



January

Minneapolis, Minnesota U.S.A.

2025

The TCRC Annual Auction February 1st

by Jim Cook

The biggest R/C Airplane Auction in the Upper Midwest -- the TCRC Annual Auction -- will be held on Saturday, February 1st, at its normal location of CrossPoint Church at the intersection of 98th Street and France Avenue in Bloomington, Minnesota.

If you are planning on being a seller at the TCRC Auction, you can pre-register at TCRCOnline.com. Instructions for pre-registration are on page 3 of this newsletter. Remember there is a minimum opening bid requirement of \$20, so sellers are urged to bundle lower priced items to be well above the \$20 opening. If the seller check-in people do not believe an item will achieve the minimum bid, they may require that item to be sold on the bargain table during the auction.

If you are a buyer, you will have several different means to purchase R/C airplanes and equipment: 1) By bidding on items continually coming across the main stage from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM; 2) By bidding on select items in a silent auction throughout the course of the day; and 3) By visiting the bargain table for R/C items priced between \$15-\$30.

Doors open at 6:45 AM for seller registration and check in, and for buyer registration. There is a \$5 admission charge for everyone attending the auction. A Bidder's Card is included in the admission charge.

At 8:15 AM the impound area will be opened to give the bidders a chance to get close-up looks at the items that will be sold. In addition, all items heading for the auction block will proceed down tables in the auction hall. This process and flow of items will generally take about 45 minutes to go across these tables. Again, giving potential buyers a chance to see their interested item for auction bidding.

If you are a seller and you feel your item is selling for too low of a price, you may protect that item by being the winning bidder. In that case,

you will be charged a buyback fee of 10% of the selling price up to a maximum of \$20. On successful auction sales, TCRC takes a commission of \$5 or 10% of the selling price, whichever is greater, on all items.

Throughout the course of the day, there will be a concession stand starting with coffee and rolls in the morning, and sandwiches and beverages for the rest of the day. Patrons must stay in the concession area (which is on the main auction floor) while eating and drinking. No food or beverage is allowed outside of this area, including carry-ins.

For buyers, TCRC accepts cash, checks and credit cards. If a credit card is used a 3% fee will be charged. All items must be paid for and removed by the end of the auction.

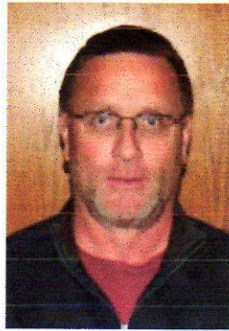
Sellers will be sent their proceeds from sales very soon after the auction.

Continued On Page 3, Col. 1

**Don't Miss The
TCRC Auction On
February 1st!!!!**

A Note from The Head Wing Nut

By Bob Briesemeister



Hello Members,

Happy New Year and welcome to 2025! It's hard to believe that we had a White Christmas a week ago. With the warm temperatures and rain, the snow is all gone except for a few piles. It feels like 2024 all over again with no snow -- Minnesota is supposed to have snow!!

It's hard to believe but the TCRC Auction is just a month away on Saturday the 1st of February 2025. This is my annual article for all hands-on-deck for TCRC members to volunteer their time at the auction. TCRC is run by members who give their time all year by being on the board, running the website, publishing the newsletter, mowing, field repairs and clean up and yes, volunteering at the auction. It's a great time to support TCRC and the hobby of flying model airplanes. There are many jobs that you can help with from set-up on Friday to tear down on Saturday once the last item is sold.

We need people from concessions to runners moving items to the stage. Checking items into impound and checking them out when they are sold. Even with things being mostly digital we still have some clerking and paperwork to keep track of items for a little redundancy. Some security work making sure people are not going in places they are not allowed and yes, even taking out the trash. That's just a short list of the jobs and tasks that need to be done. We especially need members to stay once the auction is done to help clean up and put everything back the way we found. This is to ensure the church can have their worship services on Sunday morning.

The auction is TCRC's only fundraiser of the year and is the largest auction in the area with an average of 500 items and around 200 people in attendance. Buyers and sellers look forward to it and come from the 5-state region to attend each year.

Yes, it sounds like a lot of work, but it is very rewarding and fun. This is a great place to sell some items you don't need any longer and possibly find something that you have been looking for. I will get down off my soap box now, but we need around 50 people to make things run smoothly.

In addition to you planning on working at the auction, also take the time to figure out what you want to sell, and also what you might want to buy.

We will be discussing and working out details for the auction at the next membership meeting on January 14th. If you have questions, please come to the meeting. Also bring an airplane to talk about.

