

EL TORBELLINO

NEWSLETTER OF SAN DIEGO ORBITEERS FREE FLIGHT CLUB



December 2025

Chairman's Corner – Mark Chomyn

It's that time of year when we free flyers often reminisce about the "good old days" when Christmas meant model airplanes. As a kid of the 1950 – 60's I spent everyday from Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve visiting the store windows of my local hobby shops, hardware stores and five and dimes looking for the latest kits to hit the display. We had quite a few companies producing model airplane kits in the 50's and 60's. Berkeley, Veco, Top Flite, Guillows, Midwest, Enterprise, American Junior Aircraft, Scientific, Comet, Cleveland, Ambroid, Jetco, Carl Goldberg and even Strombecker and Lindberg were marketing light styrene plastic flying models.

There are probably many other manufacturers I've missed as the number of vendors you could choose from was often dependent on what part of the country you lived in. I also feel there was something about those old box covers that really caught your eye better than today's more glossy box tops. Hope the photo helps you reminisce a bit. Don't fret that these gems are no longer readily available at your local hobby shop they can be obtained at a MUCH higher price on eBay.



The best thing about Christmas for me at that time was that you were out of school from December 24 to Jan 1. That meant when your gift of a Carl Goldberg Ranger 28 was opened you had a whole week to build it and test fly it before school started again. Depending on what time Christmas dinner was served when the meal was over I began my building activity. For the next seven days I was not to be disturbed except for meals and snacks and bedtime got pushed back at least an hour to keep production on schedule.

The great thing about our hobby/sport is that you can still experience that joy of building and flying even though you are now a responsible adult. Go to the hobby shop or go to on-line vendors and get a kit or build from plans. Try to squeeze in a little more building time over the holidays. It's good for keeping your sanity and your manual dexterity and it might also help fire up any essential but lazy neurons that are required for a healthy and productive mind.

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New Year 2026 has the club on a full schedule for both indoor and outdoor events. Our outdoor contest coordinator, Mike Pykelny has already developed a full year draft schedule for monthly contests at Taibi Field in Perris. Once the club board of trustees has the chance to review and approve the draft, members will get contest notices by email or in the EI Torbellino. While I'm on the topic of outdoor flying I'd like to thank all those members who donated to the flying field's lease cost. Without your donations our ability to fly in Perris was a significant monetary obstacle given our modest treasury balance. You all definitely helped to "Keep Em Flying!".

In my November column I mentioned the P-30 exhibit at the AMA museum in Muncie which was spearheaded by our own Don Bartick. In talking with Don, I found out that the photo of the exhibit I saw on page 38 of July-August's 2025 NFFS Free Flight Digest was of the interim, not final, installation. In other words, it's going to be even more impressive upon its final installation. Can't wait to see the final product. A great tribute to the P-30s developers, Harry Steinmetz and John Oldenkamp, and the Orbiteers. Again, great work Don.

As for the annual banquet there's been some discussion as to whether one will be held or not. Given that the banquet is an awards ceremony, we really don't have enough contest results to make meaningful award presentations. A final decision on the banquet will come from the club board of trustees, keep your eye on your email and the EI Torbellino.

In closing a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Orbiteers members and their families.

Mark

"Speaking of plastic, savvy FF modelers all know that the Achilles' heel of every "modern" Guillow's design is the ridiculously tiny nose-button hole. How're you supposed to get any rubber into THAT?!?"

