

**TRI-COUNTY**

# WINGSNAPPERS



**THE CONTROL TOWER NEWSLETTER**

AMA 573, IMAA 138

[www.tcws.org](http://www.tcws.org)

March 2006

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**REMINDER - Meetings are on the third Sunday of the month at the Hamburg Moose Lodge, starting at 1:30 PM.**

**NEXT MEMBER MEETING:  
SUNDAY, 19 MARCH 2006 @ 1:30 PM  
HAMBURG MOOSE LODGE**

**DIRECTIONS TO MOOSE LODGE:**  
Hamburg Exit from Route 22  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 12 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Hamburg, PA  
**OFFICIAL FIELD LOCATION ADDRESS:**  
Tri-County Wingsnappers, Inc.  
329 Balthaser Road  
Lenhartsville, PA 19534

Tri-County Wingsnappers, Inc.  
c/o David Kilmer  
8-6 Heather Hts.  
Reading, PA 19606

## President's Message...

We had an excellent turnout for our February meeting (22!), thanks to all who attended and contributed! I'd like to thank Karen Loop for volunteering to take the necessary training class to get a food certificate for our club. I'd also like to thank Lee Buskirk for finding someone with a current certificate to cover us in the kitchen at the Hamburg Swap Meet! Without this certification, we would be unable to prepare any food on site, and a good portion of our proceeds from the swap meet would be lost. Lee & his wife have also volunteered to work the grill for us this year at Hamburg.

Our Hamburg Swap Meet is only a few weeks away, I'd like to encourage all members to help in any way they can. This is our largest fundraiser, and we need to be certain it continues to be a success! Our treasury is at an all time low, so this year, is more important than ever!

That brings me to another unpleasant topic... raising our dues. I'm am going to "advertise" a proposal to increase our dues for two more meetings before taking a membership vote at April's meeting (see this months minutes for details). The dues increase would take effect in 2007.

On a lighter note, I look forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting, and at the field, as the weather warms up!

Best Regards,

Paul Hartley

## New Look!

The observant among you might have noticed the newsletter has taken on a slightly different look this month! I'm interested to know what YOU think about it, so please let me know....good, bad or indifferent! This is YOUR newsletter, and I want to make it as interesting and worthwhile as possible!

I'm also interested in your ideas for articles that would be of interest to the club. So if you have a cool plane on the bench, a new gadget you're crazy about, or a funny story about your latest crash, contact me! You don't have to be a great writer...I can help with any editing or even write it for you with your input. This month, our illustrious club president gets us started with not

one, but TWO articles we hope you'll enjoy. Thanks, Paul for the contributions!!

David Kilmer  
Club Secretary  
iflyslow2002@yahoo.com

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## Unofficial Meeting Minutes...19 February

President Paul Hartley called the meeting to order at 1:30pm at the Hamburg Moose Lodge. (22) members were present.

**The 50-50 drawing** was won by John McLaughlin, from which the club netted \$11.50.

David Kilmer read the minutes from the January meeting, and no additions or corrections were made. Motion was made to approve by Karen loop, seconded by Lee Buskirk, and approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dale Loop read the treasurer's report as of 19 February. John Weidman moved to accept, George Case seconded, and the club voted unanimously to accept Dale's report.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Runway Relocation Project:** As announced in the last newsletter, the runway relocation issue is now dead. Paul thanked Lee Buskirk and the rest of the Relocation Committee for their efforts and time.

**Field Care:** Lee Buskirk advised the club that the crabgrass treatment has been purchased and will be applied in the Spring. Dennis Christman has also fixed one of the tires on the lawn mower (thanks Dennis!).

**Union Fire Company Lawsuit:** No news since January.

**2006 Events:** There are still tables available for our annual swap meet. Paul announced that the club needs to locate someone with a food service safety certificate to be present at the swap meet if we are to serve food this year. Suggestions from the floor included hiring an individual who already has such a certificate to be present at the event. Another suggestion was that we allow a Ladies Auxiliary from one of the fire companies to handle all food prep and sales. Because of the short time left before the swap meet, it was agreed that John Weidman would attempt to locate someone outside the club who already has the necessary certification and will be able to be on site all day for a nominal fee. In addition, Terry Miller proposed that Karen Loop be allowed to take the necessary classes at the club's

expense to gain this certification so that future events that include food sales will not be hindered. George Case seconded the motion, and all except Karen voted in favor (I think she was kidding!). Lee Buskirk also volunteered the services of his wife and himself for cooking duties at the swap meet (thanks Lee!).

