

M.A.R.C.S. SPARKS

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

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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: Tom Lazar, tdlazar@yahoo.com
Vice Pres: Brad Witt, bwitt@chorus.net
Secty: Pat McDonald, mrsacd21@charter.net
Treas: Ed McDonald, rcace@charter.net

Membership Information: Ed McDonald
Phone 249-0734

Flight Instruction Coordinator: Ozzie Johnson
274-0474

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: Jeff Alexander
marcs@alexandermail.net

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 General Membership Meeting, April 6, 2006

by Patricia McDonald, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by President Tom Lazar, there were 36 people in attendance.

February Minutes: Minutes of the February minutes meeting were approved as printed in the March issue of MARCS SPARKS. There were no March minutes.

Treasurer's Report was available for review.

Visitors and New Members:

New Members and Visitors: John Steen is a new member of MARCS who is getting ready to fly. **Nick Karabis** is an experienced RCer who is thinking of getting back into the hobby or selling his stuff.

New Business: Dave Rush reported the Monona High School gym is being used for spring sports, therefore, is no longer available for indoor flying.

Tom reported Field Clean Up day is April 22, 2006. There was discussion regarding the field needing to be rolled. Charlie Schultz volunteered to do the job. The Adopt A Highway pick up will be the same date. Contact Mark Finley to help with this project (or just be at the field for work day).

Ozzie Johnston will be the flight instructor coordinator this year.

Dave Rush had made two new signs for the field. He suggested one for the impound area and he encouraged other members to make more for special events.

Old Business: No action has been taken on the field access problem. The Board was unable to meet due to weather conditions. All Board members are encouraged to attend the April 20th meeting. This is a very important issue to

2006 MARCS Calendar of Events

Name	Date	Location
Boy Scout Fun Fly	June 3	Kettle Field
IMAA Big Bird Rally	June 10	Kettle Field
War Birds Over Dane	June 17	Kettle Field
Thermal Soar	June 17	Long Island Sod Farm
Electric Fun Fly	July 9	Kettle Field
1.5 Meter Glider Hand Launch	July 15	Long Island Sod Farm
Ken Kindschi Scale Rally	August 20	Kettle Field

members. All members wanting to be a part of the discussion of solutions to field access were invited to attend the Board meeting also.

Dave Rush asked about newsletters being mailed to other clubs. Ozzie noted that other clubs receive electronic copies of the newsletter. Dave also suggest MARCS send event bulletins out to other clubs for special events.

Raffle winners: Harley Nelson and Charlie Schultz

Show and Tell: Frank Baker showed a 1934 Curtis Condor airplane that he designed and scratch built.

Mike Kimmerly says his Great Plains LANCAIR low wing sport is fast and smooth. It was outfitted with a Sato .90 flat twin.

Tom Lazar brought an in-the-house electric living room helicopter.

Dave Rush told of his electric Hyperion Yak-54 with a 55" wing span and 208 w/lb. Dave also had a Spectrum DFx6 Transmitter.

Harley Nelson stole the Show and Tell show with his Convarcar. The Convarcar is a flying car. The model had a 90 inch wing span with a Supertiger 3000. The car can be independently run. It was covered with Ultracoat and had seven servos "Off the wall design." For more information about this model check out www.retrofuture.com/flyingcar.html

Press Release

By Harley Nelson

The Club wishes to thank the following people for helping to roll the field so that we have

a smooth surface this summer for flying:

- ÿ Wayne Lanphear
- ÿ Charlie Schultz
- ÿ Bob "Smilie" Geimer
- ÿ Frank Baker
- ÿ Harley Nelson
- ÿ Clayton Greaves

If there was anyone else that helped, we are sorry for not mentioning them.

Editor's Note: Harley is far too modest. It was he who did the scut work of finding the roller and arranging transport of it to the field and back with Charlie's vehicle, as well as bossing the operation. Left to guys like Harley, things tend to get done. Thanks, Ol' Buddy.

Then too, Clayton Greaves isn't even a member any more, but he still came out and helped.

The Gate

(9:30 pm, April 20): I'm just home from the Board of Directors meeting where the field access issue was discussed and cussed. Actually it took up most of the meeting. I wish there was more concrete information to give you, but this is a very complex issue that is not going to be solved quickly.

