



Raleigh-Durham Radio Control

Volume 17, Issue 5

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

May 2008

President's Prop-Wash



Larry Lewis

Well Howdy Ya'll,

Wow! Seems just yesterday we were preparing for our spring fly-in, and now we're already in the month of May. A lot has taken place in the recent weeks, and I just want to talk a little about that now. Of course, the most notable event was our spring fly-in April 19th. Yes, it was a successful one as always, and we had a great turn out. But this year's event presented something we're not used to at RDRC. Severe radio interference! Not too far into the event, we were getting numerous complaints about people getting knocked out

of the sky. And it didn't matter what you were on, PCM, PPM, JR, or Futaba. Anything on 72 MHz. and just about any channel. After plane #4 went in, Josh Bunn and I grabbed a cheap scanner, and headed off to what appeared to be, the most effected area. That being, the northeast end of the field. While we were there, two more planes experienced lock out, and crashed in close proximity to us. As CD of the event, I knew it was my responsibility to do the unthinkable. Stop the event. So, after a quick walk back, we did just that. All flying was postponed, and we held a mandatory pilots meeting. We explained to all attendees there was a definite problem, and informed them it was not safe to fly on 72 MHz. at that time. Though it was hard to do this, I think most all of the modelers appreciated our honesty, and with the exception of two or three people, nobody else flew on 72 that day. Also, while walking back to the upper area, and before calling the pilots meeting, I had already placed a call to one of our fellow members, Tom Albright in hopes he may be able to bring a more sophisticated analyzer to our field that day. Tom was very generous, and dropped what he was doing at that moment, and did in fact bring his equipment. After setting up and taking some reading, it was determined we did in fact have a strong level of outside interference, and no doubt was causing our problems that day. Also, as time passed by that day, it was noted to us other members had been experiencing radio lock outs Thursday and Friday before the event. Until we started losing several planes on the 19th, most of these guys were still wondering what went wrong with their radio equipment. As if this were not enough, later in the day some of our members noticed a model plane flying well to the east of us. Problem is this plane wasn't being flown by anyone at our field! A quick trip down the road revealed several guys out in their front yard, knock'n down a few beers, and cheering their buddy as he flew from a bean field across from his house! All of this was taking place within a mile of our field. Of course, these guys didn't think they were close enough to cause any problems. I explained the range these radios have, and all the problems that had occurred that day, and I was assured they would not be flying there anymore. Were they the cause of our problems? I seriously doubt it, but anyone on their same channel may have been affected.

So, back to our problem. Within hours of the fly in ending, phone calls were being made, and a formal task team was being assembled to tackle our issue. Soon, we had members Dave Hockaday, Tom Albright, and Tar Heel Flyers A.B Gentry taking action to find what the cause of all the interference was. Dave Hockaday quickly had several HAM radio guys working on it, and with days, two major communications companies were filling the area with very high tech testing equipment. I'll let Dave himself give you more details on what was found, and how the problem was corrected, but the really important thing is, they found it, and we're VERY thrilled to say, it has been corrected. In fact, we've had many many folks flying on 72 MHz, in recent weeks, and they are reporting great results, and no hits. This is REALLY great news, and not a moment too soon.

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Visit the club website at www.rd-rc.org

Again, I would prefer Dave give the details on this matter, as he was involved a great deal throughout the whole process. With that being said, I would like to take this opportunity to thank ALL of our dedicated members, and sister club members for all their dedication and hard work. This problem could have easily destroyed our flying site, and had a deep impact on our upcoming events. Imagine trying to hold a Fly for Tots with 72 MHz, being banned. I'm sure we would still have a great turn out, but there are still several flyers out there flying on 72. , and they most likely would not have driven a far distance to attend the event. Speaking of 72 MHz, and all. How many of you went to the Joe Nall event? I was amazed at how FEW 72 MHz. radios were there. When I walked by their radio impound around noon time, there were only 5 or 6 radios in the impound! 5 or 6!!!!!! We're talking about an event with 602 registered pilots. It was amazing. Those guys in the impound area looked like the May Tag repair man from years ago! Lonely!!!!!! It does seem that most everyone has gone the way of 2.4. Most all of our members that were still on 72 MHz. took advantage of East RC's VERY generous offer, and purchased either new radios, or conversion modules for their existing radio. They even stretched the offer of "Cost + Tax" to cover a 30 day period so that members could make their decision without feeling pressured. Again, most all of our members took them up on the offer. Of course, that offer has now expired, and we can't thank EAST RC and crew enough for what they did. I'm also told that "Horizon Hobby" was VERY impressed by their efforts, and commended their actions! HMMMMMMMMMM,,I wonder if that's why I kept seeing Brandon Hockaday hanging out at the Horizon Tent at Joe Nall?

