

# Clarksburg Model Aviation Club one of the nation's oldest

by Kim Mines  
*CORRESPONDENT*

CLARKSBURG — For about 30 years, members of the Clarksburg Model Aviation Club have been meeting at Sand Hill on Clarksburg Country Club Road to fly radio controlled-planes. On Sunday, the club planned to officially dedicate the area as "Don Harold Field."

"The field belongs to the Harold family. They've been really good to us," said club member Randy Childers.

The Clarksburg club, founded in 1930, is one of the oldest in the nation, Childers said. Presently, the club has 45 members, from age 14 to 70.

"They come from all walks of life and from all over," said Childers. "We have members from Masontown, Belington and Glenville."

There are 18 model aviation clubs in West Virginia.

Radio-controlled plane enthusiasts fly a variety of planes, from the small indoor park flyer to the Behemoth, which can weigh up to 50 pounds.

The Clarksburg club partic-

ipates in programs with county schools and with the community. Club members have done projects with the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, and have presented educational programs in almost all of the area schools.

"We have flown planes in the gyms of most of the junior high schools. We give them hands-on flying experience and teach aviation components," Childers said.

Although it has received grants from various agencies and assistance from organizations like D.A.R.E., the club is mostly self-funded.



# CLUB

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One of the club members' school programs, project Get Sky High, has been around for many years. Like D.A.R.E., the Sky High program gives kids a fun and healthy alternative to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

"The Academy of Model Aeronautics was started by Carl Hopkins during the Depression Era to keep kids occupied and out of trouble," said Childers.

The academy is now an international club. Many members of the Clarksburg club are also members of the academy, Childers said.

Dues for the Clarksburg Model Aviation Club are \$50 a year. Most of the money is spent on upkeep of the field and to help defray flying costs, Childers said. He recommends joining the academy, also. Dues for the academy are \$48 a year, which includes liability insurance, a newsletter and membership to an international club.

Radio-controlled planes can be purchased at local hobby shops, Childers said. A basic trainer plane ready to fly can be purchased for about \$450, Childers said. Planes can also be custom-built. The Clarksburg Model Aviation Club

holds lessons every Thursday from 5 p.m. until dark.

Melvin Nicholson of Bridgeport has been an instructor for the past 30 years.

"He's the grand old man of the club," said Childers. "He taught me how to fly radio control planes back in 1973."

"The club started as a VFW club, and we changed it later to the Clarksburg Club," said Nicholson.

He said he joined the club many years ago.

"I just liked airplanes and we lived close to an airport," he said.