

Propwash

The Newsletter of the Mercer County Radio Control Society
November 2008

Warbirds Reign Over Jersey

Friday, September 12th, was a dismal night for weather. Not only was Hurricane Ike bearing down on the Gulf Coast threatening certain death and billions in property damage, but the weather in central New Jersey was also troublesome, threatening the possibility of rain for at least part of the Warbirds weekend. And with an event such as an air show, the threat of bad weather can be almost as damaging as the weather itself.



Contest director Seth Hunter got the event off to a fine start.

Alas, the dismal forecast for New Jersey turned out to be hollow and Saturday dawned with, if not cloudless skies, at least skies in which the clouds were more decorative than ominous. And with dignified aplomb, first-time contest director Seth Hunter got the event off to a fine start with an informative and stimulating pilots' meeting.

Rick Andrese was the first to fly, putting his third-scale Nieuport 17 into the pinkish morning sky. There's something about a large-scale biplane in the early morning that evokes the romance of WWI combat, admittedly a romance that exists only in the imagination and one that is allowed only by the passage of time. But it was a gorgeous sight.



Rick Andrese was the first to fly with his third-scale Nieuport 17.



Dan Basovitch's chromed AT-6 drew a lot of attention.

Rick's Nieuport was followed by several other warbirds: a couple of PT-17s playing tag around the pattern, Team Braun's Eindecker, and Dan Basovitch's chromed AT-6. There was a lot to draw attention to the AT-6, including its size, its detail work, and the commanding way it flew through the skies. But at the bottom line, it was the chrome finish that covered the vast majority of the airplane. All but the rudder was chrome, the latter being finished in a far less reflective fabric, as was dictated by considerations of scale. It was definitely an attention grabber.



Nobu Iwasawa's P-40 made a short flight.

Nobu Iwasawa's P-40 Warhawk also entered the airspace. Nobu's Warhawk, a bird with a somewhat checkered past, having ended a previous flight in a spectacular crash, was back in the show, looking none the worse for wear. But its past seemed to follow it and about three circuits into the pattern, Nobu was heard to utter, "Clear the field—I have to land." At this point all eyes were on the P-40 as it entered a short downwind leg and sped across on base. As a later debriefing would reveal, the engine speed had dropped to idle and Nobu could not summon more power to slow his descent. Faced with the dangerous possibility of a high-speed turn without power, close to the ground and toward the crowd, Nobu elected to put it down in the corn at the south end of the field. With that characteristic crunching sound, known to most who fly at Warren Kruse Field, the P-40 disappeared into the corn stalks. Unfortunately, corn is not always gentle and Nobu's P-40 emerged with a broken fuselage. But the crowd was spared.



It was almost impossible to recognize Larry Alles' B-25 as a model.

Although the corn had not yet claimed its last victim of the day, it did yield to Larry Alles, who flew a mission that was both exciting and flawless in his B-25. Larry's

B-25, a 118" wingspan model powered by two G-38s, drew serious attention on the ground with its exquisite detailing: guns in all the turrets, pilots and full instrumentation in the cockpit, gauges and a stool for the nose gunner in the front, and a couple million rivets on the wings, some showing signs of wear. But where this model really shone was in the air. Only by a sense of absolute proximity could one tell that this was not a full-scale aircraft. The maneuvers were scale. The speed was scale. In fact, in many of the photographs, it is virtually impossible to identify Larry's aircraft as a model.



Larry Alles doesn't always win the Peoples Choice – But he did this time.

The People's Choice contest was held at noon on Saturday and everyone in attendance had the opportunity to vote for the model that he or she thought was the best. It was a tough competition, with a large number of interesting, detailed scale models to choose from. In the end, though, the clear winner was Larry Alles' B-25. To those who attend our events, it seems that Larry always wins the Peoples' Choice. That's clearly an exaggeration, though — we don't always run the Peoples' Choice.

It was good to see the Civil Air Patrol cadets out in force on Saturday. The ten cadets, led by Capt. Ulric Gordon-Lewis, not only parked the cars, but also helped out in the kitchen and the registration booth. And they proved to be especially adept at search-and-rescue operations, which were necessary several times during the day as pilots ventured too near the corn.

It was also good to see several members again who were recovering from accidents or illnesses. Forrest (Woody) Miller made his first appearance in several months, having had a stroke last spring. And members Greg Lucidi and Bing Gearhart were fully engaged with the event, despite recent unfortunate encounters with Dremel tools and soldering irons. It's important to

bear in mind that spinning propellers are not the only sources of potential pain in this sport.



Sunday morning Keith Zimmerly's 12' Avro 504C filled the sky – Literally.

