

WINNIPEG RADIO CONTROL CLUB - 35 YEARS OLD AND STILL GOING STRONG

The Winnipeg Radio Control Club was formed at a meeting on June 16th, 1963, by founding members Keith Humphrey, Rod McRae, Warren Barker, John Bonnett and Gerry Fingler. The W.R.C.C. was originally formed as a special interest club dedicated to radio control modeling. It was affiliated with the Model Aircraft League of Manitoba. The M.A.L.M. was mainly a control line club at that time. M.A.L.M. was founded in the 1930's.

Radio control modelers still active in the hobby who joined the W.R.C.C. in the first months were Cliff Swartz, Bill Dutka and Karoly Matusik. The club had fourteen members in the first year and the official name was not adopted until later in the year. Other names that were suggested were Winnipeg Aero Radio Modelers (W.A.R.M.) and Winnipeg Aero Radio Pilots (W.A.R.P.).

The first official flying site was in East Kildonan where Kildonan East Collegiate is located on Concordia Avenue. The first chairman was Keith Humphrey. W.R.C.C. membership grew slowly in those early years. Membership was approximately 25 members by the end of 1966. Everyone was a novice at radio control flying, learning more with each flight, improving their skills as they went along and crashes were numerous.

In 1967 the club elected its first executive, Cliff Swartz as President, Keith Humphrey as Secretary-Treasurer, Gerry Fingler as Contest Director and Rod McRae on Publicity. The club had checked out areas on the floodway as possible flying sites.

Nothing has changed over the years, the same executive was elected ("railroaded") for 1968. The contest schedule in 1968 included a WWI Scale Contest with 10 aircraft entered. Our membership had reached 50 by that time.

W.R.C.C. held their meetings at the old Free Press building in 1969. Considerable discussion was held on the purchase of land for a flying field. Motion to assess every member \$100.00 for a field fund was passed unanimously by the 60 members in attendance. W.R.C.C. was also incorporated in 1969. That year the Highway 59 flying site was first used. It was known as Seine River Park in those days. A grass runway was located on the west side of the drainage ditch.

1970 was a big year for the W.R.C.C. as well as Manitoba, as it was our Centennial Year. The \$30.00 field assessment was introduced to raise funds for paved runways. This replaced the original \$100.00 assessment passed the previous year. Club meetings were held at the transit building on Osborne Street.

W.R.C.C. participated in a number of Centennial functions. Flying demonstrations were held at Bird's Hill Park, Portage Air Show, LaBarriere Park, Charleswood Fair and the Centennial Air Show at St. Andrews Airport. The club also had a large model display in the banquet hall at the Winnipeg Inn (now the Lombard) for the Wartime Pilots Reunion, at which among others, Adolf Galland, Douglas Badar, Johnnie Johnson, were in attendance. A number of W.R.C.C. members were invited to attend one of the dinners being held and heard these gentlemen speak of their wartime experiences.

Our paved runway system was installed on August 22, 1970. Will we make 30 years at Highway 59? Only time will tell.

1970 saw Cliff Swartz step down as president after serving for 4 years. The membership had climbed to 85 members and R/C modeling was growing very quickly. The April Show & Tell meeting attracted 62 members.

The W.R.C.C. held a Model & Trade Show in April 1972 at River East Arena in East Kildonan. We had upwards of 1000 people attend. Some notable manufacturers in attendance were Bob Elliot of E.K. Logictrol Radios, Texas and Bud Nosen (super scale modeler) of Bud Nosen Models, Minnesota (if you are a long-time R/C'er you will remember them). The first club banquet was held at the Kildonan Canoe Club with over 100 people attending.

124

In 1973 M.A.A.C. held their first combined National Championship in Yorkton, Sask. Many W.R.C.C. members attended and participated in these nationals.

Talks and numerous suggestions continued during 1974 on whether to purchase property for a flying field. Concerns were expressed that the club would not be at the Hwy. 59 site for any length of time. Well, 24 years have passed since those concerns were voiced. Attendance at club meeting continued to be in excess of 50 members on a regular basis.

Things changed very little in 1975, with continued concerns for the use of Hwy. 59 site and ongoing talk of purchasing property. W.R.C.C. became a M.A.A.C. sanctioned club. The annual "Show & Tell" meeting attracted 90 members to view the latest creations of fellow modelers.

1977 and 1978 was a busy time for W.R.C.C., as members planned for and organized the 1978 Canadian Nationals. They were held July 17 - 23, 1978, at the old Netley Airport, north of Winnipeg. Many members volunteered many, many hours of their time in the preparation of staging this event and without their sacrifice of time and energy it would not have been such a success. Jim Corner, who was the M.A.A.C. Zone Director at that time, was the Nationals Chairman, and did a terrific job. Other members who were on the Nationals planning committee were Bob Matthews, Ian MacDougall, Gerry Fingler, Murray Elchitz, Rick Turenne, Dunc McRae, Don Hatch, Bernie Michaleski, Buddy Brownstone and Don Pemberton. As well dozens of W.R.C.C. members volunteered their time and energy prior to and during the week of the Nationals, doing all the things required in hosting an event such as the Nationals.

The Scale World Championships were held in Ottawa in July 1980 and two W.R.C.C. members were on the Canadian Scale Team, Don Hatch in Stand-Off Scale (Cessna Ag-Truck) and Gerry Fingler in FAI Precision Scale (L-19 Bird Dog).

Membership dues were raised for the up-coming 1981 year. Dues had remained stable for many years. In March 1981, the club hosted a day-long modeling seminar covering numerous topics. This was very well attended by the membership.

