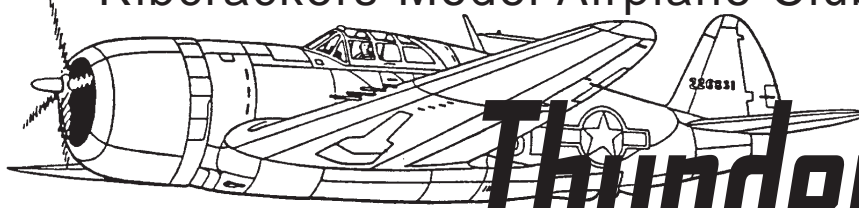




Ribcrackers Model Airplane Club



February 2009

Thunderbolt

President's Message *Alex Stathis Alexopoulos*

January is almost over and as February is approaching fast, I can't help but anticipate the end of the winter season. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see what that groundhog will say on February 2nd, and how much longer this cold winter will last. I know many of you are doing some building and we are going to see a few new, exciting planes at the field this coming season. Swap meets are always fun during the winter months, myself and some buddies checked out a few the last couple of months. We need to plan our swap meet for the upcoming season. On January 21 we had our annual Instructors Dinner that we combined this year with the Executive Board Meeting. Thank you to all who could come. We had a chance to talk a little and to work on our 2009 schedule of activities. Warren finalized the schedule and from what it seems so far, we should have a fun year of many activities, with fun flies, speed competitions, swap meet and of course our monthly club meetingsso try to stay warm for a few more weeks. I hope to see all of you at our February meeting. Have a great month of February.

Alex

WANTED

Ribcracker Pilots for next season's Student Nights.

Last year we had more students than pilots. As a result, students had to wait. We also need club members who can check out student planes. This is where most of our new members come from and it is a great way to get your work hours in. Call Warren Wells, **248-437-2694** or Alex for more details. You will meet some interesting people and have the satisfaction of teaching someone how to fly.

2009 Board of Directors

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <i>President -</i> | Alex Alexopoulos | 248-909-6869 alexopoulos24@yahoo.com |
| <i>Vice President -</i> | Hank Wojcik | 313-659-1677 |
| <i>Secretary -</i> | Matt Jerue | 248-348-5948 mdjerue@twmi.rr.com |
| <i>Treasurer -</i> | Roger Wilfong | 248-349-9079 aroger@med.umich.edu |
| <i>Editor -</i> | Don Unsworth | 248-348-0961 dunswrth@sbcglobal.net |



February Club Meeting

Monday, February 2, 7:30 pm
Livonia Senior Citizens Center
5 Mile & Farmington Roads, South-East Corner

Ribcrackers January Meeting Minutes – Jan. 5, 2009

Good turnout of club members and the meeting started at 7:34 pm. The December minutes were approved as published in the January Thunderbolt. The January Thunderbolt is now being compiled and edited by Don Unsworth and the first issue was well done and received. Don is requesting ideas for upcoming issues, so please contact him and give him something interesting to write about.

Treasurer's Report – the club remains solvent and the financial report was accepted as published and distributed. Additionally, Roger published a proposed budget for 2009. The club needs to consider cost saving measures as well as increasing our membership.

V.P. Report – The field is under a light coating of snow, but otherwise all is well.

Sec. Report – Membership renewal is now on-going. Remember that proof of a current AMA membership is required when you renew. After the March club meeting, late fees will be assessed to those slow to renew.

New / Old Items: Sometime in January (date and location to be announced) the instructors will have a party to celebrate all the hard work expended during the year to bring on new pilots. Nice job guys! The membership had a brief discussion concerning a future Combat Event, but further discussion will be necessary especially concerning safety issues. Matt Jerue will put together a club calendar for the next meeting which will include meeting dates and fun fly events

Club Raffle: A ready-to-fly Electric Zero plus an number of tools and other interesting items were raffled off this month. Excellent deal considering the price of a ticket!

Model of the Month: Dino brought in a Tuskegee Mustang RTF ARF – 40 size with an Evolution .46. Nice find Dino. Ron McHale brought in an “almost” profile Ohio Models Edge that (must of) had a 8' wing. Covered with 5 rolls of Monocote, it's big. Power is electric and Ron plans to fly it with a 10 cell LiPo and a 100 amp speed controller. This should be interesting. Winner of the MoM was Ron!

Next month's meeting will again be at the Livonia Senior Citizen's Center – 5 Mile & Farmington Roads @ 7:30pm. The date is: Feb. 2nd.

The meeting ended at ~9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted – Dennis Robbins



Model of the Month
Ron McHale



the bookshelf

The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle

Autobiography by Col. Robert Morgan with ghost writer Ron Powers

New American Library, ISBN 0-525-94610-1, 2002.

A favorite read “The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle” is a very readable personal memoir of a WWII bomber pilot, Col. Robert Morgan, who acts like a fighter jockey. It’s the story of a young kid growing up in Asheville, N.C., enjoying the good times and then watching his family lose their home due to the poor economy of the 30’s & early 40’s.