By Sunday morning, the threat of storm had passed. And with the skies blue (and the temperature on its way to 95 degrees), even more WWI biplanes materialized at the field. Or maybe they just got bigger. Where Rick Andrese's Nieuport 17, at 106" and 26 pounds, looked big on Saturday, it was considerably more modest against Keith Zimmerly's Avro 504C at 146" and about 50 pounds. Of course, flying together — it must have been like this during 1918 in the south of France.



Dogfights were strictly prohibited.

But you can't have a cadre of biplanes without some form of mischief. And sure enough, no sooner had Keith finished his demonstration passes with Rick than did a Nieuport with Axis markings show up on his tail. Of course, for Ace Zimmerly, this is an invitation to sport rather than a threat. And although there weren't any legitimate dogfights, there was a lot of chasing going on Sunday morning.

In all, 48 pilots showed up for the event, with about three times that many airplanes. Had this been a real war, Warren Kruse Field would have been a scary

place. But it was all in fun, and it appeared that a good time was had by all.

Electric Storm Hits WK Field

By Allan Shear

The weatherman had predicted warm sunshine with a calm breeze for Saturday, but you could feel electricity in the air. A storm was brewing — electrons suddenly started thrashing over a small area of Central Jersey.



It didn't matter what your interest was, there were plenty of electric powered ...

And then, around 9:00 on the morning of September 20th, to be exact, it just turned into one of the strongest electric fields ever seen, when 42 pilots from all over New Jersey landed at the Mercer County Radio Control Society's Electric Fun Fly-In.

The sky was electric. You could feel the hair stand up on the back of your neck. Contest director Sal Lucania reminded contestants that there is no point of attending a fly-in unless the participants "got in plenty of flying." With that said, pilots took to the field.

It didn't matter what your interest was, there were plenty of electric powered gliders, warbirds, ducted fan jets, 3D and aerobatic models buzzing around Warren Kruse field to cause an air traffic controller to take up drinking.

E-fliers Jun Xian Chen from PARCS brought a Rite-Wing Demon 40 that seemed to break the sound barrier as it screamed low across the fresh cut grass and climbed high into the clouds. Shazard Mohammed, also from PARCS, followed close behind, performing aerobatics with a colorful "Tarheel Hal" version of the P-47 Thunderbolt.

Greg Drusjack from Jersey Coast Sport Flyers had a bit of trouble getting airborne with his 1945 Mud Duck Sport, but soon sorted out the controls to amuse the

crowd with its offbeat looks. And fellow club member Adam Lilley pleased young and old onlookers with his J-3 Cub performing wing tip touch and goes.



Greg Drusjack had a bit of trouble getting airborne with his 1945 Mud Duck Sport.

Contest director Lucania reported that there were the usual visits to the surrounding cornfields. Rob Kallok of the Jersey Coast Sport Flyers paid an early visit to one “field of dreams.” “The big prop and big motor physically ripped the plywood — the firewall fell off,” he said. “I was lucky my plane glided into the corn.”



MCRCS member Dave Ramsey stole the show with his colorful cartoonish one-off Auto Gyro.

But MCRCS member Dave Ramsey stole the show with his colorful cartoonish one-off Auto Gyro. The craft weighs about two pounds and uses Hi-Max electric motors to produce 325 watts of power.

“I like building — it went together in three weeks of evenings,” said Dave, who noted that the craft is a copy of an original design adapted for personal use. Auto Gyros fly, according to Dave, because the rotors have negative pitch and air rushing underneath creates lift.

But Bob Keibley almost fell down laughing as he watched the copter-like craft take to the skies. “Looks

like something out of a Roger Rabbit movie,” he mused to a friend.

It wouldn’t be a fly-in without a visit to the grill for hot-dogs, hamburgers and drinks. But the kitchen staff reported that the event was so popular they ran out of food shortly after noon.

Sal summed up the event in typical style. “We got off to a slow start but a great finish,” he said before adding with a sly smile, “But it was a little noisy though.”

Bomb, Parachute, and Cub Day

With light winds and 68-degree temperatures on Sunday, October 5th, it was one of those days when no one paid much attention to the clouds that covered much of the western sky. The sun was out, our jackets were doffed, and there was excitement in the air.



Carl Gubkin is considered the father of the Bomb Drop Contest.

Even those who hadn’t read their club calendars would have known something was up by the large circle that was painted on field with the numbers 3, 4, and 5 in the successively tighter circles. And at 10:00, what was up became apparent as bombs began to fall from the model aircraft as they made low passes over the target.

As contest director Carl Gubkin can attest, these contests usually begin with apparent disregard for the painted circles, most bombs and parachutes falling somewhere on the airfield or the adjoining cornfields. It usually takes several attempts before anything falls in the circles. This year, however, Jim Feszchak wasn’t following the playbook and, on the first drop of the day, managed to put his bomb near the center circle of the target, resulting in an immediate accrual of four points.

