Servo Chatter

August 2025 Issue

President's Message

By Steve Smith

Hello Tomcats,

Over the past four decades, the SCCMAS has built one of the largest remote control aircraft fields on the West Coast, providing a place for model airplane enthusiasts to enjoy their passion. The SCCMAS is a popular stop for Park visitors along the South Coyote Creek bike path. Many visitors ask about how to get started with flying remote control aircraft. A majority of the time, there is an introductory pilot on site that can help someone new to the hobby try a flight with a training airplane setup. After the introductory flight, most new pilots return to continue the adventure flying remote control aircraft. The SCCMAS does offer a free flight training program. More information is available at www.sccmas.org or contact us at contact us at training@sccmas.org.

The SCCMAS has been involved within the community for decades, providing remote control aircraft static displays at community events, talks, demonstrations at airshows, and working with local schools to promote the hobby. During the spring each year, the San Jose State and Santa Clara University Aeronautics students test fly their senior project team designs for local flight companions. This is an exciting time for them working as a team; they are able to see their design fly for the first time after months of designing and building. The SCCMAS looks forward to having them back in 2026.

In May, the 5th and 6th grade students from Miramonte Christian School joined us for a day of flying remote control model airplanes. Part of the classroom curriculum was a flight theme. Volunteers from the SCCMAS provided the remote control airplanes setup for flight training. The students were able to fly various types of model airplanes ranging from basic trainers, EDF jets, to 35% aircraft. This was an enjoyable and exciting time for the students. The SCCMAS looks forward to welcoming the students back in 2026.

During the summer time we experience a large turnout at the field with the peak usage days on Saturday and Sunday. I would like to reiterate that the SCCMAS offers six flight stations to fly from. With the existence of electric aircraft, setup time to fly is reduced, making it easier to just walk out and fly. To be fair to all pilots waiting to fly, the use of the flight board in the motor startup area is important to manage the use of the six flight stations. Pilots are required to clip their SCCMAS card to one of the available six flight stations where you will be flying from. Once your card is clipped to a flight station you can take a turn flying. After flight completion, take down your SCCMAS card and place it in the tray. This indicates that a flight station is available for use. At times, this will require self-policing, as cards may be still clipped to an open flight station. Check around to make sure no-one is in the process of preparing their aircraft for flight in the motor start-up area. Please do not move your aircraft out to the flight
station area and wait for an open spot, use the flight board! Let's work together to make this a smooth process for an enjoyable experience.

The SCCMAS will be hosting the next members meeting on Sunday August 24th from 12:00 to 2:00PM at the SCCMAS field. The meeting is open to all members and their guests. New to the hobby and would like to join us, contact info@sccmas.org.

See you at the field,
Steve

From the Editor's Desk

Newsletter Editor - Liam O'Connor

Greetings Tomcats -

Welcome to the August 2025 issue of Servo Chatter!

This issue of Servo Chatter is jam-packed with information and photographs from the many exciting events we have had at the flying field over the past few months, including our May 31, 2025 Work Party and June 7, 2025 Warbird Fly-In. Of course, this issue also includes includes key information from SCCMAS leadership and volunteers, a summary of upcoming events, plenty of photos of our recent activities at the flying field, and Pilot Projects by SCCMAS members Babe Caltabiano and Tsung Xu.

I continue to be impressed by seeing so many new members joining our club, both young and old, and completing their flight training. We are very grateful for the hard work and dedication of all of our SCCMAS flight instructors. A special thanks to Karl Allmendinger for stepping up to be a lead flight instructor after Dave Neves moved out of the Bay Area.

With the recently warmer weather at the field, please remember to bring plenty of water and sunscreen to the field for a day of flying. We have also begun to see some of our rattlesnake friends hiding in plain sight. Please be on the lookout for them!

If you do encounter a snake, do not disturb, attempt to move, and/or touch it. Instead, back away and let the snake continue on its journey.

Until our next issue, I wish all of you a fantastic spring full of flying, fun, and happy landings.

Liam

servochatter@sccmas.org

Tomcats Reminder:

–All Tomcats Members must lock the main entrance gate behind them each time they enter and leave the SCCMAS Flying Field.

