

DRONE FLYERS CLUB

The Villages, FL

Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2024



CALL TO ORDER: The January 18, 2024, monthly meeting of the Drone Flyers Club was called to order at 18:33 hours by President Wiley. Fifty-two members (8 of which were new tonight), 2 guests and our guest speaker were in attendance.

President Wiley welcomed all in attendance. Guests this evening included: Deputy Donovan Reynolds, and Bob Globe.

CLUB OFFICERS

President's Report:

Board Meeting: President Wiley gave a summary of the Board Meeting held on January 16, 2024:

1. The Board discussed adding an additional Board member as our current number (8) could result in a tie vote and action being deferred. This issue is the result of having the same person serving as Vice President and Secretary. It was determined by the Board that the number of members should be increased by one (1) to avoid this potential. President Wiley appointed Ken Annis to the Board to resolve this issue.
2. The Board approved a proposal to require FAA Part 107 certification (or pursuing) for Board Members. Six of the current nine Board members are currently certified at this level and the other three are actively working to achieve this certification. The purpose of this change was to provide Board members that fully understand the importance of achieving a detailed awareness of the regulations impacting our club which would ultimately increase the level of safety for all members. The Board approved this change.
 - A comment was received from the floor regarding representation of non-Part 107 certified persons on the Board.
3. Future upcoming events for the Club include:
 - Fly Day on March 16. This event will be held at the Everglades Recreation Center and further details will be forthcoming.
 - Club Picnic on March 20. The Board added this picnic day to allow seasonal residents to be included in the activity. Cost will be \$10 per attendee with the Club paying the remainder of the costs. Sign-up for this event is currently open.
4. The Club will begin providing the new Part 107 study guide to members interested in pursuing this certification. The new study guide consists of one book. Cost to those interested will be \$10.00 (approximately 50% of the cost) with the Club paying the remainder.
5. The annual audit of the Club finances was completed earlier this month and the report forwarded to the Board. The audit found the financial health of the Club to be positive and no discrepancies were found.
6. Club training was discussed. The Board determined that it would be beneficial to continue offering training sessions on the fourth Thursday of the month. It was further determined that to meet the needs of the membership, training topics would be discussed at the Club business meeting (third Thursday) and the training determined by the needs identified by members present.

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7. The Village's *Neighborhood* magazine February edition will feature an article (and cover photo) of the Club. This will be available starting February 1, 2024.
8. The Board discussed the need to limit member videos presented at Club meetings. While all the videos are interesting, in the interest of time members will be limited to one 2-minute video each month.

Updates:

1. The Villages "Club News" information has been updated and will appear in the weekly supplement provided with News Sun Newspaper. We are also working to communicate that the Club is interested in providing assistance to other clubs in the form of drone video footage that other clubs can use to promote their activities.
2. Mark Clark and Peggy Garvin recently attended the grand opening of the Disc Golf Course (located on the Hogeys Pathway). They reported on the new facility and provided video footage to this club.
3. Debbie Stern has agreed to speak at our next meeting. Debbie has an in-depth knowledge of current drone issues and will provide various updates.
4. New Part 107 pilots this month included Julian Drouin and Susan Knutson. Congratulations to them on achieving this important certification.
5. A new name badge has been created for those members that are Part 107 certified. These name badges are a different color and size. The purpose of these badges is to identify those that may be of assistance to others in the Club that are working toward this certification.
6. Club merchandise was discussed. These items provide additional income to the Club and are enjoyed by many of our members. Items under consideration (or available) at the present time include:
 - Baseball hats with Club logo (will maintain an inventory of these). Lime green was the color selected by the members.
 - Stickers: available at meetings
 - Golf Cart Hoodies (covers the manufacturer light on golf cars)
 - Custom landing pads featuring Club logo: Being researched

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Peggy Garvin presented the January 18, 2024 Treasurers Report:

Opening Balance:	\$3,793.16
Income:	\$2,295.00
Dues	\$1,805.00
50/50 Drawing	\$ 60.00
Sale of Books	\$ 240.00
Picnic	\$ 190.00
Expenses:	\$593.87
Name Badge(s)	\$ 147.00
Books	\$ 441.87

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Other \$ 5.00 (Overpayment of dues)
Ending Balance: \$5,494.29

Motion and second to accept the Treasurers report as presented. Motion approved by voice vote.

Garvin confirmed that the 2023 audit had been completed and no discrepancies were found. She thanked Director Aniess and Director Hawley for the work on the audit report.

Garvin also noted that dues are now due for 2024 and asked that those that had not yet paid forward them to her as soon as possible. Garvin stated that the Club added 5 new members this evening.

