

CARTWHEELS

BY: LARRY LOUCKS, PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT TO PRESIDENT

Incident Action

by Dave Mathewson, AMA President

Between 12 columns each year for *Model Aviation* magazine, four for *Park Pilot* magazine, and six for the *AMA Insider*, I write 22 columns annually for AMA publications. In each of these columns I try to keep our members updated and informed about current issues affecting the model aviation community and the positive things that aeromodeling encompasses. So I gave considerable thought as to whether or not I wanted to write this particular column. In the end I felt that this story is important and worth telling. Read to the end and I think you'll agree.

An incident occurred April 16 when an AMA member who was flying a 450-size electric helicopter in a Tampa, Florida, public park lost control of the model and injured a young woman walking in the park. It appears that after calling 911, the pilot and his friends stayed with the injured person until EMTs arrived, then picked up their equipment and left. The local authorities will probably cite the men for ignoring a local ordinance against flying in that park.

This is an unfortunate incident that casts a cloud over what we do as model aviation enthusiasts. The local FOX News affiliate picked up on the story and ran a piece that included video that, by most standards, could be considered pretty graphic.

The potential for collateral harm to all of us as a result of this incident is significant. I've been asked a number of times whether or not the pilot and his friends involved were AMA members. In the end I'm not sure it matters. The news piece didn't say, "Park visitor injured by AMA member (or non-AMA member) flying a model helicopter." It said, "Park visitor injured by toy model helicopter."

The non-modeling public that watched that news story will now have a negative perception of model aviation and question the safety of our models. To complicate matters further, the incident occurred in a major metropolitan community park system that already had a ban on flying models.

This incident will reverberate throughout the country and,

no doubt, will become a topic of discussion with authorities of other park systems. AMA has many chartered clubs that have operated safely for years in local parks, and we are watching closely to make sure that we do what we can to support our members and clubs that may be challenged now as a result of this incident.

However, what follows is the reason I decided to write this column. I've been a modeler for a long time. In all of those years, other than regarding the frequency reallocation issue a couple of decades ago, I don't think I've ever seen the aeromodeling community come together as it has with this situation.

AMA has an internal response plan for incidents like this. We were notified of the accident by an officer of the International Radio Controlled Helicopter Association (IRCHA), one of AMA's Special Interest Groups. This triggered our response, which included working with IRCHA to identify a local responsible, articulate, RC helicopter pilot, Rolando Perez, who could speak on camera.

AMA's public relations manager spoke with Mr. Perez to go over significant points that should be made regarding AMA's Safety Code and record. In addition, our PR manager spoke directly with the FOX reporter, by phone about model aviation and all of the positive aspects of modeling. A statement was issued by AMA.

At the same time, modelers from 33 states and 14 countries – some AMA members and some not – came together on popular Internet forums to express their concern over the incident and what had happened to this young woman. An initiative was even launched to generate donations to help her offset expenses. Members of the local RC helicopter community made the effort to ensure that the local media were made aware of all of the positive aspects of model aviation and the value we bring to communities. As a result, in a short follow-up piece FOX News spoke about the positive "groundswell" of reaction from the "national modeling community" and the concerns expressed by modelers.

Go to www.myfoxtampabay.com/dpp/news/local/hillsborough/42-2-police-interview-model-craft-operators to see this coverage.

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*Courtesy and
common sense keep
R/C modeling fun
for everyone.*

The mother of the young woman expressed gratitude for the outpouring of support she has received from concerned aeromodelers.

Sometimes it takes something like this to make everyone realize that the common denominator between all of us is model aviation. It doesn't matter what type of model we fly, or maybe even whether or not we are all AMA members. While it was a terribly unfortunate incident, it provided us with the opportunity to show that the majority of us are responsible, safety-conscious individuals, and that we are protective of what we do as model aviators. And this is why I wrote this column.

Out of a bad incident came a lot of good. The public has now had the opportunity to see the positive in what we do and that we are a caring, concerned group. The efforts by everyone here will pay some dividend somewhere. It was a good job by all. And because of the actions of everyone involved in reacting to this accident, I think I've maintained my string of writing about the positive things that aeromodeling has to offer.

New Members

Proposed at the June Meeting

**FAI F3D Pylon
2011 TEAM USA Selection Trials**

From: Scott Smith

The FAI USA Team selection for the 2011USA FAI F3D World cup will be held and hosted at IRCC for the first time **EVER!** This is a big privilege for us as a club!

