

The Seminole Flyer



AMA Chartered Club 216, Founded in 1969



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Next Club Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2026
The Wine House
1355 Market Street

Memorial Day Fly-in

Jeff Owens

During the May meeting Sam Varn gave a report on the preparations for the Memorial Day Fly-in to be held on Saturday May 23. He mentioned that his weather app showed a 70% chance of rain. Quickly about four or five members pulled out their phones and consulted various weather apps. Soon there were cries of 19%, 25%, 35%, and, of course, 70%. Which just goes to show you that weather apps may be good at **post**dictions (after the fact) but they tend to be lousy at **pre**dictions. By Friday evening, most apps were showing about 20% with the showers occurring in the late afternoon.

On Saturday morning I got up early (for me) and proceeded to make some coffee in my kitchen. I looked out the window and saw — rain! I quickly checked a weather app and it showed 100% chance of rain. Like I said - great at postdictions!

Fortunately, the light shower did not last long. I headed to the field and saw that there already was a good sized crowd of members and guests enjoying the mild temps. A lot of training took place with up to three trainers in the air at one time giving our guests some good airborne experiences. Members were also flying their planes - including Ray Murtha's Fokker DVII. Check out his story further down in this issue!

Sam Varn , ably assisted by Joel Nelson and Ray Murtha did a great job on preparing and serving an excellent lunch. Marcy kept the line moving as she collected funds for lunch. All told it was another great event. And the rain held off until later in the day. The photos shown below were provided by Steve Warmath in addition to a few I took.





Throttle Cut- Steve Warmath

This may be a new term for some. It is a vital safety function for electric aircraft. Generally it is available through programmable transmitters and hobby grade RTF transmitters. Basic “toy” models most likely do not have this feature.

What throttle cut does

On electric airplanes: It prevents the propeller from accidentally starting, lets you safely carry or work on the aircraft (**There are exceptions. See Lessons Learned**), protects fingers, wiring, and equipment.

Typical setup

Most pilots assign throttle cut to a 2-position switch on the transmitter. When “ON”: Motor is disabled. The ESC receives zero throttle signal. When “OFF”: Throttle works normally.

Why it matters

Electric props can start unexpectedly from a bumped throttle stick, wrong model memory, radio glitches, arming the ESC or accidental switch movement. Even small RC props can cause serious cuts and damage.

Recommended habit

A common safe sequence:

1. Turn transmitter on
2. Enable throttle cut “on”
3. Connect flight battery
4. Wait for ESC arming tones
5. Carry aircraft to runway
6. Disable throttle cut “off” when ready for takeoff

After landing: Throttle cut “on” immediately

How to test safely

Remove the propeller first:

1. Power on transmitter
2. Enable throttle cut “on”
3. Energize aircraft
4. Advance throttle stick
5. Motor should **NOT** run
6. Throttle cut “off”
7. Motor should respond normally



Lessons Learned: I have personally had two experiences where throttle cut was “on” and was automatically disabled while working on my aircraft.

1. I was making a minor programming change on my Spektrum transmitter while aircraft was energized and throttle cut was “on”. The one function I was changing returned the “RF disabled” warning on the transmitter. I selected “Ok” and the motor went to full power, jumping off my bench

and hitting an adjacent table, breaking the prop. Not sure why fail safe did not kick in. I had to pull the plug on the battery to get it to stop. Not fun and luckily no damage to the plane or me other than my ego and the prop. **Lesson #1.**

2. I have a “Flex Innovations” aircraft with the “Aura 8” flight controller. To change settings on the flight controller, it has to be linked to a pc or laptop and their proprietary software. I was making a minor adjustment on the rates while the aircraft was energized, again with throttle cut “on”. After any changes are made through the software, the changes have to be written to the controller using the “Write All to Aura” command. As soon as I did that, the motor went to full power and flew off the table. Luckily only breaking the prop and another hit to the ego. **Lesson #2.**



Editor’s Comment - Always check your transmitter manual as different manufacturers use different terminology. On my Futaba 26sz the term “throttle cut” refers to a completely different function. It enables one to cut the engine off once the throttle is set below a certain point. It is disabled when the throttle is set above that point, so it does not function as Steve described. This can be useful if, for example, you fly a nitro model. You can put the throttle to idle, activate throttle cut, and the throttle servo will move to a point where the engine is shut off. I used to do this on my nitro models before I switched to electric.

On my Futaba TX to set up a switch such as Steve describes, you go to the linkage menu, select Function, then replace “throttle” with “motor.” Then go to the model page, select “Motor” and set up the switch basically as Steve described above. Oh - and don’t forget to remove the prop when doing the programming. Please don’t ask how I know...

A Cautionary Tale

Ray Murtha

As I was getting my Fokker DVII ready for the Memorial Day fly-in, I heard something rattling around inside the upper wing. I discovered there was a lot of play in the right aileron. This is a Spektrum metal geared servo with less than a dozen flights on it.

When I started removing the mounting plate to look inside, the servo arm fell off. The missing servo screw was the source of the rattling. The screw and lockwasher were reinstalled with some "poor man's loctite", red nail polish. I have found this works well without the permanence of real loctite.

Needless to say, all my MG servos will be getting the same treatment.

