



A Newsletter for the SPARKS RC Community Since 1986

## The President's Corner

Jim Sneed, SPARKS President

I am glad we did not have much of a winter. I never was good with freezing weather, and I guess that is why the US Air Force sent me to Duluth, Minnesota. They just wanted to see if I would freeze solid. Then they sent me to a desert air base in Tripoli, Libia to see if I could eat sand. I didn't, so they sent me to the western part of Germany to see how I would do with cold and rainy weather. I made it through that and that just proves us Texas boys could take it all.

The County guys told me that they would start clearing the burn area down west of our flying area on Monday, March 4th. This would take a week or so they said and was nearly completed before the rain came in and stopped their progress. They have about one more day to finish the grinding of the old burn trees and maybe a little time to level out the new fun area. Then we will have an 8-acre flying area to add to all the space we have now.

They will clear a vehicle path about 20 feet south of our existing flying field from our parking area to the burn area. The weather should stay nice for the next week or two so this work can be accomplished.

The quarterly "Fun Day" has expanded for this spring. The fun started on a Friday and was more exciting than our normal get-togethers. We did the normal events with closest to the target, longest time gliding, going under the limbo string, etc but will also have drone pilots from other clubs coming in for competitive flying using gates and other types of obstructions to make things more

challenging. These days are a family affair, so husbands, wives, and kids all get to enjoy the fun. Burgers and dogs, cooked by Rick Hielt, cakes and pies, and other goodies keep us from starving.

In addition to this Fun Day, we had a great Family Fun Day on Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup> with a bounce house for the kids, food for everybody, and plenty of flying games for the pilots. Dustin Hielt was the director of the events and kept the pilots busy trying to be better, faster, and safer than the other pilots. There were plenty of spectators piled up in chairs along the pavilion and as usual, there was candy drops from a plane flying over for the kid's excitement.

I am looking forward to all the things that a new year brings ... new planes, new members, and new ideas for how to do what we do. The burn area will be cleaned and will be used by fixed-wing as well as quad pilots. This area will be cleaned out. All the area will be clear open flying space that will be about 600' by 350'. Do you have a better idea for how to utilize that space? All ideas are welcomed and all we want to do is have a little more fun.

Don't forget to come to the monthly meeting, it will be the first Wednesday of each month at the Valley Ranch BBQ place at 7 pm. For those who don't know the restaurant is at the corner of Highway 249 and Spring-Cypress Road. Come hungry, their food is good. There is a big meeting room with room for 50 or more so come on down.

See you at the field ... or at the meeting ....or both

Spring Area Radio Kontrol Society

Issue 24-04

[www.sparksrc.com](http://www.sparksrc.com)

## The Vice President's Corner

James Jorden, SPARKS Vice President

Wow, Wow, Wow. What a start to the beginning of a new year. Thanks to all of you who make up this awesome flying club. Over 100 paid members already in the books. Don't think we have ever accomplished this by April in the history of our club.

This past month we hosted our first Street League Drone Race, and our second Icy Carb Fun Fly-In Event. What a great time had by all that attended these events. What a feeling it is to belong to such a great club. Thank you to all of you who helped make it happen out there.

**Field Report:** I do not recall the grass looking so green and hardly any brown spots where the grass isn't growing. With Andrew treating the field for bugs, and having our own mower and trimming equipment, I have to say the field has never looked better.

For those of you who are Discord or have come out to the field lately, you have noticed that the county has cleared or has just about cleared 8 1/2 acres of land on the west end that we can use as additional space to fly in.

This past month we had some members step up and help out with getting the place in order. Thank you so much. What a blessing it was to only have to mow once this past month. Jim Sneed is still working on getting all the cameras working again. Currently, the work area camera is for the drone coarse and hopefully soon we get all the cameras working again with their proper viewing names.