From the article "Go Guillows" by Dave Mitchell in the Nov. – Dec. issue of Flying Aces Club News

FIFTY ONE YEARS IS HOW LONG? - J.Merrill

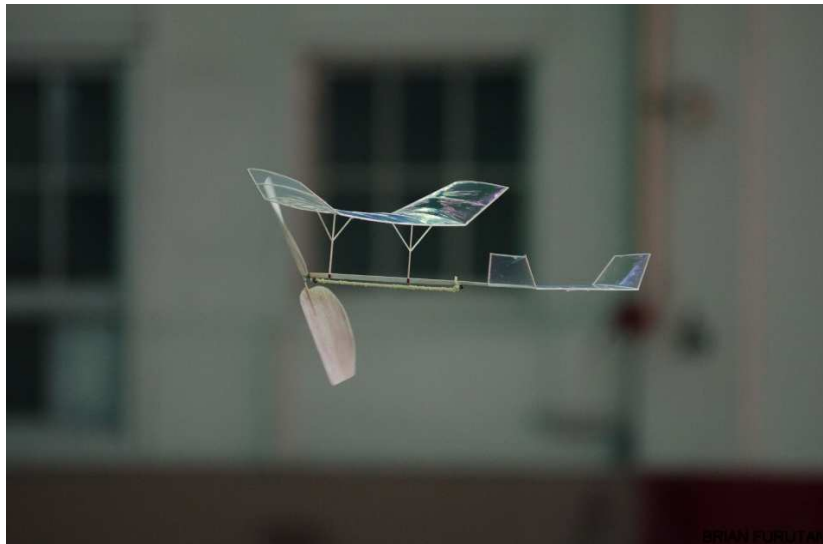


The AMA Penny Plane Events

By Mike Jester



Per the AMA indoor rules there are two Penny Plane events. They are: 1) Penny Plane; and 2) Limited Penny Plane (LPP). Both rubber powered models are very slow flying and capable of 5+ minutes flights in 25-27 feet of flyable height. The models of each event must not exceed 20-inches in length and 18-inches in wingspan. The maximum distance allowed from the front of the thrust bearing to the rear of the motor hook is 10-inches. The minimum allowed weight of the model for both these events is the weight of one US penny, namely, 3.10 grams. The Penny Plane event has no limits on the chord of the wing and the stab and allows for rolled motor sticks and bi-planes. The LPP event requires a solid motor stick and limits the wing to a maximum of 18-inches x 5 inches and the stab to a maximum of 12-inches x 4 inches. The prop of an LPP must not exceed 12-inches in diameter. The LPP event is limited to monoplanes.



An LPP in Flight at One of the Tustin, California Blimp Hangars on December 28, 2011

Over the past twenty years the Orbiteers have regularly flown the LPP event at indoor contests, most recently on December 7, 2025. LPP is my favorite indoor event. I have built four LPP models from my own designs and still have three of them. It takes some care in balsa wood selection to build near the 3.1 gram minimum but LPPs that weigh 4-5 grams are still capable of very long flights. You can cover the flying surfaces with 1.4-micron Mylar film available from J&H Aerospace which is attached with a light spray of 3M 77 spray adhesive on the 1/16 x 1/16 frames. LPPs are rarely damaged in collisions since they have very little mass and fly very slowly. There are dozens of plans for LPP models like the record setting Novice Pennyplane by Cezar Banks. If you want to build an LPP from a kit, try the Incentisitive LPP model from J&H Aerospace. Here is a link to a video of a portion of a flight of one of my LPPs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olFCD5B9LO4>



RETURN TO INDOOR FLYING - Don Bartick

December 7th marked the 5th time that we have flown Indoors at the Los Cocheros Creek Middle School gym. The two competitions were Limited Penny Plane and No-Cal. Eight flyers registered and 5 entered the events, four in Limited Penny Plane and three in No-Cal. The best of 6 official attempts was scored and added together. The results were:

Limited Penny Plane

1 st John Alling	787 seconds
2 nd Mike Jester	778 seconds
3 rd Don Bartick	376 seconds

