



Fauquier Aero Recreation Modelers
AMA #1654 farmclubrc.com
AMA Gold Leader Club



Culpeper Model Barnstormers
AMA #4894 cmbclubrc.com
AMA Gold Leader Club



Lake of the Woods Community RC
AMA #5595 lowcrc.com



September 2026

Radio Controlled Air - Land - Sea Models

Newsletter

Editor's Note: We will be rotating the lead club specific content lead sections each month (FARM, CMB, LOWCRC, FARM, CMB, LOWCRC, FARM, CMB, LOWCRC, FARM, CMB, LOWCRC) throughout the year. However, the "Tips and Projects" and "Anything From the Field" sections will be separate from the Club sections and combine the inputs from all the members of the three clubs.

Notice - REMINDER - for All:

- Our "Tri-Club Fourth Tuesday of the Month" RC Modeling Zoom meetings will resume on Tuesday, 27 October 2026 at 7:00 PM.

CMB Club Report:

The 2026 CMB Club Board of Directors:

President	Gordon Collyer	540-547-4117
Vice President	Jim Restel	540-718-6617
Secretary	Nic Burhans	540-219-9646
Treasurer	Nic Burhans	540-219-9646
Safety Officer	Bill Crone	540-825-8065
Field Marshal	Bobby Hurst	501-766-7349
Member At Large	Al Hampton	757-715-0528
Member At Large	Ernie Padgett	703-244-7465

- CMB President's Corner: Gordon Collyer

Learning by a Thousand Cuts.

Well more accurately put: training by five stitches.

In full scale aviation accident analysis the concept of holes in multiple slices of Swiss cheese lining up to "let" an accident pass through is often presented. For the first time in 66 years, I recently had my Swiss cheese

moment for the well known hand-meets-propeller event. When I was 12, it was a Cox .049 and a loose glow plug clip that induced a slice near my thumb's carpal bone. Several weeks ago, it was a small electric foam board plane that induced a 3 inch slice at the wrist....hence the aforementioned 5 stitches. The ER nurse seemed to think it was fortunate to have missed an artery, so I guess my basic reflexes are intact. My cheesy list goes something like this: not using a safety stand (small plane right?), standing in front of the plane, forgetting too intentionally verify the throttle inhibit on my transmitter, and finally, bumping or otherwise moving the throttle.

Four slices, four simple slip-ups, the holes line up and bingo, off to the ER. Well just five stitches, things healed well, but that artery comment got my attention. Folks, check your cheese!

Gordon

- CMB Secretary/Treasurer's Corner: Nic Burhans

The CMB Club's AMA Gold Leader Club Status has been established for 2026. We have received Gold Leader Club Pins. All members at the April Club meeting received their pins. See Nic at the field to receive your's.

Board Meeting Notes:

- CMB Board meeting held on Friday, 28 August 2026.
- - Items approved by the Board:
 - - - There will be a Thank-You Lunch for the mower crew in November.
 - - - The mower winter maintenance by club Volunteers will be reimbursed for their expenses.
 - - - The new flag pole project by the shelter was approved and "planting" will be in November, with the help of the Parks and Recreation Department.
- - - A new large roller project is awaiting further information by the search committee.

Membership Meeting Reminder:

- On Sunday, 4 October 2026, CMB will hold a Membership Meeting at Lenn Model Airpark.

CMB Club Membership Report:

- As of 28 September, the CMB Club had 49 members (18 Regular, 27 Senior, 3 Junior, 1 Associate, and 0 Life Members)
- The updated 2026 CMB Club Roster has been sent out to the membership.

CMB Club Calendar of upcoming events:

- Note: See remaining 2026 CMB calendar on the Club website.

- CMB Treasurer's Report

- The CMB August 2026 Treasurer's Report has been emailed to the club's membership.

- CMB Safety Officers: Bill Crone

Well, it looks like our flying season is sadly coming to a close. Weather wise it has been a weird summer. Late April and most of June I was unable to do any flying however; I was able to visit our 3 local clubs and a couple in northern VA and watch some excellent flying and learn from other pilots.

There seemed to be a common thread at all the clubs. The first issue was whether the aircraft was on the ground or on the safety table pilots would plug in their batteries while reaching over the props. The second issue; as the plane was binding or being retrieved after a rough landing the pilot was handling the prop tips checking for possible damage, the engine was still powered. The third issue I noticed was watching a pilot replace a battery cover pick up the airplane then the transmitter and the engine would start. The engine kill switch was not engaged and in some cases the throttle was slightly advanced. In at least one instance there was no kill switch programed.

