



The *SENIOR PATTERN ASSOCIATION*

Official S I G (Special Interest Group) of AMA

Dedicated to the building, flying and competition of vintage Pattern model aircraft

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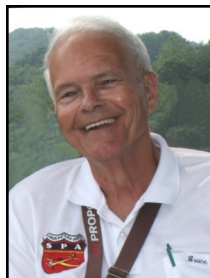
Join our Discussion list from within the webpage or inform any officer and we'll "sign you up". It's like a gigantic Mailing-list, but at NO CHARGE. A service to membership and potentials from SPA.

SPA NEWSLETTER www.seniorpattern.com JAN/FEB 2014

PRECISION AEROBATICS from PATTERN'S Golden Age

IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE PRESIDENT.....	Page 1
FROM THE CO-PILOT SEAT(VP Jeff Owens).....	Page 2
EDITORIALLY SPEAKING (Duane).....	Page 2
ALABASTER'S "LAST FLING 2013".....	Page 3
SPA SCHEDULE 2014 (& the Scheduler D.D.).....	Page 4
HOW TO SCORE at an SPA CONTEST.....	Pages 5-6
"MOVING UP" HOW TO ROLL (Without Rocking).....	Page 7



FROM THE PRESIDENT.....Happy New Year and "best wishes" on living-up to all your 2014 resolutions! January 25 saw 100% BOD attendance (and high member turnout), at the Annual Board of Directors meeting held in the Oakwood Cafe in Dalton, GA, hosted by Mike and Jeri Lynn Robinson as they have done for the past several years. Lindy Quinten (new Father to be) attended, (as he did last year), via the "Smartphone". (Love this high-tech stuff).

The Senior Expert pilots who have only participated in the race for the Memorial Trophy in the past based on the current trophy-holder vs. the top points pilot, will, in the future be limited to the top two pilots in the points race. Heretofore, the current holder was automatically pitted against only the top points pilot.

Based on the "super job" the 2013/14 Pattern Committee performed, the same 3 have been reappointed for the coming cycle of 2015/16. Jeff Owens (Fla.) will chair again this cycle with Eric Nessler (OH) and Phil Spelt (TN) completing the committee of 3. Last cycle, this committee hashed out the patterns with each other via the internet, then would each practice fly their suggested sequences and compare notes again, via the email route. They must have assembled 15 different schedules until they presented the "finished product" to the BOD for approval. Their coming cycle schedules will be presented for approval at the MASTERS contest this season in Cullman, AL. If, you have input or suggestions for them, please contact them via e-mail, phone, or letter in ample time for your' input to be considered. You might share your ideas with them personally somewhere on the contest circuit this season. Two maneuvers, determined to have been added to the AMA schedules after January 1, 1976 but just slight mods of what had been flown before then, were added to the maneuvers available for selection by the P- committee, the Double Stall Turn and the Figure M with ¼ rolls. They will entertain additional ones beyond the "approved-models" era, providing they are just "minor" mods, (without any new maneuver elements) with the basics of the era maneuvers. (IE..loops, straight flight, rolls, etc).

Dan Dougherty, CSP, has assembled and almost solidified the schedule for this season. It appears in this edition. He made lots of contacts with CD's this early in order for participants to be able to make plans for vacations, etc. Excellent planning!!

Duane has packed this issue with loads of interesting info with emphasis on scoring info prepared primarily by Mr. Jim Johns, of Dutton, AL who came to our rescue at several times when a GURU was needed for scoring during at least 3 meets this past season. Maybe more. Turn this page, take lots of time and savor this edition. We'll, more than likely have some good coverage of the Southeastern Model Show in Perry, GA on Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 2014, in the next edition. Eager for Spring.....ATB (All the Best), **Bruce Underwood-PIO SPA LIS**



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FROM the CO-PILOT'S SEATIs there anybody out there? – Pink Floyd (The Wall-1979)

For this issue's column I want to touch on a range of topics, all of which have something to do with communication and feedback from members. The first issue is that it is time for dues to be paid. In years past a stamped envelope was included with the year's first issue of the newsletter as a bit of a prod to get people to send in their checks. Although the newsletter is printed in Dalton, Georgia, Linda and I do the folding, stamping, and addressing for the mailing. And we found out that with the extra weight of the envelope it required two stamps.

