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GULL WINGS NEWSLETTER

Torrey Pines Gulls Radio Control Soaring Society (TPG)

AMA Charter Club 129

Website: www.torreypinesgulls.org

Editor – Dale Gottdank

Message from the President

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Chuck Norris

Hi everyone,

We recently lost a good friend, a fellow pilot and a tireless volunteer, Cliff Hunter. Gary Fogel's article elsewhere in this newsletter talks about his prodigious accomplishments, so I want to talk about just how much Cliff did for the club and how we need to take some inspiration from him to make sure all the things he just took care of continue to operate.

A huge thank you to Christoph (Chris) Efstathiou who graciously volunteered to take on the duties of Membership Coordinator! Thank you, Chris! He's already spinning up and you'll all get to interact with him the next time you renew your membership.

But Cliff did many more things for the club that need to continue - more than we could hope any one person would manage. Cliff handled the keys to the flying fields, changing the locks and keys out yearly, coordinated mowing of all three flying fields, handled mower maintenance, and was our liaison with the County of San Diego for the Encinitas field (which is located on county land). He brought electric power to all events he attended with his pickup with 110V power in the bed. He always brought drinks to contests he attended, especially my favorite Cream Soda!

Photo above:

TPG Members gathered for an exciting session of slope combat at the Poway Slope (Bob Hirsch photo)

(continued next page)

Message from the President (continued)

So, I'll close with this ask: Please consider how you can contribute back to this club. If that's taking on (or helping with) one of the things Cliff used to handle personally, or helping out with contests, or helping new pilots get successfully introduced to soaring of some kind, or being a mentor at the gliderport, or serving on the Gulls Executive Committee, or helping create something new that is a personal passion.

Volunteers are the backbone of our club! So, I give a heartfelt "Thank You" to all of you who already contribute, and to all of you who will be inspired by Cliff's legacy to do so in the future.

Chuck



- In Memoriam -

Clifford Hunter



Clifford Hunter grew up in Long Beach, California. After high school he was employed by Douglas Aircraft as a template maker, using photography to stencil parts onto aluminum, cut and drill parts, and make templates for others to do the same. He helped with the production on the Douglas DC-8, DC-9, DC-10, KC-133, and A-4E. In about 1970 he changed his line of work to firefighting and spent the next 30 years with the San Marcos Fire Department, working his way up to Deputy Chief. While in San Marcos, he noticed some people flying RC gliders in a field and stopped to check it out. There he met members of the North County Clouds (NCC). He built a Wanderer and took an interest in thermal duration, an interest that led to a long succession of super planes.

In 1990, development forced the closure of the NCC field and Cliff led a successful and important effort to combine the NCC with the Torrey Pines Gulls. He re-entered the world of firefighting in 2003, becoming Fire Marshall for Rancho Santa Fe. He helped survey new fields that would be suitable for thermal soaring, and through yet another important effort found and helped secure the retired Encinitas Landfill for use by TPG. Over the years Cliff volunteered for many responsibilities with TPG including thermal coordinator, winchmaster, newsletter editor, president, and most recently as membership chairman.

- In Memoriam -

Clifford Hunter



Cliff's efforts for the club went beyond these positions – when showing up to a thermal contest he would take personal responsibility to bring water for everyone, or snacks, let us use his truck for power at the field, bring eggs for friends, etc. He spearheaded efforts to improve our thermal fields. He and his wife Sandy spent many hours mowing our club fields to keep them (and the mower) in tip-top shape. He was always courteous, eager to help, and was a friend to as many Gulls as possible. Cliff was selected as TPG Modeler of the Year in 2008 and both he and Sandy were selected for TPG Co-Modelers of the Year in 2023 for their many efforts to help TPG. Cliff's passing on January 12, 2026 leaves a void that is difficult to fill, both for the club and for each of us as individuals and his friends. We will miss you, Cliff!

- In Memoriam -

Alex Mladineo



Born in 1930, Dragimir "Alex" Mladineo began flying RC gliders with the TPG in 1974 and immediately volunteered as newsletter editor, a position he held until 1976. He rapidly became a standout pilot in thermal duration locally and regionally and volunteered to organize meets and serve as contest director. This included both thermal and slope events. Alex had an amazing ability to help introduce newcomers to the hobby, thinking of creative ways to merge experts and amateurs in "Pro-am" contest formats. Alex earned first place at the 1977 LSF Tournament at Dominguez Hills and enjoyed flying mainly Windfree and Aquila sailplanes. He achieved LSF SAP Level IV but by the mid-1980s had drifted away from the hobby in pursuit of other life goals and hobbies. Alex earned the TPG Modeler of the Year trophy in 1975. He passed December 2, 2025 just a few weeks before his 95th birthday and having enjoyed 69 years of marriage to his wife Maria.

<https://www.legacy.com/legacy/dragimir-mladineo>

TPG February/March Events

DATE	EVENT	COMMENTS
January 31 st – February 2 nd	F5J Tour – 2-day F5J Contest	Perris Free Flight/Glider Field Register on F3X Vault
February 7 th	Fly 'n Swap – A Day to fly and swap meet. Clean out your garages and make room for more birds	Torrey Pines Gliderport No Contest Registration Required Fun Fly!
February 15 th	Tow Hook Series Contest F3L/F3RES – 2m & 1.5m	Encinitas Flight Center Register on F3X Vault
February 21 st	DLG Contest	Poway Flight Center Register on F3X Vault
February 22 nd	Team DLG Contest	Poway Flight Center Register on F3X Vault
February 24 th	Club Virtual Meeting	Zoom link: TPG Virtual Meeting Zoom Link
February 28 th	TPG Slope Combat Fiesta	Poway Slope Register on F3X Vault when open
March 8 th	F5J Contest	Poway Flight Center Register on F3X Vault
March 15 th	Tow Hook Series Contest F3L/F3RES – 2m & 1.5m	Encinitas Flight Center Register on F3X Vault when open
March 21 st	DLG Contest	Poway Flight Center Register on F3X Vault
March 28 th	F5J Foamy Fun Fly	Poway Flight Center Register on F3X Vault



At the slope (Ray Pili photo)

Newsletter This Month - Dale Gottdank, Editor



Dale Gottdank

Please contribute to our **GULL WINGS NEWSLETTER**

Send pictures, or maybe even an article! It could be just a paragraph with some photos from a great soaring day ...even something interesting you've seen on the internet. I'd like to have the newsletter published by the first week of every month. If there's a project you're working on, don't just post it on RCGroups...share it with your club!

