

SKY-SCRAPERS

BKLYN
NY

SKYLINES

David Acton, President / Bob Geyer, Vice President / Alan Abriss, Secretary

Issue 1, Winter 2006

President's corner

Greetings

The 2006 season will be a busy and exciting one. The new year marks the 70th anniversary of the Skyscrapers. We also have a new slate of officers, and a larger contest schedule which will have 5 two-day contests plus 6 monthly record trials.

The first event will be the club dinner on April 1st which will bring together many Skyscrapers, both old and new including Leon Shulman and Sal Taibi and many more. The outdoor season will begin April 22, with a work-test flying day, weather permitting. Coffee and donuts will be served. Bring work gloves and tools (cordless drills/screwguns, etc.)

Our Skyscrapers Annual will feature a one design event for an airplane designed by a Skyscraper. Many good designs were suggested but most involved rather large models with spark ignition engines. Bob Geyer suggested Bob Hatschek's SpitBall which was published in Zaic's 1951-52 yearbook. We ran this by our board of expert power fliers and the decision was unanimous. This model is small, simple to build, inexpensive, and can be flown in other AMA and NFFS events.

Join me in thanking Alan Abriss and Bob Hatschek for their efforts in helping put together our first edition of our new newsletter, Skylines. All members in good standing will receive this quarterly. For your convenience, a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your timely remittance of dues. (\$25.00 annually)

We also want to thank Aram and Bill for their efforts over the past years for selflessly doing a rather thankless job that requires a lot of time and dedication. Their efforts are appreciated.

Dues are due

In the past dues were collected at the club dinner, Dave Acton is still the club treasurer and he would like to have all dues mailed in before the dinner. Please send your dues to the club treasurer by February 15. Mail your check to Dave Acton, 89 No. Broadway (apt 102) White Plains, NY 10603. Pay your dues, remain a member in good standing. Please do not wait for the club dinner to pay your dues.

70th Anniversary Celebration

Speaking of the club dinner, mark your calendars for Saturday April 1, 2006. 12:30 – 4:30 at Antonees, 115 North Broadway, White Plains, NY 10603 Dinner / Lunch will cost \$35 per head. A formal invitation will be mailed with the menu and directions at a later date.

This promises to be an exciting afternoon. We are expecting original Skyscrapers Sal Taibi and Leon Shulman to join us for our 70th Anniversary. Other former members are also expected join us — so don't miss out.

Club One Design; Bob Hatschek's SpitBall

I'm flattered and delighted that my fellow SkyScrapers have selected the SpitBall for our 70th Anniversary One-Design Event. But the model does have several advantages: it's extremely simple; with a suitable engine it qualifies for NFFS Nostalgia and Early 1/2A Nostalgia classes; projected span (with dihedral) is under 30 inches so it qualifies as a PeeWee 30 with an .020 engine and two-wheel gear (easily swapped); and it's eminently suitable for the NATS ROW event no matter how small the takeoff puddle.

Back about 1950 or '51 the Screamin' Demons of Long Island added an ROW event to their annual contest. Takeoff facility consisted of four 10 or 12-ft 2x12s set on edge, covered with a large tarp and filled with water by the Syosset Fire Dept. Because the Fire Dept. could only do it once, there were two consequences: (1) the event couldn't move so the tank was set up in the middle of the field, and (2) as leakage, evaporation and splashing lowered the water level, the models had an increasing obstacle as the day went on.

SpitBall was designed and built for that meet, but was easily convertible for ROG or hand launch by means of a one-bolt mount for each tail float and the main float clamped in a grooved firewall behind the engine. Water takeoffs were superb! You got the engine screaming, lit the fuse, set it in the water and let go into the wind. SpitBall leapt forward, almost instantly hydrofoiled out of the water and was in its tight right spiral climb within a couple of fuselage lengths. Every time!

