

PCC Newsletter



November 2008

Next Meeting: November 19, 2008

AMA Chartered Club # 139

Visit: <http://flypcc.org/>

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TOM "RUSTY" AKIN

Longtime PCC member Tom "Rusty" Akin died Saturday evening, Oct. 18, after a brave battle with pneumonia.

Rusty, a World War II and Korean Conflict veteran, was an expert auto mechanic and avid radio control airplane builder and flyer.

A longtime resident of Pacifica, he was 86. Rusty was married to his wife Mary for 62 years. He is survived by two children and five grandchildren.

FIELD NEWS

Though the group's lease has ended on our former field, we are in discussions with a local landowner who has a very promising piece of land he's interested in renting to us.

Big thanks to member George Golda for making contact with the landowner. The deal isn't done — we're still sorting out our priorities and his — but so far this looks very good.

Come to the Nov. 19 meeting to hear the latest developments.

FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Jake Chichilitti

Hello Everyone,

In case you haven't heard, our beloved club has lost its flying field. I guess we should have known it was coming when we heard Mr. Deeney was selling some of his property. It still came as a shock to me when I heard the news. We are actively searching for a new field and are offering a \$1,000 finder's fee for a new flying site within ten miles or so of our old field. We would like to have a long-term lease on the site. Keep your

eyes and ears open for possible flying sites. You never know what will turn up.

I can't believe we removed everything from our site in just two weekends. I spent two Saturdays helping out and I know some of you were there for all four days. It was a tremendous effort, thanks to everyone who helped out, but a special thanks has to go to Frank Phelps. As you all know Frank is not in the best of health and he was at the field pulling nails from the runway and helping out as best he could. You raised the bar, Frank.

We had one last work party on Sunday the 26th to move our astroturf and a few remaining tables down to the cut by our storage container. The field has been plowed and you would never know there was a flying field on the property.

There is some good news. We have a lead on a potential site a little closer to Half Moon Bay. It would be an ideal flying site and is on the east side of Hwy 1. I'm sure Ken will have more to report at the November meeting.

See you at the meeting,

—**Jake**

MINUTES: OCTOBER 15, 2008

Mike Nadler

President Ken Martinez called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

Minutes were approved as printed in the newsletter.

No raffle prize tonight.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TREASURER: Ellsworth Crowell gave the treasurer's report. We're still in the black.

MEMBERSHIP: No new members.

FLIGHT PROFICIENCY: No new flight proficiency certificates.

NEW BUSINESS: Field cleanup is complete, though some equipment and sheds remain at the flying site.

No new leads on another field.

There was lots of discussion about what we should do and where we should look.

Dennis Lowry volunteered to coordinate the search efforts.

The annual PCC Christmas Party will be held Saturday, Jan. 24, at Harry's Hofbrau in Redwood City.

There was discussion regarding the club's leadership. Should it remain as is, or should the board of directors manage the club during the search for a field? Not resolved.

Elections will be held at the next meeting.

Pending acquisition of a new field, it was decided to reduce dues to \$20 per year. When we find a new field, dues will increase to support it.

We need to continue our search for a new field.

SHOW & TELL: Jim demonstrated an Easy Star II.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m., followed by the annual Swap Meet.

—*Mike*

IN THE NEWS

The following article appeared in the Oct 15, 2008, issue of the *Half Moon Bay Review* and is Copyright © 2008 Half Moon Bay Review. Reprinted by permission.

Model airplane group shot down once again New property owner forces radio fliers to migrate

By Greg Thomas

A group of old-timers rolled up the last bit of AstroTurf airstrip over the weekend under a favorite bit of Coastside airspace. The occasion signifies yet another in a series of displacements for the Peninsula Channel Commanders over the group's 47 years of operation.

For more than 10 years, the group, a nonprofit organization created by and for radio-controlled model plane enthusiasts, ruled the skies south of Half Moon Bay near Martin's Beach. But shortly after the parcel exchanged hands in August, the club received a notice of eviction from the new corporate owners of the 53-acre property, Martin's Beach, LLC. The Commanders have until Halloween to take off.

"The new property managers have said it's a problem that we're flying over their beach," said Ken Martinez, Commanders president. "More than likely they can see planes from the beach, even though we're not flying over the beach. I think this new company doesn't want to (risk) the headache of any people complaining about the planes flying overhead."

Frank Phelps rolls up the turf runway of the Peninsula Channel Commanders airstrip after a new landowner served notice on the club to cease operations on the premises. Photo by Lars Howlett.

Martinez said the corporation hasn't been returning phone calls, essentially turning a deaf ear to the pleas of the club's 110 members.