Add in the one for the envelope and you can see that the mailing charge was \$1.38 for each copy. We send out about 125 copies, so you can see that the cost rapidly adds up. It is also rather inefficient, since not all members will renew and some will renew at contests so not all the stamped envelopes will be used. So, by not including the envelope we can save the treasury about \$100.

Please send in your renewals to Eric Nessler – his address is on the newsletter cover. Also, consider becoming a Lifetime Member!

Lindy Quinten does a great job of putting all the newsletter issues on the website. For this reason, some folks choose not to receive a printed copy and I save those extra issues to distribute to prospective members at Perry, at contests, etc. Currently 11 members have elected to simply read the newsletter online. If you would like to help us save postage and printing costs, just email me (jf_owens@comcast.net) and I will put you on the "electronic only" list.

In the last two newsletters I have raised three topics for discussion – the use of the term Novice in our lower classes, the idea of "Senior" divisions for classes other than Expert, and the time frame for choosing maneuvers. I expected these to generate some feedback but I have only received a few comments – about half a dozen. This from a membership of just over 130! I didn't even receive one comment concerning my article on landings – and we all know that pilots have lots of opinions on almost anything related to flying! Now you can understand my quote from Pink Floyd at the top of the page.

The annual Board of Directors meeting will take place on January 25, 2014. I suspect that one or more of the above topics will be discussed. Please take the time to review the issues I raised in the previous columns and send some feedback to me or to other Board members if you have not already done so. And please don't feel limited to just those topics. Board members want to receive comments on all SPA-related topics.

An issue recently surfaced concerning modifications to airplanes that are on the approved list. This topic was addressed by the Board back in 2012 and Duane Wilson summarized the decisions in the March-April 2012 issue that can be viewed on the website. I encourage interested members to review his article. Basically, only a few modifications are allowed and Duane listed them, however, it was recognized that members with existing models or models under construction shouldn't have to get rid of them, so a "grandfathering" clause was included. The clear intent was that highly modified airframes should be phased out over time, but existing models could still be used. The real sticking point with this issue has always been enforcement – no practical scheme has ever been devised—in the end, no CD wants to send someone home. After all, we come to contests for fun, fellowship, and flying!

Until next time – keep those comments coming! *Is there anybody out there?.....*Jeff Owens



FROM the EDITOR *The Jan/Feb and Mar/Apr issues of the newsletter* can be challenging, and sometimes even scary to produce because there are no contest results to report.

What do we do with all that space—what do we talk about? One year at press time, I had **NOTHING**. On the other hand, the lack of contest news makes room for new features, a chance to discuss the latest issues we faced at the recent BOD Annual meeting, and allows us to take a 2nd look at the best features from the past.

Jan/Feb Issue Features— The year 2006 was pivotal for SPA—it was the year that we really started to grow in membership. In that year, the "Dalton Gang", (you've heard of them), informally led by a young buck named Mike

Robinson, made its first appearance at an SPA contest. The other "gang members" were Sam Hamrick and a soft-spoken pilot named Chris Gregory. Chris was/(still is) a great pilot who quickly "MOVED UP" the ranks of SPA with his **smooth and precise** flying technique. He is also a great writer who contributed to the newsletter four years ago. Chris isn't very active in SPA now, (helicopters)? We hope to coax him back this season, but his articles remain my favorites. I'm pleased to reprint them for you over the next three issues to enjoy again, or for the newcomers to see for the first time.

Want a mid-winter reminder of why we do what we do?—check out page 3 for the coverage of the Alabaster "Last Fling", from last November. **Scorekeeping at SPA contests** has been a chronic problem for years. This year Jim Johns has volunteered to tackle the problem, and on pages 5-6, prints the 1st installment of three on "de-mystifying" the scoring program. He does a great job—thanks Jim!! Carefully follow the "figure numbers" and colored arrows and you'll be fine.

