

M.A.R.C.S. SPARKS

Monthly Newsletter of the Madison Area Radio Control Society
Madison, Wisconsin AMA Charter #665

Volume 43 - September 2004 - Issue 9

Come Fly With Us

MARCS meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 P.M. in Room 201B of the Madison Labor Temple, 1602 S. Park St. in Madison. Visitors are always welcome. We think we have a great hobby and we invite you to come and see and consider joining us.

Officers:

Pres: Vince Streif, streif1@charter.net
Vice Pres: Brad Witt, bwitt@chorus.net
Secty: Andrew Morrow, rcfliegerjm@netscape.net
Treas. Ed McDonald, edgarnmcdonald@msn.com

Membership Information: Ed McDonald
Phone 249-0734

Flight Instruction Coordinator: Andrew Morrow
Phone 834-9353

Mail Address for official business, **other than for publication in SPARKS**

PO Box 8864
Madison, WI 53708

MARCS Web Site: www.marcswi.org

Web Master: Chris Spierings
spierings@mailbag.com

The MARCS web site contains links to War Birds and Electric Flyers Special Interest Group web sites.

Editor: Jerry Buss
1809 Browning Rd.
Madison, WI 53704

E mail: jbuss@itis.com Phone 244-8534
Contribution of articles for publication is encouraged.
Deadline for publication is the 20th of the month.

Minutes of MARCS August 5, 2004 Meeting

By Andrew Morrow

Visitors: None

New Members: None

Old Business:

- If you should be receiving Sparks by e mail and are not, contact Jerry Buss about the problem. Make sure he has your correct e mail address. Also, if you should be receiving it by regular mail and are not, make sure that Ed McDonald has your correct address, since he prepares the mailing labels..

- The Float Fly went very well, but a small aircraft turn-out this year.

- The Boy Scout Fly had a good turnout and was a great time. Watch Bill Oberdieck's column in *Model Aviation* for a report on it, with pictures.

New Business:

-The Scale Rally is coming up on the 15th. Volunteers are still needed, and help is needed setting up the evening before and the morning of the rally. All scale-type aircraft are welcomed.

-The Electric Fun Fly is on the 21st. All electric aircraft are welcome.

Philosophy 101

A person's reputation is a mixture of what his friends, enemies and relatives say behind his back.

Unknown Source

MARCS Member Does Well at Top Gun

If you didn't pay too much attention to the September issue of *Model Aviation*, you may not be aware that Dustin Buescher not only flew at Top Gun in Lakeland, Florida this summer, but placed fourth in the Pro-Am Division. On page 23, you can see a picture of his turbine powered F-86 built from a BVM kit. It's a really neat looking machine.

As I recall from the presentation Dustin made at the January meeting, he is interning this summer at Bob Violet Models.

Congratulations, Dustin. And by the way, if time allows, I'd still like to have that article about Top

Gun. I'm sure your fellow modelers would be very interested in it, as well as your work at BVM.

RC Garage Sale and Swap Meet

A fellow named Bill Hitchcock recently contacted Don Weigt wanting to know how he could dispose of some RC stuff left by his recently deceased father. Wayne Lanphear is still trying to dispose of Bob Miracles's planes and other material too.

So the idea occurred to me, why not have a garage sale kind of thing, like our swap meet that is held in February? After running it past the board, everyone seems to think it's a good idea - so that's what we'll do.

On Saturday morning, September 11, bring whatever you want to get rid of out to the field. You can set up in the shelter, out of the way of folks who want to fly. If you have a table that could be used for display, bring it along. If you have nothing to sell, come on out and shake the moths out of your wallet and buy something. Plan to spend from about 9:00 to noon. You can get in a flight or two as well.

Beginning flyers who don't have a whole lot of stuff in their field boxes or on their workbenches yet may find this to be a bonanza, since we are talking about selling that kind of stuff that was accumulated over years by veteran flyers. Also planes, engines, radios, etc. We're talking about better than ordinary prices too.

