

Grassfield R/C  
 Club  
 AMA Club #1405  
 www.Grassfieldrc.org

# The Newsletter of the Grassfield Radio Control Club, Brooklyn Park, MN

## From the President

by Dick Steine

Friday, December 3, 2004.

What a winter we are having! I'm going flying tomorrow (in December). I put together the ARF Spacewalker I won in our new and improved raffle, you know, the one with \$300 in prizes. Al Schwartz might even show with his autogiro for its 150-something flight. Al usually flies every month of the year, earning his All-Season AMA flying patch.

Sadly, I have to report receiving a call from Helen Lichtenegger the wife of Marv, who died of a stroke this week. Marv spent 20 years in the service of his country, flew 33 missions as a pilot in WW II and raised a fine family.

We also lost a young man earlier this summer, Matt Fickbolm, too early in his life. I regret not having spent more time with both of these men.

I will see you at the meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Let's all spend a little time with someone we haven't talked with recently.

## Christmas at Grafton, Herefordshire

By Phil Zuidema

Last Christmas Hank got to go home to see his family. He was waiting for the new Merlin engine to be fitted to the P-51. Here he was two days before Christmas, he thought, and he's in the thick of the war in Europe. He got to see his mother and his little brother and sister, Gary and Alise. That seemed like an eternity now. The things he had lived through in the last year wizened him well beyond his twenty years.

His best friend, Sam, from flight school, was lost piloting a B-17 over Schweinfurt, Germany in October. It was the second time the Eighth Air Force had launched a costly raid on the ball bearing factories in Bavaria. The high command reasoned that if they could destroy the ball bearing plants, then war machines could not be made. Hank figured they were probably right. As he considered that possibility, his thoughts wandered back to

(Continued on page 3, Column 2)

## T'was The Night Before Christmas-Aviation Style

Anonymous

T'was the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp,  
 Not an airplane was stirring, not even a Champ.  
 The aircraft were fastened to tie downs with care,  
 In hopes that come morning, they all would be there.

The fuel trucks were nestled, all snug in their spots,  
 With gusts from two-forty at 39 knots.  
 I slumped at the fuel desk, now finally caught up,  
 And settled down comfortably, resting my butt.

When the radio lit up with noise and with chatter,  
 I turned up the scanner to see what was the matter.  
 A voice clearly heard over static and snow,  
 Called for clearance to land at the airport below.

He barked his transmission so lively and quick,  
 I'd have sworn that the call sign he used was "St. Nick".  
 I ran to the panel to turn up the lights,  
 The better to welcome this magical flight.

He called his position, no room for denial,  
 "St. Nicholas One, turnin' left onto final."

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## Notes from the Editor

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By Phil Zuidema, editor.

Please make a note, I have a new e-mail address. It is now, PHZuidema@comcast.net. Now that I have high-speed internet access, I can download all your photos and articles that much more quickly.

I was out flying on Saturday, December 4th. Any day in December you can fly without skis is a great day. I missed him, but I understand Dick Barland was out at the field and looking good. I don't know if he did any flying, but it was nice to see him as he is still doing O.K.

Dick Steine noted that we lost Marvin Lichttenegger this past week. Marv was frequently out flying with us. I know, because he and I shared the same frequency. I would have pegged his age at about 72. When I found out he was 88 when he passed away, I was very surprised. I will be delighted to be flying at the Grassfield if I am fortunate enough to make 88 summers. Marv had been a member for as long as I can remember, (twenty four years at least), and was a real gentleman.

Al Schwartz, AMA Frequency Coordinator, will be giving a demonstration on TX and RX health analysis and what you should know.

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## Grassfield Monthly Meeting

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This month's meeting will be held:

**Date:** Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Brooklyn Center Civic Center  
 6301 Shingle Creek Pkwy.  
 Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

**Coffee and cookies served for free!**  
 See [www.Grassfieldrc.org](http://www.Grassfieldrc.org) for a map.

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## Notes from the Secretary

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By Pat Galarneault

I hope you all have been enjoying the unusually warm weather we have had this November. From the number of people at the field the last few weekends, many of you are taking advantage of it.