**Safety Report:** The pilot stations are there to protect you while you are flying. We had a young man get hit in the leg from a member's plane that landed close to the pilot station. If he had been standing inside the pilot station and not leaning up against the pole, the incident would not have occurred. Luckily, he was not hurt. However, the airplane wasn't so lucky. Stay focused on what you are doing out there. Keep in mind arming your electric planes, helicopters, and drones outside the hanger area, unless the propeller/s are removed.

If you see or know of any unsafe situations or behaviors, please bring it to someone's attention so it can be addressed.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the field one day soon. Your VP, James Jorden. 🛩️



James won the grand raffle prize at our Icy Carb Fun-fly event.

## Next Club Meeting

The next SPARKS meeting will be at Valley Ranch BBQ, 22548 SH 249, Houston, TX 77070.

**Wednesday Evening, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm.**

Banquet Room doors open at 5:30 so please, have something to eat if you can. Valley Ranch waives their banquet hall fee for us assuming they can make some money on food sales. With that in mind, please, don't bring food from home or from another restaurant. And please, leave a gratuity for the lady that bussess the tables and restores order to the room after we leave. 🛩️

The secret word for this month is "airspace".

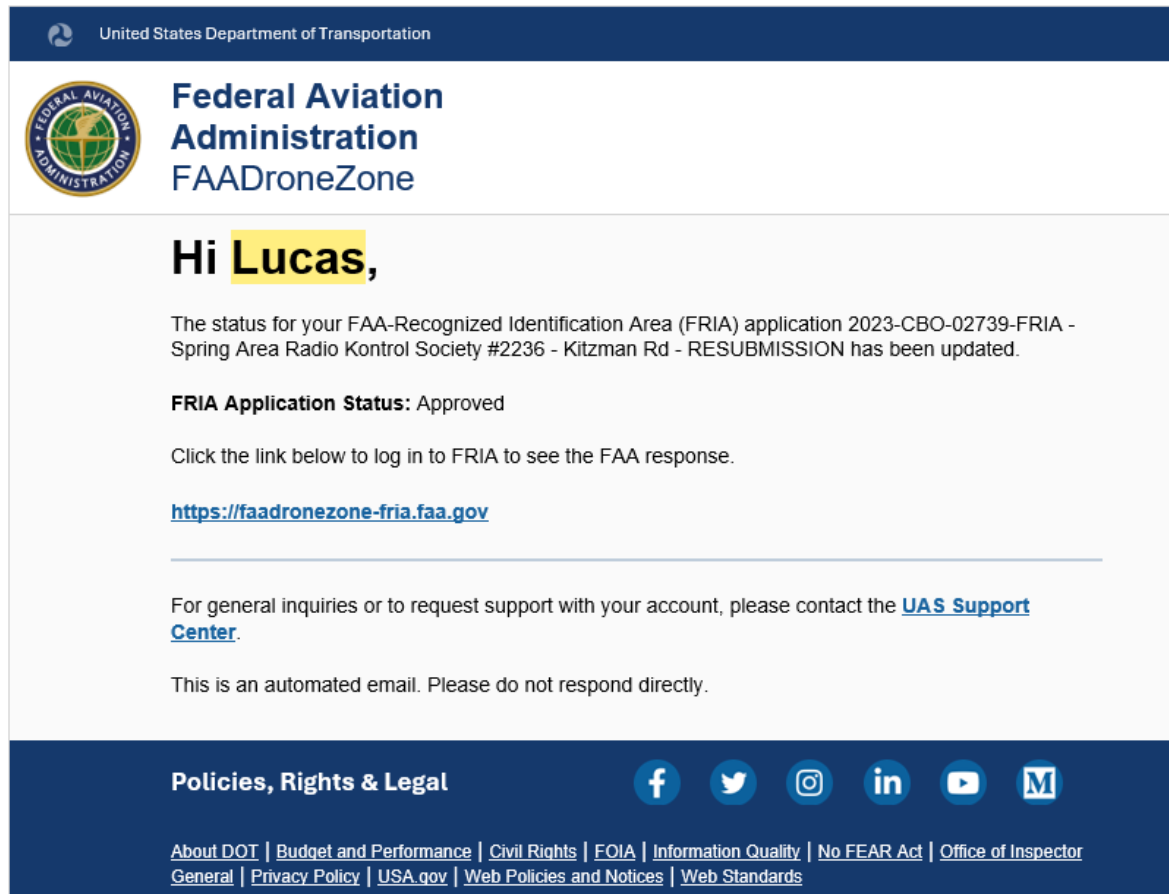
## SPARKS Field is Now a FRIA Site – No RFID Required