Secretaries Report: Secretary Randy Justus reported the December 21, 2023 meeting minutes were posted on our website. No comments for changes were received. President Wiley requested a motion to approve December 21, 2023 minutes.

Motion and second to approve the December 21, 2023 minutes. Motion approved by voice vote.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Deputy Donovan Reynolds of the Sumter County Sheriff's Office was the guest speaker and presented an informative discussion on the Sheriff's Drone Program.

- The Sheriff's office provides 24 hour a day drone capability. This consists of a minimum of 2 drones at all times. The drone fleet consists of approximately 15 of this type of drone and approximately 24 deputies are trained/certified to utilize them.
- The drones are only flown by deputies that are fully trained, certified, equipped and available. A drone can be provided to assist law enforcement within a few minutes.
- Due to a change in State law, the Sheriff's office is now utilizing Teledyne FLIR drones. This is a significant change from the DJI Matrice drones previously used. The Teledyne FLIR drones are much smaller and lighter, fit into smaller areas and are easily transportable.
- The drones provide a significantly reduced cost over the Sheriff's helicopter and are available within minutes.
- Batteries have an approximate,30-minute operational period in flight.
- Cameras have up to 128x zoom capability and are thermal imaging equipped.
- Typical line of sight is 1 mile, but spotters coordinating with the pilot are allowed to be used to increase range (waiver).
- The drones primary use includes searching for persons that are lost and crime scene photography. They can only be utilized for law enforcement purposes.
- Cost of the drone is approximately \$12,000 each, but fully equipped will significantly increase cost.
- Significantly different than "military" type drones as these are specifically produced for law enforcement use.

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NEW BUSINESS:

1. The issue of live streaming our business meetings was brought up. This would provide a means of viewing the meeting remotely. While possible, we will need to research bandwidth availability in our meeting room. Another possibility would be the use of Facebook and broadcasting from a mobile device. Broadcasting from a mobile device could be problematic due to audio issues. This could benefit seasonal residents while away from The Villages or it could decrease in-person attendance at the meeting. Further information will be needed in order to make a decision on this issue.
2. It was reported that several members have been added to the Part 107 study group. This shows a continuing interest in providing this program for our members. It was further suggested that this group should investigate the Pilot Institutes course to supplement their study.

NEW DRONES:

Several members reported acquiring new drones. The most frequent drone purchased this past month is the DJI Mini 4.

CRASH(S) OF THE MONTH:

NO CRASHES were reported for this past month! President Wiley congratulated the membership on this rare achievement.

MEMBER VIDEOS:

1. Jim Laurent: Presented his video on a Habitat for Humanity project. It featured a home being constructed by the organization here in The Villages area.
2. Peggy Garvin : Presented her video on the opening of Hogeeye Disc Golf course. This is a unique area and the first course in The Villages.
3. Mark Clark: Presented his use of the DJI Avata in his video. He flew the actual Disc Golf course on opening day and provided a unique view of what the disc golfer would see.

SAFETY OFFICER: Cres Wise discussed the importance of all Club members and guests adhering to Club safety rules when flying.

- **Before flight:**
 - Confirm software and firmware is up-to-date
 - Inspect your aircraft: Arms, body, props.
 - Are you flying in the right environment? Know your limitations. Do not fly in areas that require FAA authorization
 - Inspect your batteries and make sure they are fully charged and not swollen
 - Check all propellers. Are they damaged? If so change them
 - Calibrate the compass and IMU (Especially if flying in a new area or not having flown the drone in more than 30 days)

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- Check your air space
- Remove gimbal lock(s)
- Turn remote controller on first. Turn the drone second
- **In the take-off/landing zone:**
 - Announce your intentions (“On the Field”, “Taking-Off”, “Landing”, etc.)
 - Make sure you walk behind other pilots so you will not obstruct their view of their drone
 - Minimize your time in the flight area for your personal safety
 - Respect the flight area:
 - At Soaring Eagle the flight area is the entire field past the 3rd base line
 - At Edna’s, the flight area is on the other side of the barriers (when used)
 - Pilots are reminded to position their drone, when landing and taking off, facing away from the pilot. This will minimize accidental stick control movements that could cause injury
- **In Flight/Transitioning over adjacent areas:**
 - Maintain a minimum altitude of 200 feet or more over the softball field
 - Maintain a minimum altitude of 100 feet or more over the shooting range
 - Maintain line of sight with your drone
 - When flying at the Hog Eye Path (Edna’s), DO NOT FLY OVER Edna’s, the Starter shack, or the swimming pool area. DON’T fly over people! Use caution when flying over the walking path and the Pitch and Putt area. Also do not fly over persons on the golf course.

