

# T.E.A.M. TALK

The Official Newsletter of The Evergreen Aero Modelers

March/April 2006

Attending the March 9 meeting:

- ❖ Bill Lawrence
- ❖ Bill Wheeler
- ❖ Dave Bibbee
- ❖ Jerry Eichten
- ❖ Ken Yoder (presiding)
- ❖ Dick Johnson
- ❖ Frank Macy

The club asks that if you've not paid your dues, **please do!**

## Coming Events:

March 24/25/26	Swap Meet @ Noel Martin's & Frank Macy's	
April 9	Control Line Fun-Fly	
April 29	Jim Walker Day @ Evergreen Aviation Museum	
July 22	Electric Fun Fly – Demo Flying – New Stuff	Roger Weeks-CD
August 12/13	Control Line Contest	Jerry Eichten-CD

## **TEAM Meeting March 9, 2006 Draft Minutes**

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Call to order by Ken Yoder, TEAM V.P.

Minutes of February meeting read by Ken. Jerry Eichten moves, Dave Bibbee seconds motion to approve minutes as presented. Motion passes.

**Treasurer's report** reflects balance of \$886.71 as of the start of the meeting. Everyone is urged to hurry up and pay dues for 2006. It's less work on the membership secretary. ☺

Bill Lawrence, Bill Wheeler move to approve treasurer's report. Motion passes.

**Old Business:** The Static Model Show in February was a success thanks to the planning committee and all those who turned out to help on the weekend of the event. Ribbons were awarded in several categories, plaques unfortunately arrived too late. 47 planes entered. Suggestions for next year include: need to have Static Model Show on the museum's calendar; communication with museum could be better, the plaques looked great when they arrived but should be ordered sooner, need better advertising to area hobby shops.

Swap meet planned for Noel Martin's for March 24, 25, 26. Bring a table if you're selling.

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**New Business:** Electric Fly-In at TEAM's RC field Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Roger Weeks will CD event. Demo flights and fun-fly activities, plus many of new trends in electric equipment. Put it on your calendar!

The TEAM Country Classic 2006 Control Line contest is slated August 12 & 13. Helpers needed, especially for a Sunday barbecue lunch. Jerry Eichten is contest director.

TEAM T-Shirts are still on order.

Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of Jim Walker's birth, the Oregonian credited with 'inventing' U-Control flying and promoting the sport through his American Junior Aircraft Company. The Evergreen Museum, with a huge amount of help from Frank Macy, will unveil a special exhibit to Jim Walker and AJ Aircraft on that day. Plans are for one of Mr. Walker's daughters to attend that day. Please be hand to take part in festivities.

Field Marshall Bill Lawrence says the field needs a cleanup / workday.

Anyone interested in some RC combat with .15 size aircraft should talk to Dave Bibbee. Some Wild Thing / MAM Racer combat could be fun in July.

Dave Bibbee moves to adjourn at 7:58pm. Motion passes.

For Show & Tell Frank Macy passed around an early Free Flight version of the famous Walker Fireball. Powered by a Bantam .19 the model was built by Clarence Bull. Franks says it is a fast flyer and is extremely light. Frank Also displayed a 1947 model catalog that listed 50 manufacturers offering over 90 kits. Truly the golden age of u-control flying.

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## From Your President's Workbench:

Well gang, the 5<sup>th</sup> annual static show at The Evergreen Aviation Museum is over, and by all accounts, it was a total success. A bunch of really beautiful planes, a bunch of nice guys who shared their planes with us, and a group of guys who went out back and flew, and flew and flew: both control line and RC. It was a bit cold, but the air was wonderful. I know I had a great time flying, sharing my planes, and spending time looking at other planes and talking with a great bunch of modelers.

A huge vote of thanks needs to go to Bill Lawrence, who stepped up in the last moment when Cecil Mead's brother died and Cecil was occupied elsewhere. Bill put the pieces together that Cecil had started on, and everything went like clockwork. I want also to share my personal thanks to Bill, and to all those who worked like Trojans with him all weekend.

