

Flying Lines

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Victory in the details ...

There are no secrets in control-line model aviation. Every innovation is soon shared. But sometimes we see other fliers performing outstandingly with airplanes that just seem a little bit, well, *better* than ours. How do they do it?

Well, they'll tell us, if we only ask.

And that's why you'll find in this issue of *Flying Lines* the return of a very popular feature from the past — the winning airplane data. You liked this feature in the early years of the newsletter, but somehow it fell by the wayside. Well, it's back.

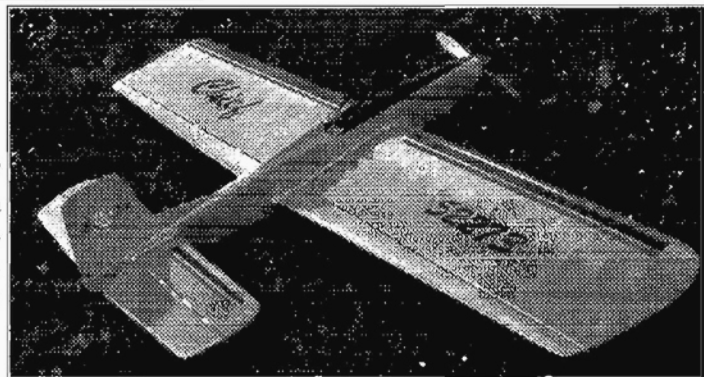
At each contest, the winner of each event will be asked to fill out a data sheet on their airplane. They're always happy to do so, and we at *FL* are glad to be able to bring you this fascinating insight into the aircraft of the successful modelers.

It's another way that modelers work together for the general health of the hobby across the region.

We're also excited about the new "Unsung Heroes" feature, appearing for the second issue in a row. We're asking *FL* readers to join in and submit articles about supporters of our hobby who deserve recognition for their exemplary contribution to our flying and building enjoyment. Subjects of these articles can be active CL modelers, or simply key supporters, such as the family featured in this issue.

Once more, we'd also like to remind readers that we'd like to get a "favorite airplane" feature going on a regular basis. Send us a picture and an article (long or short!) on your favorite plane. This does not have to be a competitive plane or a contest winner, just a plane with special significance or pleasure for you.

Remember, everyone who flies control-line airplanes is part of a small fraternity; we all de-




Don McClave of Portland, Ore., has produced another outstanding vintage airplane. This Veco Chief is his 2002 project, and was flown to victory in both Old-Time and Classic Stunt at the Jim Walker Memorial. *FL photo.*

pend on one another for help keeping this activity strong. Your participation through contributions to *Flying Lines* are invaluable toward that end.

Every time you have a major item published in *FL*, your subscription is extended by one issue. And every time a new subscriber says you sent him, you get an extra month.

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Round & Round

The Control-Line
modeler at large

By John Thompson

Modeling thought for the month:

"Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on."

— Churchill's Commentary On Man

Stop me if you've heard this one ...

My elderly neighbors, Jeannie and Joe, leaned over the back fence the other day to exclaim about having seen me on TV. Yep, they'd caught the news clip from the Jim Walker Memorial contest in Portland, where (people tell me) I was captured in the act of standing alongside the circle watching Nils Norling fly his Shark. This led to the anecdote we've all heard, team-told through the rose-colored glasses of ancient history.

Jeannie related how their sons had spent weeks building their model airplanes many years ago ("They were the kind on strings, just like yours," Joe interjected, with appropriate hand motions), and had had great fun doing it, until the fateful day of the first flight. "He let it go, and it went up and right straight down — crashed to pieces," she recalled. "Completely wrecked."

And that was the story of Joe and Jeannie's boys' model airplane hobby. Weeks of building, one brief flight, and a lifetime of retelling of the anecdote.

There must be thousands of people with the same tale to tell. The guy who sits two desks over from me at work. My tax accountant. My wife's best friend's husband. We think of CL modeling as an obscure hobby that we pursue in societal darkness — unseen and unknown by the masses. We think they can't relate.

But just to prove us wrong, every now and then someone appears at the field with that old tale and a new airplane, and we have chance to hook another enthusiast for our hobby — if we treat him right and help him avoid that still-remembered misery of one flight and a pile of pieces.

It's hard to judge, but there has to be some value to these brief news clips — and even more so to the contest itself, held in a public place. And certainly a similar value to the demonstrations

put on by our Northwest show team, as have been reported here by Bill Darkow and Jim Cameron.

Dan Rutherford points out that our greatest potential for new fliers may be in recapturing the interest of "retread" modelers. There has to be a similar, or perhaps even greater, potential in trolling for these fliers who never quite got in enough flight to be "retreads," but who demonstrated enough interest at some past time to build a plane and, without anybody's help, to crash it.

Any effort to find such fliers should be applauded — whether it's a contest, a demonstration, a school club (a la Alan Olsen's Hoquiam High School effort of a few years ago, a church activity (a la Larry Hyder's mouse race kids), or even some schoolyard sport flying. Mel Lyne's diesel combat promotion is a demonstration of successful CL evangelism.

The challenge may not be *exposure* to the public — we are seen. The challenge may be in reeling in the people who see us and know exactly what we are doing. There has to be a way to get them on the handle and get them experiencing the joy of flying CL models.

In this age of the easy to buy or build airplane (the Ukey leaps to mind), getting started in CL is easier than ever.

It just seems that we have to look up from our own pit box now and then and make sure that we set the hook when we feel a tug on the line.

My suspicion is that the most successful way of keeping the interest of a potential new flier is through one-on-one mentorship. We've tried to establish a formal program in the Eugene Prop Spinners at times over the years, but we've had limited success. The best way, I guess, is for fliers to just "adopt" potential new fliers we find and help them experience the joy of successful flight. We can invite them to our shops for building sessions, drop in in their garages to help with building problems, and help them with the struggle to get good engine runs, trim the planes, etc.

When we think of all the "I built one of those when I was a kid but I crashed it the first time I flew it" stories that abound out there, we realize that there are still lots of potential building blocks for our hobby. If we all pay some attention to the project, we can build up the participation to whatever level we desire, one new flier at a time.

Send comments, questions and topics for discussion to John Thompson, 2456 Quince St., Eugene, OR 97404. E-mail JohnT4051@aol.com. World Wide Web: <http://members.aol.com/JohnT4051/NorthwestCL.html>.

Where the action is!

Coming events in Northwest Control-Line model aviation

May 4-5

Big Money Nostalgia Diesel Combat Contest, Arlington, Wash. Site: Take Exit #206 Smokey Point from Interstate 5 and go East 1 mile on 172nd St. Turn left on 51st Ave. at the light and the site is on the left. Park on the grass. Standard Northwest Nostalgia Diesel Combat Rules. Five rounds plus finals. \$20 entry. \$1,000 prize money. Camping and motels close by. Contact Mel Lyne, e-mail: mlyne@sea-to-sky.net Telephone: (604) 898-5581.

May 5

PAC Carrier/Racing meet for all classes of Navy Carrier and .15 Nostalgia Race. Rice Mill Road site, Richmond, B.C. Contest starts at 10 a.m. Info: Contact Chris Cox at (604) 596-7635, ccox1@telus.net.

May 24-25-26

Northwest Control-Line Regionals, Albany Municipal Airport, Albany, Ore. Aerobatics: 4 PAMPA classes, OTS, Classic. Combat: Vintage Diesel, 80mph, 1/2-A, all triple elimination. Navy Carrier: .15., Profile, Class I, Class II. Racing: Mouse I (J-S)(O), Mouse II, Rat, Slow Rat, Goodyear, NW Goodyear, NW Sport (J-S)(O), NW Super Sport, Flying Clown, Quickie Rat. Scale: Precision, sport, profile. Speed: 1/2-A, 1/2-A Proto, A, B, D, FAI, Jet, Formula 40, .21 Sport, .21 Proto, NW Sport Jet. For info, contact *Flying Lines* or Contest Director Craig Bartlett, (541) 745-2025 or e-mail scaigbart@yahoo.com

June 29-30

Bladder Grabber triple-elimination AMA fast combat tournament, Harvey Field, Snohomish, Wash. For info contact Jeff Rein at Jeffrey.Rein@PSS.Boeing.com; phone (425) 823-6053.