Cover Photo: Courtesy of Steve Smith. Field Trip day at the flying field with students from Miramante Christian School.

SCCMAS: Student Field Trip

This year the 5th & 6th grade class at Miramonte Christian School had a year long theme of flight. The main focus was the Wright brothers, but they also covered a wide range of topics related to flight. At one point in the year, they had an online meeting with a park ranger from the Wright Brothers National Memorial. They also designed, built, and tested their own airfoils in a small wind tunnel. Each airfoil was tested at 3 airspeeds, and 3 angles for each airspeed. The lift was precisely measured for each setting, then recorded and graphed in Google Sheets.

Throughout the year the students had opportunities to fly the teacher's RC simulator. A staff member of Skydio Drones brought a couple of drones to the school and taught the students about how they are used in law enforcement and rescue environments. Each of the students had a chance to fly the large drone.

The highlight of the school year came on May 29 when the students had the opportunity to spend the day at the Santa Clara Model Aircraft Skypark! Steve Smith arranged an excellent event with some instruction, flight demonstrations, and buddy box time. Every student flew at least one RC plane and they all enjoyed it. Several of the students had been adamant that they did NOT want to try. In the end, they all did, and even the most reluctant students were very excited about the experience and were glad they had done it. The club members went above and beyond to make the students feel comfortable and valued.

MCS is very grateful for the chance to bring the students to Santa Clara Model Aircraft Skypark for such an amazing and engaging experience. The students made memories that will last a lifetime!

SCCMAS: Student Field Trip (con’t)

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Construction Article

By SCCMAS Member and Webmaster, Chris Luvara

Auto-Start - Part 1

After being away from the hobby for a few years—especially while the field was closed—I returned to find some pretty cool new tech. One upgrade I particularly like for gas engines is the electric auto-start system. Not having to carry a starter, and being able to restart the engine after a low idle shutdown on the runway, are just a few of the benefits. Plus, for most warbirds, nose weight is already necessary—so why not make it useful?

Four of my last "big" warbirds have DLE55s, which fortunately have auto-start systems available. Unfortunately, some of the warbirds I like to build feature inline engines, which don't lend themselves well to the typical side-mounted auto-start setup—it ends up sticking out of the cowl.

Recently, I found that Pilot-RC released a much more compact auto-start add-on for the DLE55, but it's virtually unavailable from U.S. dealers. Internationally, its available—but the price ends up being *more than the engine itself*!

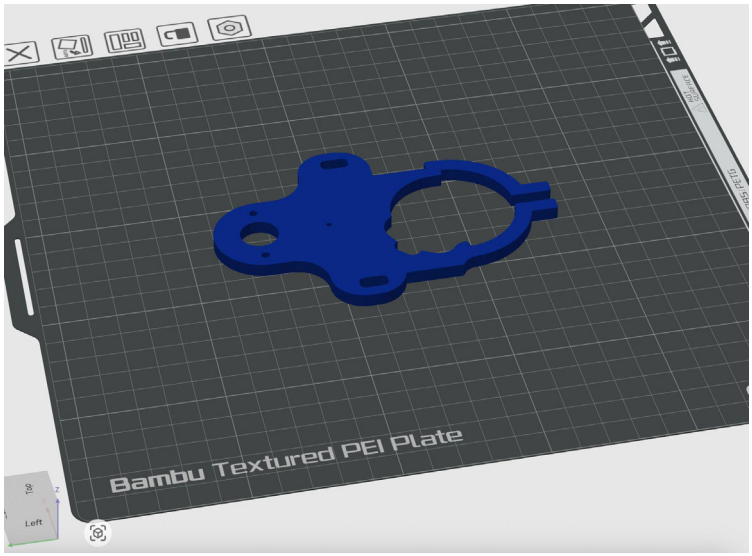
Halfway through my Top-Flite Giant P-40 build, I got the itch to see if I could make an auto-start system fit inside the cowl.

