

Thunderbolt Lite: Ribcrackers Newsletter for September 2013:

As Don is off this month taking care of some health issues, this will be a truncated and rather informal newsletter, without the careful formatting and editing Don normally provides and we all have become accustomed to. (See what I mean? A dangling preposition already and I'm only in the first sentence!) We all wish Don a speedy recuperation and rapid return to the group.

Sorry, no photos this month as none were contributed and your ersatz editor was traveling on business without a laptop, so this issue had to be pasted together on an iPad.

Minutes from previous meeting, provided by Secretary Gerald Klose:

Meeting sorta started around 7-ish. Minutes recorder didn't show up until 7:15 thinking he was early based on the start time mentioned in the newsletter.

- Don Unsworth will not be able to publish the September Newsletter. Don is still looking for someone to help with the newsletter Marshall mentioned that he has difficulty getting a response from Don asking to get stuffed published in the newsletter.
- Marshall suggested doing a club picnic.
- A discussion was started whether we should have the winter meeting minutes at Nankin again. How about at ElectroDynamics? In either case the Senior Citizen center is available for the rest of the year.
- John suggested that memo be sent to membership to remind them about the meeting either the day of or the day before.
- Dennis Carpenter offered his house as an alternate location for the meeting if it is raining at the field. Directions will be given as necessary.

Raffle

- Blue Ticket - Dennis Robbins
- Red ticket
 - Heat Gun Marshall
 - Fuel Hank
 - Dremel Acc. Ken

Several people got one more flight in before it was time to go home/bar because of darkness.

Beyond the Basics: Learning to do Aerobatics and 3D Maneuvers

OK, so you've gotten past initial training and can reliably expect to bring home your plane in roughly the same number of pieces you brought it to the field in, so what's next? After a while you get tired of just tooling around the patch, doing an occasional aileron roll or loop and you want to try your hand at something a bit more adventurous, but how do you learn without just experimenting on your own? You can appeal to a more experienced member at the club field and get some good instruction that way, and most RC flight simulators include some sort of instructional mode that will show how to push the sticks around to get your desired results for certain maneuvers, but even the best flight sims don't quite emulate the actual airplane behavior very well. Another alternative is to search out instructional information on the internet, and there is plenty to pick from. Here are a few resources contributed by some of our members:

Bonedoc's Youtube instructional videos

Do a websearch for bonedoc RC video and you will find a large selection of really well-done videos showing how to perform a wide range of aerobatic and 3-D maneuvers. His videos are different than many others in that he overlays a ghost image of his fingers on the transmitter over top of actual footage (does that term still mean anything in the digital media age?) of his airplane responding to the controls. Most similar videos on the web are done using screen captures from a flight simulator rather than a real model, and the simulations just don't seem to do as good a job of getting the point across as the real images do. You can scroll back and forth in the videos to catch the stick movements during each part of the maneuver as many times as you like, then go to your favorite simulator and start trying them out for yourself before risking your model on your new-found skills.

Aircraft Proving Grounds

Thanks to John Jushkewich for providing links to several good articles on 3-D maneuvers and other aspects of aerobatics from a website called the Aircraft Proving Grounds. You can find them at <http://www.geistware.com/rcmodeling/index.htm>. There is a wide range of good info on airplane setup and flying that will take you step-by-step through the process of tailoring your plane for aerobatics and learning aerobatic maneuvers from simple to complex. This site has a nice section on learning the Aresti system of aerobatic diagrams that is the standard used to depict all of the recognized aerobatic elements.

RCFlightSchool.com

This site has some good free tutorials on basic to advanced aerobatic maneuvers that are worth a look. They offer a comprehensive flight-school like training approach to their customers, but their site has free information as well.

RCGroups.com and FlyingGiants.com

Both of these venerable websites provide lots of good videos showing how to perform just about any maneuver you can think of. Search for aerobatics instruction in their forums and you'll find plenty of good stuff.

There are lots of other sites on the internet that host excellent training videos and instructional material that can answer most of your questions. It's amazing how much free material is available at the click of a mouse button these days. It's a far cry from the world many of us started out in 30-40-50 years ago. Back then it was find an instructor or trial and error. Mostly error.

Safety Thoughts

The rash of fatal RC incidents in Switzerland, Germany, Malaysia, and most recently New York City have caused a lot of on-line discussion about the safety of our hobby and will probably result in more flying restrictions and field closings. It's instructive to spend some time reading through the archives of several popular on-line RC forums, where you'll find threads with titles like "Post your worst RC-related injury", or "What's the dumbest thing you've ever done while flying?" These threads are chock full of gruesome descriptions of mayhem created by RC airplanes and helicopters, often complete with color pics or even videos. After reading through hundreds of such posts over the past week, ranging from serious lacerations up to loss of limbs (I'm talking whole ARMS and hands, not just fingers,) I conclude that almost all RC-related injuries and deaths can be attributed to a single root cause: complacency.

Ironically, the more experience you get with a particular model or maneuver, the more likely you are to become inured to the potential danger, and the higher the potential for a lapse of concentration or judgment. Also ironically, in some respects a model's maiden flight is LESS dangerous than its 100th flight because the pilot is very aware that he doesn't know exactly what the plane might do, and is expecting the unexpected.

When it comes to crashes, we all like to worry about things like radio brownouts, servo failures, mechanical problems, in-flight structural failures, and other issues, but when it comes to accidents that cause injuries, these are not usually contributors. The injuries I saw reported online are almost all the result of either inattention around spinning props/rotors in the pits, or deliberately flying too close to people. All of the fatal accidents over the past year resulted from flying aircraft into spectators or pilots, and all could likely have been prevented by these three simple rules:

1. Don't fly over people's heads, ever
2. Don't fly toward yourself or others at high speed, flying should always be parallel to or away from the flight line until the aircraft is beyond the ends of the field. No matter how awesome your piloting skills, if your radio glitches or a linkage breaks in flight, you become a spectator, or potentially a target.

3. Don't do high alpha, low altitude 3D flying close to the flight line, ESPECIALLY with helicopters. Although airspeeds are typically low, 3D flying is inherently unstable and more likely to result in a loss of control. You should fly far enough out from the flight line to accommodate a loss of control without endangering anyone.

Every one of us Ribcrackers has crashed, but fortunately, as far as I'm aware, none has resulted in a serious injury. Every one of us has probably also had an occasional lapse of concentration in the pits, sometimes accompanied by a close call or minor injury. Let's all try hard to stay safe every time we fly. Remember, Murphy was an optimist: "If it can go wrong, it will. If it can't go wrong, it still will"

Raffle Items for September Meeting

Marshall advises that the following items will be raffled at the September meeting:

1. A Great Planes Zlin 526 Electric or Fuel (must take in a minimum of \$90.00 for it to go)
2. An electric Foamie: receiver ready donated by Louie Marcon
3. An Igniter
4. A Hobbico MKII battery pack for electric starters making them portable
5. A \$25.00 Nankin Gift Card

Upcoming Events:

September 9th: Ribcrackers club meeting at Ray Field

Student night continues on Wednesday nights at 6:00 PM through the months of September and October, weather permitting.

Several local clubs are hosting funfllys and other activities at their fields in September, check the calendar in the back of Model Aviation for details.