Happy New Year!



For Sale

This is TCRC member Brian Crossley. I have a 50-year friend of mine who cannot fly anymore. He has asked me to sell his R/C sailplane, and other equipment. I have sold the other equipment, but the Mystique is still available. If you are interested, please contact me at:

Brian Crossley
bcplanes@msn.com
612-868-3993



Mystique Sailplane
Rudder, Elevator & Spoiler
2.9 M Powered Glider
Never Flown
Just Add Battery and Receiver
Gorgeous Airplane
\$300

TCRC 48th Annual Auction

Continued From Page 1

Because this is such a long event, TCRC has purchased many nice airplane kits that can be won by several lucky bidders if they are still present at the end of the auction. These can only be won by non-TCRC members.

The TCRC Auction is a great event, and it gives both buyers and sellers a chance to sell or purchase some great R/C items and to be a part of an enjoyable event on a cold winter day. Come to the 48th TCRC Annual Auction on Saturday, February 1st. It will be bigger and better than ever! ☺

Always Wear An Orange Vest To Retrieve A Plane

It's Hunting Season in Minnesota, and that means that anytime you even think about going out into the woods at the TCRC field, you put on an orange vest! This is a club requirement!

If your airplane does go down in the woods, the orange vests are quite close. The orange vests are stored in the rafters of the shelter and easy to reach.

Be safe! Wear an orange vest anytime you have to retrieve an airplane. ☺

TCRC 2025 Auction Pre- Registration

by Tom Hall

The Twin City Radio Controllers 48th annual auction is fast approaching! It is an amazing process to watch, lots of planes to look over, and most importantly are the volunteers that serve during the day. It is a tremendous effort for our beloved TCRC Club! This year it will again be held at CrossPoint Church, 9801 France Avenue South in Bloomington on Saturday **February 1, 2025!**

You can register for a seller's number online again this year allowing you to fill out your seller's inventory card and label your items in the comfort of your warm home instead of freezing in the parking lot the morning of the auction.

To register please send an email to auctions@tcrconline.com with your name, address and phone number requesting a seller's number. You can find full details including the seller's inventory card at <https://tcrconline.com/auction.php>. And much detail can be found using this link.

Auction Flyer can be found here: <https://tcrconline.com/documents/auction/2025%20TCRC%20Auction%20Flyer.pdf>. General TCRC Club information can be found here: <https://tcrconline.com/index.php>.

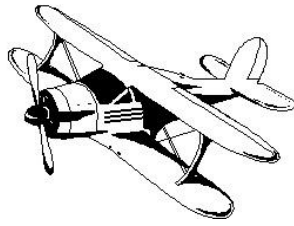
Hope to see you at the auction and please feel free to forward this

on to your fellow modelers at other clubs to get the word out.

Please take the time now to figure out what items you will be selling and pre-register. ☺



Show & Tell



Three nice planes showed up at the December membership meeting.



Sherwood Heggen yet again had a plane from yesteryear at the meeting. He had a Sig Kougar, at one time a staple in every pilot's fleet. He purchased the Kougar partially built from an estate. Sherwood completed the plane adding the tail and turtle deck, radio, engine and finish work. The Kougar weighed in at 6-pounds and had a wingspan of 50-inches. It was powered by a Super Tigre 51 2-stroke engine. The covering was yellow Silkspar with white trim. Sherwood said on its maiden flight, it flew as a Kougar is expected to fly – very well.

Scott Anderson had a nifty little Me-262 Swallow ARF from Horizon Hobby. (See the photo to the top right.) He said the 262 had electric ducted fans supplied and was a bind-and-fly kit. The wingspan was 20-inches and weighed in at a whopping 9.8 ounces. The fans were 30 mm powered with a 3S-600 mah 30C flight battery. It was done in German camouflage colors. He said the small model was a nice change of pace from his 1/3-scale and 1/4-scale planes he has been flying. He has flown it at Jordan and says it performs smoothly on take-offs and landings. He gets about a 6-minute flight time from the battery.



Brian Crossley had an electric A-10 Warthog at the meeting from Radical RC. Actually, Radical RC doesn't make an A-10. Instead, they make an upgrade kit. Brian bought two GWS Slow Sticks (needed two rudder/fins) and then used the upgrade to make his A-10. It was done in military green and powered by twin ducted fans. He had to add twin rudder/fins, brackets for the ducted fans, trike gear and working ailerons. He also added a dummy 'big gun' in the nose. He said the plane does indeed fly. He said it was a bit underpowered, but he was afraid that if he added more power the plane might break up in flight! He does fly it at least once a year. He takes off, does a few laps around the circuit and then lands. ☺

TCRC 2025 Dues Renewal Statement

by **Tim Wirtz**

It's time for membership dues renewal. Below is the information and how to pay your dues. You can pay by check, PayPal or credit card. There are instructions for each.

