



# Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers

**Chapter 1474**  
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**April 2018**  
**Editor: Alan Fry**



## **Presidents Column: John Backes**

### **2018 Meeting Schedule**

All meetings (except for the Christmas Dinner) in 2018 will be held at the Williamsburg Christian Church on the second Thursday of the month, starting at 7 PM. The next meetings will be April 12 and May 10.

### **CVA Events**

April 14 –CVA Picnic and Air Cover

The Air Cover during the picnic is to simulate the Combat Air Patrols (CAPs) where fighter jets were flown to protect a carrier battle group. They typically have jets in the air 24 hours a day while they are in dangerous areas. For our version, we will try to keep at least one plane in the air at all times from 11:00 to 2:00.

May 19 – I.C.E. Fly

The Internal Combustion Engine (I.C.E.) Fly is for any airplanes with glow, gasoline, or kerosene (gas turbine) engines. We started the Electric Fly when there were only a small number of electric planes. Over the years, the fuel planes are now in the minority so we decided to have an event highlighting them.

### **NMAD**

The National Model Aviation Day (NMAD) has been a great success for the last several years. No one has come forward to run the event. Maybe we can tag team and have a group of several people combine to run the event. Let me know if you are willing to do any of the steps below.

The steps are:

- 1) Do some advertising.
- 2) Inventory supplies (plates, bowls, etc.) that are available in the storage container.
- 3) Buy the food, drinks, ice and supplies.
- 4) Volunteer to cook.
- 5) Organize the flying during the event
- 5) Manage the leftovers.
- 6) Clean up after the event.
- 7) Empty the trash cans.

### **History of the club**

At the February meeting there were questions about the history of the club. Carl Purgold wrote a document documenting the early history of the club and it was included at the end of the March newsletter. Since then, Carl

provided a more complete history of the club that included pictures. That version is included in this newsletter. If you would like a digital copy, please send me an email.

### **Show and Tell**

I would like to have the Show and Tell be a major part of each meeting. Please spend some time thinking of what you might present. There is a TV that we can use for showing videos.

### **Contact Me**

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Email: [jb753@cox.net](mailto:jb753@cox.net)

Address: 8630 Diascund Road, Lanexa, Va. 23089



### **Secretary's Report: Fred Hill**

#### **CVA Meeting Minutes March 8, 2018**

The March 8, 2018 meeting, was held at the Williamsburg Christian Church, was called to order by the President at 7pm, 11 members were present. The President announced the minutes of the February meeting were published in the corresponding newsletter. A motion was made to approve the minutes as published. The motion was seconded, a vote taken and approved unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Jon Person reviewed the financial status of the regular and mower budget. There were 2 membership renewals. The following bills were paid: porta potty and sanction fees for an event.

There was a donation of a Thunder Power Low Wing STICK ARC by a drone pilot. The plane will be auctioned off through the club website before the next meeting. John Backes will send pictures and an announcement as to how the auction will be conducted.

Jon Persons has set up a PayPal account. This will enable us to set up a link with Heads Up RC. This will allow any orders with Heads Up RC made by clicking through our web site will result in some income for the club.

### **Site Improvements**

Bill Talbot made the following report regarding the air field:

1. The wind propeller has been fixed.
2. The mowers have been checked and are ready for the season. Volunteers are needed to help cut the grass during the year. It takes two people about 2.5 hours to cut the runway and field. Usually the field is cut on Friday but during the heavy growing season it may need to be cut twice a week. Contact Bill and he can show you how to operate the mowers and how to cut the fields.
3. The flight boxes are in need of repair and or replacement. The decision was made to pick a date and have a group of volunteers get together and repair and replace the current flight boxes.

### **Activities**

1. April 7 - Hanover RC club is having a swap meet and fun fly.
2. April 14 - Alan Fry is coordinating the Spring Picnic and Air Cover event on April 14th. This is schedule to be a 3-hour event from 11am-2pm.

## **Safety**

Members are reminded that if you see unsafe activity at the field you should speak up and report it. Be sure to introduce yourself to any fliers at the field, both to encourage friendship and comrade and to be sure that they are current members of the club.