This unprecedented occurrence drew the close attention of Carl Gubkin, who measured the distance of Jim’s

bomb from dead center with split-inch accuracy. Last years winner, Rich Lee, watched the measurement with earnest regard. Then, as if to affirm the new skill level of the Mercer County crew, or perhaps as a more personal affirmation, Rich Lee took off and planted a bomb directly in the center circle, garnering five points for himself.



Jim Feschak set an impossibly high standard by hitting the target on his first pass.



Rich Lee and Jim Van Buren watched Carl measure Jim Feschak's drop to the fractional inch.

Of course, not everyone demonstrated the skill levels that seemed apparent in these two masters. Jim Van Buren, who possessed what appeared to be the largest and most colorful bomb of the competition, twice failed to penetrate even the outer ring of the target. While Jim didn't show any outward indication of despair, a certain newsletter editor with a comparable record after two tries was ready to withdraw from the contest at that point, acknowledging his own deficiencies in relation to the far superior skills of his competitors.

But then an odd thing happened. Both Van Buren and that certain editor managed to break the outer barrier to score three points each in two drops that marked the only other attempts to successfully hit the target all day.

Feszchak and Lee, however great their skills might have been, were unable to plant another bomb in the circles in their remaining four attempts.



Jim Van Buren's fluorescent bomb was easy to find when it fell far from the target.

In planning a battle, there are issues of strategy and of tactics. Regarding the former, Jans Brower seemed to find the winning strategy in the day's contests. Jans easily won the parachute contest with his three drops. The first two completely missed the target, which is not unusual for the Parachute Drop Contest. His third also missed the target, but so intent was Jans on willing the parachute into the circle that he forgot to fly his airplane, which had an unexpected and undesired encounter with the ground. Fortunately the damage was limited to a prop and the landing gear. His only competition, Carl Gubkin, lost his parachute in the adjoining corn field on his first attempt, thus ending the contest.



Of course it all could have been different if John Tanzer had managed to get his engine started.

Of course it all could have been different if John Tanzer had managed to get the engine started on his Quaker. Winning the parachute contest every year thus far and the bomb drop one out of two, John could have been a serious contender. But such was not to be. (Jans,

what was that you put in John's fuel? Yeah, the white, powdery stuff.)

With the excitement of the bomb and parachute drops, sometimes it's easy to forget that this event is also Cub day, the one day of the year when everyone is supposed to bring a Piper Cub to the field. This year there were more Cubs than bombs, so many that there seemed to be yellow airplanes everywhere you looked. Of course not all Cubs are yellow. Rich Green and Dan Geerders came with almost identical red-and-white Super Cubs. The only way to tell the difference was by knowing that Rich's was powered by gas and Dan's by glow.



Rich Green and Dan Geerders flew matching Super Cubs.

While Cubs are pretty to look at and fun to fly, it really takes something extra to make them exciting, like a Flying Farmer routine or a dead stick landing. We didn't have a Flying Farmer, but Pat Meighan did perform a few deliberate ground loops and fly down the runway sideways a time or two. And both Jim Meighan and Carl Gubkin experienced dead stick landings, but except for the fact that the propellers weren't turning, the landings looked pretty routine. However, when an odd looking yellow model named the Lazy Bee tried it, the landing didn't work out so well; a too-steep approach sans flare left large pieces of the Bee scattered on the runway.

Some may have noted that the event was covered by the press. Jennifer Kohlhepp, a reporter for the local Examiner, along with photographer Scott and videographer Jamie, spent a couple of hours learning some details about our club. It would be tempting to suggest that Jennifer was intrigued by the idea of bombs falling in Assunpink, but in fact she had been trying to write an article on our club for a couple of weeks and this was the first time the weather cooperated.



Carl Gubkin combined events, dropping bombs from a Cub.

Even though bombs, parachutes, and Cubs dominated the day, there was still time in the sky for a large-scale Yak and an EDF foamie. And there was time for instruction, with two new students trying the sport for the first time and at least one old student honing his skills in anticipation of soloing. All in all, it was just a great day for flying, with a little competition thrown in for good measure.

Final Bomb Drop results were:

First place: Rich Lee with six points (37.5" from center)

Second place: Jim Feschak with five points (62.5" from center)

Third place: Tie between Jim Van Buren (132") and David Vale (144"), each with four points.

Honorable mentions: Carl Gubkin and Bob Bennett, for both bombing the field twice.

Parachute Drop results were:

First place: Jans Brower with two clear misses and a disqualifying crash on the third attempt.

