

Pine Barren Modelers R/C Club

April 2026



Club Meeting Highlights

(Remember, these are NOT the minutes, so they don't contain sensitive information. The complete minutes will be sent out before the next meeting).

1 April 2026

Six officers (counting the new Chief Training Instructor (CFI) position), 14 regular members, and two guests were present. The meeting proceeded after the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the pilots lost in the LaGuardia crash.

New Members: None

Field Reports:

→ **Coyle:**

- The Fire Service, tired of trespassers (mainly hunters) and folks leaking the combo, replaced their old lock and added one for us. See an officer for our new combo.
- DO NOT give it to ANYONE without checking with a PBM officer.
- Be sure to close the gate behind you.
- Dennis spoke to the new commander and the roller operator (who just graded the runway for us).
- Dennis hopes to get the camera up this weekend.
- Reminder, this is peak fire season. The Fire Service has a new water bomber, with crews at Coyle 24/7. If (when) there are fires, there will be plenty of activity. If you're flying and it gets active, your best course of action is to land and leave.
- Dennis will update the safety rules for Coyle. He also had two reminders for us:
 - No rocketry at Coyle.
 - Don't fly past the windsock (off on the left side). That's the edge of our allowed airspace.

→ **Temporary Field (Johnson's Pit):**

- All is good, but don't forget the cleanup on 18 April!

→ **Safety Report:**

- All has been good. Pat reminded us that he does, occasionally, take a look at the camera, so don't count on him not seeing your whoopsies!
- It's getting into sweatshirt weather, so remember to keep sweatshirt drawstrings, transmitter straps, etc., out of the way of props (*Watch the dangling and avoid the mangling! Ed. Bill*).

→ **Instructors' Report:**

- CFI Gary made a few recommendations for beginning the new flying season:
 - Check all your gear, even your Old Reliable model. Look for damage you didn't find last year, and for anything that shrank, cracked, or loosened over the winter.
 - Check your batteries. Safely dispose of questionable (or worse) Lipos. If you're not sure, bring them to the field and ask one of the old hands to look at them.
 - Use a model you're comfy with for your first flights. Leave your new and/or tricky models for after you've gotten your thumbs back in shape.

Club Officers

President—Dennis Spatcher
Vice Pres.—Mark Tilton
Treasurer—Ralph Ferrara
Secretary—Micki Bowne
Safety Officer—Pat Lovenstein
Chief Trng Inst.—Gary Santaniello

Contact Us:

For website, classified ads, or any other club information, visit our web site at:

<https://pbm1727.org>

or our Facebook group:

PBM on Facebook

Links to club officer and other e-mails are via the website.

You can also mail us at:

Pine Barren Modelers RC Club
P.O. Box 38
Bayville, NJ 08721

**Next Meeting
6 May 2026
Bayville VFW**

Coming next month: Gary Santaniello tells us about 'No-Prep' Drag Racing!

→ **Treasurer:**

- Ralph says we're low on T-shirts (He has some L and XL, and several Mediums).
- Black and dark blue baseball caps are in stock.

→ **Web:**

- We renewed our hosting for another year, but are still looking for a more reliable host.
- Website 1590 views, Facebook 683 members

Old Business

- The Ways and Means table was busy!
- The By-Laws are approved, we just need a final copy from the committee.
 - Another update is planned for next year, including CFI position requirements, trustees, and field safety items.
- Flea Market is 11 April 11. Set up at 8:00, doors open 9:00
 - Volunteers are needed for setup, to report by 7:30. Ralph said he'd be there early.
 - Dennis will re-post event on Facebook.
- Paul Meier's glider contest rules are on Facebook.
- Pat is working on drag racing dates. Meanwhile, the car club is racing at the college.
- We're still waiting to hear about the field improvement grant. Maybe next month?
- There was only one application for the high school scholarship, so he'll get the money. He sounds good, too, as he plans to be both a doctor and a pilot. Ralph will attend represent our club at the 3 June award ceremony.

New Business

- We bought a new turbine (spinning) vent for the small box's top. It needs mounting (space permitting). (*This will be the ONLY 'turbine' allowed at the Pit! :-)* Ed. Bill)
- The NJIT Flylanders couldn't test, due to ice and snow, so they didn't get competition points. Some Penn State students did get in tests...one had control problems, the other (carrying a two-liter water bottle) flew okay, but had a hard landing.
- We want to smooth out the far side grass near the runway. Dave Syfert offered but he's currently very busy. We're considering someone run a brush hog over it on Clean Up Day.
- Mark will install pavers near the trailer, making a grill base. (*Maybe we should use them to build a bomb shelter for our cooks? ;-)* Ed. Bill)
- The club requested Berkeley provide us with a dumpster for Clean Up Day, but we've received no response. Dennis will ask again this week. If no go, he will check about renting a dumpster.
- The gate...the township still has no installation date. Meanwhile, we're looking at erecting a barrier to keep people from driving directly onto the runway. We'll look around and see if we can find usable telephone poles, etc., during Clean Up Day.
- The lawn mower is fixed! Dennis just needs help to get it from his house, to the field.

Model of the Month: None.

Bill's Corner

Okay, so you're ready to take your new model for its maiden flight. You're all set to put it on the runway, slap the throttle open, and soar off into the wild blue yonder....Nope! You need to do a thorough pre-flight.