Scale Rally Credits

By Don Weigt

I want to thank everybody who helped with the Ken Kindschi Memorial Scale Rally on Sunday, August 15. Thanks to you, it was a great success!

Here are the people I managed to list who helped. My apologies to any I may have missed: please let me know who you are, so we can add you to the list! I don't know every member's name, I'm sorry to admit.

Also, a special thank you to the Kellys, who drove down from Baraboo just to serve food, when they had to leave early so Mike could work that afternoon and evening. That's going above and beyond the call!

Greg Baer: Flight line. **Jerry Buss:** Food buying and prep, **Joe Imilkowski:** Public Address system, **Joyce Jeardeau:** Raffle ticket sales, **Jeremy Kelly:** Food, serving **Mike Kelly:** grilling, **Mike Kimmerly:** Grilling, **Bill Kinney:** Trimming, flight line, **Wayne Lanphear:** Making signs, frequency board(?), **Tom Lazar:** Contest Director, **Craig Lovell:** Flight line(?)

Dave Rush: Raffle, raffle shelter, **Charlie Schultz:**

Impound shelter, flight line, **Vince Streif:** Grilling **Dan Sutter:** Food serving, **Lois Weber:** Food serving **Fred Weigt:** Sanitary gloves for food serving, **Brad Witt:** Transmitter impound, **Unknown:** Impound assembly, **Unknown:** Putting up signs

Please thank and support these fine raffle sponsors. Listed in alphabetical order they are:

Balsa USA - Hobby Horse - RC Performance & Hobbies - Schultz Sport N' Hobby - Skyshark R/C

1.5 Meter Hand Launch/High Start Contest, August 14, 2004

By Al Scidmore, CD

MARCS Nth Annual Hand Launch/High Start Contest was held on a beautiful day with light winds and excellent temperatures and humidity. We had 5 flyers from out of town and 5 locals. Using a set of matrices to match competitors, we flew 5 flyers in each 10 minute heat in man-on-man competition. There were 6 tasks (rounds) for each flyer to complete which makes for about 60 minutes of competition flying for each contestant. In addition, every contestant was busy timing and helping another competitor when not flying himself. This can be a very physical activity. Like most soaring competition, hand-launch requires one to move around a lot.

Contestants found the tasks interesting and in some cases challenging. Our contest traditionally requires a mix of hand launch and high start launch tasks. We allowed anyone who wished to substitute a hand-launch for a high-start launch, and many times they did. Some of the better discus style launchers got almost as much altitude on their throws as those using the diminutive high-starts that we use for this event. Lee Murray from Appleton and Chris Shubak from Madison both used the javelin type throw on their planes. However, most of hand-launches were done discus style where technique greatly influences the launch height. Even I have switched to discus launching. Who said that you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

For most tasks 20 points was earned for landing within an assigned 15 foot radius circle. For landing in his hand, one could obtain 10 points. Many flyers chase off down wind with a thermal and a hand catch is all that they can do. The tasks?

Round 1: Best 3 flights, max of 3 minutes any flight. Ten hand launches allowed.

Round 2 Best 3 flights. Max of 3 Minutes.Five

- high start launches.
- Round 3 Total accumulation (3 minute flight).
Either type launch.
 - Round 4 Best single flight. Five hand
launches.
 - Round 5 1, 2, 3, 4 minute flights in any order
Ten High Start launches
 - Round 6 Ascending times:20, 40, 60, etc. sec.
No limit on # of launches..

The A/C flown varied from original design and construction to kits and a couple that appeared to be nearly ARF planes. I allowed every contestant switch airplanes during the contest, even during a heat. Some planes were balsa and stick creations while some were glass or Kevlar vacuum bagged wings with fiberglass fuselages. As in other areas of soaring, one can pay \$200 (or more) for an airplane or as little as \$30 for a kit.

