



August 3, 2024

History of the LCRCC Flying Field

As many of us may know, the club began with a simple purpose. To build and fly radio control planes.

From what we can gather from our archives, the club was founded in 1957 and called the Ohming Pidgeons. We think it's a play on words...the HOMING PIDGEONS.

At one point a field was out near Lincoln Highway, close to the Armstrong corporate complex. It is here that radio interference was causing havoc with the pilots. From documents in the archives, we can guess that Armstrong was using a radio frequency to talk to the downtown plant. That radio frequency was causing planes to crash.

So the club began to look for a new field to fly.

On September 19, 1984, the club put forward a proposal to the Lancaster County Parks Board. It seems some land would be available for flying in the Lancaster County Park. The park is off of Duke Street, south of Lancaster. It is home of the famous Rockford Plantation.

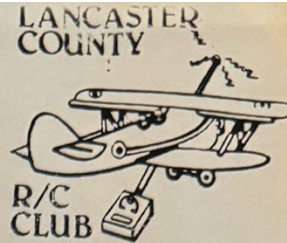
An area of only 450 feet by 150 feet was requested by the club.

That proposal is shown below.

LANCASTER COUNTY R-C CLUB INC.

FOUNDED 1957

AMA CHARTER 556



The Lancaster County Park Board;

On September 19, 1984, the Lancaster County Radio Control Club, Inc. submitted a proposal to you for the purpose of having an area for the flying of radio controlled powered model aircraft.

The requirements listed for your consideration were: Size of the flying field, The requirement of an AMA license and insurance, access to the field itself, a toilet facility, a flat roof shelter, and adequate trash recepticals. Other items discussed were the two suitable site locations, field maintenance and safety.

As a result of recent discussions with our club members and park personnel; we would like to recommend that the maintenance of the flying field be done by park employees. This would ensure that the work would be done to suit the requirements of the park. Uniformity would result. The cost of this extra maintenance would be collected from those who use the facility. It would therefore "pay it own way".

If a yearly membership were sold to those who would like to fly on the field, the cost of maintenance would covered. With only a \$.10.00 per person membership fee; our club members alone would contribute over \$ 500.00 per year to cover expenses.

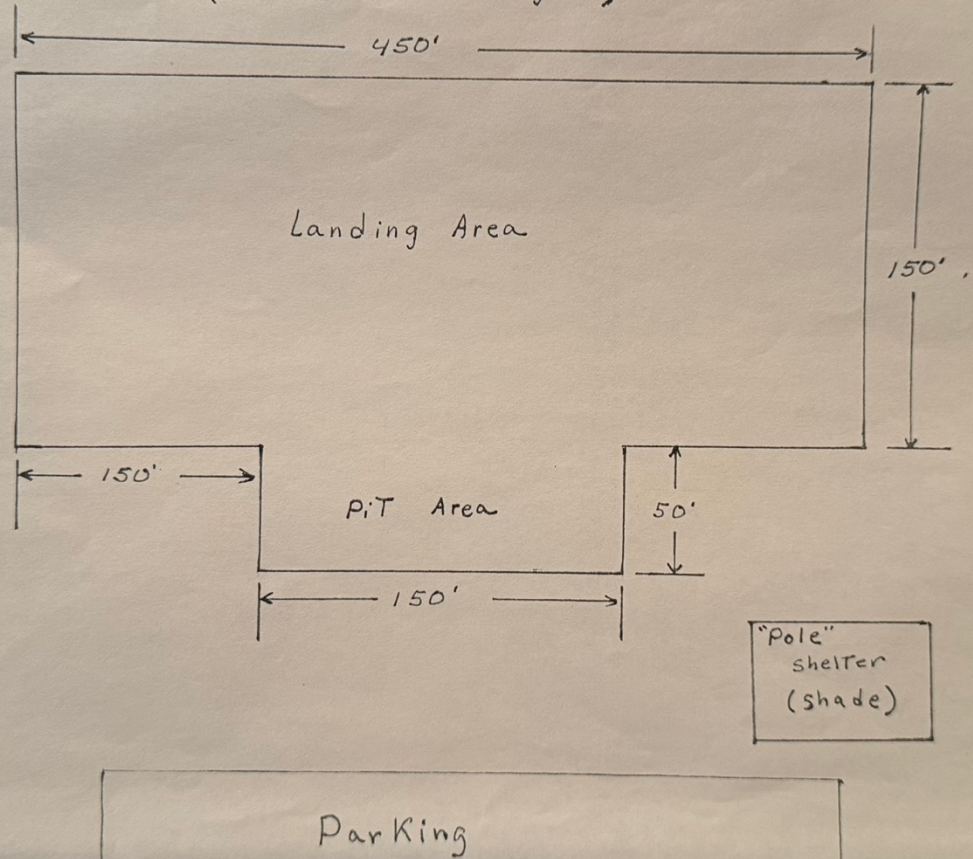
Our club is VERY concerned about not having a SAFE place to fly. If the park were to construct a flying field, all we ask is that we be allowed to call this field our home and with the assistance of the Park Rangers be allowed to enforce all of the safe flying rules that we have been using and those approved by you. Our club members are very safety conscience and have strongly indicated their desire to insure that you would be proud to have us there.