First owners of ARFs, BNFs, or RTFs, shouldn't have a lot to worry about. Of course, that's if they believe some kids in a far off country really made sure the models they assemble by the zillions for export are done correctly. "No", you say. You got a used model from someone else, and it's been flown a few times. Doesn't matter – check it anyway. I wouldn't blindly trust anything I built, so neither should you. I can tell plenty of times I've seen old, reliable models suddenly fail.

The first steps to a safe maiden flight start at home, where you can do a thorough preflight without your buddies egging you on to do something you (and not they) will regret.

Go over each connector you can reach. Are all the wires firmly connected? Don't just look at them; give each servo and battery connection a gentle tug. Now's the time to discover bad solder joints, not when you're flying (don't ask me how I know....).

Are the servo arms screwed in? Control horn, motor, and landing gear screws snugged down? Prop secure? Do the hatches latch securely? Wheel collars snug? Wood props dry out and shrink, so make certain the nuts are tight. That especially goes for those big gas props. Are the wing bolt blocks, etc., secure? I know I've seen more than one fail in flight. It's spectacular, but only once.

Anything that's taped, make sure the tape is still holding firmly and hasn't dried out.

Give each servo a gentle tug and make sure it's still glued or screwed in place. Likewise, make sure your receiver, ESC, and any other electronic bits are still firmly held down. You don't want a Velcro'ed-in part to slip and get unplugged, especially if you use a gyro!

Give the control surfaces firm tugs, and verify the hinges and control horns are solidly in place.

Hey, you Glow guys (never flew Gas, so I can't preach to you). Is your fuel any good? Glow fuel sucks moisture out of the air. May not sound bad, but in practice, it makes needle valve settings erratic. So, if you're trying to lean out that engine (even if you leave it a twitch rich) and it keeps being erratic...you probably have water in your fuel. Put that can aside and use a new one. If the new can works okay, use it – and dump the old can. Use it to kill weeds, but don't trust your model to it.

Slowly balance charge each battery before first use – 1C is what I use. It takes a longer time, but my batteries last longer. They're also more reliable – it's been many years since we lost a cell in a battery.

How's your receiver battery doing? If you aren't using an ESC with a BEC, you need a reliable battery to run your radio. If you are using a BEC equipped ESC, can it handle the number of servos you have, especially since electric landing gear and gyros each count as extra servos due to their power consumption.

Double-check all the mixing and other computer settings. If it has a gyro, remove the prop, turn the model and gyro on. Gently holding each control surface, move the mode up/down, left/right (in yaw AND roll), and verify the gyro corrects in the right direction. Make sure, too, that the gyro on/off function is working, should you need to turn it off in flight.

Whilst you have a battery in the model, check control surface movements. All in the right direction? Best way I know to do this check is to stand behind the model, move the sticks, and envision how the model will react. Yes, I do lean side-to-side when checking my ailerons (don't ask about my checking the rudder, though ;-)).

Bill's Corner

Check those props. Any bad nicks or stress marks, especially near the prop roots? If you aren't sure, retire the prop.

Hint: Make up a small set of spare screws, to go with your spare prop (or props). Dab some bright paint on black screws, so they stand out against asphalt, because you KNOW you'll drop one you really need. Now, put that spares set in your field kit, together with a matching wrench (or two).

Take the model to a flat, level area (out of the wind) and give it a little push. Does it roll straight? If not, fix it. The fewer things you have to think about during the first takeoff, the better.

Fuel up (do we say 'battery up', too?) and check your model's CG. Note that Glow or Gas models with the fuel tank behind the CG should be balanced with full tanks, so they get nose-heavier as the fuel burns off.

At the field.

Put your model on the ground and take a picture of it. Yes, I mean it. It sounds like a superstition, but Micki won't let me test fly a model until she's taken a picture of it...and I won't try to guess how many times taking that little bit of time has helped one of us notice something awry.

Always, always, always, do a range check before your first launch, following your radio manufacturer's recommendation. Making sure the prop arc is clear, give the motor a gentle goose and verify it's turning in the right direction.

Now, takeoff and gently climb out. Don't go for a rocket ship climb!

In flight, the most important thing to know is how the plane stalls. We can fly high and fast, but we all have to slow down for landings. So, I look at the slow-speed realm, first, as I don't want to be surprised by a plane falling off into a spin during landing approach.

My routine is to take off, trim so I can fly (almost) hands off, and climb to at least the pattern height. Fly straight and level, throttle back, and slowly add 'up' elevator. Once the model breaks into a stall, recover, then repeat the procedure at higher angles of attack. The whole idea is to know what the plane will do when it stalls, and to try to recognize an incipient stall. Some models give you lots of warnings...but some don't. If your model consistently snaps to one side when stalling, take a look at the wing and check for warps, sharp edges (including mold 'flash'), side-to-side imbalances, and any other difference from the other wing. Please, don't be afraid to ask for help!

Once you've landed, take the model apart and check everything all over again. Look for anything that may have vibrated loose or fallen out of place. Whilst you're at it, if you have an independent receiver battery, check its voltage. Check each Lipo cell, too, looking for weak ones.

Now you're ready for a celebratory cup -- of coffee. Let the harder stuff wait until you're home and the model is safely unpacked!

On a personal note, 1 April is the anniversary of the date I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Force. Yes, April Fool's day, 1980! My class was part of the ceremony at our preceding class's commissioning date, which made for some interesting comments as their 'date' was St. Valentine's Day!

1 April was also the date I departed my last duty station on terminal (retirement) leave, so it holds a special place on my calendar.