



# SAM Says

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**Salinasareamodelers  
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AMA Charter  
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## SAM Memorial Fly-In

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This years memorial fly-in was a great success. More that twenty pilots participated, and we had a lot of fun. Under the heading “you can’t make this stuff up” we note Howard’s tree-top landing. In an effort to ditch his crippled bird in the grass he inadvertently put it in a tree. This might have worked out just as well as there was very little damage to this big, beautiful bird, and Howard’s sense of humor survived intact.



Big Bird, Small Tree

### Special points of interest:

- \* Remember to pack-out all of your garbage.
- \* Sign-up to cook at Rudder gates
- \* LiPo safety page 5



Neatly engineered control panel on Brian Smith's T-6

## SAM Memorial Fly-In



Also seen at the memorial fly-in was this 1:3 scale Piper Cub L-4 finished in Air Force colors. It features a four cylinder, four stroke O.S. 240. Surprisingly quiet, the plane flew very scale like.

## SAM Minutes

### SAM CLUB MEETING

May 15, 12

The May meeting of the Salinas Area Modelers was called to order by President Chris Meharg at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was held at the Landing Zone Restaurant in the Salinas Municipal Airport Terminal.

Board members present were Chris Meharg, John Midgorden, Walt McCommons, Dennis Stanley and Bob McGregor. Club members present were Jack Jellá, Gary Mallett, Ed Glynn, Chuck Bosso, Alan Brown, Robert Paravicini (new member) and Gary Sobak. There were two visitors, Ben Cooper and Surtton Kundull.

Treasurer Bob McGregor gave a report of the finances in the Club's checking and savings accounts. He also shared that the club membership is now 86.

### Old Business

*Use Permit:* McGregor explained that the County has waived the application fee for initiating a new Use Permit (over \$700). He did have to pay \$240 for the application to make an application to renew the Use Permit. Bob is still waiting for the packet from the County so he can apply for a new Use Permit. In the past the Lease and Use Permit have been different lengths of time, expiring at different times. This time around the club will be trying to get the County to tie the Use Permit to the Lease, which is renewable every 5 years. There is little point in having them separate.

*Secretary:* President Meharg announced that Gary Sobak has volunteered to fill Midgorden's unexpired term as secretary. He will begin his duties in June.

*Fun Fly:* Dennis Stanley shared several ideas that he has for a Fun Fly event at the Club's field, probably in conjunction with a future RudderGate Saturday. There was much discussion of ideas. Alan Brown share several interesting ideas used by the RC Bees Club in Watsonville. There was sentiment to just go ahead, hold the event, and see how Dennis' ideas work out.

## SAM Minutes (continued)

### New Business

*Trash Issue:* President Meharg brought up the need for help in getting rid of the trash, especially following events when the cook shack is in operation. Dennis Stanley has offered to help take trash home. However, there is still the problem with members leaving trash at the field when they come out to fly. REMEMBER, YOU BRING IT IN, YOU TAKE IT HOME. The Board will be providing garbage bags (in the First Aid Box) to allow members to take home remains of once flyable but unreparable aircraft.

*Rudder gates:* For the benefit of new members present Chris explains how the club's Rudder gate events work. Chris also announced that the September 29<sup>th</sup> Rudder gate will be held at the Float Fly on September 15<sup>th</sup>. A cook sign up sheet will be posted at the field soon.

*Jim Green:* Longtime member of SAM Jim Green passed away recently. The Board authorized monies for Jim's favorite charity.

*LiPo Battery Danger:* Dennis shared Kevin Jones' experience of having a LiPo battery in his helicopter catch fire some 12 hours after it was flown, even though it was disconnected. Fortunately his smoke alarm woke them in the middle of the night. However their home suffered a great deal of smoke damage. A word to the wise, store your LiPo batteries in a steel box.

*Glider Contests:* With the glider contests starting up again in June Bob McGregor asked if Malcolm Beety will be able to CD the contest. He volunteered to help if Malcolm is unavailable.

### Show and Tell

There was no Show and Tell this month.

### Program

Alan Brown presented a discussion of Drag and Reynolds Number as they pertain to model aircraft.