Fly For Tots!!!

Yes, it's just around the corner folks. It's time to start our efforts in getting donations, workers, publicity, and all the little details that are needed to pull this event off. We'll be talking in more detail at this months meeting, so don't miss out! Hopefully, Robert Vess and I will have a lot of cool stories to tell from our Atlantic Jet Rally trip. We're headed out early Friday morning, and I'm really excited about my first jet meet. So,,,,,,,,, with that, I'm going to shoot this little write up to Brandon H. and get in a little shut eye before heading out in the morning. Please make an effort to be at this months meeting, as we have a lot to talk about. Mostly FFT, but we also want to bring everyone up to speed on our field RF status. Thanks to ALL those who dedicated themselves so much in recent weeks to solve our RF issues, and help keep our field safe.

-Larry

*See y'all at the meetin'!!!
This Wednesday!!!
May 28th!!!*

RDRC 72mhz Interference Resolutions

By: Dave Hockaday

It's been about 5 weeks since our Spring Fly-in on April 19th, when all of the interference was observed across the 72mhz band at the club flying site. When the interference became painfully obvious during the event, Tom Albright brought a spectrum analyzer out to the field try to determine the type of trouble that had developed. Tom found a powerful intermittent wide-band noise across the 72mhz band. Several steps were initiated, beginning April 20th, in an effort to determine what these problems were.

- A.B. Gentry brought out a service monitor and spent time looking for the noise and noise source. Like with anything else, an intermittent issue like this is a moving target. A.B. surmised that it would be a challenge to locate, as it was not found during the time he was monitoring.
- All licensed tower owners and licensed commercial transmitters were contacted within a 10 mile radius of the site. Several club members came up with search tools to help locate these tower and transmitter owners, and this proved to be a very helpful tool. 4 different commercial companies provided manpower and 10's of thousands of \$\$ in equipment to help determine the source of the problem. Many RDRC members saw the monitoring vehicles at and around the field. These are people who have the equipment and do this sort of thing for a living. One suspect commercial problem was immediately located, corrected, and the wide-band signal that was found during their testing has disappeared. There have been no other problem sources detected by commercial entities.
- An Azden wideband receiver ran 24/7 for 3 weeks after the commercial corrections were made. It was on an antenna 1 mile from the field, at 130 feet altitude with a high gain directional antenna pointed straight at the site, only recording the wideband IF output on open squelch. This system is so sensitive that it detects typical RC transmitters at the field at 30db over S9 (full scale on an analog s-meter). The only time the squelch has opened and recorded anything was when there were actual R/C transmitters running at the field. One of the commercial groups continued monitoring the site for an additional 2 weeks, and they have also reported no more interfering signals were found.
- A local amateur radio club had several members monitoring as well, in an effort to help locate any interfering signals and/or sources.
- On May 10th, a complaint (complaint #08-C000197) was filed with the FCC about the interference at our location. On May 14th, the FCC sent a canned reply with a number of responses for you to choose whichever may suit you. The gist of their reply was: They will not investigate unless we can provide them all of the info INCLUDING the source of the interference, the owners of the offending equipment, and physical locations of same. Duh, if we knew that from the beginning, why would we bother with the FCC?? Whatever, that's our tax dollars at work, I guess.
- Contact was made with George Fryer, AMA Frequency coordinator in our district. We will be receiving one of the AMA frequency scanners for use at the field as a follow-up test. It will be installed in the shed and set up for continuous monitoring. I'll work with various club members who frequent the field throughout the week to show them how to use it.

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- A 30-day offer was made to RDRC members who might not have radio gear on 2.4ghz, to sell 2.4ghz to them from East R/C at cost + tax. This was an effort to keep everyone flying during this period of testing. East R/C could only shoulder this loss for 30 days, as it costs us 1.5-3% (depending on the card type) for credit card transactions, labor for purchasing/receiving/sales, freight, facility overhead, etc. Many members used this opportunity to get onto 2.4 ghz with at least some of their airplanes, so everyone could keep flying.

No one can ever be certain about anything when it comes to radio. It is wireless, so the possibility of an unexpected and interfering signal always exists. The newer technologies do help reduce the possibilities of error, especially with the recognition of only your tx, model match, etc. It's impossible to EVER make a definitive statement about ANY flying site being absolutely clear of all interference. When it comes to 72mhz being in the low-vhf spectrum and the zillions of radio signals mixing all around us, I'll go so far as to say there is NO flying site in the U.S. that doesn't have an extraneous bump or mix at some time.