Our field is part of a City of Madison park. We enter through Dane County land that is part of a land fill. Laws related to operation of land fills, as well as common sense related to security of property and collection of dumping fees, require the site to be secured against after hours dumping and trespass. We once had good access to the

field after dump hours, but due to negligence on the part of some of our members who ignored the fact that the last guy out at night had to lock the gate, the County required that the gate be locked at all times after dump hours. A special lock was installed that we are required to unlock and re-lock each time we pass through in either direction. It is a nuisance to operate and it denies access to the field to members of the public who might want to come in after dump hours and watch us fly and, perhaps, become members. Our membership is in decline, probably in at least some part due to denial of public access. It is also a great impediment to several of our members who suffer from varying degrees of disability and find it difficult or impossible to operate the gate.

I have discussed here the notions of putting in a road from the county road a half mile to the east of the field or putting in an interior security fence to allow access through the current main gate but exclude access to the scale house and dump site. Because of cost alone, neither of these ideas will fly and there are other considerations as well..

There was considerable discussion of the gate issue as related to declining membership. While it may very well be an issue, both general members who were present and BOD members agreed that the problem is more complex than that.

A considerable segment of R/C has gone to electric flyers and many members and non-members alike are flying in other, regular, city parks or school athletic fields. No AMA dues and no MARCS dues are required, although many electric folks still remain MARCS members. There may be great safety and liability issues involved here, but it's being done anyway.

The County sponsored flying site at the old Verona landfill requires only a \$10 windshield sticker, again no AMA dues and no MARCS dues. Moreover, it's on the far side of town and far more easily accessible than Kettle Field for west siders who have to travel Suicide Alley to get there. On the other hand, It's rough, it's small, it's seriously obstructed by landfill vents, there is no

enforcement of safety rules, the frequency board is largely ignored and it's in too close proximity to houses, but it's cheap and nearby for some people. Again, safety and liability issues don't seem to be given much concern.

A general outline of a plan of action was finally agreed upon.

ÿ Seek improved field access when the new use agreement is negotiated this fall. The current agreement expires 12-31-06. (A little later, when I have time, I will be sending you each a copy of the current agreement, asking for input of ideas for the new one. This will be shortly after May 1.)

ÿ Research the agreement that was made between the City and County back in about 1988 when the field was moved from the top of the fill site to the present location, as it pertains to us.

ÿ Research the law on land fill security.

ÿ Look into the possibility of installing an electrically operated gate.

ÿ Negotiate with the County for open, public, access on certain days or times, inviting the public in specifically at those times. Advertising could be put out in hobby shops and on public bulletin boards, such as in food stores, etc.

ÿ Erect a new, much larger and more prominent, sign by the main gate (where we presently have a small sign) advertising our presence and listing hours of access after dump hours and inviting people in.

Please note that this is a beginning plan of action. It's pretty foggy, but details will be added as we go and your ideas will be most welcome. BOD meetings are on the third Thursday of each month (when there is business to be conducted) in Room 101 in the Labor Temple and you are welcome to appear to offer ideas. Check with Tom Lazar to verify that a meeting will actually take place.

LOSE And That Rhymes With BOOZE

I really hate to sound like a blue nosed prohibitionist, but someone's cheating out at Kettle Field and they'd better cut it out.

I have reported here before that "dead soldiers" - empty liquor bottles, that is - have been found in or around the parking lot or in the area by the benches. In the past it was suspected that outsiders, perhaps thirsty teeny boppers, were coming in over the running track to party at night.

Not so, it appears.

As I understand it, it is now known that a few of our members are the guilty parties. Please remember that it is illegal to possess alcoholic beverages in any city park and your violation of that ordinance puts MARCS at risk where our use agreement is concerned and possibly could subject the club (not to mention you) to fines.

Take your buddies to your house, or go to one of theirs, for that after flying (I hope it's not during flying) drink. You got off pretty lucky last fall when the cop who checked you out didn't challenge you when you said it was OK 'cuz you were members. It wasn't!

Dog Days

One more complaint and then I'm through. A complaint has been received about cross county runners on the running trail running afoul of doggie doo-doo as they pass by the field. Please either clean up after him or leave Phideaux home.

