



THE PROP WASH

Club Officers

- *President* - Robert Minieri
- *Vice President* - Robert Cook
- *Secretary* - Larry Bonnette
- *Treasurer* - Sam Barrett
- *Editor/Webmaster* - Larry Bonnette



Robert Minieri

PRESIDENTS CORNER

I bet by now you've all heard all of the attention drones and unmanned aircraft have been getting in the media. A couple months ago I decided that, yes, this high-tech automated flight stuff is definitely for me! So I dove head-first into it and have been having a blast.

It is overwhelming how much information and technology is available to us now. One thing is for sure - these automated flights and electronics are not for everyone! They are very difficult, or at least, time consuming to set up, and require a great deal of attention at all times to avoid total loss of aircraft. The first system I set up is a Naza unit on a Flamewheel F550 hexacopter. On the positive side, the Naza is relatively basic and easy to set up and maintain, and is a good starting platform for someone looking to get into automated flight. On the negative side, it is not very customizable and doesn't offer a great deal of features. I am currently working on a very complex system by 3D Robotics and Dragon Link that allows full automation of every flight variable, including unlimited waypoint flight planning and a 20+ mile range while maintaining full control and first person view camera perspective. The positive side is, well, everything I just mentioned. On the negative side, I only thought I had some technical smarts until I began working on setting this up. 4 hours into setting a 3D Robotics system on a test aircraft, and I'm basically starting back over at square one. Still, it's a great deal of fun and I wouldn't be doing it otherwise.

Anyone looking to get into this high-tech arena really needs to keep a clear head and be smart about where they are and what they are doing. The media is instilling fear into those who are ignorant to the hobby, and the powers that be are certainly ready to pounce on the first incident that arises. Just like anything else in life, you can be safe, or you can be negligent and dangerous. For the sake of the hobby, please remember to think about what you are doing. Respect the FAA regulations for airspace, airports and aircraft flights. Respect privacy of others. If you aren't sure about what is and what isn't legal, do a little research. Do all you can to protect the hobby and those around you.

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Meetings are at the Conroe Friendship Center on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM

We hope to see you there.



Robert Cook

Words from the VP

(The Vice President's Input)

Words from the VP

This month marks my first year with TCB! Since my job keeps yanking me around the country, I have not been getting much time at the field and I apologize for missing the March meeting. But I do have a report on the tips/tricks online sharing effort followed by a very important note on club rules and safety. Thanks for taking the time to read through it.

Online Sharing of Tips/Tricks

Based on Gary Baumgartner's suggestion in the February meeting, I sent out a note to all members that provided an email address that I set up a community using Google+. I asked for a response, interest level, or alternate ideas. My results and conclusions from this short-lived effort are as follows:

- Since I asked for feedback via an email link wherein I attached the Propwash column, it seems readership of the meeting minutes and/or the Propwash monthly newsletters is low because, Less than ten members responded.
- Of those that did respond, feedback was mixed. Some claimed that they never use online services for this kind of thing while others thought it was a good idea. Some didn't like the idea of using Google owing to privacy concerns.
- A couple folks asked why our web site does not simply use conventional forums. I explained that in the past, this did not enjoy much participation and that we were seeking other options that might yield better results.
- Feedback on emails regarding notices, events, etc. was again very low but generally positive. Anyone who took the time to respond to group emails thought this was a good way and the only way they needed to stay updated on club status.

In conclusion, I do not believe that the membership of Tri-Country Barnstormers (TCB) is particularly keen on blending the hobby with online functionality whether that is to simply share ideas or to socialize outside field/meeting functions. I am somewhat surprised by the lack of response to the idea and am inclined to think that the Propwash isn't reaching many folks. I did recommend to Larry that instead of simply posting meeting minutes to the web site each month that we email them along with the Propwash to every member with an email on file. Sam mentioned that he already sends mail to those members that do not provide an email.

I'm not sure if this is worth pursuing anymore. I am still open to ideas though.

VP (continued)

Site Safety

This is a recurring topic at TCB and this month I am frustrated. We (officers) continue to receive reports that some members are not following the safety rules. More alarming however, are allegations that enforcement of the rules is lackadaisical or non-existent even when clear infractions are witnessed. We need to correct this fast because if we don't, then someone might get injured (or worse) and we could lose the club over it. It should be self-evident that nobody is exempt from the rules and we all should follow them at all times (even when you are the only one at the field!) because safe conduct begins with safe culture. It should be second nature that you place your AMA card in a slot and take a pin just as you would not consider trying to fly without gassing up or installing the battery. Each member is provided a copy of the by-laws containing the club safety rules. It is not a blank book where members can write their own rules!