I want to encourage all of you to come to the meeting in March. I have some great prizes for the raffle: you might just be lucky and go home with a back seat much fuller than when you came to the museum for the meeting. I have had a lot of fun getting ready for the raffle, and plan on continuing with the task. However, we need people to come and throw dollars, or five dollars, or even ten dollars into the "kitty" so we can continue.

Remember also the swap meet the last weekend of March at Noel Martin's building next to his shop and model museum. The days and the hours will be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

May you all have good flights, with steady takeoffs, and even more importantly, smoooooth landings.

Roger

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Submitted by: Bill Wheeler

“It was published in the ‘New Yorker’ some years ago and I saved it. I found it interesting because the author is about my age and was hooked on aviation and model planes as I was.”

Published in New Yorker Magazine, date unknown, possibly in the forties.

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## Innocent Bystander

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“Into the Air, Junior Birdmen!”

By L. E. Sissman

Detroit, summer, 1938. A spun-gold Sunday morning. In my small, north-facing bedroom, I wake slowly to the Sunday sounds. Big yellow Detroit Street Railway trolleys trundle infrequently by, a high, electric hum above the fierce metallic screech of the wheels upon the rails. A few early cars shift and start off from the Warren Avenue lights. Over on the polyglot East Side, a hundred various Catholic churches, Slavic churches, Scandinavian churches flung up by homesick immigrants begin their solemn monody of calling the faithful – and the habituated – to Mass or service. And then, faint but clear above the choirs of bells, comes the unignorable whine of a single-engined airplane. I slip out of bed, whip on my spectacles, and after some drawing and quartering of the sky, descry a plane high over the Hotel Palmetto, Residential Rates. It is a Stinson monoplane, and the pilot, perhaps purely for his pleasure, is executing a series of shallow, lazy dives and zooms.

Later in the day, if I can prevail upon my modestly machine-minded father, we will climb into our beetle-green 1935 Studebaker President sedan and make for the city airport, where we will stand behind a sawhorse barrier and watch the American Airlines DC-3s – described as “huge airliners” by the press of the day – arrive from or return to such exotic ports of call as Pittsburgh and Chicago, joined in the pattern by a handful of light pleasure craft like the Stinson.

Still later, I will steal out of the house and walk several blocks to the Cass-Warren Drug, where, surrounded by the apothecarial ambience of iodoform, lemonade, and chocolate soda-fountain syrup, I’ll browse at length through the latest newsstand issues of Flying Aces and Model Airplane News, buying a 25-cent copy only if the pharmacist starts looking menacing and retaliatory.

Why do – did – I spend so much of my early life as an observer of aircraft? Why did I linger, with sticky, cemented fingers, over several years’ supply of balsa models? Why, between the ages of nine and fifteen, did I devote so much of my free time to aviation lore? Largely, I suspect, because my whole generation was brainwashed to think of flying as America’s (and the world’s) last frontier. To speed our escape into the empyrean, the times had provided the added spur of the Depression. Any self-respecting lad of twenty must have thought at some point about aviation as a career; even to us tads of ten or twelve, flying a plane for a living seemed both a suitable and an admirable lifework.

Look back from adulthood, it seems easy to see that my enthusiasm, like that of thousands of others my age, was based on the public-relations efforts of the aircraft industry and the complaisance of the media in feeding its trivia to readers (of all ages) like me. However my passion seemed anything but artificially stimulated at the time. Let me tell you how it inveigled me into an abortive – and aborted – career of sorts in aviation.

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I had, as I've suggested, been interested almost from the cradle in man-made things that fly. My father, who had once been an automotive engineer, helped to awaken that interest; my fellows at school, subjected just as I was to the propaganda for air-mindedness, fanned it into something resembling an eternal flame. If I could take you back to the dim institutional corridors of Miss Newman's and Detroit Country Day School in the late thirties and early forties, you'd probably see nothing but a bunch of knickerbockered schoolboys; I, on the other hand, would see a corps of flying cadets like those to innocently apostrophized in the radio jingle (from the old Jack Armstrong children's show, I think) which I've appropriated for the title of this article.