These are all instances that are easily resolved by slowing down and thinking before we act. I have been guilty and sure at one time or another we've all been guilty of rushing to get in the air or retrieve an aircraft off the runway. Prior to plugging in, check your switches, check your throttle position, when carrying your aircraft keep the transmitter in your left hand with your thumb pushing down on the throttle stick. There is no worse way to ruin a good day than to pull out the first aid kit.

While writing this, we lost a fellow pilot in Texas. He went into a densely wooded area to retrieve his down aircraft and was later found dead. The incident is currently under investigation. It is something most of us would never consider not looking for our down aircraft. This made me reflect, recently I just did it for a fellow club member without thought walked across the runway the creek and into the corn field. When I came back to the pavilion, I was greeted with, weren't you worried about the snakes, the ticks or getting stuck in the creek? Nope never gave it a thought, I had a good bead on where it went down. My only thought was retrieving the aircraft. Guess I probably should have.

Many times, we find ourselves out at the field alone and our phone in the car. My only suggestion would be before you wonder off make a call to a spouse or a friend let them know you are looking for your down plane. Arrange a time to either make or receive a call to update your status until you are safely back to the pit area. The other option is we have a number of club members with drones who are always more than willing to come out and put a drone in the air and locate your aircraft.

I hope you never have to look for a down aircraft. I only wish you blue shies and mild breezes. If you do find yourself in a situation you have a good bead on where you went down, Take a breath, Make a plan and Retrieve your aircraft Safely.

Bill

- CMB Webmaster's Report: Dick Sutton

- No new items to report.

Dick

LOWCRC Club Report:

- The 2026 LOWCRC Club Board of Directors Election Results:

President	Al Hampton	757-715-0528
Vice President	Nic Burhans	540-219-9646
Secretary	Gordon Collyer	540-547-4117
Treasurer	Jay Zompanti	978-804-8660
Safety Officer	Al Hampton	757-715-0528

- LOWCRC President's Corner: Al Hampton

— Al Hampton

President, Lake of the Woods Community RC Club

- LOWCRC Secretary's Corner: Gordon Collyer

Board Meeting Notes:

- A Board meeting was not held this month.

LOWCRC 2026 Event Calendar

Recurring Weekly Events:

- Monday Scale & Sail Boats – Clubhouse Dock – 7:00 AM – 11:00 AM (Through October 12 , 2026)
- Outdoor RC @ Sweetbriar Soccer Fields – Thursdays & Fridays – 7:00 AM – 12:00 PM (Through November 6, 2026)

- - Monthly Trail Walks (9:00 AM – 10:00 AM)

Oct 3, 2026

Special Events:

- - October 10 Culpeper Airiest static display / air show 7AM – 4PM

LOWCRC Youth Drone Soccer Schedule:

Notes:

- - Additional Drone Soccer activities info available upon request.
- - All events subject to weather and community guidelines.
- - Volunteer support needed and welcome!

FARM Club Report:

- The 2026 FARM Club Board of Directors Election Results:

President	Ernie Padgette	703-244-7465
Vice President	Nic Burhans	540-219-9646
Secretary	Nic Burhans	540-219-9646
Treasurer	Nic Burhans	540-219-9646
Safety Officer	Ken Bassett	703-425-1392
Field Marshal	Ralph Graul	540-729-1586
Member At Large	Bill Flathers	540-272-7236
Member At Large	Charlie Koustenis	703-850-3314
Member At Large	Bill Towne	540-428-1053

- FARM President's Corner: Ernie Padgette

No new or old issues to report on. Keep flying safe!

Ernie

- FARM Secretary/Treasurer's Corner: Nic Burhans

Board Meeting Notes:

- FARM Board meeting held on Sunday, 30 August 2026.
- - Items approved by the Board:
 - - - Thank You to Ralph Graul for getting the large mower fixed.
 - - - There will be a Thank-You luncheon for the volunteer mowing crew at O'Brians' on Warrenton.
 - - - There will be a mower crew drawing at the luncheon for a plane (TBD).
 - - - The Joint FARM - CMB Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, 5 December 2026, from 6:00 PM until 9:00 PM at the Northside 29 Restaurant north of Warrenton on US-29.
- - - We now have four Corporate Members of the FARM Club.

FARM Club Membership Report:

- As of 28 September, the FARM Club had 68 members (25 Regular, 32 Senior, 1 Junior, 4 Comm., 2 Associate, and 4 Life members).
- The updated 2026 FARM Club Roster has been sent out to the membership.

