



*April 2023*

## **VICE PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

**Ernie Padgette**



### **“I don’t think we’re in January any more Toto”**

We all know the schedule and the plan. January, February and March are too cold or too windy (and often too cold and too windy) to fly model airplanes. Those are the months we set aside for building new toys, repairing used toys and taking apart the remnants of last year’s projects. In short, we spend those months getting ready to fly.

This year, I had to fit in a couple, maybe three, possibly even four, weeks of airplane inactivity as I recovered from having my right knee replaced. I’d been through this last year, you’ll recall; only that was with my left knee. No big deal. A couple of weeks, possibly three, no more than four at the very worst, and I’d be back to full speed. I thought. It

seemed like a good plan. I did it like that last year with the left knee, shouldn’t be a problem this year. I thought.

I spent the first few weeks of January resting up from hunting season. I had the knee surgery on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, and was up walking and climbing stairs the day of the surgery. Piece of cake, right? The next couple of weeks was problematic. The knee wasn’t much of an issue. But I was tired and sore all over all the time. Totally exhausted and weak. Then, two weeks and two days after the surgery, I found out why. That’s the day my right hand swelled up so badly I couldn’t move the fingers. The Emergency Room wasn’t any help, but my regular doctors figured it out the next day. Cellulitis. That’s an infection I had picked up from the IV port they had put in my right hand during the surgery. It was also why I had been so weak and exhausted for the first few weeks, as my body fought the infection. So, back into the hospital for IV injections of three different types of antibiotics for five days. Five days later, I’m back home and on antibiotic pills for two weeks. Toward the end of the two weeks, I was starting to feel pretty good. I was still sleeping in most mornings and taking multiple naps each day, but I was feeling better and definitely improving.

A few days later, I started feeling tired all the time; stiff and sore all over. Back to the doctor and yes, the infection was back. Two more weeks on antibiotic pills. That ended two weeks ago, and I am slowly getting better. At this rate, I should be back to normal by December of 2024. The knee is, of course, just fine. On good days, I can stay awake more than two hours before I start needing a nap. Things hurt. I’m stiff and weak. I suppose I’m at that stage where I feel badly but that is at least better than a few days ago. I’ll get better. I have a lot of things to do and I’m

going to get on with them one way or the other. And I do have a new (used) toy to get set up.

First Fun Fly of the year was ten days ago. It was sparsely attended, probably because the forecast was chilly with high winds. The forecast was wrong (what a surprise!). It was cold and very windy. Nic, Ralph, Gene, Jack and I made up the entrants. Nic was running things and he decided winds of 20+ MPH dead in the face was a bit much so we rolled the dice to see who won. But everyone had to make at least one flight to be considered as having participated. Since this was to be my first actual flight of the year and I, like everyone else except Nic, was flying a light electric foamy, I was a bit apprehensive of my prospects. But I made it up and back down without bending anything, so was happy to call it a day. Like everyone else, I took off cross runway and was airborne within two feet. One point: Light foamys and high wind don't normally mix well, but I was quite impressed with the skill of everyone flying. Although it was dicey at times, everyone handled the wind very well and managed to avoid any damage. Landings were often cross runway, but no one broke anything. Under the circumstances, I was quite impressed. Better days are on the way health wise and weatherwise. See you at the field.

Thanks;

*Ernie P.*

## **EDITOR'S NOTES – Upcoming Events**

**Jeff Killen**

1. **Club Meeting, virtual, 7:00 PM, 4/25/2023**
2. **Grand Strand Pattern Contest, at Green Sea SC, All Day, 4/29-30/2023, CD: Marvin Marozas: [mfmarozas@hotmail.com](mailto:mfmarozas@hotmail.com)**
3. **FARM Club Day & Fun Fly #2, All Day, at the field, 5/7/2023 (Picnic, Pilot Training, and Flight Check day), CD: Dave Rothbart**
4. **Joe Nall, All Day, at Triple Tree Aerodrome (Woodruff, SC), 5/12-20/2023, [www.tta.aero](http://www.tta.aero)**
5. **Firetower Pattern Contest, at NC, All Day, 5/13-14/2023, CD: Jay Thom, [jwthom44@gmail.com](mailto:jwthom44@gmail.com)**

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**Jeff Killen**

The March club meeting was held as a zoom meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Fourteen members were on line for the meeting.

Dave Rothbart, President of Farm Club commenced the meeting at 7 PM. He addressed the following topics of discussion:

The meeting began with a discussion about the future of server maintenance. We should have a back fill for Dick Sutton who hits his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in April. A few names were mentioned as candidates. Bill Flathers knows a few guys; he will check. The servers are in Dick Sutton's basement currently.

