

# EL TORBELLINO

NEWSLETTER OF SAN DIEGO ORBITEERS FREE FLIGHT CLUB



**November 2025**

## *Chairman's Corner – Mark Chomyn*

Here we are now immersed in the year-end holiday stretch. It's a busy time of year for most of us and when it's over we usually look back on it and wonder how it went by so fast. At Thanksgiving we all look forward to the holiday feast and family get togethers. We also take time to give thanks for the good things in life we often take for granted while we rush through the year attending to our busy lives. This year we Orbiteers, among all the other things we are personally thankful for, have an additional reason to give thanks. We are participants (lessees) in a lease granted by the property owner allowing model aircraft activities at Taibi Field. Yes. That's right. We will be flying outdoors in Perris again. It will take some time to get preparations (AMA sanctions, contest dates etc.) ready for a restart. Keep an eye out for an email announcing the restart of our outdoor events.

As in any lease there was landowner/lessor compensation involved. The Orbiteers share of the lease cost was \$600. This was an unforeseen expense, and it was paid for with funds from the club treasury. An email was sent to Orbiteers on November 11, 2025, asking for donations from club members to offset the lease expense and we're hoping to get a positive response to the donation request. Any amount is welcome. Cash or checks can be sent to our Club Treasurer, Howard Haupt. His address was contained in the November 11 email.

I don't know about you but lately I've been in bit of a slump regarding my modeling activities. I've got several models ready for covering but I can't seem to get fired up and tackle them. Every time I go into the garage, I blankly stare at them but can't get motivated. I wonder, what can I do to stop stalling and get working? Then it hit me. Find a very simple project and complete it and use that accomplishment to jump start the building bug. The project had to be something that provided immediate gratification and reinforced the idea that model building is fun, easy and rewarding. Something that could be built in a few (say two) hours. I racked my fading memory for a possible subject. Then I got an email from John Merrill regarding an inquiry from a STEM class offered by the San Diego Aerospace Museum. The class was looking for an aeronautic project that would take students with experience in flying small model gliders and move them to a higher level of involvement. As I thought about what that might be, it hit me, The Flying Squirrel. A simple 12-inch span rubber power plane designed by Darcey Whyte that could be easily built by the STEM students. There is no formal plan for the Squirrel. The plane is built directly on tissue paper using balsa sticks, glue-stick and white craft glue (I cheated I used DUCO). The only special part is the 5-inch prop assembly which can be purchased from on-line vendors like Wind-It-Up Enterprises (aka Peck Polymers). And, when you get it built, it flies. So, if you're looking for a simple project for the young or old, give the Squirrel a try. It can be found online by typing Darcey Whyte in the subject line which results in several articles regarding construction of the Squirrel to pop up on your computer screen. Build it and have fun. And



yes, after successfully completing the Squirrel project I've begun covering my 54-inch span Comet Taylorcraft. To keep it in the spirit of quick and simple I started with the stab.

We have another Orbiteer in the national free flight spotlight this month. If you are a National Free Flight Society (NFFS) member (and you really should be) check out page 38 of your July-August 2025 edition of Free Flight. On page 38 you'll see pictures of a new P-30 history exhibit that has been installed in the AMA National Model Aviation Museum. The person spearheading the creation of the exhibit was our own Don Bartick. This exhibit is especially significant to the Orbiteers for the P-30 event was created and developed by John Oldenkamp and Harry Steinmetz two past members of the Orbiteers. The exhibit highlights the progression of P-30 model designs through the years from the events inception in the 1970s to the current day. The exhibit contains several nicely built models set against a blue-sky background. Thanks to Don Bartick for enshrining the P-30 and the Orbiteers in the AMA museum. Extremely nice work Don. If you get to visit the AMA museum in Muncie, Indiana, make sure the P-30 exhibit is your first stop.

On a more somber but uplifting note, the July-August Free Flight edition had several tribute notes written by family and friends of Tim Batiuk. The words of praise, thanks and admiration expressed by the writers truly captured Tim's spirit, kindness and ability to teach and mentor other free flight enthusiasts. Tim is missed by the free flight community but is present in spirit every time a glider is launched. It was an honor to fly with him.

