



# Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers

**Chapter 1474**  
**Newsletter Volume XXIII • Issue 09**

**October 2023**  
**Editor: Alan Fry**



## **Presidents Column: Randy Rogers**

### **Up Coming Meeting Schedule:**

Saturday Oct 14 @ 1:00 PM- Rain date Sunday Oct 15

Saturday Nov 11 @ 1:00 PM- Rain date Sunday Nov 12

December Meeting - No meeting in December.

January meeting - Monday January 1st, 2024, at 1:00 pm for our Traditional NEW YEARS Day fly. Cancelled only if it is unsafe to drive.

## **Activities**

The fall picnic will be held at 12:00pm and the November meeting at 1:00pm on Nov.11, 2023. Rain date will be Sunday Nov. 12

## **Events**

All the events for the rest of the season (except our fall picnic) have been suspended until our special use permit is reinstated.

## **Training Coordinator**

We need a volunteer to fill the role of Training Coordinator for CVA. See me if you are interested in the position.

## **Show and Tell**

Let's keep bringing items for show and tell.

## **Club History**

The following article was written by former CVA president Carl Purgold. I encourage all CVA members take the time to read the article and learn about the early history of CVA.

**Editor's note:** I too highly recommend that all CVA club members read the following article. I found it to be very interesting, but more importantly it contains information about the club that every member should be aware of.

# The Early History of the Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers [CVA]

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

## - THE BEGINNINGS -

*- by Carl Purgold -*

The Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers (CVA) flying club was formed by a small group of local R/C fliers who originally operated out of 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 N.N. City Farm property. Eventually, they started receiving noise 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). (Their Spelling)

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 would just coordinate flying 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, 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 register the club with 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 expand into much larger size models. Four-cycle engines, 2.4Ghz radios, ARF's, ARC'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 and larger models expedited 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 finder’s 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 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 landowners, John Hofmeyer and 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, Randy Rogers, 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 in the Spring and Summer was knee high, but great things can come from small beginnings!



To begin flight operations, the club initially cleared and leveled by hand, a small area about 300 feet by 25 feet to serve as 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. John 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 can never repay, nor will 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 took a crash course in road grader operation.... Then, with some donated seed, we had finally had our long awaited 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 Interim CVA President from 1990 to 1991.*

The Hofmeyer 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 provided by a club member. It was hauled to the site from Newport News by,,,,,, John Hofmeyer.



Shelter materials finally arrive and construction begins.



After a couple of months of work, we had our picnic shelter.  
Here, Carl Purgold and Julian Harris do the post leveling work.

John and Norman Hofmeyer 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 nearby 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 is still applied today.

- Trouble in River City -

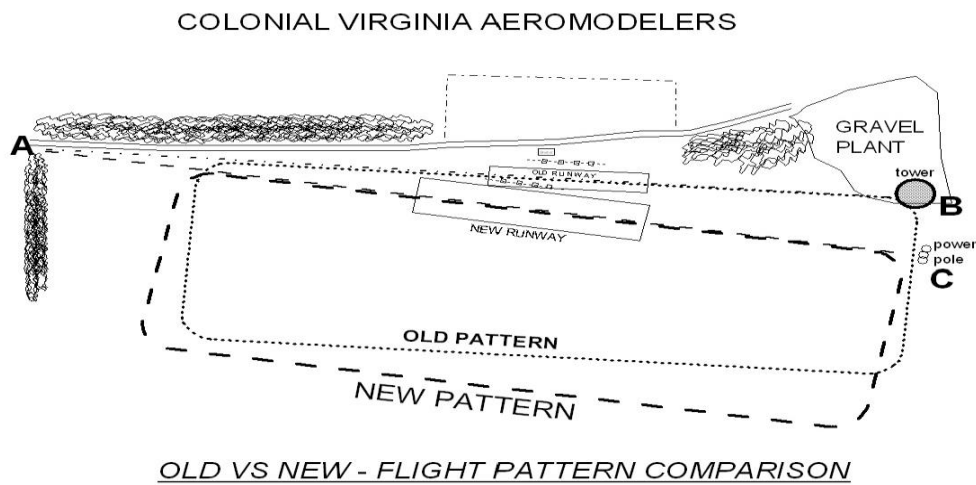
In 1997, an event occurred that nearly ended our existence at the Tomahund Plantation. An uninvited AMA member from the Richmond area stopped by the site one day. No one was there, so he just began flying! Since no club members were at the field that day, the event would have normally gone unnoticed. However, on this day, the uninvited guest lost control and crashed his aircraft through the window of a new truck parked at the nearby gravel weighing facility operated by the 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 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 the parties safety concerns.

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

The Hofmeyer's would lease the club an additional 3 acres and the CVA would establish a new flight pattern and a New Runway, with its centerline pointing well away from the Branscome facility.



1998

This was the original non-scale sketch used in the proposal.