Bruce has summarized the 2014 BOD meeting highlights. In the MAR-APR newsletter we will take a closer look at the issues discussed at the BOD meeting, **YOUR COMMENTS (that you send me)**, and ideas for improvement presented at the BOD meeting as we constantly seek to make SPA even better. Stay tuned...Duane

Alabaster- "Last Fling"

When the 2013 SPA schedule was being settled, the Asheville Masters was purposely scheduled early due to fears of bad/cold weather and low sun angles. It turned out well holding the Masters early, but afterward there was a real grass roots effort of pilots wanting more. They weren't yet ready to hang up their planes for 2013. Dave Phillips stepped forward and offered the Alabaster club as a site for one more event. Those responding opted for a one day event to be held Nov 9th, 2013. It's good to look back at a reminder of why we enjoy this sport so much, and then look forward to the 2014 season. Now with the BOD meeting in the rear-view mirror, and Perry, (the unofficial start to the new season), right around the corner, it won't be long now!!

Newcomer Fred Robinson placed 2nd in Novice



Contest flight line...seventeen participants is pretty darn good for a non-scheduled, spur of the moment, one-day contest that didn't mean anything "points-wise" after the normal season was over—looks like many still had ONE MORE CONTEST IN 'EM

B NOVICE

Billy Parker 3000

NOVICE

Pete Coleman 3000

Fred Robertson 2855

Larry Hill 2755

SPORTSMAN

Roy Thompson 3000

Dan Dougherty 2914

Charles Gray 2907

ADVANCED

Mike Wieczorek 3000

Garry Singleton 2938

Dave Phillips III 2791

EXPERT

Jamie Strong 3000

Kevin Clark 2882

SR EXPERT

Keith Watson 2929

Dave Phillips II 2870

Jim Johns 2785

Dr Charles Gray came all the way from Indiana for this one-day event. I believe he's definitely "hooked"



Dave Phillips and crew hit one out of the park!!!

I didn't know that *anybody* could have as much fun as we did yesterday— everybody seemed to enjoy the competition. WOW what a day! Keith Watson and I (Dan) drove over Saturday morning and arrived in time for the 8 am pilots meeting and we were off to the races!

Weather could have been bad in November, but it was really nice for that late in the year, with a very light wind and just enough overcast so that the sun was not a problem. I think we had 17 attendees—as many as some of the two-day scheduled contests.

We flew four full rounds with all classes, even while taking a break for a great lunch provided by Nova Rossi. I love Brats—had 2. I saw many smiling faces as we gave out the plaques and give away prizes. Dr. Charles Gray won the Nova Rossi R60F and Lil Dave's Wife Kara won the Blue Jay Dirty Birdy. How long do you think she'll get to keep it?

Roy Thompson was first in Sportsman. Mike Wieczorek managed to take a first in Advanced—even after a long layoff. Keith Watson, who looks like he's back to stay, was first in Sr. Expert.

As we closed up everyone seemed to make sure that they went around to say "Bye" and "See Ya Next year !!!" What a good feeling it was to be able to get together one more time before ending the season. Thank you Alabaster and Dave, and we WILL see you next year!!



Dan Dougherty—a man of many talents, and lots of energy—a real SPA dynamo. He goes under several names, (DD, and Dan the Man to name a couple). He is an organizer, builder extraordinaire, outspoken BOD member, Monokote expert, CD at multiple events, and scorekeeper. Other than that, he doesn't do much....

The "FAB 15" for 2014...by Danny Dougherty

First let me introduce myself. I am Dan Dougherty, SPA 13 and your new Contest Coordinator and Chairman of Special Projects. I'm trying to fill Jamie Strong's shoes while he takes a break after years of service to SPA. My best friend, school chum and bride of 47 years is Janie and my son, Dan Jr is also a modeler. I don't remember whether my AMA was issued in 1954 or 1955, but the number has not changed in all these years. I started building control line and free flight as a kid in Pensacola, Florida. My granddad and our dads worked at Pensacola Naval Air Station keeping them flying. We had T-28's, T34's and Texans flying over our houses as kids there. I was hobby mentored by some of the best and grew up in Bobe's Hobby Shop which is still in Pensacola today. I was taught to fly RC in Marietta, GA by Mickey Walker, Tom Atkins and Keith Watson in 1971. My history includes Pattern, Helicopters in the early days, (I was 2nd at the first helicopter Nats) and Quarter Midget racing. I ran one of the biggest Hobby Shops in the nation back in the 80's. I took a break from RC for a while and came back when a tussle with cancer prompted me to

