

# Propwash

The Newsletter of the Mercer County Radio Control Society  
July 2006

## Goodbye Doug—We're Going to Miss You

As the evening of May 23<sup>rd</sup> was drawing to a close for Doug McMillan, things must have seemed pretty normal: Dinner with his wife, Nancy; a few calls relating to his popular kit-cutting business; a call from a "crazy" club member about flying a ducted fan jet from Warren Kruse Field. As he left the house to walk his dog, Hannah, it's difficult to say what might have been on Doug's mind. Perhaps it was the fine family of five children he and Nancy had raised. Maybe it was the great RC club he had headed for the last five years. Or maybe it was that crazy modeler and his ducted fan.

But somewhere along the walk, something happened and when he and Hannah failed to come home, Nancy went looking for them. She found Doug unconscious in a field near their house, Hannah standing over him sounding the alarm. Doug was rushed to Robert Wood Johnson Medical Center in Hamilton. Unfortunately, despite all their best efforts, Doug passed away the next afternoon, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006.



**Club President Doug McMillan, bidding farewell to a Sunshine Foundation Dreamlift flight in early May.**

It's difficult to express in words how much we, the members of the Mercer County club, are going to miss him. He was a great friend, a great leader, and an inspiration to us all. The many members who paid their respects at the funeral home had the opportunity to meet his children and see what a fine job he'd done with them. Those who attended the funeral, conducted by his son Dougald, gained additional perspective on the man we'd known through our common hobby.

In his eulogy, Dougald assured us that Doug was in heaven. And in thinking about that, one might wonder how things are going for him up there. But those of us who knew him know that Doug would summarize it in a single word: Fantastic!

## 2006 Jumbo Jamboree Goes On as Planned

Although club members were saddened by the passing of club president Doug McMillan earlier in the week, the 2006 Jumbo Jamboree went on as planned on Memorial Day weekend. Setup day on Friday was when many of the members learned of Doug's death. For many, it was an opportunity to mourn and share memories of the man. But there was an event to prepare for and, although saddened, all agreed that Doug would not want the event marred by sadness over his death.

At the event's opening, master of ceremonies Greg Lucidi asked for a moment of silence in which we remembered our fallen leader. Then the event continued with its tradition of great planes, great flying, great food, and great friends.

Saturday dawned cool and partly cloudy, with the threat of possible thunderstorms. The possibility of inclement weather had only a minor effect on attendance though, with 60 pilots registering this year, as compared to about 70 last year. And shortly after 9:00, a number of planes took to the air.



**The size of the entries in a giant scale event sometimes makes it difficult to believe they're models.**



**... but only for a short time.**



**But, as the models get larger, it's important to keep one's priorities straight.**



**Although he denied the lost wheel was intentional, ...**



**This Gorgeous PBY Catalina lit up the morning skies ...**

Many of the planes that fly at the club events can fairly be considered works of art, with detail so complete and precise that the scale models are virtually indistinguishable from their full-scale counterparts when they are flying. In a sense, it seems a shame to subject works of art to the perils of flight. But then it's in part their transient nature that makes them so intriguing.



**... Adam Lilley's flawless one-wheel landing was a highlight of the show.**

For all the flying that occurs, scale events generally have remarkably few mishaps. But the first major mishap occurred early in the day as visiting flyer Michael Figuly of Staten Island demonstrated his blue and grey PBY Catalina, a magnificent twin-engine amphibian. Unfortunately, being unfamiliar with the unique hazards of Warren Kruse Field, he misjudged his final ap-



proach and allowed his glide slope to descend below the tree level at the southern end of the field. The approach ended with the airplane disappearing below the tree line, the drone of its twin engines punctuated by the munching sound of a model being devoured by trees.



**An isolated downpour drove flyers to their tents ...**



**... which came in many shapes and sizes.**

Fortunately, the rest of the event went on without airframe-totalling crashes, which is not to say there were no eventful landings. Most would consider a Cub to be a gentle, leisurely airplane, attractive to behold, but unlikely to provide excitement to spectators. Adam Lilley dispelled that expectation when his Cub lost a wheel in flight. While an airplane can easily fly without a wheel, landing is somewhat more difficult. In this case, Adam demonstrated perfect missing-wheel technique, allowing the Cub to gently settle on its one wheel near minimum-controllable airspeed and then turning it into the wind to settle on the bare axle as the plane's groundspeed approached zero. The crowd applauded his accomplishment.

The People's Choice contest at noon on Saturday was, as always, a treat for the spectators, affording them a chance to look at all the aircraft at very close range and

pick the one they like best. This year our own Bob Levanduski won the contest with his authentically multi-colored Fokker D-VII.



**One could imagine the sound of machine gun fire as Bob Levanduski's award-winning Fokker ...**



**... shared the sky with Keith Zimmerly's Jenny.**



**It seems that no event would be complete without a flight of Keith's B-17. (Tom Keegan photo)**

The threat of inclement weather delivered on its promise early Saturday afternoon. The skies darkened and the clouds opened, drenching all that was unprotected. Many of the attendees had brought tents to protect themselves from the sun, and in this case, the rain.

