



# The THUMB PRINT

**Thermal Thumbers Of Metro Atlanta**

[www.thermalthumbers.com](http://www.thermalthumbers.com)



**AMA**  
Charter # 1834

**Editor**  
**David Mills**  
(404)-509-4209  
[davidmillsatl@comcast.net](mailto:davidmillsatl@comcast.net)

**Publisher**  
**Brook Dixon, Jr.**  
[brookdjr@charter.net](mailto:brookdjr@charter.net)



**NFFS**

July-August 2006

## HEADS UP

Welcome to the July issue. We're somewhat late with a September postmark, but hey, I've got a life. Seriously, this issue is pithy with vital items like the first of our fall indoor dates, two contest reports and some photos, one meeting minutes, a report of the Thumbs' NATS foray, some club news, and a well-deserved rant or two from your trusty editor.

Let's get right to it. That's it from me, from here, for now. Try to glue some sticks together and make an appearance somewhere.

## MEETINGS

We're continuing our meetings at St. Luke's Presbyterian on Mt. Vernon Road about one mile east of downtown Dunwoody. Mark your calendars on September 18, October 16, and November 20. Meetings start around 7:00 pm in the church's Grand Hall and are kept mercifully short so we can fly afterwards at the spacious category I site. Bring your latest project for show and tell. Be there.

## BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Gary has secured two dates at North Cobb High School this fall. He's confident more is on the way. He's continuing to mentor the school's TSA team and remains on good terms with last year's and the new technology instructor. In fact, the new guy visited us a few times last year. We've flown there numerous times the last several years and we enjoy the spacious category II site. Webmaster Bill might have similar luck at one of his schools. Time to get excited. The dates are October 21 and December 2. Look for the dates later in these pages and on the club web site. The web site will have them first. I'm not as fast as electrons.

You can't say enough about the Thumbs who are active in local SO and TSA programs. Gary, Webmaster Bill, Dohrman, and John do a lot and don't get enough mention. The same can be said for those of similar inclination across the USA. Anything that encourages young people to pursue engineering and scientific interests makes the country stronger. BTW: every year China graduates over 100,000 engineering college students. The USA's tally? Around 8000. Think about it.

## **THUMBS ON THE MARCH: THE 2006 MUNCIE USOC**

We went; we sweltered; we drank a lot of water. Attendance was down a good bit, both nationally and by the Thumbs. Your editor, Dohrman, Graham, Bill, Ken, Diamond Don, Big Jim, and RU Jim made the trip. Camp David was particularly depopulated; only Dohrman and I set up our little Bedouin encampment. The Vanderbeek Compound returned in all its well-laden glory, but otherwise, the RV park was several imperial tons lighter. Overall, the contestant count went from the usual 290-odd last year to 230-odd this year. Most opinions credit the cost of gas and forecasted high temps for the drop off. As for me? It's all that and I just don't think people are feeling really good about things in the country right now. Call me crazy.

Speaking of temps, let me assure you it was mighty hot most of the week, even by my rigorous South Georgia standards. (Atlanta is the furthest north I've ever lived. I enjoy Atlanta's cool summers.) The flight totals for the week displayed a difficult flying environment. Thermals were hard to pick and winds were brisk for the most part. Typically, you either missed your max and you were off to parts unknown in your retrieval. Fortunately, the drift during most of the week went the long way of the field. This helped a lot. One of my Moffett flights flew from the southern boundary of the field all the way to the hobby shop in three minutes. At this juncture, let me recommend the rental of golf carts for only \$10.00, American, per day from the AMA. Sweet.

The Thumbs did OK, although this writer contributed little to the club's mahogany collection. Big Jim and Dohrman scored a second and fifth in OT HLG, respectively. Ken and I crept through Moffett with a seventh and eighth, respectively. Graham won both CO2 events for the umpteenth time. I was left with a career-worst sixth in P-30. Big Jim won a hard-fought sixth in Mulvihill, no small feat that. Dohrman won a sixth in Catapult Glider against a tough field of competitors. Ken won a fourth in OT Rubber Cabin with his venerable Korda. .

