

# EL TORBELLINO

NEWSLETTER OF SAN DIEGO ORBITEERS FREE FLIGHT CLUB

JUNE 2011



## *The Prez's Corner - Don Bartick*

Well, another Dual-clubs Free Flight Bonanza is in the can. One to remember and lament about for a bit longer. A bonanza is was not. Having to cancel the contest because of weather was a first for me and I've been with the Orbiteers for 30 years. We have had so so, good, better and best weather for our annual, but never a wipe-out as was the case for the weekend of 14-15 May. The weatherman forecasted an undesirable weather pattern for Lost Hills, but you never know about these forecast. As it turned out, Thursday and Friday before the contest was pleasant. Temperatures were in the 70's. Winds ranged from calm to ~ 6-8 mph gusts. The turn out on Friday was indicating that the weather forecast was going to have a definite impact on the participation. Around 5:30pm Friday evening the winds arrived with great gusto and everyone scrambled to get their canopies secured. When we arrived Saturday morning at the field, the winds were still high and blowing east. It was quite cold. Participants huddled to discuss the prospects of a wind change and probable reduction in wind velocity. The caterer showed up and realized quickly that they were not going to be able to use their BBQ rig on the field with the grass as high as it was with the wind blowing. Everyone waited patiently to see if the winds were going to slow down. It didn't happen and around 10:30 am with the winds registering in mid to high 20's it was obvious that Saturday wasn't going to be flyable. Forecast for Sunday was even worse. Therefore the consensus of the group was to cancel the meet and reschedule for Labor Day weekend. The CD's agreed and everyone went home. Fortunately the caterer's had another event as a potential backup to ours. They left to sell what they could at the other event.

Once home I got word out to the free flight community that the contest was rescheduled for Labor Day weekend on May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. There was favorable response. But a hitch in the plan was voiced quickly by the organizers of the Master Cub FAI contest that was scheduled the same weekend. But after many emails and phone

calls the cohabitation for both contests were agreed upon with the Dual-club event giving concessions. Everything was good to go. Even a pot-luck bean fest was organized by Dan Heinrich. Unfortunately, once again the weatherman forecasted a poor weekend including rain. Knowing the unpredictability of the forecast for Lost Hills, it appeared that the vast majority of the folks were still going to the contest.

Arline and I got to the field on Friday around 11:30am. It was absolutely gorgeous. Temperatures in the high 60's with little to no wind. A perfect day for testing. Once again we observed far fewer participants for the Friday before a big contest. We could only hope that folks were coming late in the day or first thing Saturday morning. It didn't happen. Saturday was another gorgeous day for flying. Those that participated had a great time, although the thermals were very few and very weak making high times impossible. The ice cream social was very well received by everyone. As I was taking the leftover ice cream to the Lost Hills Fire Station (a tradition), Arline called me to say that the field was on fire after Doss Porter crashed his new 1/2A Viking. When I arrived at the station, they were in the process of preparing to leave to go fight the fire. They quickly gathered up the ice cream and condiments and got them put in the freezer. Then off they went with me following. As it turned out, the fire was put out before they arrived. Just a little excitement to make the day more interesting. The bean fest pot-luck was also a hit. Something to think about for future contests.

It rained slightly overnight into very early Sunday. It was cloudy, cold and a bit breezy when we arrive on the field Sunday morning, but flyable. There were even brief calm moments throughout the morning. Overall, those that ventured to fly did fine. The cloudy skies made easy visibility of the planes and the heavy air kept them aloft. At around 1:30 the breeze was starting to get to everyone and the consensus was to end the contest at 2pm instead of 3pm. Awards were giving out at 2:30 and folks went home. Overall,

the weekend was fine for the contest, but a financial disaster.

We had 23 participants (4 juniors, 2 seniors and 17 Open). The 23 participants entered 54 events. Results will be provided in the next issue of the ET.

Note: Only Arline and I represented the Orbiteers at our own annual. This is something to think about once again. Further discussion to be held at the June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Come and participate. Bring something to fly and stuff for show and tell.