## **Old Business**

John Backes and Jon Person will continue to investigate three locations as a possible site for the Christmas party. Mark Motter is up to date on badges for the current year.

An enhanced version of the club history will be put on the web page. This will include pictures.

## **New Business**

No new business

## **Show and Tell**

Bob Juncosa showed his scratch built Cooper bomb drop for his 1/4 scale Pup.

Don Trump mentioned that ZTW Gecko series ESC may require a firmware update.



### **Training: Alan Fry**

#### **Website of the Month**

This month's website of the month has been featured many times before. The company is called "Heads Up RC" and is a popular online hobby shop with many CVA pilots.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT THEIR WEBSITE ADDRESS HAS CHANGED.** Take a moment now to delete any bookmarks or favorites that you may have to Heads Up RC and replace it with the link given below. Further discussion on Heads Up RC new website address can be found below in this month's Training Column.

Here is the link:

<http://www.flycva.com/>

**Do you have a favorite website? If so, let me know and I will put it in the newsletter. Favorite online store, how to build, how to fly, etc.- send me the link! My email address:**

[AlanWFEmail-CVA@yahoo.com](mailto:AlanWFEmail-CVA@yahoo.com)

### **Training Column- Heads Up RC**

Heads Up RC has rolled out what they call an Affiliate Program. The Affiliate Program is a partnership between Heads Up RC and Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers.

#### **How does it work?**

- CVA registers to become a member of the Affiliate Program. (Completed)
- Embed the Heads Up RC banner/ Link on the CVA website. (Completed, see below)



- Encourage your members to shop Heads Up RC by clicking on the Heads Up RC banner/ Link on the CVA website.
- CVA earns 5% of all member sales at Heads Up RC, payable monthly.

See you at the field.

Alan Fry  
Training Coordinator

## **A History of the Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers [CVA]**

(Formerly The Newport News Aero Modelers Association – [NNAMA])

### **- THE BEGINNINGS -**

The Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers (CVA) flying club was formed by a small group of local fliers who originally operated from the Menchville High School parking lot in Newport News, VA. They flew over property located just across the street. There was no formal organization, people would just take off from the school yard, fly across the street to the large cornfield on City Farm property. Eventually, they started receiving complaints from a few people in nearby Denbigh Plantation. Soon the police appeared and flying at Menchville came to an abrupt end. The fliers then moved up to public property owned by the City of Newport News Water Works. This “site” was located across from the Dozier Elementary School on Industrial Park Drive in Newport News, VA. This initial group would soon form what would become the Newport News Aero Modelers Association (NNAMA).

The small “Six” acre Dozier site also served as an overflow parking area for the Newport News City Park during large events, usually on weekends. In order to fly, you had to bring your own lawn mower with you to cut a runway in the tall grass.

Once again, we didn't have “official” permission to fly there, but since it was an open public field on city water shed property, we just moved in! It was then that Jim Merithew organized an effort to petition the city for permission to use the property. The city responded positively. We still didn't have any real organization, people would park along the road, or in the school parking lot, carry their equipment to the field and set up pretty much wherever they wanted, and go fly. We had no formal frequency control setup, everyone there on a given day just coordinated with each other. AMA membership was not required, and not too much thought was given to safety. We were very lucky. We flew for about a year under those conditions until Dave Robelyn came out and started flying with us.

Dave Robelen, was very well known in the modeling world for his small “school-yard” model aircraft designs such as the Pronto, Playmate, and the Parakeet, all sold under the name of “Tidewater Models” (later to become Stream Hobbies) .

Dave started pushing for forming a club, and to have the club be in the Academy of Model Aeronautics. He finally talked enough people into having an organizational meeting and eventually we formed the Newport News Aero Modelers Association (NNAMA). The new flying club required AMA membership to be club member.

While flying at Dozier, we could not restrict anyone else from flying there, since it was city property. They could fly there and not be members of the club, and often did not have AMA insurance. The city would later see the error of their ways and require everyone to have AMA insurance to fly on city property.