Others had not. Although the threat had been present all day, the downpour came quickly, without time to disassemble airplanes and put them away. Those that fit were stacked in tents. Those that didn't took advantage of tarps, tables, or their natural resistance to ward of the water. But as quickly as the rain came, it disappeared and stayed away for the rest of the weekend.



**To top off the event, a couple of 40% Extra's ...**



**... demonstrated how airplanes were never intended to fly. (Tom Keegan photos)**

Sunday morning dawned with the clear blue sky that provides a flawless background for photographing aircraft in flight. And the early hours of the morning displayed several attractive specimens, including Keith Zimmerly's unusually large Jenny and B-17. The event formally ended shortly after noon on Sunday. But before it ended, attendees were treated to the antics of a couple of 3-D-capable 40% Extras demonstrating that, on a modern 3-D airplane, the wings and tail are included primarily to provide something to twirl.

In the end, everyone had a great time and, as a result of food sales, 50-50 raffles, and donations, the club was able to raise approximately \$2,000 for its 2007 donation to the Sunshine Foundation—a successful result by all accounting.

## Keith Zimmerly Named Interim President

According to the bylaws of our club, if the president is unable to serve out the duration of his term, it is the duty of the board of directors to appoint someone to fill that position as an interim president. The board met on May 31<sup>st</sup> to do that. After discussion and consideration of several potential candidates, the board concluded that the person best suited to fill that role was board member Keith Zimmerly. This decision was announced to the membership at the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Keith Zimmerly is well known among club members for several interesting and endearing characteristics. First, he builds interesting models. In addition to exciting us all with their frequent demonstrations, his Jenny and B-17 have brought fame to the club as a result of their appearance in national modeling magazines.

Keith is also known as a skilled flyer and an excellent instructor. His former students attribute their skills to his enthusiastic, if somewhat unconventional, techniques. (It is rumored that instruction in takeoff and landing is often followed immediately by instruction in aerial combat.)

Keith is also known for his participation in some of the club's most memorable mid-air's, most recently with his Enforcer, his Spitfire, and his Sopwith Pup. Board members will deny that his receiving the 2005 award for Crash of the Year (which he shared with Augie Lucidi) played any part in his appointment as interim president, however.

We all look forward to Keith's leadership of MCRCS. In addition to infectious optimism and contagious enthusiasm, he is a talented modeler who truly loves to fly.



**Keith Zimmerly: Well known builder, instructor, incidental combat flyer, and now interim president.**



## The June 11<sup>th</sup> Picnic Was a Family Affair

The Mercer County RC club has had exceptionally good luck with weather for its events thus far this year, starting with the Opening Day fly-off, continuing with the Jumbo Jamboree, and most recently with the Family Picnic. For the picnic, the skies were a clear blue with the temperature ultimately reaching into the low eighties. Of course there was the wind. The indicator in the clubhouse didn't seem to be working properly, but the windsock was nearly straight, suggesting about fifteen knots. Because of the wind, some were initially afraid to fly. However, after a Zagi demonstration by Ron Neibo and Dave Vale, the fear seemed to pass. (The fact that Zagis are nearly indestructible didn't factor in here.)



**Dan Geerders, Rich Green, and Bob Bennett refused to let the wind diminish their enjoyment.**



**In a rare break from cashier duty, Jans Brower prepares to fly his Antic.**



**Mike Garze's single-wheel landing was somewhat less successful than Adam Lilley's attempt two weeks earlier ...**



**A reminder that we share the field with others.**

As one might expect, the atmosphere of the picnic was somewhat more relaxed than of a formal event, like the Jumbo. And the airplanes, while often not the serious scale models of the Jumbo Jamboree, were still very entertaining in their own right. It was, for example, a pleasure to watch Jans Brower's Antic dance around



**... but then maybe someone put a spell on him.**

the skies with a red ribbon on its tail. We all held our breath as Mike Garze attempted another one-wheeled Cub landing. While the outcome of this one was somewhat less positive than Adam Lilley's, one could only wonder if perhaps evil magic was at work. And seeing Greg Lucidi's wicked witch take to the sky, it





**Dave Vale demonstrated that, given time and patience, you can indeed feed forty people from two tiny grills. (Carl Gubkin photo)**



**Paul Abati was assisted in the pits by his wife.**



**Spread Spectrum isn't the only way to avoid a frequency clip.**



**Three generations of Geerders attended.**



**You don't have to fly to enjoy a picnic.**

wasn't difficult to speculate who might have put a spell on Mike's landing.

And while there were a lot of airplanes, there were also families and there was a picnic. Several members brought their families. Dave Vale, Armand Graziano, and Carl Gubkin cooked hamburgers and hotdogs for



**Greg Lucidi negotiated a deal to keep the skies safe.**

the hungry crowd. The small grills, coupled with the determined wind, produced a food line that provided a welcome opportunity to fraternize with fellow club members and their families.

