

# The Comets' Tale

*The Official  
Newsletter of the*



**October 2012**

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**Board of Directors**

George Boston, Mike Ambarian, Dale Nash, Alastair Brennan, 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: 7:30 PM,  
Thursday, 18 October, at the  
Oak View Community Center**



**Coming  
Up!**

**Sat. & Sun 20, 21 October**  
Comets Float Fly  
Lake Casitas

**Fri., Sat., Sunday  
25, 27, 28 October**  
Santa Barbara R/C Modeler's  
Float Fly at Lake Cachuma

**Fri., Sat., Sun.  
16, 17, 18 November**  
Comets Only Float Fly, Lake  
Casitas

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

## **From the President**

It's October, and ya know what that means, Float Fly and nominations for club officers. The Float Fly is set for the 19th through the 21st of Oct. On Friday the 19th the morning hours are set a side for club members only flying. As I recall, plane inspections will start around 8:30 or 9:00 and end at 10:00. This will be your chance to get in some flying before the general public takes to the air from noon Friday through Sunday. I will take on the Contest Director (CD) responsibilities, Don Ashworth will run the Impound, Mike Ambarian will be the Safety Officer, Mike and Steve Steinmetz will be cooking, and Marilyn Nash and Sandy Billings will be running the raffle. We need volunteers for launching and retrieving planes. With sufficient volunteers we can spread the work out so that no one will have to work more than 3-4 hours. Please see Mike Ambarian to sign up as a volunteer. Hopefully the weather will cooperate, and it will be a fun weekend for all.

Our By-Laws require the nomination of candidates for officer positions that have come to term. This year we have three positions to fill. They are: President, Treasurer and Secretary. The term for each position is two years. The nominations occur during the month of October and November.

This is performed by a nominating committee, which will most likely be chaired by Dale Nash. At the November meeting the nominating committee will present the candidates and voting will take place with the new officers elected on a simple majority vote from the members attending the meeting. With respect to the office of President, I have served for the past three years, one year beyond the traditional two years term. This was the result of no one volunteering to run for President last year. I sincerely hope that one of you will consider running for President this year. Having a different President every two years provides the opportunity for a fresh focus and new leadership. I assume that part of the hesitation to run for this office is the perception that the duties of President require a lot of dedicated time and effort. On the norm, in any given month I don't spend more than a few hours taking care of club related issues. Most of my time is spent is on preparing for the monthly meeting and taking 20-30 minutes to write these short words for the Tale. Some months do require more time, but in the worse case it's not more than a few hours here and there. John Dugan handles 90% or more of all coordination with the Lake management. Normally the Treasurer carries out his/her duties without any involvement on my part. And thank goodness for Dale and Marilyn who have shared the duties of Vice President as long as I have been a member of the club, with running all the raffles. So, other than keeping track of a few pokers in the fire, there isn't a lot to do. I encourage all of you that have not served as President to give consideration to volunteering for this position. Across the membership, the spirit of support and giving freely of ones time to keep the club running is outstanding. We always have great support running the special events out at the field, and getting volunteers to tackle administrative matters that come up during the monthly meeting. Now it's time to do the same for filling the elected officer positions.

On a final note, last month we voted and approved policy addressing the safe use of Li-Po batteries in our models. This new policy will take effect the beginning of February 2013. Attached are the final documents implementing the policy. Please take a few minutes to review these documents, and if you are using Li-Po batteries in any of your models, you will be responsible to comply with this policy before flying out at the field. Earlier this month, Ron Scott sent me the following link to a video on Li-Po fires:

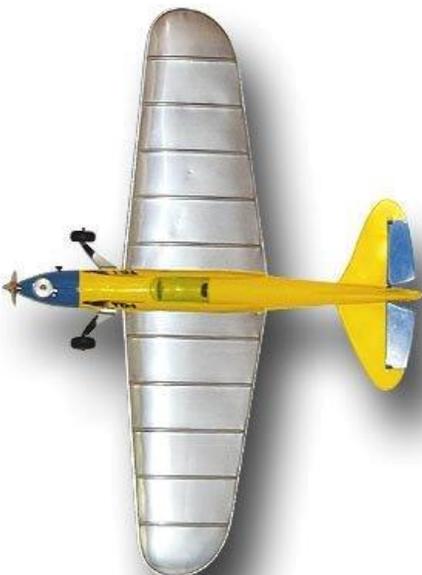
[http://youtube.com/watch?v=z3o\\_2mw\\_RPdw](http://youtube.com/watch?v=z3o_2mw_RPdw) It's an eye opener. Suggest you take a look.