In closing I'd like to wish all our Orbiteers members and their families a very Happy Thanksgiving.  
Mark

When asked if he flew "those remote control models" noted free flight modeler Bob Hatschek replied, "*No the ones I fly are much more advanced. They're fully automatic.*"

Taken from The AMA History Project Presents: The Biography of Robert L. (Bob) Hatschek

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## INDOOR FLYING December 7<sup>TH</sup> 2025

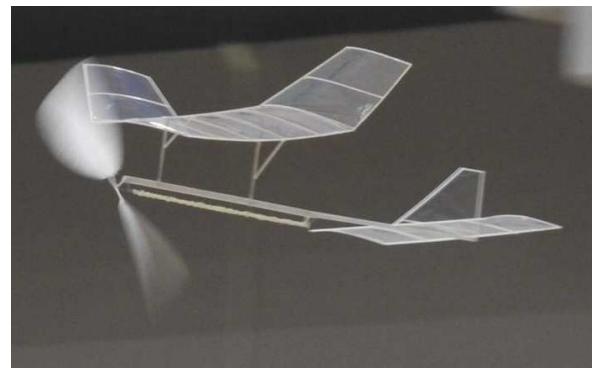


Los Couches Creek Middle School  
9669 Dunbar Lane, El Cajon CA

Feature events: Unlimited Penny Plane  
No-Cal  
& Fun Fly

Flying Hours: 8am to Noon

Participation fee \$30, and Event fee \$3



## **Broken Rubber Motor Extraction Tools**

By Mike Jester



For many years, based on the wise advice of John Hutchison, I have kept a flexible claw broken rubber motor extraction tool in my accessory box. I use it for removing a broken rubber motor that has wadded itself up tightly inside of a blast tube. It comprises a long outer coil spring housing with a red push knob and adjacent finger grips at its proximal end. When you push in the knob with your thumb, four claws extend out of the distal end of the outer spring housing, with their bent gripping ends separated. When you release the knob, the claws retract back into the outer coil spring housing and come together, holding whatever they have squeezed between their gripping ends. Often the broken rubber motor bunches up in the rear end of the blast tube and neither the motor peg nor the blast tube can be removed without risking severe damage to the model. Therefore, you need to insert the flexible claw extraction tool into the front end of the blast tube while your model is still mounted on your stooge. You can purchase a 24-inch version of this tool on Amazon for only \$5.99. If you sometimes use long blast tubes with large Old Time Rubber models like me, I recommend that you purchase the 36-inch version of this tool. Most of the time a flexible claw extraction tool will enable you to remove a broken motor but often it is a challenging task. A large highly wound rubber motor with many strands can be bound into a ball that tightly holds itself against the inside wall of the blast tube. Sometimes the claws either will not grip strands on the ball, or they will detach when pulled and not free strands to facilitate removal of the broken rubber motor. Therefore, another type of broken rubber motor extraction tool can come in handy, an example of which is described and illustrated on the next page.



**Flexible Claw Broken Rubber Motor Extraction Tool**

At the recently held WESTFAC 2025 contest in Arizona I heard Tom Arnold break a rubber motor while winding. I thought that he was going to be challenged getting it out of his blast tube. Therefore, I offered Tom the use of my flexible claw extraction tool but he politely declined my offer and indicated he had his own extraction tool. I watched as he pulled it out of his supplies. It was a long wooden dowel with a treble fishing hook secured to one end. This type of fishing hook has three sharp fishing hooks circumferentially spaced at 120 degrees which join to a central shank. Tom was able to quickly and easily remove a tightly wadded up broken rubber motor from inside his blast tube using his fishing hook extraction tool. It has the advantage of sure-fire catching and holding strands of the rubber motor and allowing the ball of rubber to be unbundled and removed from the blast tube. I made a copy of Tom's fishing hook rubber motor extraction tool (pictured below). I sawed a slot into one end of a long wooden dowel, inserted the shank of the treble hook, and glued it in place with CA. I filled in the gaps in the slot with scrap balsa. Then I wrapped the straight segments with Spider line fishing line and coated the line with CA. The OD of the wooden dowel as measured with my digital micrometer is 0.26-inches so it was probably sold as a ¼-inch OD dowel. I made the length of my fishing hook extraction tool 30-inches so it fits into one of my standard 31-inch-long plastic transport boxes. I covered the sharp end of this fishing hook extraction tool with a short segment of Aluminum tube which I taped in place before I stored my new extraction tool in my accessory box. I do not want to accidentally stab myself while manually digging through my accessory box.