We will be hosting the event that will pick the 3 guys to represent the USA in pylon racing next year. These selection races are held every 2 years, and are considered as a great honor for a club. Out of all the clubs who submitted a proposal to the AMA last year, IRCC was picked as the **BEST** place for the event. This event is an international event, for pylon racing and will draw international competitors. Every country will be hosting qualifications this fall to pick their team to represent their country, and a few will come to our event to help prepare for theirs.

We will have the international FAI top guys

here assisting in the competition judging, and in the event running. The event will be the very sleek and fast FAI planes (most have the sweeping bird like wings) and the engines that run around 30,000 rpm's on the ground! Each pilot will be in a single plane race against the clock. The times for 10 laps (2.5 miles) will be less than 1 minute.

The event will be 2 days of practice (Thursday and Friday, September 16~17, 2010) followed by 2 days of team trials (Saturday and Sunday, September 18~19). This will bring a **LOT** of exposure to the IRCC as there should be a lot of AMA and FAI brass present, so bring out your babies to get kissed for the photo ops!!

I am excited to be able to host such a huge event at the IRCC field, and I hope it brings us a good national & international review.

Work Day - Thanks

Thanks to ALL the members, (and spouses and kids), that came out for our Annual Work-Day! We had a great turnout, and everyone jumped right in and did their share. We have a new roof over the tractor, new hurricane braces on the club shed, a newly installed solar charging station properly secured on the roof (thanks to Don and Earl), runway trimmed, replaced old rail ties and lined up properly. In short, the field looks fantastic! Special thanks go to David K. and Ian for there heavy duty work that day, and to President Larry for cooking great burgers and dogs on a hot day! Well done!

Dale Anderson

**Our next club meeting is:
Thursday July 1st at FTE.
Plan to attend and see what's
new.**

The IRCC monthly club meeting will be held at FTE near the Lakeland Airport. The next meeting will be on Thursday July 1st and starts promptly at 7:30pm. Remember to bring a chair - if you want to have a seat.

IRCC Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2010

Minutes recorded by:
George Nauck, Secretary

Meeting called to order by President Larry Loucks at 7:30 with 19 present

Minutes of previous meeting approved

No old business discussion

- New Business – Scott Smith gave an informative presentation about our club and field being selected for the qualification of members of the United States Team for FAI International competition. It has always been held in California. The qualification will be September 17-19 at our field, and will bring the best pilots and planes to our premises. The FAI will supply all the judges, as this is serious stuff! Scott will provide a more comprehensive article about this for us.
- IMAA event at our field will be October 22-24 this year. Dave DeWitt is CD.
- Monster Planes will be Oct 7-9 (not at our field)
- Dale Anderson thanked all for the great turn-out and all that was accomplished during work day. Special thanks to Ian Clark and David Kreitz for the big nobs of re-roofing tractor shelter and club main shelter.
- Discussion was brought up about securing a golf cart for the field. There was not a lot of support for the idea.
- Treasurer Roger Pilkenton reported \$XXK+ in checking and about \$XX in CD
- Members at 91 with 7 juniors
- 3 new members at meeting were Bruce, Mason, and Tom
- The Sportsmanship Award went to Dale for great concern and condition of the field
- 50/50 was won by Joe
- Meeting adjourned at 8:21

ON THE SAFE SIDE

The Lighter Side of Safety: Revisited

by Don Nix, Insider Safety Column Editor

A few months ago I wrote about some things I had seen at various flying fields that could have been safety disasters, but happily turned out funny instead. I decided to continue the subject because (1) I've remembered a few more, (2) many seemed to enjoy them, and (3) I drew a blank for a subject this month ... Seemed like good reasons to me.

As I've mentioned before, I've been a modeler since I was six years old, and a full-scale pilot for nearly 51 years. I got into RC a little late in life—back in the mid-1980s—after full-scale began to be almost prohibitively expensive for the average guy. I'm sure readers who also fly full-scale can understand what a humbling experience the transition to RC can be. Suffice to say it took a very long time to get my head

out of the cockpit and fly the airplane viewing from the outside.

My late wife was also a licensed pilot, and after I became fairly comfortable with a couple of RC trainers, it was her turn. Things went well for the first few sessions using the buddy box system, but she was a long way from soloing. After a takeoff one day, she said, "My transmitter is out of trim, and I don't feel comfortable enough yet to try to trim it myself." I replied, "Nooo problem. Here, swap transmitters with me, and I'll get yours trimmed up."

(Rim shock....cymbals....think about it for a minute.)

An incident some years earlier occurred while I was flying a full-scale airplane, but the lesson learned remains the same as for models. I lived in northern Illinois at the time and did a lot of business flying in my Piper Comanche.