Take care, and safe flying.

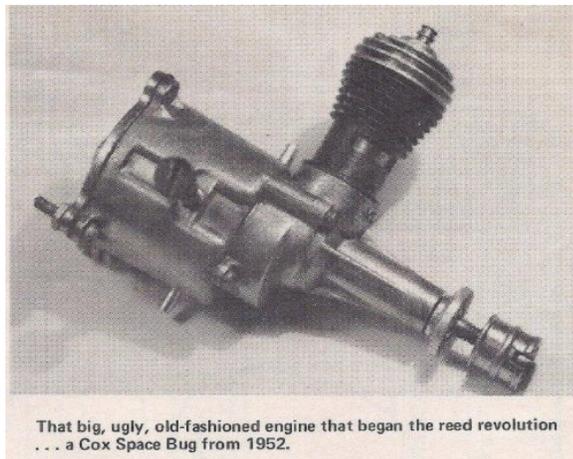
*George Boston*

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## Root's Rambling Part 2 of 2



The next year, 1953, Bob Holland bought the rights and machinery to produce the Wasp, and Bill Atwood came out with an even hotter .049, and a really bright idea. He bored out the cylinder, turned a new piston, and presto, the .051 was born. Now you could build one free flight and enter it in both Half-A and A classes just by changing engines.



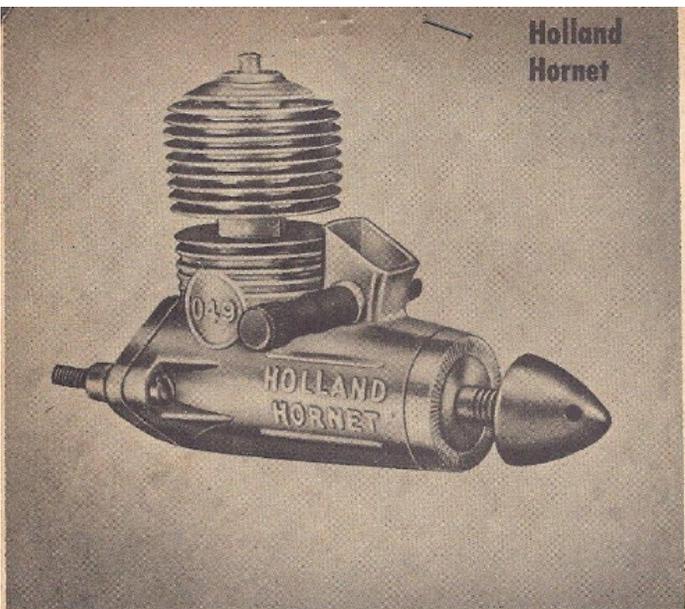
Meanwhile, what about that fellow Roy Cox? He created a market for his Space Bug "sport" engine by building it into a ready-to-fly ukie, called the Thimble-drome TD-1 (picture 7). This wasn't the first but, with its plastic body and aluminum skinned wing, it was by far the best flying of these new RTF models.

And he stripped the obnoxious tank from some of his Space Bugs and created the Thermal Hopper, a lighter and more practical engine for both FF and control line (picture 7). You could buy a machined engine mount to make the mounting a lot easier. Now we are talking real competition engines. This was my favorite FF engine for a couple of years.



And that was not all. Mr. Cox detuned some Space bugs, and fitted them with an inexpensive nylon tank, and marketed them for the unheard-of price of \$3.95, under the name "Space Bug jr." Just to show folks that he understood the meaning of the word *sport*. By the summer of 1954, the handwriting was on the wall for most manufacturers. Competition engines get all the publicity, but sport engines that sell by the thousands are the ones that pay the bills. Who could compete with a \$3.95 price tag? Atwood tried with a detuned .049 "Cadet" but soon had to raise the price a dollar. Cub put out the .049B as a kit . . . build it yourself from a box