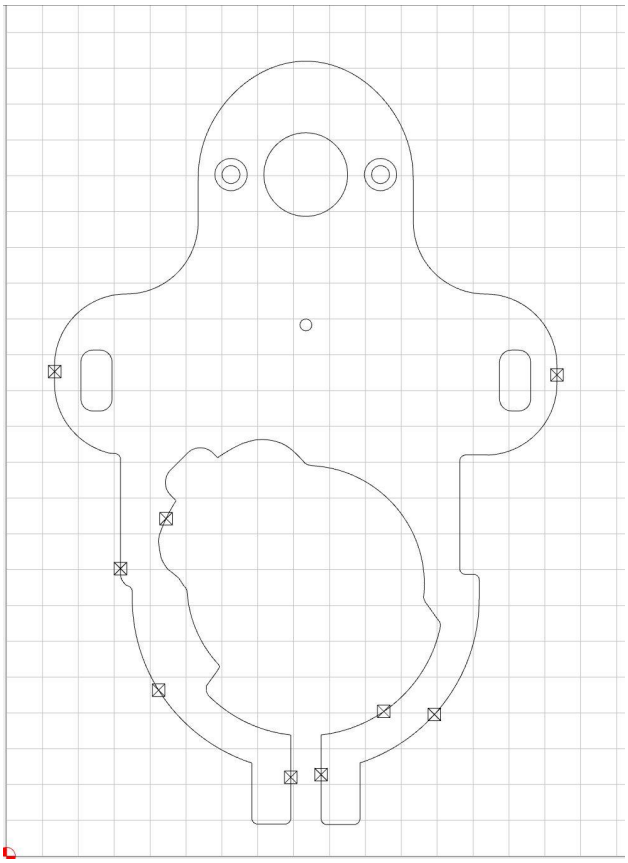
This image shows the stock auto-start mount rotated, which gave me some inspiration—it looked like I might actually be able to make it work. However, I'd need to fabricate my own custom mount, since the existing holes don't align properly when rotated. The DLE55's mounting pattern isn't square, so you can't simply rotate the stock bracket and bolt it back on.

Since I already had the engine mounted, I couldn't easily experiment with rotating the starter mount to see if the stock bracket could be made to fit—so it was off to the drawing board. I disassembled the starter, took careful measurements, and recreated it in my simple CAD program, which I use with my hobby CNC cutter.

The result looked something like this:

To make sure it would fit properly, I took the outline from my CAD drawing and extruded it into a 3D model that I could print on my 3D printer.



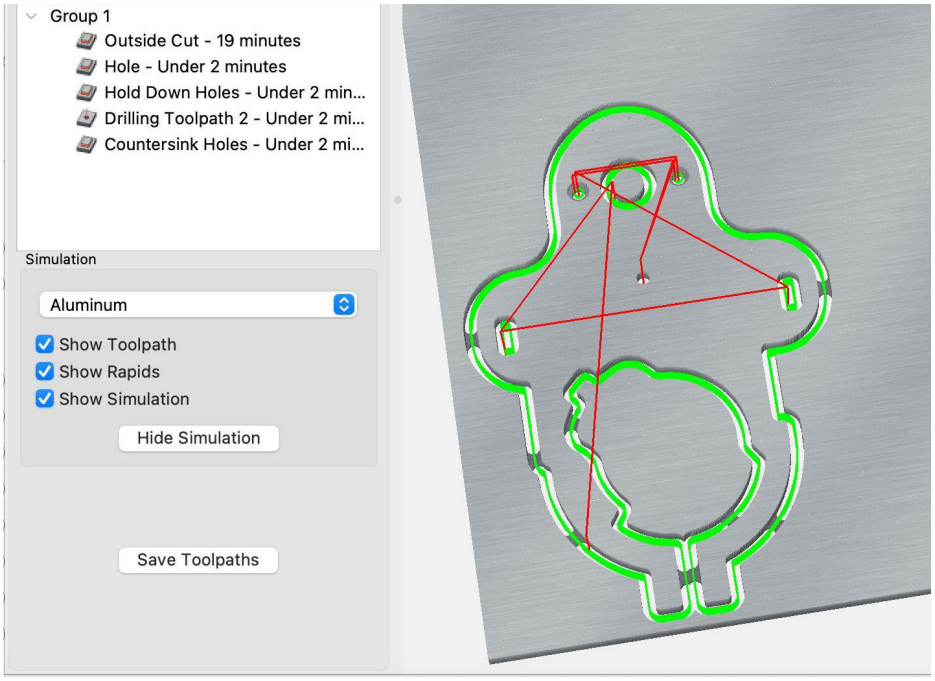


16 minutes and about $0.30 cents later (much cheaper than the aluminum), I had a part I could test on the engine.