### Randy Shewmaker – AMA/FAA Contact


Finally, we got our FAA FRIA designation! In an email addressed to Lucas Rodden, our AMA Government Liaison, the FAA approved our appeal. We were initially denied because of our proximity to Dan Jones airport which is just under a mile from our field.

Lucas discovered that not all RC fields near airports were being evaluated in the same way. This resulted in some clubs that actually use airport runways were being granted FRIA status while others, like us, were being denied. In another article on page 8 you will see that a standard process for evaluating fields near airports has been adopted.

Now we are good for four years. Then we must apply for a renewal. By that time, we hope we have a letter of agreement with Dan Jones that endorses our mutual use of the airspace. 🛩️



United States Department of Transportation

 **Federal Aviation Administration**  
FAADroneZone

**Hi Lucas,**

The status for your FAA-Recognized Identification Area (FRIA) application 2023-CBO-02739-FRIA - Spring Area Radio Kontrol Society #2236 - Kitzman Rd - RESUBMISSION has been updated.

**FRIA Application Status:** Approved

Click the link below to log in to FRIA to see the FAA response.

<https://faadronezone-fria.faa.gov>

For general inquiries or to request support with your account, please contact the [UAS Support Center](#).

This is an automated email. Please do not respond directly.

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Fig 1. Official notice that our FRIA Application is approved.

## SPARKS Earns Gold Leader Club Award for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

Randy Shewmaker, AMA Liaison

For the third year in a row, SPARKS earned the AMA's Gold Leader Club award. This was done by providing evidence that we met the following requirements.:

### Required Activities for Leader Club Status

1. AMA chartered club for a minimum of five years.
2. Club membership is open to all AMA members and is not limited to a certain number.
3. Club has developed and posted Safety and Operational Rules at its flying site.
4. Club has filed a copy of Safety and Operational Rules at AMA Headquarters.
5. Flying field has separate areas for fliers and spectators, clearly marked as such.
6. The AMA Safety Code is posted and visible at the club field.

### Leader Club Electives

1. Club has at least one active AMA leader member on its club roster.
2. Club donates to the AMA Scholarship Program or donates Model Aviation or Park Pilot magazines to a local school or library.
3. Club conducts a review of the AMA Safety Code at a club meeting at least once a year.
4. Club sponsors an annual public event, such as a mall show, flying show, or demonstration.
5. Club monitors noise levels and/or institutes club field rules, such as a requirement that models be operated at a maximum of 90 db at 9 feet.
6. Club has created an informational handout and provides it to the general public.
7. Club participates in charity programs or public fund-raising events.
8. Club has a formal lease or agreement for use of its flying site or owns the property.
9. Club participates in the AMA Introductory Pilot Program or has its own instruction program.

This year, SPARKS met all the Required and Elective requirements and was thus awarded this certificate. We also have pins available for you to wear on your jacket or cap letting everyone know you are a member of a gold leader club. Just ask Gregg Van Houten, our club quartermaster, for your pin.





## **SPARKS Holds Its First National Drone Racing Event** **Neil Marek, SPARKS Multi-Rotor SIG Leader**

Street League Drone racing brought its 2024 National Series to SPARKS March 8-10, 2024. Competing were 28 pilots coming from 9 different states; several of whom were visiting Texas for their first time.

Street League sets itself apart from other forms of drone racing by enforcing a spec for all the drones competing, this includes size, weight, propeller, battery, and the use of LED lights on the drones. All these specs provide very close racing and the best possible spectacle for spectators and racers alike. The race was a hit and was enjoyed by participants and spectators alike.

