



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

SPA NEWSLETTER www.seniorpattern.com JULY-AUG 2017

PRECISION AEROBATICS from *PATTERN'S Golden Age*

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CONTEST EARLYBIRDS

This was the early morning scene at Chattanooga 2017 captured by “photo ace” Bobbie Johns. Those who get there early are treated to scenes like this—even a converted landfill takes on a special look. Bruce took a similar photo at Asheville a couple years back, (see page 14). Each of them must certainly be “morning people” Thanks to both Bobbie and Bruce for your “photographer’s eye”...editor



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.



Bruce & Jane Underwood

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FROM THE PRESIDENT As I write this, we have three contests left on this year's schedule. Two are in the East (CMJ Hobbies on September 9-10 and the East Masters on October 7-8) and one in the West (West Open Championships on September 23-24). It has been a good season so far with 5 contests in the East and 4 in the West.

With the season coming to a close, it is time to think about the schedule for next year! As I wrote last time, we shall have to become a bit more creative if we are to schedule as many contests as we have become used to. We will have to develop techniques to put on our own contests, minimizing the number of people required from the host clubs. One item I mentioned in my last column was tried at the recent Chattanooga contest. I suggested that each contestant should be responsible for bringing the score sheets after each flight to the scoring table. This worked really well and meant that local club members could focus on other duties. An unexpected benefit was the immediate feedback one could get by looking at the scores. I know that in my case there were scores on some maneuvers that were lower than I expected. The judges saw things that I couldn't (or didn't). Conferring with the judges afterwards gave me some valuable pointers about things that they saw that I could work on. That just makes it all the more fun and challenging!

Recently I authorized Jim Johns to purchase a black and white laser printer so that he didn't have to keep using his personal printer and supplies. It was surprisingly inexpensive (about \$138 with a spare print cartridge and paper.) I extended the same offer to Bernie Olson should it be decided that a printer would be useful for contests in the West. Similarly, an inexpensive computer was purchased several years ago for Jim (or others) to use for scoring. A similar offer is hereby extended to the West Division. Jim Johns has details for equipment at good prices and he knows reputable vendors for such purchases.

The basic idea is to have, to the extent possible, SPA members putting on contests for those months where host clubs can not be found. This idea may well be put to a pivotal test next year as a plan to put on a contest at the AMA National Flying Site is in the works. No details yet, but I will keep you posted as the plans mature.

I mentioned last time that at Prattville an experimental Open class for both Advanced and Expert was created where one could use pipes and retracts. A similar option was available at the Chattanooga contest. As was the case at Prattville, there were no entries for these classes. That is something to consider when people talk about opening up the rules to get more contestants.



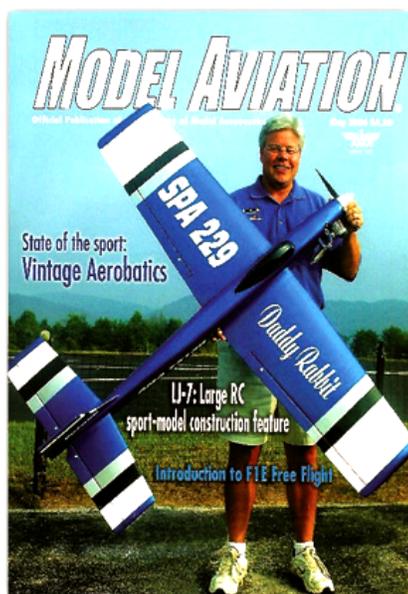
On a personal note, a long saga is nearing completion. In 2007 I started a plans-built Deception. I cut my own wing and stab cores and assembled a huge pile of balsa blocks and sheets. Life – and several other models intervened and the Deception was set aside to age gracefully. But now I have finished the dreaded Monokote application and I am installing the equipment. Here are two pictures.



I still have to hinge the surfaces, install the radio and landing gear, and generally finish up the usual details. That is a pumped OS 61 SF fitted into the nose in the second picture. I'll post more pictures on the mail list as things come together. Meanwhile, keep building and practicing. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible down the road at future contests!

Enjoy Aerobatics?

Fly Precision Aerobatics
from R/C Pattern's Golden Age



SPA is featured in *Model Aviation* February 1992, May 2006, July 2007, and August 2012.

