

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



June 2009

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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.

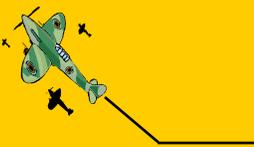
Next Meeting: Thursday, 18 June, 7:30 PM at the Oak View Community Center. **We'll Have Pizza!**

ROOT'S RAMBLING

I attended the Channel Islands Condors model club Gathering of the Giants in April. It's an annual gathering for laid back modelers to do their thing with large models. There is no competition, just fun flying and showing off one's latest big model. They had good weather this year. There was more wind than we would normally fly in at our Casitas field, but it was certainly flyable weather. The old timers (including me) who fly on Tuesdays and Thursdays at our field tend to stop flying when the wind sock has any motion. I enjoyed the opportunity to fly with some wind. It requires more pilot participation in the flight. The wind also



Coming Up!



Sunday, 28 June
Quaker Fun Fly at Lake Casitas

26 July
Warbird Day, BBQ and Swap Meet at Lake Casitas
\$10 Includes Lunch

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



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kept the temperature very comfortable and I had a great time. It was too bad that more of our Ventura Comets members didn't come out to support and enjoy the event. The Condors also served great hamburgers and hot dogs both days for lunch. They had a large turnout of spectators. I understand they sold 100 lunches on Saturday.

On Saturday I flew my 1/5 scale Spitfire and tried to fly my 1/6 scale AT-6. I had problems with the on board glow plug driver and couldn't get the

AT-6 started. The Spitfire flies well and I enjoy flying it at the Condors field which is 25% longer than ours. Picture 1 shows off their field with an Extra 300 during a fly by. On Sunday I flew the Spitfire and my Fokker tri-plane. I also took a bunch of pictures, some of which follow.

The most impressive model I saw at this event was the Hawker Hurricane shown in picture 2. This is a large 1/4 scale model (10 ft. wing span) with terrific surface detail. The model hadn't flown yet. The builder was still sorting out the large inline twin cylinder engine. This model is shown in picture 3 with my 90 inch span Spitfire in the foreground.



3



4

At the other end of the size range was the small but well detailed B-17 shown in picture 4. This model was electric powered. I missed seeing it fly but it looked great.

The Christian Eagle shown in picture 5 seemed to fly well. This model and paint scheme has always been one of my favorites. Interestingly the green helicopter in the back ground is jet powered and flew several demonstration flights. It was very impressive (for those who like helicopters).



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Although these days many of the nicer models flying are assembled from almost ready to fly (ARF) kits a few of us still enjoy building from scratch or builders kits. A good example of this is the great looking 1/4 scale Fokker D-7 shown in picture 6.

A large Stearman is shown in a fly by in picture 7. This great looking model is a Great Planes ARF.



Another model I didn't see fly, but which I thought was cute is the electric powered Northrop P-61 Black Widow shown in picture 8.

Picture 9 shows a very large scale Space Walker homebuilt. This is a simple but nice looking model.





The WACO in picture 10 is a design that continues to be popular. I would guess it was built from a kit no longer in production. This one was well done.

10

The North American Rockwell OV-10A “Bronco” shown in picture 11 was an interesting model which showed up on Sunday. Unfortunately I didn’t see it fly.



11



A model which did fly well was the Gee Bee Sportster shown in picture 12.

12

Many of the models I’ve discussed above are shown in picture 13. My 1/4 scale Fokker Dr-1 tri-plane is in the foreground.



13



14

My last picture shows a group of interesting models. Most of these models are too small to qualify as giant scale and didn’t fly, but they were interesting and still nice to look at. There were also quite a few large aerobatic models which flew throughout the weekend. I didn’t take pictures of these because I can’t tell most of them apart.

In closing I would like to thank all of the Condors members for putting on this great gathering of the Giants event. I had a very enjoyable weekend.

Bob Root

May 2009 Minutes

The Comet meeting was called to order by President Mike Ambarian on May 21, at 7:30 PM, at the Oak View Community Center.