Wise also presented DJI’s Drone Safety Tips for a Safe Flight. While provided with the purchase of a drone, they are unreadable due to size, but important to consider when flying. The Safety tips include the following:

- **Post flight:**
 - Turn off drone first then remote second
 - Do not charge battery immediately after a flight (hot battery). Leave hot battery out of case and let battery cool before charging
 - Remove the propellers after a flight if using a soft case
 - Attach the gimbal lock/clamps
 - Don’t put a hot drone in your carry case until drone has cooled
 - Store your drone properly and with care
- **Recreational vs Commercial flying**
 - Rec flyers are governed by 49 USC (Code) 44809. Exception for limited recreational operations of unmanned aircraft systems
 - Rec flyers must pass the FAA “TRUST” exam
 - Commercial flyers must pass a Part 107 knowledge exam and complete training every 24 calendar months. (see FAA website)
 - Rec flyers fly only for “personal enjoyment”. When in doubt it is probably a Part 107 flight. (Don’t share/post videos as that constitutes Part 107 flying).

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- Non-recreational drone flying **includes** things such as taking photos to help sell a property or service, roof inspections, taking pictures of a high school ball game for the school's website. Good will flying can also be considered non-recreational. Good will flying would include things like volunteering to use your drone to survey areas or events on behalf of a non-profit organization.
- Drone Training Resources: Wise supplied a listing of several entities that provide quality resources.
 - Training program sites on the internet:
 - Pilot Institute
 - Drone Pilot Ground School
 - UAV Coach
 - 51 Drones
 - FAA (laws, registration, certification):
 - FAA.gov
 - FAA Safety.gov
 - FAA Drone Zone
 - Other resources to consider:
 - 51 Drones
 - YouTube (be careful, anyone can post here)
 - Wired.com – search "drones"
 - <https://airbuzz.one/introduction-to-drones/>
- Recreational Fliers (If you haven't taken the FAA required "TRUST" exam)
 - https://www.faa.gov/uas/recreational_flyers/knowledge_test_updates
- General Drone Information
 - Don't post to social medial sites without 107 Cert
 - Drone registration is every 3 years and cost is \$5.00. Different rules for recreational pilots and commercial 107 pilots
 - Every 2-years, recurrent training required for Part 107 pilots
 - Training is free and available on the FAA Safety Team website (3 courses)
- Safety
 - Drones less than 250 g operation under 107 must be registered and have remote ID
 - Visual aids may be used momentarily to enhance situational awareness
 - Alcohol- not under the influence/no alcohol within preceding 8 hours and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) less than 0.04%.
 - When flying must present if requested, your FAA identification to representatives of the FAA, law enforcement, NTSB, or TSA. You must also have any/all required waivers, authorizations, and exemptions needed. You are also required to have proof of RPIC knowledge recently (completion certificate) and other flight operation documents that are required.
 - Your Part 107 cert must be renewed every 2 years

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- Free at FAA website
- Takes about 2 hours

VIDEO

President Wiley presented a video regarding the ban of DJI drones by government in the US. Video recommended being pro-active with your elected officials.

DRONE INFORMATION/TECHNIQUE:

President Wiley demonstrated some excellent control techniques and information on drone flying.

- Cruise control on Mavic 3 and later drones is nice mode to use for smooth flight. While useful, it can be cancelled by the following:
 - Loss of communication
 - Collision avoidance (when the obstruction cannot be avoided)
 - Manual cancel
 - Return to Home
- Hand catching drones:
 - Useful for when on boats, in grassy field or sandy area
 - It **is** dangerous if done wrong
 - Most common method: Flip the drone (not for larger drones)
 - "Land in my hand" method: Better but avoid moving hand down on contact
 - Do the lift (BETTER WAY)
 - As landing, push down on left stick as hand slowly lifts the drone
 - Hand placement: Make sure fingers clear, "clamp body with fingers as you lift
- ESC Failure (Electronic Speed Control) and GPS Failure
 - This is likely to be a memory card error. Solution: Format the memory card, and always use a quality memory card (SanDisk/Kingston/Lexar/Samsung/PNY recommended) Use only U3 A2 V30 rated memory cards, Recommend using 64 or 128 GB memory cards.

FLYING DAY REMINDERS:

- Club Flying Days:
 - Soaring Eagle: Tuesdays, 08:00 – 12:00
 - Edna's/Hog Eye Path: Thursdays, 08:00 – 12:00

50/50 DRAWING: The lucky winner of tonight's drawing for \$50 was Denny Powers.

ADJOURNMENT: The January 18, 2024 Drone Club Meeting was adjourned at 20:35 hours.

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Respectfully submitted,

Randy Justus

Randy Justus, Secretary



Drone Flyers Club stickers are available for only \$5.00

Perfect for vehicle or your drone case!

Thanks to Melanie Starkman for donating the stickers. All proceeds go to the club treasury.