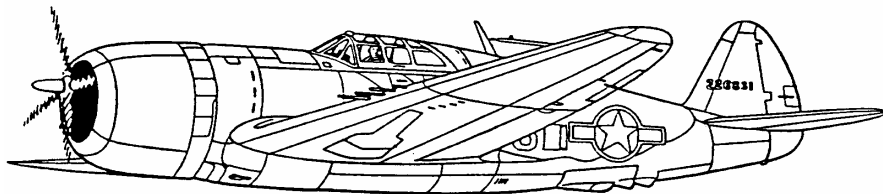


THUNDERBOLT



DECEMBER CLUB MEETING

MONDAY – DECEMBER 2nd – 7:00 PM

Livonia Senior Citizens Center

5 Mile & Farmington Roads – South-East Corner

OFFICER ELECTIONS FOR 2003

President's Message from Aaron Avery

Well, it's almost the last month of the year already. It seems like only a short time ago I became the Ribcracker President. I must say that it has been an interesting and educational year. It's been amazing to experience how much goes into making a model airplane club function. When I joined the Ribcrackers in 1997, I was under the false impression that being part of a model airplane club means two things: paying dues and flying planes. This year, more than any other, has shown me otherwise. It has become clear that a model airplane club doesn't just happen. It is a product of people who care about the hobby and the life of the organization and are willing to sacrifice some of their free time to make both survive. As the year draws to a close, I'm concerned about who will fill these roles for 2003. At the last club meeting, Don Unsworth (V-P), Gerald Klose (Sec.) and myself all announced we will not be running for office in 2003. Does this mean we will no longer be involved, of course not! *Continued on the bottom*

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RibCracker
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of
Directors**

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November Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2002

The meeting started at 7:05 PM. A. Avery informed the group that he's back to being Prez. now that his "other" job is through for the season. (He ended up 5 wins and 4 losses). The October minutes were approved as published in the Nov. issue of the Thunderbolt, with the exception of Dick Gallagher's plane being the Precedent, not President.

Sec. Report – 2003 membership cards are in if you have your proof of AMA membership and membership dues. If you have not reported your work hours, please make sure to do so by the end of Nov. to Don Unsworth.

Treasurer's Report – Detailed written report was handed out and discussed with the attending membership.

V.P. Report – the shelter at Lang needs to be covered – work will be done on Sat. Nov. 9th.

Old News – the MISS agreement has been amended and will be submitted to the MISS group within a few days. Ribcracker's were advised to (internally) keep a positive attitude with the Oakland County Parks and Rec. due to possible future needs.

New News – J. DiDia asked if the club was interested in possibly hosting an IMAC event at Lang next year (assuming the field is still available). This would be a money making event for the club and would require little participation or funds from the club to hold. A motion was made to hold the event and it was passed. Joe will report back at a future meeting on the further status of this suggestion.

December will require nominations and elections for 2003 club officers. Positions open will be President, Vice-President and Secretary. (see article further into this months newsletter).

Models of the Month – Winner was Mark Freeland with a scratch designed and built Aronica C2. This plane weighed 12 oz., power is a GWS motor and runs on 7 cells – beautiful work!

Runner ups were: Dick Gallagher – Giant size Precedent powered by a G-23 motor – Dick says it flies great! and Dennis Robbins with a colorful Mini-Sukhoi – 34" wing, 29 oz with an OS .15 LA (50% oversized engine).

Respectfully submitted – Dennis Robbins

President's Message – continued from Page 1

But it does mean that 3 of the 170 other Ribcrackers will need to assume a leadership role. If you value the opportunity to participate in model aeronautics and want to see the Ribcrackers prosper, then consider running for office. Doing so will provide an opportunity to make the organization better and it will also introduce you to the inner workings of the club and the wonderful people who take part in them. On December 2nd, we will elect a new board. If you are willing to fill an office and help the club, then please attend.

So, where does the club stand? Well, we are financially solid, our membership numbers are up, and we still have a place to fly. Make no mistake, our time at Land Field is short. As stated on many earlier occasions, if we do not find another field soon, the vitality of the club may be in question. This must be the top agenda item of 2003. Several people in the club over the past 10 months have put in countless hours trying to secure a new site, without success. Several site possibilities were pursued but none of them panned out. This does not mean that all is lost. If you ask anyone ever involved in finding a flying site, they will tell you that it never comes easy. I strongly believe that within our 170 members, the necessary knowledge and connections exist to find a new home. This resource needs to be tapped and the one to tap it, is you. Think about what and who you know and become active in this search. If you pass a piece of land that looks like it would make a good flying site, then stop and talk to the owners. Any information or help is valuable. There is power in numbers and that is the one thing we have.