We are looking foward to being an asset to the Lancaster County Park activities. One might think that all we do is eat, sleep, and live for our hobby. Sometimes it appears that way. But we all have families and limiting our children to just that activity will stunt their future growth. The Lancaster County Park would be a very attractive place for my family and friends to come while I fly for a while; then I could enjoy a picnic with them. As I fly, they would be enjoying the other facilities in the park. Where we fly now, an Industrial Park, There are many ducks, pheasants, hawks and many doves. We often see rabbits on the field. Our activities, planes have not bothered them at all. I'm sure this would not be a negative at the Park either.

William Latsha
President LCR/C

Typical R-C Field

(1.8 acres of mowed grass)





I'm sure in 1984, the amount of trees and overgrowth was not as much as today. But still, it was a rather small piece of land. And...for the time, mostly control line planes and gas planes were flown. Electric planes didn't even exist yet.

This hobby was important enough to get coverage in the Lancaster Newspaper on October 18, 1984.

Model Airplane Landing Strip Slated for Park

By Rick Sauder
Intelligencer Journal Staff

A landing strip for radio-controlled model airplanes was approved in a close vote by the Lancaster County Park Board on Wednesday.

By a narrow 4-3 majority, the board agreed to build a 1.8-acre landing and takeoff field for the airplanes on a part of Central Park known as the exhibit farm.

The cost of clearing, grading and planting grass on the farm field will be about \$1,000, according to Edward L. Schwar Jr., executive director of county parks.

Schwar said the \$1,000 estimate did not include the wages of county personnel doing the work, or the cost of using county equipment.

A model airplane flying area for the park was promoted by the Lancaster County Radio Control Club, a group of 65 hobbyists licensed for sport flying by the Academy of Model Aeronautics.

Although regulations and restrictions for use of the flying area have not yet been established, park directors said they will require that all fliers be licensed by the AMA. They would not, however, have to be members of the local club.

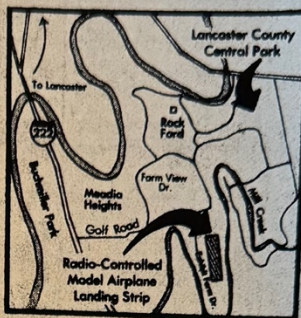
Board members explained that AMA-licensed fliers are insured against accidents that cause property damage.

There was some park board opposition to the proposal. James McMullin said he did not consider model airplane flying an appropriate park activity.

"I'm not concerned about liability, noise or even licensing. I just question if this is a proper park event," said McMullin.

Another park director, Calvin L. Duncan, was concerned that people who object to model airplane flying had not been given enough time to register complaints with the board. He therefore abstained from voting.

Voting in favor of the model airplane area were William K.