Dave became the first President of the NNAMA club and served from 1980 to 1982, and again from 1985 to 1986, but was unable to move with us to the current Charles City sight due to the distance from his home, and other personal commitments.

The second NNAMA President was Owen Perkinson, who served from 1982 to 1984. The third President was Chuck Coulter, who served from 1984 to 1985. During this period, the club conducted fun fly's and some competition-based events. Club dues were \$10 per year from 1981 to 1986, and a



grand battle ensued when it was suggested to raise the dues to the staggering sum of \$15 per year to support more club events!

The hobby was just beginning to flourish into the larger size models. Four-cycle engines, 2.4Ghz radios, ARF's, and many other items we all take for granted today, were only a dream in the early 1980's!

We began to discover that we had frequency problems from folks flying at nearby Fort Eustis. This issue was to expedite our search for a better, safer, flying site.

### **OUR FIRST FLYING SITE ATTEMPT**

The last NNAMA club president was Carl Purgold, who served from 1985 to 1987. It was during this period that the club became interested in finding a private field of its own. The entire 16 members voted to send the club officers on a quest for a potential flying site, and report back. We found a farmer in Gloucester County who agreed to lease the club a 2-acre plot of land in a large field to construct a flying site runway.



Despite much effort in constructing a 250-foot dirt runway, it eventually all ended in disappointment. Not long after club members had completed construction of the runway, the landowner became discouraged about the model flying noise and the effect it was having on his neighbors, particularly on Sunday on a nearby church. So, by previous conditional agreement, we terminated our stay there.

## OUR SECOND ATTEMPT AT A FLYING SITE

That experience, and much wasted effort, led the club president, Carl Purgold, to propose a different approach, that the club make an unprecedented commitment, ie; To have members Pre-Approve an Annual Dues amount of \$100/Yr to pay for a first-class, private flying site of their own. This site was to be much larger than either of our previous sites, and would have no restrictions as to noise, or flying times. It also would be located within a 45 minute drive from our Dozier Elementary School / NN Waterworks flying site! (In 1988, 45 Minutes was the Average AMA Member's driving time to their field.) The proposal was unanimously approved, a shock to everyone. So we were on our way.

In March of 1988, the club placed an advertisement in several local newspapers which read in part: **“Wanted – Model Aircraft Flying Site. 2 Acres with 25 Acre Overflight Privileges. Annual Lease Agreement Preferred”**. We also offered a \$200 finders fee to anyone leading us to a site resulting in a signed lease. As a result of this ad, we received numerous offers, one was from a gun club which was looking for revenue to purchase more buffer land. The site and the offer were not too bad, but the overflight area was rugged cut-over timberland, not very useful for emergency landings.. Eventually, through a 2<sup>nd</sup> party, we were contacted by a former RC modeler and full scale aircraft owner who had several sites for us to consider on his extensive property. The former modeler was our current landlord, John Hofmeyer. Carl Purgold and Eddie Belford drove to the **Tomahund Plantation** in Charles City County to inspect the proposed sites and met with Mr. Hofmeyer. The site the CVA now calls home was actually our second option, the first being considered too small. The site was somewhat wet and not very good for crops due to its low-lying nature, but we loved it!



We made our best offer and before we knew it we had secured what would eventually become one of the best model flying sites in the entire state.

**Now, we had a dream, and a flying site. All we had to do was to build it!**

The low lying terrain would later also become a major problem for the club, but would eventually be remedied with the cooperation of both John Hofmeyer, his Brother Norman, and the Branscome Corporation of Williamsburg.



In 1988, we formed a new club with a new name, The **Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers**, and elected our first CVA club president (Carl Purgold), and installed all the other officers necessary to operate a first class flying club. The NNAMA fliers who came to Charles City that year became the founding members of the Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers. They included, Tex Harrison, Ralph Moscatel, Carl Purgold, Bob Chandler, Eddie Belford, Phil DeCosta, Bill Farmer, David Farmer, Jim Merithew, Bill Heller, Roger Hunt, Jon Persons, John Matherne, Tom Hogg, Julian Harris, Ron Blackburn, John Hodges, Barry Haddix, and Ken Barnette.