look for my friends and go back to my hobby roots. At that time everyone in the Atlanta area was doing SPA pattern and the rest is history. I have not been able to do anything by halves so I have missed only 4 or 5 contests in the last 6 years. I am a builder and people make jokes about the "hobby shop" I carry to a contest....until their plane breaks and I can fix it in time for their next round. I really enjoy that camaraderie part of SPA and.... putting on contests.

Now to the real topic: SPA today. Just look at the schedule. It is fabulous. And I did not do it. You CD's and clubs did it. And you did it early so we will not be stepping on any other organization's toes, scheduling wise that is.

How did it happen? Easy, I just asked each group when they wanted to do it and everything fell into place. We only had one conflict after the schedule was about set and that was easily handled with a simple club to club swap of dates. So you did it. You CD's and clubs stepped up to commit for firm dates, places and the behind the scenes work that makes a contest run. Congratulations to you CD's and Clubs. They are the backbone of the SPA. Without them we only have a common interest...Instead we have FIFTEEN CONTESTS in 20—FOURTEEN. Just look at that schedule...you guys are good. DD

2014 SCHEDULES		SPA EAST
APRIL 26TH—27TH	ALABASTER, AL	DAVE PHILLIPS JR. CD
MAY 17TH—18TH	KNOXVILLE, TN	PHIL SPELT CD
JUNE 21ST—22ND	AMERICUS, GA (HODGES)	DAN DOUGHERTY CD
JULY 19TH—20TH	"HOTLANTA", GA	DAN DOUGHERTY CD
AUGUST 16TH—17TH	CHATTANOOGA, TN	MIKE ROBINSON CD
SEPTEMBER 13TH—14TH	ASHEVILLE, NC	WILL HICKS CD
SEPTEMBER 27TH (1 DAY)	ALABASTER (TOP NOVICE)	DAVE PHILLIPS CD
OCTOBER 4TH—5TH	CULLMAN, AL (SPA MASTERS)	STEVE BYRUM CD
		SPA WEST
APRIL 26TH	FT. WORTH, TX	KEN KNOTTS CD
MAY 10TH	TEXAS WINGS	TIM REED CD
JUNE 10TH	TULSA, OK (TENTATIVE)	LINDY QUINTEN CD
JUNE 28TH—29TH	GOLDEN TRIANGLE, TX	FRANK COX CD
JULY 12TH—13TH	ARKANSAS FARM	RICHARD TIBBITS CD
AUGUST 2ND	GSW, HURST, TX	TIM LOVETT CD
SEPTEMBER 27TH—28TH	FT. WORTH, TX (SPA OPEN)	KEN KNOTTS CD

How to SCORE at an SPA CONTEST!! ...(SCOREKEEPING MADE EASY—ER) by Jim Johns



Pattern competition is the thing that brings all of us in SPA together. It's fun to compete with others to see how our personal skills compare to theirs, and to see how our skills are progressing from contest to contest. Most of us see only the competition and camaraderie side of our contests, unless you happen to be the CD. The CD has to do many things to run a contest, but one of the most important is keeping score. How would we know which judge to gripe at about our low scores last round without a scorekeeper? All of our SPA class maneuvers have associated K factors or degrees of difficulty. The raw score given by each judge (0-10) is multiplied by the K factor (1-4) to get the total score for each maneuver. It was realized many years ago that this is almost impossible to do by hand in a timely manner, so computer scoring was born. Computer scoring requires a PC with the appropriate scoring program installed and a scorekeeper. Scoring is a time consuming job that needs at least one or preferably more people to do it right. There is so much that the CD has to do to run the contest - set the flight lines, get judges, and handle any questions or disputes that occur - that he has no time to do the scoring too. Scoring is not a difficult task - any experienced PC user can do it. Bottom line - **SPA needs your help!** This article will be a very basic overview of computer scoring for SPA. I'll elaborate further in the next few months. Let's dive right in.