Editor's Comment - Ray's story points out the benefits of a thorough preflight check. Strange sounds, loose control surfaces, and other unusual behaviors should never be ignored. This was a good catch and it likely prevented a real disaster!

Field Improvements

Jeff Owens

The last few weeks have provided us with some scattered rain showers and the grass has benefitted from it. Gordie has been kept busy mowing and the pavilion and parking areas are in great shape. The county workers have also been busy mowing the field itself.

The newly constructed starting tables were made using treated lumber that needed to age before paint could be applied. That has now happened and Gordie has painted the tops of the tables. The tops are most important because they are most exposed to the elements and to nitro exhaust. The plan is to paint the underside parts which necessitates flipping the tables over. This will happen once the top side paint has cured sufficiently. You can see Gordie at work in the photo below - taken by John Court.



Unexplained Crashes

Jeff Owens

Over the last year I have had three unexplained crashes - two of which were pattern planes and one was a Corsair sport model. In all three cases the model exhibited an uncommanded right roll followed by the apparent loss of control. One happened northwest of the flight line and the other two were during downwind legs headed east. These happened with different receivers, different batteries, different ESCs. The only common factors were the pilot and the transmitter. While I suppose that pilot error could have been a factor, it seemed rather strange since, especially with the pattern planes, I have hundreds of practice flights without any problems. I decided to buy a new transmitter in order to eliminate that possibility. So far the new one is working great. But then, the old one worked fine too...

During the Memorial Day Fly-in I was mentioning my problems and several members mentioned that they, too, had experienced unexplained crashes in about the same spots as I did. Several said that it was clearly not pilot error since the altitude was high enough to verify that there was no control before the crash.

This got me wondering if there is something going on at our field. One change I have made was to enable fail safe with the throttle set to idle and the other surfaces set to neutral. If the receiver loses signal I will know because the motor will go to idle. At least that might provide some information.

I searched the internet and found articles where much the same type of crashes occurred. One club used a drone with a receiver logging signal strength to map out regions of low signal strength - so called dead zones. The dead zones corresponded to crash locations. The dead zones were correlated with stands of trees(!) and a nearby river (we have a nearby lake.)

In order to gather more data I have decided to try to keep a list of such crashes. If you have experienced an unexplained crash, please email me the details including the model, radio system, location, and any other pertinent details you can think of. Please send it to jfolso@comcast.net.

Club Meeting News - Jeff Owens

The May meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Jay Wiggins on May 21, 2026 with 12 members present and 2 guests..

Member recognition - Steve Warmath for event flyers, setup, TAG events, and newsletter articles; Jeff Owens for the newsletter and the discharger article; Sandy Jaffe for his SEFF demo; Kevin Parsons for placing 4th in Basic at the Jax IMAC contest; Sm Varn for updating our memorial plaque; Gordie Meade for work on painting the starting tables; Steve, Geoff, Jeff, Ray, Dr. Mike for working the last TAG event; Dr. Mike for donating hot dogs and chili to the solid waste crew.

Vice President's Report - Sam Varn - everything is being prepared for Saturday's Memorial Day Fly-in.

Treasurer's Report - Marcy Driscoll - the March financial report was approved as published.

Secretary's Report - Jeff Owens - the minutes of the April meeting were approved as published.

Training Report - Steve Warmath - TAG grant is expected soon. New batteries have been obtained for the Maule. Mike has contacted a 4-H club about having a training event.

Safety Report - Mike Atkinson - no safety issues noted.

Field Report - Gordie Meade - pavilion and parking areas have been mowed and starting table tops have been painted. Fertilizer will be spread once we get enough rain.

Old Business - none

New Business - Friedrich Mursch reported on the Joe wall event. It was an excellent event with little or no waiting for flight time. The crowd seemed down slightly from prior years.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM.

The Seminole R/C Club Tallahassee, FL

Officers

President	Jay Wiggins (moonangelb@gmail.com)
Vice-President	Sam Varn (sgvarn@yahoo.com)
Secretary	Jeff Owens (jfolso@comcast.net)
Treasurer	Marcy Driscoll (mdriscoll@fsu.edu)
Field Safety Officer	Mike Atkinson (nexnbax1@comcast.net)
Field Marshall	Gordie Meade (lmeade@fsu.edu)
Training Coordinator	Steve Warmath (sswarmath@comcast.net)

Media Managers

Webmaster	Jeff Owens (jfolso@comcast.net)
Newsletter Editor	Jeff Owens (jfolso@comcast.net)

Flight Training

Primary flight training is available by appointment on Saturdays from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM when the weather is nice and not too breezy. Contact the Training Coordinator or one of the instructors to make an appointment:

Geoff Lawrence 850-591-6879

Steve Warmath 850- 509-0672

Jeff Owens 850-545-7482

Mike Atkinson (Thursday only) 850-251-2694

Gordie Meade (helicopter) 850-528-8063

Troy Emmett (Large Aircraft) 770-546-6199

Field Hours

All Aircraft: 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset 7 days/week

Please note: Although restrictions have been removed on flying hours for fueled planes, this is on a trial basis until further notice from Leon County. All gassers and nitros must have a suitable muffler.
