

Sparks Newsletter



Start of a New Year

Welcome to a new year! Winter is here and the winds blow from the north more than usual. We can usually still fly but crosswinds make it less enjoyable in some cases. Might be time to modify or fix that airplane in your hanger that could use it. :-)

Our next club meeting will be Wednesday February 5th at 7 PM at the Pinellas Park library as usual. We hope you will join us. We would like to extend a welcome to all our new members. We have quite a few it looks like. Always nice to see new people and make friends with other pilots. You may have noticed the city has been hard at work clearing most (but not all) of the trees around the lake. Especially nice about the clearing of the trees and brush is the ability to see cars coming and going as you leave or come in the gate.

Via separate email you will be getting a further revision of the club bylaws. Added were four items that have been passed down by word of mouth but not put into the bylaws. Please read them as there will be a vote on them at the February meeting to approve or further amend them.

Please please read the next item about the FAA Notice. **This will impact all of us.** We would suggest you take the time to write to the FAA per the information below and/or to your congress person. The biggest complaint is the lumping of airplane and helicopter aircraft with the “newbie drone people who have no clue” and are flying where ever along with the commercial prospects/giants. Ken Elder wrote the following and has been keeping up to date.

Call to action: FAA Notice

Club members, you may not be aware of the serious impacts from a recent FAA notice of proposed rule: https://www.faa.gov/uas/research_development/remote_id/

The FAA document is 319 pages long and inside it spells severe restrictions on model aviation. It is a gross over reach of a government branch taking away citizens rights. Here's a summary of what's inside for us:

1. All remote controlled aircraft must have remote ID broadcast capability, to an internet database so that anyone (public as well as law enforcement) can determine who is flying where. Unless it weighs less than 250 grams, then the rule doesn't apply!
2. Model aviation is lumped in with commercial drone operations, the FAA would regulate all
3. \$5 per model registration fee when the NPRM becomes law, many if us have 10 or more models
4. FAA would approve approx. 90% of existing AMA fields
5. 12 months after the rule becomes law, NO NEW flying fields will be allowed
6. 48 months after the rule all flying fields approval expires, the FAA may or may not extend

There are many more rules within the document, you will just have to read it to get the rest.

In summary, traditional model aviation is being lumped into all "drone" operations and the NPRM appears set to slowly kill model aviation.

The AMA has produced a form letter and asked all members to fill it out, but it is worded to protect AMA's own interests and the NPRM affects all of us.

As a citizen of the United States, you should read the NPRM and comment on it to the FAA through their established process (you can get from the link). You should also contact your congressmen and express your thoughts about the NPRM.

Plane responsibility (Pun intended)

Let's work together to improve club safety.

I accepted the role as Flight Safety Officer because I am passionate about the well-being of our club and its members. Additionally, we all have an obligation to follow our club and AMA's safety rules. Being our flight safety officer, I will do all I can to keep us as safe as possible. However, the best safety policy of any club is for all members to self-govern our own behaviors both by safe flights and that each pilot has the sole responsibility to assure his aircraft is safe to fly.

I like the idea that each of us self-monitor our behavior, that if you know you've violated a rule that puts our club at risk because of safety violations. That member should volunteer to ground themselves and notify the club safety officer of that decision. This better than me grounding you.

This is an example of self-monitoring. Last Thursday, Jan 16th, after more than six successful flights, that morning, and performing a preflight, I flew my Apprentice, once airborne I lost all my transmitter controls and the plane flew Northwest and out of site. I later found the plane in a mowed field just past 275. It appeared to me that it had gone into a "safe mode". I immediately grounded myself for a week. Some might say that I was not at fault and I should not be grounded. I have experience in the past months that the safe flight mode on "park flyers" including the apprentice had issues with planes having unintended issues, and for that reason I grounded myself.

I took this week to investigate with other flight instructors in surrounding RC clubs and they too have like issues. I then called Spektrum support and they acknowledged issues with that receiver and had a replacement receiver soon to be released.

I removed all "safe mode" receivers with AR 620 and now feel I can control my plane safety. I put our club in jeopardy and for that reason I grounded myself because I was the "PIC" Pilot In Command.