If you have any changes in your address, phone, email address, etc., send me a note so I can update them in the Member Handbook and Roster.

2025 Dues Renewal Information and Payment Instructions

2025 Membership Dues are the same as 2024:

Normal	Renewal Rate	Early
Regular	\$105.00	\$90.00
Family	\$105.00	\$90.00
Junior	\$47.50	\$35.00
Social	\$0.00	\$0.00

The only change is that the Social Affiliate dues have been reduced to \$0.00 by the Board. For further information on this change, contact a board member.

If you renew on or before January 15th, 2025, you are eligible to pay the Early Renewal Rate.

If you are a new member who joined in Q4, 2024, your dues cover 2025. Contact Tim Wirtz if you have questions.

How To Pay Your Dues

You may pay your dues online using the PayPal links below*:

Early Renewal – www.PayPal.Me/TCRCtreasurer/93

Regular Renewal – www.PayPal.Me/TCRCtreasurer/108

If you wish to pay by Credit Card, Contact Tim Wirtz at 952-297-5226*

If you wish to pay by check, make the check payable to TCRC and send to:

TCRC
1511 Emerson Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55411

2024-2025 AMA Dues Statements

Most older TCRC members should have received their 2024-2025 dues statements in the mail in the month of November from the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Newer members renew on the anniversary of the month they joined.

AMA 2025 dues are the same as the previous year. They are:

- Adult (19-65) \$85
- Senior (65 and up) \$75
- Under 19 Free or \$15 with *MA*

Your AMA membership gives you \$2.5 million in personal liability coverage, \$25,000 in medical coverage and also a subscription to either the print or digital *Model Aviation* for the year.

To belong to TCRC, you must have a valid membership for the year in AMA.

Please note that AMA also has a Park Pilot membership that has a cost of \$38 per year, but that membership is not valid for membership in TCRC.

To renew your membership in AMA, the Academy gives you four methods: at the AMA website, www.modelaircraft.org; by phone at (765) 287-1256; or by returning the renewal form you received in the mail in the supplied envelope.

Deadline for paying your 2025 AMA dues is December 15 to avoid a lapse in membership services. ☺

TCRC Service Awards

by Scott Anderson

Club Historian Scott Anderson, working with Membership Chairman Tim Wirtz and past-Historian Jim Ronhovde, maintains records of the number of years a person has been a member of TCRC. Award patches are then presented to those members in 5-Year increments. This year's Service Award recipients are:

50 Year



Sherwood Heggen and Scott Anderson receive their 50-Year patches (one year late).

40 Year

David Erickson (actual 42 years)

35 Year

Gerry Dunne

30 Year

Mark Wolf
 Mark O'Connor (actual 31 years)
 Mike Robin (actual 31 years)

25 Year

Jeff Tolzmann
 Ben Hocker
 Tom Carlson (actual 26 years)

20 Years



Bernie Gaub with his 20-Year Service Award.

Bernie Gaub (actual 22 yews)
 Dan Armstrong (actual 22 years)
 Corey Kaderlik (actual 22 years)
 Robert Nestaval (actual 22 years)

15 Year



Scott presents Tim Wirtz with his 15-Year Award.

Tim Wirtz (actual 17 years)
 John Rosenberg (actual 16 years)
 Joe Neidermayr (actual 16 years)
 Darryl Volk
 Bob Glass
 Mike Bellefeuille

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TCRC Service Awards

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10 Years

- Jonathon Erickson (actual 13 years)
- Tom Young (actual 11 years)
- Jerry Silverman (actual 11 years)
- Mateo Rossini (actual 11 years)
- Nelson Nibbelink (actual 11 years)
- Tom Mitchell (actual 11 years)
- Mike Dickson (actual 11 years)
- Tim Kepner (actual 11 years)
- Del Stein
- Rich Raming

5 Years



Scott presents Tom Hall with his 5-Year Service Award.

- Tom Hall (actual 6 years)
- John Withrow (actual 8 years)
- Vito Rossini (actual 7 years)
- Joel Roggenkamp (actual 7 years)
- Mark Hodroff (actual 7 years)
- Greg Happ (actual 7 years)
- Paul Theis

If you have not been presented with your Service Award patch, give Scott Anderson a call or see him at a membership meeting.