**Pig Roast:** Dale Loop reported plans and details for our third annual Pig Roast, to be held August 6th at the field. Admission is free to club members and family. The public is welcome, and will be charged \$5 per person. Donations gladly accepted (contact Dale or Karen Loop). A sign-up sheet will be posted at the field. Please sign up if you plan to attend. We also need volunteers to bring food (again, sign-up sheets will be posted at the field with suggested items). The Pig Roast will be held in conjunction with.....

**The 2006 Fun Fly & Fundraiser:** Dale Loop reported on plans for this year's Fun Fly. A sign-up sheet will be posted at the field for members who want to compete in Touch & Go, "Two Rolls & Two Loops", Longest Flight, Take-Off & Land, and Spot Landing events. Rain Date will be the following weekend (August 13th).

**BCTV Show:** The club thanked Bud Wunder for setting up the BCTV show that featured TCWS. There is a video of the show available on the web site for your viewing pleasure!

**New Shed:** Paul Hartley proposed that we start a "Building Fund" and solicit contributions from our members. All members present agreed that Dale Loop will set up separate account for this purpose (and for any future special projects that may arise). Paul will also apply to the AMA for a Flying Site Development/Improvement Grant. If our \$3000 shed qualifies, we would be eligible for up to \$300 in grant money from the AMA.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Thanks to Jim Pauley,** who kindly donated a brand new Hitec 3-Channel 72MHz AM transmitter with two servos to be used by the club as a raffle item.

**Bulk Fuel Sale:** Once again the club will make bulk fuel available to its members at a nominal rate. Due to rises in the cost of fuel, the price this year will be \$10/gal. As usual, you'll need to provide your own containers, and your order (and payment) must be in Terry Miller's hands no later than Monday, April 10th. Distribution will take place at the April meeting (April 16th).

**Leader Club Status:** Paul Hartley reported on the AMA Leader Club Awards program, which recognizes the best R/C clubs throughout the US. Paul recommended the club seek to attain "Silver" status, and perhaps even "Gold" Status, by meeting AMA-specified goals

pertaining to flying site safety, public event participation that promotes the hobby, training new pilots, etc.

**Intro Pilot Program:** Paul Hartley also recommended that the club participate in the AMA's "Intro Pilot Program." Paul proposed that we align our club membership requirements for flying at our field with the AMA's program. Details on the "Leader Club" and "Intro Pilot" programs can be found in the latest issue of *Model Aviation* magazine. Six club members have already been recruited to act as "intro pilots" and will be able to help potential new pilots to learn to fly safely in a controlled club environment while also encouraging AMA and club membership. Any club members willing to participate in this program is encouraged to let Paul know! Current Intro Pilots are: Jack Hilbert, John Messersmith, Dave Renninger, Lee Buskirk, Eric Rudjord, and Paul Hartley (who will be available mainly for heli training...and possibly SPAD training?).

**Club Dues Restructuring:** Paul Hartley recommended we modify the wording that describes the club's existing dues structure to more clearly spell out what the dues, and fees are for, and how they are applied. This does not change the dues or late fees, but rather makes it clearer to a new or renewing member what part of their membership cost is dues, what part is the late fee, and what part is the initiation fee.

**Pro-Rating Club Dues:** Paul Hartley proposed that we pro-rate the dues portion of the of the cost to new members that join the club, depending on when they join. Currently new members pay the full "new member" dues (\$75) regardless of when they join (with the only exception being that those who join after October already have the following year included in their membership). Paul proposed that we pro-rate the dues portion on a monthly basis, so that a new member joining in July, for example, would pay 6/12 (or 1/2) of the dues portion, and all of the initiation fee (\$25)...I.e.—\$25 + \$25 + \$50 total. This would encourage potential new members not to delay joining the club until the next year.

**Increasing Club Dues:** Paul Hartley proposed that beginning with 2007 memberships, dues should be raised to \$65 for individuals (from the current \$50), and \$100 for families (from the current \$75). Initiation/late fee will remain at \$25 under this proposal. While such changes to the club's dues technically only require approval of the Board of Directors, Paul proposed that the issue be discussed in several meetings, much as we would for a change to the bylaws. Several members present at the meeting compared our dues with those of other clubs they either belong to or were aware of. It was also mentioned that for some members on a fixed income, a dues increase could be difficult to absorb.

This proposal will be discussed again at future meetings, and members' comments, suggestions, or objections will be heard.

**New TCWS Event:** Jeff Shriver made a presentation about the club's participation in display at the DaVinci Discovery Center in Allentown on May 26th and 27th (Friday and Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend). The club needs volunteers to man the display table, fly demo's at the adjoining field (small electric planes and/or heli's only!). Members who have interesting aircraft to loan to the display are also welcome to volunteer. The goal is to generate interest in the club, and promote the hobby in a positive way.

**Miscellaneous:** George Case mentioned that pins #38 and #43 are missing. If you use either of these channels, please check your flight box to make sure you didn't accidentally take the pins home!

