

Silver Lining

Spring 2009
Published Quarterly

Official Newsletter of the Holly Cloud Hoppers
Radio Control Flying Club
AMA Charter #3117



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Flying Field GPS location N42 48.596 W83 34.642

www.hollycloudhoppers.org

Be Safe, Have Fun and Don't Have Too Many Rules!



It looks as though the club's participation in this year's Fenton Freedom Festival Parade on the 4th of July is canceled. Other plans have come up for me on that day so I will not be able to play "HCH parade director". When I learned of this scheduling conflict I sent a mass email, which the majority of members got, asking for a volunteer to take over for this year. About a week and half has gone by and no one has even shown interest. Unless you hear otherwise... No parade!

If my memory serves me correctly, I started flying R/C planes in the summer of '86. It's impossible to do something that long and not learn a thing or two about the subject. Some of the knowledge I acquired was sought after. In other words, it was a quest to learn... 'How does this work, what makes this happen?' However when it comes to flying R/C, I've concluded most of what we learn about this hobby comes accidentally... IE: "That didn't work, won't do that again."

Looking back, there was one thing that I wanted to become skilled at but it had me perplexed for several years... How to vastly increase the lifespan of an airplane! It always seemed I was heading home after a flying session to do repairs or take usable parts off an airframe that no longer was. Meanwhile the veterans were constantly taking their planes home in the same pristine condition they brought them in. Sure flying skills played a part, but it was the much higher count of incidents that didn't involve my dumb thumbs that puzzled me. What was their secret? Were these guys just luckier than I was?

Luck really has very little to do with it and after many years I've discovered the reality is these guys simply have a set of habits and practices that decreased incidents of fate or happenstance. Slowly and without much notice I've discovered that I, by accidental learning, have finally become one of the "lucky pilots". Let me just say the last few flying seasons have gone very well for me. I dare not say more because the R/C Gods are very finicky and will, without notice, take a sacrifice or two or more for being overconfident. So before going any further, I want to thank the aforementioned R/C Gods for allocating an abundance of good fortune in my direction.

Appease the R/C Gods in your own way, but the true answer to reducing occurrences that appear to be happenstance is taking care of the items

On the Cover:

Quique Somenzini (right) after his freestyle flight At the 2008 Tucson Aerobatic Shootout

Photo by Scott Rhoades

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that we can control. There are several elements, habits, routines, or behaviors that separate the lucky from the chronically unlucky. I've identified most of them and have provided an outline on each below. Much of what is presented was collected simply by observing others (sometimes what not to do). While some was instilled by my mentor during my training. Without further ado, let's pass the keys to being a lucky modeler.

For years my only method of maintaining transmitter and receiver batteries was the simple wall chargers that came with the radio. It's hardly a coincidence that the moment I invested in a high quality battery charger/cycler, my luck improved. Mind you, I was never a slacker on battery maintenance before; it's just that a good system that automatically charges to peak and allows continual monitoring of mAh capacity is worth its weight in gold to a modeler. Let me put this another way. I don't know a "lucky" modeler that doesn't constantly utilize a good charger/cycling system.

I've found there is nothing like good ole information to keep adversity at bay. Just before purchasing my Hangar 9 Showtime, I read a review of the plane in R/C Report. The author saved me big time when he discovered, the hard way, that the recommended aileron throw was way too much for us simple mortals. A valuable source of info these days is the internet. Instead of guessing and leaving things to chance, the answer to any question is just a few key strokes away. Just about every manufacturer has a web page and often they provide more info about their product than you likely need to know. Then there are thousands of modelers utilizing R/C

message boards, sharing information and stories. The net has taken the "learn from the mistakes of others" to a whole new dimension. The lesson here is "don't discount the experience of others and believe you know better".

Doesn't take rocket science to realize the probability of damaging a plane vastly increases as soon as the engine becomes deadstick. Often the culprit of a bad running glow engine is bad fuel. I frequently noticed the so called "lucky pilots" were getting rid of partial gallons of fuel. Once I got it through my tightwad head, that half a gallon of fuel is much cheaper than an airplane, I too started "getting rid of old fuel" and as a result, greatly decreased my occurrence of deadsticks.