The W.R.C.C. 1982 Annual September Labour Day week-end contest attracted 28 contestants, not as many as other years which saw 40 plus modelers participating. Discussions were held on the cost of building a club house at the flying field in the fall of 1982. Plans were even published in the newsletter.

In 1983 interest in quarter scale was increasing with a local I.M.A.A. chapter being formed. The Show & Tell meeting attracted 28 aircraft. Runways were resurfaced, 100' extension to the north/south runway added and boothill was paved (ask a long-time member about boothill). We participated in the R.C.A.F. Aircrew Reunion in 1984 with a model display at the Convention Centre. The club also opened the Maple Leaf Airshow in Gimli with a flying demo as well as having a static display. Membership had grown to 120 plus.

The first Scale Masters Qualifying Contest in Canada was hosted in July 1985. Modelers that qualified to participate in the finals in Phoenix, Az., were Bill Gillespie (Edmonton), Gerry Fingler, Blaine Raymond, Don Hatch and Dave Sawatzky (Altona). All except Bill Gillespie travelled to Phoenix in October for the finals. Also that fall the Richot Residents Appreciation Day drew 150+ spectators.

In 1986 the W.R.C.C. Auction drew 160 modelers with almost \$4,000 in sales. The first W.R.C.C. Golf Tournament & Dinner was held in August at the Transcona Golf Club and the temperature was 95F+!!!

On Jan. 1, 1987, the Polar Fly attracted over 50 spectators and 15 aircraft. Club membership was over 130 and the annual dinner and dance drew 85 people for a evening of fun and socializing.

The W.R.C.C. celebrated its 25th Year in June 1988 with a planned Fun Fly and banquet. Unfortunately the banquet had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. The city increased the lease term for the Hwy. 59 flying site to a 5 year term, however rumours were already surfacing about the twinning of Hwy. 59 in 1990. Major field work was carried out in May and June of 1991. Complete resurfacing, extension and widening of north/south runway, landscaping, parking lot located closer to pit area, etc., were performed to

16

what is our current set-up. Club members turned up in large numbers (I recall 60 - 70 members over a two day period) to complete the landscaping work.

In 1992 the annual Labour Day Contest was still being held. That year the club participated with a model display at the 402 Air Reserve Squadrons' 60th Anniversary. Our present sun-shelter was built in the spring of 1993. To promote R/C scale modeling, Cellar Dweller Hobby Supply held a Planes of Fame Scale Contest. Over 30 entrants turned up for a great contest. Everyone that came out with their designated model and flew it was a winner. W.R.C.C. was approached by the M.A.A.C. Zone Director to host the Canadian Nationals, but the members felt that not enough support/volunteers could be found to host another Nationals at that time. The Nationals were held in Brandon in 1994 with a number of club members helping the Brandon club host the meet.

In 1994 the W.R.C.C. returned to the Western Canada Aviation Museum in Sept. for its monthly meetings. They had been held at the Orioles Community Club for many prior years. The city again renewed our lease for the Richot Park Flying Field for another 5 years, expiring December 31st, 1998 (coincidence??).

Growing concern in 1995 for the continued use of the Hwy. 59 flying site was voiced by many members. It was confirmed with the highways department that no construction would begin for at least two years. Rumours and speculation continued through 1996. Nothing could be confirmed as to when the club may have to vacate due to highway construction.

The great flood of 1997 found our flying site under 4 to 5 feet of water. This was the first time ever that the field was flooded. Flying did not begin until the end of May. Club representatives met with City of Winnipeg Parks department to discuss relocation of the flying site. This meeting was very positive and several sites were considered. No further developments on twinning Hwy. 59 or developing a new flying location have been received from the city.

This brings us to 1998. With all the concerns over the last 35 years - especially since 1970 when we started using Richot Park as a flying site - about not knowing whether we would be asked to leave - we are still flying at the Hwy. 59 site. My suggestion is enjoy this year, especially with the early spring weather we are getting and do lots of flying. We have been in contact with the Highways Department and they guarantee 99% that we will be able to use our field all year. We have been very fortunate to have had such a great flying field for all these years, and we hope the next one is better and will be in use as long as the Richot Park has been.

Having been a member of W.R.C.C. for so long I have watched hundreds of modelers pass through our club, some have only stayed in the hobby for a year or two while other are still enjoying its many facets. I've had the privilege of meeting many terrific people while enjoying this hobby within the club membership and I've also met many modelers from all over the world through participation in various scale contests over the years. I can honestly say we have, and have had, many great modellers in the Winnipeg Radio Control Club.

If I can get on my soap box for just a few moments, I want to say that a club like the W.R.C.C. does not survive for 35 years without a lot of people doing a great deal of work for all those years. With that thought in mind, all club members need to realize that the same people cannot always do all the work, everyone needs to pitch in and do part of it. So maybe we should all ask ourselves - What can I do for MY club to make it better for everyone and more fun?

Its been a pleasure being a member of the Winnipeg Radio Control Club for 35 years. Happy Anniversary to all of you.

Gerry Fingler

Following is a list of all the W.R.C.C. Presidents for those 35 years:

1963 - 1966	Keith Humphrey	1980	Bob Matthews
1967 - 1970	Cliff Swartz	1981 - 1983*	Rudy Schawurshi
1971 - 1972	Gerry Fingler	1983 - 1985*	Dennis Saydak
1973	Bill Smallwood	1985 - 1987*	Rick Bennett
1974	Karoly Matusik	1987 - 1989*	Don Hatch
1975	Don Hatch	1990 - 1991*	Ernie Richard
1976	Jim Corner	1991 - 1993*	Don Hatch
1977	Mike Broadbent	1993 - 1995*	Dan Sirman
1978	Val Ure	1996 to date	Dick Toews
1979	Gord Sewell		

* Executive terms run September to August