
THE R/C FLYER

Volume 23, Issue 3

March 1999

Next Meeting - March 11, 1999 at 7:00pm - Clear Lake Park Bldg.

From The Editors Desk

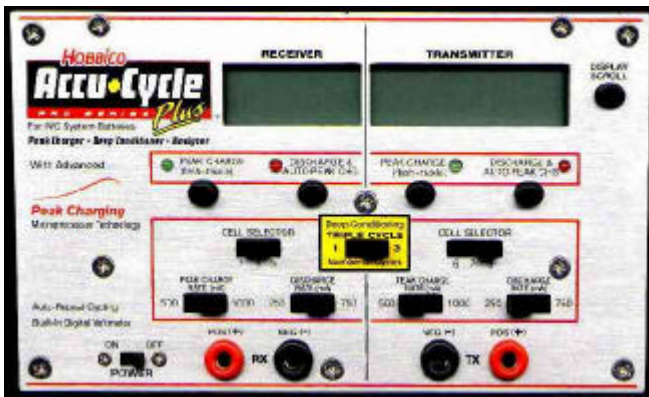
By: Preston Hunt

For those of you that showed up for the meeting, you probably figured out that the park care taker never showed up to unlock the building for us. Around 7:30pm we decided to move the meeting to Mario's Pizza on NASA Rd 1.

The list of people that have requested the newsletter via email is growing. As of the posting, 29 members have requested the "E-News" edition of the newsletter. That works out to an annual savings of \$114.84 in postage alone. I do not have the exact cost data of what it cost the club to publish and mail per newsletter but as you can see we are saving money that can be used for other club endeavors. I again want to thank each and every one of you who are subscribing to the electronic edition. ♦

Product Review

By: Preston Hunt **Hobbico Accu-Cycle Plus**



After a little more than a year of fast charging my batteries with my Hobbico Field Charger, I figured it would be a good idea to check/condition my batteries. The entire time I had never slow charged my packs except for the initial charge so I started looking for a device that could help me in that area. I was really leaning toward an Alpha 4 charger but I did not want to spend that much or wait a long time to get it. After reading various product information sheets for different charger/conditioners, I decided to give the Hobbico Accu-Cycle Plus a try. After all, I have been very pleased with my Hobbico DC quick Field Charger.

The unit was priced at \$154.99 in my Tower Talk flyer but I figured I would give my local hobby shop a crack at a competitive price. Texas Model Trends came in with a fair price of \$150.00. I gave them my business and headed home with the Accu-Cycle Plus to see just what it could do and just how much damage if any I had done to my battery packs over the past year with fast charging them a minimum of 2 times a weekend every weekend.

The first pack I decided to charge/check/condition was my 1300ma pack in my Ergo Sport 60. This pack is one of my oldest at just over 1 1/2 years. I UN-boxed the Accu-Cycle and started reading the instructions. The first thing I noticed after browsing the instruction manual was just how informative it was without dragging on and on. It contained very useful information about charge rates, discharge rates & initial charge deep-conditioning break-in (something I never knew about).

The Accu-Cycle Plus will charge/discharge/cycle/deep-condition 1 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 & 8 cell NiCd packs. It will not work with Nickel-Metal Hydride batteries, as the plain Accu-Cycle will. The Accu-Cycle Plus also features automatic 3 cycle deep-conditioning in which the unit will discharge and then charge the batteries 3 times as well as an optional 12volt field converter. During the operation of the unit, it will display current battery voltage, Charge minutes, discharge minutes & discharge MAH. It will also handle both receiver and transmitter packs at the same time while maintaining independent charge/discharge cycles for each pack.

Another good feature is the "-delta V" method of peak detection. When a NiCd battery reaches its "Peak" charge or maximum total voltage, the voltage will actually begin to decrease if left in the charge mode. The Accu-Cycle terminates the charge when the PER CELL voltage decreases by 32 m V. The Accu-Cycle has two safety features that will terminate the fast charge should a condition cause the "Peak" to be un-detectable. #1. If the battery voltage reaches the equivalent of 1.74V PER CELL. #2. If after 120 minutes the peak charge has not been detected.