Congratulations to all of the Service Award recipients, and a special Thank You to Scott Anderson for all of his time. ☺

Fairey Fantôme

by Conrad Naegele

The December Mystery Plane was the Belgium Fairey Fantôme. Fantôme in Belgium means 'ghost'.



Considered by many aviation designers to be aesthetically the most attractive fighting biplane. It was built in 1934 for the Belgium Air Force.

This plane first flew in June 1935. It was of all-metal construction with fabric-covered control surfaces. Provision was made for a 20 mm cannon, and 4-50 caliber Browning machine guns. The first machine crashed in July, but the manufacturer had enough spare parts for three more planes, and those parts-now-planes completed flight tests, and all were accepted.

These planes were ordered by Russia, Spain and Britain. Now, although the plane was very successful, no production followed. One has to wonder why?

One of the planes served in 1941 in the Western desert with the English Royal Navy.

The Fairey Fantôme had a wingspan of 34-feet 6-inches, a loaded weight of 4,120 pounds and a cruising speed of 270 mph. It was powered with a Hispano-Suiza 12-cylinder inline engine that developed 920 horsepower. ☺

MNBigBirds.com

Hawker Hurricane MkII
 Kawasaki Ki-45 "Nick"
 Focke Wulf TA-152H
 Lavochkin La-7
 Grumman Lynx
 ARADO 96B
 Howard Pete
 Mitsubishi Ki-15 "Babs"
 Thomas Morse Scout S4C

Free! **Scale Plan Downloads**

Composite Parts Available Thru MACKO

Anderson Designs

Howard Pete
1/3 Scale Racer

Add'l Extras

- In Flight Videos
- Construction Articles
- Scale Documentation
- Paint Masks & More!

2025 TCRC Annual Calendar

DATE	EVENT	REMARKS
January 7	1 st Quarter BOD Meeting – Auction Plan	Bob Breisemeister’s Home, 7 PM
January 11	2025 All Season Flyer Kickoff	TCRC Model Air Park, 10-10-10 Rule
January 14	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church, Bloomington, 7 PM
January 15	Deadline for TCRC Dues Discount	Postmarked on or before January 15
January 31	Auction Set-Up	CrossPoint Church, 5 PM
February 1	TCRC 47 th Annual Auction	CrossPoint Church, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM
February 8	All Season Flyer Session	TCRC Model Air Park, 10-10-10 Rule
February 11	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church, 5 PM Pizza & Pop
March 1	End of Winter Fun Fly	TCRC Model Air Park, 10-10-10 Rule
March 11	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church and Zoom, 7 PM
TBD	2 nd Quarter BOD Meeting	Bob Breisemeister’s Home, 7 PM
April 5	April Fools Fun Fly	TCRC Model Air Park
April 8	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church, 7 PM
May 3	TCRC Jordan Clean-Up & Fly-In	TCRC Model Air Park 9 AM
May 13	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church, 7 PM
May 13	Building Contest	CrossPoint Church
*May 17	Spring Float Fly	Bush Lake Park, 10 AM, Steve Meyer
*May 18	Rain Date – Spring Float Fly	
May 31	Spring Swap Meet & Fun Fly	TCRC Model Air Park or Fairgrounds, Bob B
**June 10	Membership Meeting At The Field	5:30 PM Dinner, 7 PM Meeting
*June 14	Grassfield Invasion Fun Fly (Open)	TCRC Model Air Park
**July 8	Membership Meeting At The Field	5:30 PM Dinner, 7 PM Meeting
*July 12	Wings Over Jordan	TCRC Model Air Park, Bob Breisemeister
August 6	3 rd Quarter BOD Meeting	Bob Breisemeister’s Home, 7 PM
**August 12	Membership Meeting At The Field	5:30 PM Dinner, 7 PM Meeting
*August 23	Model Aviation Day (Open)	TCRC Model Air Park, T. Wirtz & B Johnson
*September 6	Scale Fly (Open)	TCRC Model Air Park, Scott Anderson
**September 9	Membership Meeting At The Field	5:30 PM Dinner, 7 PM Meeting
*September 13	Fall Float Fly (Open)	Bush Lake Park, 10 AM, Steve Meyer
*September 14	Rain Date – Fall Float Fly	
*September 27	Swap Meet and Fun Fly	TCRC Model Air Park or Fairgrounds, Bob B
October 4	Crocktoberfest Season Finale	TCRC Model Air Park, Brian Johnson
October 14	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church, 7 PM
November 11	Membership Meeting - Elections	CrossPoint Church, 7 PM
November 11	Ugly Airplane Contest	CrossPoint Church, 7 PM, Sherwood Heggen
November 15	TCRC Annual Banquet & Awards	David Fong’s, Prior Lake, 5 PM
December 3	Joint Board Meeting	Bob Breisemeister’s Home, 7 PM
December 6	All Season Flyer Finale	TCRC Model Air Park, 10-10-10 Rule
December 9	Membership Meeting	CrossPoint Church, 7 PM

* Denotes events open to other than club members.

