

The Comets' Tale

*The Official
Newsletter of the*



November 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, 20 November

7:00 PM at the Oak Park Community Center

Prez Sez!

Early meeting again due to the club only float-fly this weekend. We start at 7.

The October Float Fly had 38 pilots and 13 of them were Comets. We lost a couple bucks hosting this show, but it was very close to a break-even. As far as the club activities goes the Float Flies are always on the schedule in terms of having a CD volunteer and then making sure members are available to help. That being said is it too early to have the club CDs volunteer for the next one and start the paper work? I would like to think with the rainy months on the way, the lake wouldn't be any lower than it is now and should be suitable for another event.

Thanks to all that helped at the October event, including the Lake that prepped the area by mowing and inspected the planes.

As mentioned, the Club-only Float Fly is a few days following receipt of this newsletter. Come out, bring a plane. This is the informal float fly; there is no BBQ.

I expect everyone received their renewal form for the AMA. This also means club dues are due so pay up.

The club President and Secretary spot need filling. I've done both and if I can do it... you know the rest. Dale is heading up the election committee, so if you are interested contact him.

As a club we were trying to broker a deal with the boat-rental guys. John Dugan was the spokes-person for the club and the guy making the deal. The boat guys declined so there is no special deal for the club to retrieve a wet plane. Thanks to John D for trying Happy Thanksgiving!

**Coming
Up!**



**All SBRCM Float Flies at
Lake Cachuma are
Cancelled Until Further
Notice
(not enough water!)**

**Comets ONLY Float Fly
Fri., Sat. & Sun., 21 -23
November**

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

Alastair Brennan

ROOT'S RAMBLING



Another great Ventura Comets Float Fly is over. We had wonderful weather all weekend and all those who attended seemed to have a good time. The first float fly I remember was in 1997. Picture 1 shows 8 year old grandson Ben with the trainer I built for him (a 1996 Christmas present). Ben was able to attend this year's event as shown in picture 2. Seventeen years later he is now 25. Someone a little older yet is shown in picture 3. This picture shows a few of the club members (old farts) enjoying the Float Fly. Some of the models are small and some are large. Tom Wolf (picture 4) always puts on a good show with his large scale Boeing Clipper.



Our Float Fly is only as good as the help. Thanks to all those who helped make this event great. Some of the model launchers are shown in pictures 4 through 10. A nice sport twin is shown in picture 5. Ben flew a lot but also worked the flight line a lot (picture 6). Pictures 7 and 8 show a couple of nice models.



Pictures 9 through 19 give an idea of the variety of models at this meet.



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19

Picture 20 shows my Cloud Cruiser with flaps down at the instant of Wiffle ball release while being flown by grandson Ben. This seemed to be his favorite activity all weekend. In summary, we didn't have a large turnout of pilots (only 39), but it was a great weekend.

Bob Root



20

Minutes of the October 2014 Meeting

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

7:04 pm

New Members & Guests:

- One guest was present whose name is Jesus. He may become a member by the next meeting.
- Membership currently stands at 86 members.
- 22 members were present at this meeting.

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

- T.J, as usual, had his Treasurer`s Report displayed on the white board for the membership to see. Our club bank balance is considerably down due to major expenditures for the up coming float fly such as: raffle prizes & food. Hopefully it will be recovered plus a profit with the sale of raffle tickets, food and pilot fees. We won`t know the outcome until next months` meeting.

Safety Officer`s Report: (George Lanquist)

- Safety Officer, George Lanquist, stated that there are no current problems at the field.

Park Liaison Report: (John Dugan)

- Park Liaison, John Dugan was not in attendance.

Reminders:

- T.J. stated that our field parking lot bumpers got painted. Thanks T.J. and crew.

Old Business:

- T.J. reported that the runway is holding up ok. The wind has been calm which has helped a great deal.

New Business:

- Preparations for the Float Fly this weekend are nearly complete. Anything left to do can be done on Friday morning.
- Park Ranger inspection of float bottoms is from 7:30am to 9:00am.
- Election for club officers is coming up. Dale Nash is election committee chairman.
- Jerry Deanda is giving up publishing the news letter and outgoing club President, Alastair Brennan, has volunteered to take over.

A big thanks to Jerry for his work for so many years !!!!!!! Great job Jerry.