Please send in your articles or photos (communications@torreypinesgulls.org) by the **25th** of each month so they can be included in the monthly newsletter. If there are too many, we'll save them for the next issue. Photos should be in their original, high-resolution format. The newsletter can be found on the Torrey Pines Gulls website at <http://www.torreypinesgulls.org>.



TPG President Chuck Norris (L) and Slope Coordinator Bret Locke teamed up to mow the Encinitas field before it got completely out of control. Thanks guys! (Bret Locke and Chuck Norris photos)

Club Meetings, Contests and Activities

The Torrey Pines Gulls hosts bi-monthly club meetings virtually via Zoom. It's really easy to use Zoom, join in the fun, chat with others; and we typically have a presentation about a topic in RC soaring or something aviation related.

At our last virtual meeting, in 2025, we were joined by AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame inductee **Larry Jolly** for a review of his amazing career in aeromodelling spanning more than 50 years of excellence in free flight, control line, RC helicopters, RC electric aircraft, and RC soaring. Thank you, Larry!

Our next club meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 7:00pm PST. You can be sure we'll have a fascinating presentation and as always, a time to touch base with flying buddies and friends. The Zoom link will be shared with the club via discord and Google Groups prior to each meeting. It also appears on the Upcoming TPG Events list in the Newsletter.



The Torrey Pines Gulls
invites members to join our February 2026 virtual meeting about

The Skunk Works Approach

to Innovation and Development





Mike Swanson
Former Chief Engineer, Lockheed Martin Skunk Works

Mike's presentation will focus on how the Skunk Works executes programs, including recent examples, and how the team fosters a culture of innovation to be successful.


Tuesday, February 24


7:00 – 8:30 pm


Virtual Meeting via Zoom





News from the Slope – Bret Locke, Slope Coordinator



Bret Locke



Happy New Year, Gulls!

The high-pressure systems and storms from the south appear to be leaving the southwest region. Predominant weather conditions and favorable west winds should bless our sloping activities for the foreseeable future. The TPG slope areas remain in excellent condition; recent rains have produced a plethora of green grass for our landing area at Torrey Pines. The sweet spot for the grass is quickly passing and we are requesting a mowing from the gliderport. The 2026 TPG Calendar is on the move, and wonderful events are fast approaching.

February 7th, the Gliderport Fly and Swap will be at Torrey Pines. This event draws many slopers from surrounding areas looking for treasures and some stick time at the cliff. The schedule is from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

February 28th, the Slope Combat Fiesta will be at the Poway slope from 12:00 to 4:00 pm. Please sign up for this event on F3X for planning purposes.

March 7th, the Slope Scale Fun Fly will be at Torrey Pines, this is a great day to fly and catch up with other club members.

SAFETY ALERT:

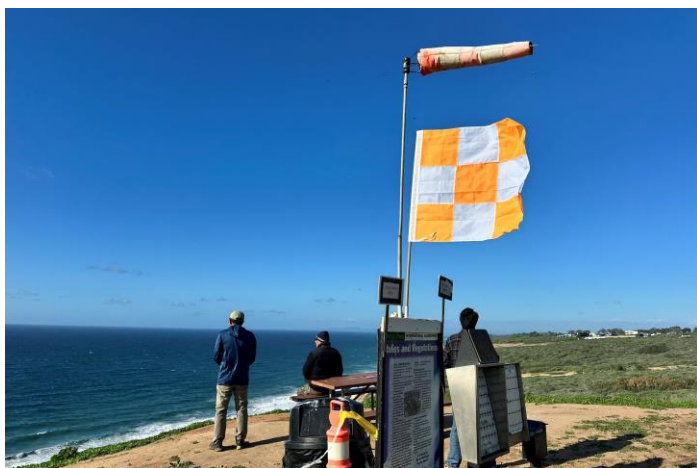
Our most effective safety practice is the Blue-Sky Rule; your depth perception cannot be trusted; Maintain Situational Awareness; and fly with a spotter if feeling overwhelmed by your plane or by paraglider traffic. In uncomfortable situations (i.e. numerous paragliders in the R/C window), landing is always a great option. If warranted, politely ask the Gliderport flight director to help clear the RC window.

We are only at beginning the 2026 Slope Season, make the best of our fortune!

Sincerely,

Bret Locke
TPG Slope Coordinator

News from the Slope (continued)



Ray Pili photo



Michael Gillen photo

TPG Gliderport Schedule for 2026

Jan. 29 th – Feb. 1 st	Gliderport closed due to golf tournament
February 7 th	Fly 'n Swap – A Day to fly and swap meet. Clean out your garages and make room for more birds
March 7 th	Scale Planes – Both TPG and TPSSS Fun Fly Day
April 4 th	Old School Vintage Classic Woodies – Balsa BOTs, Olys, Sagittas – whatever is built-up wood
May 2 nd	TPG-AIAA foamboard event – 9AM-2PM. UCSD/SDSU Foam Board Design/Build/Fly Contest – Mentors wanted!
May 9	Foamies – Ahis, Alulas, Radians – if it's foam, this is your day.
June 6 th	Katie Martin International Tribute. A day to remember and celebrate Bob's amazing wife Katie. Lots of Hobie Hawks (Katie's favorite) aloft. All RC soaring aircraft welcome, but be sure to bring out your classic Bob Martin planes too!
July 4 th	Aerobatics Day – TWF/PNF – Jesters, Ahis, Shrikes; whatever turns on a dime
August 8 th	Fly 'n Swap Again! – A day to fly and swap meet. Clean out your garages and make room for more birds
September 5 th	Old School Vintage Classic Woodies Again! – Balsa BOTs, Olys, Sagittas – whatever is built-up wood
October 17 th	UCSD/TPG Buddy Box & Skilled Pilots Mentorship Day
October 18 th	Redman Rules Contest – Ribbons for 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd . For the uninitiated, Redman Rules involve beer can bowling and limbo line.
December 5 th	No Shopping Saturday – A week or so after Thanksgiving to get out of the house

Also, keep an eye out for details on our next Poway Slope Combat session.

