



The AMA History Project Presents: History of THE DETROIT ORBITEERS



Began in November 1960

Compiled by the club (04/1962); Transcribed by JS (04/2011)

The following was printed in the April 1962 issue of Model Aviation.

Profile of an A.M.A. Club The Detroit Orbiteers

There is no such thing as an average person and the same rule applies to AMA clubs. But if the Detroit Orbiteers were “average,” our club program would be in good shape.

“We feel we have something to be proud of,” says John F. Kilsdonk, President. “At least 60 per cent of our members participate in all club activities, one reason we have progressed so well.

“We also must give credit to Mr. Gene Nelson, in the back of whose bicycle shop we hold our weekly meetings.”

Organized in November 1960 – seven members present – the Orbiteers now number 32, mostly control-line but with some members participating in free flight events and a few that fly R/C.

“We have a monthly challenge trophy, engraved with either the prop-rod, pylon plans, or road racing contest of the month,” Kilsdonk explains. “We have managed to win seven trophies at local contests to show that we support AMA activities.”

Further proof of Orbiteers’ activities Kilsdonk supplies: Newsletters, the club constitution and by-laws, pix of hard-won trophies, and plans of the *Orbiteer Half A* and *B-C*. Those of the *B-C*, a standard club model, appear on page 9.

Also printed here are copies of the Orbiteers’ membership application, constitution and by-laws, and even a growth timetable, which shows what they did in less than two years from the day the founding seven members officially put their heads together.

For the prop-rod races, incidentally, there’s a set of 15-point rules covering such things as engine (up to .074), propulsion (air); wheels (four); timing (for 10 laps – ¼ mile); attempts (two); field (commercial) and so on. Circle radius is 8 feet. A corking event for meeting nights.

Last August 13, the club held its first annual picnic at Rouge Park with every member urged to bring “mom and dad and his friends.” It was a lively box-lunch affair lasting from 8 am to 8 pm. Members wore jackets and emblems. For attractions, there were four events: Orbiteer Half-A

stunt, Half-A Grudge Combat, Balloon Busting, and Clunker Speed. For a special attraction, experts Dave Keats and J. Kilsdonk put on a finish fight with two 100 mph craft.

Clunker rules specified up to .35, minimum 250 squares, 60-foot lines, times for 14 laps (1 mile); and up to .049, at least 60 squares, 25-foot lines, timed for 9 laps (1/4 mile), with speed doubled. In balloon busting, members get one minute to break away as many balloons as possible from a special holder, no pins allowed. Balloon busting is a sure-fire event.

The Orbiteers have a lower average age than many clubs. Any club that does things for the beginners – the kids - must have. You've got to start some place and the Orbiteers already are well beyond the "lift-off" stage.

Timeline

- November 1960- First meeting, seven members.
- January 1961 – First election of officers.
- March 1961 – Membership up to 20.
- April 1961 – Club constitution and by-laws drawn up.
- May 1961 – Club newsletter organized, mailed to every member every week.
- June 1961 – Prop-rod racing established, 75 per cent member participation.
- June through October 1961 – Members participated in all CL contests within 100-mile radius.
- July 1961- Club emblem designed, club jackets made available (white emblem with green lettering on back, four-color embroidered emblem on front.)
- July 1961- Membership hits peak of 32.
- August 1961 – AMA charter granted.
- August 1961 – Club contest (1/2A airplane designed by club members, built by 90 per cent of members, and flown in stunt contest.)
- August 1961 – Picnic, acquainting parents with club activity. (Featured balloon busting, stunt contest, clunker speed contest, club combat championship; 100 per cent member participation.)
- October 1961 – Club designed and refined combat ship, blueprinted and distributed to members.
- October 1961 – Combat Cat contest appearance award for the best looking T.F. Combat Cat; 60 per cent participation.
- November 1961 – 1/4A pylon racing established, 60 per cent participation
- December 1961-1962 – Strombecker Road Racing sets purchased by the club for members' winter activity, 70 per cent participation.

Constitution & By-Laws of the Orbiteer Model Club

Constitution

Article I

The name of this club shall be the Orbiteer Model Club.

Article II

Section 1. The objectives of this club shall be to promote model building and flying in the Metropolitan Detroit Area, and to aid, insofar as is possible, the national program of the Academy of Model Aeronautics and other AMA activities looking toward the continual advancement of model aviation in all of its phases in the United States.

Section 2. All special or local enterprises of the Orbiteers shall conform to the policies of the AMA and to the regulations of that organization governing model aircraft contests.

Section 3. All persons living in the Metropolitan Detroit area or having connections in this city or the vicinity shall be eligible for membership in the Orbiteer Model Club, provided they meet qualifications prescribed by this club and by the AMA and hold a valid AMA license as prescribed by the by-laws.

By-Laws

Article I

The Officers of the club shall be (1.) a President, (2.) a Secretary, and (3.) a Treasurer, and there shall be a Senior Advisor.

Article II

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the club and shall act as spokesman for the club in all matters pertaining to it.

Section 2. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings, and the attendance toll of such meetings, and he shall provide himself with an official minutes book for this purpose.

Section 3. The Treasurer shall collect all monies due and shall keep a record of all monies collected and all monies disbursed by the club.

Article III

Section 1. All officers of the Orbiteer Model Club shall serve for one year from date of annual election.

Section 2. The election shall be held the second week in January that there is a club meeting held.

Section 3. The President shall be 18 or older, and the other two officers shall be 16 or older.

Section 4. Officers may be removed from office at any general meeting of the club membership upon a 2/3 vote of those present, providing all members have been notified at least 3 days in advance that removal proceedings are to be voted upon.

Article IV

Section 1. Vacancies shall be filled in any office by an election of those present at the meeting following notification of said vacancy by the President except:

Section 2: A vacancy in the office of President shall be filled by the Secretary with the Treasurer taking the Secretary's place and a new Treasurer being elected as provided above.

Article V

Regular meetings shall be held weekly at Royal Six Bike Shop, 16305 W. McNichols on Friday at 8:15 pm.

Article VI

At any meeting, a quorum shall consist of a simple majority of those present.

Article VII

Section 1. The initial membership fee of this club shall be \$1.00.

Section 2. The dues of this club shall be \$0.15 per week.

Section 3. Regular members have until February 28 of the current year to obtain a valid AMA license, with entering members allowed 3 days after entry into the club to get one, except that no member shall be required to purchase an AMA license after September 1st of the current year.

Article VIII

The Treasurer of this club is authorized to receive contributions or specially obtained funds or gifts from any individual or institution, to be applied to the operating expenses and activities of the club.

Article IX

Section 1. It is obligatory that no member miss two consecutive meetings, except that;

Section 2. Any member unable to attend a meeting shall notify one of the officers by telephone or post card by 8:15 pm of the day of the meeting he is unable to attend.

Section 3. A member shall be liable for dues whether he attends a meeting or not.

Article X

Amendments may be made to this Constitution and these By-laws at any general meeting of the club membership, provided that all members have been notified at least 3 days in advance that the amendment is to be considered, and that they be advised of the nature of the amendment.

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