**Distal End of Fishing Hook Broken Rubber Motor Extraction Tool**

**2025 Dual-clubs Free Flight Bonanza – November 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> -- Lost Hills, CA**  
**Picture Page – Don Bartick**



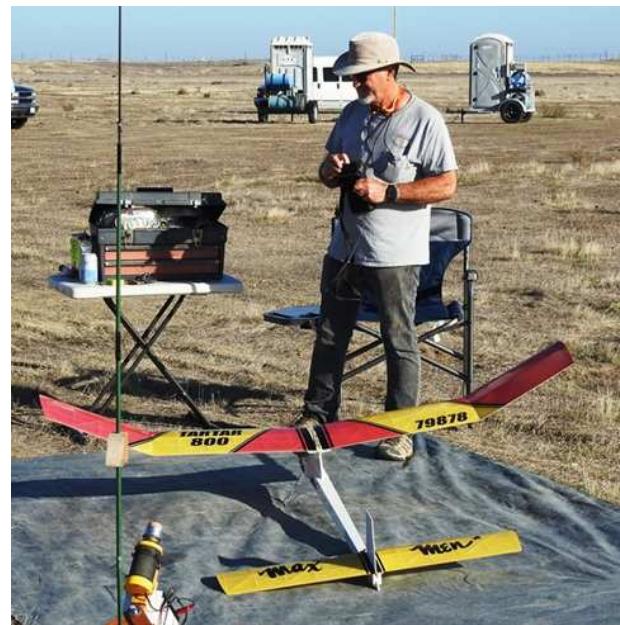
Ed Decker



Bruce Hannah



Jeff Carmen



Randy Secor

← Flight Line



**2025 Dual-clubs Free Flight Bonanza**

## WESTFAC 2025 Contest Report

By Mike Jester



About twenty flyers registered for this contest which was held in Buckeye, Arizona, just west of Phoenix, on October 23 - 26, 2025. I think the first WESTFAC had 50-60 registered flyers. Only two flyers came from California. Most of the flyers came from Texas.

I had back surgery in November of 2024 and was about 80% recovered by the time of this contest. My back really acted up during practice trudging through alfalfa and climbing over dirt berms. One day I logged more than 8,000 steps on my Fitbit wrist watch and that really did me in. As a result, I was only able to compete in four events because I just could not do the long retrievals, or even walk out to the launch table for ROG launches because the table was located far out from the line of cars and RVs to account for drift. I resorted to using my own folding table for ROG launches which I located near my car. I was only able to compete as much as I did because I paid Tom Arnold's 11-year-old grandson to retrieve my models. He was more than willing to do this as the funds I paid him went to his savings for buying Star Wars LEGO toys. The winds were 5-8 mph much of the time, except for some calm spells in the afternoon or near dusk. Overall, the flying conditions were good. Jerry Rovey graciously let us use his farm.

In the OTR stick event I finished first flying my Korda C. I got three maxes. Pat Murray, a perennial FAC champ, drove out from Indiana to compete with us westerners. He flew a Smith Mulvihill in this event. I thought it was too big to be legal in the FAC OTR Stick event but with a 36-inch wing span, I guess it is legal. Pat also scored two maxes but his third flight was 117 seconds as I recall, so I was the fortunate winner of this event. Pat finished second in this event.



**The Author Holding His Korda C OTR Stick Model in Buckeye, Arizona**

I also finished first in the OTR fuselage event flying my Korda Victory. Pat and I both had two maxes, but each of us dropped one official flight. I think I scored 117 seconds and Pat scored 114 seconds as I recall, so again I was the fortunate winner. Pat flew a Miss Canada Senior. I thought it was too big to be legal in the FAC OTR fuselage event, but apparently, I was wrong. Pat also finished second in this event.



### The Author's Korda Victory OTR Fuselage Model

In the combined Jimmie Allen/ 2 Bit + 1 event I flew my Skokie. My first flight encountered a downer so I only got 68 seconds. My other two official flights were maxes. Pat Murray beat me with two maxes. He also dropped one of his official flights. However, it was about 40 seconds longer than the flight I dropped. I do not recall seeing what model he flew but someone told me it was also a Skokie. So, Pat finished first and I finished second in this event.