Soon – sometime in the late thirties – reading was not enough, and I began to test the accuracy of my eye and the efficacy of my unformed hand with a series of model airplanes. They started, modestly enough, with “solid” models, carved from a block of balsa wood and hung, when completed, in the modeler's room for ornamentation. These rather static toys soon gave way to something more dynamic and exciting; flying models. Available then for as little as a quarter, fliers were rough replicas of famous planes – ranging from the Nieuports, Camels and Spads of World War I to the Wacos and Bellancas of the thirties and even, by 1939, to the Messerschmitts and Spitfires of World War II. Assembly of these fliers was a tough test of the Junior Birdman's inner strengths. First you had to cut several score parts out of a printer (but unperforated) balsa sheet with an X-acto knife, a chore guaranteed to make strong weep and men – their fathers – despair in unison.

Next came the assembling. To make the wings, the cut-out balsa wing ribs were cemented to thin balsa stringers with a cross section one sixteenth of an inch square. To make the body, you laced more thin (and maddeningly fragile) stringers along the cutout pieces that gave the fuselage its shape. Then – after a few small side chores like the elevator and rudder – you covered the wings and fuselage with a flimsy Japanese paper called, appropriately, model-airplane tissue, and shrank the new covering tight with an application of dope, a banana-oil-like substance.

But the proof of the modeler's prowess came in the flying. On a Saturday or Sunday – whenever your father was free – you'd pack the airplane in his car and he'd drive to some field on the outskirts where model airplanes were informally flown. You'd wind the rubber motor to within a literal inch of its life (I seem to remember 150 winds being *de rigueur* for smaller models of this kind) and hand-launch the craft into the wind. In most cases, the featherlight ship would be flung by the wind onto its nose at once, often breaking a wing and causing the modeler to repair to the drawing board; occasionally, the gods would permit a perfect hop of fifty or so feet and an uncruel landing, sparing the Fokker D-7 (or whatever it was) to fly another day. Most of my models followed the former course until, sometime around the beginning of the war, my old man kicked through with a big, tough, gasoline-powered model built to bounce off the great outdoors and com back for more abuse.

The gas model – it wasn't used as often as I would have liked, owing to a reluctant father – represented some sort of coming of age for me, as did some experiments in the early forties with Jerzy, a Polish contemporary of mine from the East Side. If I was far gone in air-mindedness, Jerzy was second only to the Brothers Wright in his pioneering enthusiasm; working from plans in adult aviation magazines, he had managed, when I appeared on the scene, to build several flyable miniature helicopters. Together we perfected the design – which looked a lot like your average traffic reporter's chopper today -- and flew our prototypes in a number of model air meets, often winning our class when there *was* a helicopter class.

This conquest of the air, limited as it was, spurred me to make more of my avocational obsession. Since I was still in my lower teens, it was highly unlikely that I could learn to fly a real airplane, or, since I was myopic to

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the point of undraftability, that I could volunteer for the then Army Air Force and enjoy my training at Uncle Sam's expense. No, it was distressfully clear that I was not to take my seat at the controls of a genuine airplane for some time to come, if ever. (As it turned out, it was never to be; and I'm likely to die grounded unless I late and suddenly indulge the whim shared by my daring colleagues at the office.)

What could I, a mere schoolboy in numbing wartime, do instead? My mother, as usual, came up with A Plan. I was unfortunate in having a domineering mother who had all the answers to my future; by the same token, I was fortunate in having an aggressive mother who could open the most formidably locked doors for me. At any rate, my mother thought long and deeply, that winter of 1943 when I was just fifteen, and determined that I did possess one salable commodity in, or adjacent to, the field of aviation. To wit; an experienced cement-fingered modeler myself, I could pass the gift of cutting balsa and stretching tissue along to even younger, but equally air-minded, boys and girls.

But how? I couldn't simply announce model-airplane-building seminars in my home; I had to have a base of operations. Very well, then; my mother backed by my father would set me up in a small hobby shop. They volunteered a round sum – I think \$1000, a lot of money in those days – for the purchase of my stock in trade, plus \$50 a month for rent. This latter amount was to be repaid from earnings, if any.