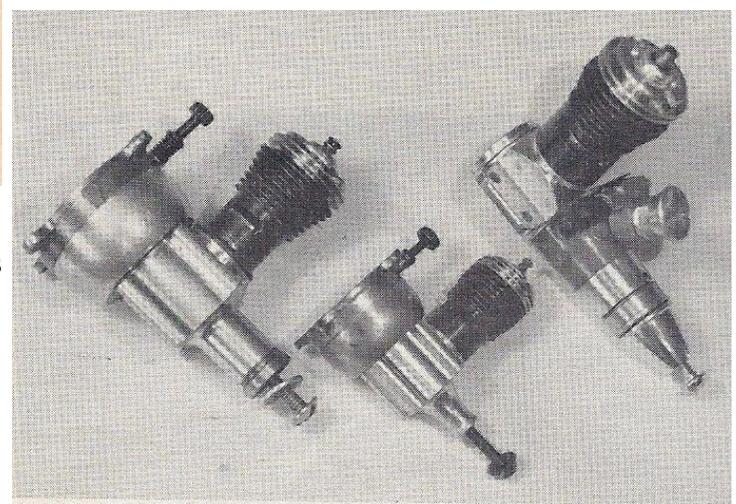
of parts for the magic \$3.95. And Anderson dropped the price of the Spitzzy to the magic number, but no one's heart was in it. Not even Cox's, it turned out. After K&B stopped Half-A production and the McCoy .049 came and went, Cox raised the Space Bug Jr. to a solid \$4.95, where it stayed until production ceased in 1957.



Like certain foreign engines, the Hornet has a rigid case—actually desirable characteristic. Bob Holland, the designer, was one of nation's leading free fliers; was mindful of needs.

In 1956 Bob Holland came out with the Holland Hornet (picture 8) which could outperform the Thermal Hopper. This was my last competition Half-A engine until about 1961. In 1960 someone finally built a new design Half-A to beat the Hornet's and the Thermal Hopper. Long after the close of our magic postwar dec-

ade, long after the Spitfires and the K&B's and the Atwoods had faded into history. The new engine was the Tee Dee (picture 10), another product of the ingenious Mr. Cox. The cub line was almost dead and the Holland Hornet took one look at the Tee Dee and expired immediately leaving the American 1/2 A market in the hands of a single company (which is now also out of the engine market).



Cox's 1-2-3 punch that killed the 1/2A market in the late '50's (l to r): Babe Bee .049, Tee Dee .049, and Pee Wee .02 (each \$3.95).

*Bob Root*

## MINUTES of the AUGUST 2012 MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by President George Boston. We had 20 people in attendance, which included 1 guest. The VP was off at a float fly in McSwain Lake. I am sure we will hear about the event at the next meeting.

The minutes and the Treasurer's report were approved. Treasurer TJ Moran pointed out that we have 79 members.

The Safety report was postponed as knowingly it was part of the **Old Business** discussion. John Dugan, Park Liaison was not in attendance.

This month's schedule includes a discussion of the frisbee golf event that will be near our field. The flying field will remain open during this event. However, there will be golfers out and we may not be the only ones with low flying objects. Pay attention if you fly during those days.

The special event that overtook the Lake a few weeks ago went off with no problems. The organizer "coned-off" the field, so there was no damage done to the paved area. A few club members met with the organizers and the summary is everyone was very pleasant. In addition the Lake fixed the entry way to the flying field. They graded the path and put down crushed gravel.

We had quite a discussion on safety. This was following all the information that was included in last month's newsletter. There will be some modifications to some of the forms. In addition some changes were pitched for edits to the club rules. These too were included in the newsletter; the ones to focus on are numbers 3/4/8/13/19/25.

### **New Business**

The October Float Fly is upon us. At the time of the meeting you would have had 4 weeks to prep. By the time you are reading this you probably have about a week.

The usual cooks have again graciously volunteered their time – Thanks Mike and Steve.

We do need volunteers to help retrieve planes. It was reported that we ran out of help last time (late Sunday). Please do what you can to come out and help, and fly, and eat, and gab. There are always a bunch of neat airplanes to see and people to chat with.

And **don't forget about the plane inspection** by the Lake's rangers. Get there early to ensure you are checked in:

7:30-10:30 Saturday.

7:30-9:30 Sunday

See the flyer for times for all the action and more information. This event is also in the Model Aviation Magazine so the out-of-towners will know to come join us.