## 2011 ORBITEER FLYING SCHEDULE

July 4<sup>TH</sup> - Walt Mooney Memorial Scale Contest

July 17 - P-30  
Power, P-20, HLG & CLG

Aug 14 - Scale Staffel FAC Contest\* (2<sup>ND</sup> of 3)

Aug 21 - Old Timer Rubber Stick (Small)  
Power, P-20, HLG & CLG

Sept 18 - Coupe  
Power, P-20, HLG & CLG

Oct 16 - P-30  
Power, P-20, HLG & CLG

Oct 29/30 SW FAI Champs\*, Boulder City, NV

Nov 13 - Scale Staffel FAC Contest\* (3<sup>RD</sup> of 3)

Nov 20 - Old Timer Rubber Stick (Small)  
Power, P-20, HLG & CLG

Dec 18 - Coupe  
Power, P-20, HLG & CLG

\* **Non-Club Points Event**  
**Otay Field Weather (619) 661-8297**



## 2011 OFFICERS

President  
Don Bartick ..... (760) 789-3773  
Vice President  
Larry Miller .....(858) 292-1434  
Secretary  
John Merrill .....(619) 449-4047  
Treasurer  
Howard Haupt .....(858) 272-5656  
Fudo Takagi "Treasurer Emeritus"  
Safety Officer & Field Marshall  
John Oldenkamp .....(619) 233-4837  
Competition Director  
Larry Miller .....(858) 292-1434  
Web Master & Yahoo Coordinator  
Bob Becroft .....(760) 723-2499  
El Torbellino Editor  
Howard Haupt .....(858) 272-5656

## ORBITEERS YEARLY MEMBERSHIP DUES

Junior - \$10  
Senior - \$15  
Open - \$25  
Family - \$30  
65+ - \$15  
Lifetime - \$250  
Non-Member Newsletter Subscription - \$15

### Submit Dues to Club Treasurer:

Howard Haupt  
3860 Ecochee Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92117-4622

## THE FINE PRINT THE FINE PRINT

El Torbellino is the official newsletter of the San Diego Orbiteers, an Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Charter Club (#1113) and a California not for Profit Corporation. This newsletter is sent monthly to all paid members, selected exchange and magazine editors. Non-Members may subscribe at \$15.00 per year within the U.S.A., offshore price will be adjusted to reflect the postage required. Materials from El Torbellino may be reproduced on an unlimited basis by other publications, but proper credit is requested.

## ORBITEER WEB SITE

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

Webmaster: Bob Becroft

**MONEY MATTERS - H.Haupt**

**Income:**

Dues (3)	\$	55.00
		-----
		55.00

**Expenses:**

B of A Account Fees	\$	17.00
May Newsletter		12.85
Dual Club award payment		746.74
		-----
		776.59

Current Balance .....\$575.58



**ON THE LIGHTER SIDE - H.Haupt**

Due to the planned events on the Orbiteer calendar, the May monthly meeting was cancelled. So, if you feel withdrawal setting in, our June meeting is coming up fast this Friday.

Pizza will be available from Venice Pizza House at our meeting this month. Bring your Favorite drink, as well as some money to cover your \$2.00 per slice cost for your favorite pizza. Plates, paper towels, utensils, and handy trash receptacle will be provided.

**HOT DOG FEED @ JUNE MONTHLY – M.P.**

On Sunday June 12<sup>TH</sup> during our monthly contest Linda Piazza will be grilling HOT DOGS.

Stop by and enjoy.  
Good Luck to all flyers.

LP



THE WAY WE WERE

# FIRST REGULAR DAILY AIRLINE SERVICE WAS FROM L

**RICHARD CRAWFORD**  
SPECIAL TO THE U-T

Through war surplus biplanes, aviation pioneers T. Claude Ryan and B. Franklin Mahoney made history on March 1, 1925. The launch of their Los Angeles-San Diego Air Line would be America's first regularly scheduled, daily air service.

The Ryan Flying Co., based at the airfield of Dutch Flats, north of today's Marine Corp. Recruit Depot, had been profitable for Claude Ryan. The veteran flyer piloted many of his firm's charter and sight-seeing excursions. His trips to and from Los Angeles were particularly lucrative. In 1924, friend and future business partner B.F. Mahoney suggested expanding the L.A. run into an airline service with a daily, year-around schedule. Mahoney offered to underwrite expenses for the operation and Ryan would fly the planes.

Ryan bought three Standard J-1 planes in Texas for a few hundred dollars each and had the disassembled planes — last used as Army trainers in World War I — shipped to San Diego.

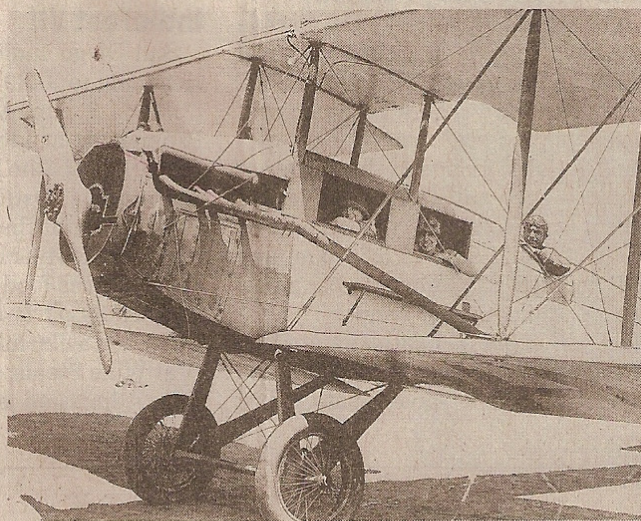
Ryan noted the planes "had no engines and were really just a batch of parts." His mechanics added single-engines and quickly put the