The Senior Pattern Association (SPA) is a Special Interest Group of the AMA dedicated to Pattern's Golden-Age (1965-75):



- Early classic (single pass non-turnaround) Pattern
- Simple and inexpensive competition

Do you enjoy doing random loops, rolls, and other maneuvers when you fly? Then you might enjoy the challenge of flying with other pilots as each of you attempts to do them as they were meant to be done! With 5 classes to compete in, there is one perfect for you. Most start in Novice and advance as skills develop. We like the challenge of competition in a fun atmosphere—come join us!

Questions? Contact avlwilsons@charter.net

seniorpattern.com

Model Aviation Ad Look for this SPA ad Coming Soon!

At the annual meeting in January, Scott Anderson pointed out that as an AMA “sig”, (special interest group), SPA is entitled to a free quarter-page advertisement once a year in *Model Aviation* magazine. We thought “why not,” and came up with the ad you see to the left.

The ad will be seen soon, appearing in the October issue of *Model Aviation*. The staffer involved with printing such ads said that only three of the many AMA “sigs” have taken advantage of this offer. Thanks Scott for being in the know ...

“Golden Years” Truisms

- ***My goal for 2017 was to lose just 10 pounds. Only 15 to go.***
- ***Ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons & tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce. And cheese. FINE, OKAY, OKAY—it was a pizza. I ate a pizza.***
- ***I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.***
- ***I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food in 3 hours and 20 minutes.***
- ***A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.***
- ***Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.***
- ***Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero out they closed school? Me neither.***
- ***I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented. I forgot where I was going with this.***
- ***I love being over 70. I learn something new each day and forget 5 others.***
- ***A thief broke into my house last night. He started searching for money so I woke up and searched with him.***
- ***I think I'll just put an "Out of Order" sticker on my forehead and call it a day.***
- ***When Daylight Saving Time ends, don't forget to set your bathroom scale back 10 pounds on Saturday night.***
- ***Just remember, once you're over the hill you begin to pick up speed.***



Knox County R/C JULY 15-16 2017

2017 Ben Oliver Memorial SPA Contest



Another great SPA contest, hosted by the Knox County RC Club is in the books. This contest was originally scheduled in Asheville, NC. KCRC stepped in to host it after it became clear that the contest could not be held in Asheville for numerous reasons. Co-CDs Phil Spelt and Warren Oliver did their usual superb job of making sure everything was done in good order and all ran smoothly. The weather caused a few small problems - fog each morning with fog hovering over the Clinch River which surrounds the field on three sides, as well as possible thunderstorms throughout the day. Gray clouds filled the Saturday morning sky, but a bright blue sky with puffy white clouds returned on Saturday afternoon and Sunday was picture perfect.

A nice turnout of 18 SPA competitors arrived bright and early Saturday morning, assembled their aircraft and tuned their engines. Several even put in test flights. Co-CD Phil Spelt then called a pilots meeting and explained the KCRC specific rules, followed by Co-CD Warren Oliver's explanation of the flight line and judging procedures. Flying was delayed for a bit by the morning fog, but it soon lifted. Competitor Curt Diggs received a phone call during this time informing him that his water heater at home had failed, so he packed up his beautiful Tiger Tail 4 and headed back to Atlanta before flying even began.

Four rounds were completed on Saturday and two on Sunday. Several competitors had problems with orientation Saturday morning due to the very gray skies. Several "lost it" momentarily but all regained control in time to save their aircraft. The only casualty of the weekend was Bruce Underwood's Dirty Birdy. This was unfortunate because Bruce is flying the best he has in years and had won the 2nd round. See The Rest of the Story below.

The 17 remaining competitors were nicely spread through the five classes - 2 in Novice, 3 in Sportsman, 3 in Advanced, 5 in Expert and 4 in Senior Expert. Competition was keen in all classes. Final scores are posted at the bottom of the page, but here's a quick summary.

- Jim Strong lived up to his name, taking the first five rounds of Novice competition for the win. David Johnson won the final round for 2nd.
- KCRCer Jimmy Russell took the win in Sportsman, also winning five rounds. Vic Koenig won a round for 2nd, with Duane Wilson finishing 3rd.
- Following the trend, fellow KCRCer Bill Dodge also won 5 rounds to secure the Advanced class victory. Jim Johns won Round 5 for 2nd place with Co-CD Phil Spelt finishing 3rd.
- Expert was the largest class with five entries. Jerry Black took all four rounds Saturday for the victory, then sat out Sunday and helped judge. Jamie Strong finished a strong 2nd, with Texas visitor Ellis Newkirk taking 3rd. Steve Drake and Co-CD Warren Oliver rounded out the class.