### **Lastly Model of the Month.**

George Lanquist brought a Cessna Skylane 182. A Global kit, finished in Sig coverall and paint. George estimates that he added nearly 2 pounds in paint alone. Powered by an O.S. 55AX, he says it flies great, "a real floater".

The meeting adjourned at 9:01

Respectfully Submitted,

*Alastair Brennan*

## Ventura County Comets R/C Flying Field Rules

1. **Current AMA membership insurance is required for all flyers.**
2. Fly in accordance with AMA Safety Code.
3. When opening the field, position the two fire extinguishers and the shovel inside the storage shed next to the door outside of the shed.
4. **No flying of RC aircraft using Li-Po batteries without certification by the Comets Field Marshal/Safety Officer. Pilots not having required certification will be asked to land and secure their aircraft immediately. The names of all certified pilots are posted on a roster displayed in the impound/frequency control board. Please see WWW.VCCOMETS.COM for details regarding certification.**
5. No consumption of alcoholic beverages by any flyer.
6. No unattended children or pets allowed on the flight line or in the pit area.
7. All transmitters must have Channel numbers displayed.
8. All flyers must understand and comply with channel number frequency control, and know how to use the frequency control board. DO NOT turn on your transmitter until you have the right frequency pin attached to your antenna, and priority to use your frequency number. 2.4 GHZ radios also require a frequency pin attached to the antenna with the posting of the pilots' AMA card.
9. When two or more transmitters are on the same frequency, the transmitters without the frequency pin must be stored in the frequency control board impound area.
10. No engine start-ups before 8:00am. (7:30am. when campground "O" is closed). Electric planes may be flown after sunrise. No flying after sunset.
11. No Jet Engines, Turbine Engines or Rockets are allowed at this field. Electric Ducted-Fan jets are OK.
12. Mufflers are required on all gas/glow engines. Noise levels should not exceed 98db at 20 ft.
13. Models must be restrained at all times prior to taxi (including electric powered aircraft), either by a mechanical restraint device, (i.e.: tail hook), or by a helper.
14. Engines may only be started with an electric starter, chicken stick, or a gloved hand, (no bare fingers).
15. Pay attention to where your model's tail is pointed during all engine runs. Prop wash should be directed away from people in the area.
16. Pilots must fly from one of the 5 designated pilot stations. No more than 5 aircraft are allowed to be in the air at the same time.
17. Announce whenever you taxi or carry your airplane onto the runway, take-off, or land; and especially if you lose power, have a dead stick, or need to make an emergency landing. Emergency landings have immediate runway priority.
18. When taking off from the right to the left (normal pattern), taxi to the 3 transverse stripes across the runway before beginning the take off roll.
19. **Be sure approach and departure ends of the runway are clear of pedestrians prior to landing and take off.**
20. Initial turns after take-off must be made away from the pit area.
21. NEVER FLY OVER THE PIT AREA.
22. Pilots must fly all aircraft on the far side of the runway, except during takeoffs and landings, and must maintain a minimum altitude of 200 feet above the lake, at all times.
23. When more than one aircraft is in the air, all must fly the same pattern as dictated by the wind direction, (normally this is a clockwise direction).
24. Maintain positive control of you airplane at all times. If an aircraft/pilot is causing a hazardous condition to persons in the area, he/she will be asked to fly in accordance with the AMA Safety Code and Comets R/C Flying Rules. If the hazardous condition continues the pilot will be directed to land immediately.
25. **If a crash occurs and the plane is electric powered, immediately throttle back to the lowest stick position. Declare to all flyers that a crash of an electric has occurred. Try and note the location of the plane, ask for help and immediately go to the crash site to inspect for possible fire. As a precaution, take the shovel and a fire extinguisher, located next to the storage shed door to the crash site. If the plane is not immediately accessible, have someone stand by observing the general area for smoke or an indication that a fire may have started. If smoke or fire is observed, call 911.**
26. No excessive engine runs in the pit area. Use the North or South end tables for all engine tuning or break-in procedures.
27. Cell phones are not allowed on the flightline, and should not be used during engine start-up, or anytime you have a transmitter in your hands.
28. Please clean up after yourself when you are done. Pick up all trash and debris, and clean the exhaust oil off of the flight table you are using.
29. Last person to leave the field will police the area, take down the windsock, and lock up the frequency control board, utility shed, and all gates.
30. All padlocks must be locked and secured back where they originally came from. Spin all the numbers so that the combination is not revealed. Please snap the lock shut and spin the numbers, even if you will be leaving a gate open. Do not hang an open lock back on the fence for someone to steal.