July 6

Lucky Hand Fun Fly, Bill Riegel Field, Salem, Ore. Fly any plane or planes you want, any way you want. Every flight gets a playing card. Best poker hand wins a prize. Contest Director Mike Hazel, (503) 364-8593 or ZZCLSpeed@aol.com

July 21

Central Oregon Lawn Darts Third Annual stunt contest, Field of Dreams, Redmond, Ore. Precision Aerobatics. For info, contact Nils Norling, 281 7th St., Metolius, OR 97741, or e-mail hogrider@crestviewcable.com

July 27

PAC Classic for Northwest Sport Race, Clown Race and Carrier. Rice Mill road site, Richmond, B.C. Contest starts at 9 a.m. Contest Director: Keith Varley, (604) 327-4932.

July 28

Western Canadian Stunt Championships for Old-Time Stunt and four PAMPA classes of precision aerobatics. Rice Mill road site, Richmond, B.C. Contest Director: Chris Cox, (604) 596-7635, ccox1@telus.net.

Aug. 3-4

VGMC Can-Am Speed Champs, Upper Coquiltam River Park, Coquiltam, B.C. For info, contact Paul Gibeault, pgibeault@telus.net

Aug. 24-25

WOLF Summer Meet, Bill Riegel Field, Salem, Ore. Saturday: Northwest Sport Race, Clown Race, Quickie Rat, Classic Stunt, P40 Stunt. Sunday: PAMPA Stunt, 80mph combat. Contest Director Mike Hazel, (503) 364-8593 or ZZCLSpeed@aol.com

Sept. 21-22

Oregon CL Speed Championships, Bill Riegel Field, Salem, Ore. Contest Director Mike Hazel, (503) 364-8593 or ZZCLSpeed@aol.com

Oct. 5

Nostalgia Diesel Combat, Arlington, Wash. Site: Take Exit #206 Smokey Point from Interstate 5 and go East 1 mile on 172nd St. Turn left on 51st Ave at the light and the site is on the left. Park on the grass. Standard Northwest Nostalgia Diesel Combat Rules. Five rounds plus finals. Contact Mel Lyne, e-mail: mlyne@sea-to-sky.net Telephone: (604) 898-5581.

Oct. 12-13

Fall Follies, Bill Riegel Field, Salem, Ore. Racing, Precision Aerobatics, possibly something else. Details TBA. For info contact *Flying Lines*.

Your contest date, 2002 ???

It's not too early to get your 2002 contests listed in the "Where the Action Is" calendar. Send the information to *Flying Lines*.

The Flying Flea Market

Classified advertisements — FREE for *FL* subscribers

CL ENGINES FOR SALE: All very good condition; Two Fox MKVI Combat Specials reworked and squeaky tight, \$75 ea. or both for \$125. One K&B .28 Sportster, \$35. One Royal .28 abc, \$35. One Royal .46 ABC, \$40. One O.S. .40FP, \$45. \$5 S&H. Gary Harris, Banks, Ore. (503) 324-3450, e-mail Slowcombat@att.net

FOR SALE: Cyclon Top 3 engine, \$130. (New price is \$165.) This one has about 3 minutes of running time. E-mail Tom Strom at TStrom@aol.com.

SALE - SALE - SALE - SALE - SALE - SALE: All Brodak dope — 25% off. All Bob Smith CAs and Epoxies — 25% off. All brands, all sizes propellers — 25% off. Eugene Toy & Hobby, (541) 344-2117, www.eugenetoyandhobby.com.

BRODAK KITS FOR SALE: Pathfinder list \$80, now \$64; Cardinal list \$80, now \$64; Oriental list \$76, now \$60. Please add \$6 S&H. J & J Sales, P.O. Box 99, Waitsburg, WA 99361. Phone (509) 337-6489. E-mail ukeyman@altavista.net

FOR SALE: 2 Ea. Nelson 15 ABC FIRE, Exc., just back from Henry Nelson (new bearings, etc.) Used for FF and combat, U.S. \$135 or both for \$260; 1 Ea. Nelson 15 ABC FIRE longstack, C/W spinner, exc., low time used for GY, U.S. \$130; 1 Ea. NIB Irvine .15 MK 2 GY/FF Version, P/L chromed & fitted by Dye, fitted Nelson head, large venturi & pressure backplate, U.S. \$150; 1 Ea. NIB Irvine .15 MK 2 or speed, C/W spinner, P/L chromed and fitted by Dye, 4.9mm pipe stinger, U.S. \$185; also many excellent Irvine .15 parts for sale: heads, shims, spinners, P/L, venturis. Write for details & prices. 1 ea. original version Cyclon .15S FAI piped speed engine, Mint cond. in orig. handmade wood box W/ plexiglass top, C/W factory pan, prop, spinner, shutoff, tank & spare parts, also C/W Doc package for collectors, U.S. \$200; 1 ea. NIB Russian Cyclon .40 ABC pylon (RIRE) C/W, gorgeous 2-1/4-inch spinner, minipipe, head wrench, U.S. \$275. Paul Gibeault, 54-5380 Smith Drive, Richmond, B.C. Canada V6V 2K8, phone (604) 526 3386.

WANTED: K&B 4.9 engines and parts. Also early version of Veco Tom Tom kit. Craig Bartlett, (541) 745-2025.

AEROBATICS INTEREST GROUP: Right

now — as in **TODAY** — is the very best time to join PAMPA! Your \$25.00 will see a full year's worth of the world's best CL-specific magazine (at 100-plus pages we no longer call it a newsletter!) dropped in your mailbox. Send check or money order to: Shareen Fancher, 158 Flying Cloud Isle, Foster City, CA 94404.

WANTED: Fox .35X and .36X parts. Also SuperTigre .35 parts. Chuck Matheny, (360) 659-0155.

COMBAT INTEREST GROUP: Miniature Aircraft Combat Association offers national newsletter with technical articles, organizes national events, keeps national combat standings, and much more. Send \$15 dues to MACA, c/o Gene Berry, 4610 89th St., Lubbock, TX 79424.

NAVY CARRIER INTEREST GROUP: Navy Carrier Society offers newsletter with technical articles, organizes national events, keeps national standings and more. Contact NCS, c/o Bill Bischoff, 2609 Harris, Garland, TX 75041. Online: President Bill Calkins at cflyer@tbcnet.com.

RACING INTEREST GROUP: National Control Line Racing Association offers newsletter with technical articles, organizes national events, keeps national standings and more. Contact NCLRA, c/o Dave McDonald, P.O. Box 384, Daleville, IN 47334. Online: <http://members.aol.com/DMcD143>

HELP WANTED: Northwest Regionals 2002 field setup, registration, event judges, general assistance before, during and after the contest. Contact the *FL* editor to volunteer.

YOUR AD HERE: Remember, classified ads are free to *Flying Lines* subscribers. Send yours in today for publication in the next edition.

CORRECTION: The telephone number listed on the Northwest Regionals flyer for Eugene Toy & Hobby is incorrect. The number for ET&H is (541) 344-2117.

ON THE CONTEST TRAIL

Results of Northwest Control-Line Competition

Delta Park Delight!

The 2002 competition season began with a dandy contest at East Delta Park in Portland, the second annual Jim Walker Memorial, ably hosted by the Northwest Fireballs. If there was ever a contest that went off without a hitch, this was it!

The Fireballs and other Portland modelers deserve hearty applause for creating this new tradition of opening the season with a major CL blowout in a great central location. If you haven't yet been to this contest, mark your 2003 calendars.