I've used this opportunity to test fly my new Q-500 plane. It flew pretty well with only a few minor trim adjustments needed. I also got the chance to test my rebuilt Ashley Quarter .40. A while back, it was snap rolling on take off. After several attempts it finally crashed hard enough to do serious damage to it. A thorough check revealed that the rudder was reversed. Apparently, I accidentally reversed the rudder when I was programming another plane on the same transmitter. Having flown this plane many times, my pre-flight checks were limited to checking the batteries and a casual "everything wiggles". The moral of the story is, do a thorough pre-flight before each flying session.

As in the past I will be processing 2005 membership renewals at the meeting. Pre-printed applications will be available for 2004 members and can be picked up at the meeting. AMA cards are coming through a bit slow, 4 to 5 weeks seems typical. I suspect they are very busy with renewals.

See you at the meeting. Pat Galarneault

(Continued from page 1, column 2, *T'Was the Night Before Christmas*)

And what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
 But a Rutan-built sleigh, with eight Rotax Reindeer!

With vectors to final, down the glideslope he came,  
 As he passed all fixes, he called them by name:  
 "Now Ringo! Now Tolga! Now Trini and Bacun!  
 On Comet! On Cupid!" What pills was he takin'?

While controllers were sittin', and scratchin' their head,  
 They phoned to my office, and I heard it with dread,  
 The message they left was both urgent and dour:  
 "When Santa pulls in, have him please call the tower."

He landed like silk, with the sled runners sparking,  
 Then I heard "Left at Charlie," and "Taxi to parking."  
 He slowed to a taxi, turned off of three-oh  
 And stopped on the ramp with a "Ho, ho-ho-ho..."

He stepped out of the sleigh, but before he could talk,  
 I ran out to meet him with my best set of chocks.  
 His red helmet and goggles were covered with frost  
 And his beard was all blackened from Reindeer exhaust.

His breath smelled like peppermint, gone slightly stale,  
 And he puffed on a pipe, but he didn't inhale.  
 His cheeks were all rosy and jiggled like jelly,  
 His boots were as black as a cropduster's belly.

He was chubby and plump, in his suit of bright red,  
 And he asked me to "fill it, with hundred low-lead."  
 He came dashing in from the snow-covered pump,  
 I knew he was anxious for drainin' the sump.

I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work,  
 And I filled up the sleigh, but I spilled like a jerk.  
 He came out of the restroom, and sighed in relief,  
 Then he picked up a phone for a Flight Service brief.

And I thought as he silently scribed in his log,  
 These reindeer could land in an eighth-mile fog.  
 He completed his pre-flight, from the front to the rear,  
 Then he put on his headset, and I heard him yell, "Clear!"

And laying a finger on his push-to-talk,  
 He called up the tower for clearance and squawk.  
 "Take taxiway Charlie, the southbound direction,  
 Turn right three-two-zero at pilot's discretion"

He sped down the runway, the best of the best,  
 "Your traffic's a Grumman, inbound from the west."  
 Then I heard him proclaim, as he climbed thru the night,  
 "Merry Christmas to all! I have traffic in sight."

*Thanks to Dave Andersen for forwarding this along.*



Photo by Phil Zuidema

Ron Gage gives Jerry Elert the "thumbs up" for his Miss Strohs Formula One racer. Slightly bigger than the Quarter .40s of today, the Formula Ones ran with no mufflers and 60% + nitro-methane. They were LOUD!

The sky was on fire. In color, this is really amazing. Taken Saturday, November 6th, after a hard day of model flying.

Photo by Phil Zuidema



Roy Maynard makes Dick Steine think a minute.

(Christmas at Grafton, Herefordshire, Continued from page 1)

the day Sam went down.

Sam was making for the target area when a JU-88 fitted with a rocket launcher tore through Sam's formation and cut his plane in half. The whole crew went down in the pieces of the plane, unable to get out.

"Hey, Hank!" Are you gonna sit around here all night? Let's go to town and get a beer and chase some skirt."

It was Jerry, one of his friends at the airfield. Jerry was a Brit, and had made it through the Battle of Britain in the fall of 1940. He started in Hurricanes and later moved to Spitfires. He had shot down three Messerschmitt 109s and two ME-110 bombers. Now he was teaching the American fighter pilots tactics. Hank looked up to Jerry as the mentor he was, but, also as a friend.