## Ventura County Comets Li-Po Battery RC Aircraft Safety Check List

**AIRWORTHINESS REVIEW:** The ultimate responsibility for the safety and airworthiness of this aircraft rests solely with the owner and/or pilot. All items listed must be reviewed and checked by the owner and/or pilot for the aircraft to be airworthy for flight.

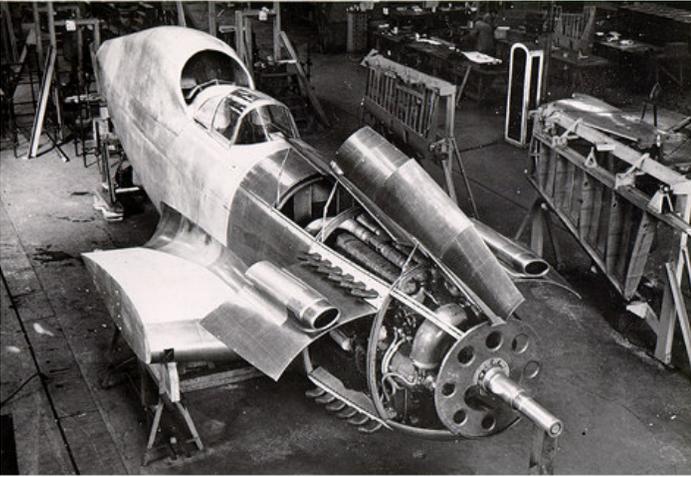
- Batteries are fully charged prior to flight (transmitter and aircraft)
- Battery and ESC are secured within/on the aircraft
- Battery, ESC, motor, and propeller, as a system, has been bench run and checked for each components capacity for the intended operation (watts, amps, volts).
- Inspection has been performed to ensure that there are no obstructions to the airflow, and that adequate cooling has been provided to the electrical drive system components.
- General Appearance (check for damage, warps, loose or open covering)
- Propeller is secure (check for cracks, damage, balance)
- Motor securely attached
- Kill switch/throttle adjustment properly set (Can I kill the engine with the radio?).
- Engage the “Fail Safe Mode” if supported by your transmitter (i.e. Prevents unintentional electric motor response on start-up. Eliminates the possibility of overdriving servos on start-up. Establishes low-throttle failsafe if the RF signal is lost. Maintains last-commanded control surface position in the event of RF link interruption.).
- Wing attachments secure including struts
- Servos and servo mounts/screws are secure
- Aileron/Flap hinges, push rods and control link keepers secure
- Elevator hinges, push rods and control link keepers secure
- Rudder hinges, push rods and control link keepers secure
- Flying wires, if any, are secure
- Canopy is secure
- Hatches or Covers are secure
- Wheels and landing gear are secure & free wheeling
- Range test performed at flying site prior to flight
- All controls going in the right direction (Ailerons, Elev., Rudder, Throt)
- Name, phone #, and AMA # displayed on the aircraft

### **EMERGENCY 9-1-1 CALL PROCEDURES**

The lake already has a protocol for placing 911 calls. A new sign has been installed on the fence out at the field.



## Mystery Plane(s)



Well. Nobody had any real clue what the thing in the 'Tale last month was, or is. I never got a reply from John Underwood, and he was my last hope. So, I guess it will be a Mystery for a while longer, or forever. Who knows?

OK, here's an easier one. Our more 'seasoned' members may remember this being a construction article in R/C Modeler Magazine. I guess that would include only members who even remember the magazine, long gone. Yeah, it's an odd airplane and I'm betting that some of y'all will recognize it. I'll tell you all about it next month.

### RANDUMB THOTS:-)

Wife Dianne and I took a week off last month to pretend we were retired. It was a great retirement, not having to get up early, and we flew every day. Lola the RV-6 went to San Luis Obispo, Bakersfield and Porterville. We did some aerobatics, too. We're unretired again, though. Oh well, it was fun while it lasted.