Description: The computer program used for scoring SPA contests is called PACSS - the Precision Aerobatic Contest Scoring System. It runs on any Windows PC, although a laptop is preferred due to power constraints at many contest sites. PACSS will print to any printer installed on your PC. I've printed with equal success on everything from a cheap inkjet to a color laser printer. PACSS has been tested under Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7. Almost anyone who can use a PC can run the program. The program has to be installed on the PC, but it's a very simple, straight-forward process. Most clubs have someone who can provide assistance if you aren't comfortable doing it yourself. PACSS was originally written for AMA Pattern competition, but works well to SPA when the SPA Class maneuver schedules are added. We've made that very easy for you--more on that later.

Program Installation: The PACSS program can be downloaded at <http://pacss.sgmsservice.com/download.htm> - it's completely free. The file is 18 Mb in size and the file name will look similar to this - **PACSS Install V040102.exe**. After the download is finished, double click the file name and the installation will begin. It's easiest to accept all of the defaults throughout the installation. When the installation is complete, the program will be opened and almost ready to use. Go ahead and close the program for now.


Installing SPA Specific Files: You will need to update two files provided with the PACSS program for SPA. Creating these by hand is tedious and time consuming, so I've done the work for you. If you can copy files, you can install these files. I've created two files - SCHEDULE.MST and PEOPLE.MST - that contain the SPA classes and maneuvers plus the personal information of all the contestants who pre-registered for an SPA East or West contest in 2013. I can email them to you, along with installation instructions, before the beginning of the contest season, pending B.O.D. approval. The SCHEDULE.MST file will be updated when new maneuver schedules are created at the beginning of a new rules cycle, such as at the beginning of 2015.

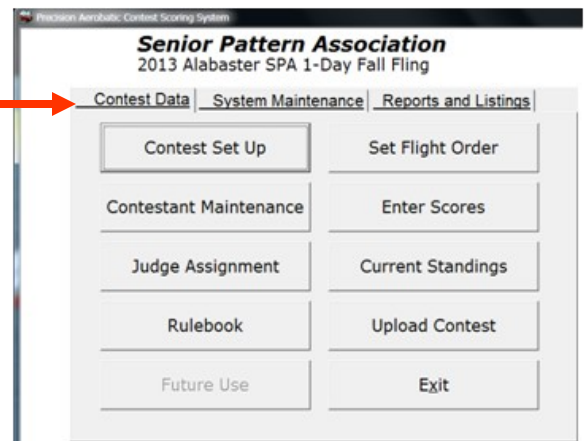
What it takes to score a contest: There are basically only six things you need to do to keep score at an SPA contest. I'll go into each of these much more deeply in future articles.

- **Set up the contest:** This is where you enter the data specific to your contest - contest name, dates, CD name, etc.
- **Enter the contestants:** Our online pre-registration can help you greatly. Simply go to the SPA website (<http://www.seniorpattern.com/contests.htm>) and find the contest you are scoring. Enter the pre-registered contestant information at your leisure before the contest. Anyone who didn't pre-register can be quickly added the morning of the contest.
- **Enter the scores:** Well, Duh!
- **Print round scores:** Everyone wants to know where they stand.
- **Backup your work:** As we always said when I worked on an early CAD/CAM system - file frequently!
- **Crash Recovery:** This is probably the most important thing you'll read in these articles IMHO. The PACSS program has a small possibility of crashing while entering scores. This rarely happens, but recognizing that it has happened and knowing how to recover will save you from a lot of work and heartache. This happened Sunday morning at Hotlanta in 2013, before we knew how to recover. It was a major pain - we had to completely reinstall the program and re-enter all scores from Saturday's competition. Trust me - you do NOT want to do this. I know - I was the scorekeeper at that contest.