Dishonorable mention: Carl Gubkin, for losing his parachute in the corn on the first pass.

Elimination of Public Events to be Discussed

The Mercer County Radio Control Society is known in the eastern region of the modeling community for the three major public events it conducts each year: The Jumbo Jamboree, Warbirds Over Jersey, and the Electric Fun Fly. These events, in addition to the money they raise, have also served to raise awareness of our club and our sport in the local community.

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to staff these events because of diminishing numbers of volunteers. Without adequate numbers of volunteers, we cannot continue to conduct events of the quality that we all demand. In consideration of this difficulty, club president Keith Zimmerly has asked that time be set aside during the business portion of the awards meeting this year (scheduled for December 3rd at the Lawrence Library) to discuss the future of these events.

Historically, the public events have raised money each year, a large portion of that money being directed toward our annual donation to the Sunshine Foundation. If the events are eliminated, the shortfall will have to be funded by a dues increase. We may also have to consider reducing or eliminating our charitable contribution.

The essential purpose of the discussion is to determine if the membership would prefer to eliminate the events, acknowledging the attendant change in the character of our club, or be willing to commit itself to providing the level of volunteerism that is necessary to support the high quality events for which we are known.

No action is scheduled to be taken at the December meeting as these issues are considered matters for the Board of Directors. However, this will be the opportunity for club members to comment and decide their levels of commitment to supporting these events in the future.

2009 Building Contest – A Whole New Game

The annual MCRCS Building Contest is on the calendar again, but this time the rules have changed. In 2009, the judging will be done at the fly-off by all club members present. Similar to the People's Choice contests we run at our public events, everyone will have the opportunity to vote for the model of his choice in each category. The fly-off will be on Opening Day.

The building rules are published below. Anyone with questions should contact Contest director Joe Raimondo at (609) 587-9047.

Building Contest Rules

1. Contestant is allowed only one entry in each class. A contestant must be a current member in good standing. A separate category will be provided for junior members (ages 12 to 17).
2. Classes shall consist of scale, non-scale, old timers, almost ready to fly (ARF), and unorthodox.

3. Models that placed first, second, or third in previous building contests may not be entered.
4. The model, as flown, must meet all AMA and club rules.
5. Model must be built and finished by the member entering model.
6. The builder of model is not required to fly the model; a substitute pilot is acceptable.
7. All active members present at the event will serve as judges and cast one vote in each category. All airplanes are to be judged at the same time starting at 11:30 AM.
8. Weather conditions for flying will be determined on the field at 9:00 AM, on the day of flying. If weather conditions are unfavorable, the contest will take place two weekends later, between the hours of 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM.
9. Flying must be conducted between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM with no exceptions; builder of model need not be present.
10. The flying portion will consist of a takeoff, a 360-degree turn, and a controlled landing as a minimum (hand or bungee launching is acceptable).
11. If the model cannot perform the required flight, it will be disqualified.
12. An award will be given to each member entering a model. The three models in each category with the most votes will be recognized as first, second, and third.

Dues Are Due

Club dues are now due and payable for 2009. You may pay your dues in person to Treasurer Bruce Evertsen, or you may mail your dues to him at 7710 Tamarron Drive, Plainsboro, NJ 08536. Dues are \$75 for Full Membership and \$37.50 for Junior Membership. As before, you must show your AMA card or AMA paid receipt or enclose a copy with your mailed payment. Invoices will not be sent, but you must pay your dues by January 31st to avoid being removed from the roster.

Club Elections on November 5th

The club will hold its annual elections at the meeting on November 5th. All executive offices and two board seats are up for election. Make sure to come and vote. While your vote may be a drop in the bucket in Tuesday's national election, your vote at the club meeting on Wednesday can truly change the face of government.

Upcoming Events

November

- 5th Meeting at WWL to elect officers
- 9th **Annual Turkey Fly at WK Field**
- 19th Meeting at WWL

December

- 3rd **Awards Meeting at Lawrence Library**
- 17th Meeting at WWL

January

- 1st **Annual Ham Fly at WK Field**
- 7th Meeting at WWL
- 21st Meeting at WWL

Club Information

The Mercer County Radio Control Society is a New Jersey-based AMA Chartered club. Its field is in Assunpink Wildlife Management Area off Exit 11 of Hwy 195. It meets twice each month on Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, usually at the West Windsor Branch of the Mercer County Public Library. The club publishes this newsletter for members six times a year in odd-numbered months and operates a web site at www.mcrs.com. This newsletter is available, in color, on the web site.

Officers

President: Keith Zimmerly
VP, Membership: Bob Levanduski
VP, Events: Armand Graziani
Secretary: James Feszchak
Treasurer: Bruce Evertsen

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