Hank was startled. "Whoa, Jerry, what! Go to town? Yeah, I guess so."

"Let's get going. It's getting dark and I think we may have to hurry if we going to find a spot at the Bubble and Squeak."

One thing the Brits had figured out was the pub, short for public. Not just a bar, it was a public gathering area for the locals to get out and visit with each other. It seemed like a capital idea, and one, "the Americans should adopt, if this war ever ends", he thought.

As they made their way to the little town of Grafton, outside London, Hank couldn't help but think about what Alise and Gary were doing getting ready for Christmas. If it was like Christmases past, Gary had the Lionel train set up around the tree and Alise had helped mother bake spritz cookies. Gary had built the Guillow's P-51 he had given to him in three days. The wing took on a little warp as the dope dried, which made it always want to fly to the left.

Oh, how good those spritz cookies smelled coming out of the oven! Mom would only let him sneak a few while they were hot, because she wanted to decorate them. He would take the hot cookies and place them in his mouth. He could practically feel the warm butter roll off the sides of his tongue. His favorite memory was buying Mom a silk scarf he saw her admire at the store. She was shocked that Hank even noticed her looking at it. There was no way Hank could ever forget how complete and right everything felt when the whole family was getting ready for Christmas.

Blaaaahhh! Jerry hammered the horn on the Morgan. "Watch out ya little beggar," he yelled.

Barely visible in the blacked out lights of the car was a young boy walking along the road toward town. He couldn't have been more than eleven. He was wearing a cap with the bill turned up. The jacket he was wearing looked like a pilot's leather jacket. Way too big, the sleeves dangled off his arms.

He spun around to look at them as they went by. Surprise turned to anger. As he was about to shake his fist at them, his gaze fell upon their leather airmen's jackets and his fist turned into a salute, instead.

(Continued on page 4, column 1)

*(Christmas at Grafton, Herefordshire, Continued from page 3)*

"Geez, Jerry! Watch out!", squawked Hank "That kid is my little brother's age."

Hank knew that life for that kid and for Gary were incredibly different. The stark reality of surviving each day made Hank even more aware of how fragile life had become.

"Maybe there will be a store open yet. I want to get my family something more for Christmas. I know it will take a month to get there, but it might be the last thing they get from me."

Hank was hoping he would be wrong about that.

As they headed toward the pub they passed a little shop. The store owner was just getting the "Closed-Please Come Back Again" sign adjusted in the window and would lock the door next. There in the window, was a Guillow's model. It was a Spitfire, just like the ones Jerry flew.

Hank quickly stepped inside. His eye caught a glass ball with a Cotswold cottage. It was one of those that you could shake up and snow would make a blizzard and then settle softly on the cottage. Alise had always been enamored with those. Lastly, he saw some Irish linens which mom would love. She saw beauty in the delicate details of life, which totally escaped Hank.

"I'd like those, too, please.", Hank said.

"That'll be one pound and six pence."

The shopkeeper grabbed a sack and carefully put Hank's purchases in it, placing the linens carefully on top.

"I know mom will like the linens." Hank felt a closeness with the owner of the store. He didn't know why, but figured it must be the season of the year. For some reason, he wanted this woman to know he was getting this for his mother.

A couple of hours had passed and it was time to leave the Bubble and Squeak and head for the base. A warm glow enveloped the two. Aside from the fact they could be dead tomorrow, they felt pretty good. A soft snow was falling now. It tickled Hank's nose as it landed upon him.

They hopped into the car. Jerry pressed the starter button and the happy little four cylinder barked to life. Jerry gunned it and started down the narrow streets.

As he came around the corner on Derry Street, he noticed a person standing on the corner. It was the boy they had passed earlier, the one that had eventually saluted them.

"Stop!", Hank told Jerry. "I want to ask that kid something."

Jerry stabbed at the brakes and they both leaned forward in their seats.

"Hey kid, where are you headed?"

There was no response.

"What's your name?"

"What's it to you, flyboy?", snapped the kid.

The coat was definitely not his. He was swimming in it.