** If bad weather the meeting will be held at 7 PM at CrossPoint Church

Be An All Season Flyer In 2025



The end of the year is in sight, just a few days away. And that means you should start thinking seriously about becoming an All Season Flyer in 2025.

To become an All Season Flyer a pilot must put at least one flight on an airplane outside in each month of a calendar year. That means you have to start in January.

In Minnesota, those December, January and February flights can occur in some pretty cool weather.

In TCRC several pilots have a proud tradition of earning their ASF patches. Some have been doing it for more than 10 consecutive years.

Earning an All Season Flyer patch in Minnesota has to be a very daunting experience. However, with the advent of the electric airplanes, it is a lot easier than trying to start a cold glow engine.

Saturday, January 4 has been scheduled as the 2025 ASF Kickoff date. If you are interested in becoming an All Season Flyer in 2025, plan on joining the other

Vice President Needed

TCRC is still in need of a Vice President for the year 2025.

Chris O'Connor held that spot for many years and did a great job as VP, but his schedule and availability prevents him from being available now. In addition, he felt it would be nice to see another club member step into that spot on the Board.

The major duty of the VP is to provide programs for the monthly membership meetings. Since we have four of our meetings at the Jordan Flying Site in the summer, that means at most the VP would have to schedule programs. In addition, there are a lot of members in the club that have considerable expertise and would be able to give interesting and informative programs.

Please consider becoming the Vice President of TCRC for 2025. I think you will find it will be a rewarding experience for you. Let a Board member know you would be interested in that position. ☺

Become TCRC's Vice President

pilots on January 4th. The 10-10-10 Rule will be in effect. That means that if at 10 AM the temperature is 10 degrees or higher and the wind is 10 mph or lower, the event will be held as planned.

Become an All Season Flyer in 2025! ☺

Membership Report

by Tim Wirtz

The year-end membership count was 111. I have sent an email to all members letting them know of the renewal. I did not send individual emails this year.

If someone needs to change their personal information in the TCRC Roster, they can email me. I have sent snail mail to the four members in the organization that don't have email addresses.

This year we will not be issuing new cards but rather a sticker that can be put on the existing membership card. If someone has lost their card or doesn't have one, I will print a new card for them and send it with the sticker. I'm doing this to attempt to save printing and mailing fees. The plastic sleeves for the cards are pretty pricy and, if we only have to do it every few years, it will save the club some money.

From the Treasurer: The budget was approved by the board for 2025 and maintains the current Dues structure and amounts while ensuring the club has the funding to operate as it currently does and has a reserve to call upon in the event we need to repair or replace field equipment, fences or the shelter.

We will close out the 2024 year with money to add to the runway fund above the required \$2000. Tim will be putting that money into Certificates of Deposit in January. ☺



www.tcrconline.com



TCRC 48th ANNUAL AUCTION

Twin City Radio Controllers - Minneapolis, MN

Saturday, February 1st, 2025

Cross Point Church

9801 France Ave S, Bloomington, MN

Main Auction

What's for Sale?

- R/C Airplanes, Kits, Engines & Radio Systems
- R/C Aircraft related stuff & support equipment
- NO Cars/Boats
- NO Unrelated Stuff

When:

Registration Begins @ 6:45 am
Viewing @ 8:15 am
Auction Begins @ 9:00 am

Details:

- \$5.00 Admission: includes Bidder's Card
- \$20.00 Minimum Opening Bid. Nothing will be sold for less than \$20
- Commission of \$5 or 10% , whichever is greater, **on ALL ITEMS**
- SELLER MUST attach a brief description to EACH ITEM being sold.
- Pre-Registration Available for Sellers
- BUYBACKS @10% up to a maximum fee of \$20
- Credit Cards will be accepted for auction and concession purchases. A 3% convenience fee will be applied to all card purchases.

Questions?