Weather was partly overcast and partly sunny, but not a drop of rain and very slight, shifty breeze. Almost perfect flying conditions. Everyone got a little pink from the sun peeking through the clouds, but nobody got cooked.

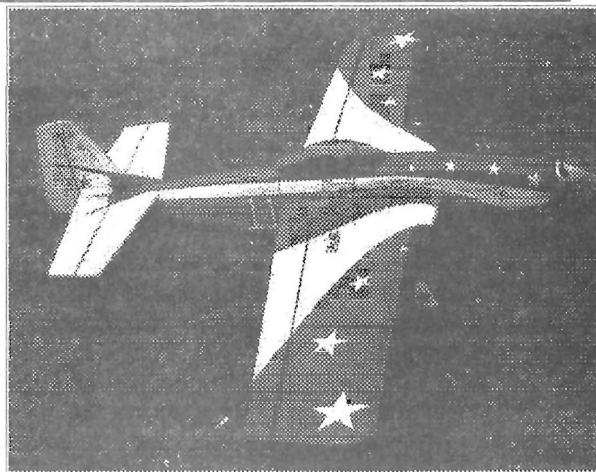
Saturday featured classic stunt, and the carrier deck was busy all day on Saturday as well. On Sunday, an excellent turnout for 80mph combat and precision aerobatics kept things going hot and heavy, but the contest was done by about 4 p.m. and there were no problems of any kind observed by your FL reporting staff.

Among the highlights of the weekend were seeing Paul Walker's fabulous new Mustang stunt masterpiece, and observing Bob Huber's first combat championship. Walker's P-51 Miss America was awarded the "People's Choice Award" after a vote of the aerobatics fliers.

Here are the results of the contest, along with data on the winning airplanes. Northwest standings points are shown in parentheses:

OLD-TIME STUNT (6 entries)

1. Don McClave, Portland, Ore. (6) 301
Data: **Veco Chief**; built by McClave; 53" span, 595 square inches; 40 oz.; flaps; adjustable leadouts, tip weight; balsa construction; Monokote; **Fox .35 stunt** (Woolard mods); 10% nitro Powermaster GMA Blend fuel; Thunder Tiger RC long plug; Taffinder 4-oz. uniflow tank; BY&O 10-3/4x6 prop; .015"x60' stranded lines; McClave handle.
2. Emil Kovac, Issaquah, Wash. (5) 303
3. Keith Varley, Vancouver, B.C. (4) 290.5
4. Dave Royer, Portland, Ore. (3) 261.5
5. Dave Baxter, Scappoose, Ore. 248.5



Paul Walker has done it again. His 2002 stunt plane is an absolutely gorgeous P-51 Miss America. See this article for the airplane data. You have to see it in person to appreciate it! *Howard Rush photo.*

6. Mike Haverly, Auburn, Wash. 225.5

Judges: Scott Riese and Bruce Hunt

CLASSIC STUNT (7 entries)

1. Don McClave (7) 552.5
Data: Same as Old-Time Stunt
2. Nils Norling, Metolius, Ore. (6) 496.5
3. Keith Varley (5) 494.5
4. Bruce Hunt, Salem, Ore. (4) 484
5. John Thompson, Eugene, Ore. 454.5
6. Mike Foley, Walla Walla, Wash. 301
7. Mike Haverly 292.5

Judges: Scott Riese and Leo Mehl

INTERMEDIATE PRECISION AERO. (1 entry)

1. Mike Haverly (1) 299
Data: **Brodak Fancy Pants**; built by Haverly; 42" span; 430 square inches; 41 oz.; flaps; balsa/silkspan construction; Sig dope finish; adjustable tip weight, leadouts, tank; **Fox .35 stunt**; MGA 5-29 fuel; Fox standard plug; Brodak 3.5-oz. uniflow tank; APC 10x5 prop; 015"x60' stranded lines, RSM adjustable handle.

Judges: Scott Riese and Paul Walker

ADVANCED PRECISION AERO. (8 entries)

1. Nils Norling (8) 479.5
Data: **Shark 45**; Lew McFarland design built by Norling; RSM & Jetco kit/plans; 60" span; 70 oz.; flaps; balsa/carbon fiber construction; PPG auto paint; adjustable pushrods, tip weight, leadouts; Winship control system; **SuperTigre .60**; Tom Lay

rework (head, ring, venturi); Thunderbolt plug, GMA Powermaster 10-29 fuel; 6.5-oz. uniflow suction tank; 13x6 wood reworked prop; .018"x70' stranded lines with crimp terminations; Tom Morris handle.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 2. Keith Varley (7) | 479 |
| 3. Bruce Hunt (6) | 477 |
| 4. Dave Royer (5) | 459.5 |
| 5. Leo Mehl, Portland, Ore. | 448 |
| 6. John Thompson | 418.5 |
| 7. Mike Hazel, Salem, Ore. | 408.5 |
| 8. Jim Johnson, Olympia, Wash. | 375.5 |

Judges: Scott Riese and Paul Walker

EXPERT PRECISION AEROBATICS (4 entries)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Paul Walker, Kent, Wash. (6) | 582.5 |
|---------------------------------|-------|
- Data: **P-51 Miss America**; Walker designed and built; 61" span, 680 square inches; 64 oz.; flaps; balsa construction; Brodak dope finish; adjustable leadouts, tip weight, elevator-flaps; **Saito .56** four-stroke; Sig 10% nitro fuel; O.S. F glow plug; 4-oz uniflow tank; Bolly 13x5 3-blade prop, .018"x65' stranded lines; Tom Morris handle. The plane is a complete take-apart; wings are in two pieces, stab and vertical tail detach.
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 2. Howard Rush, Bellevue, Wash (4.5) | 552.5 |
| 3. Jack Pitcher, Gresham, Ore. (3) | 543.5 |
| 4. Scott Riese, Portland, Ore. (1.5) | 535.5 |

Judges: Keith Varley and Bruce Hunt

CLASS I/II NAVY CARRIER (4 entries)

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Mark Hansen/ Ted Gritzmacher, Portland, Ore./ Battle Ground, Wash. (4) | 280.3 |
|---|-------|
- Data: **Martin AM-1**; designed by Bob Smurthwaite, built by Wayne Spears; 43 oz.; balsa/hardwood construction; Roberts 3-line control system; **K&B .40**; 5% nitro/25% castor fuel; K&B L-1 plug, Perfect 6-oz. uniflow tank; Master Airscrew 9x7 Scimitar prop; .015x60 stranded lines with crimp terminations, McManhon Snaps connectors; Roberts handle; pilot Mark Hansen, pit crew Ted Gritzmacher.
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 2. Mike Potter, Auburn, Wash. (3) | 280.3 |
| 3. Mike Hazel (2) | 224.7 |
| 4. Shawn Parker, Seattle, Wash. (1) | Att. |

PROFILE NAVY CARRIER (3 entries)

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. Shawn Parker (3) | 288.8 |
|---------------------|-------|
- Data: **MO-1**, Golden state kit, designed by Dick Perry, built by Bob Parker and Mike Potter; 43" span, 280 square inches; 44 oz.; line slider; balsa/ carbon fiber construction; epoxy finish; Brodak C-27 shortspan 3-line control system; **Wiley .36 carrier**; O.S. .40 carb; 50% nitro K&B fuel; K&B idle bar plug; 4-oz. uniflow suction

tank; APC 9x6 pusher prop; .015"x60' stranded lines with crimp terminations; pilot Shawn Parker, pit crew Mike Potter.