In the end, not everyone flew. And of those who flew, not everyone had their aircraft under radio control. But it appeared that everyone had a good time. And how could they avoid it? Food, friends, airplanes, in the middle of a wildlife preserve—it doesn't get any better than this.

## MCRCS Magazine Donation Program

By Jack Dempsey

Did you know that MCRCS donates subscriptions of "Model Aviation" magazine to school and public libraries? Currently we are providing the magazine to the West Windsor Library where we have our meetings, the Lawrence Library where we judge our annual building contest, and several school libraries. The public and school libraries are furnished labels to put on the jacket to identify our club and invite readers to attend meetings and visit our web site. You may ask, is anyone noticing? The answer is that the club has received notes expressing appreciation from six libraries and even one from a student:

*"I am writing to thank the Mercer County Radio Control Society for the gift subscription to 'Model Aviation.' It has been a great addition to our periodical collection. The students have enjoyed the magazine very much this year. Your organization's generosity is greatly appreciated."* Debbie Donoher, Media Specialist, Pond Road Middle School, Robbinsville.

*"I would like to thank the Mercer County Radio Control Society for its donation of the magazine 'Model Aviation' to our school media center. Your generosity is greatly appreciated."* Donna Esposito, Media Specialist, Crockett Middle School, Hamilton.

*"On behalf of the students and faculty of Fisher Middle School, I would like to thank you for the gift subscription to 'Model Aviation' that our school received this past year. The magazine was read frequently and enjoyed by all. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness."* Joan D. Villano, Media Specialist, Fisher Middle School, Ewing.

*"I am writing to thank Mercer County Radio Control Society for the gift subscription to 'Model Aviation' that our school received this year. The magazine is a welcomed addition to our collection and is especially enjoyed by the boys. Your club's generosity is greatly appreciated."* Eileen M. Couturier, Librarian, Kreps Middle School, East Windsor.

*"Thank you for the donated magazine subscription to 'Model Aviation.' The students enjoy reading it when they visit our library. Your organization's generosity is appreciated."* Karen Black, Librarian, Community Middle School, West Windsor-Plainsboro.

*"I would like to express to you again how much our students have enjoyed the magazine 'Model Aviation.' I*

*hope you received the recent thank you note one of our 7<sup>th</sup> graders wrote to your club. Please share with the other members of the club that the magazine is read and enjoyed by our students."* Eileen Cramer, Librarian, Lawrence Middle School, Lawrence.

The note Eileen Cramer referred to was: *"To the Mercer County Radio Control Society, My name is Ryan and I am a student at LMS in 7th grade and I really enjoy the periodical you send our school each month. On the weekends, I take flight lessons at Princeton Airport in a Cessna 152, and I also like remote control aircraft very much. Thanks again for this magazine. Sincerely, Ryan."*

The other schools receiving subscriptions are Grice Middle School, Hamilton; Reynolds Middle School, Hamilton; John Witherspoon Middle School, Princeton; Timberlane Middle School, Pennington. At the June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting the club voted funds to renew all of the above subscriptions as well as to provide funds to expand this program. The cost for the school subscriptions is \$12.00 each (\$1.00 per issue includes postage) and the public library subscriptions cost \$16.00 each.

## Bomb Drop Contest

Mark Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup> on your calendars as Cub and Bomb Drop day. Details will follow in the September issue of "Propwash". Carl Gubkin is organizing the event.

## A Note from Nancy McMillan

We received the following note in the mail from Nancy McMillan, following Doug's funeral:

*"Dear Friends—*

*How can I ever say thank-you enough—you all were such an important part of Doug's life. I can't think of anyone who had as many 'real' friends as he had. He would have been so happy to know how loved he was.*

*Thanks to each and every one of you for all the wonderful days of his life that he spent on and off the field—our family is truly blessed.*

*Love to all—*

*Nancy"*

## Upcoming Events

### July

5<sup>th</sup> Meeting at WWL  
19<sup>th</sup> Meeting at WWL

### August

2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting at WWL  
16<sup>th</sup> Meeting at WWL

### September

6<sup>th</sup> Meeting at WWL  
15<sup>th</sup> Setup for Warbirds  
16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Warbirds Over Jersey  
20<sup>th</sup> Meeting at WWL  
23<sup>rd</sup> Electric Fly

### **Club Information**

The Mercer County Radio Control Society is a New Jersey-based AMA Chartered Gold Leader Club. Its field is in Assunpink Wildlife Management Area off Exit 11 of Hwy 195. It meets at the West Windsor Branch of the Mercer County Public Library on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 8:00 PM. The club publishes this newsletter for members approximately six times a year and operates a web site at [www.mcrcs.com](http://www.mcrcs.com). This newsletter is available, in color, on the web site.

### **Officers**

President: Keith Zimmerly  
VP, Membership: Sal Lucania  
VP, Events: Armand Graziani  
Secretary: James Feszchak  
Treasurer: Jans Brower

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