

# Hot Air



## Message from the President

May 2013

I don't know about the rest of you guys, but seeing old Warbirds fly sure gets the adrenaline flowing. Aluminum Overcast, a B-17G-VE restoration, was at Torrance airport giving rides and allowing tours April 26th-28th.

This airframe was delivered in 1945 and never saw combat. It was sold at the end of the war for \$750 (I'll take two, thank you). The plane was used for several different applications before being acquired for restoration by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA).

She was restored over a more than 10 year period to resemble the original "Aluminum Overcast" that was part of the 389th Bomber Group. The original was lost on her 34th combat mission. The restoration is amazing and the plane is gorgeous. My favorite part is just hearing the four 1,200-horsepower Wright Cyclone Model R-1820-97 engines. I wonder what it must have sounded like at an airfield in England when all of the aircraft were lined up for a mission fully loaded with fuel and bombs and they started their take-off roll.

Well, if you missed Aluminum Overcast, the weekend of May 4th and 5th is the annual air show at the Planes of Fame museum in Chino. What is amazing about Chino is they fly just about everything they have. Take a look at their

[web site](#) for an inventory of their flyable aircraft. If you haven't made the pilgrimage to Chino for this air show, you should. You won't regret it.

### Next Meeting

**Wednesday,  
May 1st  
7:30 pm**

**La Romeria Park  
19501 Inglewood Ave**

We will be having a Fun-Fly at Del Cerro **Saturday, May 4th**. If you don't head out to Chino for the air show, charge up a glider or two and head up to the hill.

The Entradero Fun Fly will be **Friday, May 17th**. I know the Friday time slot restricts who can make the Fun-Fly, but baseball makes the weekends unpredictable.

That said, I was able to get some flying in on two recent Sunday mornings. Both times I was able to squeeze onto the field after a baseball team left following their completion of practice and was able to fly for an hour plus.

### Upcoming Fun-Flys

**Del Cerro      May 4th  
Entradero    May 17th**

Our monthly meeting will be **Wednesday, May 1st**. Bring your latest project to the meeting and let us see what you are up to. It is always great to see what innovative stuff our members are building. I wonder if I could sneak a B-17 kit onto the building table without anyone noticing...

- Jeff



## F3F Competition at Pt. Fermin!

As a devout Del Cerro sport flyer and PSF member in mostly good standing, I enjoy the slope and thermal flying with the PSF gang, but recently found myself intrigued by the F3F racing taking place at one of the other classic slopes on the peninsula - Point Fermin.

### What is F3F?

F3F competition involves racing gliders on a 100-meter course laid out across the top of a slope - or in the case of Pt. Fermin, the top of a 100-foot vertical cliff that plunges straight into the ocean - with pylons marking both ends of the course. The object is to launch your plane and gain as much altitude as you can in 30 seconds then scream down as close to the cliff edge as you dare and complete 10 legs (5 laps) of the course as fast as possible. Usually ten rotations of the pilot roster are completed with points awarded based on the times for each round, then totaled to determine the overall pilot rankings.

It's a pretty simple concept until you add in the constant cycles of preflight, launch, gain altitude, race, pull up into the landing pattern, get your plane back on the ground, work one of the pylon stations and repeat. After several hours of this, you begins to feel like you're competing in an RC triathlon. If you have any weaknesses as a flyer they will become obvious, but the upside is you will get better at everything.



*F3F Competition at Mt. Vincent*

### Point Fermin

For those who haven't yet flown at Pt. Fermin, the only word to describe it is "intimidating". The lift is amazingly smooth, consistent and big but there is definitely a steep learning curve, especially the landing process, which is commonly referred to as the "steeplechase". Flying at Del Cerro requires a disciplined landing approach, but Fermin takes landing to a different level altogether, since before you even have to worry about putting your plane safely on the ground you have to get to the landing area. Here's a hint: it's not even close to where you're flying!