FARM Club Calendar of upcoming events:

- Note: See remaining 2026 FARM calendar on the Club website.

FARM Treasurer's Report

- The FARM August 2026 Treasurer's Report has been emailed to the club's membership.

FARM Webmaster's Report: Dick Sutton

- No new updates.

Dick

FARM September Special Events:

- FARM Pattern Contest

The FARM club fall Pattern Contest took place on September 12-13 2026 and is now in the books. This year we tried something different in order to generate interest in the Sportsman class, and the overall event. It worked!

For those who know or have met Roger Hammel, he is responsible for facilitating many NSRCA D2 spring judging seminars at Banshee Reeks park and LCAA over the decades. Roger recently decided to thin out his models- unable to fly pattern. The LCAA club contacted me to see if I could find a home for a brand new 2 meter pattern airplane called the Caelus. The plane was fully outfitted with a motor, speed control, prop, spinner and was nearly ready to fly. After mutual discussions, we agreed to offer the plane as a prize for the FARM Club pattern contest Sportsman Class' winner.

Leading up to the contest, I offered training sessions for the local clubs on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. We averaged 4 to 5 pilots at each session and there were also pilots who were practicing from as far away as Roanoke, VA and King of Prussia, PA. Total entries that made it to the contest were 7. Notable was one Sportsman pilot (Gabe) who finished in 3rd place with just one week of practice flying pattern. Gene Flynn secured the win – after an extra “fly-off” round of Sportsman on Sunday. It was close!



With 20 contestants and at least that number of spectators, all classes were filled.



We were able to get in nearly 5 rounds (even with rain and fog Sunday morning) with a 6th round for Sportsman.

Want to take a moment to thank Nic Burhans for handling the scoring and judge assignments, Braxton Dudley for the highly successful e-scribe system which worked flawlessly, Dave Rothbart for line management and my wife Beth for the wonderful bar-b-que on Saturday lunch.

- FARM held its Fall 2026 Charity Float Fly Event on Saturday, 26.

There we were Thursday night, with the potential nor'easter not going to be a problem. However, the “eye” decided to move toward shore and stall Friday evening; starting to push back door cold winds toward Bealeton, VA and heavy winds and waves toward the Outer Banks and Eastern Shores.

The usual contingents for the FARM events from the East started calling in early Saturday morning to let us

know that they would be staying home to continue to combat the storm.

On Saturday, 26 September 2026 the FARM Club went ahead with its “rain or shine (or wind storm)” annual fall Charity Float Fly event.

Six pilots / boat captains and ten friends and family came from Northern Virginia and Richmond, VA areas and participated, despite the cold and increasing winds.

They flew aircraft off and power boated around Lake Ritchie in the high winds and sunshine, but most of the very windy flying day looked like this:



- When they did “fly”, our Recovery Boat captain, Ralph Graul, recovered any and all stray aircraft and boats in distress (including his own).

The usual noon-time lunch gathering, with new and old friends, was held in the kitchen as a together “warm” family-style event which included a raffle and 50/50 drawing.

Despite a low turnout, the 2026 FARM fall charity event raise \$206.00 (\$824.00 in food buying power) and non-perishable food for the Fauquier Community Food Bank.

The event also provided a picnic dinner for the Fauquier County Family Shelter residents.

It was a very windy, cold, and sunshine day at Lake Ritchie Pavilion/Lake in Bealeton, VA and all hands had a challenging time boating and flying while supporting the Club’s local charities.

Nic Burhans

Tips & Projects:

- No submissions this month.

Anything from the Field:

From RC Airplanes to Professional UAVs

Part 1 – A Hobby Takes Flight

Although I had been exposed to radio-controlled models as a child, I didn’t return to the hobby until around 1990. At the time, I was working rotating shifts as a boiler operator at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Working nights left me with plenty of free time during the day, and I needed something productive to do. I joined the Pohick Pilots Association, whose flying field was conveniently located on Fort Belvoir, and bought my first RC airplane.

Like many newcomers, I made the classic mistake of choosing an airplane that was far beyond my skill level. After a few humbling lessons, I switched to more forgiving models, learned the basics, and eventually returned to the more advanced aircraft. Before long, I was building airplanes, flying aerobatics, and spending nearly every spare hour at the flying field.

Photos – Early RC Airplanes





My first serious RC airplane was the CAP 21. It proved to be more airplane than I was ready for, so I learned on simpler models before returning to it. The Christen Eagle II, Ultimate Biplane, and other airplanes helped build the skills that would eventually lead me into helicopters and unmanned aircraft.