One winter we had a several-week stretch of weather that I didn't care to attempt to fly in even though I was instrument rated. When the weather finally improved a bit, I departed one day on a long-delayed business trip. I had several thousand hours experience and hundreds in that airplane, but I was quite aware that inactivity for an extended period—models or full-scale—can be dangerous. I went through my checklists very carefully before and after starting the engine, during taxi, and pre-takeoff.

Takeoff and climb to altitude proceeded without a hitch, so I trimmed for level flight, set the autopilot and began to relax, but not for long. My Comanche normally trued out about 180 mph, but after tweaking everything I could think of, I couldn't nurse more than about 155 out of the beast. I stewed and wracked my brain for at least 10 minutes. Remember the cartoons where the little light bulb suddenly lights up over the character's head?

In my special efforts to be very, very careful during takeoff and climb out, concentrating and perhaps too focused, I had neglected to retract the landing gear. I was alone with no witnesses, but shame and embarrassment washed over me.

Lesson: No matter how high one's level of experience, after a period of inactivity use a checklist—all of it.

Back to models. The first good-weather weekend after Christmas was always interesting at my favorite RC field in Southern California. All the people with new Christmas airplanes would show up, many of them beginners. I was hangar flying with a friend one January while we watched a young fellow about 14 getting his new ready-to-fly toy assembled. It was some sort of long-winged motor glider powered by a ½ A engine. His mother was standing close by watching sonny boy.

It quickly became obvious the lad had never flown before so my friend, one of our club's instructors, walked over and offered to help. Instead of gratitude, this whiz kid erupted with profanity, suggesting my friend perform an anatomically impossible act on himself.

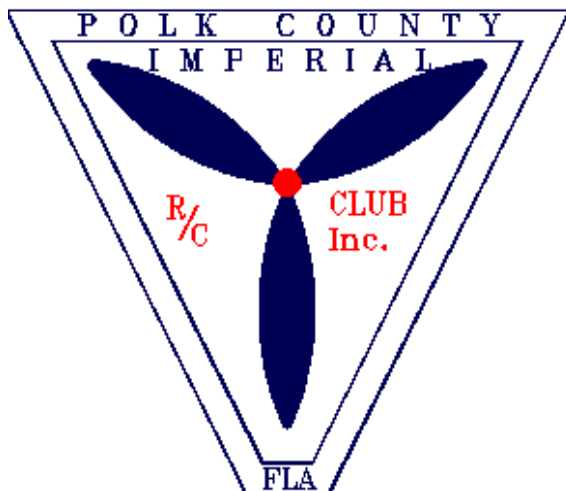
The instructor said, "Ookay" and walked away. As we watched from the sidelines, the kid hand-launched the model and immediately pulled full up elevator, which was hooked up in reverse. Amazing how thoroughly and quickly a paved runway can convert a foam ready-built into a pile of packing peanuts.

The ironic part? My friend said to the mother, "Ma'am, that wouldn't have happened if your son had accepted my help." Her response was only slightly less vile than the son's.

Clearly, the needless incident could have hurt someone, so to head off myriad e-mails asking why we allowed the boy to fly: it was a public county park, and we had no authority whatever to control operations; we just suffered the criticism if someone did something stupid or careless.

Afternote: While on a nine-month RV tour of the western states this past year, I visited the flying field at Wenatchee, Washington. This was perhaps the most beautiful RC field I've seen in years, and it was clear safety was high on their list of priorities. Unfortunately, I didn't make a note of the club name, but you folks know who you are. Congratulations!

Th-th-th-that's all, folks. I could use some suggestions for safety topics, so ring me up at flyerdon1@yahoo.com. →



Coming Area Events

USA FIA World Team Trials

September 16 - 19
IRCC Flying Site
More Details to Follow

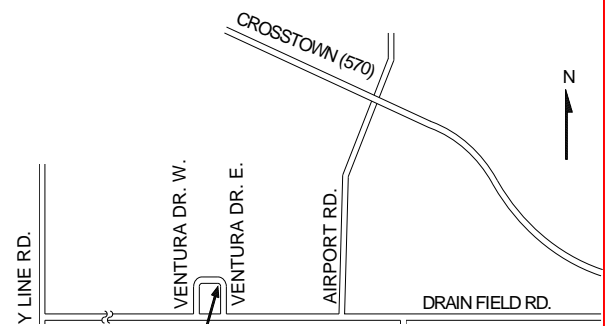
IRCC / IMAA Dist. 5 Mini Fest

October 22 - 24
David DeWitt CD
863-838-4459 Benz425@aol.com

Monster Planes
Helicopter

Here is where we meet each month.

Please **DO NOT PARK ON THE GRASS**
at FTE or his neighbors.



OUR NEXT MEETING IS: July 1st