Well after all of that, just what did I find out about my battery packs. After a year or more of fast charging not one pack showed signs of diminishing performance. The 1300ma pack came in at 1326ma capacity. After seeing the results on each of my packs, I am definitely going to keep on quick charging my batteries. This practice has not harmed even on of my packs and if anything it has helped them stay in good shape. ♦

RC Flying in Saudi Arabia (or lack thereof)

By: Joe Parlanti

As some of you may know, I've been managing a simulator project outside of Dhahran, Saudi Arabia for the last year or so. These past few months we have been doing hardware / software integration and testing of the simulator which has required me to be on-site for extended periods of time.

As soon as I arrived and saw the expanse of desert, I thought "What a flying field". Unfortunately, flying RC aircraft is not allowed in this country. RC flying used to be allowed, and then there was an incident. I haven't been able to get anyone to tell me what it was, but it probably has something to do with security. It is a very restrictive society, and this is a prime example. If a privilege is abused, it is simply taken away.

The office we are working at is about 100 kilometers from a town called Khobar. Yep, the same place where the US servicemen were killed a few years back. Khobar is where everyone goes to shop. It has street after street of dingy little shops. Much to my amazement, I stumbled across a real hobby shop one day. It has an amazing amount of stuff crammed into a very small space. There are many static models, some of which I've never seen in the states. The owner is a gruff old Saudi missing about half of his teeth. I noticed that he had some RC stuff like Du-Bro hardware, OS engine parts, spinners, props, etc. What was missing were airplane kits of any sort, engines, and radios. When I asked where people go to fly around here, his answer was "Not allowed". I then asked why he has all of the stock for building planes and was told that it used to be legal. He also showed me a plaque for the Saudi Arabia National RC Championships of 1982!

The project manager on my customer's side was in Houston last summer for preliminary testing and I took him flying a couple of times. He's a nuclear engineer from India working in Saudi. He really caught the bug and asked if I could get him a plane. I brought (smuggled?) a Great Planes PT-40, OS .40LA engine, and all the fixins to build a plane. I wasn't about to try and bring in a radio, but I had heard stories of people bringing in kits. We started building the plane a few weeks back. The original intent was to build the plane and then take it back to India where there are several clubs, but Salah is getting anxious to give it a try here. There is a huge company called ARAMCO about 50 km from here that has a large contingent of Americans. I've been told that there are some guys flying over there. Apparently, there are Saudi laws, and then there are ARAMCO laws. BTW, there are approximately 35,000 Americans working in Saudi at any given time. Anyway, when I was in the shop the last time, I asked the owner if he could get engines and he said that only very small ones were available. I then asked about fuel. He said yes it's available for 200 Riyals (about \$53) per gallon! That Cool Power seems might cheap after hearing this. On a roll I said "What about radios?" The answer was "Only 4 channel, 1100 Riyals (\$293)". That price does not include Nicads either. What this little exchange proved to me is that flying is taking place here

somewhere, and it's not cheap. So now I'm on a mission to find the guys at ARAMCO who are flying and give them a call. ♦

Safely Speaking

By: Mike Laible

It seems that the field has been really busy lately so as usual, please lets practice safety. Speaking of the safety rules, I am in the process of updating the ones on the net. The net seems to be 5-6 years old and do not have all the latest rocket club rules. Also, just as a refresher I have extracted some of the important ones and listed them below. I tried to make it brief:

3. Do not fly over the pit area(s) or spectator area(s) identified for the current flying session at any time. If possible, first flights of a new untried plane or helicopter should be made at off hours during the weekend when there are a minimum of spectators and Club members present.
4. Taxing, Take-off & Landing
 - a) Two major Directional Flight Lines (DFL) are provided to accommodate the shift in wind direction (See Figures 2 and 3).
 - c) No taxing out of the pit area under the aircraft's own power. Planes should be hand controlled until outside the pit area. **NO TAKE OFFS FROM THE PIT AREA.**
 - e) Pilots will fly from within the marked boxes behind the designated "Pilot Line". The Pilot boxes are spaced at 25 feet apart to aid in maintaining a safe distance between Pilots/Transmitters.
 - g) Helicopters will be flown from designated "HELIPAD" areas "A" and "B" opposite of the CFS flight lines in use. Flying will be no closer than 40 feet of the nearest person in the CFS pit or spectator area. Flying over CFS pit and spectator areas prohibited.
 - h) Helicopter rotor blades will be engaged only on runway or designated helipad - not in pit area or taxi way.
5. Current Flight Session (CFS): Pit & Spectator Areas
 - b) The "PIT" is an area starting at a minimum of 20 feet from behind the CFS "Pilot Line" and extending a minimum of 15 feet to the spectator area. The pits will extend in either direction parallel to the CFS pilot line as required to accommodate the number of flyers or need to avoid any standing water.

