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# The AMA History Project Presents: History of the DEEP RIVER R/C FLYING CLUB (DRRCFC)



Started in 1990

Written by RS (01/2016); Reformatted and edited by JS (01/2016)

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*The following club history was written by Donald Way, President of the Deep River R/C Flying Club (DRRCFC), and sent for inclusion in the AMA History Project in December of 2015.*

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## Deep River R/C Flying Club Hobart, IN

In 1989, a local radio control flying club, the Griffith Barnstormers, was looking at the possibility of losing their flying site. A subdivision was being constructed right next to their field. After an exhaustive search of Northwest Indiana, an open unused field at Deep River County Park was found as a possible alternative airfield. The field - in the shape of a quarter-mile oval race track, once privately owned - was used to train sulky racing horses before the park acquired the land.

This flying site was no stranger to model aviation. In the 1970s, a club known as the Lake County R/C Soaring Society, Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Charter 1393, flew sailplanes from the field. It was a small club, and sometime in the mid-1980s a number of its members moved away and one passed, thus leaving the club without the required five-member minimum to retain a charter, disbanding the club. (In the end the Barnstormers did not lose their flying field to the development, and they are still flying there today.)

Deep River R/C Flying Club (DRRCFC), AMA Charter 2991, was formally organized in 1990. The first club president was Tom Bartolac. Tom was instrumental in Deep River R/C obtaining its current location. Tom established the charter with the AMA, and made arrangements with the Lake County Parks Department to secure and manicure the field. The park maintains the field (such as mowing and trash collection) and Deep River R/C operates its field under an annual park permit free of charge. For its first season, the Club had a total of 22 members<sup>1</sup>.

Straight away, the newly established club ran into a big problem. Many airplanes were flying over the property and homes to the west of the field. There were also a number of reported crashes in the homeowner's yards. To resolve the situation, it was decided to move the pit area and frequency board to the west side of the field, thus all flying would be done to the east, keeping all airborne aircraft from flying over private property. Since that move, there have been no reported complaints from our neighbors to the west.

In the summer of 1994 some major improvements were made to the field. A 12'x12' one-sided shelter was constructed in the pit area, providing some much needed shade. Additionally, fencing and benches were installed for spectators. The materials for the improvements were provided by the park, with Deep River R/C members supplying the labor for the construction.

The year 2000 turned out to be a rough one for the club. A large natural gas pipeline was installed directly under our field (a continuous pipeline that runs from Texas to Canada), and a very large tent was set up directly on the field for its installation. No flying was done that year and a lot of club members found other places to fly, never to return.

For the 2001 flying season, a lot of changes administratively occurred with the club. By-laws were formally established, a web site was developed, and a club logo<sup>2</sup> was created. Monthly meetings initially held at the Griffith Public Library were later moved to the Lake County Public Library. A problem we were having with the Lake County Public Library was they were unable to hold a consistent monthly meeting night for us, so a permanent meeting night and location in Southlake Mall in the Hobart Police South Station was secured.

Another notable change was that club officers could now succeed themselves in office. Prior to 2001, the club had to find a new president every year. The rationale for a new president every year was to prevent cliques within the club<sup>3</sup>. With membership numbers at that time, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find new people to fill officer positions. We were getting to a point where almost everyone had served. The club officers offered to continue in their positions to relieve the rest of the membership the pressure of repeatedly serving as an officer, while still having elections annually in December.

One benefit we found to this new policy is we are better able to conduct business in and outside the club, having the same people in charge. It has been more convenient having that one person to go to with a question or issue. Although it worked very well for a number of years, one unfortunate consequence with the new officer every year policy was most club records from the 1990s were not properly cared for and have been lost or destroyed.

From the early 1990s, DRRCFC had participated in local mall shows, sometimes with other area clubs. Given the time and work involved with hosting a mall show, the club found its efforts mostly in vain in recruiting new members. With a lack of results and the fact the mall was becoming more interested in selling floor space to local car dealers, 2006 was our last mall show.

Facing a steady decline in membership, in June 2010 the club decided to hold an open house to the public at our field to attract new members. DRRCFC's Annual Open House consists of 3 to 4 club members flying trainer aircraft on a buddy box<sup>4</sup> with the remaining club membership flying and displaying their own model aircraft to demonstrate the hobby. News releases and photos are submitted to local newspapers to attract the public to come out to our flying field and experience operating a remote control model airplane first hand. In 2013, the Boy Scouts of America joined the Open House to sell refreshments. The idea of the Open House has proven to be a great success for the club in regards to recruiting new members, with more than 150 people in attendance to the show annually.