SPA President Jeff Owens easily scored the win with a dominating performance in Senior Expert - 5 Ks and a 999.38 in his other round. Secretary/Treasurer Keith Watson was 2nd and Russ Chiles 3rd. Bruce Underwood finished 4th after his unfortunate crash in the 3rd round.

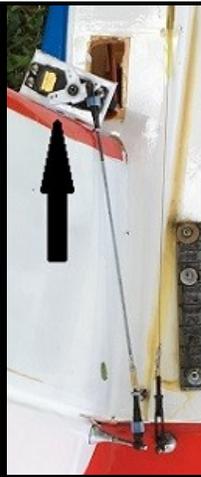
Beautiful handmade awards were passed out by KCRC President Rick Thompson early Sunday afternoon. This allowed folks to get on the road home at a decent hour. Bill Dodge and Keith Watson won rolls of Monokote and Neucover in the drawing, while big winner Steve Drake took a fiberglass and foam T2A kit donated by the Ballistic Aircraft Company home to Bowling Green, KY. Congratulations to all.

It was another wonderful weekend of SPA competition and fellowship. Remember that this years Masters is also being held in Knoxville. Again we sincerely thank the Knoxville club (KCRC), and CD's Phil Spelt and Warren Oliver for stepping up to the plate, so to speak, and saving this contest knowing they had the finale event in October. Thanks again.

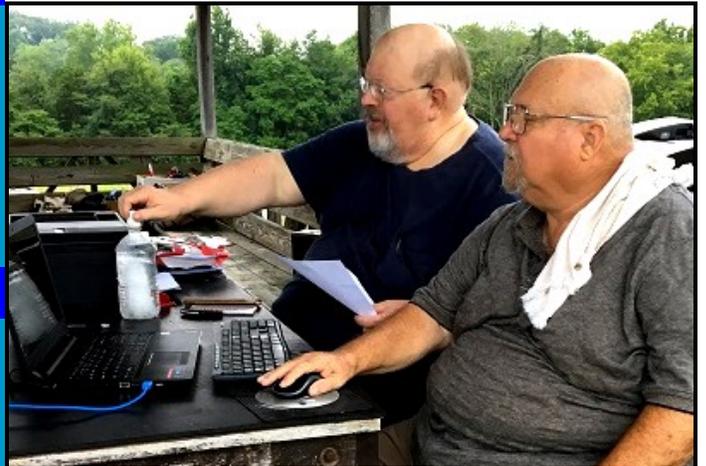
Jim Johns, Webmaster

The Rest of the Story!!

Bruce's Dirty Birdy, purchased last March at Perry, was built with dual elevator servos. Following takeoff in the 3rd round, the right servo mount broke loose from the fuselage causing the plane to be uncontrollable. See arrow in 1st photo. It crashed into the Clinch River off the right end of the field. Bruce was dismayed at losing his plane and especially his engine and radio. KCRC member Roger Kroodsma (Left) fought his way through the briars and brambles down the steep incline where he found the fuselage floating in the river. After waiting for it to float to shore, Roger retrieved it and returned it to Bruce. Needless to say, Bruce was a very happy camper.



NOVICE		EXPERT	
Jim Strong	4000	Jerry Black	4000
David Johnson	3825	Jamie Strong	3943
SPORTSMAN		Ellis Newkirk	2878
Jimmy Russell	4000	Steve Drake	3822
Vic Koenig	3670	Warren Oliver	3806
Duane Wilson	3325	SR EXPERT	
ADVANCED		Jeff Owens	4000
Bill Dodge	4000	Keith Watson	3370
Jim Johns	3892	Russ Chiles	3234
Phil Spelt	3459	Bruce Underwood	1907



Long-time scorekeeper gurus Joel Hebert and Jim Johns



A slimmer Jimmy Russell taking charge in SPORTSMAN with Daddy Rabbit originally flown by Ben Oliver



Spelt family with special guest Jeannette



Jimmy and Shannon



Critical pilot support crew



Jeff & Lori



Jerry and Kaos



Steve Drake won T2A

Buzzard Air SPA Contest

Thunderbird Field,

Benbrook, TX

July 15, 2017



The beginning stuff:

BENBROOK, Texas - July 15, 2017: The mid July heat wasn't enough to keep flyers and spectators away from the annual BuzzardAir Senior Pattern Contest in the SPA West, hosted by the Fort Worth Thunderbirds on beautiful Benbrook Lake. The day was filled with fantastic flying, food, frolicking and fun, and a few frauleins, who kept everyone in line. Twelve registered pilots flew four rounds on one flight line. Flying started by 9:00 a.m. so as many rounds as possible could be completed before the hottest part of the day. The last flight was complete by 3:30 p.m. Winds were light and variable from a generally southern direction when the contest started and eventually switched to the north for part of the day. Unusual for Texas in July, the northerly breeze and high clouds helped keep the temperature down to only 96 degrees.