Model of the Month:

- None

Raffle:

- No raffle at the meeting – the big raffle will be at the Float Fly.

Meeting adjourned at:

- 7:34pm

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn Breedlove - Secretary

The Comets Election Committee is seeking candidates for the following open Club Positions for term 1/2015 Thru 12/2016:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

If you are interested in serving in any of the above positions, please reply by email to sealdy@aol.com no later than Nov.18, 2014



Sal's WACO UPF-7 is powered by a 300 hp Lycoming Radial.
The WACO cruises at about 125 mph depending on how it is feeling spiritually and emotionally. Is this a pretty biplane or what? -TJ Moran

Another Mystery Plane



Yeah, you think you know what this thing is, but do you really? Write your guess on the back of a twenty dollar bill and send it to the Comets' Tale Plaza, Somewhere In Ventura. The first correct answer will earn the sender bragging rights. Or not.

RANDUMB THOTS :-) *Landing with the wheels up.* Note that we're talking about landing a retractable-gear airplane with the wheels retracted, as opposed to landing just any airplane upside down.

In the nearly 40 years I've hung around Santa Paula Airport, I've had the chance to see a couple of folks land with the wheels up, and I've seen the aftermaths of a few more.

Now, let's get something straight here. In spite of all the dramatic stuff you get from Hollywood about doing this, in reality, if a gear-up landing goes even fairly well nobody gets hurt and while some types do better than others you'd be surprised how little damage it does to most airplanes.

One day about 1980 or so, I was in the hangar working on somebody's airplane while crews were dumping rocks over the south side of the airport into the riverbed to replace a few that had gone downstream in the last storm, and to protect from future erosion. They were using big dump trucks and the big rocks made a lot of noise as they scrunched out of the truck beds. After hearing one load of rocks go out that lasted a -l-o-n-g-time, I decided I wanted to see what that truck looked like. Must be gigantic, I thought. I walked between the hangars to the runway toward the west end of the airport and found a Beech Twin Bonanza on its belly, in a small cloud of dust. So. A tin Twin Bonanza skidding on its belly sounds exactly like a load of rocks exiting a dump truck. A very nice lady took the infamous short step down off the wing, looked at me and said "I've never paid a dime for hull insurance, and I'm still ahead." And she admitted she just forgot to put the gear down. The horn blew, but it just didn't register.

One nice day, word ran thru the airport that two instructors in a Cessna Cutlass had a stuck nose gear. The Chief Pilot from Michael Dewey Aviation, Gene Beliveau, was talking to them on a handheld radio and they tried everything, but the nose gear stayed stuck. The Fire Department was called and the retractable 172 made a smooth landing on just its two back feet, the pilot holding the nose up as long as he could, having stopped the propeller and even bumped the starter to get it horizontal so it would not hit the ground. The nose finally fell and the airplane skidded perhaps fifty feet on its nose. It was noisy, but it stopped nicely. The doors flew open, the two instructors hopped out and ran in opposite directions, about 50 feet each, stopped, turned and looked back, shrugged and wandered back to the airplane to get their headsets and Jepp bags. No big deal. I think the Fire Fighters were actually disappointed that nothing dramatic happened. Turned out the nosewheel doors were rigged wrong and stuck the nose gear in the up position. Damage was little more than demolished nose gear doors. So much for Hollywood.

I heard another one come scraping in when a pilot in a Beech Bonanza forgot the landing gear until just before touchdown. The extending landing gear and the runway met about halfway thru the extension sequence and the weight of the airplane was more than the extension mechanism could handle. That one made some noise, with the poor propeller biting off some asphalt thrown in for good measure. The airplane stopped in an awkward position, landing gear not quite all the way back into the wells. Pretty embarrassing.

Not too long ago, I was given the chance to learn that a fiberglass airplane landing gear up sounds much different from a metal one. A visiting pilot in a Lancair 320 got distracted at a First Sunday Open House event and did the belly bounce boogie. I heard it but wasn't sure what it was. It sounded like a Frisbee scooting on a parking lot. Honest. He had a wood propeller and it tossed lumber here and there, but probably protected the engine from damage. We got a pick-up crew of about 15 strong lads to just reach under the airplane and pick it up. The pilot reached in, put the wheels down and they pushed it to somewhere at the west end of the airport. Those Tupperware airplanes seem to take the sliding arrival pretty well.

