

# The Comets' Tale

*The Official  
Newsletter of the*



**May 2011**

President	George Boston	(805) 646-6992
Vice President	Marilyn Nash	(805) 532-1433
Secretary	Alastair Brennan	(805) 388-0180
Treasurer	TJ Moran	(805) 649-8193
Field Marshal/Safety	Mike Ambarian	(805) 646-6084
Park Liaison	Ken Marsh	(805) 646-1962
Webmaster	Don Sorensen	(805) 968-4288

dsorensen@tri-counties.org

Comets' Tale Editor Jerry Deanda (805) 641-3730 deandamid@charter.net

Comets' Website: [www.vccomets.com](http://www.vccomets.com)

**Board of Directors**

George Boston, Mike Ambarian, Marilyn Nash, Alastair Brennan, TJ Moran

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

**Coming  
Up!**



**Saturday, 21 May**  
Electric Fun-Fly &  
Glowpower  $\leq .16''$ . + BBQ  
at Comets Field

**10 -12 June**  
Float Fly - Lake Cachuma  
– Santa Barbara R/C  
Modelers. No BBQ, or  
raffle

First Sunday of each  
Month  
Open House at Santa  
Paula Airport

### From the President

It appears that the April Float Fly was a big success. The weather was outstanding Friday through Sunday. We had a total of 63 flyers and over 110 airplanes. There weren't a lot of crashes, but enough to keep things interesting. I know of one flier who lost three large airplanes, two of which were Canada Air twins. On the economic front, we took in enough money at the BBQ to pay for the food, but came up a little short in ticket sales to pay for the raffle gifts. As always there was no lack of effort on the part of Marilyn Nash and Sandy Billings to push raffle ticket sales up to the very last minute. With respect to the final accounting, TJ will give us update at the May meeting. Most importantly, there were no safety/flying accidents that resulted in any injuries. Unfortunately, Bernie Hammer's truck got backed into on Sunday, but nobody was hurt. I want to personally thank all the folks that helped out with the event. Everybody worked very hard to make this event the success it was. My personal thanks to each and every one of you for your unselfish commitment to make the Comets one of the best clubs in the AMA. I got numerous positive comments from many flyers of how they appreciate our efforts hosting the float flies, and how well organized and well run the events are. Thanks again for your **OUTSTANDING** support!

Prior to last months meeting we held an auction of all of John Anderson (JD) flying gear. A good deal of it was auctioned off, but there remains quite a bit of gear and planes to be sold. We will continue the auction following the May meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May (that's a Saturday this year) we will be hosting the annual "Electric Fun Fly & Gas Glow Power < .16". We will also be hosting a BBQ lunch. So please mark you calendar for the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup>. Take care, and safe flying.

*George Boston*

**ROOT'S RAMBLING!**

The club's April float fly was a huge success. The weather was perfect for the entire weekend. I have included a few pictures to make those who couldn't attend jealous, and to remind everyone who did participate what a great time we all had. The pictures were taken by George Boston and I.



Picture 1 shows him in his new CD vest. He did a great job keeping the event going smoothly.



The number of participants and the beautiful weather and scenery are indicated in pictures 2 and 3.

One of the most unusual models to show up at our float fly in quite a while is shown in pictures 4 and 5. This is a scale model of a jet seaplane built by Convair (I think in the 60's).



It did fly but eventually crashed during a demonstration. The model in the pictures had an electric ducted fan for propulsion but didn't seem to have enough thrust. It managed to get partially out of the water as shown in 5 but didn't ever reach flying speed. It utilized a retractable ski similar to the full size airplane. I hope the owner gets it flying in the future.



The model in the pictures had an electric ducted fan for propulsion but didn't seem to have enough



The SIG giant Rascal in pictures 6 and 7 is a very nice flying large model reminiscent of an old time free flight model (a second cousin to all the Quakers owned by our club members?).