Another popular event the club holds is its monthly Fun Flies. In the past, Deep River R/C would have a large cook out and the membership would come out for some casual flying, with an occasional contest with raffle prizes. Today not much has changed. The club tries

to hold a monthly Fun Fly in the summer months. It's a relaxed get together of the club membership as a whole to socialize and fly as a group. Those of us in DRRCFC consider ourselves a "sport" flying club. We fly a variety of aircraft such as large quarter-scale aircraft, helicopters, small foam park fliers, and everything in-between. We even have a control line and 3D flying area. All disciplines are welcome and the out of the ordinary is encouraged.

The DRRCFC is active in our community. We have provided display models to the Indiana South Shore Welcome Center to commemorate the Wright Brothers' anniversary of 100 years of flight. We have assisted students from Northwestern University with the use of our field to launch a weather balloon for high altitude experiments they were conducting. We have also worked with the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) with an experiment in the use of R/C aircraft to distract wildlife from a hazardous waste pit used to store sludge from a dredging operation of an area canal.

In May of 2012, members of DRRCFC participated in the nationwide program called Wings Across America 2008 (WAA-08). WAA-08 used an electric park flyer from Stevens AeroModel, the SQuiRT (Simple, Quite, Robust, Trainer), which was flown in all 48 contiguous states. Its mission being to promote model aviation, the plane was handed off personally pilot to pilot and never shipped by mail to complete its journey.

The plane and its contents for our leg of its adventure was picked up from a member of the Chicago Radio Control Modelers and flown on May 19, 2012 at our field in Deep River County Park. Seven pilots from DRRCFC participated in this historic event<sup>5</sup>. The plane was then hand-delivered to members of the South Bend Radio Control Club. After five years touring the country, the WAA-08 SQuiRT made its way back to its home field in Gloucester, Virginia to conclude its journey. The plane and its associated equipment now reside in the National Model Aviation Museum in Muncie, Indiana.

In 2007, DRRCFC applied for and was granted Silver Leader Club<sup>6</sup> status. In 2014, the Club upgraded to Gold Leader Club, with the help of the AMA's establishment of National Model Aviation Day. In its inaugural year, Deep River R/C raised \$140 for the Wounded Warrior Project, the AMA's chosen charity for National Model Aviation Day. DRRCFC also participates in the AMA's Introductory Pilot Program. As of 2012, we have two Introductory Pilot Instructors available for newcomers to the hobby.

Club history written by:  
Donald Way, President  
Deep River R/C Flying Club  
AMA Charter 2991  
[deepriver\\_rc@hotmail.com](mailto:deepriver_rc@hotmail.com)  
[www.deepriver.jimdo.com](http://www.deepriver.jimdo.com)

## *Appendix*

1. *The founding members of Deep River R/C Flying Club listed in order of their membership:*

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Tom Bartolac</i>        | 12. <i>Jim Weaver</i>      |
| 2. <i>Bob Krueger</i>         | 13. <i>Victor Gillette</i> |
| 3. <i>Wally Mold</i>          | 14. <i>Don Way</i>         |
| 4. <i>Rich Bartolac</i>       | 15. <i>Jim Wirick</i>      |
| 5. <i>John Schopp</i>         | 16. <i>Tim Weaver</i>      |
| 6. <i>Phil Cathey</i>         | 17. <i>Randy Starr</i>     |
| 7. <i>Stanley Kudzinowski</i> | 18. <i>Jim Petro</i>       |
| 8. <i>Russell Miller</i>      | 19. <i>Roger Nusbaum</i>   |
| 9. <i>Robert A. Clark</i>     | 20. <i>Scott Conner</i>    |
| 10. <i>Willie Edward</i>      | 21. <i>Rod Stanley</i>     |
| 11. <i>Ernest Thomas</i>      | 22. <i>Ted Kutscher</i>    |

2. *Deep River R/C Flying Club's logo adopted 2001:*



3. *The Club was formally chartered in October 1990, a short season. All officers carried over to 1991 to complete a full year.*
4. *A buddy box is the student's radio when linked to an instructor's radio. The instructor with a click of a switch activates the student's radio for control of the model. When the student gets into trouble the instructor can "click-out" the student and safely recover the model airplane on his radio preventing a crash.*
5. *Wings Across America 2008 pilots, May 19, 2012:*

<i>Don Way</i>	<i>Jim Petro</i>	<i>Ken Kolberg</i>	<i>Jim Anderson</i>
<i>Jim Reno</i>	<i>Tom Harmon</i>	<i>John Rhynearson</i>	
6. *AMA Leader Club Awards (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) are earned annually by clubs that meet up to 14 performance standards of community service and activity.*

