



# The Flightline



Volume 45, Issue 1 Newsletter of the Propstoppers RC Club AMA 1042 January 2015



### President's Message

We have a problem with admitting members who arrive late to the monthly meeting. The school wants the front door to be locked when people are not in the lobby. So those who get there late can't get in. If you have a phone, call 610 322 7496 and we will open the door.. we can try to think of an easier way at the meeting .

Larry will have more of his home built models; by the way, they all fly great.

Fifty Five cans of soup were delivered to the Church for the holidays This went to the needy.

Any new models bring in for show & tell.

Don't forget Feb. we will have an indoor Picnic. John will pick up the food one hour before the meeting; Around 6:00 till 7: 00 then the meeting. Consider this a Mid Winter Break

See you at the meeting

**Dick Seiwel, President**

*Agenda for January 13th Meeting At Gateway Community Church, At our CA Field site; Meeting 7pm till 8:30?*

1. Show and Tell
2. Membership Report
3. Finance Report
4. Club Calendar Review
5. 2015 Dues Reminder

### Minutes of the Propstoppers Model Airplane Club December 9, 2014 at the Christian Academy meeting room

Call to order by Vice-President Chuck Kime took place at 7:15 PM Roll call by membership chair Ray Wopatek showed 15 members present

Minutes of the November meeting as published were approved The treasurer's report was presented by Pete Oetinger

#### Old Business:

The Christian academy field continues to the muddy so be careful and go around to the left side away from the lower muddy area if you choose to fly there.

#### New Business:

Al Tamburo suggested that the club rent a table at the Lebanon show this spring. This would allow us early access and a place to sell your wares. He will try to arrange it.

#### Show and Tell:

Larry Woodward showed a foam FE flier for indoor use. He tried it this morning and thinks he is close with the trim. It is a free flight model.

He also showed another foam plane from Armond called a Nube Tube with 30 inch wingspan. He built wing extensions for this plane to make it a 60 inch and glider and is anxious to try it. Dwayne Myers showed a quad copter approximately 8 inches across that has a built in camera to transmit live video. It has three axis stability and flies easily. He flies it on an FR sky transmitter with spectrum module so that he can connect to many standard models.

Adjournment took place at 8:30 PM.

**Dick Bartkowski, Secretary**

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	<i>President's Message</i>
1	<i>December Meeting Minutes</i>
1	<i>January Meeting Agenda</i>
2	<i>Indoor Flying Dates</i>
3	<i>Happy Holidays from Al Cheung</i>
4	<i>Photo Report from the AMA Expo</i>
5	<i>Dues Renewal Information</i>
13	<i>Drones from the Wall Street Journal</i>

Thanks to all those who provided me with material for the newsletter this month. Sorry I just ran out of time to include it. But I will include it next month.

Everyone else, consider sending me some material for future editions

Your Editor, Dave from rainy California

## Calendar of Events

### Club Meetings

#### Monthly Meetings

Second Tuesday of the month.

Gateway Community Church at the Christian Academy. Doors open at 7:00

**Next Meeting; 13<sup>th</sup> January**

#### Tuesday Breakfast Meeting

Tom Jones Restaurant on Edgemont Avenue in Brookhaven. 9 till 10 am. Just show up.

Flying after in the summer at CA or Elwyn Field 10 am. Weather permitting.

Indoors at the Brookhaven Gym in bad weather 10:30-11:30 See dates allowable.

### Regular Club Flying

At Old Christian Academy; **Electric Only**

Monday through Friday after school till dusk

Saturday 10 am till dusk

Sunday, after Church; 12 pm till dusk

At Elwyn Field; Gas or Electric

Monday through Saturday 8 am till dusk

Sunday 12 pm till dusk

**INDOOR Flying, see attached dates.**

### Special Club Flying

Saturday mornings 10 am

Wednesday Helicopter evening in summer

Thursday evenings in the summer

Tuesday mornings 10 am weather permitting after breakfast.

Check our Yahoo Group for announcements;

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/propstoppers/>

### Beginners

Beginners using due caution and respecting club rules may fly Apprentice or similar models without instructors at Christian Academy Field.

The club also provides the AMA Introductory Pilot Program for beginners without AMA insurance.

## Indoor Flying Season Dates

2014 - 2015

Tinicum School Gymnasium.

Friday, February 6, 2015

Friday March 6, 2015

Brookhaven Borough Gym dates;

Saturday Jan 17 2015

Saturday Feb 21 2015

Saturday March 21 2015

All sessions are scheduled from 6:30 – 9:30 PM

Indoor flying is usually available at the Brookhaven Gym following Tuesday breakfast on days when weather is too bad to fly outdoors. Check with Chuck Kime for dates.

Please remind the membership that no food or gum is allowed.

Guests welcome

Guests may fly with AMA membership.

Introductory membership available at the meeting.

Propstoppers RC Club of  
Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

### Club Officers

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### Tinicum Unexpected January Cancellation

Gentlemen,

I am sorry about last Friday evening's (January 2nd) indoor fly at Tinicum.