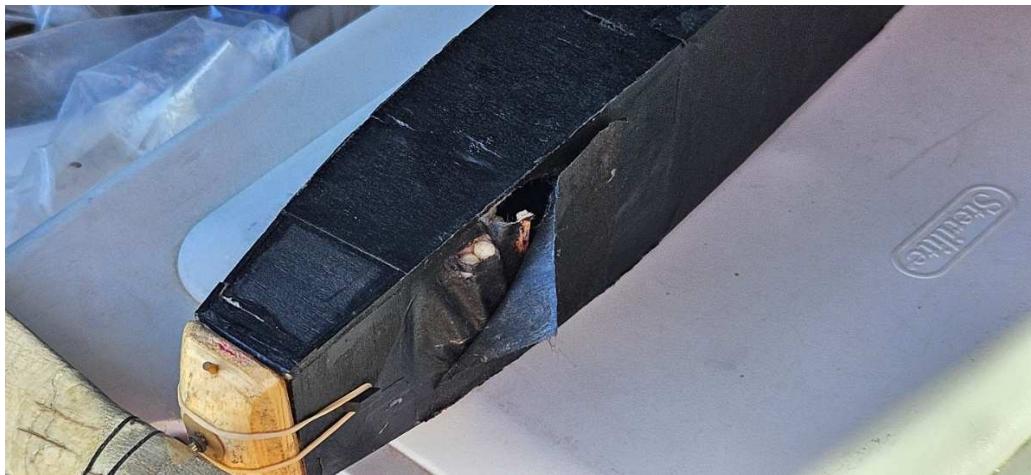
I also entered the 2X Walt Mooney Peanut mass launch event with my Found Centennial which I completed just before the contest. I had it flying well in practice after some trimming. I was flying it with a 6 x 3/32 - 20-gram rubber motor and it was a little too weak. I tried a 6 x 1/8 - 20-gram rubber motor and it was a little too strong. So about 15 minutes before the mass launch I decided to hurriedly make up a rubber motor with a 10 x 1/16 cross section that was also 20 grams. It would be right between the first two motors I tried in terms of cross section and would have probably given very good flights. When I started winding upon receiving the command of the event supervisor, I realized I made a stupid mistake. I had made up a rubber motor with **10 loops** of 1/16 rubber instead of **10 strands** of 1/16-inch rubber. I quickly got to 4-inch ounces of torque on only 400 turns. But it was too late to switch rubber motors. When I lined up for the mass launch, I let some turns bleed off, hoping to forestall a torque-in. But predictably, my model turned hard right and crashed into the alfalfa after a couple of tight circles. The model suffered no damage, but I was eliminated from the mass launch in the first round. This was a dumb and costly mistake. My Found Centennial would have probably made it through several rounds with a 10 x 1/16 - 20-gram rubber motor. In the final round both flyers got maxes, or close thereto, so the odds of me winning this event were probably no better than 50/50. The chases would have been hard on my back. By this time, I was walking with a very painful back and crooked over to one side.

Continued Next Page



### The Author's 2X Walt Mooney Found Centennial on His Tailgate Winding Stooge

During practice, and before I made my official flights in the OTR stick event, I could not trim my Korda C to fly correctly with its new yellow fuselage. So, I gave up and went back to its old, very worn and repaired black fuselage. When I wound a rubber motor to considerably less than half max turns without a blast tube for a test flight, the motor broke, and several uprights and cross-pieces were broken just forward of the motor peg. I know better than to do this! I cut away the Polyspan, replaced the broken cross pieces and uprights, and recovered the cut-out areas with checkered Esaki tissue I had in my flight box. It was a scrap of tissue but I had just enough to complete the job. The model still flew well in one short practice flight. I think I also got a max with my Korda C with the model in this condition on my first official flight. On my second official flight, I was about to launch when the rubber motor broke. This time it did terrible damage all along length of the fuselage. I knew my yellow fuselage would not work so I spent the next two hours doing surgery, cutting away tissue and Polyspan and replacing about 12 cross-pieces and uprights. About half were done with 1/8 x 1/8 sticks since I ran out of 3/32 x 3/32 sticks and other flyers did not have many. Rod Persons generously gave me a full sheet of yellow Esaki tissue which I used a big part of. I got a max on my second official flight with my extensively repaired Korda C. I noticed a slight stall in the glide during my second official flight but I still scored a max because the model got plenty high enough. The new cross-pieces and tissue clearly changed the CG. Before my third official flight I added 1-2 grams of clay ballast to the nose. I did not do any test flights. My third official flight was a max and the stall was gone.