- Email Auction@TCRConline.com
- Call Bob 612-964-8877
- <http://www.tcrconline.com/pages.auction/htm>

Concessions

- Hot Coffee and Donuts
- Soda/Pop/Water
- Sub Sandwiches

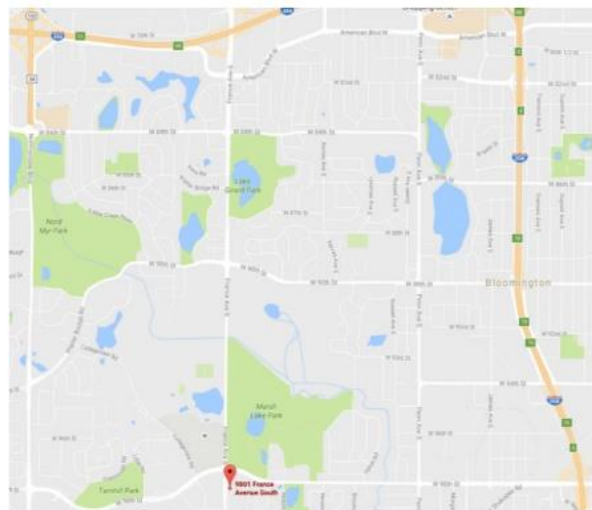
No food or drink in the bidding area

Silent Auction

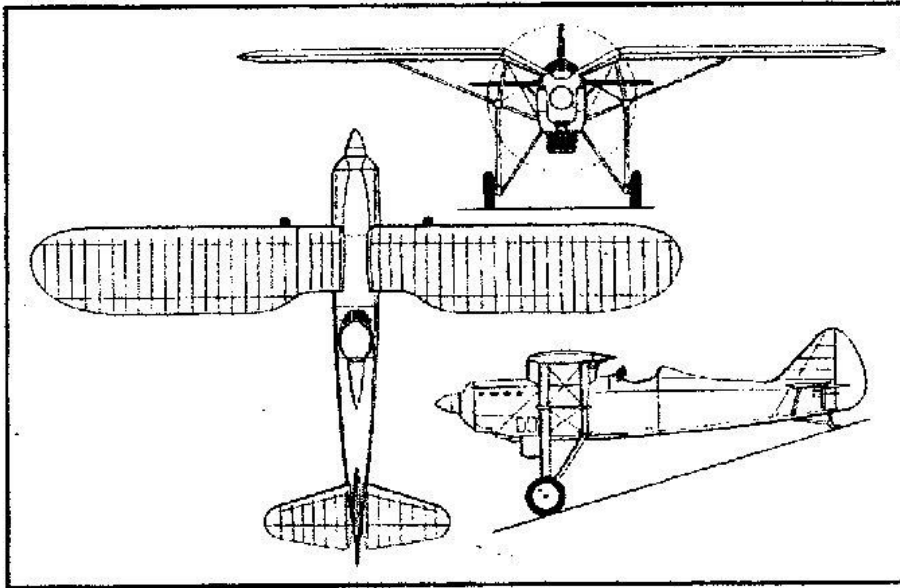
- For Items \$125 and up
- One Hour Exposure for all items in Silent Auction
- 5 items sold each HOUR for 6 hours
- Set your minimum (\$125 or higher), Bidders bid for one hour. Item sold to highest bidder
- Limited to 1st 30 sellers who choose this option
- **Items are shown at random**

Bargain Table

- Items sold at fixed price \$15 - \$30, predetermined by Seller
- All Day Exposure
- All Items sold at the table
- \$5 flat fee commission



January Mystery Plane



TCRC Apparel To Be Ordered

The TCRC Board has decided to purchase new TCRC apparel that will be on sale to club members.

Secretary Ken Weddell will be making the order in the next few weeks. Apparel will include hats, T-shirts, shirts, sweatshirts, etc.

Let Ken know that you are interested so he has an idea of numbers and sizes to order. ☺

Calendar

- Jan. 1 Happy New Year!
- Jan. 7 1st Qtr. Board Meeting
President Bob's Home
- Jan. 11 All Season Flyer
Kick-Off
Jordan Field
10-10-10 Rule
- Jan. 14 TCRC Membership
Meeting, 7:00 PM
CrossPoint Church
Meeting & Zoom
Session
- Jan. 15 Deadline for
TCRC Dues
Discount
- Jan. 31 Auction Set-Up
CrossPoint Church
5:00 PM
- Feb. 1 TCRC Auction
CrossPoint Church
France Ave. and 98th
Bloomington, MN

THE TCRC FLARE OUT Monthly Newsletter



TWIN CITY RADIO CONTROLLERS INC.

Purpose: To preserve, encourage, and further develop the hobby of building and flying radio controlled model airplanes.