### The Landing

The landing process begins with climbing over a 4-foot cement wall then walking across a park, crossing a busy 4-lane road, climbing over another wall, hiking to the top of a ridge and only then do you actually maneuver your plane downwind (watch out for the kites!) and land on

the backside or top of the ridge. Did I mention that you're flying your plane out over the Pacific Ocean while you're running this obstacle course? Depending on the wind speed, the approach to the landing area can be wildly turbulent. If the wind is below 15 mph you can pretty much land

however you want. Between 15 and 25 mph it's best to avoid flying over the parking lot south of the landing zone. Anything slower than full speed passes through the rotors here and your plane will likely end up "re-kitted" on the



asphalt. Above 25 mph and your only option is to fly over the ridge itself and do a 180 downwind before hitting the flaps and hovering to touchdown.

### **Racing**

While racing the course can be as simple as making a series of 180 turns at each pylon until you complete 19 of them (10 legs), there's more to it than meets the eye. For example, the launching and starting procedure can get incredibly elaborate in an effort to gain maximum altitude and max speed before starting the course. Some pilots simply launch and do a couple of "pumps" before starting. Others will engage in a complex aerial ballet including pumps, rolls, loops and all manner of unlikely aerobatics that seem able to generate enough energy and starting speed to catapult their expensive composite sailplanes all the way to Catalina!

Once on the course, judging the turning points accurately and making clean, efficient turns while avoiding cutting the course becomes challenging, to say the least. It's clear the art of F3F is definitely in the details and there are many, many details. The more competitive pilots use exotic mixing programs utilizing camber, reflex, rudder, aileron and flap combinations to help them maintain energy (speed) while flying the course. Without this automated assistance, I can't imagine what kind of mental and manual dexterity would be required to be competitive.

### **My First Race**

As you can imagine, competing for the first time in F3F could be a recipe for some sort of RC flying stress test. The good news here is that the Southern California Slope Racing (SCSR) crew that runs these events is really supportive and provides generous assistance. They even conduct pre-season practice races for anyone interested in F3F, which includes a totally rigged race course, plane set-up tips, safety

instruction, a complete explanation of race rules and most importantly, personal coaching. In case you're wondering what all of this cost, it's free! Yep, all of this expert coaching from some of the best flyers in the sport - no charge. Try finding that deal at your local golf course! Don't have a molded carbon racing rig? No problem, you can fly anything that's airworthy.

Consequently, I had a good idea what to expect, thanks to the SCSR training program. Still, with everyone watching, the timing system beeping and the CD calling out "30 seconds!" until start time; waiting for my first "official" launch felt a little tense. My launcher walks me through a last systems check "left-left, right-right, up-up, down-down. Ready?" Go! The launches are definitely high octane. Don't expect a gentle point and toss. Once in the air I'm looking for lots of quick altitude to beat the 30-second start deadline and then dive into the start and fly the course as clean as possible. Unless I cut, each turn is accompanied by a beep from the corner judge.

Sooner than I realize I'm hurtling through the last leg and zooming up to altitude to join the landing pattern! As I trim my plane to float mode and begin the hike to the landing zone, another launcher / flyer team is already taking my place to begin their next round. Obviously, a novice like me isn't that competitive (yet) but the adrenaline buzz is addictive and it's great to hear the encouragement when you get a personal best not to mention you'll develop flying skills you didn't think possible.

It's definitely worth a trip to the SCSR webpage and attending one of the F3F events to check out the action. Who knows, might be just the ticket to "rationalize" the purchase of a sleek new molded sailplane. But be warned, it is very addictive!