Ebel Jr., David M. Huber Jr., Clayton B. Shenk, and Gerald R. Fox. Voting against it were R. Jeanne Sonntag, Rosalyn Ward and McMullin.

The county's RC club approached the park board for a flying area because their present field, located in the Sycamore Industrial Park, is surrounded by construction and rapidly becoming inadequate.

The exhibit farm site, located in the southwest corner of Central Park, was considered an appropriate area for the field because it is free of obstructions, such as telephone wires and electrical lines, and already has an access road.

Park board members pointed out that a new contract would have to be worked out with the farmer who rents the farm field for growing alfalfa and corn. The model airplane strip will take up only a small part of the field.

Jack Sonneborn, a representative of the RC club, said that normally about six members use the present flying area during weekdays and usually no more than 12 to 15 show up on weekends.

During sanctioned competitions, of which several are held each year, Sonneborn said the club would ask to reserve the new

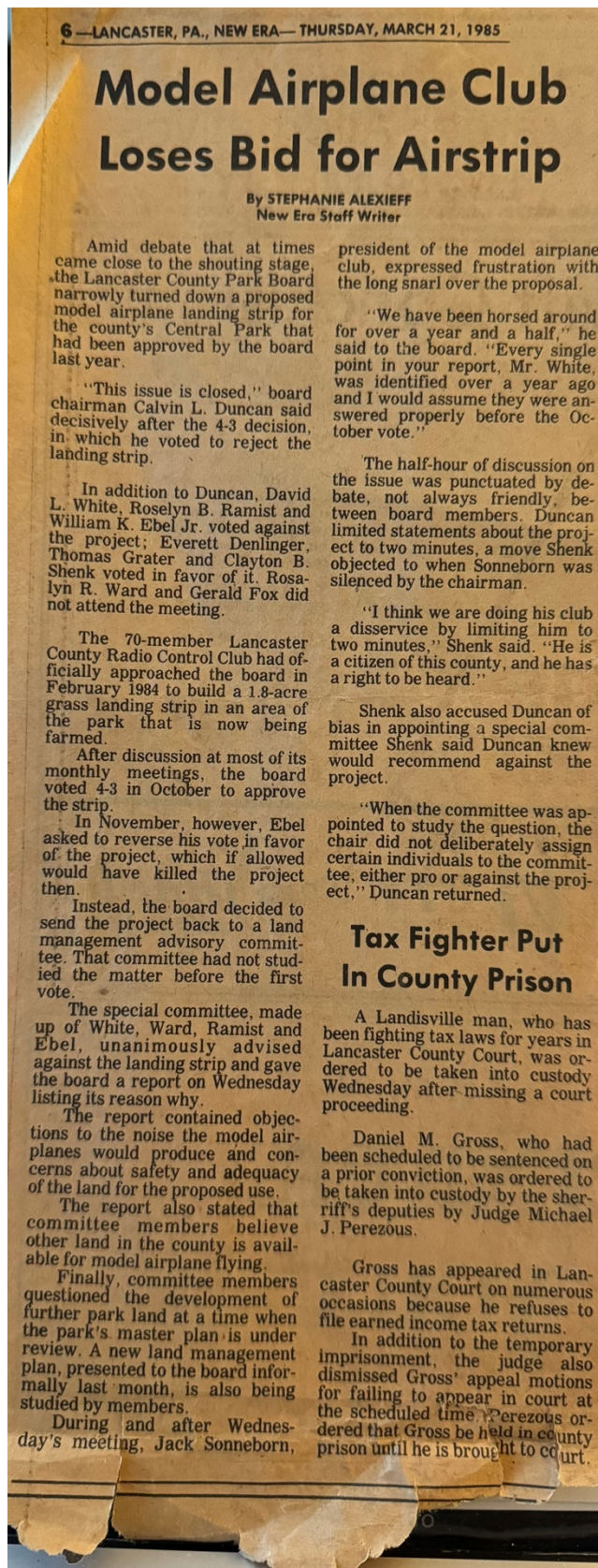
County Park To Get Model Plane Strip

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area.