The first event of 2026 is scheduled for February 28th, 2026



January DLG Contest Report – Justin Tolman, CD

The January 2026 DLG contest/clinic was held on Saturday, January 17th with 13 pilots in attendance. The mood was somber as we gathered for the first time in 2026 without Cliff Hunter's jovial presence. In Cliff's honor, we made him the honorary CD and flew 6 tasks he picked for 2025's January contest.

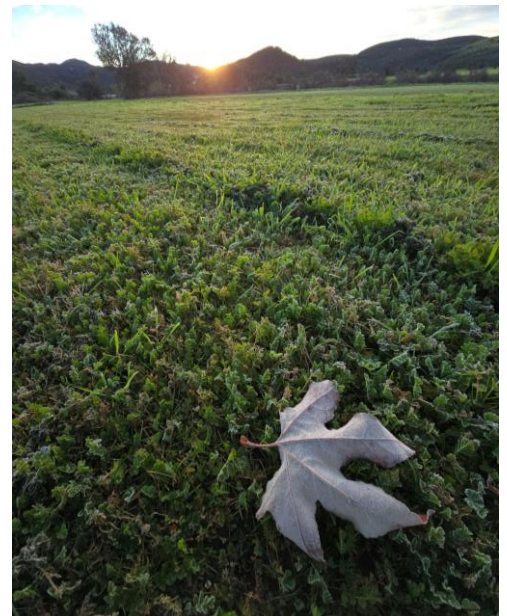


DLG pilots enjoying a beautiful Poway morning (Bob Hirsch photo)

The cool overnight air left a bit of frost on the freshly mowed field (thanks Ian for the mow). And it took well into the day for the thermals to perk up, despite the rapidly rising temperatures.



Justin Tolman photos



The early morning air provided little to no lift in Round 1 (Task H, 1,2,3,4), Tom Farley took advantage of his electric-launch and some smooth flying to take the K in Group A over hand-launch veteran Mike Smith, despite a 25-second first flight. In Group B, Milan Bregman edged out hand-launch veteran Gary Fogel by just 8 seconds to take the K.

January DLG Contest Report (continued)

With timers (and hecklers) well positioned on the sidelines we moved onto Round 2, (Task C, AULD). Don Lochhead, put in a great effort with his electric-launch and west-end residency to take the K in Group A. In Group B, going perfect and getting all 3 of his 3:00 minute flights was Milan.

Round 3 brought out the original Task D, Ladder. In Group A, Doug Cronkhite and Tom managed to get all 5 of their flights and shared the K. Group B, 5 pilots avoided significant mistakes and all shared the K, collecting all 5 of their flights as well.

Heading into 5-call Poker and Round 4, nobody was confident in their ability to find sustainable lift. (Most of us seemed quite content that this was the 5-call variety and not the modern, 3-call flavor of Poker). In Group A, Gary was able to record 4 flights, totaling 6:00 to take the K over Ian Cummings' 4 flights and 4:05 flight time. In Group B, Doug played it safe and got in 4, 1:30 flights before finding 3:00 air on his fifth flight to rack up 9 minutes of flight time, taking the K.



Contest activity (Dave MacNeil photo)

After a short break to enter scores, the air finally started to take a turn for the better in Round 5 (5:00 in 7:00). In Group A, Mike, Arthur Markiewicz and Milan were able to score maximum flight time and share the K. We took one more quick break to rescue Chuck Norris' plane from a low-hanging branch right along the access road. Moving on to Group B, it was William Lalla, Doug and Justin Tolman also scoring maximum flight time to share the K.

We would round out the day with Round 6 and Task I (Three Longest). In Group A, Milan's quick turns would only drop 6 seconds and earn him the K over Justin. In Group B, William battled bested some unruly, dare call it opposite-of-lifty, air to take the K over Mike.

When we tallied up all the points, it was Doug Cronkhite who came out on top, followed by Milan Bregman and Arthur Markiewicz.

January DLG Contest Report (continued)



Contest winners: Doug Cronkhite, 1st Place (center), Milan Bregman, 2nd Place (right) and Arthur Markiewicz, 3rd Place (left) (Bob Hirsch photo)

We enjoyed the time spent with friends, but it sure would have been better had Cliff been with us. We will miss him dearly.

Our next DLG contest will be February 21st. Hope you can make it. Sign up for February 21st here:

https://www.f3xvault.com/?action=event&function=event_view&event_id=4116

-Justin Tolman
TPG DLG Coordinator

F3X Vault Scores Rounds (1-6)

#	Pilot Name	Total	Diff	Completed Rounds (No Drops In Effect)					
				Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
1	15 Doug Cronkhite 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	5779.2		936.4	947.0	1000	1000	1000	895.8
2	Milan Bregman 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	5747.6	-31.6	1000	1000	1000	747.6	1000	1000
3	Arthur Markiewicz 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	5579.8	-167.8	938.7	968.9	1000	872.2	1000	800.0
4	Mike Smith 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	5522.1	-57.7	984.6	945.6	1000	666.7	1000	925.2
5	William Lalla 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	5494.5	-27.6	881.3	969.1	1000	644.1	1000	1000
6	11 Gary Fogel 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	5124.4	-370.1	882.3	643.7	1000	1000	727.7	870.7
7	Tom Farley 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	4911.2	-213.2	1000	968.5	1000	833.3	453.7	655.7
8	Justin Tolman 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	4851.7	-59.5	713.0	707.7	771.4	666.7	1000	992.9
9	16 Mike Ray	4586.2	-265.5	748.5	880.4	771.4	552.0	932.7	701.2
10	John McNeil 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	4436.0	-150.2	835.9	780.0	771.4	500.0	598.0	950.7
11	14 Ian Cummings 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	4374.4	-61.6	654.2	617.6	771.4	680.6	965.3	685.3
12	12 Don Lochhead 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	4128.0	-246.4	841.3	1000	771.4	611.1	317.0	587.2
13	13 Chuck Norris 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	3407.7	-720.3	755.3	591.6	771.4	500.0	0.0	789.4
14	Clifford Hunter 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	0.0	-3407.7	0.0	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS
15	Captain ...c Picard 🇺🇸 🇩🇪	0.0		0.0	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS

January F5J Foamy Fun Fly Report – Arthur Markiewicz, CD

On January 24, we had nine contestants show up for the F5 J foamy fun fly. We use this platform to teach people about F5J, which is very simple, really. This time, between Don and myself there were enough altitude recorders to have a real F5j contest with the Radians.



Pilots meeting (Kevin Vu photo)



F5J Foamy Fun Fly (Kellen LeBlanc photo)

January F5J Foamy Fun Fly/Contest Report – Don Lochhead, CD



The launch line (Kellen LeBlanc photo)

The clouds made everything look very unstable, but at the altitude we were flying it was pretty stable. A few good pilots found thermals. When it was all said and done, Steve Hurd won the event, with Bob Hirsch and Don Lochhead taking second and third respectively.

Please consider coming on out and joining the fun next time. It's low-key and a great way to learn about F5J and soaring competition in general. With prices for a Night Radian of around \$220 for PNP and \$270 for BNF, it's a relatively inexpensive entry to the game.

Rounds (1-5)

#	Pilot Name	Total	Diff	Completed Rounds (No)				
				Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
1	11 Steve Hurd 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	4419.26		833.33	893.06	1000	692.87	1000
2	8 Bob Hirsch 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	4411.62	-7.64	514.93	1000	896.69	1000	1000
3	1 Don Lochhead 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	4088.98	-322.64	1000	1000	938.65	781.33	369.00
4	3 Arthur Markiewicz 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	3957.81	-131.17	1000	538.14	547.49	1000	872.18
5	9 Mike Swanson 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	3897.67	-60.14	874.26	666.67	500.00	1000	856.74
6	7 Kellen LeBlanc 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	3734.34	-163.33	383.62	596.41	981.84	772.47	1000
7	5 Jake Olefsky 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	3652.80	-81.54	485.07	1000	1000	380.35	787.38
8	10 Kevin Halle 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	3622.45	-30.35	1000	676.84	604.29	499.21	842.11
9	6 Tom Farley 🇺🇸 🇨🇦	2907.40	-715.05	811.39	317.92	1000	778.09	NE

Club Membership Update



Christoph Efstathiou

Hello Gulls,

Thank you so much for the patience as I get up to speed with processing renewals and new memberships. As might be expected, Cliff had everything well documented and clearly marked so I hope to have everyone and everything squared away by end of this week.

We currently stand at 74 memberships for 2026, including 2 new club members. For those who have not renewed, go to the new and improved web site at torreypinesgulls.org and renew your membership. Gate keys for Poway and Encinitas will be changed February 1, 2026.

Renewing or new members must fill out the registration on our web site.

Please use the link below when joining as a new member or renewing an existing membership. Fill out the registration form completely and pay using PayPal, credit card or check. If you have not signed up for the TPG Google Group, you will be sent an individual email when becoming a member.

<http://www.torreypinesgulls.org/membership.html>

Membership Activity Summary

The table below is a summary of lifetime members, new and renewed full members, and youth members; based on completed registration forms received to date.

Date: January 27, 2026	
Renewed TPG members since last report	72
New TPG members since last report	2
TPG paid memberships for 2026	74

Membership Processing

Please use the link below when joining as a new member or renewing an existing membership. Fill out the registration form completely and pay using PayPal, credit card or check. Current members will receive a renewal notice using the TPG Google Group email process. If you have not signed up for the TPG Google Group, you will be sent an individual email.

<http://www.torreypinesgulls.org/membership.html>

All new and renewing members will receive a membership card and key (if requested, for Encinitas and Poway). The key provides access to the gates at our Encinitas and Poway flying sites. Members who fly at the Torrey Pines Gliderport and are Gliderport rated will receive a club lanyard from a club representative at the Gliderport. Members must wear the lanyard with the membership card attached when flying at the Gliderport, for safety reasons. Remember, you must have a current AMA membership to join TPG. To join AMA, follow this link:

<https://join.modelaircraft.org/torreypinesgulls/>

Please contact us at: membership@torreypinesgulls.org if you have not received your membership materials or have any membership-related questions.

Club Membership Update (continued)

Annual Membership

TPG's membership period is January 1st through December 31st. Renewals begin November 1st of each year.

Club Dues are as follows:

- **Full Members** – \$60 per year
- **Youth Members** (19 years or younger) – \$5 per year
- **Student Members** (full-time) – \$20 per year
- **Work Credit** You will receive a credit of up to \$20 on your annual dues; \$10 per each half-day working at any TPG flying field. When filling out your registration form, there is a place to input your hours/credit.

New members joining in the first six months of the year pay the full rate. Those joining in July through September pay half the applicable rate. If you are a new member joining in October through December, you pay the full rate, but your membership is considered paid through the end of the following year.

You can get more detailed information regarding your yearly membership benefits by using the following link: [Torrey Pines Gulls Membership Guide](#), which will provide answers to many of your questions regarding Torrey Pines Gulls activities. Also review the TPG Club Bylaws for more information at: [Club Bylaws](#)

Christoph Efstathiou
Membership Chairman
membership@torreypinesgulls.org



Note: TPG membership information will not be shared or sold and will only be used to contact members for purposes of TPG business.