planes into flying shape. In the forward cockpit they created an enclosed space for four passengers. Side windows provided a view for each traveler. The pilot flew the plane from a rear cockpit left open to the sky. "When it rained I'd just stand up in the cockpit and look over the windshield. At 80 mph and 100 feet of altitude we could get along okay," Ryan said.

One of Ryan's biplanes — larger than the other two — boasted a side-by-side rear cockpit that could seat an extra co-pilot or mechanic. This plane, the designated "flagship" of the fleet, was christened the Palomar, the name of the building at Sixth and Maple where Ryan and Mahoney had apartments. (Three years later, Charles Lindbergh would purportedly bunk at the Palomar Apartments as he supervised the construction of the Spirit of St. Louis.)

Ryan set a fare of \$22.50 for a round-trip ticket, calculating that amount as the break-even cost for each flight (even with only one passenger). A one-way fare was \$14.50, hotel transportation included.

On Sunday morning, March 1, the airline was ready to debut. Shrewdly, Ryan and Mahoney recruited Hollywood celebrities as their first passengers. Thousands



T. Claude Ryan in the cockpit of a Standard J-1. COURTESY OF THE SAN DIEGO AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

of sightseers and movie fans converged on the airfield at 99th Street and Western Avenue in Los Angeles to see the celebrities and witness the inaugural flight. One hour before departure, a dozen movie stars, including director Robert Vignola, actress Hedda Hopper, and Cecil B. DeMille star Vera Reynolds, lined up for photographers while police pushed back the crowds.

Airplanes from the Army and Navy would escort the "huge cabin passenger planes" to San Diego.

Departure came at 10 a.m. Flying at 1,500 feet — with Claude Ryan piloting one of the celebrity planes himself

— the flight south would take 90 minutes.

At Dutch Flats, a huge crowd was waiting as the planes — flying in perfect formation — touched down on the dirt landing strip. Cameramen from the San Diego Cinema Corp. cranked footage of the stars as they disembarked and were greeted by the mayor and members of the Chamber of Commerce "aviation committee."

Lunch at the U.S. Grant Hotel came next, followed by several rounds of congratulatory speeches. The movie stars were given an afternoon tour of the city and then whisked back to the airfield for a return flight to Los An-

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## ..A. TO S.D.

geles.

The San Diego Union praised the new project and predicted it would "set a precedent for civil aircraft development." The next day the airline began its scheduled service: daily flights between San Diego and Los Angeles, with departures from the north at 9 a.m. and returns at 4 p.m.

Profits, however, were disappointing. As the novelty of the airline route declined, so did passenger traffic. Fares were raised to \$17.40 one-way and \$26.50 round trip. But most Ryan revenue continued to come from charter and sightseeing flights.

To stimulate interest, the fledgling airline purchased a larger plane built by Donald Douglas, of future "DC" airliner fame. With a wingspan of 56 feet and a length of 37 feet, the Cloudster biplane dwarfed the three Ryan Standards and could accommodate 10 passengers.

But the well-appointed airliner did little to boost profits. Ryan and Mahoney found themselves sometimes flying empty planes between cities. Eventually, they chose to concentrate on airplane manufacturing. After less than two years, the pioneering Los Angeles-San Diego Air Line closed operations.

SAN DIEGO ORBITEERS  
Howard L. Haupt / Editor  
3860 Ecochee Avenue  
San Diego, California 92117-4266



## WHAT'S HAPPENING - JUNE / JULY 2011

---

- June 5 - Indoor Fun Fly, Grossmont College, 9:00 am.
- June 10 - Orbiteer Monthly Meeting at Scripps Ranch Community Center,  
11885 Cypress Canyon Road, Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.  
Indoor fun fly featuring A-6 & HL gliders follows the meeting.
- June 12 - **Orbiteer Outdoor Monthly**, Otay Mesa, 8:00 am.  
Non-Power: Coupe    Power: All Classes  
Other Classes: P-20, HLG & CLG
- July 3 - Indoor Fun Fly, Grossmont College, 9:00 am.
- July 4 - Walt Mooney Memorial Scale Contest, Otay Mesa, 8:00 am.
- July 8 - Orbiteer Monthly Meeting, Scripps' Ranch, 7:00 pm.
- July 17 - Outdoor Monthly, Otay Mesa, 8:00 am.