

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



May 2014

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Alastair Brennan, George Lanquist, Dale Nash, Lynn Breedlove, TJ Moran

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, 15 May

7:30 PM at the Oak Park Community Center

Prez Sez!

**Coming
Up!**



Saturday, 17 May
Comets Electric and Small
Gas Fun Fly at Lake
Casitas

Sunday, 18 May
Fun Fly & BBQ,
Camarillo Flying Circus

**First Sunday of each
Month**
Open House at Santa Paula
Airport
Free Young Eagle rides for
kids 8-18 years old

The weeks seem to be passing too quick for me. Jerry the 'Tale editor reminds me about the newsletter deadline and what seems like the next week, he is doing it again.

As mentioned previously we hosted the Spring Float Fly to great success – Well, lots of pilots anyway. This month, as you read this, the small gas and electric fly is just a few days away. Next month (June) we have the annual War-bird day.

Is everyone keeping up, and manage to, or has the whereabouts to switch gears from one theme to the next?

And if that wasn't enough – next month – The June meeting we have the mid year Comets dinner meeting...or meeting with dinner.

TJ continues to keep an eye on the runway. I suggest we organize a work-party to seal some seams soon. How about we do this on a Saturday or Sunday when some of the working members are available to help.

See you at the meeting and/or field.

Alastair Brennan

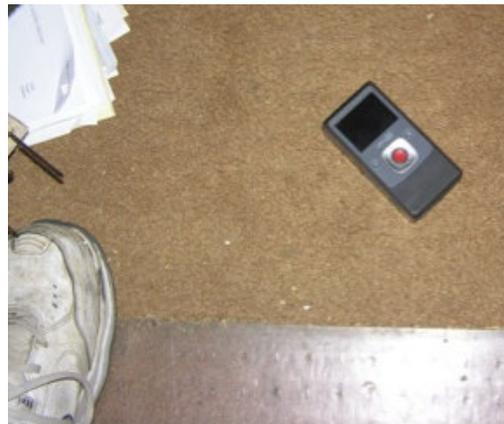
TJ's Sighting Thingy!

Our guy TJ bought a small video camera and used it to shoot video of the first flight of Bob Root's Waco. Finding the viewfinder awkward, TJ worked out his own sighting device. This what he came up with, and here's a link to the video, posted to YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4GvxGWbr34&feature=youtu.be>

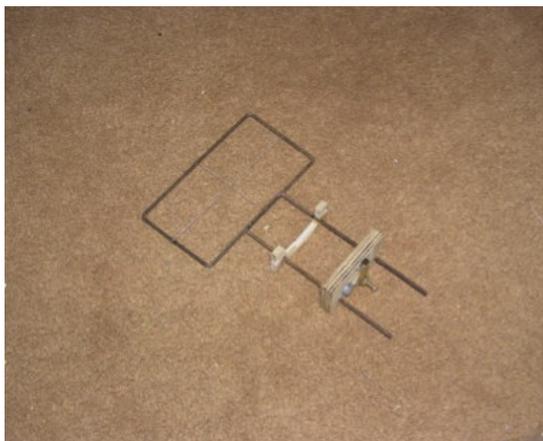


The camera is an HD flip video. It has auto focus, a pretty poor zoom feature, and a backside viewfinder screen. Uses 2 AA batteries and has about 2 hours of video capacity.



The camera back side shows viewfinder window and control buttons. Very simple. The sighting device was necessary as it is virtually impossible to

find a flying R/C airplane in the viewfinder and keep it there. With my device, you can close one eye, sight thru it with the other eye on the airplane and keep it in the center of the field of view. Sort of like pointing a pistol.



Here's the bent up sighting frame and the plywood cradles to hold the camera. The square brass piece with the thumbscrew mounts the back sighting piece. The sighting frame is sized approximately to what I see thru the camera viewfinder when the thingy is held about 18 inches from my eye. The sighting frame is soft steel from the shop scrap bin.

Here's the aft sighting device. Square piece on one



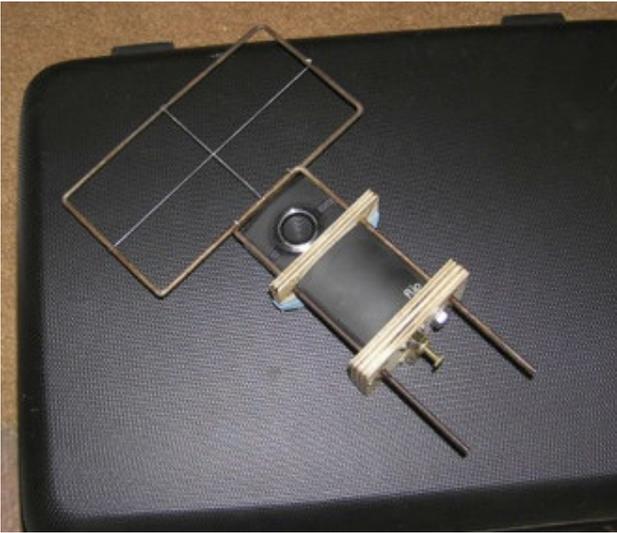
end fits in the square tube on the bottom of the plywood mount and is retained by the thumb screw. Heavier horizontal piece is 1/8" brass rod, lighter vertical piece is 1/16" brass rod with the sighting reticle formed out of 1/16" brass rod around a 3/8" mandrel and soldered to the vertical piece.