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## Schedule of Events

### June

2 - Glider Contest	SAM Field
4 - Board Mtg.	Location to be announced
6 - Club Meeting	Salinas Airport
16 - Field Work Day	SAM Field
30 - Rudder gate	SAM Field

### July

2 - Board Mtg.	Location to be announced
5 - Club Meeting (a Thursday)	Salinas Airport
7 - Glider Contest	SAM Field
14 - Memorial Fun Fly	SAM Field
28 - Rudder gate	SAM Field
30 - Board Mtg.	Location to be announced

### August

1 - Club Meeting	Salinas Airport
11 - T-34 Race	SAM Field
4 - Glider Contest	SAM Field
24-26 - Scale Fun Fly	SAM Field

### September

1 - Glider Contest	SAM Field
3 - Board Mtg.	Location to be announced
3 - Labor Day Fly In	SAM Field
5 - Club Meeting	Salinas Airport
14-16 - Float Fly & Rudder gate	Lake San Antonio
22 - Field Work Day	SAM Field

### October

1 - Board Mtg.	Location to be announced
3 - Club Meeting	Salinas Airport
6 - Electric Fun Fly	SAM Field
12-14 - Float Fly	Lake San Antonio
27 - Rudder gate	SAM Field

### November

5 - Board Mtg.	Location to be announced
7 - Board/Club Meeting	Salinas Airport

### December

1 - Toys/Tots Fun Fly	SAM Field
1 - Annual Banquet	Landing Zone

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## LiPo Battery Pack Ignites In Home

Recently Kevin Jones had a lithium polymer battery catch fire in his house. Here's his story.

As you might know the leading cause of LiPo fires is mischarging the pack, either through improper settings in the charger or charger malfunction. The second leading cause is a short circuit in the battery pack. The beauty of the modern LiPo packs is their ability to give up power very fast. Unfortunately that is also their greatest liability. When shorted they will give up power much more quickly than their ratings suggest, turning wiring into molten metal, and creating intense heat within the cell due the rapid chemical reaction taking place. A white hot jet of high temperature gas bursts through the cell and vents until the chemical potential energy is depleted. The intense heat generated will easily ignite flammables near the jet.

These shorts are rarely caused by physical deformation of the cells. I think several of you have experimented with setting off old packs by deforming them in some way and have found the results unimpressive. On the other hand, if you short the leads for a few seconds the reaction is very impressive.

The fire investigator who visited my house had seen a number of LiPo fires; all while charging, and all in the garage where there was no smoke alarm, resulting in significant damage to the home. The cause of the fire at my house was one that I had not heard of.

I fly helicopters and most of my fleet reside in the garage, but a



Remains of fire stricken helicopter

few of the electrics sit on a cabinet in my study; conversation pieces really. I usually leave uncharged packs in them so that they sit right. Recently I flew one of these a few times. The batteries were old, but didn't show signs of damage, and charged up just fine. After flying, the battery, motor, and ESC were not hot and didn't show any signs of impending doom.

That evening I brought the helicopter back into the study with the battery pack still onboard. Then at 3 a.m. the next morning my wife and I were woken up by the smoke alarm. I discovered the helicopter with the entire front-end engulfed in flames. This was 15 hours after a quite unremarkable flight.

Fortunately I found the burning helicopter quickly, and it was next to a sliding glass door. I grabbed it by the tail boom and through it out the door. Unfortunately the Velcro securing the battery pack to the helicopter had melted and the battery pack was left on the cabinet still burning. I grabbed it with bare fingers and chucked it out. I did sustain a few blisters, but felt nothing at the time. I then put the fire

out with a fire extinguisher. Needless to say the helicopter and all of the electronics were a total loss. Damage to the house was minimal, but still repairs and cleaning ran about \$10,000.

It is difficult to say with certainty why the pack ignited. But, a leading theory is that the old pack, not having been used much for an extended period of time, had swollen a bit in the hours after the flight breaking a solder joint and causing an internal short.

This event has forced me to rethink my battery storage methods. First, I went through my collection of LiPo's and tossed out any that showed any puffiness, or were old and no longer useful. "If you don't think you will use them, there is no reason to keep them". I still store some models in the house, but without batteries. All of my batteries are now stored in a vented metal cabinet in the garage. I'm also adding a heat alarm in the garage, hopefully tied to the house smoke alarm system.

In more than a decade of using LiPo's, this is the first accident that I have experienced, and I have no plans to stop using them. With correct charging, health monitoring, and proper storage they are safe. This is a case where safe battery storage would have contained the damage.