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|--------------------|--------|
| 2. Mike Potter (2) | 245.5 |
| 3. Mike Hazel (1) | 189.97 |

.15 NAVY CARRIER (2 entries)

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. Shawn Parker (2) | 288.8 |
|---------------------|-------|
- Data: **Snipe**; designed by Bill Bischoff, built from Bischoff plans by John Hall; 28" span, 220 square inches; 28 oz.; foam/ balsa/ basswood construction; epoxy finish; Brodak C-28 shortspan three-line control system; **RJL Conquest .15**; stock Perry carburetor; 50% nitro fuel; Fireball Supercool plug; Dubro 2-oz. uniflow tank; APC 7x4 prop; .012"x 52' stranded lines with crimp terminations; J-Roberts handle; pilot Shawn Parker, pit crew Mike Potter.
- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| 2. Mike Potter (1) | 128.2 |
|--------------------|-------|

GOLDEN AGE BIPLANE CARRIER (1 entry)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Mike Potter (1) | 228.3 |
|--------------------|-------|
- Data: **Boeing F4B4** from *Flying Models* plans, designed by Joe Demarco. Modified by Mike Potter for carrier. Wingspan 33.5" and 27.5", 335 sq. inches; 29 oz.; all balsa construction; Dacron covering, K&B epoxy finish; Brodak C-27 inverted three-line control system; **Fox .36 MKV** with reverse rotation crankshaft; O.S. 4BK carburetor; APC 9x6 prop; Powermaster 60% nitro fuel; Fireball Supercool plug; 4-oz. Perfect tank; .015x60' stranded lines with crimp ends; Brodak handle; pilot Mike Potter, pit crew Shawn Parker.

80-MPH COMBAT (13 entries)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Bob Huber, Stanwood, Wash. (13) | 5-1 |
|------------------------------------|-----|
- Data: **Pupfighter v.6.22**; designed and built by Dick Salter; 37" span; foam/ wood construction; FasCal finish; wingtips and trailing edge added; wire/ line tension shutoff; **O.S. .35FPS**; 10% nitro fuel; .18"x60' stranded lines with eyelet terminations; Mejluk handle; snap 100-lb. test connectors; pit crew Tony Huber.
- | | |
|---|-----|
| 2. Jeff Rein, Bothell, Wash. (12) | 5-2 |
| 3. Mel Lyne, Garibaldi Hghlnds, B.C. (11) | 5-2 |
| 4. Mike Rule, Black Diamond, Wash. (10) | 3-3 |
| 5. Dick Salter, Seattle, Wash. | 3-2 |
| 6. John Thompson | 2-2 |
| Jim Green, Bellevue, Wash. | 2-2 |
| 8. Dave Baxter | 1-2 |
| 9. Mark Hansen, Portland, Ore. | 0-2 |
| Tom Strom, Seattle, Wash. | 0-2 |
| Buzz Wilson, Edmonds, Wash. | 0-2 |
| Tony Huber, Renton, Wash. | 0-2 |
| Bob Smith, Roy, Wash. | 0-2 |

The Scoreboard

Northwest control-line competition standings.

The race is on!

The **Jim Walker Memorial** got the race under way for glory in the Northwest competition standings.

Flying in stunt, carrier and combat got the leader board established in each event. From now through the end of the 2002 season, *Flying Lines* will keep readers updated on the progress of the best of the Northwest's competitors, leading to the January 2003 publication of the Competitor of the Year award.

We hope you enjoy this feature of *FL*, that has been a part of the newsletter since it began in 1979.

Contests counted to date: April 20-21, Portland, Ore.

Following are standings for updated events:

2002 STANDINGS

OLD-TIME STUNT

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Don McClave, Portland, Ore. | 6 |
| 2. Emil Kovac, Issaquah, Wash. | 5 |
| 3. Keith Varley, Vancouver, Wash. | 4 |
| 4. Dave Royer, Portland, Ore. | 3 |

CLASSIC STUNT

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Don McClave | 7 |
| 2. Nils Norling, Metolius, Ore. | 6 |
| 3. Keith Varley | 5 |
| 4. Bruce Hunt, Salem, Ore. | 4 |

PRECISION AEROBATICS

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Nils Norling | 8 |
| 2. Keith Varley | 7 |
| 3. Bruce Hunt | 6 |
| Paul Walker, Kent, Wash. | 6 |
| 5. Dave Royer | 5 |

OVERALL STUNT

- | | |
|-----------------|----|
| 1. Keith Varley | 16 |
| 2. Nils Norling | 14 |
| 3. Don McClave | 13 |
| 4. Bruce Hunt | 10 |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 5. Dave Royer | 8 |
| 6. Paul Walker | 6 |
| 7. Emil Kovac | 5 |
| 8. Howard Rush, Bellevue, Wash. | 4.5 |
| 9. Jack Pitcher, Gresham, Ore. | 3 |
| 10. Scott Riese, Portland, Ore. | 1.5 |

PROFILE NAVY CARRIER

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Shawn Parker, Seattle, Wash. | 3 |
| 2. Mike Potter, Auburn, Wash. | 2 |
| 3. Mike Hazel, Salem, Ore. | 1 |

.15 NAVY CARRIER

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Shawn Parker | 2 |
| 2. Mike Potter | 1 |

OVERALL NAVY CARRIER

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mike Potter | 7 |
| 2. Shawn Parker | 6 |
| 3. Mark Hansen/Ted Gritzmacher, Portland, Ore./Battle Ground, Wash. | 4 |
| 4. Mike Hazel | 3 |

80mph COMBAT

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Bob Huber, Stanwood, Wash. | 13 |
| 2. Jeff Rein, Bothell, Wash. | 12 |
| 3. Mel Lyne, Garibaldi Highlands, B.C. | 11 |
| 4. Mike Rule, Black Diamond, Wash. | 10 |

OVERALL COMBAT

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Bob Huber, Stanwood, Wash. | 13 |
| 2. Jeff Rein, Bothell, Wash. | 12 |
| 3. Mel Lyne, Garibaldi Highlands, B.C. | 11 |
| 4. Mike Rule, Black Diamond, Wash. | 10 |

Flying Lines keeps track of standings in all AMA rulebook and Northwest official events, in all Northwest sanctioned contests.

Your *FL* editors do their best to keep up with the results, but contest directors can help keep the standings up to date by making sure to send the results to *FL* immediately after the contest. If you spot errors, please let us know.

Results must include the placing in each event through fourth place and the report also must list the number of contestants in the event, in order for the point standings to be counted accurately.

Also, please include in your report the hometown of the contestants, and note which contestants are juniors. Only Northwest residents are counted in the standings (AMA Dist. XI and British Columbia). The score of each contestant also should be listed for general reporting purposes and for checking against the Northwest records.

If you flew in a contest that doesn't appear to be counted, contact the contest director or *Flying Lines*.

Special notes: Precision aerobatics expert fliers' scores are multiplied by a factor of 1.5. When an individual is allowed more than one entry in a single event, only the highest-placing score shall be counted.

Send contest results, corrections and other correspondence regarding Northwest Competition Standings to John Thompson, 2456 Quince St., Eugene, OR 97404, e-mail JohnT4051@aol.com. For a printed copy of complete standings for any event, or for a copy of the rules for any Northwest event, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.



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ZOOT ZOOMER
SEZ ...
"FAST IS COOL!"

zoot's mixture!

Greetings, dudes!

You have probably heard of the term "urban legend." In our hobby we have such things, which usually can be classified as rumor, misunderstanding, myth or maybe even just a downright lie! (All of the aforementioned being equal to bogus info!) Over the years, Zoot has seen his share of this stuff (and maybe even propagated some hisself for laughs!) For your entertainment, here are some Fuel Myths that come to mind ...

"This can of fuel has been sitting around for a couple of years, betcha it's real nasty and strong by now." I heard this kind of remark coming from the oldie modelers when I was a junior-Z. I betcha none of those quackers saw any first-place action based on their fuel "prowess." Hey, if that's all it took to make fuel better, you can be sure that the fuel blenders would have been selling their wares on the basis of being "aged."

"Mix the fuel ingredients two weeks ahead and store in a dark glass bottle." This I actually saw in a 50's magazine article. The dark glass bottle is not a bad idea, but have no idea where the notion of letting the fuel blend for two weeks came from. Back in the early days of speed (and attendant speed "secrets"), there was no doubt a bit more experimentation with fuel formulas. But it would seem that either the stuff is going to mix quickly, or not at all.