Indeed, takeoffs were so consistent that modeler/photographer Art Silberberg (now deceased) decided to try for a head-on color shot of the takeoff as a possible cover for *Flying Models*. Remember, this was over 50 years ago, and magazines wanted good-sized transparencies—at least 4" x 5". Artie's camera was a 4 x 5 Graflex single-lens reflex, a huge and heavy box. You viewed the ground-glass image on top of the camera by looking down through a folding hood about 18" high (which excluded extraneous light). Elephantine and cumbersome would be suitable adjectives—it was no 35-mm SLR of today.

Artie crouched at the far edge of the tank, resting the camera on the plank edge. He focused and signaled me to proceed—which I did in my normal procedure as described above, But what I didn't realize was that the main float struts had gotten slightly bent during retrieval from the previous flight (with the tank at mid-field, the downwind trees were closer than usual). The next lesson learned was the importance of the high planing angle of the sled-type main float!

SpitBall was aimed directly at Artie's expensive lens no more than 10 feet away when it was released. It leapt forward! But it seemed to hang on the water a wee bit longer than usual. Then it peeled off and went into its screaming spiral just before it got to Artie.

But Artie wasn't there any more!

He had done a rolling back flip as "That damned engine kept getting bigger and bigger in the viewer."

A couple of weeks later I asked Artie what kind of picture appeared when the film was processed. His answer: "Blue sky."

That's a true story as accurately told as I can remember—and believe me, it made an impression on my memory.

Another memory of SpitBall is that it was the first design of mine that was ever published in a Frank Zaic Yearbook (*The 1951-1952 Model Aeronautic Year Book*). The drawing presented here is taken from that source with a few minor corrections. A full-size blowup of this drawing (folded only) is available from Dave Acton, 89 N. Broadway, Apt. 102, White Plains, NY 10603. Price is \$5.00, postage included. If you plan to build a SpitBall—it's quick and simple—here are a few notes:

Most balsa is medium, quarter grain except for the wing spar and leading edge (both hard) and the wing saddle (very hard). Corner gussets at wing and stab tips are full airfoil thickness (very soft) and are radiused on the inside with sandpaper rolled up on something like an X-Acto knife handle. Note that the overlapped spar joints require offset notches in ribs for alternate panels.

Fuselage sides are assembled on the formers (some of which are notched 1/4" for later insertion of the pylon) and the bottom is sheeted with grain lengthwise. With all components finished as completely as possible, the model is completely assembled and balanced with the CG at 75% before the pylon is glued in place.

The original did not use a timer. Rather a very small (approx 3/8" cube) shim brass tank was mounted externally very close to the needle valve. Procedure was to start the engine, adjust it, shut it down, refill the tank, restart it, and count down to launch. It worked okay with the longer engine runs of those days. But you had to check run time frequently, as it was affected by needle setting, fuel mix, atmospheric conditions, prop used, and the like. There's plenty of room inside for a timer; use one. But reinforce the cutout in the fuselage side.

Trimming is simple: shim the stab for a smooth glide and add left rudder (reshimming the stab if necessary) for a tight left glide, all the while shimming the engine to the right for a right spiral climb. As your confidence increases, increase engine power and run time.

You know what? I'm building another SpitBall!

Contest Calendar

The 2006 contest schedule has been finalized. The dates are as follows...

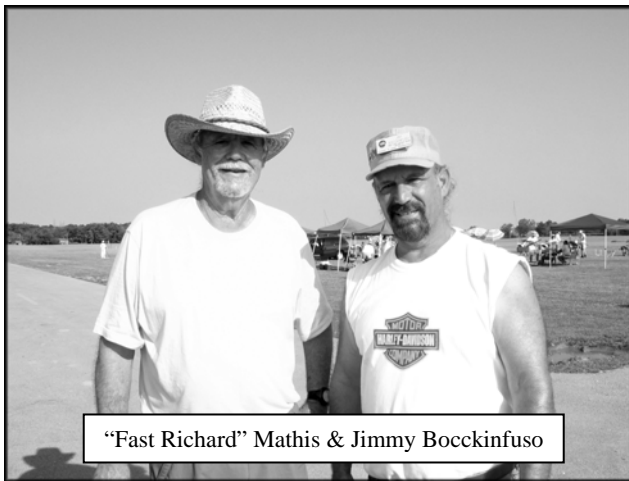
April 22 is a work - test fly day. This is the weekend we prepare the field for the contest season. Coffee and donuts will be served for all those who volunteer to work.