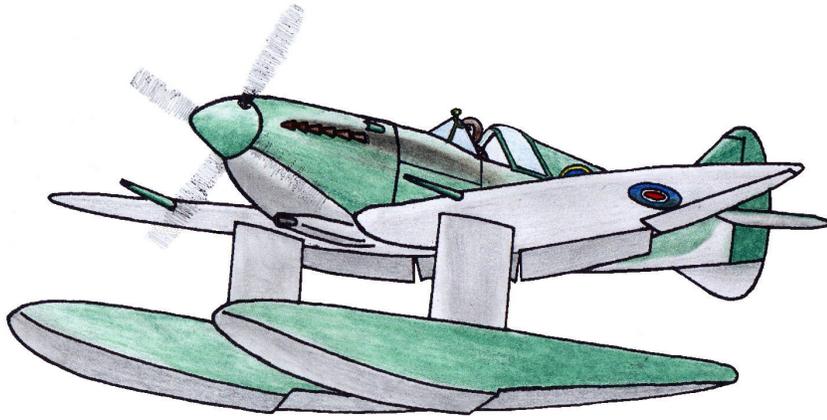
The first week of October we had 'Bring Your Wings and Wheels to Work Day' at Lockheed in Palmdale. That was fun. I got fly to 'work' that day... well, I'm based in Palmdale but I really work in Valencia, so I took a vacation day and saw all my friends and coworkers in Palmdale. We had 16 airplanes show up. Lots of RVs of various types, a Cessna 170, A Cessna 182, a Piper Cherokee 140, a Piper Comanche 250, a Citabria (the only rag and tube airplane of the day), a Beech T-34, a Beech Bonanza and the People's Choice winner, a Velocity, which was also the only composite airplane there. It was a great day, lots of employees came out at lunchtime to see the airplanes and all the cars on display, everybody was friendly and the weather wasn't TOO hot. I headed for home at about 2 PM and got hammered pretty well in the desert turbulence, but it got smoother as I cleared the ridge, then I flew a circle around my building in Valencia, and scooted back to Santa Paula. One hour of flying time total... man, I wish I could have flown to Palmdale when I worked there, my commute would have been a LOT shorter!

Then, last Sunday I had the privilege of flying on behalf of the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles program. Lola and I flew with two young guys who were interested in aviation, the first was 11 and a VERY sharp kid, the second guy was 17 and he was real sharp too. Both boys flew almost all the flight themselves (I'm embarrassed to have to admit this, but the 11 year old held an altitude better than I can...) and both came away happy and excited. It was an eye-opening experience for me to see such squared-away, smart kids, and they were interested in flying. The Camarillo Chapter of the Commemorative Air Force hosts Young Eagle flights the day before each First Sunday Open House at Santa Paula Airport, and then Santa Paula hosts them on First Sunday. These flights are free to kids 8 to 18 years old, run about 20 minutes and they get a certificate and a logbook, and their names go into a big database at the EAA Headquarters. If you know a boy or girl that's interested, you can visit the website at [www.young eagles.org](http://www.young eagles.org), contact me or just walk up. Maybe next time, it'll be Dianne's turn... she's ready to go.



Fly Safe!

*Jerry Deanda*



**NO WHEELS**

# Ventura County Comets' FUN FLOAT FLY!

20 & 21 October, 2012

**Entry Fee: \$20.00 (No Pre-registration)**

**IMPORTANT NOTE!! All models MUST be inspected for mussels by a Park Ranger. Saturday 7:30AM to 10:30AM, Sunday, 7:30AM 9:30AM. If you miss this inspection, YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO FLY!!**

*Hosted by:*

Lake Casitas Recreation Area

And

The Ventura County Comets

There Will Be A Great Raffle!

***Your Original A.M.A. MEMBERSHIP Card is REQUIRED ,  
no copies, please .***

**No helicopters, no flight training!**

- AMA Sanctioned Event
- RV Parking at the Flying Site (No Hookups at the Flying Site)
- Hookups in Camping Areas with Reservation by calling 805-649-1122
- Adjacent Picnic Areas
- 10 years or older in the pit area
- Great Spectator Viewing Access
- Food and Drink Available
- Plenty of fun

**Need More Info? Call:**

***John Dugan 805-646-6898 OR George Boston 805-750-0901***