6



7

If the Seawind in picture 8 was full size the bush in the water would be a tree. This small electric model is another nice flying model.



8



9

Doesn't the scale model Beaver in picture 9 look realistic? This was a large nice looking model.

The realistic model in picture 10 isn't. It's a full scale Bird Dog which flew by several times. The owner was at the field later in the day answering questions. Because of the vertical tail shape I initially thought it was a Cessna 170. The owner set me straight. It is larger, higher powered and has super performance.



10



11

Last month I mentioned my "project". The full scale Fokker T5 is shown in picture 11. It is a Dutch medium bomber developed in the late 30's. They only had 16 flying at the time Germany invaded and the planes didn't last long. It seemed like a simple project when I started, but like most of my projects it has gotten more complex as I have progressed.



The fuselage started with a flat top to aid initial building as shown in picture 12. Partial formers and some of the aft stringers were added. Then it was turned over and finished.

12

The completed fuselage is shown in picture 13. The front and back ends are all glass (plastic).

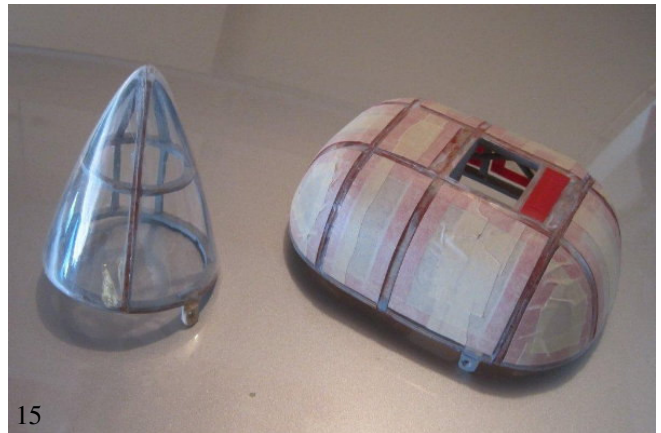


13



14

I molded the plastic over a plug after heating and built the frame out of 1/64



15

plywood in a form as shown in picture 14. They were formed as a wide piece. I then I sliced off the narrow frames on a band saw. I wasn't able to form the plastic

in one piece so I had to glue several pieces to the frame. The results are shown in picture 15. In this picture the front end piece has been masked off so the joints can be filled and the simulated frames can be painted. The last picture (16) shows how I made light weight 1/12 scale crew members. I utilized 1/12 scale Williams Bros. pilots and added the lower body in foam carved in place. I didn't have all the balsa hands carved when I took this picture. The total crew weighs 3 oz. I didn't build the navigator or mid fuselage gunner because they can't be seen. The tail gun and nose cannon are also shown in 16. I now have most of the model covered and I'm in the process of painting and finishing. Scheduled finish date? Who knows? I just enjoy building.



16

*Bob Root*

## MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2011 MEETING

The evening started with an auction – again –. Guess what, another one of our fellow members passed and stuff was brought to the club for bidding. So we bid, reminisced, argued, and talked shop for about an hour before the meeting was called to order. Jim Anderson was the guy. I remember him from a few years ago. He used to write an article for this newsletter about setting up airplanes and flying skills - His monthly example airplane was “.40 fumble-thumbs”. I thought it was funny.

**President George Boston** called the official meeting to order at 7:31. There was the call for members and guests, but it went unanswered.

**The Minutes** were approved and we heard from Treasurer TJ Moran. The Treasurer said we are at about the same state financially that we were last year. The Treasurer has sent reminders to the unpaid members – The Treasurer’s report was approved.

**The Field Marshal’s** report was that some of the larger planes are noisy. Kinda obvious, but the point to take is that we need to make sure we aren’t breaking the sound limit. Keep this in mind when setting up a new large-scale plane.