When I returned to the hobby after a 20 year hiatus last March, I realized that a lot had changed while I was away. Not only was the TCB field much larger and infinitely more enjoyable than the tree-lined postage stamp I was used to, there was a genuine concern for the welfare of all members. I was very much impressed and appreciated the time Paul Langner took to orient me to the site rules and the whole idea of pilot stations, flight path, where not to go, where not to fly, etc. He did it because I just showed up one day, got my plane out and took off going the wrong way, and with no regard to the flight path. That's the way we did it at my old field so I didn't even realize I was breaking a few rules. Pilot certification? What the heck is that? If you could bring it down in the same number of pieces you took it up with, then you were certified.

Full disclosure -- I didn't take much time initially to read the TCB rules carefully because, well...I knew how to fly already so what's the point? This point is, I was wrong and I could have damaged or destroyed another plane flying the wrong way, or cause injury to myself or others by not following the rules. After my wounded pride recovered from Paul's considerable but gracious "corrections", I realized that he was right and felt shameful for my lack of attention to safety. After all, I work in the chemical/refining/mining industries where an attitude like I demonstrated can get you or your co-workers killed. We fly dangerous machines and while the potential for destruction isn't as great as a refinery explosion, it can be just as catastrophic to an individual that is struck in the head.

Do I think we have members that just don't care? No, I don't. I think we have a few members just like me that never bothered to read and understand the rules. We might even have a few that think they are veterans and in the way "familiarity breeds contempt" simply bend or ignore them because they think they can without causing any problems or imposing any real "risk" to anyone. Maybe there are some that think "not my job" to identify and correct unsafe acts. But they are wrong and we should move towards correcting this behavior -not in a way that gets personal or ugly - but in a way that helps everyone to appreciate the reason why we have the rules in the first place.

VP (continued)

The TCB is a relatively large club with about 150 members. Most of the members don't come to the meetings and, as I mentioned in the previous section, it doesn't appear that many take the time to read the Propwash. The importance of this message is then lost on those who might benefit the most. Heck, it's hard enough for officers to keep track of who certified, who is a guest with AMA, etc., let alone to expect members to keep an eye on everyone. All told, it would appear that self-policing isn't working as well as planned. Therefore, I as a precursor to our upcoming meeting in April, I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Immediately reinstate practice of using colored stickers on current AMA cards to ensure that all fliers are insured members of TCB.
2. I suggest we extend the stickers (using a colored system perhaps?) to identify members that are certified to fly (green stickers?) vs. those that are members but still in training (red stickers?). Just because you are a member in good standing doesn't mean you can fly safely.
3. Finally, several months ago we talked about instituting a safety orientation program for all new members. That fell off the radar but I believe we need to get it back on the radar. I offered to help Gene put one together and this would include a book along with a site safety orientation not unlike Paul gave me when I first joined. I believe this will end those who don't know the rules because they never took the time to read them (or understand them). Every member should be required to take this training and sign-off that they attended it. We could even host a few group sessions for anyone that is interested in attending, even if they have been members for a while.

Of course, these are just ideas and all ideas are welcome. We need to reach resolution on ways to enforce safe flying for everyone. Afterwards, it will make dealing with breaches or incidents much easier and less hostile. What are your thoughts? Shoot me an email at Robert.Graham.Cook@gmail.com and I will bring them to the next meeting.

Till next month, may lift and thrust exceed drag in all you do.

Till next month, may lift and thrust exceed drag in all you do.

Over and out.

Bob

Meeting Minutes

(The Secretary's Report)



Larry Bonnette

March 7, 2013
Start time: 7:31 PM
Members present 33

The March 7, 2013 meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM by President Robert Minieri

The meeting started with the President telling the group that he had recently been called a "Poor President" and that he (the President) needed to discuss the comments with the members.

Robert told the attendees that he tries his best to give the club the attention it deserves and that he has recruited many new members to the club and has tried to make it a "Fun" club to belong to. Robert said that that he had been "Yelled at" and the person speaking to him did not provide the respect that is due to any club member. Robert told the members present that he just needed to know if others felt the same way about the way he handles himself as both a President and a member of the club.

The group discussed the many infractions that club members have committed in the past and everyone seemed to have an opinion on one thing or another.

One of the comments that seemed to be prominent was that people were not placing their AMA membership cards into the frequency board and taking a baton. Even the president commented that he did not see a reason for doing it (placing his AMA card on the board) if the pilot is flying a 2.4 GHZ radio.

Sam commented that all pilots must adhere to the rules.

Max commented that "not flying from the proper flight station and ignoring the rules" sets a bad example for any new members who just joined. Max also commented that our aircraft can actually kill people and has happened in the past and that ignoring rules may someday get someone killed.

Keith J. commented "We are all supposed to be there to have fun and that as members of the club we should all be open to criticism and should be able to discuss issues that affect all of us".

One of the members asked if we could remove the rule that requires 2.4 radio users to place their card on the "Board".

The sticker on the AMA card came up again and the result is that Sam may (or may not) send stickers out to the members.

