

Mountaineer R/C Flying Club

AMA Charter #659



April/May 2003

Barry Thaxton's R/C Ornithopter

Club News

As you may have already noticed, there was no meeting or newsletter in April. This was primarily my fault. I couldn't think of anything to say and I needed a break. This letter won't be my best effort either. There just isn't anything new going on.

As for news, there really isn't any. Things have been fairly quiet at the field the last couple of month's. No vandalism, the mower is still with us and the grass is growing.

We added a couple of new members, Tim Stollings from the Logan area and David Gillispie one of Denny's kin. There have been quite a few spectators stop by and show some interest, but I haven't seen them since. I'm guessing the gail force winds and crappy weather has been a big factor.

There have been a couple of days where we had big turnouts and a full parking lot. Not a bunch of people flying on those days, but it is always more fun when there is a crowd. We have also been seeing some old faces frequenting the field again.

Barry

Ornithopters

In the last few months I've been playing around with my new ornithopter. I know the big question on your mind is what in the world is an ornithopter? They are mechanical birds and in this case, a R/C mechanical bird as you can see from the picture above.

Until Bob Rowe pointed me to a website to look at some brushless motors, it never occurred to me that they even existed in R/C form. Naturally, as soon as I saw it, I hit the Buy button and a few days later it landed on my doorstep. Construction was a bit of a nightmare since the instructions contained no pictures and were written as if the builder already knew what was going on. Finally after a week, it was together. The design is rather an ingenious one. It is powered by a Speed 300 electric motor with it's own gear reduction setup and the wings and tail are made up of an array of carbon fiber rods and ripstop nylon.

The initial test flights were interesting to say the least, but I've got most of the bugs worked out. Most of the time, I have some control over it, but it does tend to have a mind of it's own at times, especially in the wind. Recently, it has proven to have an insatiable appetite for parked cars and model airplanes, taking out two of Bob

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**Next Meeting - Sunday, June 1st
2:00 PM at the field.**

Meeting notes from April 6th...

In attendance: Denny Bostic, Jerry Workman, Bob Yates, Bob Rowe, Pat Howley, Barry Thaxton, Dave Gaines and Stan Clark.

The Treasury reported that the club had secured it's AMA charter for this year. Current funds were \$1255.00 minus \$504 for the drainage project and material for the benches leaving about \$750.00.

Thanks went out to Dave for building the additional benches and bringing them to the field. Thanks went to Barry for donating the new windsock that Denny put up.

Denny brought up the subject of buying our own Porta-John for \$125.00. The folks we currently have our service with told Denny they would service our unit for \$15 per trip. It was agreed to proceed with these plans based on these numbers.

Denny mentioned he was also checking into getting electric and water into the field. After some discussion, it was agreed that the club would need some real facts and figures before doing anything.

Denny brought up an invitation to have a club display at Shawnee Park sometime in Sept. No details were available.

Apparently, we were due a check from the Bob Evans fly-in last year. Someone checked into and the check to sent to Jerry Leffel. Jerry usually winters in FL, so hopefully we can get the check from him when he gets back.

✈

(Ornithopters continued....)

Rowe's planes in one landing.

The thing is a ball to fly, but I think I'm going to reserve it's flying time to late in the evenings when no one is around to save on insurance claims. Several times when I've been flying it in the evening at the field, I've heard tires squealing and shortly a car comes flying into the field. The people think they have spotted a rare purple bird.

I've researched the subject quite a bit since getting my bird. The best I can tell, there are only three different ornithopters available at the moment. The Slow Hawk which is the one I have with a 59" wingspan and the Park Hawk with a 47" wingspan. Both are from Sean Kinkade. The 48" wingspan Kestrel is available from R&R Model Aircraft.

A couple of weeks ago, I got the Slow Hawk's little brother the Park Hawk. The initial test flight on this bird proved it to be more responsive and controllable. After flying the Park Hawk, I now need to go back and make some modifications to big brother.

I really can't say enough about these birds. I highly recommend them to anyone wanting something a little different that is a bit of a challenge to fly. I heard from Sean Kinkade that a Park Parrot will be available in the near future. Can't wait to get my hands on one of those.

Unfortunately, these birds ain't cheap. Depending on the equipment you use, servos, receiver, etc., you will typically end up with an investment of somewhere between \$300 ad \$400 per bird. Probably why you don't see any around.

✈

Directory and Frequencies In Use

As part of sending out the postcards earlier this year to attempt to get some better information about our members, one of the questions was the frequencies you use. I was sort of disappointed about the number of cards I received back. I was hoping for a 95% or better return of the cards, but it ended up being more like 70%. Enclosed with this newsletter, you will find the best data we have on the saturation of frequencies at our field. I didn't include and HAM frequencies, since Chunky is the only one using HAM that responded.

A day or two after receiving this newsletter, those of you who returned your postcard to me will be getting your member directory. Those of you who didn't send their cards in and want a directory, need to send the postcard and a \$5 check made out to the Mountaineer R/C Flying Club to Barry Thaxton. The \$5 fee is a donation to the club and for the work involved in making an exception for those who didn't take 5 minutes to fill out the card and return it in a timely manner.. ✈

Around the Field

While there hasn't been much news at the field, we had plenty of spills and thrills. The Bag A Plane contest is heating up. Unfortunately, I'm in the lead. I got another point for destroying my Acro Phat on it's second flight when my receiver failed. Bob Rowe gets a point for losing his Mini Flash in a mid-air with my Mini Flash and I'm awarding a 1/2 point to Dave Gaines for smashing his Lazy Bee on his tail gate in disgust.

Lets see... Bob Yates has been getting more time on his T-34. Bob had a little incident with the nose gear collapsing, but he seems to have it resolved. Bob also has a Slow Poke kit he says he is working on. Can't wait to see if the kit is any better than my ARF.

I converted my Slow Poke to electric. It flew a little better than it did with the Saito 40 on it. Still disappointing though.

Dave Gaines says he has his scratch built A-10 finished and is waiting on a good day to test fly it. Can't wait to see this one.

There have been a couple of mid-air since the last letter. Bob Rowe and Stan tangled with Bob's Magic and Stan's fun-fly. Both got down with minimal damage. As I mentioned before Bob and I got our Mini Flashes tangled up.

Bob Rowe finished his Ecstasy. He decorated in the Dazzler scheme. It is definitely a strange looking bird and is amazing in the air.

As you can see from the pictures, electric flight is making it's way into daily life at the field. No one is ready to give up our combustion engines, including myself, but I have found it interesting.

With the weather trying to get nicer, get out of the house and come to the field. When you come out, just half charge your batteries. I need some help with the Bag A Plane award. Just kidding.

Barry



Rowe's new GWS electric A-10 going for it's maiden flight.



Bob's tricycle gear T-34 converted to a nose dragger. Ground handling is pretty rough.



Barry's new Mini Flash powered by an MP Jet Brushless motor

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Barry's new (second) electric Acro Phat from North East Sailplanes



When Mini Flashes collide.



Rowe with his new (soon to be doomed) Mini Flash from Mountain Models



Rowe's new great big fun fly. The Ecstasy powered by an OS .91FX