More than one judge commented to the CD that these folks have been obviously practicing and their flying has improved, as reflected by the scoring.

The usual stuff:

Though participation was light, all five classes were flown with the following results: Frank Cox, with the Golden Triangle club, walked away with the **Novice** top spot. Tommy Scarmardo from the Houston area and Fort Worth Thunderbird Steve Ehlers battled for top honors in the **Sportsman** class with Tommy pulling out the win. Bernie Olson from WAMS took top honors in **Advanced**, followed by Thunderbird Chris Berardi in second place and Bobby Zikes from Temple, TX, picking up the third spot. Thunderbird and CD Pat Ensign faced Wichita Falls flyer Robert Redmon in the **Expert** class with Pat taking first. Rounding out the contest was Thunderbird Ken Knotts, who took home the **Senior Expert** prize.

The ending stuff:

The contest was well-supported by J.T.'s Hobbies in Fort Worth. Many thanks to J.T. for outstanding contest raffle prizes. Congratulations to the winners: Steve Ehlers -- case of fuel, Bobby Zikes -- Contender kit, and Bob Redmon -- battery checker. Each registered pilot also won a door prize such as epoxy, glow plugs, and other hobby sundries from J.T.'s.

All in all, it was a good contest, though a smaller than usual crowd. There was excellent support from Thunderbirds volunteers, especially Tab Bowland, Dave Dingman, Gary Cummings, and Jeanne Alphin, who helped out all day. And a special thanks to Leslie Ensign for keeping official score, serving as photographer, and creating awards for the contest.

It all wrapped up at a local BBQ joint, where once again, the world's problems were considered and sometimes solved, including politics, ecology, economy and occasional important topics, such as model airplanes.



Win, Place and Show: Pat, Bernie, Chris, Bobby, Tommy, Bob, Frank, and Steve

NOVICE

Frank Cox 3000

SPORTSMAN

Tony Scarmando 3000

Steve Ehlers 852

ADVANCED

Bernie Olson 2957

Chris Berardi 2916

Bobby Zikes 2868

Gary Alphin 2230

Anthony Stelly 963

EXPERT

Pat Ensign 3000

Robert Redmon 2763

SR. EXPERT

Ken Knotts 1000



Bobby Zikes wins Contender from JT Hobbies



Tony and Frank watch while waiting





Chattanooga 2017

August 12-13, 2017

Evidently drawing from his expertise as an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician), CD Scott Anderson avowed at the pilot's briefing on Saturday morning, "I want all to have a delightful and healthy fun-filled weekend". " The forecast is calling for high temps and very humid conditions, so I'm providing big coolers of Ice water under each judges tent. It's there, it's free, please consume plenty and stay hydrated". I'm confessing, this was one of the most beneficial of the numerous hospitable acts personified by Scott, Misty and the Chattanooga RC Club this weekend. Scott and Misty, the CCRC officers and several members just outdid themselves with the acts of hospitality this weekend.

Let me cover the finale prior to the preceding events, if I may. Scott, well known throughout the modeling industry through his connection with AMA and it's associates, promotes some of the biggest and best raffle events on the SPA East circuit. Take a look at this: Scott and Misty behind the raffle prize display. This "marketing" of the actual prizes included led to a huge sale of raffle tickets and much success. Here's the contributors that Scott says made it possible: **LET'S START WITH THE BIG STUFF FIRST...5 planes, 1 engine, and 1 radio-PRETTY GOOD!!**

And now a **BUNCH** of other stuff:



Pulse Battery

Bob Smith Industry

Tru-Turn

RTL Hardware

APC

Progressive RC

Sullivan

TACTIC

RA Cores

Tite Bond Glue

Flight Test

Ballistic Aircraft Company

CRCC

Chief Aircraft

Planewrappers

See what I mean? You can

tell that much thought and prep work went into this event. In the radio business we refer to "show-prep" as the prep for a show, lots went into this event.

Scott, (in his typical matter of fact—no-nonsense style),

posted a brief "recap" of the event Sunday evening by simple posting...**"21 paid registered pilots, 2 crashes, 6 rounds."** More about this later.