I was not advised that the building would be closed for activities over the Christmas break when I scheduled the dates. I guess they are trying to save on heat, lighting, maintenance staff, etc.

I attempted to reschedule the lost evening, but the Youth Club's basketball schedule has started and they have all of the evenings scheduled that we have not already reserved.

I apologize to anyone who was inconvenienced and drove over to the school expecting to fly.

Sincerely,

Mike Black

## *Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year from California.*

From Al Cheung

The weather this winter has been excellent for flying with the exception of a week of rain, which was desperately needed. It is mostly calm in the winter except when there is a storm. I have added a few videos of my experience out here to my You Tube channel with links below in case anyone is interested.

This was my first experience with slope soaring. It is a small hill at Bedwell Park in the Baylands that was recommended for beginners. Christmas day was the first day there was decent wind. Too windy for my new Eflite Adagio, so I pulled out my trusty Radian and stuffed as many batteries as I could fit into the cockpit to keep it from getting blown backwards.

Slope Soaring on Christmas Day 2014 with Radian at Baylands Park Redwood City CA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEVv5ZMXLHA>

This is California style RC flying at Baylands Park in Sunnyvale. It was shortly after the rains so the field was too wet to fly off of. You can see there were no flight controllers nor safety officers. There are electrical outlets at the BBQ pits, but one should bring a power strip to share and watch out for the stray FPV drones in the picnic area.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VE9uCTZCKHQ>



This is Lake Lagunita on the Stanford campus on a rare day where there was actually water in the lake. Flying is supposedly permitted on the lake bed which is normally dry.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzON8e1eQNw>

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### *Photo Report from the AMA Expo 2015 from Ontario California*

Your editor is once again beginning his Southern California purgatory by serving on the SAM booth at the Expo. Below are a few shots of vendor offerings I thought may interest the members.





The booth next to us, as usual, was a collection of old RC transmitters chronicling the changes in technology over the last fifty years or so. All of these have been donated to this fellow. It is such a popular display that trade show organizers pay him to transport them for display all over the country. Each time he exhibits people drop off new additions.





Lots of "drones".







This is a record holding U/C speed model. At first I didn't realize it is electric powered. Flies on 60 foot lines and pulls 200 amps at takeoff from a two cell 4000 mAh 65C battery. Runs for about 35 seconds to fly 6 timed laps.





I guess this is the latest variation on the eternally popular Vapor; The FPV Vapor.



This is typical of the high quality models on display or entered in the concours scoring.



Not all the vendors are from the model airplane field. Samy's Camera is a chain of camera stores that operates in the Southern California area. They had an extensive display of Photo Drones.



Dave

# The Drones on Autopilot That Follow Your Lead (Usually)

Ghost and Iris+ Trail Their Owners and Take Great Pictures, But Watch Out for That Tree

A new generation of personal drones like the 3D Robotics Iris+ have autopilot systems that can follow you around. Personal Tech columnist Geoffrey A. Fowler takes them for a test flight.

Link and Video;

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-drones-on-autopilot-that-follow-your-lead-usually-1419357666?KEYWORDS=drones+on+autopilot>

By **GEOFFREY A. FOWLER**

*Wall Street Journal Dec. 23, 2014 1:01 p.m. ET*

[Drones with cameras](#) can bring a stunning aerial dimension to our photos. But pilots of these increasingly popular mini-copters have an unfortunate tendency to crash into things. I myself have flown them into trees, houses...and a friend.

So what if we could remove some of what makes personal drones dangerous—human error?

A new generation like the 3D Robotics Iris+ and the Ehang Ghost can do much more of the flying themselves. They've supplemented (or in some cases, replaced) confusing joystick controls with apps that tell them to take off, follow flight paths and land autonomously. And their coolest trick: They can just follow you around, keeping a camera trained on you like floating paparazzi.



The Ghost drone, above, and the Iris+ can be programmed to follow their owners, but they sometimes go off on 'flyaways' beyond their owner's control. *EMILY PRAPUOLENIS/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Putting my flight casualties behind me, I took these two autopilot drones into a field to see what they could do. They quickly transformed me from a novice pilot to a good one—though learning to trust a machine to fly itself was a white-knuckle experience of its own.

None of the drones I've tried is simple or fail-proof. They still require the commitment and experience of a hobbyist. But they provide a glimpse of how drones might soon become a bigger part of our photography culture, the ultimate selfie machines.

There's a long list of concerns about drones, from short battery life to the potential for privacy invasion. In the short term, I worry most about crashes. We don't want these flying lawn mowers to buzz by people or drop from the sky. Earlier in December a [drone "Mobile Mistletoe" stunt](#) sliced someone's face when it careened out of control.

The Federal Aviation Administration is [considering rules that would require pilots of commercial drones](#) to have a license, but that wouldn't apply to consumers. Rather than take on the risk, some cities—and [all U.S. national parks](#)—have banned even recreational flight.

