

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



July 2011

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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 July, 7:30 PM at the Oak View Community Center

**Coming
Up!**



Sat. 23 July
Comets Warbird Day,
BBQ and Swap Meet at
Lake Casitas
\$10 includes Lunch

**Wed. the 3rd and Fri.
the 5th of August**
Comets Model
Presentations at the
County Fair

**First Sunday of each
Month**
Open House at Santa
Paula Airport

From the President

At the June meeting I announced that we have an invitation from the folks at the Ventura County Fair to host an information table promoting the Club and AMA in the building where the models are displayed. They are going to make two tables available to us, one for setting up static displays of our models and another that we will be sitting at answering questions and promoting the club. Some thoughts on what we might want to do are: displays of different phases of model construction, different types of models (gas, electric, heli's, etc), laptop PC running flight simulation software, and handouts. Mike Burns went out on the Internet and purchased 200 glider planes that we can hand out. Ron Scott put together a handout providing guidance on the purchase of "your first RC airplane", with a listing of hobby stores and other AMA sanctioned clubs in the local area. And I have been working on a Club brochure that just went to press promoting the club and our flying site at Lake Casitas. We have found the Club Banner in the storage shed out at the field, which should spruce thing up nice. So, as of right now it looks like we have a good game plane.

They are asking if we could man the tables on the 3rd and 5th of August from 11:00AM until 7:00PM. They suggested that we have two shifts each day with two to three folks at the table from 11:00AM to 3:00PM, and from 3:00PM until 7:00PM. They will provide free tickets to us along with free parking. At the

June meeting at least eight (8) members held their hand up indicating that they would help out. I will get the names, desired days and time from each of you at the July meeting. We will also have to work out the details on who will be providing the displays and the laptop computer and flight simulation software. I will be meeting with the Fair Staff on the 29th to go over the details.

On the 25th of June we held our annual Quaker Fun Fly and Water Balloon Drop. We had a good time with 8 competitors drooping balloons. It was heated competition with Mike Burns hitting the closest in the first round at 98", then yours truly tying Mike early in the third round. But the potential tie was put to bed when on the next to the last drop Bob Root missed the target by only 66", winning the event.

This month on the 23rd, we will be conducting our annual War Bird Day & BBQ + Swap Meet. There will be a \$10 entry fee to cover the cost of the food. This has always been a fun event, with some good deals to be had at the swap meet, not to mention the great hamburgers and hot dogs, cooked by yours truly. So don't forget to highlight Saturday the 23rd on your calendar and plan on coming out to the field for good times and good food.

As a last note Ken Marsh has posted on the Frequency Board field closures due to Cross Country Races scheduled for the remainder of this year. The dates are as follows:

September 17th, Saturday, closed all day.

October 5th, Wednesday afternoon only

October 28th, Friday afternoon only

November 3rd, Thursday afternoon only

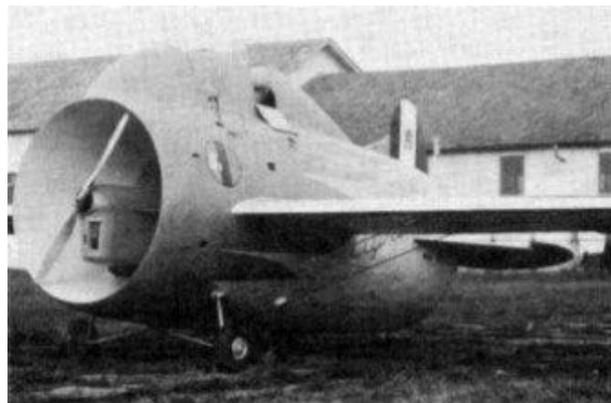
Please highlight these dates on your calendar.

Our July meeting is scheduled for the 21st at 7:30. Hope to see you all there. Take care, and safe flying.

George Boston

ROOT'S RAMBLING!

Do you know the name of the airplane in picture 1? I will give you more information later about this interesting airplane idea that didn't pan out.