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

Treasurers' Report: We have 87 members and finances are in good shape. The report was approved.

Field Marshal/Safety Officer: No report

Park Liaison: No report

Old Business:

We had 77 flyers attend the April Float Fly and had a profit of \$552.

The runway continues to peel. In order to save money on resurfacing, Mike Ambarian suggested patching the cracks and to postpone resurfacing until the field has peeled down to the asphalt level. It was voted on, and seconded. Mike will pick up the materials to patch the runway.

New Business:

Jerry Deanda announced that member George Boise passed away and memorial services will be held May 31.

Dick Hanna will turn 90 on May 25. Happy Birthday, Dick!

We had some vandalism at the field, where tables were carried away and relocated elsewhere. Members were able to clean up and get things back where they belonged.

Ron Scott sent word – “Thanks to all who helped during the April Float Fly.”

Several visitors voiced complaints about the camping fees charged, by the Lake, to camp at the field. It seems there were a variety of rates - anywhere from \$25 to \$35 per night. A committee (John Dugan and Mike Ambarian) was formed to meet with the Lake officials to discuss the camping fees for the Float Flies. Several visitors stated they would not be returning due to the large increase in the fees and we hope to rectify this problem.

REMINDER: Next month is our dinner meeting. Dale will handle getting pizzas and Mike and Steve Steinmetz have graciously accepted getting sandwiches, plates, napkins and sodas.

Model of the Month:

We had three Model of the Month entries:

Don Ashworth brought in a Lysander and gave the club a short history lesson on its 1935 conception (the original – not the one he brought in). He has not yet flown the plane which weighs 11 to 12 pounds, has swept forward wings (he pointed out there was one on each side!), and has a .91 engine.

Leo Gabriels brought in a \$40 plane by Calvary, which has been flown at about 5 MPH.

Dave Watson had a Park Hawk ornithopter – which really did look like a big purple bird. Dave said it is not hard to fly or land and attracts real birds but glides like a brick. It uses a 300 milliamp battery.

The judges decided Don won the model of the month.

The raffle was held – and Jerry Deanda won the \$80 Super Ticket. Congrats, Jerry! There are 2 tickets left on the Yak and engine. Hopefully we can do the drawing for that next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.



Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Brown



Sunday, 28 June

is the Quaker Fun Fly
at our Lake Casitas Field.

Don't miss it!

ON THE SAFE SIDE

101 Ways to Stop a Spinning Propeller

By Don Nix, Insider Safety Column Editor

Unfortunately, we are limited to only a single safe one: Stopping the engine. Yeah, yeah. Everyone knows that. Right? Well, if so, then why are more than half of all model accidents caused by model propellers—while turning? Because we do very stupid things sometimes. Because we get careless. Because we get too casual. Because we are inexperienced. Because we are so experienced we think common sense safety is for beginners. Because, because, because.

Well, that be the cause!

K&B engines might not be very familiar to newcomers to the hobby, but oldsters will remember that K&B was the leading American manufacturer of model engines for decades, having been started by Johnny Brodbeck back in 1946.

About 20 years ago, I was flying at the pilot's station next to one occupied by my good friend, John Brodbeck; the "B" of K&B engines, and son of Johnny, the founder. John was test flying an engine sent in by a customer seeking a solution to a puzzling problem. (Yes, company owners really used to do such things.) John had made a couple of laps around the field, but felt the engine was too lean, so he landed and taxied to the front of the pit to change the needle setting.

Now here's a fellow who is the owner of a model engine company, who had probably been weaned from Mama Brodbeck to a baby bottle filled with glow fuel, and had been around and using model engines since the earth cooled. One would think he would be extra careful; be sure the model was secure and tune the engine from behind. Instead, wanting to get on with the test, he reached across the propeller from the front. I can tell you it stopped the engine. However, flying was over for the day for both of us because I had to drive him to the emergency room to have a deep 3-inch gash in his forearm neatly stitched.