How SPA can help you as a scorekeeper: I've already mentioned the SPA Specific Files. I am also creating a set of Microsoft PowerPoint presentations that are actually an Instruction Manual for using the program. It will feature step-by-step instructions for all phases of the scoring process and lots of pictures. I can provide these to you in the form of PDF files. You can print them out and use as a reference manual if you like. Both of these items should be available before the start of the 2014 SPA contest season after B.O.D. approval.

I hope I have you excited about scorekeeping, so let's dive right into the specifics of PACSS. Installation is pretty simple - download the file, double click it, and follow the prompts. Be sure to register the software when it starts for the first time.

When the program starts, this is the screen you'll see. Notice that there are three tabs at the top - Contest Data, System Maintenance, and Reports and Listings. The **Contest Data** tab,  is where you enter anything



specific to your contest. The **System Maintenance** tab has all the tools to do the housework – system preferences, class schedules, people maintenance, and backup. The **Reports and Listings** tab is exactly what you'd expect – a place to print various things. All three tabs have one thing in common – all have an **Exit** button which closes the PACSS program. Let's deal with some basics first. Every screen has a text menu and an icon menu and all share a few basic icons. If you hover your cursor over any icon for a few seconds, you'll get a pop-up telling the purpose of that icon. For example, in **FIGURE 1** at the right, 1 = exit this screen, 2 = open, 3 = add, 4 = save, and 5 = delete. The number and meaning varies from screen to screen, but you get the idea.

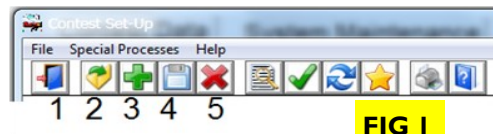


FIG 1

(FIG 2) With that settled, the first thing you need to do after installation is personalize the program for your club. Click on the System Maintenance tab, then on System Settings. Fill in your club or organization name (←). Leave the other information "as is" for now and click the Save (diskette) icon to save the information, and then click the Exit icon (↑) to leave this screen.

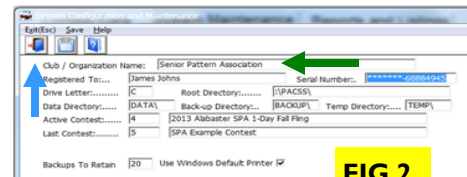


FIG 2

(FIG 3) Now let's set up our contest. Click the Contest Data tab, then Contest Set Up, then the GREEN PLUS icon to add a new contest. Select "SPA" from the drop down box in **(FIG 3)** (↑) and fill in your contest dates. Be sure that the two check boxes to the right of SPA are NOT CHECKED. When all is correct, click the Continue icon (↑) twice to continue.

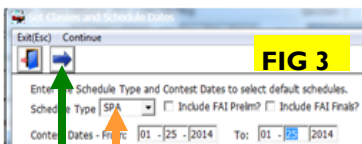


FIG 3

(FIG 4) Enter your contest name at the top (←). All of the classes will be shown at the bottom, one at a time. You must decide whether or not each class is included in your contest. Sometimes, there aren't any B-Novice pilots, so you don't want that class to show up on your results. Note the In Contest field (←) at the right. Use the scroll bar at right to move through all the classes doing the same. All six SPA classes (B-Novice, Novice, Sportsman, Advanced, Expert and Sr. Expert) default to "Y" and the other classes default to "N". Change it to "N" for classes NOT in your contest. When you scroll the first time, you'll get a screen asking if you want to activate the contest. Click OK to save this as the currently open contest within PACSS. When you've gone through all classes, click the SAVE icon (↑) to save all the information for your contest, then click Exit (↑) to return to the Main screen.

