV-6. She's yellow on top and gray on the bottom, has an O-360 Lycoming making 160 horsepower with a carburetor and a wood fixed-pitch prop.

I have just a very few hours in the airplane so far and it's been a bit of a revelation after three years in a Cessna 140. Lola is fast. We seem to do about 160 mph at higher power settings. All of a sudden I have to pay attention to hold an altitude. It handles like a sports car, very responsive, even at low speeds. Stalls are



kind of sharp and happen at 65 mph with the flaps up and about 70 with them down. At least it breaks straight ahead. For landing we use 90 mph in the pattern and 80 over the fence. Landings are generally on the main gear, and I'll work on landing three point. Most of my landings have been a sloppy combination of both as I land, bounce and then finish up three point. Oh well, I've made one good one so far.

No aerobatics yet but I'll get to that too. And yes, Dianne flies it better than me.

Jerry Deanda

Though I Fly Through the Valley of Death, I Shall Fear No Evil. For I am at 80,000 Feet and Climbing.”
—At the entrance to the old SR-71 operating base Kadena, Japan

“You’ve never been lost until you’ve been lost at Mach 3.”
—Paul F. Crickmore, test pilot

“The only time you have too much fuel is when you’re on fire.”

“Blue water Navy truism: There are more planes in the ocean than submarines in the sky.”

“If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage, it’s probably a helicopter—and therefore, unsafe.”

“When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.”

“Without ammunition, the USAF would be just another expensive flying club.”

“What is the similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots? If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies; if ATC screws up, the pilot dies.” →

Airplanes for Flying in Windy Weather

by Ivan Cankov

All too often, on an otherwise nice but windy day, folks just don't fly. Obviously, for a beginner, that's common sense—but for someone who has some experience, the wind can be a challenge that adds some spice to flying.

While it's easy to see that experience level has a lot to do with how much wind is too much, it may not be quite as apparent that the type of model you're flying also can have a great effect on your ability to handle winds.

Let's go through some airplane design features to see which ones give us the best flying characteristics to handle winds and the resulting turbulence:

Size: In general, the larger the airplane, the better it will handle winds of all kinds; large models don't "flop around" as much!

Dihedral: The more dihedral in a model's wings, the more they are going to be affected by crosswind gusts; it is hard to keep the wings level, therefore lineup to the runway is difficult in a crosswind situation.

Wing Loading: The higher the wing loading, the less an airplane will be affected when hit with a gust.

Aspect Ratio: Lower aspect ratio (stubby) wings will be less bothered by gusts; there is less leverage for side forces to upset the airplane, and lower aspect ratio wings have a greater tolerance to changes in angle of attack caused by gusts.

Power: Having the power to overcome the force of wind is necessary. The same thing goes when you get into a sticky situation.

Lateral Control: Ailerons are beneficial in a crosswind landing and takeoff phases. The ability to dip a wing into a crosswind without changing heading is essential, as is the ability to rudder the airplane parallel to the runway heading while keeping wings level with ailerons while landing.

Landing Gear: Models with tricycle landing gear are easier to land and take off in a crosswind than tail draggers; in addition, the wider the spread on the main gear, the better.

Maneuverability: This one is a bit harder to quantify. You want a model with stability, yet you do need good maneuverability to cope with gusts. Therefore, you want a model that is stable, yet responsive.

Wing Mounting: Generally, a low-wing airplane will handle crosswinds better. This is because the center of gravity of the airplane is nearer, in a vertical sense, to the aerodynamic center of the wing.

Therefore, a side gust does not roll the model as easily. Moreover, by mounting the main landing gear on that low-wing model, they can be spread wider.

It's unfortunate that almost every preceding item is in direct opposition to the characteristics found in many popular trainers. The main exception is the requirement for tricycle landing gear. But even with trainers, there are differences. Compare a Seniorita with the Kadet Mk2. While the Seniorita may be a bit slower and a bit easier to fly, the Kadet, with its ailerons, higher wing loading, lower aspect ratio, and lower dihedral, is a far better airplane when flying in windy conditions. Going a step further with the same kit manufacturer, the Cougar (.40)/Cobra (.60) kits embody all the right characteristics for windy flying.

In closing, I offer Confucius' only known saying about RC flying: "To learn to fly in wind, one must fly in wind!" →