The HLG event was one for the ages, where Big Jim won a righteous eighth. Tellingly, the 2006 USOC NATS might be recalled for the debut of the discus-launched HLG. Seattle's Bruce Kimball showed us the future and it is DLG. I'll never build another overhand-launched HLG again and many others won't either. Tis ancient technology, my friends. I can't wait until the design is published. I'd be shocked if it won't be a NFFS MOY next year.

You can't make too much of the Kimball DLG; the HLG world changed. When was the last time you saw the glider pen break into applause after a launch? Bruce relayed his model and technique is a collaborative effort between him, Len Surtees and Mark Bennis. Let's just say it worked. Lost in the tumult was a solid effort by Stan Buddenbohm to win second in a very tough field with a folding wing design; any other year, he'd have the HLG cognoscenti in a feeding frenzy.

I attended the NFFS Banquet for the first time to receive a Distinguished Service Award, for which I'm grateful. I even wore a tie and nobody died and/or got betrothed. It was a pleasurable evening with good food and comradery. I enjoyed my three helpings of cheese cake. (Where does it all go? You don't really want to know.) Rex was a viciously efficient MC and had us in and out of there in under two hours, including the eats. Well done, sir.

Once more, Dohrman and I got the wrong of the stick at the raffle and BBQ. We did manage to hog-out on the hot dogs, however. We had to salvage something out all those forlorn and under-achieving tickets. I had one year of graduate level statistics and know a thing or two about probability theory and there were sinister forces at work there, Kemosabi. Something smelled

fishy and it wasn't Friday. Where's Geraldo Rivera when you need him? Maybe Jerry Springer would be a better choice.

### **AUGUST CONTEST REPORT**

It was hot and the winds were choppy and turbulent. The thermals that were on hand were small, transient, and difficult to acquire. Frankly, both Dohrman and I agreed it was much like the NATS. The fourteen contestants flew a little of everything, including big gas jobs, CLG's, P-30's, some scale and towline gliders. Old pros at this, everybody drank a lot of water and had their planter hats on and no EMS drama ensued. Happily, we had about ten visitors of all ages. The results follow.

#### **CLG**

Jim Altenberb	197
Karl Hube1	37
Dohrman Crawford	120
Don Peacock	103
David Mills	100
Clarence Purdy	56

#### **Dime Scale**

Ollie Benton -- Martin MO-1	150
Gary Morton -- Comper Swift	76

#### **Jet Catapult Scale**

David Barfield -- Airacomet	52
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#### **Cat-A-Piglet**

Jim Martin	121
Dohrman Crawford	103
Clarence Purdy	102
Jim Altenbern	92

#### **P-30**

Jim Altenbern	335
Karl Hube	310
Gary Baughman	279
John Barker	146

#### **HLG**

Dohrman Crawford	174
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### **THUMBS IN PRINT**

Your editor shot a hefty tome across the bow of the free flight community in the 2006 NFFS Symposium, entitled "Twelve Free Flight Heresies." Frankly, I take a few, actually several, shots at several of our sport's sacred cows and had a fun time doing it. All of the comments I've received to date have been positive. Given the bevy of contentious slings and arrows contained therein, I'm surprised I've not heard the other viewpoint. I guess that's the way it goes.

I was shanghaied to be the sympo editor for 2007, hereinafter referred to as the "007" edition. Hopefully, I'll be stirred, but not shaken by the experience. Get your copy of the 2006 edition today. It's a good one.

### **THE CHICKEN WIRE CEILING**

They'll let anybody into the annual NFFS Board of Director's meeting. It would seem anyway. Actually, I was invited to attend the BOD meeting at the AMA building on Saturday morning after the week's flying was over. I didn't make the 7:00 am curtain call, but thankfully, I wasn't the last one to show up. One veep and committee chairman slunk in after I did. Thank y'all very much for keeping this pilgrim from being the last one. The coffee, fruit, and pastries went a long way toward jamming my brain into gear at that awful hour. It's hard enough for me to act like an adult under the best of circumstances.