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Next meeting will be Sunday, March 19th at the Moose.

If you have a broadband internet connection, you can now download the BCTV broadcast that featured our very own Bud Wunder and Paul Hartley!

**Motion was made by George Case to adjourn the meeting @ 3pm.** Karen Loop seconded, and all present voted to approve.

### UPCOMING R/C EVENTS

**March 11<sup>th</sup>:** CPAA's 26th Annual Radio Control Flea Market in Lebanon, PA at the Lebanon Fairgrounds. [www.cpaa.us](http://www.cpaa.us)

**March 17<sup>th</sup>:** 11th Annual Bucks County RC Flea Market, 6:45pm, at the Central Bucks West High School Cafeteria. [www.buckscountyr.com](http://www.buckscountyr.com)

**March 25<sup>th</sup>:** 13th Annual TCWS Swap Meet at the Hamburg Field House. [www.tcws.org](http://www.tcws.org)

**April 16<sup>th</sup>:** TCWS bulk fuel sale distribution. Orders and payment due to Terry Miller by April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**May 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>:** TCWS RC plane & heli display and demo at Da Vinci Discovery Center in Allentown.

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## RC Electronics: Spektrum DSM Radios for RC Aircraft

By Paul Hartley

Wouldn't it be nice if we had RC aircraft radios that automatically handled frequency management for us by finding a free channel when we turn the radio on? Wouldn't it be nice if our radios used two channels to control our models with redundancy, so if we got interference on one channel, we could still control our model with the second channel? Well now an RC aircraft radio system has come along that has both of these highly desirable features, and many more.

This new radio system is called the Spektrum DX6. It is designed only for park flyer and micro heli use (limited range), but Spektrum is working on a full range version for larger model aircraft. The DX6 operates on the 2.4GHz frequency band using DSM (Digital Spectrum Modulation) or Spread Spectrum modulation. Spektrum came out with DSM radio systems

for RC ground models about a year ago, and has just released this DX6 system for park flyers & micro helis within the past few months.

Spread spectrum radio systems have been used by the military for years. This type of modulation spreads the data/voice signal energy over a very large bandwidth, making it very difficult to detect & intercept, and very difficult to jam. Cordless phone technology has already evolved over the past few years from 49MHz FM to 900MHz/2.4GHz digital and Spread Spectrum modulation technology. Now, finally, our RC aircraft radio technology has advanced to 2.4GHz DSM technology as well!

When you first turn on the DX6 transmitter, it searches the 80 available channels in its 2.4GHz band, and picks the two with the least noise/interference to operate on. Since the FCC requires all devices operating in this band to pick a free channel and not interfere with other devices, there's virtually zero chance of getting "shot down" by another 2.4GHz device in the area. Operating on two channels gives the system redundancy, so if interference of some type does occur, it is unlikely to affect both control channels simultaneously, and control of your model is unlikely to be interrupted. The tiny receiver even has a separate antenna for each of the two channels that it uses.

Since most of the RF "noise" energy from your model's motor, engine, ESC, etc. is below the 300MHz region, a 2.4GHz radio system like the DX6 is not



susceptible to this source of noise or glitching, like our existing 72MHz systems are.

In my opinion, the introduction of this DX6 system is a milestone in the history of our RC aircraft hobby. I believe our 72MHz FM (PCM/PPM) systems will soon go the way of the 49MHz cordless phones. After Spektrum releases the full range DSM systems, I believe we will start to see a large decline in the 72MHz system sales, with the majority of pilots purchasing the new 2.4GHz DSM systems. If the other giants in RC electronics (Futaba, Hitec, JR, Airtronics, etc.) aren't currently working on their own system for this new band, I'm afraid Spektrum will probably eat their lunch! For those of us with 72MHz transmitters that take RF modules (Futaba 9C, Hitec Optic 6, etc.), it is likely that Spektrum will be making compatible modules to allow us to upgrade them to 2.4GHz DSM (Spektrum makes such modules for multiple brands of ground radios already).

As of this writing, I've already seen one of our TCWS members at the field with one of these new DX6 systems: Dave Renninger. He was flying one of his brushless electric foam planes with it. Dave said that he was so impressed with the DX6, that he has already ordered 4 more receivers to convert more of his foamy and park flyer fleet!

For a very detailed article on the DX6 visit the Spektrum website at <http://www.spektrumrc.com>. For a detailed review, visit the RCUniverse website at <http://www.rcuniverse.com>, and click on the "Reviews & Articles" button at the left of the page.