There always is an interesting little "wrinkle" associated with Chattanooga because of the field's proximity to housing in the area. After take-off, pilots needed to offset the flight line by a few degrees to coincide with landmarks on the ground—one of them being a nearly invisible, (in the morning) church steeple. Each pilot could designate his own "centerline", then they had to fly their pattern without the benefit of flying square to the runway. It added an additional element of challenge for out of town pilots. It was a bit disorienting at first, but as time went by everyone got more familiar with this arrangement.

Saturday it stormed within 1/2 mile of the flying site, but we remained dry. Scott kept us moving and the 4 rounds were complete by 3 PM. Sunday was lovely with 2 more rounds, all the lucky raffle winners chosen, and award presentations made with departure by 1 PM EDT. Scott announced a 9 AM start on Sunday morning, and it was "wheels up" promptly at 9 AM.

A "first" was initiated at this contest, it was announced at the initial pilots briefing, there will be no RUNNERS. The pilot will carry his scores sheets after each flight to Jim Johns in the scorekeepers quarters. Laughingly, some asked "are the scores gonna be in pencil?"

Scott answered, "no, they will be in **RED INK**". A few times the pilot had a short discussion about some individual something that occurred during his flight with an individual judge. It worked "flawlessly" as did the scorekeeping chores conducted by Jim Johns and Harold Donaldson of the CRCC club who assisted with accuracy checking.

The two crashes referred to earlier...Mr. Ed Gonzales from Asheville, NC, during round 3 lost his KAOS, and Dan Dougherty had the vertical fin and rudder totally "eject" during his flight. Dan was able to maintain flight for about 30 seconds without any vertical stability. It was incredible, to say the least.

I must comment on the "excellent" turnout—especially in the NOVICE class. Of the 10 that pre-registered, 7 NOVICE pilots participated for what was the largest turnout of NOVICES this season, reminiscent of the mid-2000s here in SPA East when it was common to have 10 or more NOVICES at every contest. Congratulations to all the NOVICE pilots, with a special call-out to those 3 or 4 who flew in their 1st SPA event. Congratulations also go to those veteran pilots who invite and work with the NOVICES until they are established into SPA. That's what it is all about—shepherding new pilots into our SPA fellowship. We're proud you joined us.

Again, this contest saw some of the best EXPERT competition anywhere! There were 5 guys who flew most of their maneuvers just like they were demonstrating how the PERFECT maneuver is defined in the SPA rulebook. This assessment was shared by both Jeff Owens and Matt Griffitt with whom I had the privilege of judging these fine pilots. As you study the scores note the closeness. The competition is keen, (in 2017).

Scott, Mlsty, CCRC, you hosted a delightful weekend and those of us who attended and participated, are so very grateful for your class. I always love coming to "choo-choo" city, and this year was "one of the best". Of course, you can have a hard time trying to determine which is "the best". They are all fun, well run events in a near ideal location that people want to come to. Thanks CCRC!

ADVANCED		NOVICE	
Jim Johns	4000	Jim Strong	4000
Matt Griffitt	3812	Joe Grant	3871
Dan Dougherty	129	David Johnson	3491
EXPERT		Anthony Blair	3230
Jerry Black	4000	Steve Champagne	3199
Jamie Strong	3968	John Davis	3198
Ellis Newkirk	3918	Ed Gonzalez	1598
Warren Oliver	3808	SPORTSMAN	
Steve Drake	3748	Jimmy Russell	4000
SR EXPERT		Vic Koenig	3819
Jeff Owens	4000	Duane Wilson	3741
Keith Watson	898	<i>Distinguished visitors Dave & Peggy Phillips stop by</i> →	



Marie wins ladies basket



Scott & crew worked hard



Ed Gonzalez at 1st SPA contest—he'll be back



The Pilots and CRCC club members at Chattanooga

Dan G's Dirty Birdy Twin

By Dan Grotzinger Via e-mail interview

I've known Dan Grotzinger for several years. We really got to know each other the day in 2009 when he was enlisted to do the first flights in 45 years of Ed Kazmirski's personal Taurus at a VRICS meet in Lexington, Ky. This was Ed's final Taurus, (dubbed the Taurus II by us), and a plane he preserved since the mid-60s along with his 1962 NATs-winning Taurus. Both were part of his estate when Ed passed away in 2008. Bruce would fly the plane later that summer at the 2009 Asheville contest, (BTW, both events can be found on YouTube).

Dan has also written several articles for Model Aviation, the latest in last October's "building issue", when Dan did a comprehensive article on painting and covering.