**The Park Liaison** report was that the field will be mowed and parking lot graded – Ready for the Float Fly.

### **Old Business:**

Flight Certificates were printed and put at the lake in the shed. President Boston says he will hand out a few to each of the club instructors so they are available when a new pilot solos. But in case they are not handed to you they are (were) in an envelope next to the mailbox.

The locked gates were discussed again. The bottom line is that the Lake reserves the right to lock the gates at their discretion. So if you are concerned about flying on a day after a lot of rain, call the Lake to see if the gates are unlocked.

On the subject of club promotion we are waiting for the Ventura County Fair to call us back. Our contact is on vacation and expect her to call when she returns.

Bob Root spoke to the group about his experience with the school kids. These are 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> graders in an accelerated class – See “Root’s Ramblings” in last month’s (March 2011) newsletter. Sounds like the kids really enjoyed it. And let’s not forget the two other club members (Don Ashworth and TJ) that were involved. Seems like, together they brought some fun to the classes. And maybe some new club members.

The Float Fly was discussed. President George said he was going to be the responsible party; the CD. As usual of the last couple years the float planes must be tagged by a uniformed ranger. And the Lake donated an annual pass for our raffle. Lastly we were reminded to promote safety at the float fly. Don’t let anyone get hurt or endanger others.

### **New Business:**

There was not much due to Float Fly campers. They had to be checked back into the Lake before they locked it for the night.



The night concluded with Don Ashworth being awarded a Lifetime Membership award. He has 24 years with the club. Before anyone gets too excited that has a bunch of years with the club, you also need to be a certain old, have crashed a bunch of airplanes, have 4 scars from propellers and been late to at least 3 Thanksgiving brunches due to, “Lost track of time at the Lake”. So until you have those don’t call. If you do have those, or equivalent talk to El Presidente. Either way congratulate Don when you see him.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

*Alastair Brennan*

Approximately three months ago a former club member, Jim Anderson (known to many of the club members as JD) passed away at his home in Las Vegas.

Last month we had an auction of some of this equipment, but there is more.

The heir to Jim's estate has donated all of his flying gear, kits, etc. to the club. Don Ashworth will be bringing it to the May meeting on Thursday the 19th and we will be conducting an auction after the meeting. Don says there is a lot of stuff left, including some great kits. So if you're looking for some great deals, and adding to your inventory of flying stuff, plan to attend.

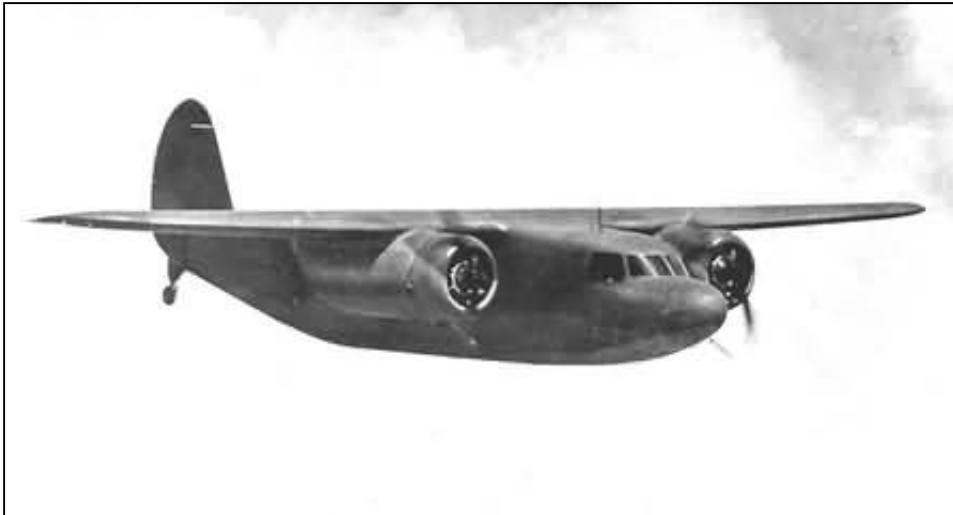
The proceeds are for his friend Mary who took care of him for many years. (she can use the money)