There's one thing you have to say about Rex Hinson, our president. He knows how to run a meeting. Every agenda item proceeded in a brisk fashion. I was honestly shocked about the

breadth of issues discussed in some depth. Clearly, more goes on than I suspected. I'm happy to report several items I discussed in my sympo article were addressed to one degree or another. We'll see what happens.

### **MY FELLOW EDITORS, WHAT GIVES?**

One item in the meeting did surprise and disappoint. In another context, Rex mentioned he receives only a handful of newsletters. Huh?!

Our club's policy has always seen the newsletter as more than a blurb sheet for the locals. We've always used the club treasury to mail copies of the TP to the NFFS, SAM, FAC, and AMA presidents, all the NFFS veeps, and several high profile NFFS functionaries. We've always exchanged newsletters with whatever club wanted to exchange with us and we've always sent copies to all the first rate magazine columnists. Yes, it costs some money in copying and postage expense, but everybody who matters knows what the Thumbs are up to. Now that the TP is the ETP, our distribution list has grown a bit because electrons are cheap.

I'm baffled and more than a little embarrassed that our man Rex gets only a handful of club newsletters in the mail or via e-mail. "Dat jez ain't riite," drawled the blue-eyed Gullah scribe. I read a lot of newsletters and nearly every club claims hundreds of dollars in their treasuries. Every club needs to ask themselves what their treasury is for. If you're not going to use it in the club's interests, don't ask for it from your members. Let your members keep it in their pockets.

At the very least, you should be sending your newsletter to the NFFS president, and your veep. Don't make these guys make decisions in a vacuum. I still can't believe it. I'd better shut up before I write something I'll regret later.

### **KITS FOR SELL**

Marty Zellman has an assortment of scale kits on the market. He's letting them go for \$35 each or \$180 for the whole lot. He says they're all new-in-box. Contact him at 404-753-7898, if you're interested. I like the Dumas kits, particularly the 30 inch series. They're not as light as those of our sport's more boutique-ish vendors, but they build true, have good decals and molded parts, and if you're willing to substitute a little lumber at the tail and tips, here and there, they fly just fine. Here's the list:

Dumas Hawker Hurricane, 30" span  
Dumas Lockheed Air Express, 30" span  
Dumas Polish PXL 11C, 30" span  
Dumas Hall Springfield Bulldog, 30" span(I'd love to see someone build this one!-DM)  
Comet Gull II, 30" span  
Peck Polymers Mini-Bell, 25" span

### **SPEAKING OF KITS**

I just received a message from Don DeLoach in which he gives a glowing recommendation of the new line of kits from Mike Midkiff and his biz partner. This new kit line features CAD plans, laser cut parts, hand-picked balsa in the right grain, real decals, and vacuum-formed parts. Each design is flight tested and many are familiar with FAC veterans, who've been beaten by them over the years. Mike provides all the necessary scale documentation for our friends, the judges. Check them out on <[rockytopmodels.com](http://rockytopmodels.com)>.

Don says Mike's from Hurst, Texas, so you don't suppose he's a Tennessee fan, do you? Now that would be an alien life form, if I ever saw one. Not that I'm "messin' wit' Texas", or anything. Rocky Top, my hallowed backside. Go Dawgs!!!

### **ANOTHER BAD IDEA**

There are rumors circulating and apparently movement afoot to lower the Wakefield motor weight down to 25 grams from the already butt-dragging 30 grams. Several reasons are given for this, none of which carries much water for this pilgrim. According to its shadowy adherents, the Euros are having a hard time getting timers with good eyesight and binoculars to consistently time long flights for all contests. Please remember, this is the group that had a hard time getting ice onto the fields for CO2 contests and outlawed it as an unfair advantage. Unfair advantage? Ice? Puleez.

How about making sure you've adequate timers to begin with? And I guess you have to be a World Superpower to have enough adequate binoculars to go around. You've the organizational suds to amass legions of contestants to a contest, but not timers? You know where you can put that beret, ami?

There's also some racket about the rules being such that the models are out-flying their contest fields. Maybe I'm just a screaming Ugly American, but it strikes me it's a better idea to find fields to match your rules that the other way around. I'd suggest they put some of that much-vaunted Euro brilliance and sophistication to work on their flying site problem.