Morgan enlisted in the Army Air Corp and reported for duty and flight school in May 1941 driving to Camden, S.C. in his Model A Ford at the age of 23. Having never flown before, he was in love with flying after his first introductory flight experiencing several snap rolls and spins in a Stearman PT-17.

From the PT-17, he went on to master the BT-15, AT-7, AT-8, B-18 and the A-29 at training fields in Georgia and Louisiana. By Christmas 1941 he was checked out in his first four engine B-24C “Liberator” also known as the “Boxcar”. By March 1942 he was doing instrument landings in the B-17 and had logged a total air time of 660 hours. By June he was in final training and stationed in Walla Walla Washington doing formation flying and doing blind instrument landings.

It is now August in Bangor, Maine and Morgan meets up with a brand new B-17 number 4485 later named “The Memphis Belle” and it was love at first sight. The largest all metal plane made in the U.S. at that time. He has logged 885 hours by now and next month it is off to Europe and the War.

Morgan’s exploits on the ground and in the air had him constantly in hot water with his superiors. The buzzing of staff parties, his home town and air fields and performing non-authorized landings had him hat in hand standing before generals on many occasions. His love life is another story and I’ll leave that for you to read. It was one of his loves, Margaret Polk from Memphis that No. 4485 got its name.

After 19 months of training, 24 years old, having no prior flying experience, Morgan finds himself and crew flying their first mission into enemy territory on November 7, 1942. The losses of the 91st Bomb Group stood at 80% due to lack of fighter escorts. As an incentive to keep the crews focused on their mission, it was decided to send crews and their planes home if they completed 25 missions. The crew of the Memphis Belle was the first to complete its mission and was rewarded with going home June 13, 1943.

The “Belle” toured the U.S. that summer and in September, Morgan and his crew said goodbye to the “Belle”. Sitting at a desk for a month convinced Morgan that inactivity was not for him, so on October 2, 1943 he was sitting in the left hand seat of a B-29 in Pratt, Kansas.

Twelve months of training had Col. Morgan and his crew flying the “Dauntless Dotty” in the Pacific War. After 26 missions his war was over. From a cocky 23 year old kid flying a bomber like a fighter to a more subdued pilot having witnessed the loss of friends, fellow flyers and massive destruction, Morgan returned home to try and piece his life back together.

This is a good read and one that helps give a better perspective on the “Greatest Generation”



Editor’s Note:

If you have any knowledge of the club’s history, I would like to have it. Past fields, air shows, activities, members, etc. I’m still on the lookout for other ideas to publish. So write or call me. Remember, you don’t have to write an article. Just give me the information and I’ll do the rest

Thanks,

Don

Tip of the Month

REMINDER: Now is the time to give your fleet of planes a once over and make the necessary repairs and modifications for the coming flying season. Don’t forget to check the dates on your batteries and replace the old ones and recycle those that you are going to use.

From the journal

(Model Aviation)

AMA President Dave Mathewson’s Perspective on page 5 of the January 2009 issue outlines the resurrection of an old award. The AMA wishes to “Thank members who made model aviation at the local level more enjoyable for all of us.” Look it up for the details.

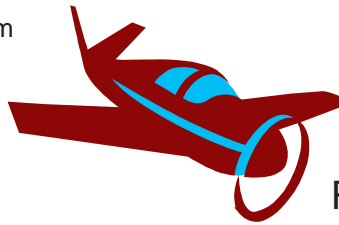
Does the RIBCRACKERS have some nominees?

Local Coming Events

February 2, 2009
Ribcrackers Club Meeting
Budget and Calendar

Livonia Senior Citizen Center, 7:30 pm
Alex Alexopoulos 248-909-6869

March 1, 2009
Flying Aces RC CLUB
18th Annual Flint RC Swap Meet
Lake Fenton High School, 9:00 am
\$5, Women no charge
Bill Gerald 810-845-3007



February 25, 2009
Skymaster Swap Shop
Wednesday 7-9pm

Larson Middle School, Troy
Joe Hasst 248-321-7934

March 2, 2009
Ribcrackers Club Meeting
Livonia Senior Citizen Center, 7:30 pm
Alex Alexopoulos 248-909-6869



We're on the web!
<http://www.ribcrackers.org>

Gerald Klose heats it up!

It's 11:00 am, the temperature is 19 degrees, the sky a light slate grey, a steady wind out of the south at 7 mph, gusting to 20 mph and the tops of the grass showing through a light coating of snow. Got the picture? It's COLD! Matt Jerue is on the flight line and ready to start up and get the first flight of the new year in the record book, but alas, a fuel leak occurs and he has to withdraw. Next on the scene is Alex. The OS 4 stroke starts easily and lifts his TANGO quickly into the air. Gerald Klose is next with his TIGER 60. After a little heat supplied by his van's exhaust pipe, the plane launches quickly into a 20 mph gusting wind. There were a few spectators, future member Patrick Gietzen and son Matthew, Warren Wells and me (Don). So Alex has bragging rights for the first flight of 2009. It's 12 noon, the toes are cold and I am out of here!