Where We Fly – Panoramas – Ian Cummings

Here are Ian Cummings' immersive panoramas of our world class flying sites; the world-famous Torrey Pines Gliderport, Poway Flight Center, where each year the club sponsors the IHLGF (International Hand Launch Glider Festival) and the Encinitas Flight Center. Clicking on the pictures takes you to our sites:

Click on this photo to visit the Torrey Pines Gliderport.



Click on this photo to visit the TPG Poway Flight Center.



Click on this photo to visit the TPG Encinitas Flight Center.



How We Compete

F5J Contest Series



John McNeil

Thermal Coordinator – John McNeil

Thermal Duration (winch launch) contests have been moved into the Tow Hook Series (see the following pages). For F5J contest dates, check the following link on the Torrey Pines Gulls website:

<https://www.torreypinesgulls.org/f5j-competition.html>

Also, be sure to subscribe to the RCGroups 2026 TPG F5J contest schedule thread for contest news. In the meantime, check out what's been going on during 2025:

<https://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?4662319-2025-TPG-F5J-contest-schedule>

or contact John McNeil at thermal@torreypinesgulls.org

DLG/Hand Launch/F3K Contest Series



Justin Tolman

DLG Coordinator – Justin Tolman

For DLG contest dates, check the calendar on the Torrey Pines Gulls website:

For information, contacts, rules, etc. for past and upcoming Hand Launch/DLG contests, check the following link on the Torrey Pines Gulls website:

<https://www.torreypinesgulls.org/discus-launch-glider-series.html>

Also, be sure to subscribe to the RCGroups 2026 TPG DLG Contest/Clinic Series thread for contest news:

<https://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?4841707-2026-TPG-DLG-Contest-Clinic-Series-Information>

or contact Justin Tolman at dlg@torreypinesgulls.org

How We Compete (continued)

Team DLG Series



John McNeil

Thermal Coordinator – John McNeil

Following a successful and fun launch of this new contest format in 2024, we have expanded the team DLG schedule in 2025. Each event will be on a Sunday following a Saturday monthly DLG.

Also, be sure to subscribe to the RCGroups 2026 TPG Team DLG Contest/Clinic Series thread for contest news. In the meantime, check out what's been going on during 2025:

<https://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?4662309-2025-TPG-Team-DLG-Series>

or contact John McNeil at thermal@torreypinesgulls.org

Team DLG format:

- Teams consist of exactly four pilots.
- In each heat, three of the pilots fly while one pilot times and provides team direction.
- Each round, the timer is rotated. After four rounds, all team members will have timed once.
- Contest rounds follow F3K formats except:
 - Flight timing
 - Flight time starts when the last of three pilots releases the model.
 - Flight time ends when the first of three pilots time would end.
 - If any pilot lands out of bounds, then the flight scores zero.
 - (In other words, all three pilots fly each flight together for a single flight time)

For full details, check out this RCGroups Forum:

<https://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?4617285-New-F3K-Team-Contest-Format>

How We Compete (continued)

2024 TPG Tow Hook Series - F3L/F3RES/TD/1.5m



John McNeil

Thermal Coordinator – John McNeil

The TPG Tow Hook Series was a great success in 2025; more contests, fun fly clinics and even a multi-club/multi state event, The Coastal Cooler, which was held in August.

For information, contacts, rules, etc. for past and upcoming Tow Hook Series contests, check the following link on the Torrey Pines Gulls website:

<https://www.torreypinesgulls.org/f3l-res-competitions.html>

Also, be sure to subscribe to the RCGroups 2026 TPG Tow Hook Contest/Clinic Series thread for contest news. In the meantime, check out what's been going on during 2025:

<https://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?4662329-2025-TPG-Tow-Hook-Series-F3L-F3RES-TD-1-5m#post53309761>

For more info, contact John McNeil at thermal@torreypinesgulls.org

Aircraft Classes

- 1.5m RES bungee launch. Max flying weight is 250g. Construction materials and techniques must follow F3L rules. Maximum flight time is 5 minutes.
- 2m RES bungee launch. Construction materials and techniques must follow F3L rules. Maximum flight time is 6 minutes.
- AMA thermal duration open class. Winch launch. Skegs are allowed. Maximum flight time is 10 minutes.

Equipment

At least three landing tapes will be provided, marked for F3L. AMA TD will use the same landing bonus formula as the other classes.

F3L compliant bungees will be provided by the club and set up at the CD's direction. At the CD's discretion, all bungees may be shortened from F3L standard to accommodate field conditions. Lighter 1.5m meter bungees will also be setup.

Winches:

A single winch will be on TD days. The winch shall be set up in parallel with, and at the same length as the stretched bungees. The winch will not have a retriever.

How We Compete (continued)

F5J Foamy Fun Fly and Contest/Clinic Series



Don Lochhead

TPG will continue our F5J style foamy fun fly contest (and clinic) Series in 2026 at our Poway field.

This is truly a fun-fly and a great way to get into F5J style flying. Any foamy or stick-built plane up to 2m (or so) is welcome. Night Radians are very popular but we also see Yellow Jackets (stick-built) and a variety of other vintage foamy and balsa stick-built aircraft.

We typically pause mid-contest for a quick clinic. Subjects generally focus on F5J topics of interest to pilots getting into the format. The events are free but we still ask all pilots to sign up on F3X Vault so we know how many to expect and can run the matrix ahead of time.

For information, contacts, rules, etc. for past and upcoming F5J Foamy Fun Fly and Contest/Clinic events, check the following link on the Torrey Pines Gulls website:

<https://www.torreypinesgulls.org/foamy-fun-fly.html>

Our first fun fly of the year will be held on January 24th. Sign up and come join in on the fun.

https://f3xvault.com/?action=event&function=event_view&event_id=4150



Bob Hirsch photo

League of Silent Flight and TPG – Gary Fogel



Gary Fogel

The League of Silent Flight (LSF) <https://www.silentflight.org/> is the special interest group (SIG) representing RC soaring to the Academy of Model Aeronautics. LSF has its own lengthy and important history, having first been conceived of in Northern California in 1969, and helps arrange the annual RC soaring Nationals at Muncie, Indiana each summer. Additional info on its history can be found here: <http://www.silentflight.org/images/documents/lfsstory.pdf>

Mark Smith was the first local to sign up for the LSF program with LSF #19. His father Rod was not far behind with #28. They may have been flying more with Harbor Soaring Society at that time (1969/1970) than Torrey Pines Gulls but soon were enjoying membership in both clubs. Since then over 10,000 people from around the world have signed up and received an LSF number.