No-Cal Profile

1 st Walter Ainslie	141 seconds
Jester and Bartick	DNF



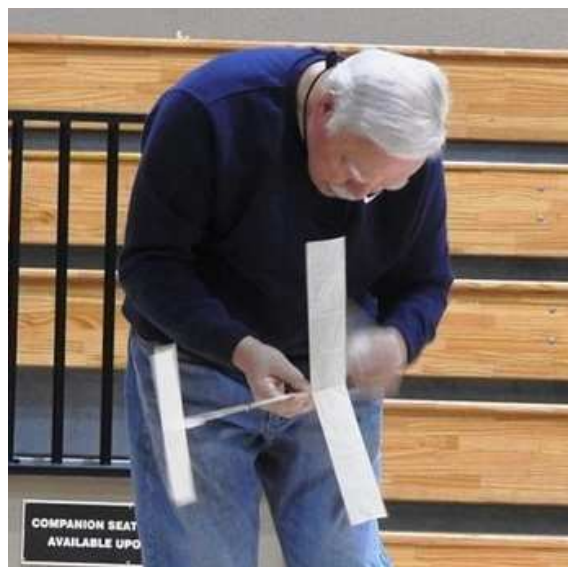
Of special note was the attendance of Curtis Huffstutler. He is getting back into Free Flight after a 20-year absence. He recently joined the Orbiteers and is thrilled to be flying again. He had a great time.

Once again, we fell short on attendance. Having 8 participants contribute funds did come within 75% of the rental fee. The gym is the best venue we have ever had. With a 27-foot height to the center girder. Higher if you fly above the wooden girders. Some successfully do. It makes indoor flying a joy. So, everyone reading this report, please try indoor or return to indoor. The weather is great and the chases are very, very short.

Next Indoor is scheduled **February 8th for 4 hours-8am to noon**. The cost to participate is \$30 minimum. Additional contributions are welcomed. Competition events are free. Events will be A-6 and Catapult Glider. Of course, bring whatever you have to fun fly.

WE NEED MORE PARTICIPANTS. We can't sustain renting this great venue without more participants. Please consider Indoor Free Flight. It's really a fun version of Free Flight. Up-up and away! - Don