Obtaining stock was not a problem – even in mid-war, model-airplane kits and collateral items were available in quantity, presumably because they were morale-builders and propaganda-spreaders -- but finding a suitable (i.e. cheap) storefront was. Since I could not afford to advertise, I required a high-traffic location; my eyes fell on several untenanted stores on Woodward Avenue, the main drag of the city, which was only a two-minute walk from our home. Inquiries were unproductive; most landlords wanted \$100 or more a month for these valuable spaces, and my (or my mother's) Plan seemed doomed. Until my father, heretofore a silent partner in the borning enterprise, noted that one of the stores for rent was owned by the *New York Times*. Why, he reasoned, wouldn't a high-minded enterprise like the *Times* want to help set up a worthy young man in an equally worthy – and virtually nonprofit – business? The trick, he reasoned, was to gather his family together – father, mother, and son – and make a personal pitch to the head of *Times* real-estate operations in Detroit.

He made inquiries; the said executive turned out to be a Mr. Sulzberger, a member of the *Times's* ruling family, which my father felt augured well. He called for the appointment, which was duly granted. We met on a sunny morning in Mr. Sulzberger's modest office, high up in a downtown bank building that might well have been owned by the tentacular *Times*. It was my first business presentation, and, to my undying surprise, it went well. Mr. Sulzberger was chatty and avuncular listening in grave and middle-aged courtesy to our shaky little scenario; when we finished our act, he quietly allowed as how something might be worked out; he'd be happy, he said, to assist such an ambitious young man. What it boiled down to was a reduced rent of \$50 a month – right on target – but without a lease.

Model Airplanes Unlimited opened, with a new hand-lettered sign and the aforesaid \$1000 in models and supplies, on April 1, 1943. School hours prevented my opening until two in the afternoon, but I made up for it by staying late in the evening. From the first, to my amazement, kids showed up droves. Not just the middle-class kids from the immediate neighborhood, but dozens of black and poor whites from the slums of the East Side. And they brought money; war work had employed both of their parents in many cases, and their mothers were only too glad to spend a little cash on a place that would occupy and engross their kids while they were at work. So, at the early age of fifteen, I found myself running a kind of prototypical day-care center – and enjoying it immensely.

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When school ended, in May, I extended my business hours with an assist from my parents, who often spelled me; as public schools also let out for the summer, the number of my customers increased. It was busy, hectic, and even marginally profitable; despite the free tuition in modeling in modeling. I was clearing my rent and making a small and tidy profit on the sale of models. Best of all, my students and I had an enormously good time; as an only child, I had never worked closely with other children before, and the pleasure of teaching and teamwork was a revelation. And – in a city later to be famous for its racial tensions – black and white, hillbilly’s son and sharecropper’s son worked side by side with great goodwill.

But that was not to last. One hot day in that summer of 1943, there were rumors of riot, confirmed by a glance down Woodward Avenue; crowds of blacks and poor whites, advancing respectively from east and west, met in the middle of the street and did battle with fists and sticks, knives and blackjacks. Soon the National Guard was called in to restore peace, and olive-drab half-tracks patrolled the Avenue.

The riots continued sporadically for a few days, but my business, of course came to a dead halt. Parents kept – and continued to keep – their kids at home. I might go through an entire day with half a dozen customers. Model Airplanes Unlimited was clearly moribund, and soon the time came to call once more on Mr. Sulzberger. As sympathetic as ever, he allowed us to shut down on short notice; we owed only that month’s rent.

Now, as I write this, I hear the buzz of a light plane over in the west. In 1938, it was a wholly sweet sound, full of promise; now it is a bittersweet sound, reminding me with ever-increasing force that this is a life of choice and compromise; that I am no more a Junior Birdman; that the air and all its graces have escaped me. But grounded as I am, I still look up to see the light plane in the west.

Thank you, Bill. A great read!