2025 Officers

- President **Bob Breisemeister**
612-964-8877
- Vice President
- Secretary **Ken Weddell**
952-500-3446
- Treasurer **Tim Wirtz**
952-941-5357

TCRC Flare Out

- Editor **James R. Cook** 952-200-2030
- Publishers: **Tom Hall** 515-664-7674

Website: <http://www.tcrconline.com>

TCRC meets every month on the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall of CrossPoint Church located on the southeastern corner of the intersection of 98th Street and France Avenue in Bloomington. Guests are welcome to attend these meetings.

18304

If someone were injured at the TCRC flying field and you had to call 911, what would you tell the operator for the location of the emergency? You would tell the operator the fire number for our field: 18304.

For safety reasons, it is very important every member knows our fire number. Hopefully we will have the fire number prominently displayed in the shelter at the field in the very near future. ☺

The Addiction

by Sherwood Heggen

I had heard of this organization but never knew anyone who had used it. But here I am on the advice (demand) of my wife and the minister of my church. I didn't think I was hurting anyone. It was all very innocent. So, here I am at this meeting, and it was my turn to introduce myself. I stood and heard my self say, "Hi, my name is Chuck Benson. I am a balsaholic and I need help. There was comforting relief in just saying those few words. I was now officially a member of Balsa Anonymous.

Where did this all start? One never knows the exact time when something like this starts. My father messed around with a little wood model airplane for a while but then he found the game of golf. I didn't see him around on weekends much after that. A buddy of mine in high school found an old control line engine in his folk's garage that his dad had tried to run when he was younger. My buddy built a control line airplane from a kit for the engine, crashed it, and gave up on the idea of model airplanes. He said I could have the airplane, so I took it. It needed some repair which I found interesting. I was handy in making things and a local hobby shop sold balsa which I needed for making new ribs and such. I had never felt a piece of sheet balsa before. It had a soft, light, and pleasant feel. The fragrance was lightly sharp and woody which penetrated my liking. With what I felt sufficient to replace the broken parts, I paid the hobby shop clerk, hopped on my bike with the balsa under my arm, and headed home. I set up a makeshift workshop in my bedroom. An old card table sufficed for a work bench. A short length of a 1x4 pine board was my cutting board, a single edge razor was my cutting tool, some bits of sandpaper, and Elmer's white glue was going to hold it all together. I finished the airplane and attempted to fly it with the same success as my buddy. Maybe flying in circles just wasn't for me. But the allurements of balsa continued in me.

Sometime later the urge to feel and smell the balsa again crept back into my longing. I journeyed down to the hobby shop on my bike to look around. There they had balsa airplane kits which were guaranteed to fly. The shop clerk let me open the box to inspect the contents. Wafting from the opened box was the intoxicating fragrance of balsa wood. I picked up a wing tip block and felt its warm, smooth, and friendly texture. Other parts in the box seemed to want to be touched. I had to take it home to the bedroom workshop. It cost most of the money I had, but cost was no object at that point.

Later at home in my bedroom workshop I opened the box and absorbed the alluring fragrance of balsa. An airplane was to be built from the box's contents which urged me on to work the balsa. It was easy to cut, sand, and fit into the proper place to create the end result. Eventually, an airplane was in front of me. I loved the sight of the finished structure with its little wings stretched out begging "Fly Me". To realize flight, an engine, radio, and support equipment were required. Money to buy the support equipment purchase was earned by doing odd jobs after school and weekends. When school homework was finished, the balsa called me back to the bedroom workshop to enjoy its pleasure. Over the years, the desire to work with balsa intensified and other important things of life went to the wayside. One balsa airplane after another was created by this uncontrollable desire for balsa. Eventually a wife and kids somehow came along. Hours huddled in the workshop over my obsession for balsa started to erode my relationship with my wife. Despite my urging her to join me, she objected to any association with balsa. Yet my desire to enjoy the effect of balsa remained gripping. Just to be sure I wouldn't run out, I would take advantage of the bundle sales through the big name balsa companies. I felt compelled to take advantage of the sales for 20-count bundles of 1/16", 3/32" 1/8", 1/4 " sheets. They were tucked away in my workshop out of sight to make it seem like I had no problem. I knew the problem was getting worse, but somehow, I didn't care. Building continued and the pleasure of balsa became stronger with each project.

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The Addiction

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The obsession with balsa began to be threatened one day when my wife came into my shop to call me for dinner. She found me in a weird state of throwing balsa dust and shavings into the air and letting them shower down on me as I enjoyed their enchanting fragrance. After I recovered from a serious sneezing and coughing episode from inhaling the dust, she knew there had to be an intervention. She knew our minister had to be involved because he would know what to do.

