



# Tri-State Modelers Newsletter



November 2009

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## *Latest News & Upcoming Events*

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 11, 2009 7:00 **at Mt. Pleasant Home.**

Greetings to all! As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I spent most of the month of October in the Galveston, TX area, actually living in Texas City. For the fun of it, I went to the AMA site to see what flying clubs were in the area. Believe it or not, there are 9 clubs within 25 miles of the center of Texas City! I did visit one briefly ... it was a magnificent site with 2 runways in an X configuration, a LOOOONG distance between the pit area and the runways, LOTS of safety fencing, fenced pilot stations, concrete starting pads ... and lots more. Those who have been to Texas will remember that they have lots of room, so they take advantage of it all! The highest hills in the area are the highway overpasses, so finding a flat site is another problem they do not share with us. They had about 90 members in the club ... and only 3 flyers out on a beautiful Sunday afternoon ... sound familiar???

Speaking of "membership excitement" ... I would be interested in knowing how many members would be interested in trying some indoor flying during the winter months. It would require potential flyers to get some new equipment, though those who have the new 2.4 GHz equipment are already part way. There is a plethora of small indoor flyers available costing under \$200. The style of flying that you do will be different because of the confines of the space, but it would be excellent training for all of us. Furthermore, it would afford us a new opportunity for community awareness and outreach.

Where could we fly you ask? Well, there are more spaces than you might expect. The Peosta Community Center has a very large gym area for example, and I know that the UD recently built some sort of indoor rec area. I might not make the November club meeting because I will be having dinner with one of our members who moved away some years ago, but who has lots of contacts in the aviation department of the UD. I will ask him who we might contact. Anyway ... let's have some discussion on the topic.

I am also including another article of 3-D flight ... and it is a maneuver that I have tried, but it scares the daylights out of me. I include it only because it stresses AGAIN the importance of learning basic flight maneuvers WELL. I encourage all pilots to hone their skills ... every flight should include a planned practice of at least one aerobatic maneuver that is done with a degree of precision. For example, there is a big difference between hauling back full elevator to do a loop and trying to make a larger round loop, especially with different airplanes. Your overall flying experience will be much enhanced and you will have more fun. Similarly, I highly encourage everyone to read carefully the "Why Models Crash" article in the recent AMA Modeler magazine. Note especially that "pilot error" is not a leading cause.

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## ON THE SAFE SIDE

# The Lighter Side of Safety

*by Don Nix, Insider Safety Column Editor*

My last column about self-appointed, rude, and dangerous hotdogs in RC drew more mail than any previous one. With one exception, all the letters were not only in agreement, but most gave examples of similar incidents at their own fields and how they had dealt with it.

The lone dissenter was not only indignant (“Nobody is going to tell me what I can and can’t do”), but at the end of his e-mail stated he could tell I was probably pro gun control and a few other unspeakable sins, none of which were true or had anything to do with flying model airplanes. Oh, well.

As I was debating subject matter for this issue, it occurred to me that funny things related to safety do happen from time to time. They are only funny when no person is injured or no property is damaged. The following incidents took place years ago at a very popular RC flying field in Southern California.

Late one Saturday afternoon, one of our most regular and experienced pilots was flying an Ugly Stik and began yelling, “I don’t have it! I don’t have it! No control!” then watched open-mouthed as “his” model gracefully climbed into the pattern, turned downwind, turned again and passed in front of everyone, continuing on around again, seemingly on its own. This field was a very busy one with 12 pilot stations, and most had models in the air at the moment.

Gradually he realized what had happened. This particular fellow liked to fly low and in the weeds (literally), but was always careful to do so well past the far side of the runway, at least a hundred feet from the flightline. As he made one of his low and slow passes into the afternoon sun, an almost identical Stik was taking off at the far end of the pit area and starting to climb into the pattern. At that time of day, at that particular point and general altitude, models tended to become silhouettes briefly.

Ah, you can see it coming. Just as our friend was approximately abreast of the model taking off, his eyes picked up the other Stik as his own. In the meantime (as we discovered an hour or so later), his model had continued unhampered and uncontrolled straight ahead, crashing into a golf course several hundred yards to the west. I might mention the golfers were not amused.