I mounted it to the engine, and then on the airframe. Great, looks like it will work!

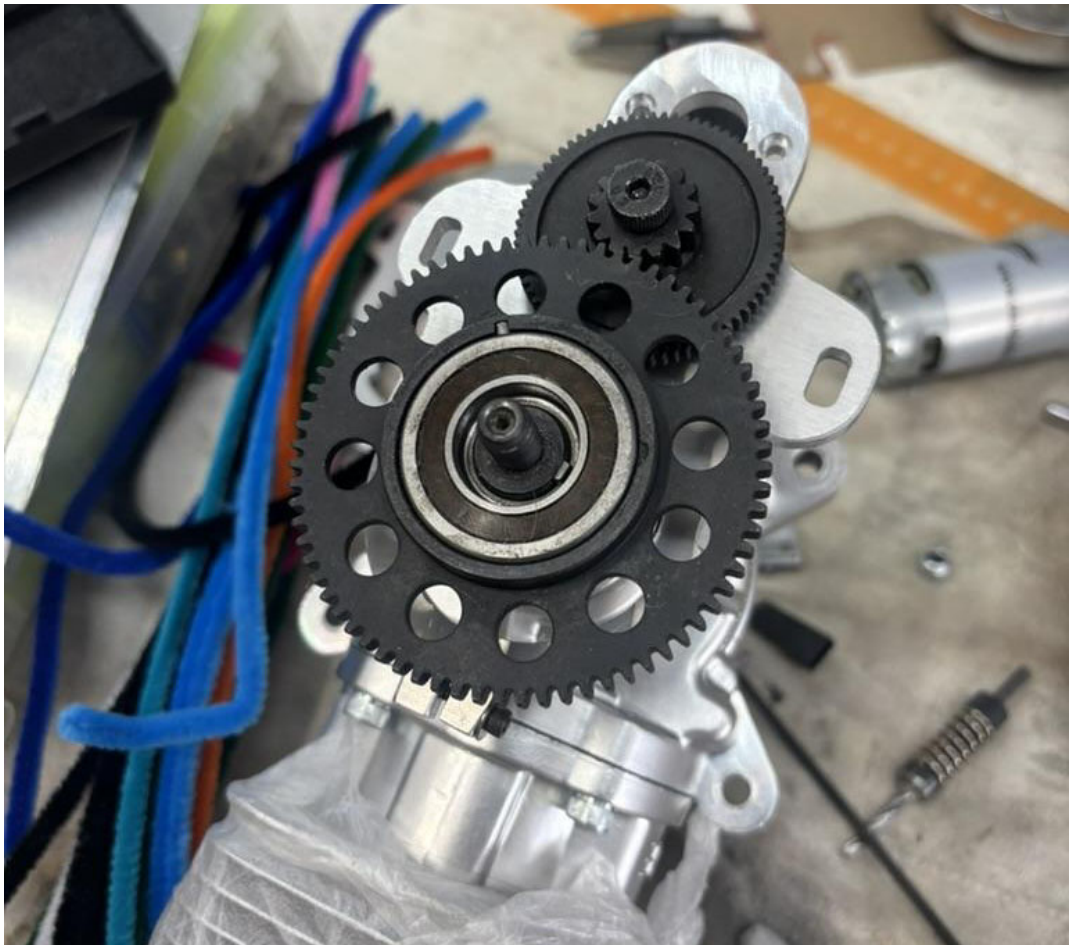
Next, it was back to the CNC process to cut the final piece from aluminum. I'll spare you the details, but after recalibrating the machine and replacing a few worn parts, three cuts later I finally had a workable piece.

To the right we can see the simulation in my CNC program. It shows the cut outline along with the "rapids", which shows how the router will move around.