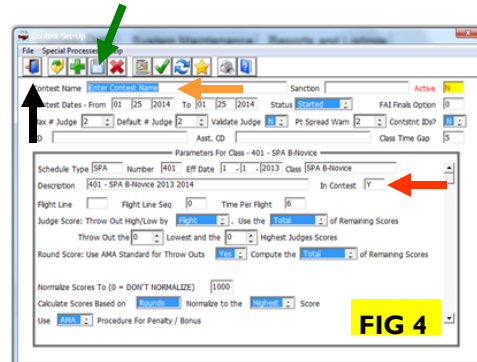


FIG 4

(FIG 5) Now let's add some contestants. Click **Contestant Maintenance** and you'll get the screen at left. Type LAST NAME of contestant in blank at bottom (←) then press Enter. Look for the contestant at the top (←). Check carefully as the names are not always in perfect alphabetical order and there may be more than one person with the same name. Use AMA numbers to verify you have the right person. When you find your contestant, double click his name. If you don't find him, click Add New Person (↓).

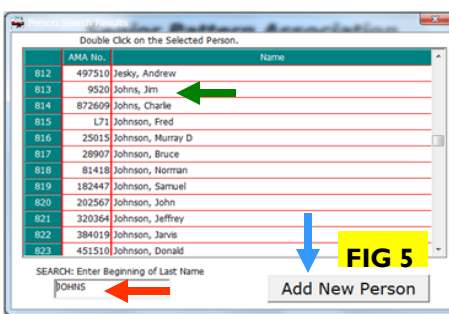


FIG 5

(FIG 6) Verify that all info on this screen at right is correct or enter it for a new person. All of this info will be stored for the next contest, except for the channel/frequency data (←)

which must be entered each time. Enter channel numbers (00 thru 60) for 50 or 72 MHz channels or "SS" for 2.4 GHz. Select the appropriate class from the box at right (←). Click Save (↑) to save this pilot's data to your contest, then click Add New Contestant (←) to add more pilots. Click Exit (↑) to return to the Main Menu after all pilots have been added. That's about it for this time. I hope I've given you some tips you can use and piqued your interest in this vital task for the success of our SPA contests. Next time we'll talk about entering and printing scores, backing up your data, and much more.

I attend virtually all SPA East contests and I will be glad to assist if you have problems. You can also contact me directly at any time at tr20pd@gmail.com for personal assistance. I'll help in any way I can with any scoring question.

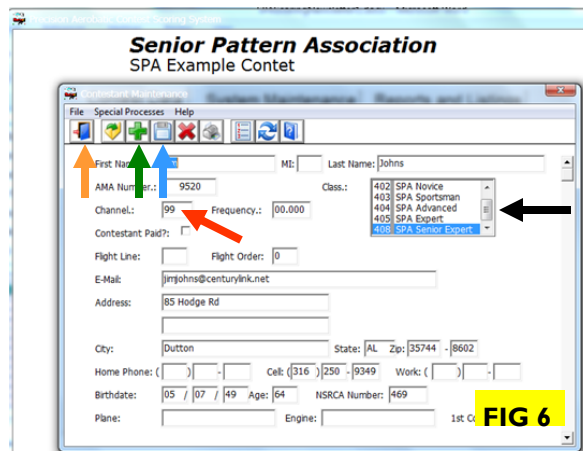


FIG 6

Please consider volunteering to be a scorekeeper – either full time or part time – at your local SPA contest. Remember – **The Senior Pattern Association** works best when **YOU** help! Smooth Landings!

MOVING UP

...By Chris Gregory
Part I

As part of the (notorious) "Dalton Gang" joining SPA in 2006, Chris Gregory made a name for himself early. In 2010, Chris wrote a great series of articles based on the concept of "Moving UP"—and the challenges each new level of competition brings, with emphasis on the art of performing the "rolling maneuvers". He has a knack for writing in a very entertaining, yet informative way. I hope you enjoy these as much as I did as you read them again—or for the first time.



Chris's World Models **INTRUDER**, with its attractive custom color scheme—

I feel your pain with regard to the jump to the next level of maneuvers. When I felt pressured to move out of novice and into sportsman, it was a huge undertaking and one that required a TON of practicing, and perhaps most important of all... some quality time with Coach Underwood and crew to get my plane a bit more ready for the Sportsman sequence.