Speaking of early-day fuel formulas, and something I miss from ye olden days, is the smell of nitrobenzene around the speed circles. This

stuff had a neat-o shoe-polish kind of smell. It was used to blend the high nitro with castor oil. Back in those days most everyone used only castor oil. Use of nitrobenzene has long been abandoned, since use of synthetic oil tends to facilitate better mixing. Oh, and it turns out that the stuff was dangerous anyway, being associated with the big "C" word.

Hey, I just remembered an "urban legend" from my younger days. Many years ago I met this guy while at a contest up in Washington. He was from Canada, and had a "remarkable" story about a fuel formula. The story goes that he had a friend that had come up with a fuel for our 2-cycle glow engines, that even when running at peak full output the engine would exhibit no tendency to over-heat. As a matter of fact (according to him), the engine would run so cool that you could hold your hand on the engine head indefinitely! This very special blend had 12 ingredients, but alas, his friend did not share the information and died with the recipe!

Yeh, sounds kind of bogus, eh? Anyway, for those of you wondering who was the Canadian? ... It was someone I have never seen or heard of since, and that was a long time ago (in a galaxy far, far away).

Later, dudes!

— zz —

SHOP TIPS



CLEVER BUILDING IDEAS FROM FLYING LINES READERS

• **A fast and strong hinge:** FasCal makes a great continuous hinge. Here's how to do it. First, sand the two edges to be hinged to a nice V so they have just point contact along the hinge line. Now cut the FasCal strip about 2-1/2 inches wide and stick 1-1/4" of it to the elevator top surface. Smooth the FasCal down over the point of the V. Now carefully bring the elevator close to the tailplane and set the elevator down 45 degrees. Move the elevator into contact with the tailplane, check the alignment, and stick the FasCal to the fixed tailplane top surface with the elevator still at 45 degrees down. Now flip the whole plane over, set the elevator at 45 degrees up, and stick on the bottom piece of 2-1/2-inch-wide FasCal strip, with 1 1/4" in front and behind the hinge line. Use a thumbnail to get the FasCal fully into the hinge. For super strength add a second layer of FasCal. If you cover the plane in film (Monokote, Econokote etc), then use the tip of the covering iron to glue the covering into the hinge with the elevator at 60-90 degrees deflection. After covering, bend the elevator 90 degrees up and down to free up the hinge.

— Mel Lyne

AIR MAIL

LETTERS FROM FL READERS

Dear Flying Lines:

I just received my first copy of your newsletter and I already feel compelled to write. I am concerned about the comments made regarding dBat in "Round & Round" and "Cognitive Modeler" editorials.

I flew control-line back in junior high school and recently returned a few years ago after a 20-year hiatus. I had been aware of combat since my younger days and aspired to someday be competent enough to compete. If it hadn't been for running into Mel Lyne and dBat, I would still be just planning on flying combat "someday." From your comments I can only assume that you either have forgotten what it is like to start a new pursuit or were so gifted at flying and building that your learning curve was almost effortless. Please allow me to offer a perspective on dBat from a neophyte's point of view.

I suppose our planes seem like "wobbly old tubs" to experts who have flown for years and are comfortable flying Nelson-powered fast planes and Cyclon-powered 1/2-A's. Realize this: I could never have flown, built or afforded those planes or 80mph stuff for that matter as a beginner. I never would have attempted it: too expensive, too specialized, and two scary. On the other hand, I could cut balsa and build a dBat plane or two and afford a .15 PAW. In a matter of months, I had entered my first contest. I've now flown fast planes and 1/2-A's. If it weren't for dBat I never would have made it this far.

DBat is out of compliance with contest proposal standards? Area modelers are criticized for trying to create a beginner-friendly event to attract new blood? Look around. How many new fliers have been added to traditional events? The dBat contests I've attended regularly have new fliers.

What really amazes me is that both writers of these opinions go through such gyrations to get at their main gripe: the propeller rule. Look at the pros and cons. The specified prop was cheap, relatively efficient, available and unbreakable. Remember, beginners have to buy everything new

and we don't have the resources that seasoned modelers have. The prop rule was to keep the event cheap and let beginners hit the ground and get back in the air ASAP. I'm not too proud to admit that this feature is still appreciated. The con seems to be that the specified prop is no longer made, hence the rule change.

"The current rules do not conform to any sort of logical standards ... and have micromanaged the event into a state of competitive apathy. If the event is to flourish ... these rules should be abolished." Really, Mr. Hansen? Would this be the same logic that turned slow combat from the original purpose of a low-tech, low-speed beginner-friendly event into a big-bucks, high-tech "fast combat" with suction feed? Competitive apathy? I enjoy the three to five contests that I attend each year. Where are you?

Eliminating the engine requirement and building restrictions will turn the event into a high-tech arms race for the amusement of the experts already flying the other events. If you like high-tech and expensive, have a good time in fast and 1/2-A. You want an event with anything goes and a speed limit? See you in 80mph. Would you like to encourage beginners with an event that is non-intimidating, relatively cheap and a lot of fun to boot? See you in dBat.

— *Jeff Riechel, Snohomish, Wash.*

Some Unsung and Un-Roasted(yet!) Heroes

There's a couple of unlikely dudes in our sport on the West Coast who really do a lot to hold it all together. And some of us are not even aware of the effort these guys put in. I've known them for over 20 years, a lot of contests, a lot of great times. They fly in the contests, organize them, sponsor them, and even win some of them. These are not hi-tech hero types.

These are your average "Joe grunts." Workers. The guys we cannot do without. The guys who do a staggering amount of work each year, sometimes behind the scenes, to make it all happen. They've flown racing, speed, combat, stunt, crazy events, and some even without names. Each of them has a special love for this great sport. Each of them has a wife (unbelievably understanding), a family and a job, and yet somehow finds the time to squeeze in numerous hours per week to help keep our sport alive and healthy. This newsletter is something they created and kept going for over 20 years for communication in the sport. This has

been vital in keeping the interest going. And they've done a great job and a great service for control line flying. I wonder how many of us appreciate the time and energy that goes into just one issue of *Flying Lines*?

My hat is off to the two great guys of *Flying Lines*, John Thompson and Mike Hazel. They really deserve our thanks.

— *Mel Lyne, Garibaldi Highlands, B.C.*

Dear Prop Spinners and control-line friends:

It is with great regret that the Eugene Toy & Hobby crew will not be able to attend this year's Regionals.

We have been proud to support this fine contest since the beginning and treasure the many friends we have made over the years. We are sponsoring trophies and will provide prizes as we have done in the past.

We thank you for all of your previous support and look forward to maintaining those relationships in the future.

Thanks.

— *Mark and Alan Agerter
Eugene Toy & Hobby*

Dear Flying Lines:

... I may put together a Northwest Quickie Rat and use a BB Fox .35 that's laying around my shop, then find someone who wants to fly it.

I like the new look of *FL*.

Our local hobby shop for aero folded up in December 2001. Don't even have a good outlet for balsa now. Only a craft shop with a limited assortment. Makes building really tough. Two years ago we had four places to buy wood, now none. Blame it on mail order and the Internet or just a failing economy? Most of his other supplies were for the RC crowd.

Oh, well, things are always changing.

— *Dick Kulaas, Wenatchee, Wash.*

Dear Flying Lines:

I've been trying to build my own tanks, but I have a problem. Every time I use my torch to solder the end onto the tank, the fuel catches fire. What should I do?

— *Ratso Magoo*

Thanks for the excellent question, Ratso. We find that using all-castor stunt fuel solves this problem. The formula: 0% nitro, 0% alcohol, 100% Baker's AA castor oil.

A Strange Occurrence at the Flying Field

By Mike Hazel

Here's an odd one, that I won't soon forget:

A few weeks ago I headed out to the local field to put in a few flights with my Skyray. (Yeh, the cruddy one I fly in Stunt!)