This was the first major drone race hosted at SPARKS RC club, and facilities were filled with happy participants who were impressed by what SPARKS has to offer. Congratulations are due to our top four finishers Amari, Limon, Free, and KalliFPV taking the top spots at the event.

With the success of this first major race hosted at SPARKS, the future looks bright as this club looks to set itself apart as a top RC flying spot in the Nation. 🚁









## Precinct 3 Begins to Clear the Burn Area West of SPARKS Runway

As Jim Sneed mentioned in the president's corner, the county began to clear out all the burned, dead trees that were left after the big fire a couple of years ago. One of our members, Chuck Wain, was kind enough to share an aerial view of the area he shot a few days ago. There is still a way to go but as you can see, this can be a significant addition to SPARKS Field. Even though this area is part of our lease, we need to submit ideas about how we can best use this area to the Parks Director before someone else claims it because it is unused. Is anyone interested in flying control line? Please share your ideas with your officers as soon as possible. ✈️



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*“A good rule to remember for life is that when it comes to plastic surgery and sushi, never be attracted by a bargain.” ~ Graham Norton*

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## **FAA Finalizes Process to Expand Remote ID Authorizations for Clubs Near Airports in Uncontrolled Airspace**

### **AMA Blog**

**On** March 8, 2024, AMA and the FAA finalized procedures to expand Remote ID Authorization exemptions to include clubs on or near sensitive locations in uncontrolled airspace. Previously, only AMA clubs in controlled airspace with letters of agreement with air traffic control were eligible for this type of authorization; however, after months of AMA/FAA collaboration, the FAA will now begin granting Remote ID Authorizations that exempt AMA club sites in Class G airspace from Remote ID for a period of four years.

To Read the rest of this article please go to the AMABLOG at [FAA Finalizes Process to Expand Remote ID Authorizations for Clubs Near Airports in Uncontrolled Airspace - AMA IN ACTION Advocating for Members \(modelaircraft.org\)](#) To remain current with the most recent government-related news, regularly [visit the AMA Government Affairs blog](#).

## **SPARKS Meeting Minutes 03/06/2024**

Location: Valley Ranch BBQ

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by our esteemed President, Jim Sneed. A quorum of members was present. There were three visitors according to the sign in sheets.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- The minutes of the February meeting, which had been published in the latest newsletter, were approved as published.

### **Membership Report**

- We currently have 104 total members with 86 voting members. There are 7 probationary members. We have a total of 21 non-renews for the 2024-2025 year. These members were dropped from our roster and the AMA roster. They have been notified of their change in status.

### **Field Report**

- The field is in excellent condition. Fertilizer will soon be needed. Watering will start if there is no rain.

### **Financial Report**

- The club is doing financially well. The balance went up significantly mainly due to members paying their 2024 dues.



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## Safety Report

- There were no issues to report.

## ROTC Report

- No report.

## SIG Report

- Dustin reported on the Fixed Wing SIG activities and Neil reported on the Multi-Rotor SIG activities. Both discussed the two upcoming events in March.

## Quartermaster Report

- No report. Greg is assembling a catalog of our merchandise.

## Old Business

- **Training.** James and Dustin continue to train members.
  - February Graduates
    - Paul Overgoner
  - James' Students
    - Luis & son
    - Tom Darst
    - Paityn Pitcock
    - Owen Torry
    - Josh Rossow
  - Dustin's Students
    - Hunter
    - Gene Ward
    - Tobias Algorta
    - Phil Newcome  
Piper Evans
    - Tate Rossow
    - Adam Rossow
- **2024 Dues** are due. Last payment time was at the final gavel drop at the end this meeting.
- **Television.** The large screen television has been installed and is operational. FPV Drone videos can be viewed there.