### Officers of Deep River R/C Flying Club

	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Field Marshal</b>	<b>Safety Officer</b>
<b>1990</b>	Tom Bartolac	Bob Krueger	Rich Bartolac	Wally Mold	Russell Miller	Willie Edward
<b>1991</b>	Tom Bartolac	Bob Krueger	Rich Bartolac	Wally Mold	Russel Miller	Willie Edward
<b>1992</b>	Bob Krueger	Tom Bartolac				
<b>1993</b>	John Rhyneanson					
<b>1994</b>						
<b>1995</b>	Scott Conner					
<b>1996</b>	Michael Chiaro	Scott Conner	Ralph Gard	Jess Peters	Robert Burdan	Rod Stanley
<b>1997</b>						
<b>1998</b>	Kevin Strugeon	Ben Uskert				
<b>1999</b>	Tim Boyes	Ben Uskert				
<b>2000</b>	Bob Krueger					
<b>2001</b>	Donald Way	Chuck Vas	Bill Mitch	Greg Pucher	Jim Anderson	Tim Boyes
<b>2002</b>	Donald Way	Chuck Vas	Bill Mitch	Greg Pucher	Jim Anderson	Greg Pucher
<b>2003</b>	Donald Way	Chuck Vas	Bill Mitch	Greg Pucher	George Wolotka	Greg Pucher
<b>2004</b>	Donald Way	Chuck Vas	Bill Mitch	Greg Pucher	George Wolotka	Greg Pucher
<b>2005</b>	Donald Way	Chuck Vas	Bill Mitch	Greg Viator	George Wolotka	Jim Anderson
<b>2006</b>	Donald Way	vacancy	Bill Mitch	Greg Viator	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2007</b>	Donald Way	vacancy	Bill Mitch	Greg Viator	Bob Toby	Jim Anderson
<b>2008</b>	Donald Way	Greg Viator	Bill Mitch	Greg Viator	Bob Toby	Jim Anderson
<b>2009</b>	Donald Way	Greg Viator	Bill Mitch	Greg Viator	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2010</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Bill Mitch	Donald Way	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2011</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Bill Mitch	Donald Way	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2012</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Bill Mitch	Donald Way	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2013</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Bill Mitch	Angelo LaManta	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2014</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Ken Kolberg	Angelo LaManta	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2015</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Ken Kolberg	Donald Way	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson
<b>2016</b>	Donald Way	Jim Petro	Ken Kolberg	Donald Way	Jim Anderson	Jim Anderson

*Unfortunately records from the 1990s have been lost or destroyed leaving blanks in the above chart.*



*Below: 1993 Mall Show*



*Below: 2002 Mall Show*



*Below: 2005 Mall Show*



*Below: 2006 Mall Show*





*Below: Deep River R/C Flying Club's Annual Open House*



*Mike Blouir (right) lets the ladies try the controls while their parents look on.*



*Earl Gumm (left) and Dave Haskins (center) help a prospective student.*



*Don Way (right) checks out new member Ed Kreiger (center). Larry Trzuppek (left) coaches the next pilot.*



*Lots of people in attendance.*



*Tim Pierce (left) and Ernie Nevada (right).*



*Center picture starting with the front row, left to right: Steve Doloszycki, Jim Deck, and Walter Matusiak. Middle row: Patrick Falk, Roger Reynolds, John Rhynearson, Jerry Rhynearson, Don Way, Marlin Mosher, and Jim Petro. Back row: Ken Kolberg, Jim Anderson, Eric Huball, Angelo LaMantia, and Earl Gumm.2012.*





*Above: Earl Gumm (left) and Jim Petro (right)  
Newspaper Release: "Flying High with Model Airplanes"  
(By Annette Arnold, The Times newspaper, June 9, 2010)*

[http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/illinois/flying-high-with-model-airplanes/article\\_941d4b33-8f51-529a-bc55-b1f9ad33ccf1.html](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/illinois/flying-high-with-model-airplanes/article_941d4b33-8f51-529a-bc55-b1f9ad33ccf1.html)



*Above: (from far left) Ken Kolberg, Walter Matusiak (sitting), Larry Trzuppek, Eric Huball, Earl Gumm, and Don Way.*

*Newspaper Release: "Time to Fly Remote Control Planes"  
(By Annette Arnold, The Times newspaper, June 20, 2012)*

[http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/hobart/time-to-fly-remote-control-airplanes/article\\_e98a51df-448a-5222-bdf1-4129685acf20.html](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/hobart/time-to-fly-remote-control-airplanes/article_e98a51df-448a-5222-bdf1-4129685acf20.html)

# Certificate of Achievement



*This certificate is awarded to*

***Deep River R/C Flying Club***

*from Hobart, Indiana*

*In recognition of achieving successful flight on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

***Presented by the Wings Across America Team***

*In above photo: Tom Harmon, Jim Petro, Jim Anderson, John Rhyneerson, Ken Kolberg, Jim Reno, and Don Way.*



*Above: Ken Kolberg, Earl Gumm, and Chuck Norrman inspect the SQuiRT's contents during our monthly meeting.*



*Above: Jim Anderson posing with the carrying case.*

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**AMA History Project**  
National Model Aviation Museum  
5151 E. Memorial Dr.  
Muncie IN 47302  
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511  
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