On another occasion, one of my friends who did a lot of training of newbies was helping a beginner with his brand new trainer, checking everything, starting the engine, tuning it, and explaining what he was doing at every step. After getting the engine tuned and idling properly, he told the proud owner that he wanted to check the engine at full power with the nose up to be sure it wasn’t too lean. The owner, eager to please, held the airplane vertical while the engine test was made, and was still holding it in that position when the instructor reduced the power to idle.

Yes, the fellow was a beginner, but he had been at the park for a couple of hours, and certainly must have seen what others were doing all around him. No doubt nerves pickled his brain at that moment, because when the instructor nodded at him, assuming the fellow would put it down at the edge of the runway, the poor guy simply tossed it straight up into the air, nose pointed skyward, engine at idle.

Incredibly, the stunned instructor, having more skill and presence of mind than most of us, punched the throttle full forward, managed to get the thing wallowing into the air and flew it out into

the pattern. Another fine example of what happens when we assume something.

After getting into this subject, I realized I have some more funny ones that ended up safely, but they'll have to wait until next issue. In the meantime, if you care to add to the list, or suggest another safety subject, I'm always available: flyerdon@aol.com.→

From the Mid Atlantic Radio Kontrol Society, Snow Hill, Maryland

## **Learning to 3-D and 3-D Well; Part 3 of 5: High Alpha Knife-Edge Flight**

*by Jeremy Chin*

In the previous articles, you got the right equipment (both virtual and real) and you learned how to fly a Harrier. Then you expanded your 3-D horizons by learning to fly an Inverted Harrier. You are well on your way to building a solid base of fundamental 3-D skill.

Next in line is another fundamental skill that can be built upon later. It is time to learn to do a High Alpha Knife Edge.

If you followed earlier suggestions to build your basic aerobatic skill set, you learned to fly a Knife Edge during that effort. If not, then go back and learn to fly it. Make sure you can fly both left tip down and right tip down, and both orientations with the top and the belly of the airplane toward yourself. This basic aerobatic skill can also be developed quickly using the simulator.

If and when you are comfortable flying regular Knife Edge flight, you are ready for the next step in your 3-D education: High Alpha Knife Edge. This name is really just the common name for flying Knife Edge at a high angle of attack.

To learn this skill, start by flying a regular Knife Edge down the field repeatedly. As you fly, gradually increase the rudder deflection, while balancing that against changes in throttle. Some airplanes require more throttle, some less. All have a point of equilibrium that you must find on your own.

This skill can be learned at any lower altitude, but I've found that having the lower wingtip at around eye level is the most effective. This altitude gives enough time to roll the airplane back to level in the event of a problem, but is not too high to allow good vision of the airplane.

You may find that the airplane you are flying will require a higher angle of attack in high-angle-of-attack Knife Edge than it did for Harrier flight. This is because the fuselage typically has less area than the wings do, and thus requires a higher angle of attack, more power, or both, to maintain a flat heading. You may also find that you need some aileron correction or elevator correction to keep the airplane on the same heading while in High Alpha Knife Edge. Fly the airplane in this case rather than relying on a mix. I've found that rarely are mixes effective in maintaining High Alpha Knife Edge when compared to regular Knife Edge.

Perform the same exercise in both directions down the field, and both directions with both orientations to yourself. When you feel comfortable in all orientations, begin to make circles with the airplane. Use your elevator to 'steer' the airplane in your intended direction. Practice this skill repeatedly until you feel comfortable in all attitudes and orientations, and turning in all directions.

When you have mastered High Alpha Knife Edge and flying upright and inverted Harriers, you are ready to move on to two more advanced 3-D skills: The Hover/Torque Roll and the Rolling Harrier. Each will be covered in upcoming articles. →

**TRI-STATE MODELERS**

Minutes of the October 14, 2009 Club Meeting

***Meeting Location: Mt. Pleasant Home***

Weather: Dark too early to fly. All meetings at Mt Pleasant Home until May 2010

There were only 5 members present, therefore no official meeting was held. There was considerable discussion about RC aircraft and EAA aircraft.

**Next meeting: November 11, 2009 7:00 at Mt. Pleasant Home**

**Bring yourself, and a member and a friend**

Secretary: Jerry Anderson