THE FINAL SCORES (out of 6000)

Ben Yahr, Madison	5972
Steve Leittgen, LaCrosse	4968
Sl Scidmore, Madison	4857
Bob Scidmore, Madison	4703
Chris Shubak, Madison	4682
Steve Yahr, Verona	4195
Curt Lewis, Loves Park, IL	3911
Lee Murray, Appleton	3878
Bob Harold, West Salem	3666
Trace Lewis, Loves Park, IL	2139

To Brian Andreas a great big THANKS for working the entire contest even though he didn't fly. He could have, but didn't fly so that he could make it all go smoother

Flying the Mail

By Jerry Buss

The first move by the new Postmaster General, Will Hays, and his Second Assistant, Col. E.H. Shaughnessy, had ominous overtones for the people who flew the mail. By the end of June, 1921 they had shut down the Washington to New York experimental route and closed the two feeder routes from St. Louis and Minneapolis to Chicago. The air mail work force of over 500 employees was cut back to 382. Fifty five pilots had carried about 2 million pounds of mail in 1920, but pilot strength was now reduced to 39. Shaughnessy also discontinued the program for testing new aircraft as potential mail carriers and, instead, named the DH-4B as the standard machine of the air mail service.

The New York to San Francisco transcontinental route was reorganized into three divisions. New York - Chicago became the Eastern Division, Chicago - Rock Springs became the Central Division and Rock Springs-San Francisco became the Western Division. Shaughnessy had no more than completed all of these actions when he died suddenly. Hays replaced him with another army man, Col. Paul Henderson.

Henderson proved to be an excellent business man and planner, whose dream it was to extend mail service on a grid between all the major cities in the country. To be effective, night flying would be essential and that emphasised the need for new lighting technology. As an initial experiment, he turned to two young Army Air Corps officers from McCook Field (now Wright-Patterson) at Dayton, Donald Bruner and Harold Harris, who were already working on the notion of a lighted airway. With Henderson's support, the Army was persuaded to erect a chain of beacons from Dayton to Columbus, 80 miles away. Then a system of landing lights and building markers were added. The lighting industry foresaw an emerging market here and were enthusiastic about developing new equipment.

Superintendent of Air Mail, Carl Egge, hired an illuminating engineer named J.V. Magee to study the problem and develop a plan and in April 1923 the plan was approved and funded by Congress. As an initial experiment, small acetylene gas flares that were visible for about 10 miles were set up at 3 mile intervals from Chicago to Cheyenne. Emergency fields were established roughly 25 miles apart and at each of these a rotating beacon on a 50 foot tower swept the area, rotating 6 times per minute. Beacons twice the size of the emergency field lights were used at the regular fields, Chicago, Iowa City, Omaha, North Platte and Cheyenne. In addition, 36 inch search lights producing 500 million candlepower were mounted behind lenses and were put at the sides of the runways at the regular fields. The lenses dispersed light over the runways, giving as little interference with the pilots' night vision as possible. Red obstacle markers were placed where needed.

In the life of the DH-4B, as many as 600 structural changes were made to help accommodate the demands of carrying the mail and a major change was needed to support night flying. The wings were redesigned with the happy result of lowering the landing speed from 60 mph to 45 to make night landings less risky. As an unexpected bonus, it also gave it a 10 mph increase in

cruising speed to 131 mph with a 500 pound load. Maritime style red, green and white navigation lights were also added to the planes, along with landing lights that were mounted as far outboard as possible, between the wings.

Between August 21 and 24, 1923 the beacon system was tested and it worked to perfection. One eastbound load of mail arrived in New York only 26 hours and 14 minutes after departing San Francisco. Heretofore, the planes had handed the mail off to trains when darkness fell, with the trains handing off to planes again in the morning. Now transcontinental through service was in sight. The coast to coast lighted airway waited only for Congressional appropriation of funds to complete its construction and that came quickly.

So remarkable were the achievements of the postal flyers that in both 1922 and 1923 the US Post Office received the Collier Trophy for "The Greatest Achievement in Aviation in America." By July of 1924, the lights were extended from Cleveland to Chicago and from Cheyenne to Rock Springs. Its test was so successful that transcontinental through service was continued on a permanent basis.