I would like to say thank you to everyone who helped make this past year a success. I look forward to seeing what the New Year will bring and will support who ever it is that will lead us through it. I hope to see you at the December meeting. If not, Happy Holidays and safe flying!

Pop-Bottle Cowl by Jim Newcombe

(Ed. Note: Jim needed a cowl for his new Dazzler and made one. This is his report:)

I made a cowl for my Dazzler from a 2 liter pop bottle. I'm pretty pleased with how it turned out and how it dresses up the plane. It also ought to have a favorable impact on the aerodynamics, avoiding the exposed firewall, etc. If you haven't tried this, you might want to, as it's surprisingly easy to do. I made a mold out of foam and balsa - pink foam as a center piece, with approx. 1/4 to 1 inch of balsa around this center section - more at the front for shaping purposes. Then I shaped the balsa to the fuse, making the mold about 1/16 - 1/8 inch bigger all around and making the mold about 3/4 inch longer than needed, which included the overlap of the cowl for attachment to the fuse.

I drank an A&W diet root beer for the bottle. (Too bad they don't bottle Jack Daniel's in 2 liter plastic bottles!) Then I cut the bottle top off and left plenty of extra bottle length for going over the mold. Put a dowel into the foam center at the back of the mold and then hold the dowel in a vise with the mold pointed up. Put the bottle on top of the mold - screw top is still attached, and with the bottle centered on the mold, use your heat gun to shrink the bottle to the mold; initially holding the bottle down on the mold by pushing down on the screw top. You can use plenty of heat to get rid of any wrinkles.

Trim the bottom of the bottle at the end of the mold. Now comes the hardest part - getting the cowl off the mold. The first trial cowl I made, I was able to tap the plug out from the bottle top, but I couldn't do this on the second one, probably since I shrank the plastic more that time. (It might be easier if the balsa was sealed with epoxy, but I haven't tried this yet.) I ended up slitting the cowl length-wise at the top where it was going to have to be cut out anyway for cylinder head clearance and cowl installation and this allowed me to get the cowl off the mold. Then make all of the cutouts for fitting the cowl. It's pretty easy, since the cowl is clear so you can see where to put needle valve holes, etc.

For attachment, I used the method that I have been using for cowl attachments recently. After drilling 1/16 holes through the cowl and the fuse for the screws, I drill through the cowl with the same size drill - actually a little smaller for fuel tubing. Then put a piece of fuel tubing through and cut it off so that there's about 1/16 inch of tubing on each side of the hole. Cutting a taper in a length of tubing will allow easy entry into the cowl hole and it also allows the use of a smaller drill, providing a tighter fit for the tubing, especially after the attachment screw is inserted. This isolates the cowling from vibration and it also keeps it from cracking at the stress points. I think that the plastic used in this method is going to be pretty tough and won't crack.

If the cowl is going to be a solid color, you can paint the inside, leaving the outside clear and shiny. I guess these are techniques that the RC car guys use to also paint designs inside their car bodies, but I simply painted the outside. If painting the outside (I used LustreKote) use the mold as backing for sanding and to put the masking tape and trim on. I painted the outside after doing a lot of hot water washing to clean the cowl. I then used the mold as a backing to hold the cowl rigidly, put the Monokote trim on, being careful to not use too much heat. My finished results are below.

RIBCRACKERS PICNIC AND FUN FLY

Sunday, September 22, 2002 was another milestone in the history of the Ribcrackers Model Airplane Club. A combination of Ralph Hegadorn's wonderfully prepared grilled hot dogs and Dave Schiavolin's masterfully devised challenge to both airframe and pilot nerve. It left all the attendees in a state of pure wonderment and appreciation for the skills of these masters of the sky. But alas, someone had to win and someone had to lose. However, I do not believe anyone blamed Ralph directly for their loses. In any case, the following recaps the results of these exceptional events.

BOMB DROP EVENT 1st -- Gerald Klose, 2nd -- Jim Newcombe, 3rd -- Bob Newcombe

This event, as usual, was an attempt to drop a bomb from a flying aircraft and hopefully hit a target somewhere in western Oakland County. Three attempts were made by each pilot and by the 3rd attempt most pilots were capable of finding Lang Field. Gerald Klose, however, seemed to have fewer problems accomplishing this feat. This fed speculation concerning Gerald's whereabouts over the past few months and rumors about private flying fields and many bombs sold by retailers to one specific unidentified person. Since I have no specific evidence, I think I will just let it die.

