



THE NEWSLETTER OF SAM 26, THE CENTRAL  
COAST CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF  
ANTIQUe MODELERS. **FEBRUARY 2009 #233**



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**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING** will be at Dick Fischers on April 15. If you're a procrastinator like me, you can drop off your income taxes at the post office on the way over.

**ERRATA:** We got off to a bum start when I misspelled the names of both Cecil Cutbirth and Bob Sundberg last month. Sorry about that guys. I receive the names of new members from Treasurer Jim Bierbauer. I think I made the mistake, so about the best I can do is blame it on Jim. And while discussing new members, a belated welcome to **BOB MACDONALD**, whose name I hope I spelled correctly. Bob hails from Bakersfield and will probably attend our March contest at Taft.

**RC REPORT MAGAZINE** has gone out of business. But they did it with class, by letting all their columnists know first and publishing a farewell issue. They are also offering refunds for remaining subscriptions. All this is very unlike the other magazines that have quit in the past. RC Report consisted mostly of reviews of ARF's and equipment, but their columnists penned a lot of useful information with lots of humor.

Stu Richmond, our member from Apache Junction Arizona had this to say about Editor Gordon Banks and the magazine: "Gordon Banks' "R/C Report" magazine has directly benefited we who are active R/Cers...because the writers have always been allowed to tell the truth. Bob, I wrote for the model press for 33 years and the 5-6 years I wrote for Gordon were my very best...in that I was allowed to tell what I believed to be the truth... Gordon was the best editor I ever worked for!!!"

**LONESTAR Balsa** is back in business at a new address after a devastating fire in 1987. Find them at: Lone Star Balsa, 12058 S. Profit Row, Forney TX 75726  
Or phone 972-552-3939 or [lonestar-balsa.com](http://lonestar-balsa.com)

**BALSA SHEETS** and blocks are also available at good prices locally from Jim Bierbauer or Bob Angel as we took over a batch of modeling supplies from the widow of a deceased local modeler. He was a back and forth type flier who had accumulated lots of first class kits, engines and general modeling supplies and support equipment. This includes several glow engines, mostly NIB, in sizes 46 to 68 two stroke, and new Saito 56, 91 and 150 four strokes, plus a number of large model kits. Some ARF types, some build up types. We are pricing these items out at less than Tower prices. We could ship engines, but aren't too eager to ship the kits as the boxes are quite large. I'll have a list soon for anyone who's interested either by E mail at [samrcflier@verizon.net](mailto:samrcflier@verizon.net) or by post.

**MTBF**, or *Mean Time between Failures*, is a term familiar to many in the aircraft and aerospace business. It's usually expressed as hours of operation between having either a component or a complete system fail. Lately, I've been thinking that the MTBF concept fits our models nicely, but should probably be expressed in terms of number of flights rather than hours. And as a rough estimate, it seems like just about 20 flights between having something on our little hot rods fail and require troubleshooting and maintenance. But somehow the MTBF rate increases to about 10 flights when flown at a contest or public demonstration.

**A TYPICAL EXAMPLE** of MTBF at a contest came at our last contest at Taft, when the engine on my B glow ship suddenly would not hold a needle setting. I retired it and saved the troubleshooting for the shop at home. It turned out that the output nipple on the OS fuel shutoff had loosened from vibration over several flights and had unscrewed itself just enough to allow a pressure leak to cause erratic running. Now an OS shutoff valve has one nipple (my inlet side) turned from solid metal, but the other is screwed into place. That factory assembled valve had probably a MTBF of 50 to 100 flights. But the engine's fuel system was on only about its' 10<sup>th</sup> flight since the last problem – which incidentally occurred at a previous contest.



**KEITH SMITH** is building a sailplane for the “sorta” Old Time Glider event our March contest at Taft. He calls it the “Gambler” and it looks very competitive. Keith builds fiberglass composite fuselages under the name Pacific Sailplanes. However this ship isn't fiberglass and the construction is balsa to keep in the spirit of the sorta OT event. The event was started by ED Hamler as an offshoot of the rulebook glider event. It's run under the SAM rulebook flight rules of 3 flights for 20 minutes.