Don Edberg was the first in the club to achieve LSF SAP Level III (February 2, 1974). Randy Warner was not far behind, completing the level on April 25, 1974.

Don Edberg was also first in the TPG to achieve LSF SAP Level IV (June 27, 1975). Keith Finkenbiner completed the level on July 8, 1975 but was likely living in Illinois at that time. Ben Clerx completed Level IV on September 30, 1975 but was perhaps living in Honolulu at the time.

Larry Jolly completed his SAP Level V on November 16, 1983 but may or may not have been a member of TPG at the time. TPG members Don Edberg completed his on July 8, 1989. Since then, George Joy (1992), Patrick Dionisio (2002) and Keith Finkenbiner (2002) have completed Level V:

- SAP Level III – 51 pilots
- SAP Level IV – 31 pilots
- SAP Level V – 5 pilots

Larry Jolly (1983), Don Edberg (1989), George Joy (1992), Patrick Dionisio (2002), Keith Finkenbiner (2002)

For LSF eSAP, only one pilot in the history of the program has completed Level V – Larry Jolly (September 2, 2015). We need more pilots signing up and completing eSAP levels especially given the popularity of F5J, our regular F5J fun flies, and the opportunity to use electric launch DLGs in our monthly F3K contests.

League of Silent Flight and TPG – (continued)



Who in the TPG is currently working on which levels? I have the following info; if you do not see your name listed and wish to be added please let me know. It's good for us to have a list of current aspirations so that we can help others team up along the way and get to their goals. Don't forget to use 2026 TPG events towards next levels!

First	Last	SAP Level next to achieve	eSAP Level next to achieve
Milan	Bregman	Level I	
Gary	Legerton	Level I	
Mengchen	Li	Level I	
Paul	Nibecker	Level I	
Scott	McCurdy	Level I	Level II
Justin	Tolman	Level II	
Christoph	Efstathiou	Level II	
Ed	LaCroix	Level II	
Jake	Olefsky	Level II	Level II
Eric	Metzdorf	Level II	
Daniel	McFarland	Level II	
Don	Lochhead	Level II	
Ian	Cummings	Level III	
Mike	Verzuh	Level III	
Ray	Pili	Level III	Level II
Tom	Kiesling	Level III	
Chuck	Norris	Level IV	Level II
Mike	Smith	Level IV	
Steve	Condon	Level IV	
Gary	Fogel	Level V	Level III
John	McNeil	Level V	
Scott	Condon	Level V	
David	Hall	Level V	
Ben	Clerx	Level V	
Rick	Shelby	Level V	

How We Connect

Questions or concerns?

You can have your questions answered at: www.torreypinesgulls.org

We have a [Contact Us](#) link in the drop-down menu that appears when you scroll over [The Club](#) next to [Membership](#), [Locations](#), [Contests...](#)If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, etc., here's your chance.

Don't forget to join

In order to maintain a line of communication among members, we have a TPG Google Group. Please make sure that our club Membership Chairman has your current email address. You can confirm this by contacting membership@torreypinesgulls.org. If you are not already a member of the TPG Google Group, you will be sent an invitation to join.

When you join as a member of the private TPG Google Group, the club will distribute notifications, newsletters, contest events and holiday party info, etc. This information will keep you informed of all club activities throughout the year. You don't need a Gmail address to participate in Google Groups, but you do need to be a member of TPG.

Google Groups provides a great way of communicating with one another. If you have any questions or concerns about almost anything having to do with flying, building, finding another club member, etc., you can post them on Google Groups. It also allows you to send links and attachments, just like regular email.

...and, very importantly, since all postings/emails are done through Google Groups, your actual email address is not visible when notifications are sent out to the club members. Also, only members of the group can post to the group, so joining the group does not add to your spam burden.

So, verify that the club has your correct email, make sure you receive an invitation to join Google Groups and sign up!

Procedure for Joining Google Groups

Here are the steps new club members need to take to be added to Google Groups if they don't have a Gmail account/address:

1. Go to the [Google Account Sign In page](#).
2. Click Create account.
3. Enter your name.
4. Click Use my current email address instead.
5. Enter your current email address.
6. Click Next.
7. Verify your email address with the code sent to your existing email.
8. Click Verify.
9. Confirm with TPG Membership (Cliff Hunter) the above steps have been completed, use the following email address: membership@torreypinesgulls.org

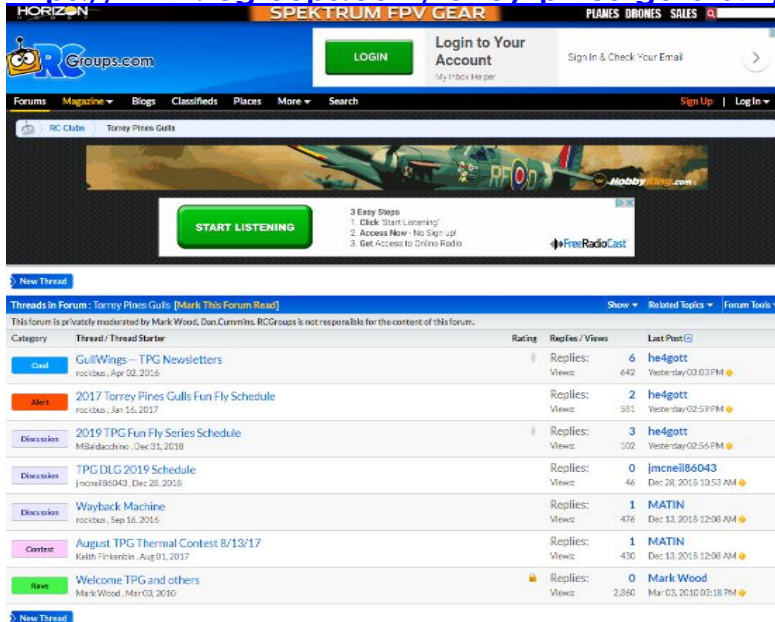
How We Connect (continued)

Are you a member of ?