Speaking of safety, I guess if some of you have been out at the field lately you would know about my new nickname. It seems I have been a "magnet" of sorts, so magnet is the name. Why you ask, well a mid air and a near ground attack will get you this name. Preston now parks at the other end of the field of where I am. **Editors Note: You are just kidding, aren't you Mike?** Kinda don't blame him. The mid air was an unfortunate event and caused more damage to the other airplane. In fact, the other accident also caused more damage to the other party. HUMMMMMM, maybe flyers should be aware of me. I guess the bottom line is that accidents do happen. That is the meaning of the word. But, lets just try to be careful. The more we practice safety the less an accident has a chance to materialize. ♦



In The Pits

By: Mike Liable

Well what has everyone been building? Any new projects or product reports to tell us about? If so just drop a note to Preston. My latest project is building another Sorta Pattern 60. This is a replacement for the one I lost in '98. It seems the accident was do to a faulty switch. The switch was about 4-5 years old and probably needed replacement. So remember to take care of that equipment. So for the construction is coming along with no problems. Should be finished by April. Another project that may be happening soon is a Bates Hellcat. This is a wonderful looking model and is around 82". I have all the laser cut parts, wood, cowl, and canopy (once again the old computer work barter system). All I need is the engine and retracts (only the two most expensive parts). This one will be built be Pop Laible. Haven't quit talked him into yet, but he is coming around.

Let's not forget about the FunFlies for the '99 season. I have written most people that was part of the old fun fly committee with suggestions for the upcoming season. I believe by the response (or lack of), everyone agrees with the schedule and events. As can be noted by the cartoon, lets just have some fun and try not to loose any planes.

1999 SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

March 13

- 1) Alarm Clock Pylon Race
- 2) Climb and Glide with Spot Landing
- 3) Loops

April 10

- 1) Climb and Glide with Spot Landing
- 2) Blind Flight
- 3) Dice Roll

May 15

- 1) Mail Run
- 2) Luck and Go
- 3) 2 Minute Touch and Go

July 10

- 1) Alarm Clock Pylon Race
- 2) Dixie Death
- 3) Looper

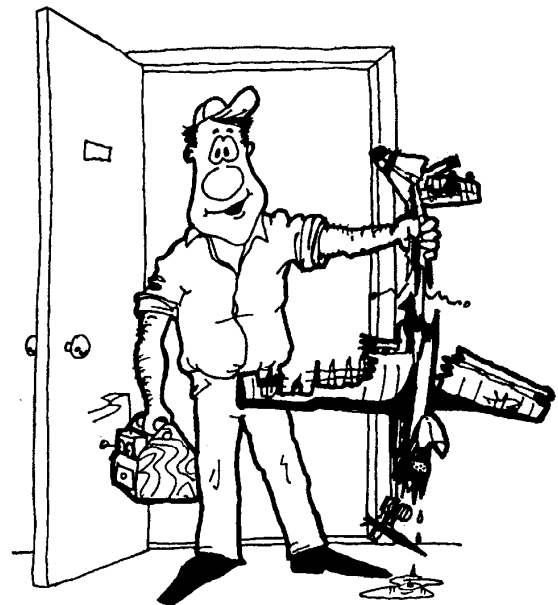
September 11

- 1) Alarm Clock Pylon Race
- 2) Dice Roll
- 3) Oh, Craps

October 16

Fun-Fly Finals and BBQ

- 1) Alarm Clock Pylon Race
- 2) Climb and Glide with Spot Landing
- 2) 2 Minute Touch and Go



... Yes, but I was declared the winner !!!

A Visit into Electric Flight

By: Don White

It was bound to happen, if you read "Model Aviation" and "Flying Models" long enough you might ask if there anything to this electric flight?

I decided to take the plunge and see if it was for me. I had always thought I would like the smaller airplanes and when you begin to think smaller, you think cleaner, cheaper and on

and on. I have never even seen an electric plane. I did read a article about Tom Hunt's stick series designs and called him. Before I knew it I had spent \$109 on the book "Clean and Quite" a kit called the Low Watt and something called a BCE. More on the BCE later.