Here is one of those from which I learned what NOT to do by watching others. This conclusion was made after a lengthy study with mathematical probability thrown in. The scientific deduction is, needle tweakers have flights that end in a deadstick at a MUCH higher rate than anybody else. Those trying to squeeze every last bit of available power out of an engine often get the mixture too lean thus causing it quit at the most inopportune time. The performance of a plane with an engine running slightly rich and a few less max RPM, is barely noticeable to most pilots. If you want increase an airplane's longevity, be concerned about keeping the engine running rather than running at absolute maximum performance.

A common link between guys that keep planes for a long time is making sure ALL equipment is taken care of and well maintained. This is a no brainer and I

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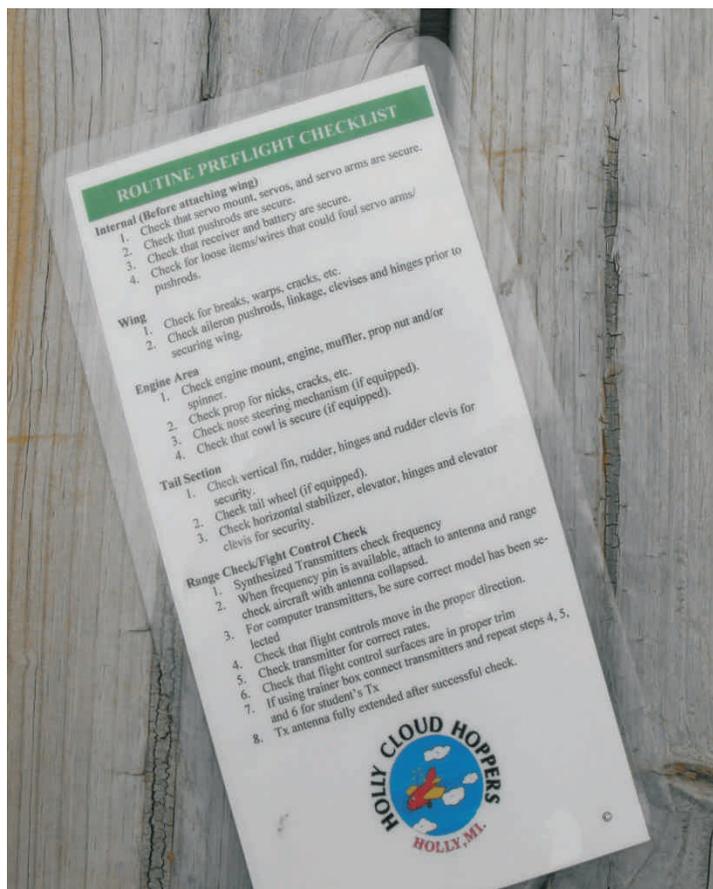
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doubt anyone would disagree that well maintained equipment will serve you better. But it all simply comes down to habit. Some modelers are in the habit and some are not. Those in the habit of giving their equipment extra care and attention reap the benefits.

Here's a little known secret. "Lucky pilots" appear to fly the same kits and ARF's as everybody else... But theirs are BETTER! It's true but they don't get these better planes by knowing somebody at the hobby shop or entering some secret code in their Tower Hobby order. In fact they start with the same ARF or kits as everybody else; the secret is they have very high standards when building/assembling or even repairing damage. Can't tell you how many times I've seen planes come apart or be a complete handful to fly due to a shortcoming in the building/assembly process. Time is frequently a factor here. Those taking extra hours replacing suspect parts, redoing aspects that are not as good as they could be and adjusting angles and balance so they are right on the money, are simply rewarded with much better planes than Joe Average modeler. The "lucky" ones don't let even minor issues pass as good enough.