**Broken Rubber Motor Bunched Up in the Front of the Fuselage of the Author's Korda C**

As of the writing of this article, the official scores for the WESTFAC 2025 contest are not available on the WESTFAC website so I cannot give you a run down on how many of the other events played out. Pat Murray ended up being the grand champion at this contest edging out another incredible builder and flyer, Johnathan Nunez. Pat flew an incredible WWII twin-engined Soviet Yak 2 bomber that easily achieved 90+ second flights each time it went up. It won first place in the prestigious FAC Rubber Scale event. Many thanks to our CD, Tom Arnold, and his able assistants, Rod Persons and Mike Kelly, for putting on a great contest. I hope to be in good enough shape to compete at WESTFAC 2026.



**WESTFAC 2025 Grand Champion Pat Murray (left)  
Receiving His Trophy from CD Tom Arnold (right)**



← Perris Flying Field, Photo by Clint Brooks



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Annual Membership - \$20  
Lifetime Membership - \$250  
Non-Member Newsletter Subscription - \$15  
Junior Members 16 years old or younger - Free

### Submit Dues to Club Treasurer:

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### **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.

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

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## **Results of the 2025 Dual-clubs Free Flight Bonanza**

### **A National Cup Event**

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> 2025 LOST HILLS, CA

*Don Bartick, San Diego Orbiteers, Contest Director  
Doss Porter., Fresno GMC Contest Official*

The Dual-Club Free Flight Bonanza is the joint annuals for the San Diego Orbiteers and Fresno Gas Model Clubs. This was the 66<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> annuals respectively for the clubs. Having dual club participation in waning attendance, significantly reduces the overhead cost to put on a successful event. It has worked well over the past 22 years. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year sharing the field with the Patterson FAI contest. It worked well last year and it again worked well this year. Even better.

I arrived on the Lost Hills field Thursday without Arline. She is dealing with some medical issues and didn't want to be far from her doctors. Consequently, the camera duties that she handles and that everyone appreciates was left in my hands to do what I could. Brian VanNess had set up the location on the field for the Patterson FAI contest. It was at the far Northeast end of the field to give sufficient distance to the orchard that is Southwest and the sheep ranch further West. After a brief discussion with him, it was agreed the Dual-clubs contest would be located in line with the Patterson on the West end. That way we wouldn't be interfering with each other's flight path. The weather forecast for the weekend was cool and calm winds. Turned out to be another great 3 days of FF contest weather. Cold in the morning and warming up to the mid 70's, Wind was fairly consistent from 4 to 8 mph. Very flyable, but did require some long chases. Thermals were light. You really had to pick air. Very competitive conditions.

This was our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of having a 3-day event. We created a schedule that allowed the majority of the events to be flown any day, but if you were clean (only maxes) you could carry over to the next day(s). There were a few scheduled events; such as, Mass launches and Vintage FAI and Vintage Wakefield. The scheduled Friday noontime 1-hour break for lunch and the now famous Ice Cream Social during the break. This event continues to be a favorite. Leftover ice cream and condiments are given to the local Lost Hills Fire Department. The tradition also lived on for the very well attended Saturday night Food Fest. Both special events are open to the Patterson contest group courtesy of the Dual-clubs.

Overall participation was 31 Senior/Open and 1 Junior this year. This group flew 97 events. We had contestants outside of California that came from Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona. Always good to see some new faces. This is encouraging. The hobby still has life. Unfortunately, the core group that make it to contests is around 40 or less.

Special thanks to Fresno GMC Doss Porter for officiating the Nostalgia and Old-Time events. Another special thanks to Orbiteers Linda Piazzi, Fresno GMC Gail Porter and Nancy Day, who spent a great deal of time at the CD table recording times and helping with the Ice Cream Social and Food Fest. This gave me an opportunity to participate in the competition. Last but not least, thank you Fresno GMC David Martin for manning the grill and SCIF Dan Heinrich who provided tables for the Food Fest. I can't express more gratitude for their help.

**Highlight of the contest:** The most contested events this year was C/D Gas and Vintage FAI Power. Both with 7. The Gold in C/D Gas was split between Guy Menanno and Randy Secor with each having a total of 2160 seconds. They chose not to fly a tie breaker. The Gold in Vintage FAI Power went to Bruce Hannah with a total of 1574 seconds, but Guy Mennano was right on his heals with 1489 seconds.