Yes, he was hurt, but said the worst pain was the embarrassment of being an engine manufacturer who would do such a dumb stunt (his words, not mine) at Southern California's busiest flying field in front of about 60 modelers.

My guess is, there are very few modelers who have been flying more than a couple of years who have not donated a little blood and possibly flesh to carelessness with propellers. For some of us, once is enough. Others have a little slower learning curve. It would be bad enough if their carelessness just injured themselves, but all too frequently an innocent person is hurt; sometimes more than just stitches.

I think I'll cut this column shorter than I had planned to allow you faithful readers (all six) to submit some of your own experiences that might quite possibly make others think twice before doing something stupid, ill-advised.

Always glad to hear from you: flyerdon@aol.com or flyerdon@yahoo.com. You will get a reply. →

Tips & Tricks

Sandblaster Sandpaper and Foam Sanding Blocks

There has been some recent discussion on SAM Talk about the merits of a 3M product called Sandblaster Sandpaper. It's available at Sherwin Williams Paint Stores and at Home Depot, and is supposedly superior to all other forms of sandpaper. It doesn't like getting wet or high humidity—not usually a problem in Southern California. But it's said to last for a long time and cut very well.

The SAM Talkers had another tip about a source for sanding blocks. Apparently paint and dry wall stores carry white foam sanding blocks that are about a foot long and two- or three- inches wide. The back of the block is molded in a curved shape to fit your hand. The large block would be just the ticket for sanding an old timer's wings, and the foam backer wouldn't tend to dig in. Of course you can chop that foam block up into just about any shape you want for smaller sanding blocks.

—From the *Southern California Ignition Flyers newsletter*

Weight

During the process of building your next masterpiece, it may become apparent that tail or nose weight is required. Lead weight for fishing lines is available at most sporting goods stores in the form of round (about 1/8-inch diameter) strips, several inches long. The strip lead is easy to cut up and embedded in the model during construction. For example, strips of lead inserted under the triangle stock can be used to reinforce the fin or stabilizer on most model designs. It can also be inserted into wing tips to provide lateral balance.

—From the *Concord Skyhawks, reprinted in Schoolcraft Skyhawks R/C Airplane Club newsletter*

A Note From the AMA Insider's Technical Editor

From the AMA Insider

A short time ago, a modeler wrote Ed McCollough (your humble technical editor) the following:

“Noticed and noted on the foot of page 66 of March Model Aviation underneath the picture of the Spektrum/JR flight logger, it is recommended that six-volt battery packs be used on ALL 2.4GHz receivers. Called Horizon Hobby on the phone; they confirmed this statement. It was suggested the same six volt usage for other brands also. Would like to suggest the general membership be made aware of this when 2.4 GHz receivers are used in glow/gas airplanes/helis to preclude possible in-flight loss.”

When I read this, I agreed with him and wrote him I would get on the problem. Please, read what he wrote and consider it very, very carefully. Unfortunately, the answer to his question hasn't been that quick or easy, but for the time being, here it is:

If you are flying a 2.4 GHz system, follow the manufacturers' specifications for the voltage. If you are using a separate voltage pack for the receiver, be absolutely sure it has enough voltage to run the receiver. A common 5.0-volt receiver pack may not have sufficient voltage to run your particular receiver. Actually, if you used a six-volt pack and it was adequately charged, it should be sufficient, regardless of the manufacturer.

There is one problem, when using a six-volt pack if it isn't required by the manufacturer of your system. That problem will likely happen if you are using digital servos. If you drive some digital servos with six volts, there is a high probability you will damage the servos because of the higher voltage. Remember, if the servos fail, it won't make much difference that your receiver is still working. *(on the other hand, if the receiver fails, it won't make much difference if the... well, you know. -jerry)*

You always need to be flying with a functional receiver pack, one that is as close to fully charged as possible. Remember, insufficient volts to the receiver and you crash.

Lastly, as in all things, and in all cases, read the instructions. →