

Eating Key Lime Pie on Jupiter Or, The Top of the Hill/Rhinebeck RC Jamboree 2010

By Jennifer Lilley, Jersey Coast Sport Fliers

Sorry, Chelsea Clinton, but Rhinebeck was on the map long before your “I do’s” came on the scene.

You see, for years, modelers and aviation enthusiasts have long been familiar with the quaint town, finding bliss of their own year after year at the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree. Sure, you may have had fancy-schmancy hotels, designer clothes and exquisite foods, but we have our Hotel de “Van Cot,” Fokkers and toasted campfire spaghetti, thank you very much.

We too make solemn promises: promises to have and to hold CA, love and cherish calm skies, and as always, to make our way to the famous Top of the Hill after a day of flying. There, Part II of an action-packed day emerges. It’s an extension of fun on a different level where just about anything is discussed, seen and eaten.

Some CA with your Hot Dogs?

Dusk at the Top of the Hill often means the onset of a “get it done while there’s still light” flurry. And at the 2010 44th Annual Old Rhinebeck RC Jamboree, it was no different.

Quick “showers” (a.k.a zippy under-the-shirt deodorant reapplications) were taken. Grills were fired up. Tables were quickly lined with a hodgepodge of potato chips, props, key lime pie and industrial sized cans of OFF bug spray.

With what little light remained, it was time for one thing and one thing only: Electric Mayhem. This year, about six mini electrics flew fast and furious at the Top of the Hill, one dare after another making the moves bolder every second.

“Lower, lower!” (To the pilot already flying a foot off the ground).

“Try to get it to go *THROUGH* the van!” (Urging yet another pilot to fly it through the open windows of an unoccupied van, entering at the drivers side and exiting through the passenger window). Mission accomplished.

“Over the grill!!!” YES! A series of “ooohs” and “aahhs” erupt as the mini plane soars frighteningly close to grilling hot dogs, nearly colliding with another plane attempting to do the same.

Others, however, were in awe of another amazing sight that stood still at the bottom of the hill. A flawlessly crafted wooden teardrop trailer, unique in every fashion, left people captivated. With its shiny varnish and superb details, it seemed to draw just as many “ooohs” and “aahhs” as the Coleman-Grill Grazing activities a few hundred feet away.

And in the midst of it all, dogs chased their Snoopy Frisbees, a few children darted in and out of tents during intense hide-n-seek games and laughter echoed throughout the trees.

Once again, the spirit of Cole Palen – founder and curator of New York’s Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome - was felt among long-time flying enthusiasts and friends who’ve gathered here with fond memories for decades.



Top of the Hill– dinner coming? Jim Baye of Jersey Coast Sport Fliers relaxing at the Top of the Hill campsite



The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome show traditionally include a “through the years” fashion show with volunteers from the audience modeling the garments.

It's a Bird . . . it's a Plane . . . it's a . . . Marshmallow?

This year, significantly more folks joined the Top of the Hill festivities than last year, all eager to experience the exciting mix of conversation and chaos.

The small campfire flickered (at times much, much more brightly than others), illuminating faces and hand gestures that excitedly recapped the day:

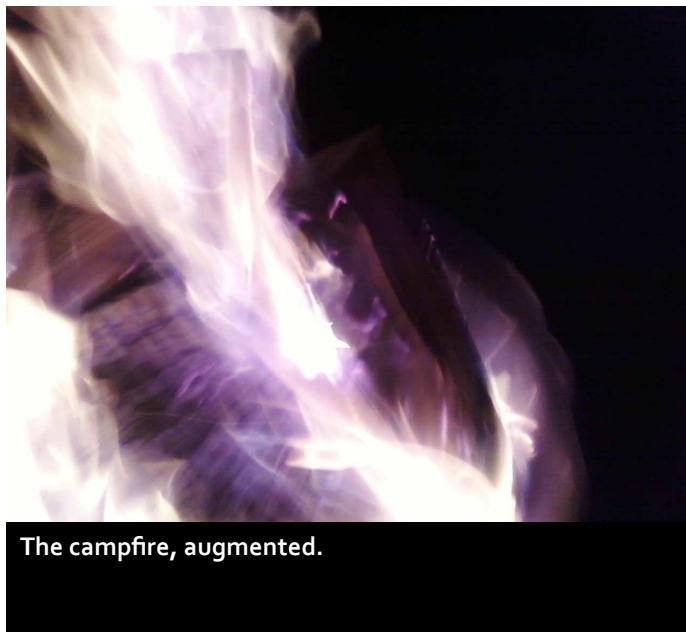
“It was being sold for how much? C’mon, you can’t pass that up, man!”

“He really kept coming in hot!”

“I can’t believe the wind kicked up just as I went dead stick.”

The flickering campfire seemed to spark new conversations and memorable moments.

For example, take the director’s film debut. We found that adhering a fresh-plucked glowing marshmallow to the tip of a long stick made for a rather heavenly prop. When held up high and waved steadily across the backdrop of a star-filled sky, the illusion of a shooting star was created. Look everyone, make a wish! But oddly enough, the same “shooting star” suddenly reversed course and moved quickly to the left . . . and again to the right . . . swaying back and forth repeatedly. Quick, who has Stephen Hawking on speed dial?



The campfire, augmented.

Moon, Stars, Sun

When the power of marshmallow imagination faded, the power of a telescope lens came into play. We were all able to see Jupiter front-and-center, its moons directly in front of our faces. As if waiting to enter a planetarium, several of us stood in line eager to scan the Rhinebeck sky and put the universe seemingly within arms reach.

More stars continued appearing on the scene – this time in human form. The

well-anticipated “Alien Man” emerged from out of nowhere, wildly flashing his blue LED eyes. The “Distractor,” complete with his stealth-like maneuvers, took part in the festivities. “MacGyver,” always ready at a moment’s notice, rushed to the aid of anyone re-

questing anything from duct tape to *War & Peace*. Even a log in the fire took on the distinct image of a face (, adding to the unexpected moments that only The Top of the Hill tends to produce. Of course, it wouldn’t be the same without the usual “who’ll find a satellite first” contest, where several fingers abruptly pointed upward within mere seconds.

And while our hearts filled with fun, our stomachs filled with some of the tastiest preservatives, sugars and saturated fats known to man. Key lime pie, marshmallows and very crispy, cold hot dogs were consumed (in that order). Pepto-Bismol, MacGyver?

Never Letting Go

Sigh.

Another time at the Annual Old Rhinebeck RC Jamboree anticipated, enjoyed and already greatly missed. Familiar and not so familiar faces were welcome sights, as were the refreshing conversations, belly laughs and jokes.

On the ride back home, the pervasive smell of campfire smoke lingers in our hair. The distinct scent is a welcome reminder that Rhinebeck memories always stay with us, in some way or another, never letting go.

So there you have it, Chelsea. You had your Rhinebeck moment. But you see, we are the lucky ones because we get to have Rhinebeck moments year after wonderful year. There will always be fun, togetherness, respect and silliness. From this day forward.

Here’s to next year, everyone.