

Noontime demos ended each day with a candy drop for the kids. More than 10 pounds was distributed from several RC aircraft. When the models landed, the race for treats was on.



by Jay Smith

Fly-for-T



The club raffled RTFs for kids in attendance and promised free instruction. Left to right are Jacob, Lydia Brock with her new airplane, and her father, David.

Flying for a cause with lots of fun thrown in



Wayne Parrish piloted this beautiful Vario Bell 47G III. Many scale details combined with its large size made it easy to believe we were watching a full-scale version fly.



ots 2009

FUN-FLYS ARE great to attend. Not only do you get to do a lot of flying, but you also get to see a bit of everything, from helicopters to jets and all types of propeller-driven models. The Raleigh Durham Radio Control Club (RDRC) Fly-for-Tots (FFT) event takes it to the next level; all money raised goes to a good cause. The club chose Victory Junction as its charity, and in 2009 a remarkable \$27,100 was raised.

The key to this gathering is helping children, which RDRC President Larry Lewis reminded everyone throughout the weekend. A total of 230 pilots from throughout the US heard the call and converged at the club's beautiful field the weekend of September 19-20.

The RDRC site, which is located just outside Raleigh, North Carolina, provided pilots with the choice of using either the paved runway or the grass that runs parallel to the runway. The field has a wide opening directly behind the runway, allowing pilots a lot of depth for aerobatic flying.

No one made better use of that space than Jason Noll, who put on an amazing flying demonstration both days with his Extra. His model flirted with the ground, soybeans, and trees, to the amazement of the pilots and crowd alike.

I have a bold—but honest—statement to make: *FFT is like no other event I have*

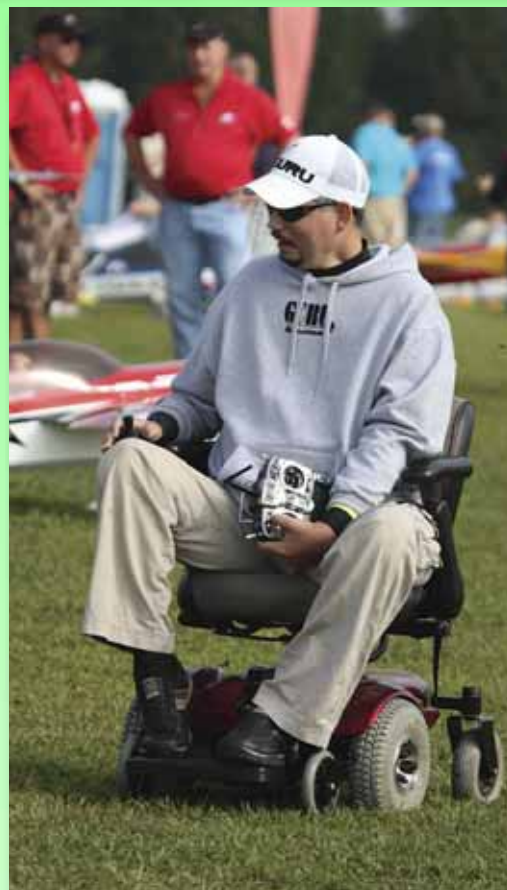


Tom Drake spent a year-and-a-half constructing this $\frac{1}{3}$ -scale Balsa USA PT-17 kit to add scale realism. The 250cc radial engine had no problem hauling the 54-pound, 118-inch wingspan, Stearman across the sky.

Photos by the author



Riley Kissenberth performed the Intermediate RC Aerobatics sequence with his Composite-ARF Integral. He flew the graceful demonstration as part of the noontime show.



Chris "Lucky" Carnes came out to support the event. Not only is he a great pilot, but he also provides inspiration with his can-do attitude.



Radio Active Airshows brought its amazing simulator trailer that allowed attendees to fly FS One on two large projection screens.



Jerry Smith, a National Competition Fun Fly Champion, thrilled the crowd by flying continuous aerobatics with his Smith Special. Its O.S. .32 engine with Smith Power Pipe screaming the whole time made the model sound like an angry bee!



Look inside East R/C and you will find many great RC products manufactured on the premises. Located minutes from the RDRC field, this company is one of many FFT sponsors.



Peter Goldsmith shows that Cubs can hover and drop candy while doing it!



Radio Active Airshows' flying lawn mower, piloted by Jeff Phillips, amazes many people the first time they see it. If only it cut the grass as well.



Matt Balazs (R) built this turnkey, fuel-and-fly Extreme Flight RC 100cc Yak-54 as the raffle grand prize, and Nelson Phillips won it.



Chris Mulcahy, sponsored by PAU, puts this Edge 540 in a stable hover. Several pilots hovered beyond the runway throughout the weekend, to keep the pattern clear.



A look down the flightline shows the diversity of models flown at the 2009 FFT event. A total of \$27,100 was raised for Victory Junction.

attended. The mentality of those who were there was amazing. The event was all about fellowship and flying for a great cause.

People of varying skill levels and flying styles piloted gas-, glow-, and electric-powered aircraft side by side. At any given time, you might be flying with a jet pilot to your left, a 100cc “Hucker” to your right, and a Scale warbird flier at the end.

Yet throughout the event, the pilots flew together without issue. There was not even a midair, outside of the ParkZone T-28 mass flight. And that in itself was an amazing accomplishment; all 230 pilots flew from one flightline with no problems. It’s an example of what aeromodeling is about.

So what is Victory Junction? It is a camp in North Carolina for children who are chronically ill, or suffer from serious illnesses, and their families. It was Adam Petty’s dream, and his parents, Kyle and Pattie, completed his vision after he died in 2000.