**ARMING SWITCHES** might have been called *disarming switches*, except arming switch is easier to say. But disarming for safety is their primary purpose. They were the subject of two columnists, Bob Aberle and Greg Gimlick, in the February issue of Model Aviation. Notice that 2 of the 3 connectors pictured on the commercial “shorting plug” unit wouldn’t be needed if you were wiring from scratch. But many electric fliers have gotten away from arming switches after newer ESC’s have a programmed in “no motor start condition” unless the throttle lever is at retard when radios are switched on.

A computer radio can also be programmed so one of the flip switches keeps the motor shut off should the transmitters throttle lever get bumped accidentally. But only an arming switch can assure that the motor doesn’t start unexpectedly due to a radio or ESC glitch. Both columnists covered the technical details of the switches.

Besides the positive interruption in one of the battery wires, mention was made of an alternate arming switch which interrupts the lead between the ESC and the receiver. Presumably this might be used because the switch would not have to carry full motor current and could be a lighter duty switch. But that system sounded a little “iffy”, because not all ESC controls will shut off properly. It was even suggested that you call the ESC manufacturer to verify that the scheme is safe. Careful bench testing was also recommended. All told, it sounds like that system could be a weak link and little improvement over just relying on the transmitter and ESC. I’d opt for the direct battery interruption if installing an arming switch.

**THE HOLMAN FAMILY** showed up in force at the Southwest Regionals, with a larger motor home to accommodate everyone. Rick invited his daughter’s boyfriend Phillip, and was indoctrinating him into flying. Rick knows how to raise a family. He says “Anyone who wants to date my Daughter has to be a model flier”. Phillip was a very personable and helpful young man and a fast learner.



Flight line action, as Dave Lewis at left gets his Bomber underway at the SW Regionals at Eloy Arizona. Doug Klassen Photograph.



**THE DALLAIRE** pictured above is a once quite popular design that is frequently overlooked today. It's quite competitive with that high aspect wing and a fairly streamlined fuselage. It's a good candidate for Texaco, and Jim Bierbauer should be flying a four cycle powered one at our next Taft meet. The one pictured was snapped at Eloy in January by Doug Klassen who sent us a nice batch of Photos from that meet.

**FUEL SYRINGES** are now imported from China along with most of our material goods. They are much cheaper, both price wise and physically. I've been wrapping clear packaging tape around them to help prevent breakage, and to contain hazardous glass shards when they do break.

**OLD FLIER LEARNS NEW TERM:** A helicopter flier mentioned "nitro engines". Since most modern engines use nitro, I didn't understand the term and had to ask. The "young 'uns" among us have cut their teeth on electric motors, and needed an easy to use term to distinguish real engines from those sneaky quiet electric motors.

**DAVID BAKER**, the well known organizer and supporter of SAM activities in the UK passed away on the first day of this year. You'll no doubt see his biography in other publications, such as SAM Speaks.

**SNAP-IN BATTERY PROBLEM:** Recently, one of my transmitter batteries was consistently registering low voltage way early in the flight. Before replacing it, I removed and cycled it and found that it should still be quite serviceable. But back in the transmitter, it dropped to 9.7 V fairly fast. The problem turned out to be the old type snap-in connections. The battery has the little 9 volt battery type snap-on connectors, but the transmitter has only a couple of friction springs. Giving the springs more tension plus a shot of Corrosion X made an OK field fix, but I plan to solder in some real connectors.

Never trust friction connectors, especially on something as critical as a radio. Just a couple of days ago, my tachometer wouldn't light up when switched on. Just opening the case and re-seating the batteries fixed it. Consider how often ordinary flashlights fail, and all that's needed is cleaning and reseating the springs and batteries. And those snap-in dry cells are one of the things that turn me off about the new cheap Spectrum DX5e radio set on 2.4GHz. Being cheap, no batteries or charger are furnished, so it just has a snap in battery box. They sell a Ni-Cd conversion kit, but the Ni-Cds just snap in also.

**RESISTOR QUESTION ANSWERED:** Ken Holden sent a response to my open question as to why some resistors come in nice neat 10K Ohm size, while others have odd size Ohm designations, such as 4.7 K rather than a neat 5.0K.

**Hi Bob:** In response to your resistor value question, the values traditionally lay on a scale like the decibel scale, or wire gauge. It was to make manual calculations easier.

Thermals,  
Ken in Carmichael.