Barbara Towne passed away recently; Bill says he is doing OK and he wants the club to keep him busy. There will be a family gathering at Bill's home at 2 PM on Saturday, April 15.

There have been runway tire tracks left from someone driving a vehicle over the runway. Dave Rothbart has discussed this with Mrs. Rhynalds, who does not know who is doing this. Barriers have been put up, along with stakes and signs. Another option is to put up cameras or signs warning about cameras.

The engine on the John Deere tractor is inoperative. We have a Craftsman engine that runs; we could shift it to the John Deere. Nic Burhans is looking for an engine; for now, we mow with the skag.

### **Board Reports**

Treasurer: Nic Burhans we have \$8419 in the bank now. Field rent for the next 3 months is due. Our first fun fly is this weekend on April 2 at the field.

Jeff Killen, Bill Flathers, Ralph Graul, and Charlie Koustenis all had no reports in their areas.

### **Presentation**

Rob Snedegar gave a talk on 3D printing. As the subject of his presentation, he showed us a Lockheed Constellation L749.

## **WINGS OF BALSA**

### **John Hunton**

The Muncie facility was completed and AMA headquarters was moved. The complaining has died down. It seems like we are again gaining a sense of pride in the new facilities as we did before, and are accepting it as one by one we experience it. I have heard nothing but good about the site amenities and the building.

The museum has been filled out now and it is magnificent again. The little hobby shop in the middle evokes all kinds of memories. There are classic models all around. Like the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, the Muncie facility is too much to be taken in at one visit. The gathering of Eagles in 1996 gave me the chance to see the building all fitted up and in use for the first time since the shell was finished. What an experience. What a sense of pride I have in the building.

Design work has been started on a new building at Muncie, a new administration building. The hue and cry is beginning to build, but the result will be a much more professional setting for the AMA workforce and much more room for the magnificent museum. I am serving on the committee responsible for the design of the new building. It will be exciting.

### **Luscombe test**

The little Luscombe was a delight to fly. Light on the rudder and elevator, heavy ailerons. Spins like a top. Stressed to 9g's upright and 6 inverted. Needing a mission for a CAVU afternoon the decision was made to take Shrimpy as high as it would go, cut the motor, and see how it glided with the prop stopped, just in case of catastrophic failure some day. I was at about 12,500 feet and we were at Shrimpy's service ceiling. This Luscombe 8A had no electrical system and therefore no starter. To stop the propeller I turned off the mag switch and went into a stall. The prop kept turning. I went into a steeper stall and the prop finally stopped. We started gliding down, the glide angle noticeably steeper with the prop stationary. Ok, 8,000 feet. Time to start the motor again. I nosed over to pick up speed and have the air pressure turn the propeller again, the same propeller that was reluctant to stop turning. No start. I nosed over steeper, the airspeed slipped over the

127 mph red line into the mid 130s. We were going almost straight down and the propeller was standing still. We passed through 2,000 feet. I had set 1,500 as the minimum pull-out-and-find-a-place-to land altitude. The green Virginia farmed land was becoming distinct rows of corn. The brown plowed land was becoming furrows. The green forests were becoming individual trees.

### **Melpar Days**

Needing a job and not being able to generate enough architectural work to make it, I had the opportunity to go to work for Melpar in their RPV program. I did not know anything about RPVs or Melpar, but to work on airplanes while trying to get a small office going seemed like the way to go. I interviewed with them. Ed Rose asked if I could carve a prop. Of course I could, so I was hired.

Melpar had several RPV demonstration programs going on. Bill Hinnant (noted modeler) was working there on several platforms including the E-100 (the number being the design weight of the RPV), which was powered by a Ross four cylinder engine. He was also helping develop an autopilot helicopter stabilization system. The existing basic Melpar RPV platform was the E-35, which was powered by a 3.5cc Roper engine that had been adapted for RPV use by Melpar engineers (Charlie Wild). There were no "giant scale" motors available at the time and no propellers of the proper size. I had been hired to work on the Very Low Cost Harassment Expendable Vehicle (VLCHEV) which was to be launched to seek ground based radar units and put them out of commission with a small explosive charge. It was a one way vehicle made of foam core wings and stab and a blow-molded (Tupperware) fuselage designed to be built in quantity for under \$5000.

It was unbelievable fun working with Bill Hinnant and other modelers (JE Albritton came to work there later). We were designing and building airplanes, testing motors and propellers. We tested in the University of Maryland wind tunnel and the University of Washington wind tunnel. We did computer analysis. We flew tests at Webster Field, a Navy base east of Patuxent. We tested at Wright Patterson AFB and got to meet Don Lowe and see his USAF drone shop.

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