So. There I was standing there in that room with a group of balsaholics stating my name and confessing I needed help, and help was on the way. It wasn't an easy time. It was painful. I was convinced by those who knew "better" I had to rid our home and my life of all balsa stock and airplanes. After the meeting, my wife, minister, and counselor assisted me in removing all of the equipment from my airplanes and then hunted down the stashed balsa. A celebration of release was held with a roaring balsa bonfire.

My life had changed but it wasn't all for the good. Balsaholics Anonymous was a small organization without a lot of funding and didn't have a great recovery program. There was an issue of a hole in my life where the balsa used to be. Would I ever be the same as I was before my encounter with balsa? My counselor seemed to understand but he pretty much got out of the picture once all the balsa had been destroyed. He did mention there was a substitute for balsa. It was called foam airplanes, and they were already built and ready to fly with little electric motors to power them. I liked what I heard and found many sources on the Internet for beautiful scale models that were precisely detailed like the real thing. It was amazing that one could own such an incredible looking model with no work involved. I ordered two models -- one was a Piper Cub and the other a Corsair with retracts! Three days later, their box arrived at my doorstep. I carefully opened the box and beheld two highly detailed foam scale models. All I had to do to make them flight ready was to charge the battery, bind the receiver to my transmitter, and go fly.

The following day was sunny and calm and perfect for a test hop of the Cub. All went well. I was flying again! I had missed that part of the hobby but now was back into it. Many flights took place over the next few days with both the Cub and the Corsair. Eventually, the Cub and Corsair developed a lot of hangar rash and some crash damage repair and weren't looking as good as new. It was time to see what else was out there that would be nice to have. Big Time Hobby was having a 30% off sale on WWII fighters at the right time for my need for new. I figured if I bought three, it would be a savings as if I had only bought two -- so the purchase was made. With their soon arrival, I was back in business with great looking models. The Cub and Corsair sat in the corner of the

workshop while the new ones got all of the flying time. That Christmas, my kids gave me a new and improved version of ready to fly foam airplanes. The skin was smooth, not bumpy looking like my other models, and it was much bigger which gave it smoother flight. I was infatuated with the foam airplanes. How easy it was to gain new planes with only the clicks of a few computer keys and then see the boxes show up at my front door. Much wanted more and I was beginning to wonder -- how many is too many? I love them all!

My wife eventually noticed a pattern and she was concerned. A short time later, I found myself with her and my minister in a meeting room with other like-minded men. It was my time to introduce myself. I stood and heard myself say, "Hi, my name is Chuck Benson. I am a foamaholic and I need help." ☺

Show & Tell Data Form

Bringing a plane to the TCRC meeting for Show & Tell?

If you are, be sure to go to the club website TCRCOnline.com and print out a blank Show & Tell Data Form. Fill this out and make sure it gets to the newsletter editor, Jim Cook so that the correct information shows up about your new airplane in the newsletter.

Also, if Jim is not at the meeting, make sure someone takes a picture of your new masterpiece and emails the picture to Jim also. If he is not at the meeting, you can have someone take a picture of the completed form and email that picture to him also. ☺

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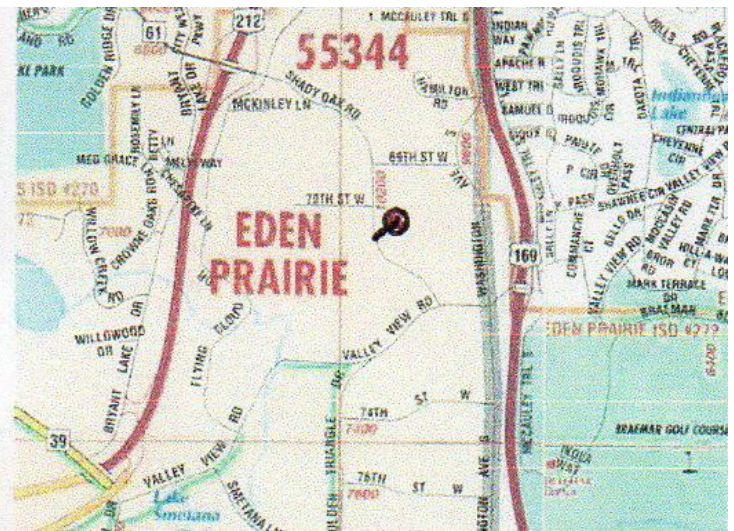
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