- **Drone and Fixed-Wing Warning Signs.** The signs have been made several installed. The remaining signs will be installed before the Drone Meet.
- **FRIA Status.** Our FRIA status remains unchanged. The first ruling is being appealed. The remote ID modules have been ordered for our three trainer planes.
- **Updated By-Laws.** The updated By-Laws were sent to the interested parties.
- **Health and Wellness.** Randy again reviewed the benefit offered by the AMA and an insurance company to pay up to \$75 toward club dues. Information is available in our newsletter as well as the latest AMA Magazine.
  
- **New Business**
  - **Liability Insurance.** Randy reviewed the insurance coverage we have from the AMA. It **only** covers modeling activities. It does not cover non-modeling activities such as mowing and maintenance. Randy felt that we should protect the club with some sort of umbrella policy. A motion was made for him to investigate coverage and costs and report next month.
  - **Memorial Plaque Addition.** Phil Newcomb, a new member this year, has passed away. His name has been added to the Memorial Plaque which contains the names of members who have taken their last flight.
  
- **Upcoming Events**
- National Drone Contest will be held at SPARKS Field on March 8-10. Neil is coordinating this event. He is expecting about 20 pilots.
- Fixed Wing Icy Carb Fun Fly is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>. Dustin is coordinating this event.

## Program of the Month

- Dustin reviewed all the modifications to our website. Navigation is more straightforward.

## Model of the Month

- Marcelo Ayala won model of the month with, actually, two entries.





*Figure 1 Marcelo with his Great Planes P40.*

### Vice President's Name Drawing

- Jim Mulder won the \$105. Next month we start over.

### Prize Raffle

- \$216 in raffle tickets were sold. Marcelo Ayala won the grand prize of Gift Certificates from Randy's Hobbies.



*Figure 2 Marcelo receiving the grand prize from our President, Jim Sneed.*



The next meeting will be held at Valley Ranch BBQ on the FIRST Wednesday of April (April 3<sup>rd</sup>).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted by  
C. Paul Gallagher  
Secretary

*“If I had a bookstore, I would make all the mystery novels hard to find.” ~ Demetri Martin*

### **NOTICE - Remember the Secret Word**

As an incentive to read the newsletter, we want to offer an opportunity to win a prize to one of you who do. At some point in the next meeting, we will ask you to write your name and the secret word on a piece of paper and place the paper in a jar. The first name drawn with the correct secret word will win a \$25.00 gift certificate to Randy’s Hobbies plus six raffle tickets. The secret word for this month is “**airspace**”. Increase your chances of winning by not talking about or sharing the secret word. We will be doing this drawing randomly during the rest of the year. Officers are not allowed to participate. 🛩️

### **Accessing the SPARKS Field cameras from your phone or other device**

To access the cameras at the SPARKS club field, you must install the ZMODO app on your device (phone, tablet, or PC.) Download the app from your app store or the internet. During the installation, the app will ask you if you want to share your data or files. Reply “No”. Once installed, go to the Login Page.

Select ‘login’ using the SPARKS ZMODO administrator’s phone number. The phone number you must use is: [+17132545175](tel:+17132545175) and the password is [Cowboy01](#). Now you will be able to see what is happening at the field, who is there, what the weather is like, and what fun is being had. Enjoy the view. 🛩️

### **Accessing the Internet via the SPARKS Hotspot**

We have high speed internet access at the field as a benefit of your membership. While at the field with your phone, notebook, or laptop, you can check email, look up manuals or instructions, or participate in video conferences if you need to take a work break from your day of flying. To connect, look for SPARKS when you search for local networks. The network password is **Kitzman!** Yes, include the exclamation point. Yes, we have charging ports available. Just bring your cable. We may have someone donate a cable or two soon. 🛩️



## Communicate with other SPARKS members via the Discord App.

**Discord** has become an essential way for us to connect with our SPARKS pals outside of meetings through text, voice, and even video chats. Unlike its unfortunate name, Discord provides a way for people with similar interests, like SPARKS members, to post messages and alerts, post events, request help with a problem, show your latest project, let others know you are heading to the field, sell an item, send direct messages, ask general questions, and discuss issues that may be bugging you.