Hometown Hero Makes Good -- Again

You will, no doubt, recall that Dustin Buescher made a really great showing at the World Jet Masters Tournament in Hungary last summer. Well, he recently outdid himself when he took *first place* at Toledo with the same F-86 he flew and showed in Hungary. It's a helluva feat, Dustin, and your friends are very proud of you. In fact the Board of Directors officially voted you one ATTA BOY.

I hope *Model Aviation* will carry something on this in the next issue. Bill Oberdieck, if you read this, can you do something

to promote that?

Picnic

It looks like nobody is interested enough in having a picnic this year to organize one. It seems like everyone is so accustomed to having Charlie Schultz take that bull by the horns that they are sitting back and waiting for him to do it again. Actually, it seems like it should be someone else's turn.

Several of us Old Farts were talking about this the other day and some suggestions came up. The Riley Deppe Park location has been very good, but the July dates have proven so hot that by noon everyone has had enough and gone home right after lunch. September seems like it might be a better bet for that reason. In view of the price of fuel, having it on the Labor Day week end would provide a good excuse to stay home. The format could be a pot luck, with dishes assigned alphabetically.

What do you think? Want organize it? The bulk of the job would be to see about the park reservation and picking an alternate date, if September 2, 3, or 4 aren't available. Also you'll need to arrange for soda, ice, grills and serving tables, but a call for volunteer helpers here in Sparks should get you all the help you will need. I'll be glad to provide the SAR boat again. Contact me, and tell me you're on it and I will announce it here in Sparks.

High Powered Employment Opportunity

Well, perhaps it isn't so high powered and the pay ain't much but it could fill a couple of your idle hours each month. One of the main attractions is that your MARCS dues would be free.

For several years I have been kicking around the idea of writing another book and I've finally decided to go ahead with it. Today over \$1,200 worth of reference material, over 5,100 pages of court documents, arrived at my front door, so I guess I'm sort of committed to it now.

I took the job of editing Sparks in the summer of 1998 when the former editor was in a

real time bind and said I would do it for the rest of the year. Eight years later, here I am -- still. With the time that I will need to commit to this new project, I would like to shed the editor's job to make time for the reading, traveling and finally writing that I will need to do. I know that if I keep the editor's job, the quality of Sparks will suffer for lack of time to devote to it and eventually I will likely either miss deadlines or sacrifice time on the book..

I hope someone out there will come forward and do me out of this lavishly remunerated position. In discussing it at the BOD meeting, it sounded like the club would be willing to flip for the purchase of a Desktop Publishing Program to make it easier for you to put out an improved looking bulletin with more and better pictures. Please contact me at jbuss@itis.com if you are interested.

By the way, the story is about Ernest John Dobbert, Jr, of St. Francis, WI, who took his family to Jacksonville, FL, where he profoundly abused his four children and killed two of them in 1971-72. He ultimately took a seat in Old Sparky in 1984. I became marginally involved in the case when I directed the Wisconsin Medicaid Program's coordination of benefits operations. The two surviving children returned to Wisconsin where they were cared for in institutions supported by Medicaid. They won a million dollar recovery against the City of Jacksonville for neglect of police responsibility and it was my job to recover some of our expenditures on their behalf from that action.

Karaya Ein

By Jerry Buss

A legend grew up out of Erich Hartmann's combats with Mustangs in May and June of 1944. Some sources advance it as a possibility and some are adamant that it is factual.

Ralph Hofer was one of the leading aces of the USAAF, actually the highest scoring ace in the ETO to be killed in air to air combat, and it is held in some quarters that he was killed by Erich

Hartmann over Bucharest, Romania. I don't know the origin of this notion, but undoubtedly it has at least a common derivation with a chapter titled *The Kid* in a book titled *Tumult in the Clouds* by James Goodson (other sources refer to him as *The Kidd*). In my opinion, a lot of this book seems highly romanticized and in at least a couple of instances borders on braggadocio, although the author's credentials as a fighter pilot are unquestioned. Perhaps if one is that good a bit of boasting is forgivable. Before being shot down himself, Goodson was the CO of the 336th Fighter Squadron of the 8th Air Force's 4th Fighter Group, the USAAF reincarnation of the three RAF Eagle Squadrons, although Hofer, himself, was never an Eagle. Hofer flew for the 334th. Upon transferring from the RAF, the former Eagles soon transitioned from their Spitfires into P-47s and it was one of the early groups to receive P-51s in late 1943 when they became operational.