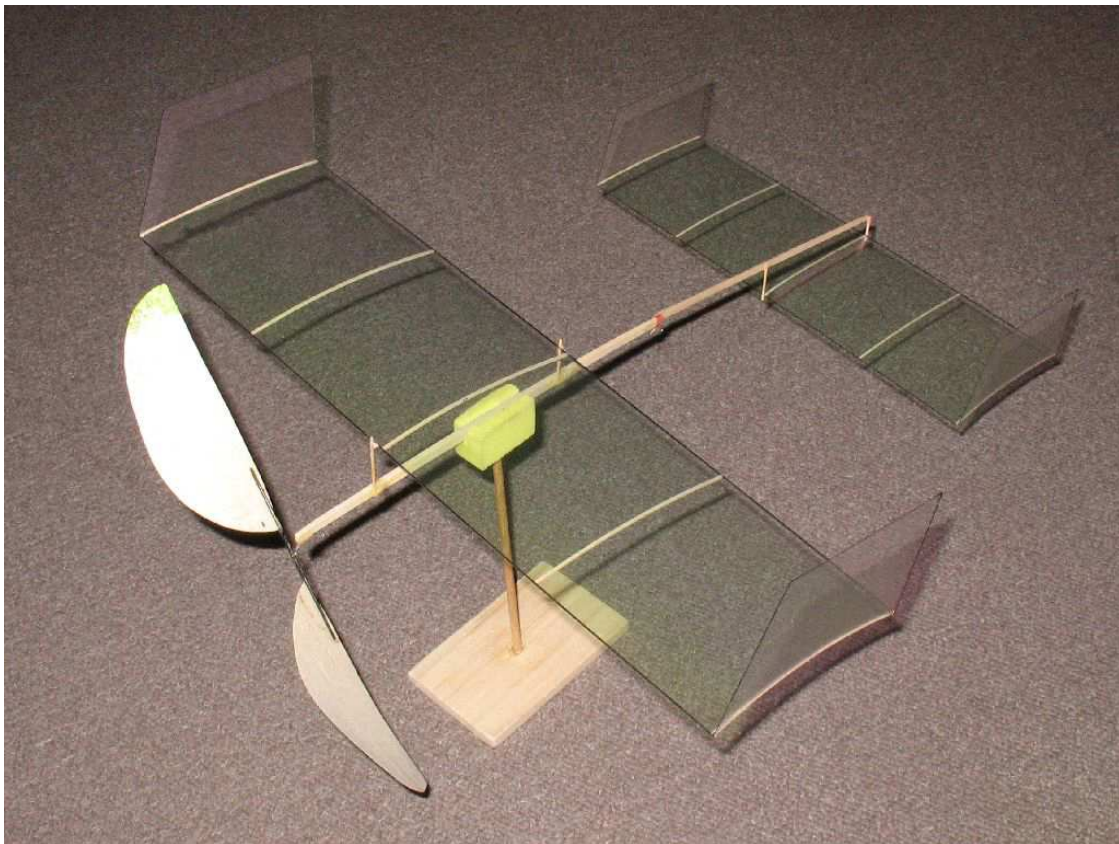




Orbiteers Limited Penny Plane Contest - Los Coches Creek Middle School – Dec. 7, 2025
By Mike Jester

Best 3 out of 6 official flights

<u>Flier Name</u>	<u>Flight #1</u>	<u>Flight #2</u>	<u>Flight #3</u>	<u>Total</u>
John Alling	190	248	349	787
Mike Jester	251	283	244	778
Don Bartick	144	103	129	376
Mark Chomyn	106	66	DNF	172



Limited Penny Plane (LPP)



On December 03, 2025, the P-30 Exhibit was officially completed at the AMA National Model Airplane Museum. For 15 months, Michael Smith, Director of the Museum and I collaborated about the contents of the exhibit and ways to display them. The exhibit is a wonderful tribute to Orbiteers; John Oldenkamp and Harry Steinmetz who are credited for the founding of the AMA P-30 event. The event was officially launched at the 1981 NATS. Bob White flying his Mini Twin Fin design was the 1st NATS P-30 winner. His airplane was found still intact by Orbiteers Randy Secor who donated the plane to the museum for the P-30 exhibit. Other historical planes were found and donated. Some had to be restored and some were built from scratch. Such was the case for John Oldenkamp's Hot Box and John Ferrer's Gully III. The exhibit also has an example of a current design to show how the P-30 has progressed over time. That design was my High Tail 30, donated by me for the exhibit. Aside from airplanes, we included a mini exhibit of propellers and free wheelers, put together by Orbiteers Mike Jester. There is also a mini exhibit of P-30 DT timers, put together by me using components donated by; Orbiteers's Mike Pykelny, Mike Jester and myself. This is a very complete P-30 exhibit. It is the first of its kind to show the history of the development of a single AMA Official Event. Michael Smith did an outstanding job putting the exhibit together. Should you ever have a chance to visit the AMA Headquarters in Muncie, IN, take time to visit the museum. Aside from the P-30 exhibit, you will see historical aircraft from all phases of the hobby.

I would like to further thank Orbiteers Mike Jester for donating Harry Steinmetz's Turkey, originally constructed and flown by David in competition then giving to Harry who renovated it and continued flying it in competition. I also want to thank Orbiteers Randy Secor for donating Bob White's Mini Twin Fin, Fred Terrizan for donating Jack Brown's P30 TOO, Don DeLoach, NFFS Digest Editor, for donating his original Polecat that set the Senior P-30 National Record back in the day that still stands today.

I have to say; "Now the Orbiteers club is very well represented on the National Stage." It was a pleasure for me to spearhead the P-30 Exhibit and hope those that visit the AMA museum are pleased with the exhibit.

Look for my complete article on the P-30 Exhibit in a future issue of the NFFS Digest.

Don Bartick



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ORBITEERS MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual Membership - \$20

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Junior Members 16 years old or younger - Free

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WHAT'S HAPPENING -

Flying schedule for 2026 is in process; look for the outdoor schedule announcement.

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