Below is a photo of the mount, ready to be "removed" from the stock. During the cutting process, it's held in place by small tabs to keep it secure. Instead of having the CNC drill full-depth holes for the gear and motor mounts, I had it cut pilot holes to about 30% depth. I then finished them to the correct size using the appropriate drill bit. The hole for the gear was tapped afterward.

With the mount finished, I installed it on the engine—almost ready to give it a try.

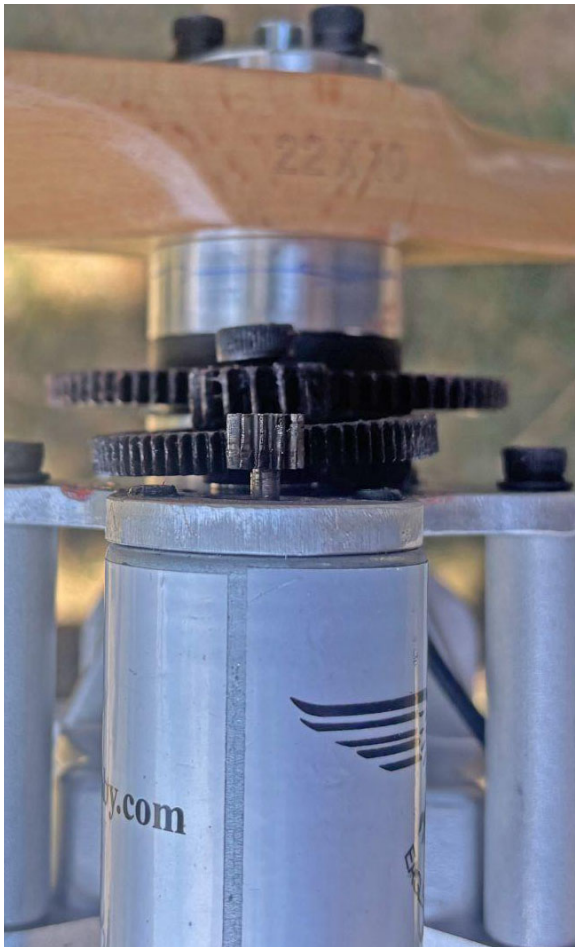


The moment of truth. I set everything up on my test stand, ready to fire it off. And—it starts and runs! I put it through two full start/stop cycles, then let the engine cool down before running another test.

After checking that all the screws were still tight, I gave it one more go. It started right up again. I ran the motor for a few minutes across its full throttle range and then shut it down.

Whiiiiiiiirrennnneee. This time, it had a distinctly different whine on shutdown.

I took a look—and wow. Something was definitely not right. Somehow, the bolt holding the middle gear had bent, and the motor's pinion gear teeth were chewed up and misaligned. My guess is that the gear mesh wasn't quite right, which led to the failure.



Since I wanted to keep making progress on the P-40 and needed the engine for it, I decided to pause the auto-start project. I've found another used DLE55 to continue testing and refining the setup.

So don't worry, there will be a part 2!

SCCMAS Work Party

By SCCMAS Member, Liam O'Connor

On May 31, 2025, a number of Tomcats modelers (who are listed below) participated in a work party at our field. The work party was a success, with many members completing several long overdue projects. Among other things, the work included mowing, weed whacking, painting of all of our picnic benches, and repair of some of our work tables.

It was excellent to see a core group of our members contribute to making our flying field even better than it already was. The SCCMAS is truly blessed to have some of the most committed and hard working members of any club in the area.

The contributions of our membership help to make our flying field one of the best in the nation. If you were unable to make our last work party, please try to make the next one, and be sure to reach out to our club leaders if you would like to contribute in any other way.