The 4th Fighter Group included some of the USAAF's best, men like Howard "Deacon" Hively, Don Blakslee, Duane "Bees" Beeson, Willard "Millie" Milikan, Louis "Red Dog" Norley and James Goodson, many of whom became POWs when shot down while conducting airfield beatups, else their scores would have been higher. It also included the highest scoring pair of dog fighters and strafers on the US side, Johnny Godfrey and Don Gentile, who finished with 66 kills between them.

Then there was Ralph Hofer. Ralph was a screw up, but a very likeable one. He was full of pranks and humor and military and combat discipline were sometimes, but not too frequent, things to him. Although he was never in the Eagle Squadrons, he apparently transferred into the USAAF and the 4th from the RCAF in late summer 1943. On his first combat mission with the 4th he claimed an Fw-190 on a day when no one else saw a German and no one believed him. His gun camera film bore him out and he just went from there, running up a score. Once, while attacking a One Ninety, he had to hesitate briefly when he discovered he had forgotten to turn his gunsight

on. Another pilot broke in front of him and was about to hose the Focke Wulf when Hoffer called out “break, break,” to the interloper. He then went in and finished the German off.

He adopted a huge Alsatian dog, actually still a pup, after its master didn’t come back from a trip over the Continent. Duke was as friendly and playful as his master and they would romp together, wrestling, playing fetch and running and growling at each other for hours. If ever a man and his dog loved each other, they did. Undisciplined in combat, he was left off several missions as punishment and, to fill idle time, Ralph tested newly received replacement aircraft. While giving a check ride to a new replacement pilot, James Goodson saw a P-47 pull up abreast of them. The only visible occupant of the cockpit was a big Alsatian dog. The Jug’s nose dropped and then came up into a loop, arriving on Goodson’s tail. Later, on the ground, Hofer was



The Kidd, Duke and the Salem Representative

ecstatic. “Duke’s really great at flying,” he told Goodson, who said any damned fool could do a loop, but how was he on instruments? “Great,” Hofer replied. Goodson was peeved because, to make room for Duke, Hofer had to leave his parachute behind.

Maybe

Duke was a good instrument flyer, but Hofer was a lousy navigator. A couple weeks after D-Day, to demonstrate absolute air dominance, the 4th set out with its Mustangs on the famed shuttle mission, a pure propaganda stunt, escorting bombers from England to Russia to Italy and back to England. Predictably, Ralph became separated and lost on the outbound leg and created an international

incident with the paranoid Ruskis when he landed unauthorized at one of their fighter strips near Kiev.¹ Then, unable to find Italy while trying to catch up with the group, he was fortunate to find Malta. He finally caught up at Foggia, Italy. He was a great, though undisciplined, lone wolf kind of fighter pilot, who most severely taxed the patience of not only his Squadron Commander, Jim Clark, but also his Group Commander, Don Blakslee, but he was too good to be grounded for long. He had a long shaggy head of hair that drove his superiors nuts and his choice of shirts was a raggedy, seldom washed, old football jersey. He had a special talent for getting separated from his mates and going off to freelance, often returning home with interesting things documented on his gun camera film. Don Blakslee, in a 2004 interview commenting on a newly published book about Ralph Hofer, said that “The Kidd was beyond control.”

He had been an amateur boxer from Salem, Missouri and had won a Golden Gloves trophy in 1940, but his manager told him he would never be a really good fighter; he was too nice a guy. Sent to Detroit to pick up a car from the factory to ferry to California where he was scheduled to box, he slipped across the river to join the RCAF where he served as a sergeant pilot until he was allowed to transfer to the USAAF.