Ken B. asked the officers to please get together and discuss what it is that they (the officers) need to do to move forward with these issues.

At that point this discussion was closed and may be re-visited after the Club Officers talk to one and other.

Donn Bonnette donated a very nice first aid kit to the club.

Minutes (continued)

Sam reported that weed application to the runway will happen as soon as it warms up a bit.

Mower shed security has been completed and the combo for the mower shed has been set to the gate combo (backwards).

The insurance company paid our claim.

The door frame on the Mower shed needs to be replaced because it is rotten.

The road and some of the parts of the property needs to be filled in with concrete dust. Robert M. will spread it but the club will need to purchase it. The cost will be approximately \$2000.00. The club will be asked to vote on the \$2000.00 expenditure next month.

The IRS has accepted out tax exempt paperwork but has not yet gotten back to us (they have 90 days)

The Club voted to donate \$500 to the Civil Air Patrol cadet program.

No new members

Mar 16 Robert will be installing the new heli pad on the south side of the runway. Robert is looking for volunteers to help.

March 23 Robert will host an indoor flying session at the Grace Lutheran Church on 105 in Conroe.

April 20 Bomber Field in Monaville TX. The club will have telescopes set up on that evening for people to look at the stars and planets. You can bring a plane with you and do some flying and star gazing.

Max asked if a heli pad can also be added to the north side of the field. Robert said that we have enough material so if enough people show up to help on the 16th he will try to install one.

April 27 and 28 Big Bird

Will we promote the Big Bird ? Robert will talk to Jimmy.

Dan Wiggins installed black covering on more tables at the field. Thanks Dan !

Model of the month was won by Paul Green

The attendance award would have been won by Melvin Lindsay (but he wasn't at the meeting)

The name tag award was won by Andrew Tanner

Meeting adjourned at 8:59



Sam Barrett

The Treasurers Report

Spring is in full swing and the grass field will need weed treatment, irrigation, fertilizing and mowing; all things that cost us money but, luckily for the club we are in a position to handle the expense. When filling up the big sprayer to weed treat the field it was discovered that the pressure tank for our well had a damaged bladder and our well pump was cycling on and off rapidly. We had to replace the tank. Thanks to Max Taylor, John Luedke and Tom Bufkin for their hard work in identifying the problem and getting the replacement installed and tested. Our volunteers save the club many dollars and we can't thank them enough. Also, our President and a team of volunteers installed a helo pad at the south end of the field on the 16th of March. This new pad will help keep fixed wing and rotary wing craft from encountering each other and increase our improve safety. The new smooth surface

will also need maintenance to keep seams smooth and the weeds cleared off; plenty of work to keep us busy and to prepare for Big Bird.

Safety has been a popular topic recently and we can't stress safety enough. Our sport and hobby can be a very dangerous activity if we let our guard down and forget to follow the AMA and field safety rules. As the club Treasurer, I also have to safe guard the assets of the club and we have no more valuable asset, except for our members, than our flying field. Carelessness increases the risk of accidents at the field. It also increases the risk of potential loss of our field, if damage or liability suit losses exceed AMA coverage limits of our field owner coverage. Please read and follow the rules and expect other members and guests to do the same. It is the best way to be safe and to safeguard our valuable members and their flying field.

We discussed sending out the "membership" stickers to put on our AMA cards at our March meeting. The stickers can easily be printed by anyone with a inkjet printer and placed on their AMA card so they don't really ensure that a person displaying the sticker is a member. I was trying to save the club the \$100 or more that it costs to prepare and mail the stickers, in addition to a day or two of my time to print the stickers, print the mailing labels, stuff the 145 envelopes, apply postage and mail the stickers. The officers are to discuss whether to send out the stickers to those currently paid members. If you receive one in the mail you will know that we decided it was our best choice. If not, in the mean time we will be checking AMA cards at the frequency board to ensure AMA cards are up to date and that the card member name is on our current member roster. The member roster is in the glass case next to the well house door if you want to verify anyone you see flying at our field that you do not recognize as a member or think they are members whose AMA coverage has lapsed.

It was suggested at our March meeting that we eliminate the requirement to place an AMA card on the 2.4 GHz board but, if we did that, we may have problems identifying non-AMA covered members or visitors, flying. While we may not need a "frequency pin" for 2.4 GHz, we do need some way to check on fliers to ensure they are on the member list or signed in as a visitor with a club sponsor and have a valid AMA card. There may be more ideas on this topic that would allow the club to be protected and ease the congestion on the 2.4 GHz board. Comments invited.



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«First Name» «Last Name»

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«City», «State»

«Zip»

Web site www.tri-countybarnstormers.com

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DON'T FORGET

TRI-COUNTY BARNSTORMER
CLUB MEETINGS ON THE FIRST
THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE

April 4th