District III—Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia

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I recently attended a new event in Ohio called RCS Fest 2018. I first met event Contest Director Nathan Saylor and his wife, Abby, at the annual full-scale Vinton County Air Show in McArthur, Ohio. At the time, Nate inquired about the possibility of hosting a model aviation event at the airport with the blessings of airport manager Nick Rupert.

Nate and I had several calls and emails during the winter to discuss the requirements needed to hold the event. At one point, Nate nearly gave up on the idea, but with my encouragement, Nate persevered and sanctioned the event. As the date approached, I was concerned because I had not seen any event promotion.

On Saturday, June 16, I packed my Cherokee with two RC models and made the short flight to the Vinton County Airport. Upon landing I was greeted by Nate and Abby and was pleasantly surprised by the number of participants.

The flightline along the runway was clearly marked for beginners, main, helicopters, and FPV racing, including a Mini Whoop and Tiny Coupe course inside a hangar. All of the flying areas were set back from the main runway for safety. There was also an RC car and truck racecourse set up behind the flightline.

Registered pilots were given a neck lanyard with a pilot's pass showing a map of all of the activities on the grounds and a schedule of events. Nate and Abby had thought of everything! All kinds of aircraft were being flown including Giant Scale, Scale, foamies, Pattern, trainers, multirotors, and more.

J.T. Snider demonstrated Pattern flying to the new generation of modelers who attended RCS Fest.

Abby, Nate, and Popeye—a.k.a The RC Saylors.

As AMA District III vice president, I attend many events but frankly, I did not know many of the participants. I introduced myself and was amazed at the distances people had come to participate in this new gathering. I met people from Wisconsin, Colorado, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, and more. I asked people how they heard about this event and they told me they follow Nate and Abby on their YouTube channel called The RC Saylors (www.youtube.com/user/TheRcSaylors).

As do many current generation modelers, Nate and Abby utilize YouTube and other social media to promote the hobby. It must be working because approximately 80% of the 56 registered pilots were new AMA members just a few weeks beforehand or they joined while attending. This new event brought in roughly 45 new AMA members!

Check out The RC Saylors at www.youtube.com/TheRCSaylors.

The FPV racers were out in force at RCS Fest!

An epic moment from RCS Fest. The first-ever RC airplane baby gender reveal—it's a girl! Congratulations Nate and Abby Saylor!

Nate told me that most of these new members had no idea what AMA was! This alone brings two things to my attention. Traditional modeling, marketing, advertising, and such are clearly not working to attract new people into the hobby and all of us—you, me, AMA, hobby manufacturers, etc.—must look for new ways to identify and communicate with this new generation of modelers.

Thank you Nate and Abby Saylor for leading the way in the promotion of model aviation and showing traditional modelers that there are plenty new folks interested in our hobby.

Till next month, fly safely—fly AMA.

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