Thanks Ken – that sort of answers it, although I wouldn't have the slightest idea what or how to begin calculating. But then I still believe electricity is a largely unproven proposition something like alien abductions, Loch Ness monsters, global warming, Yetis, etc.

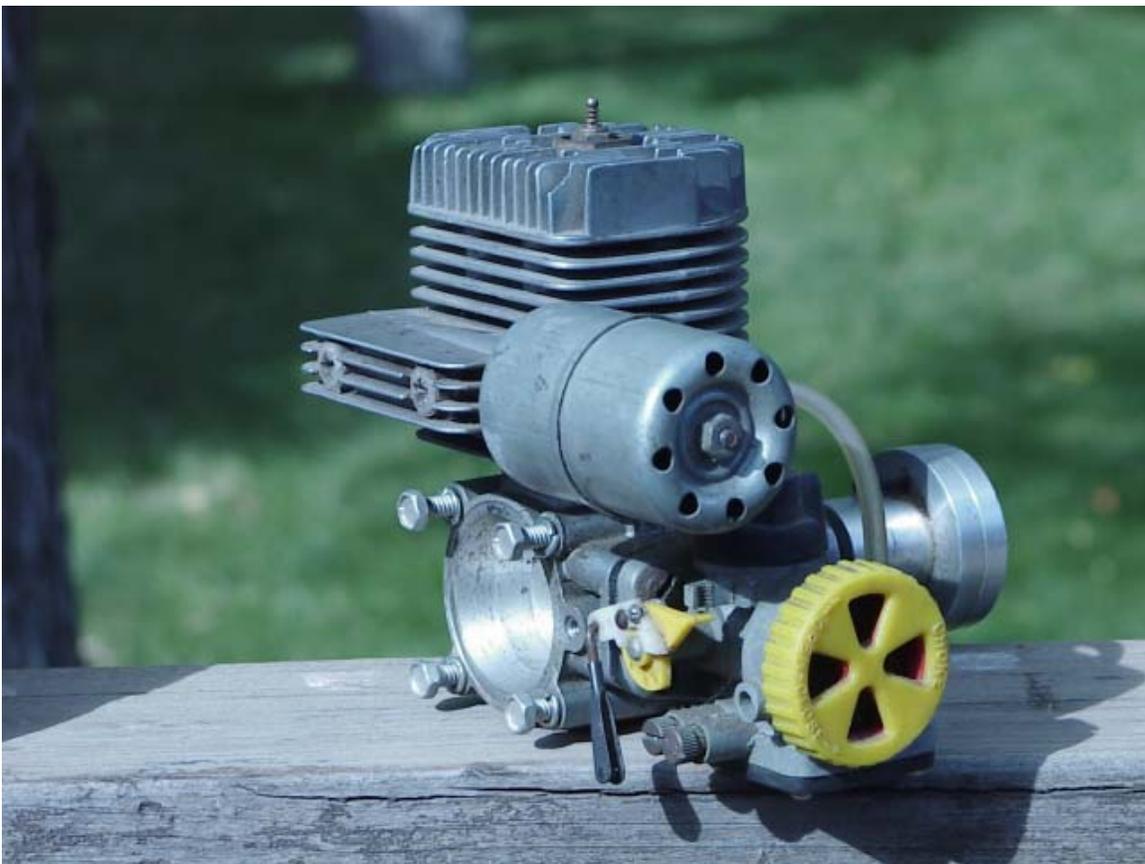


Here we have one of the new and much cheaper 2.4 GHz radios being made in China. It's called "Turborix" And is a four channel transmitter/receiver set available for just \$68 postpaid from a dealer called AirLandSea Hobbies located in the USA. Probably the most attractive thing about the price isn't the 68 bucks, but the spare receivers, which are just \$15 each.

**RED SCHOLEFIELD**, the Battery Clinic columnist for Model Aviation says he has tried out one of the pictured radios, and it works OK. It's advertised as a very basic, but full range computer radio with four model memories. Since there is no charger, I assume the transmitter batteries are non rechargeable disposables and are probably not included. And they probably fit into another of the snap-in battery boxes that we keep warning ourselves about. The trim switches look like analog type, but are probably just the cheaper to produce digital such as we find on most other computer radios, regardless of price. If so it might not have the same drawback as the \$100 Spectrum DX5e set we reported on in the September '08 issue. That non computer radio has the worst of both worlds with digital trims but no visible record of where the trims were last set.