This little block joins the horizontal and vertical rods. A piece of bronze scrap is drilled at 90 degrees to accept the rods, then drilled and tapped to accept a 4-40 screw and thumbscrew. Horizontal and vertical rods were made longer than necessary for adjustment purposes. Screw and thumbscrew feature met the need to fine tune the sight to get the objective in the center of the camera's field of view when looking thru the sight piece.



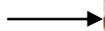
This is the aft sight reticle, 1/16" brass rod loop bent and soldered to the vertical rod.

The front cross hairs are attached to the frame. They're dental floss, stretched and tied to the frame and secured with a dab of CA. Pretty simple and easy to repair/replace.



← Camera, front view, mounted in the frame.

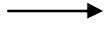
→ Camera rear view, in the frame. Shows retention by a couple of rubber bands and the lower 1/4-20 bolt.



← Put the crosshairs on the airplane, then circle it with the aft reticle and it follows the plane simply with your ability to point it.

→ Wires hanging out will be trimmed once I have set all the adjustments and I'm happy with how it works. Probably put some sort of pistol-grip

handle on the bottom plywood plate picking up the 1/4-20 camera bolt—something for later development.



7Q Moran

MINUTES of the April 2014 MEETING

Meeting was called to order by Club President, Alastair Brennan, at:

- 7:02 pm

New Members & Guests:

- 15 members were in attendance. No new members or guests at this meeting.
- Membership now stands at 78.

Treasurer`s Report: (T.J. Moran)

- T.J. gave the Treasurer`s Report. Lots of expenses this month – Float Fly raffle & food costs. We will see how the Float Fly shakes out money wise next month – profit or loss.
- Ongoing expense for the runway – so far the total is \$7300.
- Treasurer`s Report was approved.

Safety Officer`s Report: (George Lanquist)

- No problems to report this month.

Park Liaison Report: (John Dugan)

- Report from John as to the preparation for the “Float Fly” this week end.
 - Mowing is complete.
 - Porta-potties in place.
 - Ranger will be at the field for quagga mussel inspection.
 - Pit area has been set back about 20 or so more feet for increased safety.

Reminders:

- John Dugan reports that park has a new supervisor for maintenance. J.D. says he has known him for years which will be an asset for the club.

Old Business:

- None this month.

New Business:

- Dale Nash announced that anyone who works at the Float Fly will received 2 extra raffle tickets.
- T.J. is doing more research on adhesives but no progress to report at this time.
- George Boston took the floor and acknowledged the late Mike Ambarian and TJ Moran for their unsolicited and tireless work for the club. Both have been or are officers of the club but they both word constantly to maintain our flying field. We all thank you and appreciate it.
- Everyone liked the guest speakers and encourage more.

Model of the Month:

- None

Raffle:

- Raffle will be at the Float Fly.

Meeting adjourned at:

- 7:35 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn Breedlove - Secretary

Trouble brewing?

ST. LOUIS – Police are investigating after a drone crashed in downtown St. Louis Monday (5 May) afternoon.

Schron Jackson, a spokesperson for the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, says Bike Unit officers responded to the Metropolitan Square building in the 200 block of North Broadway around 4 p.m. Monday after security officers called about a recovered article from a 30th floor balcony. Jackson says the article is a DJI Phantom II Quadcopter, controlled through WiFi. It crashed into the building and landed on the balcony. Pieces of the drone were broken from the crash. Police are now looking for the owner of the drone.

According to the FAA, civilians can have and operate drones, if you maintain a visual while flying and keep it under 400 feet above ground. The drone that crashed Monday hit the 30th floor of the 593-foot-tall building. It crashed into a floor that houses a law firm. Witnesses tell NewsChannel 5 an employee of the firm found the drone and called security

Joshua Foster lives downtown St. Louis and doesn't want to see a drone fly by his window that could potentially spy on him. "It's crazy that a drone actually hit this building and nobody knows where it came from?" he said. "That's sickening."

Drones are basically souped up remote controlled airplanes that can record video.

"We've got things flying around above us right here in Missouri in the middle of America," said Foster.

St. Louis police now want to know who flew a drone. The mystery drone is controlled through WiFi connection and had a camera that rotates.

"What's the point, it's going back to privacy, and what's the point of that, why would we need to fly drones," said Carl Sword.

St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson sees great potential in drones for police work he talked to NewsChannel 5 last summer.

"To help keep officers safe, to help keep the community safe," said the chief. "For monitoring public space, things like the upcoming Fair St. Louis, baseball games for terrorist, suspicious activity."

He is trying to get waiver from the FAA to use one for the police department.

Just last year the FAA grounded drones used by journalism students at University of Missouri. They were using them for news coverage, but the FAA ordered Mizzou to stop flying and get government authorization.

Police would like to talk to the owner of the drone if you have any information call Crimestoppers: 866-371-TIPS.

Here is a statement released by Drone Free St. Louis

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (also known as UAVs or drones) has grown dramatically. Monday's crash of a private drone is one of several dozen drone crashes that have been reported within the United States. Technology is moving faster than regulations. For example, the FAA has no regulations currently for drones that fly below 400 feet. There are inadequate regulations, either from private drones with a camera attached or from the future potential for widespread police surveillance. Much of this is happening so quickly that there is not time for informed consent or legal rulings. Knowing these facts, Drone Free St. Louis calls for public dialogue about the true risk and cost of domestic drones in St. Louis.