If you're not...**you should be!** RCGroups is the most widely used and active online Radio Control Community for everything RC, from planes to cars, to boats, drones, radios, power systems...pretty much anything RC! It includes forums, specific interest threads, blogs, discussions, etc....and, more importantly, The Torrey Pines Gulls Forum.

To get started, click on the link or web page below to get to the TPG Club forum. You can also get there from the **Clubs** link at the lower right of the RCGroups home page and scroll down to Torrey Pines Gulls.

<https://www.rcgroups.com/torrey-pines-gulls-672/>



Category	Thread / Thread Starter	Rating	Replies / Views	Last Post
Goal	GullWings – TPG Newsletters rocksas, Apr 02, 2016		Replies: 6 Views: 642	he4gott Yesterday 03:03 PM
Alert	2017 Torrey Pines Gulls Fun Fly Schedule rocksas, Jan 16, 2017		Replies: 2 Views: 561	he4gott Yesterday 02:59 PM
Discussion	2019 TPG Fun Fly Series Schedule MBaradachino, Dec 31, 2018		Replies: 3 Views: 102	he4gott Yesterday 02:56 PM
Discussion	TPG DLG 2019 Schedule jmcneil86043, Dec 28, 2018		Replies: 0 Views: 46	jmcneil86043 Dec 28, 2018 10:53 AM
Discussion	Wayback Machine rocksas, Sep 16, 2016		Replies: 1 Views: 476	MATIN Dec 13, 2018 12:08 AM
Contest	August TPG Thermal Contest 8/13/17 Keith Finkestein, Aug 01, 2017		Replies: 1 Views: 436	MATIN Dec 13, 2018 12:08 AM
Item	Welcome TPG and others Mark Wood, Mar 03, 2010		Replies: 0 Views: 2,840	Mark Wood Mar 03, 2010 03:18 PM

If you haven't yet joined RCGroups, click on the **Sign Up** link at the upper right and follow the instructions.

Once you've navigated to the Torrey Pines Gulls Forum, you can subscribe to the Forum or to any of the individual threads within the Forum.

To subscribe to the Forum, click the **Forum Tools** link and select "Subscribe to This Forum" from the dropdown menu. Then choose from the notification dropdown menu. If you want to subscribe to a specific thread, click to open the thread, and click the **Thread Tools** link. Select "Subscribe to This Thread" from the dropdown menu. Again, choose from the notification dropdown menu.

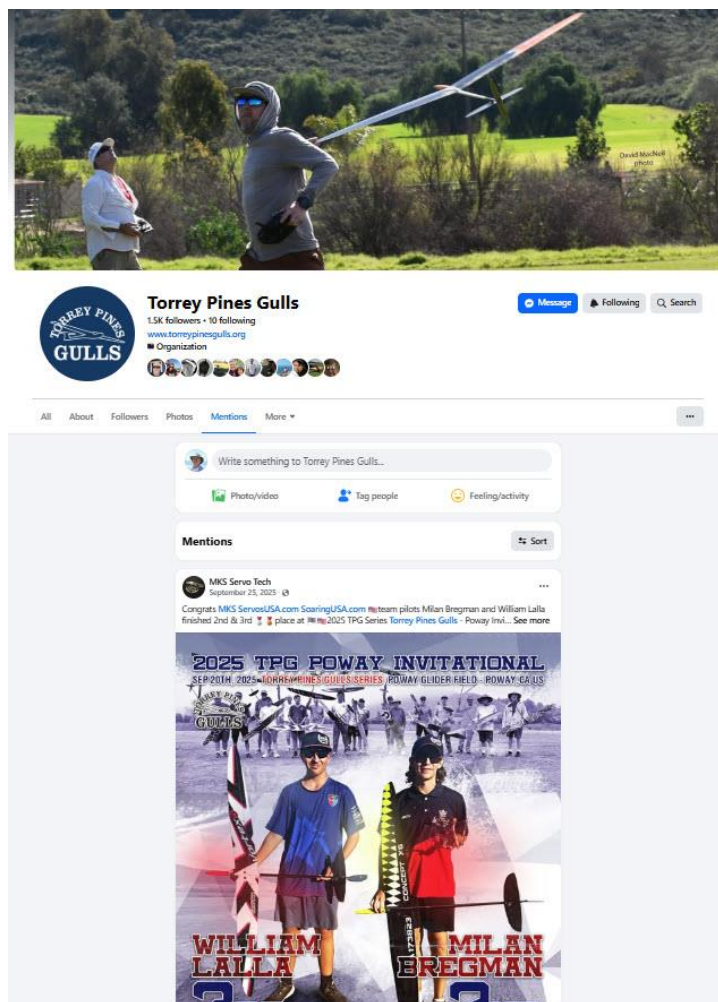
RCGroups allows you to post photos and videos. By subscribing, you can keep up with the latest events, club activities and member postings.

How We Connect (continued)

Check out the TPG **facebook** Page

If you haven't had a chance yet, check out our TPG Facebook page by clicking the links below for new content posted by club members and friends.