This was a solo outing, so the launching stooge was my partner.

The first flight went OK, other than the needle needing some tweak. I start the engine up for the second flight and apply the appropriate amount of tweak.

When I get to the handle, I see that the plane has scooted (on its single-wheel gear) so that it is almost pointed directly toward the center of the circle.

I run back to the plane, and pull the plane back around to proper launch angle. To keep the plane from moving, I place my battery box in front of the wing leading edge near the wingtip.

Everything looks good so I run back to the handle (yes, engine is still running). I pick up the control handle, and then the stooge release string handle, and then give it a yank.

Something is immediately wrong, as only the front half of the plane is launched and the tail section is left at the launching stooge. The plane buzzes along on the ground for part of a lap until I step out of the center to allow it to dork itself on the grass at the edge of the circle.

I then haul the plane back to the launching stooge to investigate, and see that the fuselage has broken just behind the wing trailing edge at a previous point of repair.

My guess is that when I quickly righted the plane while attached to the launching stooge, that I restressed the old repair and it was just waiting to break.

But wait, here's the weird part:

The tailskid on the rear section of the fuselage was still engaged in the launching stooge, and then I find that the stooge release string was broken midway out. So what this means is ...

The stressed fuselage broke at the exact moment that I pulled (and broke) the release string, giving only the appearance that I launched the plane!

OK guys, what are the odds of this????

The Real 'Dirt'

Some tight lines from the bad boy of CL flying, "Dirty Dan" Rutherford

MonoKote trim

Trim for MonoKote finishes is best done with plain ol' MonoKote; let the Arcey guys use the thick "trim" stuff. Do all cutting on poster board, taping the MonoKote (less protective backing) in place securely. The designs, AMA numbers for example, have previously been copied onto plain white paper and are taped to the MonoKote. Your standard #1 X-Acto knife with a #11 blade seems to be the best tool. (Just be prepared to change blades *very* frequently.) The technique is simple: Carefully cut through both paper master, MonoKote and into the poster board.

Save both paper and MonoKote cutouts. Arrange paper pieces on model, tape in place. Using a pin, poke holes at about 1/4" spacing through paper and underlying MonoKote. Later, this lets trapped air out, eliminating bubbles. Remove paper and tape. Position MonoKote pieces in place, using the pin-hole patterns as a guide. Iron in place, beginning with low heat, finishing with whatever level of heat you used on the main body of film. A trim tool helps, is not necessary.

Sharp edges eventually will lift. First, use a font that doesn't create many pointy things. Second, iron small pieces of clear MonoKote to questionable areas. Cheat by creating a radius on all corners of the clear film; fingernail clippers work.

Film maintenance

One of the problems with MonoKote finishes is that they can get a bit scruffy looking if not maintained properly. The first answer to the problem is taking extra time during the finishing process. Get everything nailed down first time through, especially edges and laps that can easily get fragged during normal handling.

Actual maintenance of a film finish is relatively easy. Clean all the glop off with a spray-on, foaming type of cleaner. There are any number out there, my favorite being Tuff Stuff, readily available at many auto-parts stores. It's real cheap, works super.

Try to avoid grabbing any old rag; it might have a dollop of dried epoxy, nicely scratching the film. Instead, while at Local Auto, snag a roll

or box of those blue "shop towels" from Scott. They are cheap, superior to normal paper towels, always free of contaminants.

With model squeaky clean you'll be pleased with Tuff Stuff cleaner. It really does work. Still, the finish won't look quite as nice as it did when new. The answer is simple: Armor-All. Squirt this stuff all over the model, let it soak in for a few minutes. Wipe down with a soft, clean cloth, again those blue paper towels being ideal.

To brag not much, my '98 Smoothie, while hardly wrapped in the best film finish in the Northwest, has held up well through four years of practice and contests, still gets pretty reasonable appearance scores. And I just told you why. There are no other tricks, this was full-disclosure.

(I have seen this cleaning treatment used with good results on painted finishes. However, you are on your own here. Especially with the Armor-All, this possibly leading to some interesting fish-eye problems if and when touch-ups are required.)

Sheet metal screws

One of Pat Johnston's *Stunt News* articles reminded me of using sheet metal screws to attach motors to maple mounts. Pat was stuffing a four-stroke into a model and existing bolt holes didn't match the new piece.

While it is widely believed that I was the only one to actually do this, for many years I used #8x3/4" pan head sheet metal screws — installed in 3/32" holes! Honest! — to hold various sorts of .36s to maple mounts in Combat models. Never, ever had a failure. Well, there was that one time when a sheet metal screw, while being tightened and no doubt due to the amount of torque required in engaging a 3/32" pilot hole, broke off flush with the mount. That was ugly! But the remaining three screws served that model well for the rest of its useful life ...

Tell ya what, Pat having reminded me of this, I wouldn't hesitate to use sheet metal screws when fitting a new engine to an existing model. Or in avoiding the use of blind nuts on profile models, whether for attachment of motor or fuel tank. Especially now that socket-head and square-drive sheet metal screws are readily available.

Combat Cornucopia

Combat news and views by Mel Lyne

The diesel "whack"

Some pointers for operating diesel engines, especially in cold weather.

Getting the engine started the first time is always the toughest start.

Fresh fuel with at least 30% ether is essential. If the beast just doesn't want to fire, even with increased compression and lots of fuel, try a shot of starting fluid (pure ether) in the exhaust ports. This usually gets immediate results. If the piston-cylinder fit is leaky (poor compression), put a few drops of castor oil in the exhaust ports, flip it over, then give it a shot of starting fluid or regular fuel.

Diesels, unlike glows, require a "smart flick-over" to start them. In North American English, this means you "whack" them. Set the prop horizontal coming onto compression, put your finger shield on, make sure the engine is not flooded, then whack it a couple of times. If it seems dry, choke it once and whack it again. Developing a good whack takes a little practice, but it will pay off big-time in faster starts. All the Brits and Europeans have used the "whack" diesel starting technique for decades.

Getting to recognize diesel engine characteristics (flooded or dry, under- or over-compressed) by the "feel" of the engine when flicking it over takes practice and will come in time. Try and avoid flooding your diesel. When fueling up, if you turn the prop backwards onto compression, this will stop fuel entering the crankcase. When the tank is full, tip the engine so that any fuel in the venturi pours out. Now you have a dry engine, and can start off with a single choke of fuel before you whack it. If it seems dry with no firing after several whacks, choke it again and repeat. If the cylinder is held lower than the crank, fuel will drain to the cylinder, and a flooded engine will result. Position the cylinder higher than the crank to lessen the flooding tendency. Conversely, if the engine seems dry, tilting the cylinder lower than the crank will help fuel to get to the cylinder.

If the engine tries to kick back when you

whack it, it is semi-flooded.

Hold the plane with the cylinder vertical, so the fuel stays at the bottom of the case, and whack it again. If it is really badly flooded, back the compression down until it starts. If there is really stiff resistance to flicking it over, back down the compression (unscrew the compression lever) until it flips over, then slowly increase the compression until it starts firing. Diesels are 27-to-1 compression ratio, and you can bend the rod or crank pin if you hydraulic them and try to flick them over. Take the compression back up once it is running. Once the engine is warmed up, lean it out for maximum rpm. Then lower the compression until it misfires.

Take the compression up about 1/8 of a turn from here and you will have the engine set at maximum power. But you need more fuel for maneuvers, so richen the motor about 1/8 of a turn on the needle. If the engine misses occasionally in the air, especially on a cold day, add more compression (screw the compression lever in). When the air is cold, the engine cools off in flight, resulting in a lack of compression. So on cold days you can add more compression.