The cheap receivers are no doubt not compatible with Futaba, Airtronics, Spectrum, etc transmitters. Still the long term effect may be to lower the prices on extra receivers from the major manufacturers. Those name brand radios are something like computer printers, in that they could be given away if you'd continue buying their overpriced ink. It looks like more of these cheap 2.4GHz sets will continue to appear. There's even one offered from Hobby King priced at \$30.

If you're interested in the pictured set, AirLandSea Hobbies can be reached by phone at 1-607-547-8742, or by mail at 446 Springfield Hill Rd., Cooperstown, NY 13326. You can also "Google" their website for more information.



**WHAT'S THIS?** Would you believe a Cox 1.40? I'm told it was made by Cox for chainsaws and this one has been converted for model aircraft use.



**THE NOMAD** design by Chuck Hollinger was beautifully executed by Carlos Gerster of SAM 1953 in Argentina.

It's 900 square inches and powered by an Irvine 40 diesel, which Carlos plans to fly in an LER event.

Your Editor has always liked the design, but has yet to build one, usually opting for something simpler. Now I feel I couldn't measure up to the standard that this one has set.

I had watched Chuck Hollinger fly the original Nomad as an Ohlsson 60 powered free flight in the late nineteen forties. Our local club, the Prop Spinners of Bremerton Washington had sponsored a big contest at the Kitsap County airport. Kitsap County is almost an island, and aside from one road out to the south, all travel in and out was by ferry boat. The famous Tacoma narrows bridge that had collapsed in a wind storm in the nineteen thirties had not yet been rebuilt.

Those were the days when you could get manufacturers to send kits, supplies and even engines as prizes. So to attract outsiders, the club had put out lots of publicity and had lots of nice prizes to offer. The contest offered both free flight and control line. At that time all modelers were just modelers, and free flighters didn't discriminate against those who chose to physically control their aircraft. And in fact many FF guys swung both ways.

Among those coming over from the Seattle area were Chuck Hollinger and his flying buddy Hank Cole. Both were accomplished modelers with published model designs to their credit. We were mostly high school kids struggling to learn the ways of modeling and Chuck, being a famous and well known grownup competitor and designer was a local hero and a source of learning. The good looking Nomad was the highlight of the contest and won its class. It might have the first competition for the ship. I believe Chuck and Hank took home a good percentage of the hardware that day.

**ROLAND FRIESTAD**, SAM Speaks editor has, as you know, produced a CD set of all the SAM Speaks issues from the first issue at back around the Stone Age until just a year or so ago. For \$30 postpaid, this is a really good deal, especially so for those just joining SAM. Now he's working on scanning early Model Airplane News and will be following with Air Trails and Model Builder. This is one big undertaking and will be a great service. In fact it stands to make some of our houses larger as we'll be able to get rid of musty stacks of old magazines. Thank you Roland!

**HARDY ROBINSON** asked that I do a piece on **cleaning engines** and maintaining them in clean condition. He buttered me up by saying my engines always looked neat and clean. I was surprised to be accused of something like that, but I accepted it gracefully. I've always thought, "You want neat and clean engines, you look to Tandy Walker for that". We'll briefly summarize. The Dawn Power Dissolver treatment described several issues ago is the best thing I've found to cut through that dark exterior varnish caused mostly by baked on castor oil. After a lengthy search I finally found the product on the shelf at Wal-Mart at a very reasonable price.

But when you're disassembling an old gunked up engine the overnight heated crock pot is a good way to go. The warm anti-freeze bath works well, but so does a simple bath of cooking oil. I used cooking oil to restore a little twin cylinder Wen Mac to once again turn over freely. Those little gems have such close tolerances that you almost have to disassemble them or you'll break something trying to free them up with just heat applied from the outside.

Rust removal is accomplished with Naval Jelly, available at most hardware stores. The jelly is also a good exterior varnish remover and does a good job of removing cylinder varnish on Cox 1/2A engines. A product called Evapo-Rust is also a good immersion type rust remover. Its' available in bulk quantities at Freight Harbor Tools. With all these treatments you need to be cautious about not messing up a fine exterior finish especially on painted parts.