### **Additional things from JD's estate:**

Don Ashworth has some additional items to auction off at the next meeting. The auction at the last meeting was successful but he ran out of time before he ran out of items to sell. Mary also sent some more things she found in JD's trailer. In addition to several boxes of stuff to be sold by the box he will be selling the following:

1. Complete 44 inch span AT 6 kit. Partially built with 2 servos.
2. Previously flown 58 inch P 51 with servos, retracts, and OS 46 engine.
3. Great Planes Extra 300. No radio, engine, or cowl.
4. Large Extra 300 kit with instruction book but no plans.

Small helicopter complete.



Here's another  
**Mystery Airplane.** Do you know  
what this is?  
(I mostly get correct answers from  
Rick of Oak View... )

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### **Trick to using Robart pin hinges**

I was installing Robart pin hinges on my T-34 Mentor. I can never get both sides perfect ... no matter how carefully I measure, so I came up with a neat trick to make them perfect.

On the stabilizer (in this case three hinges on each side) I mark out where I want the holes, then I clipped off ¼ inch of T-Pin tip and, using pliers, push the short pin into the stabilizer where I marked. I left about 1/8 inch or less sticking out (either end works, but I pushed the pointed end into the stabilizer).

Next I made sure the elevator was perfectly aligned with the stabilizer then pressed the two together. The pins left a mark on the elevator (or rudder) where to drill the holes. I guess you could use the same method with CA hinges.

—*Dave Raczka, Brauer's Aviators, Pendelton, New York*

## RC Airplane Tips: Getting that Great Looking Finish

by John Adams

A beautiful, professional quality finish adds that all-important final touch to your model. It's what gets those extra stares at the field ... and makes you proud of a job well done.

Some expert builders would have you believe covering is an art that takes years of experience to develop, but the truth is that you can achieve it with some basic know-how and patience. Understanding the materials you're working with is vitally important, and surprisingly, this is where many modelers make the biggest mistakes.

Each brand of covering has unique properties. So if you learn using one type of covering and then try using those techniques with a different brand, it often leads to marginal results. I've been using UltraCote exclusively for the last 15 years. UltraCote offers several unique properties that are advantageous over other film coverings, making it easier for me to achieve and maintain a professional finish.

### **Multitemperature, Maximum Control**

UltraCote is unique in that different things happen at different temperatures. This allows for precise control during covering.

Covering with UltraCote becomes many times easier—with vastly improved results—when you understand what specific temperatures do to UltraCote, and when to use those temperatures.

### **220°F: Application**

The adhesive is activated at just more than 220°. At the recommended application temperature of 220°, the adhesive reaches its full bonding strength. No shrinkage of the film occurs, so no distortion of the film takes place. Use the 220° application temperature when applying covering and when applying UltraCote trim pieces over UltraCote. Remember, if your iron is set at 220°, no shrinkage or distortion will occur, so there is no risk of distorting seams, trim lines, or trim pieces and full bonding strength occurs.

Watch out for ... don't press! Heat liquefies the adhesive, not pressure. Let the heat do the work and avoid gouges. It's natural to want to apply pressure, but it doesn't affect the bonding strength. If you're using a sock (highly recommended), it will be necessary to go more slowly over a given area, as it takes longer for the heat to penetrate the material. Some modelers turn up the heat to 240° when using a sock, but I prefer to stick with the 220° temperature and go at a slightly slower pace. This creates fewer air bubbles.

### **300°F: Shrink Onset**

At 300°, UltraCote will begin to shrink. Use this temperature after the covering is applied to tighten it, remove wrinkles, and remove imperfections. It's amazing how many wrinkles can be removed at this temperature, and it's important to start removing imperfections at this minimum shrink 300° setting.