If you just have a slight misfire in the air, you can take the plane up high and work the engine harder. This will heat up the engine and increase compression to give a smoother run. On a hot day you may find that your engine starts to labor with overcompression, especially up high. You can fly a few low level laps and this will get the engine running faster with more fuel going through it, cooling it. In hotter weather, your diesel will want more fuel to keep it from cooking. Any time your engine starts to really slow down and labor it is a sign that it is overcompressed. Sometimes you can even smell the burning castor oil. Prolonged running like this will damage the engine. So ditch it, start the engine with one good whack, and back down the compression until it just misfires, then take it up to get rid of the misfire. Lastly, open the needle a bit to let it run cooler.

Have fun operating your diesels, and always wear a finger shield. You'll be glad you did.

Mel Lyne can be contacted in care of Flying Lines.

Building the Yankee Nipper

By Gary Harris

Speed-limit combat is a slowed down version of control-line combat that is fun. World class competitors, newbies and retreads can all have a good time at it. Cost is less than AMA (Fast) or FAI combat. There is much less carnage. Engine choices are broad, with anything from a .25 to .40 working to power the plane.

Rules for the speed-limit events can vary from region to region since they aren't unified as are the AMA (Fast) rules.

GX combat is popular on the East Coast and a plane that has evolved which is purpose built for GX is the

"Yankee Nipper." This ship was designed by Jim Carpenter, who hails from North Salem, N.H.

Recently, Joe Just of J&J Sales Co. contacted me to ask if I would be interested in building a "Yankee Nipper" and I told him yes.

An instruction video filmed by Jim Carpenter came with the kit.

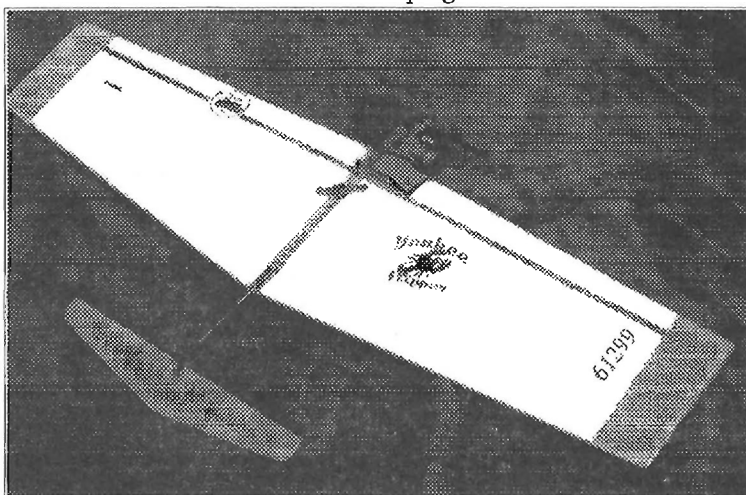
The plane uses a foam wing of about 500 square inches. Spars are 1/8" X 3/8" with the 3/8" side flat. Center rib is 3/4" pine lightened aft of the high point using circular holes drilled from the side. A carbon fiber tail boom is used. The stabilator is about 16" long and made from 1/4" balsa with the trailing edge tapered. Area of the stab is approximately 35 square inches. A permanent hinge of piano wire and brass tube is used. The bellcrank is mounted externally. Metal motor mounts are the preferred method of attaching the engine but hardwood mounts will work.

If one uses the Czecko metal motor mounts, engines of large block (.36-.40) or small block (.25-.35) will bolt right on. Jim mentions this in his video; that by simply inverting (flipping) each mount the bolt pattern becomes narrow enough for the smaller engines. Neat trick!

The GX pilots have a preference for suction

tanks but bladders can also be used. The chicken hopper hard tank works very well. The 3-1/4 oz. version seems to be about the right size.

When using the hard tank, the leading edge of the wing directly behind the engine needs to be cut out and reinforced. I set mine up with the fuel pickup tube located 5/16" above the center of the glow plug and the engine runs at the same RPM upright or inverted.



Building of the plane is conventional and fast. Jim's video goes into detail about adhesives. Each builder may choose the glue that suits them. Basically, the cores get glued to the center rib, then spars are glued in place, tip weight added, 1/8" balsa tips go on, sheet rock tape is

IRONED on at key locations, then glued with white glue, tail boom with stab can now be put in place (center rib must be pre-drilled).

About now you can cover the wing, set up the controls, mount the engine and tank then head for the flying field with your combat flying buddies.

My plane flew just fine off the board. I've tested it so far with a Fox MK4, APC 9X4 prop, hot plug and low nitro. It was faster than the 75-80mph speed but was easy and fun to fly. It has plenty of line tension, turns tight, tracks true and is very responsive without being too sensitive. The CG on mine is set at about the center of the spar which is 2-1/2" back from the leading edge. This, then, is close to 21%.

The next engine that I tried was a Fox 40 de-tuned for stunt. This engine with a 9x6 prop on low nitro and hot plug goes about the right speed to give a better evaluation as far as how the plane performs at the 73-75mph speed range. It flies very well. It is pointable and easy to fly "eyes off." At the slower speed the line tension is just right. It maneuvers well, makes tight loops and snappy corners.

Two thumbs up for the "Yankee Nipper." It would be an excellent choice for any of the speed limit combat events and lots of fun to just sport fly.

Outstanding heroes

Recognizing people who make special contributions to our hobby



(EDITOR'S NOTE: This semi-regular feature recognizes special people who have made a significant contribution to the general health of our hobby, whether they are active CL fliers or not. The following article appeared in The Register-Guard newspaper in Eugene, Ore., as part of a special section about family-owned businesses. It features one of the Northwest's great families in the model aviation hobby.)

More than just business

The family behind Eugene Toy & Hobby

By Lewis Taylor

The Register-Guard

Running a business is more than just a part-time hobby for Mark and Alan Agerter, brothers and owners of the 4,500-square-foot-shop at 32 E. 11th Ave. in Eugene, Ore.

Not only can you find balsa wood by the sheet, scale-model locomotives and a well-ordered rainbow of shiny paints in little glass jars at the Eugene Toy & Hobby store, but there's also a family history here that goes back four generations.

"I think the biggest difference with a family business is there's always an overall framework around you that influences your decisions beyond just what's best for the business," said Mark, 48.

"Not only are you asking, 'What's good for the business?' but you're wondering, 'How is this going to fit into my brother's plans or my family's plans?' I like to call it 'Business with a heart.' We're not cutthroat, go-for-it business people. That's just not our style."

The Agerter brothers say their style is a big part of what's helped them maintain their successful downtown niche. It's a friendly little shop with pockmarked glass cases that are older than many of the customers and a faint industrial scent that reminds most people of the hobby shop they used to know.

Customer service is still the overriding goal here, and Eugene Toy & Hobby is still among the

first stops in town for budding hobbyists, skilled modelers and quite a few toy shoppers. Along with Jefferson nickel holders, Lionel train sets and umpteen different kinds of X-Acto knives, you can find plastic noise makers, hula hoops, doll houses and even fake doggie-doo.

The merchandise has changed since the early days, when the Agerter's shop was located on Willamette Street and cigars and magazines were the mainstay of the business. The definition of hobbies also has changed.

Digital train controllers and microchip Lego sets now vie for the shorter attention spans of hobbyists, and "out of the box" has become a popular catch phrase in an industry that began as a way to kill time, not save it. Still, what's most remarkable about the Agerter brothers' family business is not how well it has adapted to changing times, but how much it has managed to stay the same.

"We're too stubborn to give up," Mark said. "One thing that separates us from everybody else is you can come in here and talk to the boss, and, if something goes wrong, you have eyes to look at. People come in here all the time and say, 'I just can't stand mail order. I can't stand talking to some idiot on the phone somewhere.' They want one-on-one, and, at our kind of store, you definitely get that."

The Agerter brothers aren't the only ones who recognize good service. Over the years, the shop has attracted an ever-expanding membership of dedicated customers, including one recent mail-order convert who now prefers Eugene Toy & Hobby to the hobby shop in his hometown, which happens to be in Australia.