Speed 400 was the only way to go according to Tom, so I purchased a Speed 400 motor and a folding prop as well. The kit arrived and it was a stack of sticks 1/4X1/8 that's all, oh there was a few laser cut parts but not many.

I began to read back issues of the 5 monthly magazines I subscribe to and started to learn the lingo. I even found a review of one of Tom's designs called the, don't laugh, the Dimwatt in the October 1997 MAN. I keep these magazines for research like this don't you? Anyway it said "Inexpensive entry to electric's" - that's for me - inexpensive.

I proceed into the building phase: cutting and fitting about a thousand little sticks into a airplane. The wing airfoil is unique, I had never seen anything like it. The 1/4 X 1/8 is bent over a 1/4 X 1/8 spar to shape the airfoil. To accomplish this bending soak, soak, soak the sticks. I could not bend them without breaking so I did the next best thing, I changed to 1/16 X 1/8 and laminated them, that decision worked but doubled the cut and fitting. The fuselage is unremarkable but very light and just full of angles. I had to use CA Thin just because I wanted every joint to be a work of art.

In the mean time the search went on for more stuff, connectors must be the Samos Power Pole, battery must be a 500 mah AR cell 6 or 7 cell. Huh! What's an AR? What's a power pole? How much voltage? Do I use a fuse? How do you charge these batteries. Oh yea, what direction does the motor turn? How do you turn the thing on and off.

Back to the BCE/SC. This is a computer that you install that does a lot of things you didn't know you needed done. One of the most important is you can power your receiver and motor out of the same battery. Trust me or trust it, it cuts off the motor at 6 volts leaving plenty in the battery to glide down and land. It even gives you 20 seconds of additional motor run time if needed for emergency. That's what BEC stands for "Battery Elimination Circuit". Guess what SC stands for? Everyday the UPS guy brings more stuff. Tune in next month and come to the meeting so see the bones. ♦

Continued Next Month.

February Meeting Minutes

By: Kellan Goertemiller

Meeting started slightly late at Mario's, 7:55 p.m.

Minutes were approved from last month's meeting.

Working on getting the field striped.

Working on the club logo on shirts, hats, patches, and windbreakers.

Mike Goza working on possibly setting up a heli event.

Will discuss committees till next month's meeting.

Suggestion to put up a tint at Rally of the Giants with the club logo to get the club recognized.

Visitors were Sharon Bates and her husband Andy, Bob McMahan and his son, also Jim Sanburg.

Preston is currently scanning in all the old newsletters.

Motion made and approved to find more web space for the club as a second site.

16 people present at 2/11/99 meeting, 12 members 4 visitors.

Meeting ended at 9:05.

Field Safety

I guess one of the biggest issues on everyone's mind (or at least it should be) when we are at the flying field, is safety. I know Mike brought up some good issues in his article above. I don't know about you, but I get very uneasy anytime I see a plane barreling at the pit area no matter what altitude it is at. In most all cases, maneuvers should be performed parallel with the active runway. All to many times, I have seen loops performed on a flight path that would over fly the pits if something went wrong. Other things I have seen are, high speed turns toward the pits, acrobatic maneuvers where the flight path is aimed at the pit area during parts of the maneuver. All it takes is a millisecond of dumb thumbs or a radio failure or possibly even a structural failure to send a plane hurtling into the pit area with the force of a 45 caliber bullet seriously injuring or possibly even killing someone if it hit them. So lets play it safe and always keep in mind what could happen is something went wrong.

Club Officers

President	Joe Parlanti
Vice-President	Preston Hunt
Treasurer	Dave Hoffman
Secretary	Kellan Goertemiller

Instructors

Don Fisher
Mike Laible
James Lemar
Mike Goza
(Heli and Airplane)
Jerry Hajek
David Hoffman
Preston Hunt
David Tadlock (Glider)

The R/C Flyer

EDITOR

Preston Hunt

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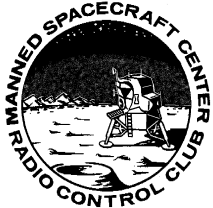
ASSEMBLY, POSTING, DISTRIBUTION

Bob Blaylock

Article and Want Ads can be submitted to Preston Hunt at
Rt. 3 Box 685 Dickinson, Tx 77539 in hardcopy, ASCII or
Microsoft Word or E-Mailed to phuntii@gte.net

Club Homepage: <http://www.phoenix.net/~mlaible/msc.html>

The R/C Flyer



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