<https://www.facebook.com/TorreyPinesGulls/>



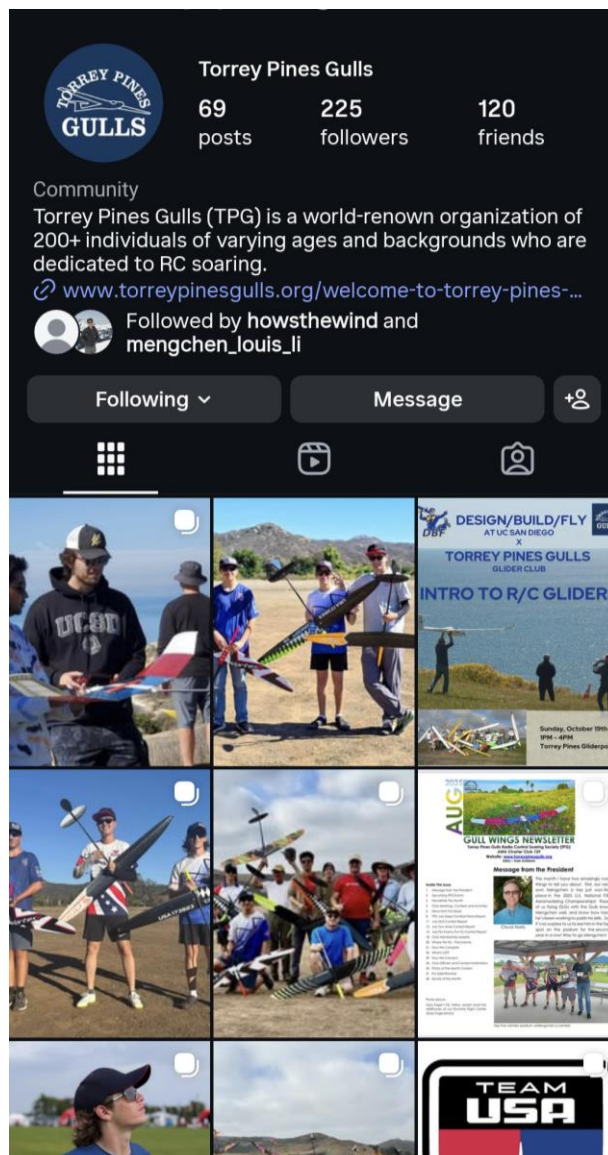
How We Connect (continued)

TPG is on



TPG's Media Coordinator, Mengchen Li, has created an Instagram account for the Torrey Pines Gulls. If you're already on Instagram, search for `torrey_pines_gulls` and click on follow. If you're not on Instagram, well, now's a great time to join!

Also, if you have any photos or videos of your RC soaring activities, contests, builds, fun flies, etc., send them along to Mengchen at media@torreypinesgulls.org and you might find your submittal on a TPG Instagram post.



How We Connect (continued)

Join the Conversation:  **Discord**

Discord is a free website and app that you can download to your phone or computer that gives you access to the Torrey Pines Gulls group chat. This is an active discussion group with interesting conversations happening all the time. It's a great place to ask questions and learn from your fellow members. Event reminders and club news are posted to our Discord server so you can stay up to date with what's happening.

To get in:

1. Visit the Discord website and download the app to your computer or click the 'Open in Browser' link.
2. Or, search through your phone's app store for the Discord app and install it.
3. Create a free account inside the app or website.
4. Scan the QR code or click the link below it to join.



<http://www.discord.gg/vRdV6Fd9nP>

Club Officers and Contact Information

President	Chuck Norris	president@torreypinesgulls.org
Vice-President	Gary Fogel	vp@torreypinesgulls.org
Past President	Ian Cummings	
Secretary	Dale Gottdank	secretary@torreypinesgulls.org
Treasurer	Don Lochhead	treasurer@torreypinesgulls.org
Communications Officer	Dale Gottdank	communications@torreypinesgulls.org
Thermal Coordinator	John McNeil	thermal@torreypinesgulls.org
Slope Coordinator	Bret Locke	slope@torreypinesgulls.org
DLG Coordinator	Justin Tolman	dlg@torreypinesgulls.org
Membership Chair	Christoph Efstathiou	membership@torreypinesgulls.org
IHLGF Coordinator	Chuck Norris	president@torreypinesgulls.org
LSF Coordinator	Gary Fogel	vp@torreypinesgulls.org
Webmaster	Jake Olefsky	tpg@foldnfly.com
Media Coordinator	Mengchen Li	media@torreypinesgulls.org
Historian	Gary Fogel	historian@torreypinesgulls.org
Raffle Chairman	Michael Gillen	Contact via TPG Discord server

Executive Officers



Chuck Norris



Gary Fogel



Dale Gottdank



Don Lochhead



John McNeil



Bret Locke



Justin Tolman



Christoph Efstathiou

Photo of the Month Contest

Each month club members may submit photos of an activity related to soaring and the newsletter editor will post a **WINNER**.

A Photo of the Year winner will be selected from among the monthly winners and will receive a prize (their photo will be used as the website and newsletter masthead AND will appear on the following year's club membership card); so **horizontal format photos are preferred**.

Email your photos (**JPG format and original high-resolution version, please**) to Dale Gottdank at submit@torreypinesgulls.org. Please provide your name, location of photo and photo description. Note: December photo of the month winner(s) will be included in the following year's Photo of the Year competition.



4th Quarter (Oct-Nov-Dec 2025) Winner – Steve Stanton launching his self-designed Cayley at a TPG F5J contest (Bob Hirsch photo)

Photo of the Month Contest (continued)



January Winner – Lone glider near the Black Mountain Gliderport (Kevin Vu photo)



You've heard Elf on the Shelf....Well this is... (Milan Bregman photo)

Photo of the Month Contest (continued)



Rare windy day in January (Ray Pili photo)



Justin Tolman about to make a catch (Dave MacNeil photo)

Photo of the Month Contest (continued)



Launching at the January Foamy Fun Fly (Kellen LeBlanc photo)



February Winner – Justin Tolman mid launch (Dave MacNeil photo))



TPG Classified Ads Policy

Classified ads are free to TPG members for non-commercial purposes. Commercial customers should contact the editor. To submit an advertisement, send the information to communications@torreypinesgulls.org. Ads must be submitted by the 25th of the month to appear in the next issue. All advertisements will remain in the newsletter for the month of issue and will be removed for the following issue. If you wish to advertise for another month, you will need to notify the editor or resubmit.



Quote of the Month:

"It only takes two things to fly: airspeed and money."

~ Aviation adage



December Poway morning (Bob Hirsch photo)