To join the other members, you must first download and install the Discord App on your smart phone or another smart device. You can download Discord

from your favorite app store. Please pick a user ID that is meaningful so we will know who you are: Not something like “Superman”, OneWeasle, or “PunkDaddy.” We must be able to identify you via your user ID.

Then, contact Dustin Hiett at [dirty86jeep@yahoo.com](mailto:dirty86jeep@yahoo.com) Dustin will verify you are on the SPARKS member roster and will grant you access to the SPARKS Discord servers. Again, a name like “BarferJet” isn’t going to be on the official roster.

We think you will enjoy being more in touch with what’s going on. ✈️



CartoonStock.com

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## **SPARKS Marketplace**

### **FOR SALE**

**Turbo Timber Evolution 1.5m PNP, Includes Floats - E-flite EFL105275**  
New in unopened shipping box.

**\$250.00 OBO**



Contact Randy Shewmaker  
[rsheemaker@earthlink.net](mailto:rsheemaker@earthlink.net)

281-300-2899

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### **Support our local RC Hobby Shops. They are an essential part of keeping our hobby alive.**

Shopping at a local hobby shop as opposed to buying hobby supplies online offers several advantages, and there are several compelling reasons why you might choose to support your local brick-and-mortar hobby store:

1. **Personalized Assistance:** Local hobby shop owners and staff are often passionate hobbyists themselves. They can provide expert advice, answer your questions, and recommend the right products for your specific needs. This level of personal assistance is often missing when shopping online.
2. **Hands-On Experience:** You can physically examine the products, which helps you make more informed choices. You can touch, feel, and even test some items, which is not possible online.
3. **Community Engagement:** Local hobby shops are often hubs for hobbyist communities. You can meet like-minded individuals, participate in workshops or events, and build relationships with people who share your interests.



4. **Supporting Local Businesses:** By shopping at a local hobby shop, you're contributing to your community's economy and helping sustain a small business. This can lead to a stronger local economy and job opportunities in your area.
5. **Immediate Gratification:** When you purchase items in-store, you can take them home immediately, eliminating the need to wait for shipping. This can be especially beneficial if you need supplies urgently or for last-minute project ideas.
6. **Product Variety:** Some local hobby shops carry unique, handcrafted, or niche items that may not be readily available online. You might discover rare or specialized products that cater to your hobby.
7. **Avoiding Shipping Costs:** While some online retailers offer free shipping, not all do. Shopping locally can help you avoid shipping fees, which can sometimes be substantial, particularly for larger or heavier items.
8. **Quality Control:** In a physical store, you can check the quality of the items you're buying. You can inspect for any defects or damage, reducing the likelihood of receiving subpar products.
9. **Returns and Exchanges:** If you need to return or exchange an item, it's often more straightforward with a local store, as you can deal with the issue in person rather than navigating the process of returning items through the mail.
10. **Sustainability:** Reducing the carbon footprint associated with shipping items can be more environmentally friendly. Local shopping means shorter transportation distances for products.
11. **Convenience:** Local hobby shops are typically located nearby, so you can quickly pick up items or browse the store without the need for long commutes or shipping wait times.



With that said, shopping online has its advantages too, such as a broader selection and potentially lower prices, so the choice ultimately depends on your specific needs and preferences. Some people find a balance by utilizing both local hobby shops for certain purchases and online retailers for others. 🛩️

## Sanctioned Events for April

APRIL 6

### 2ND ANNUAL WARBIRD AND CIVILIAN FLY IN

**CLASS C**

**Contact: PABLO ROMERO**

**Location: 1900 Dowell Rd Rockwall TX 75032**

[View Website](#)

APRIL 6

**34ND BIG BIRD FLY-IN AND 20TH ANNUAL SWAP MEET**

*CLASS C*

**Contact: MARK MANUSOV**

**Location: 2444 CR 180 Alvin TX 77511**

[View Website](#)