The surrounding wild grass was waist high, but great things can come from small beginnings!



To begin flight operations, the club initially cleared and leveled a small area about 300 feet by 25 feet for a runway.



The runway was dirt of course, and clouds of dry soil would sometimes drift back into the pit area after each takeoff. It looked very authentic, but what a mess it made.



We had to park on the road to the rear of the site due to the soft nature of the former cropland. Back then, the road was used for farm traffic, creating even more dust storms...



Rain sometimes left us grounded for as much as a week, until the site dried out. Many attempts were tried to drain the site using hand dug ditches, and filling in the low spots with dirt. But the water just moved to another location!



In those days, the landowner, (Mr. Hofmeyer), often attended our meetings. So when the drainage issue came up, he suggested that maybe he could help us improve the elevation of the site through the donation of some additional topsoil which he would provide at no charge to the club. This would also improve the property for any future use.

The ***no-charge*** nature of the Hofmeyer's assistance to the club was to become legendary. The club could never repay, nor should we ever forget, their generosity.



Prior to accepting the topsoil donation, the club installed hundreds of feet of drain pipe under the site to further address the drainage problem. After that was accomplished, gravel to fill the ditch created by the drainpipe installation, and topsoil to raise the site a foot or more, both hauled into the site by the Branscome Corp thru the auspices of the Hofmeyer's, again at no charge. When the club wanted to extend the original runway by 200 feet to the limits of the site, the same assistance was

offered, unsolicited, by the landowner, only this time Mr. Hofmeyer would also manage to have the Branscome Corporation provide one of their commercial Road Graders to the club for us to use in spreading the topsoil and grading the new runway. The club president Carl Purgold got a crash course in road grader operations.... Now, with some donated seed, we had our Grass Runway!

Occasionally, while fertilizing the surrounding crops, John would make a pass over the site as well, “to help the grass grow”! We explained that making the grass grow better was not a club objective, and although we appreciated the thought, slower growth was much more preferable. When Carl Purgold needed to step down as president for a year, John Hofmeyer became the CVA President from 1990 to 1991.

The Hofmeyer's and their family members were always invited (at no charge of course) to our picnics, Christmas banquet, and all other club social functions. In the early years, John and Norman would routinely stop by the site whenever members were engaged in their flying activities, just to chat, or offer a tour of the Tomahund Plantation.

The club would eventually require a Shelter to serve as the center of club activities. Most of the materials required to build the current shelter, were donated by club members and the Hofmeyers.

Telephone poles were provided and hauled to the site by club member Bill Farmer.

The steel safety fencing was also provided by a club member and hauled to the site from Newport News by, you guessed it, John Hofmeyer.





Shelter materials finally arrive and construction begins.



After a couple of months of work, we had our picnic shelter.

John and Norman also leased some of their property to a local hunt club, whose members seasonally hunted doves in the field several hundred yards out in front of the runway. Members of both clubs were initially concerned about the proximity, but it proved to be a non-problem, and eventually they moved further away.

This is an aerial view of the CVA site in 1995. Photo was taken by Carl Purgold who just happened to be flying by in a UH-1 “Huey” helicopter while on a research flight from NASA Langley Research Center.



Grass cutting has been traditionally performed by volunteer members, many of whom provided their own gas, and in the early days used their own lawn mowers! No other club can boast of this level of member support. Most clubs pay others to cut their site. The club was eventually able to establish a fund for buying suitable club mowers and that effort continues to this day.

