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Extreme hospitality alive and well in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

I have been involved in model aviation most of my life and have been flying radio controlled airplane since 1973. I have had the fortunate experience of flying with, and meeting, some of the friendliest and helpful people I have ever met in the United States as well as abroad. In fact some of my closest friends I have met through this sport of model aviation.

One Friday in June of 2009 I had an experience with a model aircraft club that completely floored me? Let me explain:

I have been the contest director for a helicopter contest in the Nashville area of Tennessee for fourteen years. My regular flying field is within (and controlled by) one of the state parks. For thirteen of those years I have had no problem at all. Without going into detail, at 4:50 PM, on the practice day (Friday), the parks department decided they would not allow us to use there field for a contest (as usual, we had all of the legal AMA paperwork and sanction) and told all of the pilots to leave the field or face a summons by the park police.

I had folks that made ten plus hour drives to get hear and I was one stressed CD. I called a modeling friend and let him know of our problem; a big bunch of world class helicopter pilots with no place to fly!

Robert Hughes (my friend) happened to be flying as a guest (the first time at this field in ten years) at the Middle Point Skyhawks flying field a couple of towns over in Murfreesboro Tennessee. Jim Powers (president) overheard the conversation (remember this is about 5:00PM on a Friday) and offered to see if the members would have any problem with us moving the contest to there field. Within fifteen minutes Jim and I were chatting and he got full support of the club for this.

I was pretty much speechless; I don't know these people from Adam and they are willing to shut down there nice weekend of flying so the field can be exclusively used by a bunch of helicopter pilots they don't even know. Well we all caravanned to the field Friday night and met up with Jim and began to mark out the field for our competition.

I got home thinking that this cannot be true. Surly there will be irate members yelling at us in the morning about ruining there weekend of flying. I slept quite poorly concerned that this was way too good to be true.

Saturday was a very nice day (too nice to give up a flying field) and we got started. About mid morning, I caught a glimpse of someone walking toward me with a determined pace. Hear we go (I thought), getting kicked off another field in the same weekend would be too much for me. No, this person (one of the club members) came to find me to shake my hands and welcome me there and letting me know he was happy they could help (they even unlocked there doors to let us use there mower, paint, grill as well as any other items they had available).

It sounds crazy but this went on all weekend; club members and officers, coming out for a few minutes, making sure we were all right and was there anything they could do to help us. Help us? They did far too much as it was.

I want to offer my sincere appreciation to all of the members of the Middle Point Skyhawks (<http://www.mprcf.com/>). In all the years I have been enjoying this hobby, I have had so many positive experiences of people wanting to help. This experience has moved the bar high when it comes to hospitality and this club and there members should be recognized for helping out when it was not really the most timely or convenient thing to do.

What the club members did not know at the time was that all of the monies from this event have been going to help support an after school program in a low income area of Nashville (through one of the churches). Without there help, we would have missed this years contribution for the first time in fourteen years.

Once again, thank you Skyhawks!

Sincerely,

Tim DiPeri
AMA Member since 1973
AMA # 22677