Last year he flew with us at the Prattville contest, (thanks Dr Gray for inviting him), and we had a chance to see his award winning Dirty Birdy fly that day. That Dirty Birdy was featured in his October 2016 article. Unfortunately, Dan's Dirty Birdy was eventually was lost due to radio failure. What to do now?



Bernie Olson and Dan Grotzinger attending their first Masters last year



2016 Season Dirty Birdy

In the aftermath of that event, Dan got an idea—why not experiment with a Dirty Birdy TWIN! As Dan explains, "it was probably my best plane overall. It's only drawback was the usual torque and yaw issues of single propeller designs. I reasoned that twin counter rotating props could make the DB a better plane. I'm still evaluating."

"I had two glow twins and lost them both to one engine out in landing approach. One was a scratch built Sr. Skylark twin which of course never existed until mine. I loved it. I often considered doing an electric version. Then I lost the Dirty Birdy. The Dirty Birdy "was a very good plane...the only thing I could fault was torque and yaw issues from the single engine. I thought (that) maybe counter rotating twin props would make it perfect. So this project was killing two birds with one stone.

"The thing/opening in front (of the canopy) is cooling air for two 4 cell 4100 mah batteries. The air exit is out the bottom of the wing around the aileron servo. The ESC's are behind the motors in the nacelles. The motors are two E-flite 25, 1250 kv designed for pylon using 8-8 props. It's a strong motor and does work well with 10" diameter props but the pitch should not go above 6 in that diameter. I worked this whole power system out on my E-cobra 25 design. Flight time is 10 min with this set up. One should not run full bore all the time with an electric. Although there are advantages to electric (flight), I still like glow better. I have ten batteries so I can get five flights without waiting hours to charge two batteries."

"We have (now) had more flying time with better conditions to trim the twin. At this writing we have had twenty flights on the prototype. At first we were disappointed with some aspects of the models performance. The first eight flights were completed in two flying sessions, both of which were quite windy. We arrived at the erroneous conclusion that the twin power plants adversely affected four-point and slow rolls. We have (since) had two more flying sessions, one in calm air and one in a six mph crosswind. Just a couple of clicks of mostly rudder trim with out fighting the wind made all the difference. Takeoffs and landings are as easy and smooth as silk. On take off, gradually ease the throttle to about sixty percent and ease in slight elevator while doing so. It will fly itself off with no jump into the air and no deviation in heading as it leaves the ground. The twins add lift to the center of the wing which contributes to this easy landing and takeoff characteristics.



In most maneuvers the airplane will track as if on rails. The four point and slow rolls have a little different timing and "feel" from the single glow powered version, but handles very well as soon as you get the "feel".

"In the last flying session, the only maneuver I had trouble with was the Square Reverse Cuban Eight. From the center of that maneuver each square is entered as an up-line

with a half roll. The first square is entered at normal flight speed and is no problem. On the second square I was entering after having bled off too much airspeed on the previous down-line. This was causing the airplane to lose heading when rolling in the second central up-line. This was easily corrected by not fully powering down in the down-line and adding power in the baseline before pulling up. The last flights were completed in a six mph crosswind and the airplane literally did not see it. Dirty Birdy's are generally good in wind anyway but the neutral torque and yaw of counter rotating props helps clean things up even more".

"I had hoped to use 10-6 props but could not find a pusher. The 10-5's that I am using give a moderate airspeed that I am becoming comfortable with the more I use them. With electric motors you don't need as much speed because the motors will not bog down in the up-lines like a glow engine. All in all we are very pleased with our counter rotating twin pattern plane. It was well worth the effort and we hope others will benefit from this experiment." "See you at the field! Questions and input are welcome".

Dan's Dirty Birdy Twin will be a featured future construction article in Model Aviation!!



SPA Member Profile—Jeff Owens



Jeff Owens with his Cessna 182

Name/SPA Number: Jeff Owens, L243

City/State: Tallahassee, Florida

Occupation/Former Occupation: FSU Physics Professor (retired)

Years in Model Aviation: 65

When did you join SPA: 2004

How did you find out about the SPA and why did you decide to join?: I met Bruce Underwood and Steve Byrum at the 2004 Perry Swap Meet and they signed me up!

Are you or have you been a full-scale pilot?If so, when, where and what do you fly?: Yes – I started flying full scale in 1985, although I did get to do a lot flying with my Dad when I was younger. He had a Cessna 170 and then a Bonanza. I have owned a Cessna 182 Skylane for the past 30 years. I have flown all over the US for both business and pleasure.