- Steve Kratz



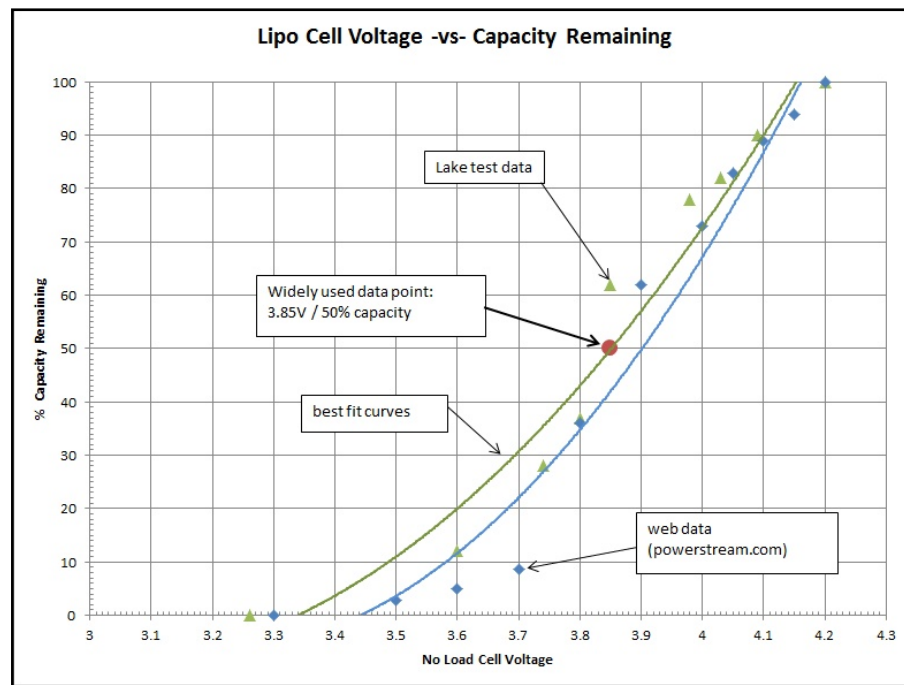


From our Vice President...

The graph below shows two sets of data relating no-load cell voltage to remaining capacity in the cell. I included the set of data I measured and some data that I found on the web from an industrial Lipo supplier. I guess the two data sets represent the variability of the batteries. A flyer can use one of the many battery cell voltage meters available (I've put some in our recent

raffles) to check the individual cell voltages in a Lipo after a flight and then use the chart to determine how much capacity was left in the battery (use the lowest cell voltage). It might help somebody avoid ruining a battery by over-discharging it or crashing an airplane.

- Jerry



Treasurer's Report

For the month ending March 2013, the club gained a significant amount of operating revenue, all resulting from the annual fee collection - with special thanks to John for his hard work coordinating this effort. This brought the operating account to \$1,472.19 after all the funds earmarked for the Entradero Fund were quickly moved into that account, now totaling \$1,560.60.

The raffle fund has stood at \$487.36 for a few months, as Jerry typically submits receipts and his spreadsheet only on an as-needed basis when the fund goes low. However, the raffle is setup to be mostly a self-sufficient system with expenses covered by the income from the raffle collection. So, we only expect to fund this

account maybe 1 or 2 times per year, with the largest contribution expected at the December raffle extravaganza, usually providing members with \$500 in goodies.

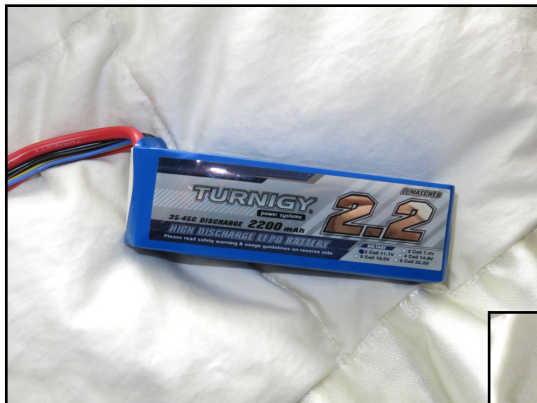
At this time, I consider the condition of the club's finances to be adequate for this year's budgeted expenses, as well as having some reserve money in the event of any minor unbudgeted situation. If you would like a complete financial report emailed to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at [treasurer@peninsulasilentflyers.com](mailto:treasurer@peninsulasilentflyers.com).

Until next month, happy flying!

- Mike Lewis



Monthly Raffle!



*Once again, we will hold a raffle at the May club meeting.*



*Come on out and win something cool!*



Website News

Don't forget to check out the website from time to time. This past month, I added a couple of articles, including one about the much-discussed snakes at Entradero.

- Chris

**Club Officers and Volunteers for 2013**

- President: Jeff Chambers  
310-370-0771
- Vice President: Jerry Lake  
310-370-6697
- Treasurer: Mike Lewis  
310-987-8178
- Secretary: John Spielman  
310-378-0951
- Newsletter: Chris Newton  
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