The main trim changes that I had to do pertained to knife edge flight. Moved the CG back even further than it already was on the Intruder (think I wound up 3/4" behind the main gear), and a very minor program mix that induced a small (very small) amount of down elevator once my rudder deflection hit about 70%. I think moving the CG back just a hair more may have eliminated the need for the mix, but I never tried it.

Once the plane was pronounced "as good as we can get it" for my plane, the real work began in earnest. I got several gallons of fuel, a shopping cart full of Mountain Dews for the ice chest, and went out and started working on rolls. I understood that a proper horizontal roll does not happen by banging the aileron stick over to the left or right and waiting for the roll to finish. A proper roll must be "flown through". Just as you fly through a loop (rather than just pulling up elevator and holding on) you must also learn to fly through the roll.

Rather than start working on 3 horizontal rolls, I decided to work on a slow roll. This roll, more than any other will teach you the art of flying through the roll. To say I worked on the slow roll is a bit of a stretch, because what I actually did was more like practicing straight inverted flight. I pulled the nose up a bit, and did a somewhat slow roll to inverted, hold the inverted, then roll back to normal flight. My roll to the inverted position was not "deathly slow", but very "laid back and smooth". As I got comfortable rolling from upright to inverted smoothly and flying the inverted portion, I started working on my smoothness rolling out of the inverted portion back to normal upright flight. Before long I was shortening the length of time spent inverted, and simply started doing the roll as one continuous roll rather than hesitating in the inverted position. This practice proved invaluable because I was actually working on 2 new maneuvers at the same time. Straight Inverted Flight, and the Slow Roll. By the way...rolling to inverted and then back to upright is 2 points of the 4 point roll; my practice was technically beneficial toward 3 new maneuvers.

With the slow roll starting to look decent, I started working on 3 horizontal rolls. This maneuver is very scary and as you have indicated, can get out of hand in a heart beat! One thing that really helped me on this was Coach's suggestion that I set up a low rate aileron switch for the 3 rolls so that I could just peg my ailerons, and then worry about the elevator and timing. If the roll rate is too fast (and 99% of the novice flyers are rolling way too fast) it is just too easy to get out of timing with the elevator. With the roll rate too fast, you wind up being late on the down elevator, then you hold it in too long and by the time you enter the 2nd roll you're already heading toward the ground. This almost happened to me at the Gadsden contest in 2007 when I somehow managed to push hard down elevator just in time to pull (technically "push") "Trudy" out of the big bad pine trees before she took out half of the "Kidd Field National Forrest".

One day, Cass Underwood boasted that he never used ANY down elevator during his 3 rolls. I called him on his claim and he proceeded to demonstrate his 3 rolls. To make a long story short, he did have to use just a smidge of down in the inverted position to keep his line level and not down hill. I learned a very valuable lesson though... it takes VERY LITTLE down elevator to keep the 3 rolls level. By very little I mean... really very little! I don't think his stick moved more than 1/16 of an inch. The whole key to his ability to do 3 rolls with "practically" no elevator was that he started by making sure that his nose was ABSOLUTELY not pointed down even by a millionth of a degree. Read into that whatever you want, but make sure you understand that if you start 3 rolls with your nose down (even a very little bit) you will wind up introducing your plane to the ground shortly thereafter. Another thing to remember is that speed is your friend on all of the rolling maneuvers. The faster the plane is traveling, the less control input is required to keep it on line.

Remember boys and girls... smart pilots begin practicing their new rolling maneuvers by pulling the nose up prior to starting the roll. As you progress and get more comfortable with flying through the rolls, you can start reducing the amount of "nose up" needed for insurance, and eventually be able forgo the nose up all together.

Long post already, and there is still the knife edge flight and 4 point roll to talk about. Let's let 'em go for now.. learning straight inverted flight, slow roll, and 3 horizontal rolls is a lot to chew on, and hopefully these steps that helped me will help you as you begin your journey into the deep end of the aerobic pool. I'm not sure I'll ever be able to play on equal footing with Coach or Jerry Black... I think these guys came out of the womb knowing how to fly rolling maneuvers! The rest of us mortals will just have to keep hacking away at it.

To be continued next issue.....

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