Since the only problem that was found was corrected, no interference has been found while being continuously monitored by the commercial techs, the area amateur radio operators, and the monitoring system at my home only 1 mile away. There has been one instance of a 72mhz PCM lockout by Dane on May 4th as he flew by his flight station, he regained control, then lost it again at the north end of the runway. No other reports of problems from anyone. Lots of folks are flying on 72mhz, every day. We've been asking everyone who comes in the shop and observing others on 72mhz at the field, and have not seen or heard of any other issues with operations on 72mhz.

That's the update on the 72mhz situation at the field. No signals on the radar and 72 MHz pilots seem to be flying without problems. It is still being monitored, and will continue to be. I'll update the group once the AMA frequency monitor comes in and is installed.

- Dave





Minutes From the RDRC Club Meeting, April 23rd

By Secretary: Dave Hockaday

- The meeting was called to order by President Larry Lewis at 7:37 p.m.
- President Larry Lewis checked for any new members and guests that might have been present. There were 20 people were present, including 1 new person who was: Keith Cring
- The minutes for the March meeting were read and approved as written.
- There were no reports of safety violations at the field.
- Dustin Hedrick gave a treasurer's report and reported that the budget was in good condition and again, under budget.

Old Business

- Larry reported that the field repairs and updates are looking good. Frank Moore offered more (Moore?) grass seed if needed.
- Jay Benson will be heading up a work group to make improvements & repairs to the tables at the field.
- The new signs for replacement at the entrance of the path are underway by Mike Hollowell.

New Business

- It was discussed that the person that mows the grass on Thursday or Friday is sometimes meeting a little opposition when he arrives to cut. It was agreed to let him mow, if he should arrive at a time when you are flying. His contract is to mow no earlier than Thursday morning, no later than Friday evening. It is impossible to schedule a time when it doesn't interfere with someone flying.
 - The safety barriers were cut down to allow them to re-grow more cleanly. A discussion was held about the possibility of planting boxwoods or similar hedge as barriers.
 - A discussion was held about the possibility of modifying the Associate membership, and it was agreed to let it stand as written with no changes.
 - A report on the Spring Fly-in was given. We had 75 registered pilots, representatives from several clubs, good turnout, good food, and made \$1274.00 for the club.
 - A discussion was held about the interference at the field, and the steps that were being taken to solve the problem. Larry Lewis reported on the person flying at a nearby corn field, and the results of his meeting with them.
 - Clyde Long gave a good discussion on ways to improve your transmitted signal and possible recovery during a period of interference.
 - Brandon Hockaday discussed the 30-day 2.4ghz deal at East R/C for those who needed to get something on 2.4ghz to fly during the testing period.
- Larry Lewis Called the meeting closed at 9:15pm.

On the road with the

Compiled by Editor: Brandon Hockaday



@ SEFF '08, Americus, GA



....Continued....



@ Joe Nall '08, Woodruff, SC





...Continued...



@ Jet Rally '08, Fentress, SC



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Some Members New Planes!!!!



Manny Huysentruyt's New 122" P-47



John Knoy's New 98" Super Decathlon



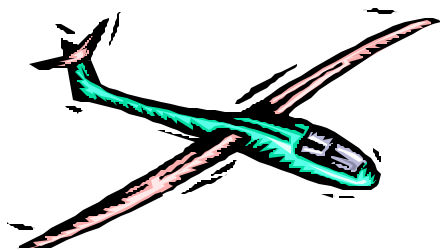
Bryan Long's New Spitfire



Chris Hockaday's New 35% Extra 260



My New 27% Extra 330L



Please Visit our friends and sponsors of the club....



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NORTHERN
TOOL + EQUIPMENT



Newsletter

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Submittals:

All club members are urged to submit material to be published in the newsletter. The material must be received by the second Saturday of each month. Text is easily submitted in the form of regular mail or e-mails sent to my address above, photos can be attachments in any format that your camera produces (or scanned photos).

Note from the Editor

Hope everyone has been doing great! It's been a great flying Season so far. Apart from a lot of wind, we've been having some pretty decent weather! We all had a good time today (Memorial Day), cooking out at the field and just having a good 'ole time! I hope you enjoyed all the content I packed in this issue, and I will try my best to do the same each month, it just gets really hard to find time. Anywayz, hope to see you all at the meeting this Wednesday, May 28th....then I will be going to the mountains the first of June to relax and do some slope soaring!!!

- Brandon Hockaday





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TO:

