



## Cen-Tex Modelers

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**CEN-TEX MODELERS INC.**

**P.O. BOX 874**

**KILLEEN, TEXAS 76540**

## **BIG BIRD – 17-18 MAY 2014**

The Big Bird event was held on 17-18 May 2014 and was CD'd by Jim Hillin. The weather was great, lots of sun, with a bid of wind at times. About 25 attended the event with 8 pilots that signed up. Food was great and thanks to Lee Mitchell for the effort in preparing the good. Below are some pictures of the event.



Bob Hass, Charles Culver and Jim Hillin



John Hall and spotter during take off



Hubert Dirr, reporter and Jim Hillin



John Hall and Lee Mitchell





Unloading and setting up



John Hall's bi plane



Part of the aircraft line up



Hubert Durr's Stephen Akro





Hubert Dirr's Stearman PT-17



Lift off



Looking for fire hydrant





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PHOTOS BY CATRINA RAWSON | HERALD

Jim Hillin, right, and Herman Syx make adjustments to Hillin's model airplane Saturday during the Cen-Tex Modelers annual "Big Bird Fly-In" at Union Grove Park at Stillhouse Hollow Lake.

# FLYING HIGH

## Model airplanes fill sky during 'Big Bird Fly-In'

**ONLINE EXTRA:** See more photos and watch a video with this story at [KDHNEWS.COM](http://KDHNEWS.COM).

BY VANESSA LYNCH  
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

**S**ALADO — A clear, blue sky was the perfect backdrop as model airplanes whizzed through the air Saturday morning.

"The takeoff is the easiest part. Keeping it up and landing it is the hard part," said Hubert Dirr, a member of the Cen-Tex Modelers who has been building planes since 1968. "You always have to be in control of its many moving parts."

Members of the flying



Model airplanes are displayed Saturday during the Cen-Tex Modelers annual "Big Bird Fly-In" at Union Grove Park at Stillhouse Hollow Lake.

club gathered for their annual "Big Bird Fly-In" on Hall Field, located at Union Grove Park at Stillhouse Hollow Lake.

"I've always loved aviation and if I could be re-born, I would come back as a trained Air Force

PLEASE SEE **SKY, B8**



# SKY: Goal is to spread enjoyment of flying

FROM PAGE B1

pilot," said the retired chief warrant officer who served in the Army for 30 years. "Building and flying these is the next best thing to being up there yourself."

Dirr brought his Boeing-Stearman PT-17, a scale model of a World War II plane, that he built from scratch.

"The backup engine has 542 individual pieces alone," he said, adding that it took him close to three years to complete it.

## DANCE IN THE WIND

While he didn't fly any of his planes, several other club members took their creations to the sky, letting them soar and dance in the wind.

"I have never crashed a plane I couldn't repair," said Jim Hillin, club president, who was tinkering with his Yak-54, a 1990s Russian aerobatic and sports competition aircraft. "All planes have an expiration date; you just don't know when or how soon it's going to come."

Hillin said he's been fascinated with airplanes since he was 6 years old, and after an injury prevented him from being able to continue to fly crop dusters in the 1960s, he had to figure out another way to get the same high.

"I knew the only way I would be able to fly again was if I had both feet on the ground, so here I am, still flying planes," he said.

Founded in 1972, Cen-Tex Modelers



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CATRINA RAWSON | HERALD

Jim Hillin makes adjustments to his model airplane Saturday during the Cen-Tex Modelers annual "Big Bird Fly-In" at Union Grove Park at Stillhouse Hollow Lake.

are chartered with the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Hall Field is leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and is maintained by the club's nearly 60 members. Its goal is to spread the enjoyment of flying model aircraft and introduce the hobby to newcomers.

While flying model aircraft is a popular hobby, it's anything but cheap. Club member Herman Syx said an enthusiast can spend anywhere from \$300 to

\$2,000 on a plane, depending on what they want to fly.

"Takeoff is optional, but landing is mandatory," Syx said. "That plane has to come down one way or another, so I tell people you can't fall in love with a plane because you will never fly it."

For more information, go to [www.centextmodelers.com](http://www.centextmodelers.com).





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## BUTCH SPRADLING MEMORIAL FLY IN – OCTOBER 2014

On 18 October 2014, a memorial fly in was held in honor of Butch Spradling, who passed in October 2014. His name was placed on the club's memorial plaque at the field. Members of his family were in attendance with many of the club members also in attendance. Below are some pictures of the event.



Hubert Dirr with his Eindecker



Another view of Hubert's Eindecker







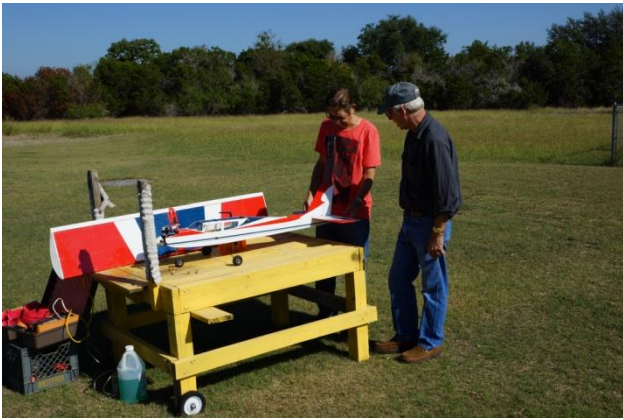
Herman Syx and other club members



Hubert setting up wing support wires on the Eindecker







Those in attendance for Memorial



Richard Chambers and others



Jim Hillin giving memorial to those in attendance



Clubs Memorial Remembrance Plaques





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## **ANNUAL BIG BIRD EVENT – 18-19 APRIL 2015**

The annual club Big Bird event was held on 18-19 April 2015. Considering the weather, the turnout was really good, over 19 pilots signed up. Rough count of those in attendance was over 25. Thanks to Jill Hillin the club event CD, everyone had a great time and enjoyed flying and great conversation with others. Below are some pictures of the event.



Jim Hillin and John Hall at registration



B17 from Austin Club



Richard Chambless setting up







Richard Chambless



William Stone and Hubert Durr



John Hall's plane



Hubert Durr setting up his Eindecker







Jim Hillin's Plane



B17 with follow me Jeep



Line Up







William Stone hard at work



John Hall's plane









# Strong crosswind grounds most model airplanes at **BIG BIRD FLY-IN**

BY COURTNEY GRIFFIN  
KILLEEN DAILY HERALD

**S**ALADO — The crosswind was much too strong for most fliers Sunday, the last day of the annual Model Airplane Big Bird Fly-In event, so many club members stood by and visited.

"We had a beautiful day yesterday, though, one of the best days we had in years," said Hubert Dirr, a member of Killeen's Cen-Tex Modelers Inc. "Not just because of the nice weather but also because of the wind."

Established in 1971, Cen-Tex Modelers Inc, the local remote-controlled model airplane club, flew more than 30 miniature planes Saturday at their headquarters at Hall Field in Union Grove Park.

While many planes dotted the sky, one of the highlights was a 10-foot-wide B-17, modeled after the famous World War II bombers.

The plane was brought by guest member Paul Smith, of Austin, outfit-



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LANA HUSBAND | HERALD

Daniel Santos, of Killeen, checks the wings of his remote-controlled airplane Sunday during a Cen-Tex Modelers event at Hall Field at Union Grove Park.



John Hall, of San Antonio, checks his remote-controlled plane Sunday during a Cen-Tex Modelers event at Union Grove Park.

PLEASE SEE **FLY-IN, A8**



# FLY-IN: Clubs have history of contributing designs, innovations

FROM PAGE A1

ted with movable model guns, a bomb hatch and designs that matched its time period.

The B-17 airplanes were used extensively against the Germans during the war.

"I used to be underneath them on the receiving end during WWII," said Dirr, jokingly, who grew up in Germany. "So I know how much damage they can do."

## ELECTRIC, HISTORIC MODELS

All weekend, enthusiasts brought out small electric planes, large combustible engine planes and more historical models during the event.

An Albatross D.III, a German World War I plane — equipped with a model pilot — sat in John Schrick's trailer as he joked with friends.

Shrick, a member for 2½ years, also deemed Sunday's 20 mph winds conditions too hazardous to fly in. Planes can cost anywhere



Dan Smith, of Georgetown, works on Hubert Dirr's World War I remote-controlled model airplane Saturday during a Cen-Tex Modelers event at Union Grove State Park at Stillhouse Hollow Lake.

from \$50 to \$5,000, he said.

Nearby in another trailer, Jim Hillin, the club president, showed off his three acrobatic model

planes, which are designed to do tricks including flips and barrel rolls.

The tricks are still tough for the

## The Cen-Tex Modelers club will have events in June and September.

30-year veteran to pull off because they require multiple remote controls. He's had his fair share of fiery crashes, he said.

"Our favorite expression is: Every airplane has an expiration date, but you just don't know when," said Hillin, laughing.

Remote-controlled aviation clubs have a long history of contributing to plane designs and innovations because the small-scale, cheaper planes still lie on the same foundational principles of their bigger brothers, Hillin said.

"The power-to-weight ratio, that can get a little off," said Hillin, adding some caveats. "Eight, 10, or 12 Gs will knock a pilot out, but we don't have to deal with G-force down here on the ground."

The experimentations have

helped lead to high-capacity planes like the Boeing 747's design, he said.

Chatting while one brave soul took a plane out, Hillin said most of the members fly models for the love of aviation.

"It's a lot of fun. With myself, I used to be a full-scale pilot until I was physically unable to fly. Doctor told me I had to figure out how to fly with both feet on the ground, so I got into this," he said.

It's still "not quite" the same feeling though, Hillin said.

"Flying is freedom, but the good thing about these is that if you crash one you can walk away from the crash," he said.

The club will have events in June and September.

cpflin@kathnews.com | 254-501-7559





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## **BIG BIRD – APRIL 16-17 APRIL 2016**

The club held its annual Big Bird event on Saturday, 16 April 2016. The event for Sunday, 17 April 2016 was cancelled due to impending rain. Approximately 10 pilots registered for the event, with 20 plus individuals attending. The event Contest Director was Jim Hillin. A good time was had by all in attendance. Below are some pictures of the event.



Setting Up



Part of the gang setting up







Breakfast of Champions

Jim Hilin's plane





More of the gang



Ready for take off



John Hall and Charles Culver











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## VETERANS DAY EVENT – 11 NOVEMBER 2017

The club held a Veterans day event on 11 November 2017. Many club members attended and the day was enjoyed by all. Below are pictures of the event.



**Veterans Day Warbird Fly In**

**Free!**

**Saturday November 11th**

**Hot Dogs!**

**New, Old, Gas, Electric, Balsa, Foam, all Welcome!**

CenTex Modelers  
Hall Field  
Union Grove Park  
8680 Union Grove Ln, Salado, TX 76571





























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## ANNUAL BIG BIRD EVENT - 19 MAY 2018

The club held its annual Big Bird Fly In Event on 19 May 2018. The weather was very good, a bit windy, but all in all was great. Over 22 pilots registered for the event. A good time was had by all. The food was great. Below are some pictures of the event and aircraft.

Cen-Tex Modelers Inc.  
Killeen, Texas



# Big Birds 2018

**WHEN: MAY 19th, 2018**  
**TIME : 0900 am**  
**WHERE: HALL FIELD**  
**Union Grove Park**  
**Stillhouse Lake**  
**Killeen, TX**

GPS  
N31.009 / W97.623



**COME FLY ON OUR  
NEW GEOTEX RUNWAY**



Sanctioned event

**Trophies**



**Farthest Drive**  
**Best in Show**  
**Best 3D Pilot**

**80" MONO PLANE / 60" BIPLANE / TRUE 1/4 SCALE**

All BIG BIRDS Welcome Gas or Electric  
Pilots Lunch provided on Saturday  
Landing Fee \$15.00  
Raffle on Saturday Afternoon  
Camping Available in nearby park  
for more information contact Jim Hillin  
hhillin@hotmail.com (254) 371-1894 <http://www.centexmodelers.com/>

























































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## **Annual Big Bird Event – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2nd June 2019**

The club held its annual Big Bird event on 1 and 2 June 2019. The weather was great, light wind and lots of sun. A great time was had by all that attended. Below are some pictures of the event.



































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## ANNUAL BIG BIRD – 10 OCTOBER 2020

The annual club Big Bird event was held on 10 October 2020. Turn out for the event was decent and fun was had by all. The early morning fog took sometime to clear off, but once it left, flying was great. Below are some pictures of the event.

**Cen-Tex Modelers 10 Oct 2020**  
**Big Bird Fly-in**  
**Sponsored by LEGEND HOBBY**



**Cen-Tex Modelers** of Killeen would like to invite you to our annual Big Bird Fly-in on October 10, 2020. Pilot fee is \$25 with lunch included. Pilots will be awarded for best in show, best 3D, best war bird, and best civilian aircraft. A beautiful Seagull Models 60cc Razorback P47 (\$799 ARF) and pilot prizes provided by Legend Hobby will be raffled at 4:00 p.m.



**LEGEND HOBBY**

**"Keep 'Em Flying"**  
**WWW.LEGENDHOBBIY.COM**

For more info please email: or contact  
CO. Doug Pettit at: 1-254-421-4002  
[pett101@centexmodelers.com](mailto:pett101@centexmodelers.com)

Food services available from  
**GRETCHEN'S PIT BBQ**



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