Until next year; *Don Bartick, CD - Ramona, CA: dbartick@4-warddesign.com*

## For the record . . . .

Place	Name	Seconds	P-30 (5)		P-30 Jr (1)	
<b>P-30 MASS LAUNCH (5)</b>			1	Ates Gurcan	660	1
1	Glen Grell	300	2	Glen Grell	631	Tristan Mayer
2	Bruce Hannah	239	3	Doug Mayer	326	352
3	Ates Gurcan	145				
<b>½ A Gas (1)</b>			<b>A Gas (5)</b>		<b>B Gas (4)</b>	
1	Ron Garnas	398	1	Jerry Hull	811	1
			2	Robert Donnelly	720	2
			2	Guy Menanno	448	3
						Robert Donnelly
						715
						Guy Menanno
						678
<b>C/D Gas (7)</b>			<b>Catapult Glider (2)</b>		<b>Hand Launch Glider (2)</b>	
1	Guy Menanno	2160	1	Doug Mayer	270	1
1	Randy Secor	2160	2	Jon James	242	2
3	Jeff Carman	830				Tristan Mayer
						306
						Doug Mayer
						218
<b>Vintage FAI Power (6)</b>			<b>Vintage FAI Wakefield (4)</b>		<b>E-36(4)</b>	
1	Bruce Hannah	1574	1	Ates Gurcan	900	1
2	Guy Menanno	1545	2	Bill Swift	976	2
3	Ed Decker	1469	3	Glen Grell	827	3
						Lynn Edmondson
						600
						Jack Murphy
						235
<b>A/B Electric (4)</b>			<b>Night Gas (3)</b>		<b>Mulvihill (2)</b>	
1	Jack Murphy	1116	1	Todd Reynolds	540	1
2	Guy Menanno	480	2	Jeff Caran	526	2
3	Lynn Edmondson	360	3	Bruce Hannah	445	Glen Grell
						720
						633
<b>Dawn Mulvihill (1)</b>			<b>½ A Golden Age (3)</b>		<b>½ A Nostalgia (1)</b>	
1	Glen Grell	835	1	Randy Secor	635	1
			2	Robert Edmondson	487	Nat Seavy
			3	Bruce Hannah	180	218
<b>A Nostalgia (5)</b>			<b>B Nostalgia (5)</b>		<b>C Nostalgia (7)</b>	
1	Bruce Hannah	1620	1	Glenn Schneider	900	1
2	Randy Secor	1420	1	Bruce Hannah	711	2
3	Guy Menanno	1362	3	Robert Donnelly	506	3
						Justin Martin
						1070
						Guy Menanno
						619
						Todd Reynolds
						513
<b>.020 Replica (2)</b>			<b>Sm OT Rubber Stick/Cabin (2)</b>		<b>Lg OT Rubber Stick/Cabin (2)</b>	
1	David Martin	422	1	Bill Swift	544	1
2	Brad Levine	380	2	Brad Levine	131	2
						Glen Grell
						493
						Bill Swift
						427
<b>) A/B/C Pylon/Fuselage (2)</b>			<b>Nos Rubber/Wakefield (3)</b>		<b>1/2A Texaco (2)</b>	
1	Jeff Carman	540	1	Glen Grell	780	1
2	Daniel Heinrich	401	2	Ates Gurcan	494	2
			3	Bill Swift	470	James Kruse
						7:44
						Brad Levine
						3:01
<b>Full Size Texaco (1)</b>			<b>1 Minute Target Time (3)</b>		<b>Classic Towline (1)</b>	
1	Brad LeVine	4:54	1	Brad Levine	269	1
			2	Ates Gurcan	229	Brad Levine
			3	Nat Seavy	202	136

**2025 Dual-clubs Free Flight Bonanza – November 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> -- Lost Hills, CA  
Picture Page (#2) – Don Bartick**



Buck Murrey & Bruce Hannah



Glen Grell



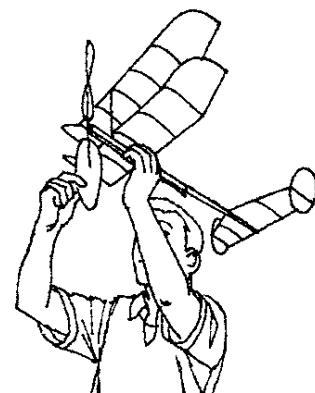
Guy Menanno



Robert Donnelly →



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## **WHAT'S HAPPENING -**

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Flying field lease is in process; look for announcements for next outdoor flying date.

December 7th - Indoor Flying 8am to Noon (4 hours)

Los Couches Creek Middle School, 9669 Dunbar Lane, El Cajon CA

Unlimited Penny Plane and No-Cal feature events.  
Bring what ever you have to fun fly!

Participation fee \$30, and Event fee \$3