Everything changed one day when fellow club member **Royce Brademan** arrived at the field with an RC helicopter. Watching it hover was fascinating. Unlike airplanes, helicopters could stop, back up, hover in place, and fly in almost any direction. I knew immediately that I wanted to learn to fly one.

My first helicopter was a **Hirobo Shuttle 30**. Like most helicopter pilots of that era, I learned the hard way. There were no flight simulators or electronic stabilization systems. I built my own training gear from wooden dowels and Wiffle balls attached beneath the landing skids. Those homemade “training wheels” allowed me to learn to hover without constantly tipping the helicopter over.

Eventually, hovering became forward flight. Forward flight became aerobatics. Before long I was flying loops, rolls, inverted hovering, and backward flight. Over the next several years I owned a variety of helicopters, including XL 60s, GMP helicopters, and a Kyosho 60. What had started as a hobby had become a passion.

That passion led me to **Norbert “Bert” Wagner**, who operated a small aerial photography business called

Advanced Aerials. Bert had developed a radio-controlled helicopter capable of carrying a professional 35mm Canon camera for aerial photography. He needed an experienced helicopter pilot, while I enjoyed designing and building mechanical systems. It turned out to be an ideal partnership.

Soon my evenings and weekends revolved around designing and building equipment. I purchased a **Smithy 3-in-1 machine**, which combined a lathe, milling machine, and drill press in a single unit. Our dining room became a machine shop, while the living room served as an assembly area. Between my full-time job at Fort Belvoir and our aerial photography business, there wasn't much free time left—but I loved every minute of it.

One of the biggest challenges was vibration. Early on, the helicopter produced enough vibration that the camera required a shutter speed of about **1/1000 second** to capture a sharp photograph. That severely limited the situations where aerial photography was practical.

I redesigned much of the camera mounting system. By installing vibration isolators in the proper shear configuration, redesigning the pan-and-tilt mechanism, modifying the servo drive system, and adding rate gyros to stabilize the camera platform, we dramatically improved image quality. By the time we finished, the camera was producing sharp photographs at shutter speeds as slow as **1/60 second**—an enormous improvement for aerial photography.

Our Aerial Photography Helicopter



Our camera platform was an XL gasoline-powered helicopter equipped with a Zenoah G23 engine. Beneath the helicopter was the custom camera gimbal that I designed and built, incorporating vibration isolation and gyro stabilization to produce remarkably sharp aerial photographs.

Our work attracted attention. We were featured in newspaper articles and even appeared on **CNN Headline News**, helping demonstrate that model helicopters could perform serious commercial work long before drones became commonplace.

One particularly memorable assignment involved photographing the **old Dulles International Airport control tower**. Because of the location and surrounding obstacles, using a full-size helicopter wasn't practical. Our radio-controlled helicopter was able to safely capture photographs from angles that otherwise would have been impossible.

Dulles International Airport Control Tower



One of our most memorable assignments was photographing the original Dulles Airport control tower using our RC helicopter. Looking back, it was an early example of the type of work that drones routinely perform today.

As our reputation grew, Bert and I exhibited our aerial photography system at the **Weak Signals RC Expo** in Toledo, Ohio. During the show I met **George Makowicz** of **Aerobotics**, a company supporting research projects at NASA Langley Research Center. George was interested in the stabilized camera systems I had been designing and later asked me to build several custom camera gimbals for his organization.

Those projects eventually led to an invitation to spend a few weeks working with Aerobotics. That temporary assignment soon became a full-time job offer.

In **1998**, I left my position at Fort Belvoir and joined Aerobotics.

What had begun as a hobby flying model airplanes at a local RC club had unexpectedly become the beginning of an entirely new career in unmanned aircraft.

Next: Aerobotics, NASA Langley, and the road to Schiebel CAMCOPTER.



The Air - Land - Sea Newsletter is published monthly by the FARM, CMB, and LOWCRC Clubs. It is forwarded to the Club members. Articles related to all types of RC models are welcome. Opinions expressed in the newsletter articles are those of the individual author and do not necessarily reflect those of FARM Inc., CMB Inc., or LOWCRC Inc.

Publishing input deadline is the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Please forward all inputs in Microsoft .doc or .docx format with associated Pictures separate in jpg format to:

Nic Burhans

6061 Captains Walk

Broad Run, VA 20137-1959

540-219-9646

E-Mail: npb6218@earthlink.net

Club Web sites: <http://www.farmclubre.com>

<http://www.cmbclubrc.com>

<http://www.lowcrc.com>