DEAD STICK WITH SPOT LANDING 1st -- Gerald Klose, 2nd -- Dave Hurt, 3rd -- Keith Neff

This event placed pilots in an unenviable position, about 400 ft. over the field with no power. To earn 1st place they had to land on a fixed spot in the fastest amount of time. All the pilots did really well in this event, however, Gerald Klose, managed first place again. Once more speculation ran rampant with many side glances in Gerald's direction. However, since I am totally objective and with a high regard for my fellow man, I refuse to be pulled into such questionable discussions.

THE FINAL TALLY

After a full day of flying activity, good food, Mylanta, etc. the final results were tabulated and the grand winners were as follows:

1st Place-----Gerald Klose 2nd Place-----Jim Newcomb 3rd Place-----Dave Hurt

Thank you all for your participation in this event and for the other fun flies held previously. Setting up each of these events takes a considerable amount of time and effort and is certainly worthwhile, when we have a good turnout. For future reference please keep in mind that even if you do not participate directly in the events, come on out and support those that do. It makes for a much more rewarding experience for everyone.

Dave Schiavolin

More Murphy's Laws

(as they apply to Model Planes)

- ⇒ Trees are always closer than they appear and if there is only one tree in an otherwise deserted area your model will always fly into it.
- ⇒ To calculate the location of the exact rear center beneath your workbench, just drop a small screw – of which you have no extras.
- ⇒ The right way to cover a certain shape is always found out the day after you covered it the wrong way.
- ⇒ Glide distance is exactly equal to the distance between the spot where your engine quits, and the nearest spot level enough for a landing, minus 10 feet.
- ⇒ Like milk, every plane has an expiration date. Some are sooner than others.
- ⇒ CyA is a medical adhesive, as such it is much more effective at gluing fingers than balsa.
- ⇒ The probability of an engine quitting is directly proportional to the distance the airplane is from the landing area. (see glide distance above)
- ⇒ A new glow plug will last forever if you have spares, but only about a half an hour if you don't.
- ⇒ The number of radio hits is inversely proportional to the flying skill of the pilot.

The Squawk-box by Dennis Robbins

Either I'm getting older (which is better than not) or I've been around this model / flying thing for a long time. I still remember when you couldn't find ARFs, because they didn't exist. I remember building models over a long period of time, only to see them crash mere moments after they left the ground for the first time (yaa, yaa, yaa...I hear ya!). I even remember the days before CyA (Ambroid is bad) and film coverings (tissue, silkspan and dope were all we had). Now, that has changed.

It seems that I keep meeting new members/flyers out at our field, who are very excited to have learned the basics of flight. Our instructors have done them well, but some of the other mundane tasks haven't yet been taught or perfected or learned. It's all those little things that come from experience, meaning that you've made that mistake and hopefully learned from the pain. Generally I'm speaking of maintenance items, but not always. It's those little things that can add up, for instance:

- When you change or re-orient a servo arm and forget to reinstall the hold-down screw. Or... never checking the servo mounting screws and having the servos move while under load – does your flight trim no good!
- Forgetting to check the tightness of a wheel collar and seeing the wheel fall off just after you take off – or sometimes before. Or... not checking the landing gear bolts and seeing the landing gear turn 90° to the direction of travel.
- Forgetting to check the prop bolt tightness and having the prop leave the plane – hopefully not while you're standing in front of the engine – very scary! (Please don't ask how I know this!)
- My favorite – not painting the tips of your props a bright color for visibility. (NO! – I'm not the one who reaches through a prop!)
- Not checking the engine hold-down screws or the engine mount bolts – don't worry, you'll hear it as it flies past – maybe once.
- Filling your fuel tank with a ½ gallon of fuel before you realize a line you pulled “snug” might have been too tight and it came off the tank, or split just behind the firewall.

I'm sure you get the picture. I would recommend that we all routinely do a thorough pre-flight maintenance before we go out. Make a maintenance list if you have to or pick up one of the published lists from the internet. Read the magazines about our hobby and learn what others are doing – their successes can be yours and their failures can be theirs – you'll learn from them. Remember that if you purchased an ARF, it's still subject to the wear, tear and vibration that all of our models are susceptible too.

Maybe I am getting old. Except that when I called Ralph Hegadorn recently and when we ended our conversation, he said “Good-night, Young Man”. Thanks Ralph – that helped more than you realize.

Attention All Ribcrackers!!!