While flying P-47s, his nose art identified him as “The Missouri Kidd,” but after transitioning to a P-51 he adopted a scrawny Missouri mule with wings and golden boxing gloves and a golden horse shoe tied to its tail with the title, “Salem Representative.” His was the only plane in the ETO with white sidewall tires. He was one of the youngest pilots in the 4th, only recently a 1st Lt. having been a sergeant pilot in

¹ News was never released that on the night after arrival in Russia, while Don Blakeslee and the bomber CO were in Moscow making a short-wave propaganda broadcast to the states, a staff of JU-88s destroyed nearly half of the bombers on the ground. By the time four Mustangs got aloft to challenge them they were gone, having suffered no losses.



the RCAF and initially a Pilot Officer in the USAAF, among majors and colonels. Partly in view of that, partly because of his boxing background, partly because of his youth, he was

only 21, and with heavy influence from his behavior, he was "The Kid" to his friends -- everyone who knew him.

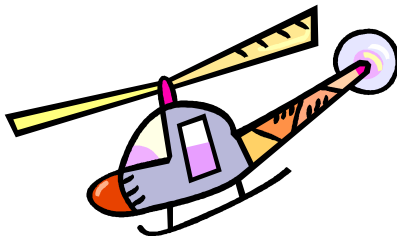
Undisciplined though he was, he was soon challenging the highest scorers in the Group for kill totals. Like many other pilots, there is debate about his actual score. According to Goodson his tally was 27, 15 air to air and 12 on the ground. At war's end, this score would place him fourth in the 4th Fighter Group, behind only Godfrey with 36, Goodson with 32 and Gentile with 30, all of whom had a long head start on him. According to another source, he had 16 ½ air to air and 14 more on the ground, putting him ahead of Gentile. Another source credits him with a 15-14 split. Whatever, he was a tough fighter and his score was run up in the short time between October 1943 and June 1944 in an environment not nearly so target rich as that in which Bubi Hartmann fought. On D-Day +4 he was shot up and forced to land on an emergency strip just off Utah Beach, the leader and sole survivor of a four plane flight assigned to strafing road traffic. Dogfaces, grateful for the air support, gave him a front line tour and treated him like visiting royalty until he was able to take off. He returned to Debden with a German helmet that smelled of urine, according to Goodson, and a copy of *Mein Kampf* as souvenirs.

In his book, Goodson recites how, before returning to England on the shuttle mission to Russia, the 4th was tasked to a B-24 escort mission from Foggia to the Romanian oil fields. According to Goodson, Bubi Hartmann and Kid Hofer met over Bucharest. They were about the same age, but Hartmann had vastly more experience as a fighter pilot. That afternoon, at the Fourth's home field at Debden, back in England, Duke suddenly began to howl mournfully. Then he trotted over to the revetment where the Salem Representative would never be parked again and laid down. Also according to Goodson, Bubi's second victim that day, George Stanford, spent the rest of the war as a POW. Two other Mustang pilots, Deacon Hively, who claimed three One Oh Nines, and a man named Siems, were both wounded, but returned home.

It's certainly a romantic story, but as to the sad ending it is pure theater. Bubi Hartmann did not kill Kid Hofer. Some Messerschmidt pilot apparently did, but it wasn't Hartmann. Hartmann did score two kills against Mustangs on a single day and they were over or near Bucharest, as Goodson says. That was on May 21, 1944. Hartmann scored against five more Mustangs on June 1, the day eight of them ran him out of gas and forced him to bail out. Then, on or shortly after June 6, JG-52 left Romania and took up station in eastern Czechoslovakia. His next encounter with Mustangs didn't occur until May 4, 1945 when he also shot one down, his 351st and next to last victim. The 4th Fighter Group's shuttle mission to Russia didn't set out from Debden until June 21 and the escort mission on which Kid Hofer was lost occurred on July 2. Bubi Hartmann was long gone from the area by then and Bucharest was out of range for his Gustav from his new station in Czechoslovakia. Its operational radius was only about 225 miles. Further, while he scored three Shturmoviks on July 1 to raise his score to 250, Bubi Hartmann claimed no victims at all on July 2.

Ah, the fog of war!

M.A.R.C.S.
1918 Gulseth St.
Madison, WI 53704



Your headquarters for RC planes, trains and automobiles

Schultz

Sport & Hobby

315 S. Thompson Rd.

Sun Prairie, WI

(608) 837-3498

Mon.-Fri., 8:00 to 5:00