The club balloon drop event brought out a number of members to try their luck. The airplanes and pilots that were entered are shown in picture 2. I think everyone had a good time. I was the lucky winner with a winning drop of 6 ft. 6 in. on my third and last attempt. The winning airplane is the red and white 1937 design Cloud Cruiser shown in the picture.



Since member Tom Wolf retired he has been flying with us on Tuesday. He is a real craftsman and is currently working on a large scale de Havilland Mosquito to replace the smaller one he has been competing with in scale contests for many years. It is shown in picture 3. I think this new one has a 120 in. wing span compared to the old one of “only” 81 in.



Tom is shown in picture 4 readying his Extra 300 for flight. It is shown on approach in picture 5.



Club member Ken Marsh has been finishing a couple of small T-6 racers (picture 6). Apparently in the old days the club used to hold T-6 races. I think Ken’s models are powered by .26 cu. In. two stroke engines.

Picture 7 shows these two compared to the larger T-6 which he has been flying regularly.



TJ Moran has been pretty active with the club since his retirement. He painted and installed the beautiful club emblem sign (cut out by Steve Billings) shown in picture 8.



He has also finished and flown his 200 percent Quaker as shown in picture 9. This 14 foot span monster has to be assembled at the field from a bunch of parts (fuselage, empennage, and 3 part wing) as shown in pictures 10 and 11.



The plane weighs about 45 pounds and is powered nicely with a 6.4 cu. In. gas engine.

The first takeoff is shown in picture 12 at about 1/2 inch altitude.





13



14

Flyby and approach shots are shown in pictures 13 and 14.



15

The model has a bomb bay and is capable of dropping a lot of soda cans. Picture 15 shows TJ's Quaker dropping 27 empty soda cans, count them!

It is amazing to me what can be found on the internet. Pictures



16



17

16 and 17 show a couple of our astronauts. If you Google Hairstyles of the Astronauts you can find these and other space pictures on the Air and Space Smithsonian web site. See www.airspacemag.com/multimedia/Hairstyles-of-the-Astronauts.html. The gal in picture 16 is Marsha Ivins during the STS-98 mission in 2001. She's a five-time shuttle veteran who logged more than 1,300 hours in space before leaving NASA last year. Picture 17 is of Physician and astronaut Rhea Seddon (here on STS-58). She has spent more than 722 hours in space. The three-time shuttle veteran retired from NASA in 1997, and is now the assistant chief medical officer of the Vanderbilt Medical Group in Nashville, Tennessee.

Now, what is the airplane in picture 1? Google Stipa-Caproni Flying Barrel to see. The you tube site www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYqr2h_xQRk. Is a video of first flight of this unusual airplane.

That's it for this month. I will continue next month.

Bob Root

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2011 MEETING

*M*eeting was called to order at 7:50. We all arrived a little early for our traditional mid-year feast - Pizza and sub-sandwiches.

There was a call for new members and guests, but there were none. Thanks was offered to Mike and Steve Steinmetz for bringing the food. Those two sure do a lot to support the club.

The minutes were approved and the Treasurer's Report was reviewed – currently 80 members. No reports from the Field Marshal or the Park Liaison. No news is good news, right?

The report from the attendees of last month's small-gas and electric fun-fly was that there was a decent turnout, and that it was a fun day.

Old Business

Our contact at the fair called us back and has renewed excitement of having us there. Tentatively the dates are Aug 3 and Aug 5. And the times are 11:00am-7:00pm. The volunteers get free admission and free parking. We are still considering the supplies to bring with us for handouts, i.e. business cards, brochures, etc. We are also considering bringing computer with a R/C flight simulator. That should get some attention. Any other ideas send to Pres. George.