Favorite pattern planes and why you like them: Deception – I like the look and they fly well. I have built two and am completing a third. I also have one I got from a friend. Dirty Birdy – the Tower ARF flies well and I had a lot of success with it. Curare – the ARF version has done well by me. I like it in the calm weather and the Deception when it is windy (it weighs about a pound more.)

Do you or have you competed in other organizations-have you gone to the NATs: I flew AMA pattern from 1979-1990 working my way up from Pre-novice to FAI (turnaround). I still have a Pursuit 120, a Hydeout, and a Focus and am considering using these to compete in AMA pattern once again. I have also flown RC helicopters – I have a Raptor 30 and a JR Vigor (60 sized).

Something others may not know about you (other or past hobbies and interests): I have flown full scale aerobatics in a CAP-10B and a Super Decathlon. I competed in an IAC contest, taking second place in Basic in 1995. As part of my research in theoretical High Energy Physics I have lectured at universities and laboratories around the world including places in Europe, the Middle East, South America, and China.

NOTICE: WE NEED MORE PROFILES OF MEMBERS.

This feature was requested by multiple members. Your fellow SPAers would like to know about the interesting life you've led outside SPA. Don't be shy-we're all friends here in SPA. This is the last profile I have. If I don't receive more profiles, this feature will go away..editor

Please answer all questions, insert a photo of yourself, and save it to your PC. Then click below to send an email to Duane Wilson. Be certain to attach this document to your email.

Diary of a Mad Eclipse Observer

by Duane
Wilson



HAMMING" FOR THE CAMERA-
NOT WORRIED



TOO BAD—NOT MY PICTURE

I've been dabbling with photography much longer and more consistently than modeling over the years. This is my way of documenting the experience of witnessing and photographing the eclipse. I hope you don't mind the diversion.

You may be thinking "what does this have to do with modeling?" Plenty—if you're from **SPA West**. The next total solar eclipse to touch the USA is a little over six years away and *Dallas is ground zero*, so it's never too early to begin

preparations for the next big event. You might want to keep this newsletter handy for quick reference so you'll be ready on April 8, 2024. Well, maybe not.

As for photographing the 2017 "Great American Eclipse," there was a certain amount of "wouda-coulda-shoulda" associated with this adventure, but also some successes. Some pictures were taken through my new telescope on its very first time out in the field. I had the eclipse in mind when I bought the telescope two months earlier, but as I learned more, I discovered that an 8" telescope actually has **too much magnification** for photography of eclipses as the sun more than totally fills the field of view, It's great for planets and the moon—that's what I primarily bought it for.

I have known about this eclipse since the late 1980s, (there was an eclipse in Hawaii back in 1991, but we didn't have the disposable income back then to even consider it), but I wasn't going to miss this one so close to home, (maybe 50 miles away and 90 miles by car to the center of totality). Even though the 2017 eclipse was in the back of my mind all this time, as time drew near and those last few days before it finally happened clicked down, I found I hadn't prepared quite as diligently as I could have. In the end I could have used a little more time to get used to the gear and practice. Regardless, I now have a lot more knowledge and appreciation for solar eclipses—(something I thought I already knew a lot about), but there is nothing like experiencing a total eclipse first hand to bring everything into focus.

It took 1-1/2 hours from the time we first saw the moon crossing the sun's surface until totality, then **156 glorious seconds of total eclipse**, then another 1-1/2 hours until the eclipse was over. By the way, it may be interesting for you to know, (it was interesting to me), that at 25.3 miles/min or 1520mph it took 93 minutes for the shadow to cross the entire country from Oregon to South Carolina.

I had a telescope and two cameras with me at the place we chose to watch the eclipse in Anderson, SC--one with a rented (and very expensive) lens. After some reading up, I got some important things right, but in the excitement of the crucial 156 seconds, I made some mistakes and bad judgments that came back to haunt me. More in the summary.

I've done a kind-of mental "root cause analysis" of everything that happened—all the factors good or bad that came together to determine the outcome. At the critical moment of "totality" when things were happening very fast all around us, it turned out that I was fortunate to get any pictures of the sun's corona, (the prime "eclipse shot" seen in the picture above), so now I want a "do-over", "Mulligan" or whatever to get it right next time-but "next time" will have to wait. The corona pictures look okay at first glance unless you know what to look for, (I do), and you compare it with other folk's shots taken on a sturdy tripod. More about that later. At least I got something of my own to prove I really saw what I saw).