Even on the best built and maintained planes stuff comes loose, breaks from regular use or simply goes out of alignment. One thing I've learned over the years of modeling, the tiniest detail will have largest consequence. The way to find these tiny inaccuracies is with a preflight inspection. One recent example of such an inspection saving my plane was finding a rudder control horn that had come loose. Had I flown it that way, it surely would have jammed or come off entirely. Keep in mind its not necessary to do a pre-flight to

find similar flaws. Most can be found during post crash inspections (for some reason everybody does those). As a carryover from my full scale flying days, I use a preflight check list so an inspection point will not be skipped. Yep, I may look like a dork with my check list but I prefer it to looking like some hotdog stud pilot taking a plane home in a garbage bag. A *printable check list was published in the [Winter 05 issue of the silver lining](#).*



Checklist published in newsletter.

This next habit was instilled by my mentor and twenty some odd years later is still an important element of my preflight routine; that is a radio range check. Former R/C Report writer, Dick Pettit, had written

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about this in his column and like Mr. Pettit reported, I see few people take the time to do a proper range check prior to the first flight of the day. Being such a firm believer in a range check I reprinted his article in the [Summer 06](#) newsletter but see it did little to change the minds of most *HCH* members. Less than favorable range checks have kept planes of mine grounded more than once, until a reason was diagnosed and fixed.

The previous leads us to this... "Lucky pilots" know when to say no! I've seen many pilots discover a flaw like a servo that's binding slightly, a receiver that is giving an occasional glitch or they just can't quite get the engine running right, then decide to fly anyway as if the problem will remedy itself in the air. The flight typically ends with them and a couple buddies picking up airplane pieces scattered across a section of the flying field. As frustrating as it can be, "Lucky pilots" would much rather get skunked on flight time than risk taking the plane home in many more pieces than it came.

This one took me awhile to notice, but "lucky pilots" are such because they hold themselves to high standards of flying. Even good pilots make mistakes but the difference is the lucky ones don't let it compound to a crash. One prime example of this is take offs. "Unlucky pilots" are determined to get the plane airborne once it starts rolling, regardless of where it's headed or what its doing. Lucky pilots on the other hand will abort a take-off as soon as the plane veers from the runway center line. Starting a take off roll over is much better than clearing the pits or stalling into the brush. Nobody in the peanut gallery will think less of you if you take five tries to get a plane airborne.

They just think you're doing high speed taxi test... Just like you thought the "lucky pilot" was doing (the secret is out). The same can be said for landings. Too many pilots get what I call "get-it-on-the-ground-it is". This happens when the plane is on short final and the pilot is going to put the wheels on the ground, no matter what. I've seen MANY planes get busted up on botched landings when the pilot simply should have aborted and gone around for another approach.

Lucky pilots are never satisfied with their basic flying skills. As an example, ever notice some of the most advanced guys at the field doing touch and go's over and over? For the most part it is a contest against oneself to grease that landing just a little better than last time or make the wheels touch at an exact point on the runway. New maneuvers are fun but it's the sharpness of basic skills that saves your bacon and brings your plane home safe, so never give up on improving them.

This last one took me a long time to adopt and is a good wrap to the article. The number one invaluable trait of all lucky pilots is PATIENCE! For years I couldn't wait to get to the field and get a plane in the air. Now I realize a hefty price was paid for my haste. Once I started practicing more patience, many other elements that lead to airplane longevity fell into place. The paradox I discovered about slowing down, thinking things through and taking time to complete additional task or even redo... I get much more flying time. †

Things to ponder:

Have you ever imagined a world with no hypothetical situations?

Misc. Club News

By **Scott Rhoades**

- Not much club news for this newsletter. One point of interest is the *HCH* Fun Fly on June 13th. Flyers for this years Fun Fly, outlining events and rules, were left at the field for all interested members. If you haven't had a chance to pick one up or you need another copy, that flyer has been post on the *HCH* web site.