New Business

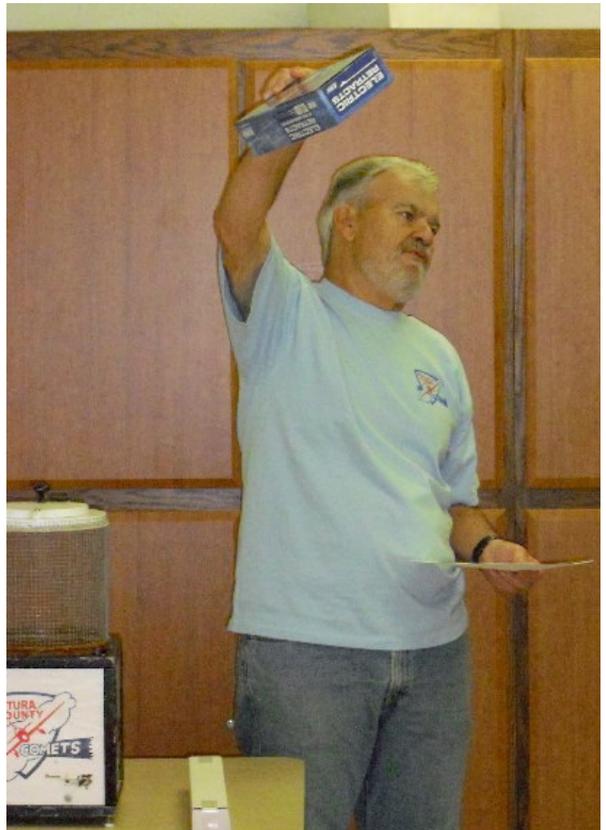
Quaker Fun Fly and egg drop was discussed. We needed volunteers to track names and distances of eggs vs. distance from bull's eye.

July has the annual warbird and swap meet scheduled on the 23rd. Like I said last time, bring a fighter and some of the stuff you don't fly or use anymore.

TJ closed the meeting by telling us about the time he, Bob Root and Don Ashworth had with the school kids a few weeks ago. He summed up the flying day, described the airframes (designs) and the success and failures.

The teacher had an award made for the team and TJ presented this to Bob Root.

The meeting officially finished with the usual raffle and once the prizes were won the gavel struck at 8:33.



Respectfully Submitted,

Alastair Brennan

RANDUMB THOTS :-)

Along about last 8 July, driving home from work, I heard a radio broadcast about a brush fire in Camarillo, and they interviewed the Fire Chief, who said the fire was apparently caused by a model airplane crash. "Oh man," I thought, "they'll make a Big Deal about this." I expected headlines and Letters to the Editors, but I haven't heard a peep.

According to the Ventura County Star, one of the Condors crashed an Abbra, a high-end pattern model. He said he had 1,300 flights on the model (!?) and when it went in, he and a buddy headed out to get it, but when they saw smoke, they moved away and dialed 911. I haven't heard what he found when he finally got out there... of course he couldn't go out there until the fire was good and out. It took 85 firefighters, and two helicopters to keep the fire down to four acres. They did a great job. I imagine the airplane is a total write-off, and the owner figured he had \$4000 in it... a big loss, and pretty embarrassing, too. I'm glad nobody got hurt.

I think fires started by models are rare, but I know they're not unheard of. Many years ago (oh boy, it must have been around 1973...) I was at Santa Barbara R/ C Modelers' More Mesa flying site between Goleta and Santa Barbara when a buddy crashed a 1/2A pylon racer (remember those?) and if I remember right, it was an Ace R/C Upstart. These were popular kits at the time and they were all wood and powered by a Cox Tee Dee .049 or .051. They could do around 80-90 mph. It went in 'way over there and the pilot started out to get it when he saw smoke, so we all ran out there and tried to put out the fire with our jackets, but it was going far too good for that. Pilot's Dad zoomed out of there in the station wagon, going very fast on the dirt roads to call the fire department. (yeah, well, this was long before cell phones) The firefighters were there very quickly and the fire was out post haste. I remember the Dad (who ran a local hobby shop) telling the fireman that it would sure be a shame if this got to the papers, and I don't think it ever did.