UltraCote features a unique property that allows for a controlled shrink rate based on the selected temperature. While it begins to shrink at 300°, at 320° UltraCote shrinks 18% of its total shrink rate. It's important to use the minimum temperature necessary to achieve a smooth, wrinkle-free finish.

Most modelers don't realize that to further shrink most brands of film covering, it must be heated above its previously exposed peak temperature. In other words, if a covering was already exposed to 320°, it will be necessary to go above 320° to further shrink the covering. Use the lowest temperature possible to achieve a smooth wrinkle-free finish at the starts and you'll have the largest available shrink rate remaining should you later need to shrink the film.

Watch out for ... stay away from seam lines and edges! Remember, 300° is well above the adhesive activation temperature, and seems will pull away. If you have some stubborn wrinkles close to the seam line, try this trick. Soak a washcloth in cold water, then fold it twice and place it on the seam line, covering the seam but exposing the wrinkles. With your iron at 330°, quickly apply it to the wrinkled area for about 5-10 seconds. The washcloth will keep the seam cool, and prevent it from pulling apart and distorting.

### **350°F: Maximum Shrink**

At 350°, the maximum shrink is achieved. You won't use this setting very often, but it's important to know the total shrink temperature range. That's because the amount of shrink rate you'll have left is based on the temperature you use to shrink the covering.

For example, if you're shrinking your film using 320°, you'll find that 82% of the total remaining shrink is left. That's good! That means that, if in the future you need to re-shrink the covering, it won't be a problem. But a word of caution: use the high temperatures only as a last resort to shrink wrinkles and imperfections. In most cases, if you need to use this much heat, you'd be better off to just replace the covering with a new piece.

Watch out for ... stay away from seams and edges. The higher temperature can cause bubbling and blistering.

### **Removing UltraCote**

You may come to a point when you'll need to remove or replace a piece of UltraCote.

In many cases, the covering will simply pull away, but if you're having a tough time, use your heat gun. Lift a corner of the covering and then pull away while directing heat in the area to be removed. I just recovered a two-year-old Reebok CAP 232 using this heat gun technique and it looks as good as new.

### **Bubbles and Blemishes**

When your airplane sits out on a hot sunny day, you may notice that the covering bubbles and wrinkles. This is common with all brands of film covering, no matter what the manufacturers claim. But getting rid of those wrinkles is easy. You'll need a heat gun, a covering mitt, a wet washcloth, and a fine straight pin.

Heat the affected area and notice how the air underneath the cover expands, making bubbles. As you continue to apply heat, moving in a 6-inch circle, it will release the adhesive bond. At first, several smaller bubbles will appear, but as you continue to work the area, the bubbles will join to form one large bubble. Now pop the bubble with the pin, and immediately wipe the area with a covering mitt to reattach the covering. It may take several attempts, and you'll get better after you do it a couple of times.

It's important not to stay in one place for very long with the heat gun, especially if you're working with a balsa-covered foam part as warping and damage could occur. If the affected area is close to the seam, use the wet washcloth trick to prevent the seams from distorting and pulling apart.

### **Preventing Heat Blemishes**

Heat blemishes occur when the elevated temperature causes the trapped air in the wood to expand. With nowhere to go, the expanded air causes a bubble to form in the covering and stretches the film. When the air cools, the stretched covering remains. You'll notice this happens especially with dark colors like black or dark blue, and that this never happens on the bottom of the wing, but only the top where the sun heats the surface.

The solution? While several methods have been tried—like completely painting the wood structure with thinned white glue to prevent the air from reaching the surface—we know of only one method of preventing this from happening: don't leave your airplane in the sun! Seriously, get a cover or a tent or find some shade. Also, choosing light colors will prevent the intense heat buildup. Last summer during our hottest days, I measured the covering temperature on a dark blue airplane that had been sitting in the sun at 163°. If you keep them from getting hot, there is no problem, but, for those times when they do, practice the re-shrinking techniques mentioned, and it will only take a few minutes to bring back that pristine finish.