May 11,	Record trials.
May 27-28,	International Challenge
June 10-11,	EFFC (New Location)
July 1-2,	70 th Anniversary Annual
July 8,	Record trials.
August 12,	Record Trials.
August ??,	Wilbur & Orville (Date TBA)
September 9,	Record trials.
October 14,	Record trials.
October 21-22,	Fall contest.

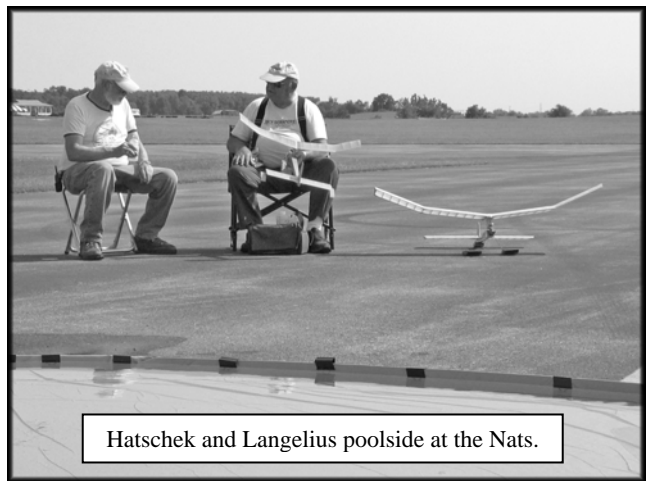
Events and contest details will be sent out at a later date and will also be posted on the club's website



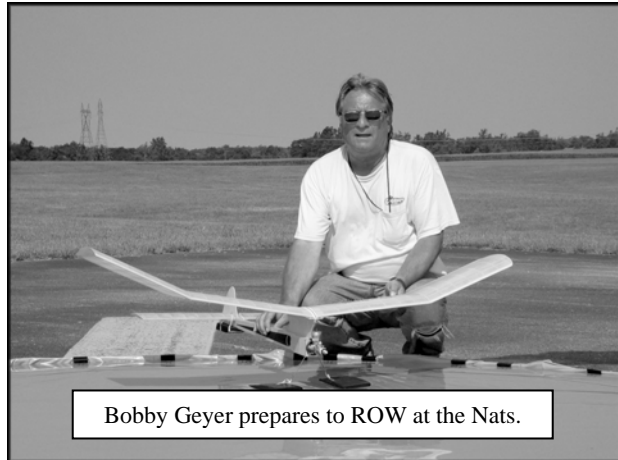
70 Years and still going strong!



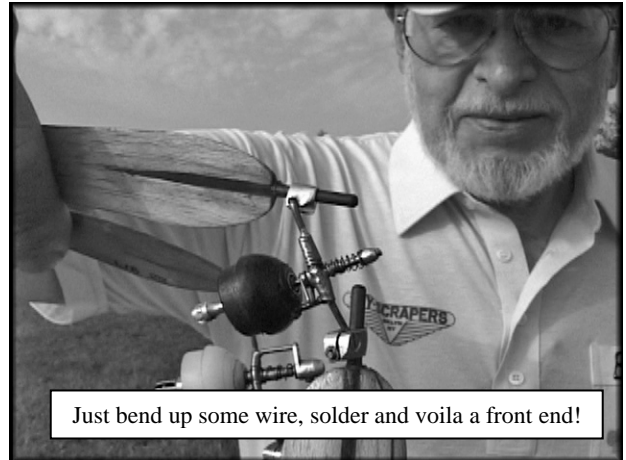
"Fast Richard" Mathis & Jimmy Bocckinfuso



Hatschek and Langelius poolside at the Nats.



Bobby Geyer prepares to ROW at the Nats.



Just bend up some wire, solder and voila a front end!

Alan Abriss / Editor
94-20 66th Avenue
Apt. 1G
Rego Park, NY 11374

First Class Mail