A HUGE thank you to the following members that participated at the work party:

- Steve Smith
- Mike West
- Antonio Counsil
- Tim Jones
- Keith Angelo
- Mark Glanville
- Jim Witkowski
- Mike Mabanag
- Mark Mabanag
- Roger Pellor
- Ville Karaila
- Luke Peng
- Ryan Nguyen
- Thao Nguyen
- Bruce Gao
- Lynsel Miller
- Trevor Wallace
- Joe Lowry
- Joe Alves
- Alex Saroyan
- Liam O'Connor
- Abhi Kini
- Krishnan Natarajan
- Andy Keates

Continued on following page

SCCMAS Work Party (con't)

SCCMAS Work Party (con't)

SCCMAS Work Party (con't)

SCCMAS Work Party (con't)

New Safety Net Installation (August 10, 2025)

New Safety Net Installation (con’t)

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In

By SCCMAS Newsletter Editor, Liam O'Connor

On June 7, 2025, the SCCMAS held the third Annual Warbird Fly-In at our flying field. With the benefit of Sharam's advice and experience running the Fly-In the past few years, I organized the event this year, and Lynsel Miller served as the CD. Numerous other Tomcats members (who are listed below) volunteered in various ways to coordinate the event.

The Warbird Fly-In was a spectacular success, with a total of 34 registered pilots from the SCCMAS, as well as from other bay area clubs, including SACRATS, Livermore Flying Electrons, Hollister Wavemasters, and Woodland Davis. A full day of flying, camaraderie, and fun were enjoyed by all. A catered lunch from Togo's for all of our pilots was the icing on the cake.

Special thanks to Alex Saroyan for picking up the sandwiches, Cyndi Cougoule for keeping the registration organized and flowing smoothly, Krishnan for treacherous long-hours gate duties, and Steve Smith for getting the park commission approval for the event.

Many thanks to all of the following members that volunteered to make the Warbird Fly-In a success:

- Sharam Shirazi
- Steve Smith
- Lynsel Miller
- Chris Luvara
- Henri Richard
- Cyndi Cougoule
- Mike Luvara
- Liam O'Connor
- Alex Saroyan
- Krishan Natarajan
- Matt Campi

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.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SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

Additional photos of the Warbird Fly-In are included later in this newsletter.

SCCMAS Pilot Projects

Above and Below Right: Babe Caltabiano's scratch built Japanese Raiden. Babe's version is a captured Raiden, with a wingspan of 63 inches; weight 14 lbs; engine DLE20. Fiberglass fuselage and foam wing covered with balsa and fiberglass, etc.

SCCMAS Pilot Projects (con’t)

Above: Tsung Xu’s vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) build that he designed from scratch. Tsung wrote: “It takes off and lands like a quadcopter with lifting motors. It can transition to cruise flight when airborne using the dedicated cruise motor. This VTOL is also 3D printed using lightweight foaming PLA to minimize weight.

It's built for long range flight, and can fly for over two hours based on power draw in its maiden flight. I targeted four hours or more of flight time and that might be achievable with many aerodynamics and propulsion tweaks.

This is my second ever VTOL scratch build, and I want to build a startup that makes two seat personal use eVTOLs under the FAA's upcoming MOSAIC upgrade to light sport aircraft.”

TRCM One Day Pattern Contest

By SCCMAS Member, Luke Peng

I attended the Walnut Grove Tokay RC Modelers one day pattern contest on 4/12/2025, CD by Jon Soda, who is the NSRCA D7 VP and a SCCMAS member.

Beautiful weather, outstanding facilities and friendly TRCM members, we had a great day! See photos below.

The next close by pattern contest will be at The Hollister Wavemaster flying site on 6/21-6/22, come over and watch the precision aerobatics!

-Luke

Continued on following pages…

TRCM One Day Pattern Contest (con’t)

TRCM One Day Pattern Contest (con't)

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.


NOTICE


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SCCMAS Warbird Fly-In, Con't.

SCCMAS: Scenes from the Field

Above and Below: SCCMAS Member Alex Saroyan's CARF Rebel Classic, with Kingtech K-142 Turbine Engine for power.

SCCMAS: Scenes from the Field (con’t)

SCCMAS: Scenes from the Field (con’t)

SCCMAS: Scenes from the Field (con’t)

Above: Chris Luvara captured a photo of this “well-fed Rattler” on August 10, 2025. Please be on the lookout for them!

The Goats Have Arrived!

Below: Photo by Michael Luvara, taken 6/17/25. SCCMAS welcomes the annual visit by the goats, Mother Nature's "lawn mowers" at work on the south side of the Field!

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