



Skyhawk Report

January 2005

Next meeting is Monday, January 17th at Perkins Restaurant, 1455 Woodruff Road

President:	Tom Holmes	233-1912	tholmes@mindspring.com
Vice President:	Russ Stiles	289-0697	titortd@earthlink.net
Secretary/Treasurer:	Steve Dunann	676-9118	sdunan@charter.net

Items for Sale

Slightly used balsa wood for sale...cheap! Contact Mike Reece at:
mwreece@charter.net.

Quotes of the Month (A couple extra this month...just not much going on!)

Rodney Dangerfield: "I don't get no respect: When I played in the sandbox as a kid the cat kept covering me up!"

George Carlin: When someone asks you, "A penny for your thoughts?" and you put your two cents in...what happens to the other penny?

Will Rogers: "Don't gamble; take all your savings and buy some good stock and hold it 'til it goes up, then sell it. If it don't go up, don't buy it."

"The best doctor in the world is the veterinarian. He can't ask his patients what is the matter-he's got to just know."

New Members

No new members or new pilots in December.

Upcoming Events

After carefully and thoroughly researching the topic I discovered that there are *absolutely no* AMA or even non-AMA events scheduled anywhere east of the Mississippi during January. No fly-ins, no fun fly's, no trade shows, no nuttin'. Oh, OK, there are a couple of swap meets in Florida and New York, but the ones in New York are only scheduled because Hillary cancelled winter there this year...she's just too *cold!*

Communications

"Eliminating Variables"

I was having a discussion a few weeks ago with Eric Meyers of Horizon Hobbies. I told him about a mishap of mine and he made the statement, "Successful RC flying is all about the *elimination of variables*". I've thought a lot about that since, and it makes a great deal of sense.

Before each flight airline and private pilots do a "walk around" check of their aircraft before departure: checking fuel for any water content, ensuring that control surface actuators are secure and operating properly, inspecting tires for proper inflation and integrity, following pre-flight check lists, etc. RC flyers should do the same types of things:

- Use high quality fuel...inexpensive fuel may be appealing, but may also may contain contaminants;
- Don't use fuel that is old or that has been exposed to the air for a long time;
- On four-strokes be sure to add some oil to the exhaust nipple on the rear of the crank case housing prior to starting the engine;
- Check to make sure all control surface linkages are tight and that clevises are secured with a clevis retainer or tied off with thread or dental floss;
- Inspect all hinges on control surfaces for wear or breakage;
- Use after-run oil after each flight on two-strokes;
- "Tug" on the wings and tail feathers to insure there is no hidden damage;
- Make sure you have "ranged-checked" your radio before flying;
- Check to make sure that radio and receiver batteries are fully charged. Even for NiCads, recycle the batteries at least a couple of times a month if you fly frequently;
- Inspect any electrical connectors to be sure they won't separate during flight;
- Turn on the transmitter and receiver(s) to check for proper travel throws and direction of travel of control surfaces (*some of us have sometimes* forgotten to change the "model" setting in the transmitter);

- After every few flights check the glow plug to be sure it glows brightly, otherwise replace it. And use high quality glow plugs (after all, they don't cost much!);
- Inspect the covering fabric for tears or weak spots that could cause trouble during flight;
- Check for any broken wing spars or fuselage sections;
- Check to be sure the canopy is securely fastened (some planes just don't fly too well with a separated canopy);
- Check the landing gear to make certain the wheels are on tight (*NO* plane lands well without one or both wheels attached!);
- Inspect the fuel tubing where it connects to the fuel tank, the carburetor and the pressure nipple on the muffler. The ends of the tubing can stretch after prolonged use and may no longer form a tight seal over fuel fittings (lose pressure and...oops, the "C" word!);
- Make sure the muffler connection is tight to avoid loss of pressure to the fuel tank;
- Periodically adjust the valve clearances on four stroke engines;
- Shake the plane (with the fuel tank empty) to ensure the clunk can be heard as it moves around inside the fuel tank. If you can't hear the clunk, it may have been forced to the front of the fuel tank which invariably leads to that dismaying "dead stick" bring-'em-home!
- Look at the covering material to make sure all seams are well sealed and won't come loose during flight;
- Allow your engine to "warm up" a bit before take off. Some engines just run better when they are hotter;
- Be sure the "transition" from low throttle to high throttle is smooth and quick. Otherwise adjustment to the high- or low-idle screws may be required;
- **ALWAYS** place your club card or AMA card on the proper channel designator on the impound board;
- Make sure your radio frequency tags are on the antenna of your radio (so others can be sure there will be no interference);
- Use the "wind ribbon" supplied with your radio so you will be sure of wind direction.

I'm certain I don't know *all* the variables involved in flying RC airplanes. Surely there are more (direction and force of the wind, humidity, temperature, height of the grass on the runway, snow, ice, blizzards, advancing tsunamis...I could go on forever!). But I think the point Eric was trying to make is there are a lot of them. And, while we can't control all of them, the more of them we can (and do) control, the better the odds of a successful flight. If we *could* control all of the flight variables, then we would never even hear the dreaded "C" word! So, check all things you can...and, unfortunately, the rest is up to you.

This Month's Special



Mea Culpa

Last month I wrote about safety, and I learned a lot researching the topic, although the lessons turned up a bit short. I left one out...**NEVER** taxi your aircraft all the way back to your field box! It's a great way to ruin a prop while simultaneously cutting a neat round hole in your tool kit. Oh, yeah, and it drives Bollinger absolutely crazy!

Have a great NEW YEAR!

mwreece@charter.net

R.C. Planes

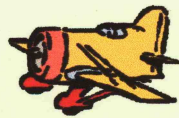
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WCRC Skyhawks
2607 Woodruff Road
Suite E #106
Simpsonville, South Carolina 29681