In spite of many good decisions I made, the critical mistake I made was that I forgot about the solar filter being on the camera—even as the crescent sun was disappearing in the viewfinder. The solar filter blocks out all but **1-1000th of one percent** of the sun's light—otherwise you would fry your eyeballs along with the camera the same way insects are fried by mean little kids with a magnifying glass! At totality the sun totally vanished and I didn't immediately realize why. As I fumbled with the camera, it came off the tripod (I knew I had a weak attachment between the camera and tripod. The weight of the camera and lens was too much for it. In hindsight I should have played it safe and bought a new tripod head when I discovered the problem instead of trying to rig a temporary fix.) Fortunately I caught the \$2,000 rented lens before it fell to the ground, (thank goodness.) When the solar filter was finally removed, I had no alternative than hand-holding 8+ pounds of camera and lens—not good--you don't get a sharp enough image that way.

Still, all in all, more things went right than wrong, We were fortunate in many ways. The weather was hot, (but who cared about that at the time—heat exhaustion was still a good couple hours away). There were no clouds that interfered enough to cause a problem, (it is common to get increasing clouds and thunderstorms in the middle of the afternoon in August in SC), so we were grateful for that. It clouded up later after the eclipse. Those clouds would have caused real problems if they had been there earlier. Again, we were fortunate.



Some of my eclipse pictures. (LT) was just before totality, (I should have been taking off the solar filter). (Center) a hand-held picture of the corona with the filter finally off-use a tripod(RT) The moon moves on as most of the “show” is over.

It's one thing to know about solar eclipses—it's another thing to experience one. There is a HUGE difference between a partial eclipse, (even a partial of 99%) and totality. With even 1% of the sun visible you can't look at it without special glasses, and the sun is still casting shadows on the ground. There is no CORONA HALO surrounding the jet-black disk of the moon unless you are in the path of totality.

A few minutes before totality the sun's light becomes “strange” as you look around at the landscape—it is still bright daylight, but not nearly as intense as it was just a short time earlier, (a little like a small dark cloud passing in front of the sun-only the sun is still out.) This is especially apparent in the heat of summer. The light seems “softer”. It's very comfortable. It's like being in the shade without being in the shade. There are wisps of a cool, light momentary breeze as the temperature is suddenly lowered 10-15 degrees in a matter of minutes.

Just before totality you can see the sky get dark in the direction of the approaching shadow, then suddenly you are plunged into darkness—almost like a light switch from “on” to “off”. People are cheering and car horns are blowing. If you look toward the horizon on all sides you can still see a kind of twilight in the distance. The blackness of the moon's disk is starkly contrasted with the bright halo of the corona, (the sun's atmosphere). Time seems to stand still for a moment. You can see the brighter stars and planets. Insects, birds, and bats are all fooled. The sight is absolutely “jaw-dropping” to look at—unlike anything you've ever experienced over your whole life. Even with all the camera troubles I was having, I managed to generally take in much of the effect of the eclipse, but I didn't have the chance to just relax and enjoy it like Penny did. Then after too short a time in a brilliant flash the light is back and you need the glasses again to see the sun. For the next 1-1/2 hours the process repeats itself, but the “big show” is over. The whole experience is difficult to put into words, but I've tried to do my best to describe it.



**Picture taken by 8” telescope with 2032 mm magnification
Note sunspots on surface**

God willing, if I'm alive and physically able in 2024, I will get it “totally” right in west Texas if the weather permits—less than seven years away. There are other total eclipses between now and 2024 if you are willing to go to the trouble and expense of going to where it is. We're thinking about that now. There is something about witnessing this event that makes you want to experience it again—and as soon as possible.

ECLIPSE TIPS...DO NOT LOOK AT THE SUN...USE SPECIAL GLASSES & SOLAR FILTERS

- Use a minimum of a (total magnification) 300mm lens. (900mm total magnification is ideal and was my set-up. You can rent a lens and extenders from www.borrowlenses.com
- Use a **good tripod** and **remote shutter release** to steady the image
- **ISO 100-200, F8, 1/250 SEC** with solar filter and vary exposure times at **ISO 100, F8 manual**

From the “it’s different” department...



Here is a picture of Ellis Newkirk taking a picture of planes in flight, and supposedly what he was taking a picture of— all at the same time. This came from the creative mind of Jim Johns. You’ve got to admit it isn’t your everyday picture. Pilots flying at the time were Jerry Black, (Kaos on the right, and John Davis on the left, each in the middle of their respective maneuvers in the same photo frame. The pant legs and shoes belong to caller Warren Oliver.
Photo from the SPA East-Chattanooga event.

Asheville Sunrise - taken by Bruce Underwood in 2015...



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