One popular drone maker, Parrot, has addressed safety by making quadcopters that are so lightweight that they can be used indoors with bumper-guards. It recently began shipping its [\\$500 Bebop drone](#), which includes a much-improved 14-megapixel fisheye camera. It's generally the most kid-safe drone you can buy, but piloting it via smartphone app (or even its [Skycontroller remote](#)) requires hours and hours of practice.



The Iris+ drone can be controlled via a smartphone app. *EMILY PRAPUOLENIS/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Autopilot drones go beyond turning your phone into a joystick. Both the Iris+ (which has been out for a few months) and Ghost (which starts shipping in January) can be commanded via app to fly to specific coordinates. You program the flight path with your finger on the screen. An external antenna, which comes with both models, sends the flight instructions from your phone to the drone.

The Iris+, which sells for \$750 without a camera or \$210 stabilizing gimbal, has the most sophisticated software. In its DroidPlanner app, available on Android only, you draw on a map the path you want the drone to fly—like around your property or along the beach. When you press launch, off it goes on its own. (You can even share and download flight plans online.)

The app can also suggest other maneuvers, like having the drone circle a building while keeping its camera trained on it. That's a very tricky move to accomplish with joystick controls. With one tap, you can take an automatic "dronie," where the

camera sweeps away for a dramatic video selfie that will make all your friends jealous. Both of the drones I reviewed are designed to work best with a [GoPro](#), but you could add a different camera. Ghost, which sells for \$375 on its own or \$599 with a camera gimbal, offers a streamlined take on these kinds of controls. With its app, also only for Android, it can automatically take off and land, as well as hover and go to the spot on a map that you tap with your finger.



Geoffrey A. Fowler flies the Iris+ drone. *EMILY PRAPUOLENIS/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

And then there's Follow Me mode. The drone apps track the location of your phone, and instruct your flying friend to follow along as you move. (And to all you twisted people: No, you can't tell it to follow someone else.)

For now, Ghost's Follow Me controls are limited to following above your head at whatever height you choose. Iris+ lets you tell it how far away to fly, and whether the drone should try to follow ahead of the path you're traveling or to repeatedly orbit around you.

The prototype Ghost I tested sometimes failed to follow, instead just hovering in place. The company says new hardware it plans to ship to customers will improve responsiveness.

Testing this while running around in a field was surreal: The drones tailed me like alien spy probes. Except you'd never miss these drones because they sound like a swarm of angry bees and neither can last more than about 20 minutes on a battery charge.

Still, imagine if you could have a drone levitate just above your car so you could see what traffic looked like up ahead, or follow along and film you while you kayak.

There are other intelligence problems to overcome first. Neither autonomous drone can sense or avoid obstacles that might get in its way. So if something—or, egad, someone—moves into its path after the flight plan goes into effect, you could be in trouble.

The Follow Me function adds another stress: Every once in a while, both drones would just go rogue, a phenomenon [the drone industry calls flyaways](#). The problem is actually with the GPS on the phone that's commanding the drone—phones aren't great at sensing location consistently. When they got my location wrong, the drone would go on a wild-goose chase

without any real ability to avoid danger on its journey. (The Return Home button still worked as expected. Regardless, I would never fly either of these in crowded areas.)

Autonomous software was certainly helping me fly, but also made flying scarier. What if the map is out of date? What if I programmed the drones wrong? (During this, I've learned that I'm terrible at estimating the height of things, an essential skill for eyeballing potential drone missions.)

Every time one went up, my palms got sweaty, my heart rate quickened and scenes from "The Terminator" movies flashed through my head. I kept one hand hovering over the Return Home button at all times.

DJI, which makes the popular Phantom drones, hasn't put Follow Me controls in its apps. (Its new model, marketed to professionals, is a joystick-controlled \$2,900 drone with a 4K camera that can spin 360 degrees while filming.) DJI's concern is that automating drones before they have the ability to avoid obstacles on their own could be dangerous.

On an Iris+ flying lesson with 3DR design director Jason Short, I asked if letting drones fly themselves with the current state of technology was really a good idea. "This drone is far more likely to come back safely than a manually controlled drone," he said.

A little later in our lesson, he switched back into manual controls—and soon inadvertently crashed our Iris+ into a pole. One of its arms broke off.

The crash was an accident, but it made his point.

For now, he acknowledged, even autonomous drones take time to master, and are for people who want to make flying a hobby. But it's clear from the first batch that, soon enough, they may be right for a broader swath of photographers who just want a camera that can find its own way in the sky.

**Geoffrey A. Fowler Wall Street Journal**

## Membership Renewal For 2014

**Membership renewal for 2015 is now required. You can renew by mail or at the club meeting in January.**

**Don't lose your club privileges!**

**Bring cash or check and your AMA card.**

**Dues are \$60.**

Please send a check to;

**Ray Wopatek**

**1004 Green Lane**

**Secane, PA. 9018**

**Please enclose a *copy* of your current  
A. M. A. Membership card,**

**And Please, Please enclose a**

**Stamped self-addressed envelope.**

**Ray Wopatek Membership**

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