

Classic Pattern Get-Together May 21st

By Robert Fish

Classic pattern is coming to our field in the form of an informal get-together of like minded enthusiasts on Saturday, May 21st. So what is "Classic Pattern" and how does it differ from "Regular" Pattern?

What is "Pattern" Flying anyway?

"Pattern" is a term that applies to Precision Aerobatics. A sequence of aerobatic maneuvers are performed in a predetermined sequence, and the flight is judged (by two judges) for the correctness of the geometry of the maneuvers, positioning, and smoothness. There are different sequences or "patterns" varying in difficulty from easy entry level to "Wow", that's tough. IMAC is pattern flying with "scale" airplanes. Pattern flying is flying with a purpose.

What do you get out of it?

Good question. When I was a lad learning to fly (1974), if you wanted to be a hot pilot, you would fly pattern. Why? Pattern flyers were the best pilots. They practiced doing something specific, and were disciplined. They did not just randomly toss their airplanes about, *and it looked good*. This still holds true today. Try flying straight and level from one end of the field to another. Not so easy, is it?

So what is "Classic Pattern"?

Classic Pattern is often referred to as the "Golden Age" of pattern flying. Unlike today's pattern flying, the schedules did not run together as one continuous sequence. Instead, one maneuver was performed per pass, the aircraft then turned around, and another maneuver was performed. And so it went, until all ten maneuvers were complete.

What about the airplanes?

The airplanes used were considerably different than those flown today. There was a 10cc (.61) limit on engine displacement. (Note: There was no gas power, four strokes, or electrics back then.) The airplanes were sleek and fast, and tracked like arrows. They were manly, and had a commanding presence in the air. If you have ever seen the Blue Angels or the Thunderbirds fly at an air show, you will know what I mean.

Do I need to compete?

No, you can practice pattern and reap the benefits, applying them to whatever facet of R/C that you enjoy.

Do I need a fancy/complicated/expensive airplane?

No. Any aerobatic sport airframe will do.

Why the interest today?

Pattern evolved just as things have a tendency to do. The airplanes got larger and more expensive. The pattern became a continuous sequence (called "Turnaround" pattern) just like an IMAC sequence. Lots of guys "my age" that flew pattern back in the day moved on to other things (wife, kids career, prison, etc) and once those commitments ran their course, had time to return to playing with our toy airplanes. When they saw what pattern had become, they thought it was not so great, and started looking for what they loved before. Nowadays, there is a resurging interest in what we now call Classic Pattern. There is quite a bit of organized activity in the East and South, but none out west. The Classic Pattern Get-Together is an effort to get enthusiasts together in one spot, get to know one another, and get some exposure for this activity.

Most people give the blank stare when asked about Classic Pattern, likely because they have never seen anything like it before. It is our hope that that will change, and this Gathering is an effort to that end.

Is this a contest? Will the field be closed that day?

No, it is not a contest, and the attendees will blend in to the normal day's traffic. They will be operating as my guests, in accordance with the Club bylaws. So don't be afraid- have a look at what is going on. You may like it!