Bill Van Orman, a model ship builder who's been shopping at the store for more than three decades now, would rather spend his money locally than order parts through the mail or over the Internet. He estimates that he has spent thousands of dollars with the Agerter family and, although he knows he could find many of the same materials elsewhere for less, he says the personal attention is invaluable.

"If you're a capitalist, and I am, they are the quintessential good story," Van Orman said. "I would bet that the number of customers that they've lost, you could count on one hand."

Both Mark and Alan know Van Orman by name, as they do all of their regular customers. It's a practice they learned from their father, Paul, who died in the early 1990s. Not only do the brothers remember working at the shop from the age of 12 or 13, but both recall being pushed out onto the floor to interact with customers at a time when most kids were still playing in the cul-de-sac.

"Socially we learned to be outgoing," said Alan, 45. "Don't draw into your shell."

"Don't beat yourself mentally," Mark continued. "Don't be afraid to not know the answer. He'd say 'Well, figure it out. You can do it, you do this at home. You know what to do. Just ask questions. If you're confused, don't BS 'em with the wrong answer. Just tell the truth.'"

Another lesson the Agerter brothers took away from their father was the importance of hiring and maintaining a good staff. The shop currently employs three part-time and 10 full-time workers, some of whom have worked there for decades.

"It truly wouldn't be possible without a good crew," Mark said. "We hire people who are actively involved in the hobbies they're selling and dealing with. A lot of it is just talking to customers about what they're doing. You want to have a good staff. You want to keep them on hand. You want to make it worth their while to be here."

Mark and Alan work full time at the store (and a whole lot of overtime during the holiday season), and both say their father (a seven-day-a-week workaholic) put in a little too much time at the hobby shop. Although they've discussed branching out with another location, they've decided against it. One advantage of being a partnership, they say, is they can still find time to spend with their families. The disadvantage, of course, is that the income is divided by two.

"We're probably not as greedy as we could be," Alan said. "We're here to work and take care of the customers. Sometimes, the customers' needs get put ahead of our own."

The Agerter brothers divide the labor between them, with Mark handling most of the hobbies and Alan dealing with the toys. In a back office cluttered with glossy catalogs, the two stay current on the latest merchandise, balance the books

and try to anticipate the year ahead.

While you might expect business to be slumping at Eugene Toy & Hobby, it turns out that recessions are actually good for the hobby industry.

"If the economy is really going strong, we're probably holding our own," Alan said. "This past year when the economy took a little downturn, it was our best year ever. Business was pretty good this past year. Probably because people are pulling in their horns a little bit and maybe not getting the Hawaii trip, the European vacation, the new car this year. So they're doing constructive things around the house with their family. Game sales are up. All our hobby business is up."

The hobby industry, the Agerters point out, was founded during the Great Depression as an inexpensive way to pass the time. Model railroad cars were constructed for next to nothing out of paper, and other cheap crafts developed. It was shortly after the Depression, in fact, that Mark and Alan Agerter's grandfather, Byron, moved to Eugene from Kansas to take over the family business from his father, Perry. At the time, the shop was known as the Magazine Exchange.

Until moving into the current location, the Agerters changed their address often, relocating into the St. Vincent de Paul building at 128 E. 11th Ave. in 1939, moving across the street next to the old Dot Dotson's photography shop in 1943, and then going one block north to 98 E. 10th Ave. in 1957. After Paul moved the business back to East 11th in 1969, the shop continued to grow, and, in 1986, the store was expanded into the adjacent restaurant.

Last year, the Agerter brothers celebrated their final loan payment with a mortgage-burning party, and the shop has continued to evolve in new ways. A modest Web page complete with actual train sounds has given the shop an Internet presence, and store has continued to cater to more and more technology-driven hobbyists.

Dale Remiro, a radio-control boat racer who helped found the Emerald Radio Control Boat Club, says many of the racers he knows do a good deal of their shopping at Eugene Toy & Hobby. Remiro, who races a methanol-powered hydroplane with a top speed of 56 miles per hour, also collects "N gauge" model railroad equipment. In the 25 years he has been shopping at the store, he says, the Agerter family has continued to cater to the needs of its customers.

"They've listened," Remiro said. "And they

haven't changed in one really important area — they haven't done anything different in terms of their service. They treat everyone fairly, and they want to do the right thing.”

Although the Agerter brothers are both married with children, neither has given too much thought to who will succeed them. Mark's daughter, Katie, has been known to play cashier on her weekends, but, for now at least, no one knows how the next chapter in the family saga will unfold.

“They're kids and I would hate to influence them at all,” Mark said. “This was the furthest thing from my mind when I was a kid. I had no aspirations to be here. I never ever thought that I would do this for a career. Then one day I thought, ‘I really enjoy this and I'm good at it, so, why not?’ I started full time in 1975, and I've been here ever since.”

(EDITOR'S NOTE: One thing the newspaper didn't mention is that ET&H maintains a fully stocked control-line section, and has hauled the whole inventory to the Northwest Regionals contest each year. The store's classified ad in the "Flying Flea Market" (Page 4) tells how to contact ET&H.)

Flying Lines welcomes contributions for the "Unsung Heroes" feature. If you know of someone worthy of featuring for their outstanding contribution to CL modeling, send it in!

Eastern Washington News

By Joe Just

Good weather has finally arrived here in the Inland Empire. Control-line flying is once again a viable undertaking. Got out this past week with a new friend, Mike Foley of Walla Walla, and tested some new Ukey prototypes and discovered that Mike is gearing up to enter the contests this year after a 20-year layoff.

Haven't heard from Mark Connor but have heard that he is now flying a scratch built P-51 of his own design and is doing well. Have done some thinking about hosting some sort of C/L get together this year, but it is still in the “thinking” stage. It has been some time since we have had a C/L meet over here in the sunshine.

Don't let go of the handle!

Time to renew: Don Chandler, John Howell, Bruce Hunt, Preston Husted, Pat Johnston, Richard Kulaas, Don McClave, Richard Smith, Rory Tennison.

Letter from Alabama

Northwest racer **Ron Howell**

reports on his move

Hey y'all, well, I'm finally getting settled in down here in Bama. I'm working for Bessemer Air Carriers as a Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic. It's a small air freight company mainly delivering stuff for banks and medical supply companies. We have 31 aircraft in our fleet so it keeps us pretty busy most of the time.

The trip down here was definitely the trip from hell. It almost sounds like a damn country song. I blew a radiator hose in Idaho, lost my trailer off the back of my truck in Colorado. Thankfully, I lost it at a stoplight in Fort Collins. Then in Oklahoma I blew a head gasket. We parked my truck there and continued on to Birmingham in my dad's truck, got home at 2:30 am. We got up the next morning at 6:00 am, went and used my dad's company truck, bought a car dolly and towed the company truck back to Oklahoma City. On the way there we came up over a rise and a car doing about 40 mph on the interstate, with a line of cars on our right. We were stuck; we slammed on the brakes and avoided hitting the other car, but the company truck's front right tire fell off the front of the dolly.

Took us about two hours to get the company truck back up onto the dolly. The trip back went without any major hangups. We finally made it to Birmingham at 9 p.m. Saturday, March 23, traveling a total of about 4,400 miles, 1,400 more than we had planned on.

Anyway, I really like it where I'm working and as soon as I get the truck up and running again, I'm planning to start flying again. For those close by, I'm mainly a racer that has dabbled in carrier.

There are a couple guys I work with that are really interested in seeing me fly and seeing how I work at a airfield there is a ton of open pavement to show them on. So maybe my dad and I will have to start up a club here in Birmingham for racers, as I've noticed there aren't too many racers in Bama. If any of you would like to get together and fly sometime, drop me an e-mail and we'll see what we can arrange (pills007@yahoo.com). I hope everyone is getting geared up for the Regionals up there. I'm sure it's going to be one of the best ever and I'm sorry I will miss it this year. Take care and keep your lines tight.

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