To date, more than 10,000 children have experienced everything the camp has to offer. It is a great opportunity for kids to set aside their health problems and enjoy themselves in a safe environment with new friends.

The RDRC has been supporting this charity for three years, after visiting the camp and being forever changed by the experience.

As do many events across the US, FFT featured a raffle with some great prizes. However, RDRC pulled out all the stops with the grand prize: a turnkey, fuel-it-and-fly, 100cc Extreme Flight RC Yak-54. Team JR’s Matt Balazs, who owns Evil R/C, built the model. It was decked out with products from numerous great sponsors and was worth nearly \$5,000.

Another fantastic activity was a children’s raffle, in which the prizes were RTF electric-powered aircraft. They were given away almost every hour, and each winner received a promise from the club of free RC flight instruction. All the kids have to do is return on any weekend!

What a great way to introduce aeromodeling to the younger generation and their families and provide a positive learning experience. The kids’ excitement and enthusiasm about winning raffle prizes surpassed the adults’—except Nelson Phillips, who won the Grand Prize Package.

The noon demonstrations were a favorite, and the large contingent of spectators let pilots know when they saw something they liked. Robert Vess kept the interest and excitement high throughout most of the flying, with his spirited commentary via the loudspeakers. But he didn’t have to work hard; some of the best pilots in RC stole the show.

Many warbirds flew in groups designated by their type or era. World War I was well represented, and World War II had even more participation. A big draw was the “flight of bombers,” which consisted of bombers and ground-attack aircraft. Pyrotechnics were used at show center to create explosions when the models made their diving passes.

3-D and precision flying also had a good showing, with representation from Jason Noll, Seth Arnold, Jamie Hicks, RJ Gritter,

Chris Carnes, and Riley Kissenberth, to name only a few. Tails touched the grass, some great team flying was performed, and RC Aerobatics and IMAC (International Miniature Aerobatic Club) routines were flown.

Jerry Smith showed everyone why he is a repeat National Competition Fun Fly Champion while having fun with the crowd, pretending to be an inexperienced, elderly pilot.

Radio Active Airshows put on a demonstration with its flying lawn mower—something that amazes many people the first time they see it. This group also took its impressive simulator trailer, which provided spectators with the opportunity to experience RC flight on one of the two big-screen projectors. Even experienced pilots found it easy to get immersed in the experience.

The focus returned to the children each day at the close of demonstration flying, with a candy drop. A large group of kids of all ages stood along the flightline as several models took to the air with their precious cargo: more than 10 pounds of treats.

Once the aircraft dropped their payloads on the far side of the runway and were successfully recovered, the children sprinted to find the candy, in what closely resembled an Easter egg hunt. The club made sure no child walked away empty-handed.

The club even managed to give crowds a few surprises, such as full-scale flybys by a P-51 Mustang and a PT-17 Stearman.

There were several vendors at FFT, and not only did they provide raffle prizes, but some of them also donated a part of their sales to the event. Horizon Hobby supported the cause by attending and providing a free receiver, on the spot, to anyone who purchased a DSM transmitter from *any* of the vendors at the fly-in.

AMA President Dave Mathewson and District IV Vice President Bliss Teague also made it to the event. They helped support the fly-in and answered questions from members and the public.

What the RDRC has done with FFT is not only special; it’s nothing short of amazing. It has expanded the event each year in both attendance and money raised and has managed to garner the local community’s support. This proactive approach shows what a club can do for its community, instead of asking what its community can do for the club.

I hope that this fly-in will continue to grow and be successful, as well as be viewed as a model for other clubs that are looking for ways to give back to their communities. Our sport is one of the greatest in the world, and being able to enjoy it while making a difference to someone in need is truly fulfilling. Who could ask for anything more? **MA**

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Sources:

RDRC
www.rd-rc.org

Victory Junction
(877) 854-2267
www.victoryjunction.org

Why Do You Attend Fly-for-Tots?

“It is so cool that somebody put together a charity fund-raiser around our sport. We can do what we love and contribute to a great cause.”

—Fred Midgett of Higher Plane Productions

“I come to Fly-for-Tots to help support a great cause that means a lot to me as well. I know what it is like for those kids to go and be able to do something normal like other kids. I wouldn’t miss it for the world. I want to support the RDRC and Victory Junction Gang.”

—Chris Carnes of Radio Active Airshows

“For the fun and entertainment and to see all the members in District IV.”

—Bliss Teague, AMA District IV Vice President

“I think the best reason to come to Fly-for-Tots is because this event represents modeling in the coolest possible way ever. This does more for the community and is a great example for how people can contribute back to the community and make model aviation part of the community, rather than isolate it.”

—Peter Goldsmith of Horizon Hobby

“Well, Fly-for-Tots is a great event and it’s for a good cause.”

—Seth Arnold

“I come to Fly-for-Tots to help out for a good cause. Come down and hang out with everybody and enjoy flying model RC airplanes, and it goes to a good purpose.”

—Jason Noll

“I come to hang out with everybody and support the fund-raiser. It is a good time out here.”

—Jamie Hicks

“I came for the food.”

—Andy Kane

“I come out to fly with my friends and help out the charity, and just have a good time.”

—RJ Gritter

“I think that in the stressful times that we are in during a recession, anytime we can be a part of something to help someone, or at least give a smile to someone regardless of what level, be it a child or older person [we should]. Being a good influence is one of the main things, and I come to have fun with old friends and make new friends, and that’s why I am here.” **MA**

—Jerry Smith, Fun Fly Champion

—Jay Smith