

# The Comets' Tale

*The Official  
Newsletter of the*



**January 2010**

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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.*

**Next Meeting: Thursday,  
21 January, 7:30 PM at the Oak View  
Community Center**



**Coming  
Up!**

**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 President George Boston**

Happy New Year all. I hope that 2010 is off to a good start and finds you and your family well and prosperous. At the December meeting I assumed the duties as your president from Mike Ambarian, our president for the past two years. I joined the Comets in October 2003 after an absence from model airplane (U-Control) building and flying for almost 40 years. Ken Marsh was kind enough to take me under his wing and teach me how to fly RC, and helped me get started with my first plane, a SIG Kadet. Beyond the fun of building and flying RC, I have formed new friendships, and always have a great time when I am out at the field. On most days when I am at the field I am subjected to (and sometimes participate in) good nature ribbing and joining in on discussions of every subject imaginable. It's my experience that there is never a dull moment out at the field.

Without a doubt we have one of the most beautiful AMA flying sites in the nation. We are also fortunate to have an active membership that volunteers without hesitation to help maintain our field and participate in the various events that the club hosts. I continue to be impressed with all of you who pitch in giving your time and energy to make the Comets the great club it is. It is because of all of these factors that I volunteered to serve as your president for the next two years.

I want to take a quick minute to address all of our members that have not been out at the field lately, or haven't attended one of our monthly meetings. I sincerely appreciate how hectic our lives can be, especially when it comes to slicing out a day to go to the field or an evening to attend the monthly meeting. I encourage all of you to find the time, and treat yourself, including your family to a fun day at the field, and Lake Casitas. If you can find the time to attend one of our monthly meetings (third Thursday of the month) I think you will find it both informative and time well spent. We always have a raffle, and virtually every month someone brings a model to show-off. The meeting only lasts an hour to an hour and one half, and there is coffee and cookies. So put it on your calendar next month, and we look forward to seeing you. On a final note, if you need assistance/a ride getting to the field or the meeting, let me know and we will do everything we can to help out.

To all of our members, if you have thoughts, suggestions/recommendations or criticisms regarding any aspect of our club, please don't hesitate to share them with me, or drop me an email at [gbboston25294@roadrunner.com](mailto:gbboston25294@roadrunner.com). Thanks again for your support, and I look forward to seeing you out at the field.

George Boston

### Root's Rambling

With the start of a new year Ken Marsh has asked me to remind everyone we will be getting a new lock combination for all the locks at the lake. The combination will be changed on January 21, 2010. The combination can only be given to current club members so pay your dues. Come to the meeting Thursday Jan. 21 or call someone for the new combination.

Last Friday (Jan. 8) some of us went to the AMA Expo at the Ontario convention center. Every year there are a few more folks selling electric "stuff", but there are still a good number of companies in the fuel powered model business. I hadn't planned on replacing the Extra 330 I crashed last month, but I couldn't resist buying an Edge 540 ARF that was on sale for **Cheap!** It cost less than the covering would have if I had built it from scratch. I can use the radio, engine, etc from the crashed Edge. There were some nice models on display and I took a few pictures. Picture 1 shows a nicely finished B-24. It was large, on the order of 140 inch span.



Picture 2 is of a highly detailed F-16. Some of the jet powered models have gotten very sophisticated.



A large F-14 was also on display which utilized a working wing sweep capability (picture 3).



The Vought Corsair in picture 4 was built from an old Byron kit.

The large electric powered “Spruce Goose” shown in picture 5 has flown and I was told it flew well.



The large Curtiss Condor in picture 6 has a 16 ft. wing span and is powered by two 43 cc gas engines. It is spectacular.

Although I wasn't able to get a good picture of it the WW-I Siemens Schuckert D.III bi-plane shown in picture 7 was neat model with great detail including the lozenge fabric covering.





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Last month Andy Carlson was finally able to get his A-10 Warthog into the air. It is shown in picture 8. He has been working on it for at least two or three years with help from his father in law Mike Ambarian. He started with glow engine powered ducted fans but couldn't get the reliability he wanted so he switched to electric battery powered ducted fans. This new technology is developing rapidly and is now normally very reliable (although expensive). All the testing indicated that everything was working great.

He is shown taxiing out in picture 9.



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Picture 10 shows a fly-by during the first flight. It looked great in flight, but Andy said it was flying 'heavy'.



After trimming and checking the stall characteristics (which were good) he initiated the landing approach (picture 11). At this point Mike commented that he had been in the air 4 minutes. Looking through my camera view finder I thought he suddenly reduced power too much, too soon, too low. Both engines had stopped completely.

He almost cleared the infamous airplane grabbing bushes at the approach end of the runway. However, one wing lightly hit a bush, the plane rolled 90 degrees, and the result is shown in picture 12 as the model is coming to a stop in a cloud of dust. The first question is what happened? It turns out one battery pack was dead while the other was still essentially fully charged. Before the flight Andy had told me the batteries were good for about 4 minutes at full throttle. Without realizing it he flew most of the flight on one fan pretty much at full throttle! He thinks both were running during the take-off, but one must have quit soon after. He is thinking it was an ECS problem, but I haven't heard the final analysis yet. The nose was destroyed when the heavy batteries came loose, and the left wing and stabilizer were broken. This A-10 is such a nice looking model I hope he rebuilds it. It obviously flew on one engine and I'm sure it will fly great with two.



I don't want to end on a sad note so I have included three pictures of club member's new models which have had successful first flights in the last week or two. Picture 13 shows John Dugan's Extra on approach. He built this from a Carl Goldberg kit. He had to repair it after a radio problem on its first flight but it flies great now.



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Don Ashworth built the Tiger Moth in picture 14. Andy Brennan started this model several years ago but never completed it. He and Don worked a deal and Don recovered it and added scale detail. It is powered by a Saito .30 four stroke engine. It flies in a very scale manner.

The cute model shown in picture 15 was built by Bernie Hammer. I didn't get a picture of it in the air because I was flying when he and George Lanquist flew it but they report it is a great flyer.



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PICTORIAL REVIEW

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What is it in picture 16? This information is from 1960 Air Progress. It's a Swiss flying belt design revived by Arnold Junker of Quebec. Rotor diameter is 16' and weight is 105 lbs with pulse jet tip units. It was destroyed in crash, pilot not seriously hurt. I guess this shows we will try anything to get into the air, sometimes with success, sometimes not. I hope to see everyone at the flying field.

*Bob Root*



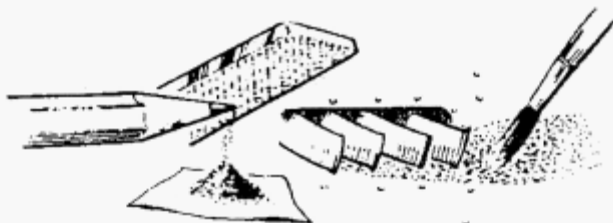
We had our Christmas Dinner Meeting on 17 December last year. Here's a shot of the food line, just getting started. The food and fellowship were both great and everybody had a good time. Thanks to everybody who cooked and/or brought food!

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### FOR SALE

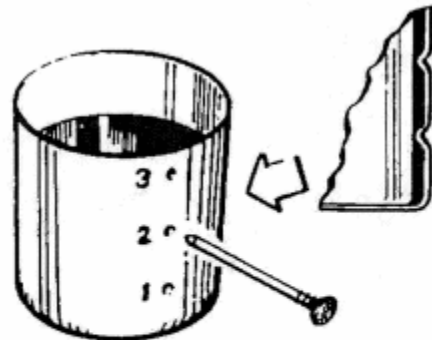
Standard Quaker with a 6 channel Futaba T6XA transmitter, receiver, servos and bomb bay.  
 Good Mag .70 engine, yellow covering. All in good condition. \$300.  
 Call Bud Scolari 805-649-4803

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#### **PAINT DETAIL**

Make a little pile of fine pencil dust, then smudge this onto your model with a finger. This makes very realistic exhaust and gun soot marks. Seal with a spray of matt varnish. You'll get more control if you use a soft, dry brush to apply the soot marks.



#### **NEAT MEASURING CAN**

A smart way to calibrate the *inside* of an empty soda can so that the correct proportions of epoxy can be poured in for mixing—just indent on the outside of the can with a blunt nail, taking great care not to perforate the can.