Radio, an up and coming technology, seemed to hold some promise for flying the mail, but it never really panned out during the postal flyer era. In one experiment, Kenneth McGregor carefully followed a ground controller's instructions to fly from Washington to Philadelphia with the ground entirely obscured by clouds. He finally ran out of fuel and made an emergency landing in the outskirts of Norfolk, Virginia, 185 miles south of his starting point. As Lt. George Boyle had learned on the first air mail flight, Philadelphia is to the northeast of Washington.

Jack Knight, who made the first night flight, tested a 170 pound GE radio in 1923 with some success. The huge machine was crammed in behind his cockpit. He wore bulky headphones under his helmet and had a microphone strapped to his chest. His plane trailed a 200 foot long antenna behind it, probably making it resemble one of today's 1/12 scale RC combat planes. He was able to communicate successfully with a ground station, but the department was not impressed enough to buy into the notion of equipping the de Havillands with radios, perhaps in part because their considerable weight would have eaten into the DH's cargo capacity. Ground based radios did come into use in this era, however, to communicate weather information at destination cities that allowed the use of better judgement over whether to

take off or not.

At the start of the air mail service, the only navigation instrument, indeed any instrument at all, in the cockpit was an unreliable compass and operations in the kind of weather that these early pilots experienced could have used much more. On the other hand, aerial navigation was an unknown art and old time pilots weren't really interested in learning it. Slim Lewis said that an instrument panel was "just something to clutter up your cockpit and distract your attention from the railroad or river bed you're following." On the other hand, some pilots displayed a certain primitive genius. One taped a half empty whiskey bottle to the dashboard and simply observed the action of the booze to tell him about the plane's attitude when he couldn't see the ground. Another pilot suspended a walnut on a string. James Hill found that on his run from Bellefonte to Sunberry New York, he could smoke one and a half cigars, drop through the clouds and land.

Army planes were equipped with turn and bank indicators, but these didn't work on the mail planes. The army only flew in good weather, but in the weather in which the mail men flew so often, the air intake tubes that activated them iced up. Wesley Smith and an instrument specialist named Howard Salisbury mounted the indicator's air tube on the exhaust manifold to solve the freeze up problem. They also fashioned a bank indicator of their own out of a curved glass tube with a steel ball bearing inside.

Technical improvements in the airplane were making flying safer, but in addition, if safety was improving, it had a lot to do with the fact that men were gaining experience as pilots, as well as familiarity with their routes. No more were pilots expected to fly whatever plane was available; each man had a machine permanently assigned to him and his name stenciled on the side was a thing in which to take pride. Paul Henderson didn't maintain the "fly in any weather" policy that had characterized Otto Praeger's management style. The terrible death rate of 1919 to 1921 of more than one death per month was no more. In 1924 there were only three deaths and in 1925 only one. He won the sincere affection of the pilots by repeatedly saying that they should use good judgement about weather. He would prefer a 10% delivery rate with no fatalities to a 90% success at the cost of a pilot's life.

In 1924, zone air mail postage rates were established. For mail within one of the three divisions, the rate was set at 6 cents per ounce. For mail from one

division to an adjoining one, it was 16 cents per ounce and 24 cents per ounce to go through all three divisions. The new revenue helped to pay the \$550,000 cost of the coast to coast beacon system.

And then, in 1925, Congress decreed that the Post Office should get out of the business of carrying the mail by air.

From the Ken Kindschi Scale Rally



Frank Baker's Air Force, A-20 and B-17



Carl Bachuber's Stratocruiser, 18 feet, 95 pounds



A bunch of good stuff



More good stuff



Still more good stuff



Chris Spierings' Fw-190 D wearing Russian Front Winter Camo.

Sorry I don't have room for more. There were a bunch more that should be shown.

A giant scale thank you to Don Weigt for the hard work he put in to organize a great event that seems to get better every year. We should probably throw in a couple of attaboys too.

Schultz Sport and Hobby

315 S. Thompson R
Sun Prairie, WI 53590
(608) 837-3498

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm



**The *Electric Fun Fly* may be over, but the *Fun of Electric Flying* isn't..
Come on in. Check out all of the electric models and equipment
that we have to make your winter dome flying a real**

Blast