We went back to the crash site, and the origin of the fire was easy to find, which made the model easy to find. We found a Tee Dee in the brush with the plastic parts melted, and right behind that, a pathetic melted plastic fuel tank, an aluminum landing gear sticking up into nothing, a charred battery, a charred receiver, two charred servos and two wire pushrods going aft to... nothing. All the balsa and Monokote had burned away completely.

The pilot sent the radio bits back to Orbit (remember them?) with a note saying they might be interested in seeing how their radio did in a fire, and you know, they replaced all that stuff for free, explaining that it would be a shame to have a young guy lose this expensive equipment and not be able to replace it. Pretty nice of them, we all thought.

There was also a vague story about another fire starting at More Mesa, blamed by the fire department on a crashed model sailplane that was not recovered. They said it was just laying there in the brush when the sun shined thru the canopy, just right to act like a magnifying glass, and start a fire. Hmmm. I guess nothing ever came of that either.

Here's a photo of Lola, our RV-6. The local Rotary club in Santa Paula was having a barbecue at the airport, hosted by Wilma Melville of the Recue Search Dog Foundation fame. They requested some airplanes to do some fly-bys and Dianne and I were happy to help them out. It's not often that we're ASKED to fly low and fast. We made two passes down the runway. In the photo, we were indicating about 180 mph and we were down to about 20 feet. One of the flight instructors from CP Aviation took the photo. Bruce Dickenson made a couple of low, loud passes in his Mr. Dickenson, Jeff Wenig did a couple in his Cessna 180, Judy Phelps did a couple in her Pitts S-2B and we all had a good time. The barbecue was really good, too. We got tri-tip and chicken along with all the rest of the good stuff.



I think Dianne and I have out about 100 hours on the RV-6 since we bought it a year and a half ago. That's a fair bit of flying when you consider that the average owner-flown airplane flies 50 hours a year.

We're getting pretty comfortable with the airplane now as we gain experience in it. We've been as far as Bullhead City (all right, Laughlin AZ) and we've both done some aerobatic flying. This seems to be just about as close as anybody could get to the Ideal Sportplane. Although Lola is probably the roughest, slowest RV-6 you're going to find, we still cruise around 160 mph burning only 8 gallons of fuel per hour. We have a panel full of old timey steam gauges (as opposed to the newfangled glass panel displays that are appearing everywhere), the 'small' engine, a 160 horsepower O-320 Lycoming with a carburetor (nope, no fuel injection) and a simple fixed-pitch wooden propeller. It handles like a sports car with light, responsive controls, although they do stiffen up just right as speed increases. Stall speeds are perhaps a little on the high side for a Cessna pilot (just over 60 mph, flaps up or down) and we approach using full flaps and 80 mph on final. It's just a little skittery on the runway.

We've done 'gentleman aerobatics', just kind of mild stuff like loops, aileron rolls, barrel rolls, immelmans, hammerheads, split S's and spins up to one turn. No snap rolls and I'm pretty sure we haven't been over four Gs, although we don't have a G meter so I'm estimating there. Van calls it a 6 G airplane at 1375 lbs, which pretty well precludes aerobatics when Dianne and I are both in the airplane. Making this weight with both of us and our parachutes allows only 8 gallons of fuel... not enough.

I think we're using a quart of oil about every 10 hours, which is quite good, and there are no leaks... kind of unusual. The belly even stays pretty clean. We've had few problems... the battery relay went out right after we bought the airplane... that was only about a \$40 job, although it was kind of hard to reach. We had a small sheet metal project to do when a flap hit the trailing edge skin and bent some stuff, but that turned out not to be not a big deal, and we've had to replace a vacuum pump, which was a bit on the pricey side.

There are some things still to be done ... isn't there always? We want to redo the upholstery and I'm sure it will be time for a brake job on the next yearly condition inspection. We have a couple of cracks in the spinner which we're watching closely, but so far, no changes. We're really happy with the airplane.

Jerry Deanda