At the December club meeting, we will be voting for some of next years officers. Positions open will be President, Vice-President and Secretary. Normally, the last guy to duck gets elected, but it doesn't have to be that way. The positions do take some time and effort to help guide the club, but it can also be a very rewarding experience. We need volunteers for these offices, and that doesn't exclude some of you elders that have done this before. You will be rewarded with tremendous admiration, a sense of self-worth and satisfaction and a complimentary membership. Please consider helping out. This is your club and it needs your help and leadership.

What Happened!?!?!?

Another “wacko” issue that we don't have to deal with (at least here in southern Michigan). I heard a story that occasionally, in Australia, large birds have been known to “take RC planes away, and then drop them to their death”. True or false? Well – I checked with my buddy who flies south of Melbourne and he gave me this accounting:

During the summer months, his club's field regularly has large eagles circling high above their airfield. When the weather is hot, it is almost guaranteed. His club did have an incident during one of their “old timer” competitions. (For those of you who don't know about “old timers”, they're essentially large gliders, with relatively small engines, and smaller fuel tanks, that run wide open throttle until their engines cut out. The idea is to get the planes up high and then let them either glide back to earth or control their flight, generally searching for thermals.)

It was during a competition that an incident did occur. Apparently, once the engine cut out and the noise stopped, one eagle became upset that another “bird” was in it's territory. The eagle decided to dive for the now floating plane. The eagle ripped off one of the plane's wings and flew off, while the rest of the plane plummeted back to earth. Club members now realize that their planes are fine as long as their engines continue to run and they don't fly too high.

Would this be considered natural interference?

Local Coming Events –

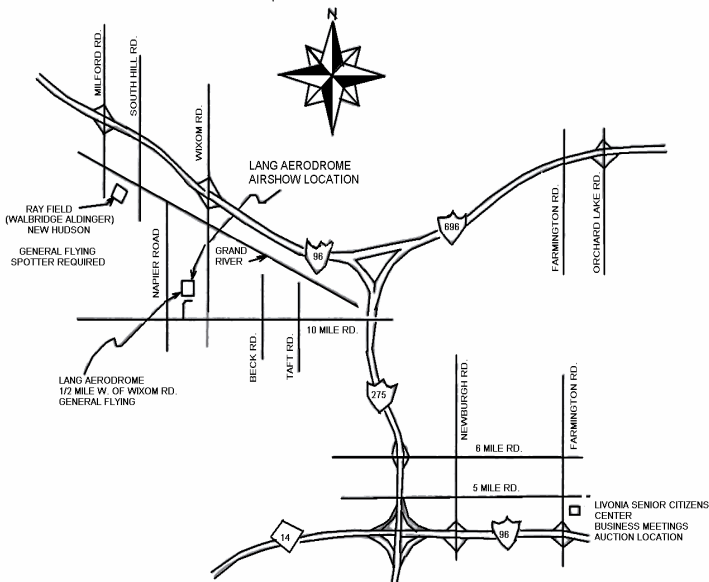
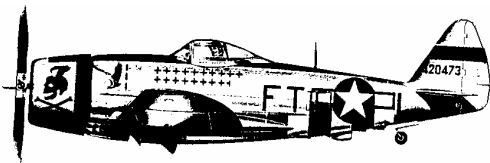
12-2	Ribcracker Club Meeting Club Meeting & Elections	Livonia Senior Citizens Cntr 5 Mile & Farmington Rds. SE Corner	Aaron Avery 734-425-8403
1-6	Ribcracker Club Meeting General Club Meeting	Livonia Senior Citizens Cntr 5 Mile & Farmington Rds, SE Corner	New President Phone # - TBD

From the Editor’s Desk – Many thanks to all who commented on this year’s newsletter – good or bad. The bad means you read this rag and I elicited a reaction, the good meant you read this rag and I elicited a reaction. Either way, at least you took the time to read the Thunderbolt and be part of the club. Thanks to those who provided articles for the newsletter,

because you made my life much easier and filled the pages with your experiences. And thanks to the board for being there for all of us. For working and laughing to make this a wonderful experience. Lastly, I want to thank the club members for being such a great bunch of guys. You make it fun to go to the field and even more fun to listen to at club meetings (even if those meetings do occasionally mean “work”). Safe holidays to all and we’ll see you in 2003.

Dennis Robbins

Dennis Robbins
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Happy Holidays!

From the 2002 Ribcracker Board, we wish you and your families the safest and best wishes for this holiday season and the coming New Year. May your planes fly straight and your crashes be few. We look forward to seeing you and all your new flying equipment during the coming season. Fly safe and be well!