Pilot Safety tips

1. Always make sure all batteries are fully charged before flying.
2. Time flights so you can fly safely within the time allotted by your battery.
3. Perform a range check of the transmitter and the model before flying the model.
4. Make sure all control surfaces correctly respond to transmitter controls before flying.
5. Do NOT fly a model near spectators, parking areas or any other area that could result in injury to people or damage to property.
6. Do NOT fly during adverse weather conditions. Poor visibility, wind, moisture that can cause pilot disorientation and/or loss of control of a model.
7. When a flying model does not respond correctly to controls, land the model immediately and correct the cause of the problem.
8. Do not fly the plane past your visual capabilities/sight.

Paul,
Sparks Safety Officer and Chief Instructor

Briefs

- Runway repairs will be done as soon as the weather cooperates. This will be a repair not a complete repaving of the runway.
- Send your for sale and want ads to sparksrc1@gmail.com and we will send them to the club members
- We are working on a Wiki for the SPARKS web site. Lets hope it gets up and going and is useful
- **We are looking for a person to take over the soda machine stocking. It involves buying the drinks (at a Costco, Sam's club, Walmart, etc.) and then putting them in the machine as need be. Extra stock is kept in the office. If you would be willing please call or email Bill Cessna (813-205-3338 or wcessna@gmail.com). Jerry Thornton has been doing it diligently since the beginning of time and needs a break. Hoping someone will step up.**

Tech questions

- Any member with questions send them in an email to sparksrc1@gmail.com and we will reply in the next SPARKS Newsletter

Plane pictures



People are always bringing new planes out to the field. Take a picture and we will include in the next newsletter... Always nice to see shiny new planes. We will be actively taking pictures in the future for inclusion. If you want to share yours contact Bill Cessna (wcessna@gmail.com)

On the left is Bob Lindberg and his wonderful 1929 Fleet (Concept Models 1/4 scale) and then on the right we have Alex's HSB turbine (foamy) Mirage 2000 that flies very well! It even has smoke!



Humor



Winner caption :

“We found the nuts, all five of them”

Club Events

As VP of SPARKS and promoter \ coordinator of events, I would like to propose based on club interest that SPARKS have a couple events for the members only this year. (This would be in addition to the Warbird, Open house and the Oktoberfest we will be having.)

Combat

We tried a combat event last year and it was somewhat successful. Due to Personal circumstances I was regretfully unable to attend however I did get feedback. My understanding is we had 3 overall issues and here are my thoughts on each.

1) Lighter than anticipated participation

This could have been due to preparation time members had to create a flyable entry. We had some rules in place regarding requirements (span, electric, cell count, weight, etc) to keep things fair but generally I feel more time to prepare and build would correct this. The club offered a simple plan and foam to create an entry. There will be more on this to encourage and make it easier to build a plane prior to the event

2) Getting planes in the air.

My understanding is that the streamers created too much drag on initial toss or takeoff. Doing some reading on this, other clubs would coil (like a snake) the streamer on the ground such that drag is increases as the plane pulls into the sky rather than the full weight of the streamer immediately. This seemed to solve this issue. For other clubs.

3) Literally no contact or streamer cuts

Contact \ streamer cut probability can be increased by more participation, creating a 'target rich environment' :-). So we need to have more participants to create numbers in the air.

Since the Combat event was our first, we learned a lot but it still looks like a fun event. So I will be proposing it again for later this year with plenty of time to create your sacrificial creations. You can email me personally at mtvufg8r@gmail.com if you have any interest or questions. I'll tally the interest over the next few weeks to determine the level of interest. The planes are not hard to build or expensive

Pylon racing

I thought a club only pylon event would be something we could try as was done in the somewhat distant past. We could have an electric and glow event or just combine the two into one with simple requirements on power to keep things fair. Again you can contact me directly at mtvufg8r@gmail.com and I can gauge interest.

Regarding contact, just state whether you would participate in the combat, pylon or both. Regarding your input, thoughts, requirements, best practices, etc. we can move forward with those inputs once we determine if the events even have legs.

Well that's it for me. Blue skies, and gentle breezes down our soon to be refurbished runway....

Mike Valletti

Club Elections results

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- President - Bill Cessna
- Vice President - Mike Valletti
- Secretary - Giovanni Recchia
- Treasurer - Bob Shadrui
- Safety Officer - J. Paul Jones o
- BOD - Mike Adams
- BOD - Ken Elder
- BOD - Oliver Parker
- BOD - Jerry Thornton