Then, in 1997, an event occurred that nearly ended our existence at the Tomahund Plantation. An *uninvited* AMA member from the Richmond area stopped by the site one day. No one was there, so he just began flying! Since no club members were at the field that day, the event would have normally

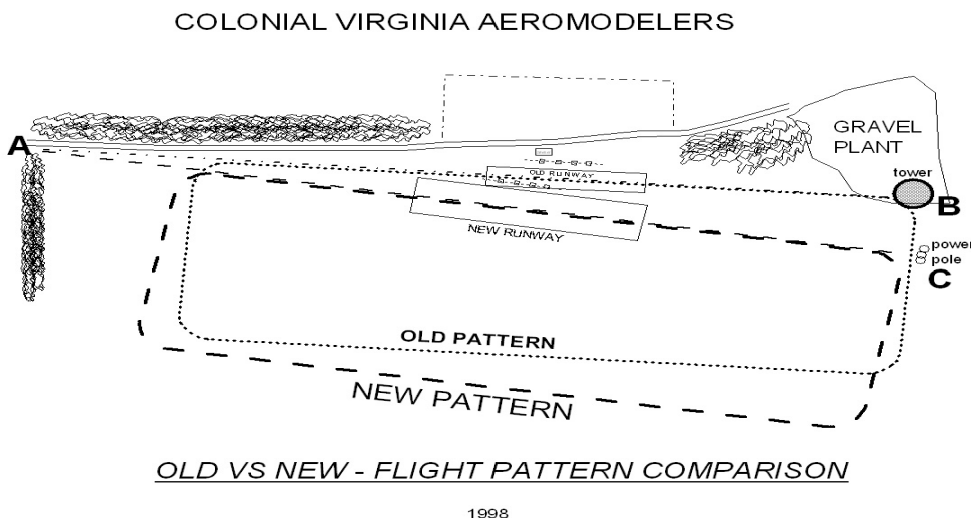
gone unnoticed. However, on this day, the uninvited guest lost control and crashed his aircraft through the window of a truck parked at the nearby gravel weighing facility operated by Branscome Corporation.

No one was injured, but this careless action resulted in a formal request to the Hofmeyers by the Branscome Safety Manager to shut down the model activity near their Route 5 weighing facility for the protection of their workers there.

Mr. Hofmeyer informed the Branscome Safety Officer that the flying club members were also friends of his, and that the company would have to work out some arrangement satisfactory to both the flying club, and the corporation. This would result in a six month effort by club officers, John and Norman Hofmeyer, and the Branscome Corporation, in an attempt to mitigate all of parties safety concerns.

Through many discussions and some on-site demonstration flights, a tentative agreement was eventually reached with the Branscome Corporation.

The Hofmeyer's would lease the club an additional 3 acres and the club would establish a new runway further out into the field with a new flight pattern away from the Branscome facility.



This was the original sketch used in the proposal.



Once we had leased the additional land, we still had the problems of materials, equipment, and costs. It would required hundreds of cubic yards of topsoil, and the ability to move it, before the club could commit to the final agreement with the Branscome Safety Officer. This was nearly an impossible obstacle, given the club's limited resources.

Once again, the landowners came to our rescue, providing not only the required topsoil, but convincing the Branscome Corporation to provide all the hauling, and perform professional grading of our new 750 foot runway, again at no charge. This established a much longer runway and a new flight pattern which is still in use today.

There are many examples of landowner support for our club, but suffice to say that we are a most fortunate flying club to have had such long standing support from the site owners.

The club expanded it's activities during the first decade at the Tomahund Plantation to include such events as the CVA Mall Show, now in it's 18<sup>th</sup> year.



With the help of volunteer members, we added the Spring Picnic, Fall Picnic, Night Fly, Club Auction, The Cub Fly, Giant Scale Fly-in, Duration Challenge, and the Annual Christmas Dinner, just to name a few. The practice of providing complimentary CVA Newsletters to selected former members and some AMA officers was also implemented, spreading the reputation of the club far and wide. We



had new members join us from as far away as Virginia Beach, VA, a nearly two hour drive on some days. It was a great period of trial and experimentation, which saw the club grow into what it is today.

By 1999, the club had expanded to over 80 members including Junior and Full Memberships. The drainage system continues to function after 16+ years in use and the club's reputation for friendliness and as great place to fly, continues in that tradition.

In 1999, after 12 years as CVA President, Carl Purgold asked to step down, and the club elected John Backes to become the second CVA President.



Building on past accomplishments, John Backes picked up the reins of the club and pushed ahead into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Carl

**Vice President: Tom Treese**



**Safety Officer: Cliff Casey**



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