Several fliers met and dismantled the 500-foot airstrip over the weekend — the first and most significant of steps members are taking to uproot their 10-year ties to the property. The only thing left to do is to remove the maintenance storage container and rolls of AstroTurf, Martinez said.

"We've been screwed again," said Alonzo Richardson, recalling several relocations the group has been forced to make since its inception as an affiliate of the Academy of Model Aeronautics in 1961. The 92-year-old World War II pilot veteran is revered as the patriarch of the club.

"We did everything we could do to be a good neighbor to contribute to the community activities, and things were going fine until Mr. Deeney had to sell the property," he said. "The people who bought it wouldn't hear anything except us getting the hell out of there."

Richardson remembers when the club was first ousted in the late 1960s from their original fly zone atop Trousdale Drive in Burlingame and found land in undeveloped Foster City. Throughout their five-year stint in Foster City, group members were bulldozed out of their sites several times by developers and county agencies, Richardson recalled.

"We had to move about five times to get out of the way of tractors (when they were developing the neighborhood)," he said. "Finally we went to Half Moon Bay to Alves Dairy (in the early 1970s) and we had a wonderful set up there — probably the best ever. But again (in 2000), the housing development got us, the county took over the property and we had to sell our assets, such as we had, to the county."

That's when the group moved to its most recent field near Martin's Beach. But now the group is once again being removed against the will of its members.

"It's a shame," Richardson said. "It seems the county doesn't have a place for radio fliers anymore."

The majority of Commanders members are over 65 years old; many of them long-time members who understand model airplane flying to be more than just a hobby.

"It teaches discipline and skill because a lot of people build their own airplanes," member Harry Smith said. "You build them from the bones up, so to speak. It can be an educational thing.

"It's not something that's just a pastime," he said. "The stuff we use in the military these days came about from this type of radio-controlled flying."

Over the course of their more than 40-year stay in Half Moon Bay, group members have tried to engage the community to gain recognition and visibility — working with the Boy Scouts of America to give lessons, and air time to anyone who stopped by the strip.

Two years ago, Commanders membership expanded when Peninsula Aeromodelers, a similar group of radio fliers, was displaced from its fly zone on the 208-acre Wavecrest property due to a "conflict of landowners," Martinez said. The Aeromodelers ran afoul of the city of Half Moon Bay, which eventually issued a cease-and-desist order against the club.

"That's not an uncommon situation," according to Wes De Cou, Academy for Model Aeronautics western region flying site coordinator. "Generally when the properties change hands this becomes an issue whether they can stay on the property or not."

De Cou said he's been advising "an awful lot" of AMA clubs caught in desperate circumstances recently. He recommends groups always be on the lookout for potential fields to move to at a moment's notice, even if they already have secured a location. In the Commanders case, he suggested talking to San Mateo County Parks and Recreation.

Commanders members are currently scouring nearby areas and contacting county agencies, but say they are a bit anxious trying to find a new location.

"We certainly hope (that the group survives the transition), but a flying club can't do a whole lot or attract new membership if we don't find a place to fly," Smith said.

"We're not in absolutely critical times but moving is expensive, which cuts into the funds," Martinez said. "If we

don't get something really fast, that'll make it tough for the club to continue."

For more information on the club, visit the Peninsula Channel Commanders' Web page: flypcc.org.

(The PCC thanks the [Half Moon Bay Review](#), writer Greg Thomas and photographer Lars Howlett for the excellent article. Here's a link to the [original article](#) on the *Half Moon Bay Review* website.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

November

- 1 Swap Meet @ SCCMAS, Morgan Hill
- 19 PCC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dave Chetcuti Room

December

- 17 PCC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dave Chetcuti Room

January

- 21 PCC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dave Chetcuti Room

February

- 18 PCC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dave Chetcuti Room

March

- 18 PCC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dave Chetcuti Room

April

- 15 PCC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dave Chetcuti Room

Newsletter Submission Deadline: Third Tuesday before the next meeting.

PICTURES

Photos by Eric Einarsson, Bruce Crawford and Pete Johnson. You can view these in color at <http://flypcc.org/coppermine/>

Help make the newsletter and website better: take pictures and send them in! Want to learn how? Check out this helpful page: [How to Send Photos](#).

PCC members pry loose the AstroTurf carpet.

Lots of hands make it possible to roll this stuff up.

The first cleanup weekend was impressively productive.

Kicking works about as well as pushing!

These guys worked their buns off.

The work crew takes a little break.

Bruce Crawford dismantles the field camera.

Loading the container.

The field is largely disassembled.

Who needs chairs?

Ken Martinez & Dennis Lowry mapped parts for reassembly.

Dennis charts where everything goes.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 19, 2008, 7:30 p.m.