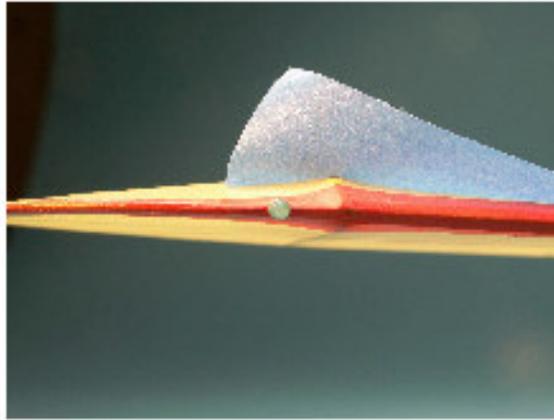
The incident in the last tale actually happened at Santa Barbara when the pilot of a Piper Comanche almost, just about landed with the wheels up, but when he heard the propeller tips tickling the runway, he firewalled it and went around. It did not perform real well and vibrated a bit, but it got around and landed again, this time with the wheels where they belonged. The prop tips were curled enough that the guys looking at the airplane didn't think it could have gone around, but there it was.

It's getting a bit trite, but it bears repeating "A good landing is one you can walk away from. A great landing is when you can use the airplane again."

The other quote about gear up landings... "There's them that has, and them that's a-gonna."

So I fly fixed-gear airplanes.

Jerry 'kid' Deanda



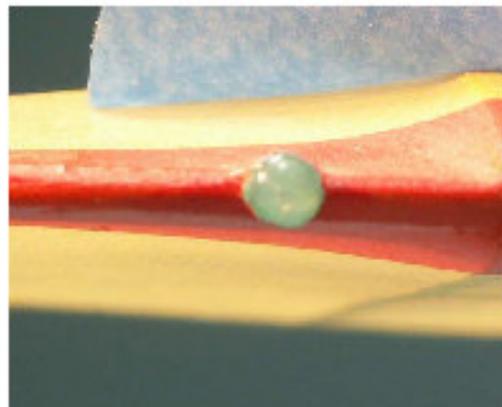
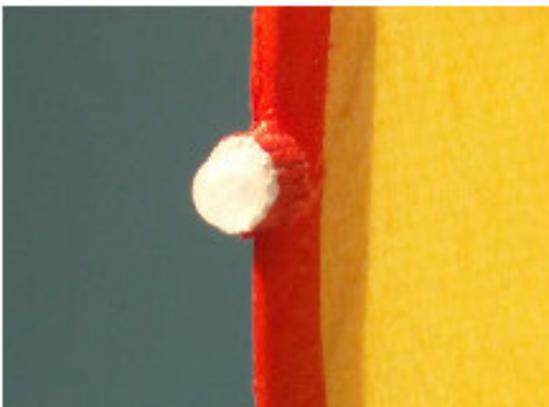
REALISTIC NAVIGATION LIGHTS

Here is a simple way to create navigation lights for your model airplane - nothing expensive but quite real looking. These were created using some left over 1/8" square balsa, some bright white, red and green enamel paints, and Zap 560 canopy glue.

First I finish covering the plane but in this case I added the light base before I applied the trim color. Take a piece of 1/8" square balsa or whatever is appropriate for the scale of the plane and round this by placing it in a fold of fine sandpaper and spinning while applying pressure. Try not to sand it too small in diameter. Now cut a piece a little longer than needed for each light. Make a v-groove at one end of each piece so that it rests well on the leading edge of the wing or trailing edge of the tail as needed. You can use baking soda or sawdust as filler if you cannot get a perfect fit. Cutting oversize now allows for you to keep working until you get a good fit. Trim to length and sand for a nice finish. Now in this example I applied the trim color which overlaps the light fixture. Once this dries I take the appropriate color enamel for the light location and just paint the flat surface where the lens will go. This will become the color of the light. Once this dries you are ready for the final step. Take a drop of the Zap 560 canopy glue and create a rounded droplet on the end of your light fixtures. This glue will dry clear to translucent giving the effect of depth and carry the background color forward. You can force the shape of the drop to be rounder by orienting the plane so the drop of glue hangs downward.



Neat.



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