The airplanes being flown are mostly between 48 and 64 inches in wingspan and run on a fuel mixture of alcohol, castor oil and nitro-methane, Sonneborn said.

On March 21, 1985 a final vote was to happen for the approval of the flying field. It seemed to be a 'done deal', except a board member changed his mind. The newspaper article describes the 'heated' discussions that occurred.



On June 20, 1985 club members found the 'unfinished legislative route 1124' in Lancaster County. We now affectionally know it as 'The Goat Path', since the local Amish farmers allowed their goats and cows to graze on portions of the unfinished roadway.

On November 15, 1985, an agreement between the LCRCC and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was signed.

That summer on June 24, 1985 the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal did a story on our new home.

The club has made many improvements over the years, filling in swails, adding top soil, adding a clubhouse with solar panels for charging. Shaded areas for the pits, a refrigerator, port-a-potty and even our own garage for our mower and maintenance equipment. We were fortunate to receive a professional security camera that allows members to look at the field, see who is there and view the conditions on the field.

And as a famous radio personality, Paul Harvey used to say at the end of his broadcasts, "Now you know the REST of the story".

I wonder what the original club members would think of all we have done to continue enjoying the hobby we love. That little piece of land in the Lancaster County Park would never have been able to provide the area we need for our EDF jets, drones, helicopters and even turbine models !!

I can only imagine what the club will look like in 50 years from now, and what those members will be flying !

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Martorana', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Martorana
Director of Communications



Intelligencer Journal photos by Dan Marschke

Lee Shaeffer hand launches his "Wildcard" radio-controlled sport plane on the unfinished Route 23 "goat path," which has been converted to an airstrip for model planes. Test pilot, Bill Kametz, in background, mans the controls.

Route 23 Goat Path Becomes Landing Strip For Modelers

By Paul Bomberger
Intelligencer Journal Staff

The unfinished stretch of Route 23 — known as the "goat path" and destined to be an expressway some day — is now the landing strip for radio-controlled airplanes.

The Lancaster County Radio Control Club received permission from the State Department of Transportation to lease a section of the unfinished Route 23 expressway off Hartman Station Road in Upper Leacock Township, for its new airstrip, April 11.

This came just one month after the Lancaster County Park Board voted 4-3 to reject a proposed airstrip for the county's Central Park.

Ironically, Transportation Secretary Thomas E. Larson in January said that building a combined Route 23/30 — the number one item on Lancaster County's highway wish list — would be "kind of like flying backwards to the moon in a Piper Cub."

Weather permitting, many of the approximately 75 members of the model club will spend the summer evenings flying their radio-controlled planes on the goat path.

"It's interesting to fly and do new things with your plane as you improve," according to John F. Stone, of Columbia. Stone began flying due to the persistence of his son, John P. Stone, who at 10-years old is the youngest club member.

For about \$200 dollars, one can purchase a radio, engine, and plane to get started.

Each club flyer must be licensed and insured by the the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA).

"With the assistance of a test pilot, after about two-hours of flying time you can take-off and land your plane," says the elder Stone. "In two or three years you can become a proficient flyer and learn to do aerobatics with your plane."

Wayne Cramer, 58, of Lancaster, has been with the club since its origin in 1957. "I just like building the planes myself and then delving the elements."

In his flying career Cramer has gone through 25-30 planes, constructed primarily with balsa and plywood. "I've been lucky and haven't crashed too many



Two Lancaster Radio Club members are seen tracking their remote control plane.

planes over the years," he said.

The state-approved shed, which the club erected on the land, houses a lawn mower and other equipment needed to maintain the grassy field, which covers the would-be highway. A local Amishman voluntarily repairs the lawn mower when problems arise.

The lease on the land is for an indefinite time period. However, when and if construction of the new Route 23 expressway restarts, presumably the radio club will have to search for another airstrip.

"We intend to remain here as long as we can," said Bill Kametz, club treasurer.

Other radio club officers include, Jack Sonneborn, president; William Latsha, vice-president, and Jim Cox, secretary.