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## The Fun-Fly

An apology is offered to all for combining two months into this issue. Unfortunately, my plate overfloweth with projects, work, honey-dooos, taxes, a property tax revolt, volunteering at EAM and, yes, hopes of getting in the air like and with the rest of you. I expect to start seeing some relief perhaps in May.

Oh yes, I did get into the air this past Sunday at the Fun-Fly. I did have fun...we ALL had fun and that was Jerry’s mission and the name of the event. I dusted off my old RingMaster with the 55+ year old Fox .35 Combat Special (don’t ask why I chose such a hot engine, when I have a myriad of milder powerplants with which to power the bird. The last time I flew the ‘Ring’ was about nine years ago. Since then, I’d grown older, developed benign positional vertigo, had a quad-bypass, worn-out knees, arthritis in my ankles, knees and hips and other non-treated aches and pains. I kept delaying my flights while enjoyed watching the others, from Eugene, Portland, Mac, and who knows where else, fly, share stories and laugh a great deal. This old Delaware hick really enjoyed the day. I met some other guys who were almost as old as dirt, such as I...and they flew better. Some gorgeous planes took to the sky as my nervousness built until I couldn’t stand it anymore. I had to get airborne.

Oh yes, being one to follow the rules, I had ordered two Fox .35 mufflers some months ago. They arrived and I promptly put them where I would not lose track of them. I told myself, I just grab one and put it on the evening before. “Now, where in the hay did I put them?” Couldn’t find the bloody things. A little ‘fessing’ up to Jerry,

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the CD, and he said fly on the grass circle. I wasn't sure he was concerned about noise abatement or if he wanted me to be as far away as possible with my ugly old RingMaster...OR, if he was fearful that flying with a U-Reely would jeopardize the others. What's that? A U-Reely? Hey, I'm old...what can I say. They still work and pass a 65 lb pull test...and yes, the lines still get hung up when reeling back in. Oh well. Jerry was still good to me and he fearlessly launched me without running for cover.

I had to calm my jitters for a few laps of straight and level before trying the thrilling wingover. Hey! This darn thing is faster than I remember. Now here's where it became thrilling. I decided to try a shallow wingover without going fully vertical. My vertigo kicked in and I started drunk-stepping all over the middle of the circle. Oh crap! It started to clear, but now my heart was pounding like a jack hammer and I was already out of breath. I thought this was a Fun-Fly! Why am I NOT having fun?!!! Fortunately, Jerry recommended that I fly with about half the fuel and that was a godsent suggestion. For what seemed like an hour, the Combat Special finally screamed (did I mention that I was flying unmuffled?) to a halt and with the grace of a pelican I held a perfect glide, then performed a perfect grass-tumble landing. As Jerry walked to retrieve the 'Ring', I popped a nitro and tried to gulp in as much air as I could take. I swear Jerry could hear my heart pounding. Fun? Am I having fun yet?

My second flight went a lot better, but I still had the vertigo, pounding heart and lack of sufficient air. Yet, the 'Ring' flew like a dream and tolerated my steeper wingovers, loops and minor inverted stuff, which was enough for me this day. My hand stayed attached to my body and somehow it worked better than my body. A near grease-job of a landing, this time without tumbling. Hey, maybe I've still got it...rather, maybe I'll get some it back? Exhaustion set in and I was done for the day. My one hope is that I will be able to work through my ailments and get back to some good flying like the rest of the guys.

Jerry had provided sufficient goodies that everyone who flew got something to take home from the drawing. I like to think that I made the beginnings of some new friendships. Some great flyers put up some very handsome planes. The RingMaster was not the ugliest bird there, though. Mike (can't remember his last name) flew a gyrocopter that his dad built from scratch. Now this thing personified Das Ugly Schtick! It flew pretty well, but had some stability problems when shooting landings.

Jerry Eichten put on a good Fun-Fly. Nobody crashed and everybody, including me, had fun. My digital camera arrived back from Sony's repair shop in Texas in time for me to capture some pictures. I'll try to get them into the next issue and/or post them on a website where you can view and download them. More on that later.

Good show, Jerry!

Dick Johnson, Editor