## RC Helicopters: Two New RTF Micro Helis to Get You Started Inexpensively!

By Paul Hartley

The vast majority of our TCWS members are strictly RC plane pilots, but a few established members and many new members are starting to show up at our field with some helicopters... both micro and nitro. Since I started in RC aviation with a .50-sized nitro helicopter (and subsequently learned to fly planes), I can't resist the urge to try to convert some of you "plank" flyers into "rotorheads" as well!

In my opinion, until a few months ago, there was no beginner heli that was both "easy to fly" and inexpensive. The cheapest helis were small, micro electric, fixed pitch (FP) helis, which are the most difficult type of helis to fly. The easiest helis to learn on are the .30 - .50 sized nitro birds, since they are larger, and much more stable than the tiny micro electrics (especially with some wind). Unfortunately, the nitro helis typically run on the order of \$1200+ to get to the RTF stage, and many beginners have a hard time coughing up that much money to enter a new hobby!

About a year ago, Eflite entered the micro heli market. Their first offering was an inexpensive collective pitch microelectric helicopter called the Blade CP. Now for about \$220, you can get an RTF micro heli that is much easier and more responsive to fly than the FP micro helis costing as much or more!



Even though the Blade CP is much easier to fly than the FP micro helis, it still is not nearly as stable and easy to fly as the .30 - .50 sized nitro helis. Until recently, I still would have recommended that a beginner start with a larger nitro heli if he/she had the resources and planned to stick with the hobby. But there is yet another new player in the micro heli arena... and it's from Eflite yet again!

The Blade CX is a coaxial rotor heli that Eflite introduced only a few months ago. Coax helis are extremely stable... so much so that they are comparable to the larger nitro helis for stability. Coax helis are still fixed pitch, and lack the quick response time of the CP helis, but the coax helis can hover "hands-off" much longer than most other helis, FP or CP. Megatech and Hirobo both had coax helis before the Blade CX came out, but they were much more expensive. The Blade CX retails for about \$190 RTF, while the other coax helis were \$250+. Since Eflite products are distributed through Horizon Hobby, and the CX has already proven to be extremely popular, parts support and availability is likely to be much better than any of the previous coax helis.



With these latest offerings from Eflite, I'd highly recommend the Blade CX as a good beginner heli for those on a tight budget, and the Blade CP would be a good follow-on heli. The nice thing about the CX is that, although you're likely to outgrow it's flight capabilities rather quickly... it's small size and great stability make it one of the easiest helis to fly indoors (I'm considering getting one to fly during these cold winter months)! So even after you've moved on, you're not likely to find another heli that can be as easily flown indoors, in very tight quarters!

I personally own a Blade CP, as do at least two other club members. I flew the CX very briefly at Hobbytown in Allentown and was very impressed. Jack Hilbert has had much more stick time on the CX than I have, so I asked him to give us a first hand review of it... here's what Jack has to say:

*"I have always wanted to fly an R/C helicopter but seeing the frustration and replacement parts cost my son Zachary went through while learning to fly discouraged me from progressing. Working part time at Hobby Town*

USA has given me an opportunity to pay with lots of different R/C 'toys' and especially micro electric helicopters. I originally purchased a RotoFly by Helimax. It is a fixed pitch design with both a main rotor and tail rotor. One word described the learning process - **FRUSTRATED!**

Ultimately, Horizon Hobbies came out with the **BLADE CX** with a co-axial blade design. One word describes this experience as well - **FANTASTIC**. The CX is **EASY** to fly, **FUN** to fly and **INEXPENSIVE** to fly. It's **NOT** meant to be an aerobatic machine and you won't become an Apache pilot flying one **BUT** you **WILL** have fun! I'd recommend it to **ANYONE** thinking about trying helis."

So if any of you plank flyers gets the urge to come over to the "rotorworld", and you don't really want to shell out the money for a .30 -.50 sized nitro... consider picking up a Blade CX to get you started. You may have a hard time finding them though... the CX and CP are selling like hotcakes, and the local and online hobbyshops are having a tough time keeping them in stock!

For more details on the Blade CP and CX, check out the Horizon Hobby website at <http://www.horizonhobby.com> and look under the RC Helicopter section. To see what the masses are saying about the Blade CP or CX, check out the RCUniverse (<http://www.rcuniverse.com>) electric heli forum. Just to give you a feel for the popularity of these two helis... I started the "Blade CX" thread when it was first announced, and the thread already has 520+ posts with over 33,000 hits! The "E-Flight Blade CP" thread has been around much longer, and currently has 2,200+ posts with over 144,000 hits! If you click on the "Reviews & Articles" button on the RCU homepage, you'll also find their review of the Blade CX.

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**CAPTION CONTEST!**

Who is this mystery Club Member, and what the heck is he doing?.....and why?

Submit your captions to me at the next meeting. There is no prize...just the undying admiration of your fellow members! (and if you have a picture that you want the rest of us to make fun of, send it in!