But one simple trick for keeping engines clean was passed on to me by Dick Fischer who'd picked it up from Jack Albrecht, who maintains very neat equipment. Keep a spray bottle filled with methanol and after a flying session hold the airplane nose down and spray the engine and its compartment to remove grit, grime and oil residue. The alcohol drips out and dries rapidly, and being organic, it doesn't even hurt grass if it drips on it.



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**HAVING FUN IN ITALY** Here's Bruno Chianti launching his 1/2A Strato Streak.

Bruno came up with some statistics on SAM Talk with a pie chart showing the Bomber and Playboy dominating 1/2A competition. I presume the statistics were gathered from his local sources, because oddly enough Bombers are *relatively* scarce in the 1/2A event stateside.

**ED HAMLER** sent out a message to his SAM 27 companions, drumming up support for the upcoming contest at Taft March 28 & 29. So far it looks like Ned Nevels, Mike Clancy, Don Bekins, Dan Carpenter, and Steve Remington plan to attend from SAM 27. Most of these guys are also associate members of SAM 26. Thanks Ed, maybe this will get things going for the start of the California contest season.

**PROP PREP.** Hal Wightman had an article on prop carving in SAM Speaks #201. While I have no intention of carving props from scratch, I do “prep” wooden props. But when you get lucky and a prop lasts a long time, the hubs start to get badly compressed. Hal’s idea of putting four hardwood dowels into the hub seems like a good way to restore such a mushy prop. But you need to insure that all four dowels get driven in an equal distance, especially on the back side or you’ll end up with a wobbly out of alignment prop. I’ve found it’s a good idea to remove or at least loosen a wood prop between flying sessions to prevent crushing. Ever notice that a prop that’s been sitting tightened on an engine often throws itself loose at next engine start?

**USEFUL PRODUCT?** SAM Secretary Tommy Gray sent this message to Tandy Walker when Tandy was having problems with a poor contact in a new drill press circuit board. “There is only one way I know to make it half way reliable and that would be to clean the strip and the back of the panel with *Cramolin De-Oxit* then put *Cramolin lube* on it. We use it on high dollar electronics equipment circuit board edge card connectors and there is NOTHING else that will work any better. I have cleared up intermittents in \$100,000 equipment with it. I had an AMPEX factory tech put me onto it about 30 years ago and it fixed intermittents in a video tape machine that was killing me with service problems. After treating the board and connectors with it, the problems went away and never returned. Cramolin is made by Caig Laboratories and can be found on the web. I understand however, that you can get a consumer version from Radio Shack.”  
Tommy Gray

That product sounds like a super version of the **Corrosion X** that Bob Holman sold for a while. Bob may have discontinued it because a few people had problems with the little plastic pressure pump. But I’ve had good service from the stuff for several years.

**TRANSMITTER RECALL.** Red Scholefield just passed the word that Horizon Hobbies have sent a recall notice on **Spectrum DX6i transmitters** due to a problem with the stick pots. Date codes affected are 807E through 812E, plus 901E. These numbers are found on the back, maybe inside a module cavity. Horizon suggests that you stop using these immediately and send the transmitter (only) with batteries removed to them for upgrade. They’ll pay the bill both ways. You can contact them for instructions at 1-877-504-0233 or Email [productsupport@horizonhobby.com](mailto:productsupport@horizonhobby.com)

**TANK MAKING 101:** Roy Bourke had a nicely illustrated tutorial on making custom fuel tanks in the Jan.-Feb. issue of SAM speaks. He recommended brass as an easy to work metal. But as I recall, Joe Wagner warned us that brass produces an acid when glow fuel is left sitting in it. It might be a good idea to use tin plate instead. I made a tank recently from a suitable material found at Home Depot that was intended for, I believe, roof flashing.



If you see the dreaded red X in the box above, it means that as of February 24, AD 2009, 1600 hours, Treasurer Jim Bierbauer has no record of your dues being paid for the year. If you believe this message is in error, give Jim a call at the number on the Masthead. Otherwise we'd appreciate your \$15 check made to SAM 26 and mailed to Jim at his address, also on the front page. We often have the last few guys pay up at the March contest, so we won't dispatch the hit squad until after that date. Thanks.

Robert L. Angel  
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