Visit this website to read a chilling account by Wally Hoffman as he bombed Schweinfurt, Germany, in October 1943, losing many planes and crew to the desperate and deadly Focke-Wulfs.  
<http://home.att.net/~ww2aircraft/Schweinfurt.html>

Hank wondered aloud, "Where'd you get the coat?"

"It's my brother's."

"No kiddin'?", Hank replied. "What does he fly?"

"He used to fly Hurrys", the kid said. The pride for his brother swelled his voice. "But he doesn't fly anything any more. He went down in the Channel a year ago when he was shooting down a Heinkel. He didn't

see the ME-109 coming up behind him. He's dead. He got picked up, but was drowned already. I ended up with his jacket."

Hank cringed. He could imagine his brother, telling his friends about how he, Hank, went down. It could happen so easily. He wondered how Gary would do without his big brother around. For that matter, he wondered how mom would do.

"So, where do you live?", Hank asked.

"I live with me auntie. Her husband, he's not me uncle, you know, he likes to hit her and they were having a big row tonight, so I got out. I think they would just as soon not have me around. I got stuck with them after me mum died when the Gerries bombed our block in London." The kid's voice started to quiver a little, but false bravado was pushed up from his gut to cover up.

Hank thought of how he had given Gary the P-51 model last year. Gary was so proud of his brother just like this kid was of his.

"Say, what's your name?" Hank wanted to know.

"James. My name's James."

"Well James," Hank reached into his bag and pulled out the model of the Spitfire. "This isn't a Hurricane, but it's helped many Hurricane pilots make it back home alive. I'm sorry about your brother. Take this, please. As a gift."

The veneer of toughness fell away from James. There was still some innocence left in this boy. Too soon, it would be swept away for good. But this Christmas, he accepted this gift as a child.

"Gee, thanks a lot, but you don't need to do this. I don't even know you."

Hank felt himself get a little soft inside. "I know, but there's a kid back in the U.S. that wants you to have it. His brother's a pilot, too."

James' arm jerked against his forehead. He was looking directly at Jerry and Hank.

Too soon, Hank worried, he may have to do this for real.

Hank's and Jerry's arms pulled up to their foreheads, and snapped to their sides just as quickly.

"Merry Christmas.", they all said in unison.

As the Morgan pulled away, Hank looked back to see James' serious face, break into a smile as he looked at the Spitfire.

"It may be an O.K. Christmas, after all, Jerry,"

# Interesting Shorts



Here's the new club mower. It has a zero-turn radius and more horsepower than any Nelson engine, except maybe Pat Galarneault's 185 mph Quickie.



Recognize this modeler? If you do, you're dad-burned good. He's still around and shakin' things up on the racing scene.

He sails, plays handball and bikes 50 miles without batting an eye. He's a little older now, but still good lookin'.



Warbird 2004 Winners  
Need some fighter pilots?



148 flights and it's for sale! Never crashed more than it could be fixed.

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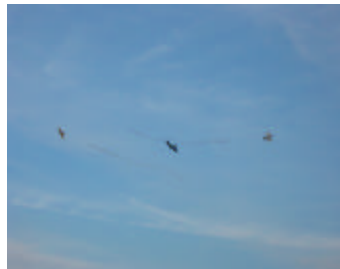


Two bazillion flights and it still looks new, right?

Bill Hempel's mean machine.



The combat gang, chewing the fat. Or, is that, meltin' the fat?



From this cluster of little planes, landed this Martian, only six inches tall!

More fat melting from some of the pylon crowd!





Roy Maynard brings out the Japanese and American WW II iron.

## Grassfield R/C Club Board Members

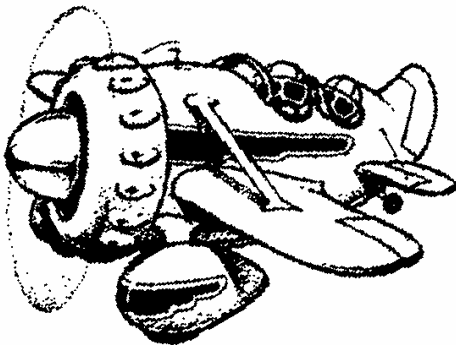
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## The Clippings

*Newsletters of the Grassfield R/C Club, Inc.*  
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