A pertinent and pressing background is also lacking. The quality of rubber isn't getting better; I see no signs of Tan SS besting Tan II. People are inexorably working through their stocks of the primo Tan II. Limiting the motors to 25 grams to add "fair" advantage over those mule-whipping Tan SS? I just don't get it. I hope this one just goes away. Let's face it—a Wakefield with a 25 gram motor is just not a very good model airplane. Ergo, who's going to want to fly the event. Not me, that's for sure, not that I've made great inroads, personally.

### ***DON PEACOCK BOUGHT A CELL PHONE!!!***

### **ET TU, TAFT?**

The ETP offices received a report on the sale of the Taft flying field on the west coast. Long one of the best flying fields in th world and home to the west coast FF fraternity, people in the know are concerned about the future of its use. At this pecking, the identity of the new owner is unknown, so nothing definite is known at this time. No doubt, more will be known shortly. Keep your ears and eyes peeled for further developments.

Don't forget we're not immune to flying site worries either. During the July contest at the N GA Turf Farm, the elder Mr. McWhorter voiced disapproval of our parking situation. We corrected the situation immediately and Prez Howard addressed the issue later with the younger Mr. McWhorter personally and all appears to be smoothed over. Howard thought it important to nib it in the bud and he was right in doing so.

Thanks, Howard. This club of ours would really be in a fix if we lost the use of that flying site. People across the country are amazed at how close it is the center of Atlanta. Out west and elsewhere, most club fields are larger, but they have to drive for several hours to get there.

## WHY WE KEEP SCORE

Here's the latest tally. Our Skysters only have two more outdoor meets to amass points before the Domers take the field and have the advantage. The truth can set you free, but the process can also be painful and inconvenient.

Jim Altenbern	55
Brook Dixon, Sr.	38
Dohrman Crawford	27
Gary Baughman	24
Clarence Purdy	22
Karl Hube	20
Jim Martin	19
Richard Schneider	18
Bill Gowen	18
John Barker	18
Don Peacock	14
Jim Howell	10
David Barfield	8
Barry Sholder	7
Al Pardue	7
Graham Selick	5
Frank Hodson	3
David Mills	2
Chris Goins	1
Gary Morton	1

## NEXT ISSUE

We should have an announcement on further indoor dates and a report on how much damage the Thumbs did at the SAM Champs. Our two-day contest is coming late this month and expect some reportage on it. Take some pictures, y'all. Once again, we beseech the multitude for contributions. I'm not an A-type, rather a flower-smelling B-type. Don't make me work too hard.

Ciao, y'all!

## Rules for Spirit of Comet event for 2006

In an effort to promote more scale flying and resurrect models we all most likely built at one time a new perpetual trophy is now offered within TTOMA.

“The Spirit of Comet” will recognize FAC type modeling and flying and will be biased toward scale and Comet models in particular. The trophy itself is a fine wood base topped by a pewter art deco statue named (what else) “The Comet”.

Point scoring will begin as is typical for high point but will differ in the following ways. All FAC rubber events are eligible to be scored for this trophy. All non-scale events will be scored at one half the points normally scored for high point. All scale events will be scored at full points. If a Comet or Guillows model is used as appropriate to the event an extra point will be added to your finish position for the event. Highest total points within all of the eligible categories for the year will be the winner.

1. Any FAC eligible rubber powered model can compete for this trophy.
2. Any Comet or Guillows designed model can be used for the additional points.
3. Comet or Guillows model construction must follow plans as closely as possible. Use actual formers and wing ribs. On scale models if ribs are not shown on plan and not available from the sheet wood parts then use a rib from another Comet scale model and enlarge or reduce to fit.
4. If building from a kit, wood can be substituted as can the prop and wheels.
5. If a DT is desired, modifications can be made to the model to accommodate such.
6. Models will be judged and verified legal Comet and Guillows models by submission of plans from which model is built. No other scale documentation is necessary. Color scheme is at the builder’s discretion.