APRIL 12 - 13

**TCRCC WARBIRD & SWAP MEET**

*CLASS C*

**Contact: VINCE HOECHTEN**

**Location: 7500 N Humble Camp Rd Dickinson TX 77539**

APRIL 13 - 14

**32ND ANNUAL SPRING CUP**

*CLASS AA*

**Contact: JULIE PARKER**

**Location: 489 FM 3302 Hamilton TX 76531**

APRIL 13

**DON STILL ANNUAL MEMORIAL FUN FLY**

*CLASS C*

**Contact: DAVID LAIRD**

**Location: 6300 Folsom Dr Beaumont TX 77706**

APRIL 13 - 14

**NORTH TEXAS PATTERN CHALLENGE**

*CLASS AA*

**Contact: Scott HAZARD**

**Location: Westlake Park Hickory Creek TX 75065**

[View Website](#)





APRIL 13

**THE BRING IT ALL FUN FLY PRESENTED BY CENTEX MODELERS**

*CLASS C*

**Contact: HUDSON CARLTON**

**Location: 8680 Union Grove LN Salado TX 76571**

[View Website](#)

APRIL 20

**PROP NUTS ANNUAL FLEA MARKET & FLY INN**

*CLASS C*

**Contact: Allan Smith**

**Location: 3802 Wolcek Rd Crosby TX 77532**

[View Website](#)

APRIL 27 - 28

**SPACE CITY RC ANNUAL PATTERN CONTEST**

*CLASS AA*

**Contact: JOHN LADD**

**Location: 6332 Katy Hockley Rd Katy TX 77493**

APRIL 27

**WARBIRDS OVER ISC**

*CLASS C*

**Contact: MICHAEL LAIBLE**

**Location: 1601 Nasa Rd 1 Houston TX 77058**

[View Website](#)

## Dyess Park Contact List

Please add these contacts to your phone or keep them where you can find them in an emergency. As you can see from the last page of the newsletter, we had some members who were glad they had these numbers when they got locked in the park.

| Title                 | Name       | Phone        |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Dyess Park Manager    | Will Davis | 832-236-7309 |
| Emergency Dispatch    |            | 713-274-3100 |
| Precinct 3 Constables |            | 713-274-2500 |



*“Trust me, son, if there was a monster under your bed I would have claimed it as a dependent by now.”*

CARTOONSTOCK.COM

***“Only the curious have something to find.” ~ Sean Watkins***



## Performance RC Hobby

performancerchobby.com

3609 Business Center Dr Ste 116, Pearland, TX 77584

(281) 557-3450



**Valley Ranch**  
GRILL & BARBEQUE

*"Taste The Smoke"*

22548 S.H. 249  
Houston, Tx 77070  
Tel: 281-376-1588  
Fax: 281-251-8866

**René Cardozo**  
General Manager  
rene@valleyranchbbq.com

**BANQUET FACILITIES & CATERING AVAILABLE**



## Your 2023-2024 Officers



| <u>Office</u>  | <u>Name</u>     | <u>Email address</u>   | <u>Phone #</u> |
|--|-----------------|--|----------------|
| President  | Jim Sneed       | <a href="mailto:President@sparksrc.com">President@sparksrc.com</a>         | 713-254-5175   |
| Vice President/Safety<br>Officer/Field<br>Manager/Training Officer | James Jordan    | <a href="mailto:VicePresident@sparksrc.com">VicePresident@sparksrc.com</a> | 832-541-7931   |
| Treasurer/Newsletter<br>Editor/Parks Liaison/AMA<br>Contact        | Randy Shewmaker | <a href="mailto:treasurer@sparksrc.com">treasurer@sparksrc.com</a>         | 281-300-2899   |
| Secretary/Membership<br>Officer                                    | Paul Gallagher  | <a href="mailto:secretary@sparksrc.com">secretary@sparksrc.com</a>         | 832-368-0500   |

*“I hate housework. You make the beds, you do the dishes, and six months later, you have to start all over again.” ~ Joan Rivers*

## Seen at the Park



### Caged

Quietly passing time while waiting on the constables to open the gate after the park closed early.