<http://hollycloudhoppers.org/documents/Flyer%20-%20Fun%20Fly%2009.pdf>

A whole new set of events are scheduled for this year along with a completely revamped scoring system. The events chosen by the Fun Fly committee will certainly appeal to a large range of members and should prove very fun. Also, all in attendance will be eligible to win a door prize.

- Annual airplane raffle tickets are available from club president Doug Pickett. The proceeds from raffle ticket sales go into the club coffers and helps keep club dues at a very reasonable rate. So be sure to pick up several tickets from Doug to sell on behalf of the club.
- The following is an article that was printed in the Flint Journal 9/20/08 Offbeat column. Thought you guys might find this interesting since we fly very close and often over I-75.

Small plane draws big reaction. Byrn Mickle

It sounded bad enough. A 911 caller Tuesday morning created quite a stir when he reported seeing a small plane spiraling out of control and disappearing behind the trees along I-75 in Vienna Township.

Within minutes, fire fighters from Clio, Mt. Morris Township sped to the area expecting the worst.

Sheriff's deputies swarmed the area and a search helicopter was put on alert, said Clio Area Fire Chief Gary Domerese.

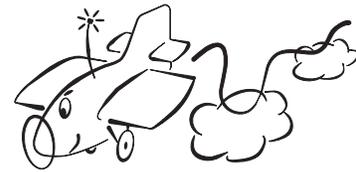
All for a remote-controlled airplane.

Turns out the distressed plane belonged to a man on Field Road who had been practicing some morning aerobatics.

The plane - with its 8-foot wingspan - was apparently big enough to trick the caller into thinking it was the real deal.

The pilot was surprised by all the attention and will likely hold any future practice sessions with the plane at a nearby airfield, said Domerese. †

Events Calendar



June 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

HCH dates

Events around the area

War bird Fly In	Pontiac Miniature Aircraft Club		June 27 th
Club Fun Fly	HCH Club Field	10:00 am	June 13 th
Fathers Day Airshow	Flint Aero Club, Baker Field		June 21 st
HCH Open House	HCH Club Field	12:00 pm	August 1
Big Bird Fun Fly	Flint Aero Club, Baker Field		August 1,2
Last Bash Pot Luck	HCH Club Field.	4:00 pm	Oct 3rd
H CH Fall Clean up	HCH Club Field.	10:00 am	October 17 th
H CH Chili Fly	HCH Club Field.	1:00 am	January 1 st

Murphys law and R/C

By Scott Rhoades

- As soon as your fingers are covered with epoxy your nose will start to itch.
 - Pictures of a new airplane must be taken before the maiden flight, because it will spite you and NOT be available for any after.
 - The ONLY time wind changes direction or intensity is when a plane is on short final for landing.
 - An airplanes attitude, altitude and distance from the field are all directly related to the probability of a deadstick.
 - The absolute best flying weather of the entire year will be trumped by a prior engagement.
 - When a plane crashes in a tree, it always comes to rest just beyond the reach of any method readily available to retrieve it.
 - The hobby shop will be out of that single item necessary to get your plane airborne.
 - The further you live from the flying field the higher the probability of forgetting something.
 - To assure perfect flying weather for a week, crash everything you own in the previous.
 - Accidentally glue your finger(s) to a part of the plane, that part will come loose from the plane well before your finger(s) come loose from the part.
 - The one screw that vibrates loose and falls off is the one you do NOT have a spare of.
 - Long after you've learned to fly is when you learn what planes make very good trainers.
 - Excellent deals on equipment and airplanes present themselves when you don't have the cash... And somebody else does.
 - The odds of a plane crashing are directly related to the number of people watching it fly.
 - Winds are always stronger at a flying field than any other location within 100 miles.
 - If you show up at the field not appropriately dressed for a search and rescue mission, your airplane WILL crash in thick brush.
 - Fingerprints on the inside of a canopy only show up after it has been glued on.
 - Any tool or part, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible corner.
- Believe everybody knows this last one...*
- If you utter the phrase "Just one last flight before I go home" you will crash on that flight. †

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