## Contest Report for July 9, 2006

We were favored with good weather for the July contest. Breezes were light most of the time and turnout by the members was great. 15 actual contestants with a variety of models made the day interesting. We are starting to see more FAC style flying which is good and has been needed at a field such as ours for a long time now.

I hope to introduce some proposals soon to narrow the competition and make for more exciting results.

Don’t forget the “Spirit of Comet” high point trophy for FAC events. Details should be in this issue of the newsletter.

Now for contest results.

### Embryo

- |                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Don Peacock – Debut      | 250 |
| 2. Jim altenbern -- Cruiser | 142 |
| 3. James Martin -- Debut    | 87  |

### Old Time Rubber

- |                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1. David Barfield – Gollywock | 89 |
|-------------------------------|----|

### FAC Jet Catapult

- |                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| 1. David Barfield -- Bell P-59 | 74 |
|--------------------------------|----|

P-30

1. Jim Altenbern	324
2. Al Pardue	307
3. Gary Baughman	303
4. Don Peacock	256
5. James Martin	202
6. Clarence Purdy	197
7. John Barker	193

FAC Rubber Scale

1. John Barker -- Curtiss Robin	154
2. Gary Baughman -- CR-3	97
3. David Barfield -- Claude	24

Catapult Glider

1. Jim Altenbern	255
2. Karl Hube	206
3. Clarence Purdy	104
4. Al Pardue	86

A-1 Straight Tow

1. Karl Hube -- Moon Shadow	267
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F1K CO2

1. Graham Selick	240
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Open HLG

1. James Martin	180
2. Gary Baughman	130
3. David Barfield	33

Cat-A-Piglet

1. Jim Altenbern	202
2. Dohrman Crawford	185
3. James Martin	135
4. Don Peacock	131
5. Gary Baughman	130
6. Clarence Purdy	99

**The Thermal Thumbers of Metro Atlanta, 17 July 2006, Meeting Minutes**

The following email note received from Bill Gowen states the reason for the cancellation of the July meeting:

Due to the church being set up for the upcoming election, the club meeting scheduled for July 17 has been cancelled. The next meeting will be August 21.

Respectfully submitted, Geoff Gros Guth, Secretary

**The Thermal Thumbers of Metro Atlanta, 21 August 2006, Meeting Minutes**

President Howard Klemmetsen, called the meeting to order. Eleven members were present. The last meeting minutes were read by Geoff Gros Guth, and the report was accepted by the members present.

The treasure's report was read by Don Brown and accepted by the members present. For the period between 19 June 2006 and 21 August 2006, the deposits were \$670.00 and the expenses were \$57.00. Don said that the club check for \$300, a donation towards overnight accommodation expenses, was returned by Gary Baughman, because his competition team did not participate in the anticipated indoor contest.

**Old Business**

Dohrman Crawford said that the NATS at Muncie, Indiana was a lot of fun. The weather was hot and there was one large thunderstorm, during which the AMA museum was explored. The attendance was down 20% from the previous year.

John Barker and Bill Gowan reported on the United States Indoor Championships at Johnson City.

Howard Klemmetsen talked about the issue of abuse of the sod at the outdoor flying site, the North Georgia Sod Farm. He reiterated the need to park near the roadway.

#### New Business

Howard Klemmetsen initiated a discussion of potential new indoor flying sites. He also talked on the subject of how the club members, with all their model building and flying experience, could help introduce others to the hobby of building and flying model free flight aircraft.

#### Show and Tell

David Barfield showed his well constructed and finished Twin Lizzy which was built from a BMJR kit. He also had along some old Guillows, Cleveland and Classic Model kits.

Richard Schneider gave a brief account of the World Scale Meet in Sweden. He showed a photo album containing beautiful photographs of many of the scale entries. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Geoff Grosguth, Secretary

**Your editor launching his Moffett at the NATS from the front yard of Camp David.  
One mile and a half of lawn to the treeline. Sweet!**



Photo by Don Deloach

SUMMER PICTURE COLLAGE  
By David Barfield



Graham with Mini-Pearl



July  
9  
2006



Gary preparing SE-5



Dohrman tests his new Gollywock