Once we had leased the additional land, we still had the problems of materials, equipment, and costs. It would require 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, our landowners came to our rescue, providing not only the required topsoil, but convincing the Branscome Corporation to provide all the hauling and to 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 its activities during the first decade at the Tomahund Plantation to include such events as the CVA Mall Show, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year. (1999).



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 and become 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 retired from his position at the NASA Langley Research Center and asked to step down as CVA president to travel, play some golf, and take a break from the hobby he had enjoyed for 45 years.

The CVA Membership Unanimously elected **John Backes** to become the second President of the *Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers*.



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

*It has been a great ride, honor and privilege, to be a part of the Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers, and I will always remember the good Friends, the challenges, and all that came my way as your President.*

*My Sincere Gratitude and Thanks for your Patience.*

**Contact Me**

Randy Rogers

[RRogers72@cox.net](mailto:RRogers72@cox.net)





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

CVA Meeting – September 16, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Randy Rogers. The meeting was held at the Field. A total of 20 members were present. The August 2023 meeting notes were approved.

### **Treasure's Report – Jon Persons**

One new renewal

The following bills were paid:

Tex Harrison \$52.37 for drinks  
Bob Juncosa \$754.24 NAMD event  
Randy Rogers \$74.06 – lawn mower gas, \$85.07 lawn mower blades  
Charles City County \$1450.00 – application for Special Use Permit  
SB Cox \$106.00

The operating fund, Mower Fund totals were reported.

### **Site Improvements – Randy Rogers**

No report

### **Activities**

The activities for the remainder of the year have been postponed.

### **Safety**

No report

### **Training**

No report

### **Old Business**

There was an update on the application for the Special Use permit. The application has been submitted. The Community development committee has approved the application and it is currently in the next step of the process. It is on a thirty-day notice phase. The police and fire departments will be contacted and given a chance to voice their concerns. A letter will be sent to adjoining landowners inviting them to a meeting to be held at the field to voice any concerns to the use of the property.

In the future the club will need to get An Event permit for future events held at the field. We may be able to get a Blank Event Permit that will be good for a year. This will be dealt with in the future once the Special Use Permit is obtained.

## **New Business**

Before the elections were held the following email was read by the club secretary:

Hi Fred,

September 14, 2023

I am currently out of Virginia. In your capacity as Secretary of the Colonial Virginia Aeromodelers AMA Chapter 1474, I am making you my proxy. I ask you to read this statement at the Saturday CVA meeting BEFORE ELECTIONS of OFFICERS. "I am calling a point of order. The CVA Club has not presented a Nomination Committee and has not presented a slate of proposed officers for this election of officers. The parliamentarian of the CVA Aeromodelers Club needs to stop this election for failing to follow established procedures for election of officers. If we do not have a parliamentarian, then the Board needs to stop the elections which are on the agenda for this meeting. The club should form a nominating committee to present a slate of proposed officers with their names and positions. They need to publish this and they need to establish a procedure for absentee voting and proxy ballots before the election is held."

Sincerely,

Ron Jolda

CVA Member at large

There was a general discussion concerning whether proper procedure has been followed or if the election needed to be postponed. It was decided that this member had not been present at any meeting in the recent past that his objection was not pertinent to today's election. There was a vote by the board to hold the election today as scheduled. The vote was 3-1 with the Secretary voting to postpone the election.

There was a general discussion concerning the use of absentee ballots. The board decided that absentee ballots sent by email would be accepted. The vote by the board was 3-0 with the Secretary abstaining. There was a total of 3 absentee ballots were submitted. Their use did not affect the outcome of the election.

The Following people were nominated:

President – Randy Rogers

Vice President – Mark Motter

Secretary – Harold R Francis & Fred Hill

Treasurer – Jon Persons & Bob Juncosa

The results

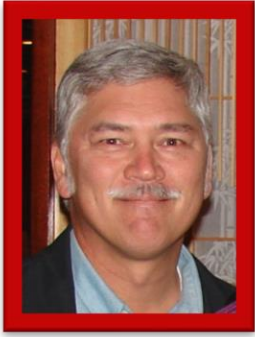
Secretary – Fred Hill 11; Harold R Francis 8

Treasurer – Jon Persons 14; Bob Juncosa 6

## **Show and Tell**

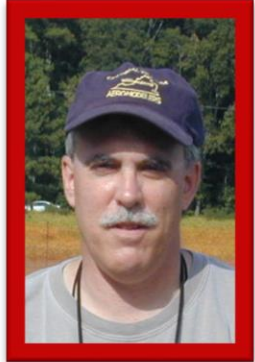
No show and Tell

The meeting was adjourned @ 2:05pm



**Safety Officer: Cliff Casey**

Fly Safe, Be Safe



**Newsletter Editor: Alan Fry**

<p><b><u>President:</u></b> Randy Rogers (757) 784-7181 RRogers72@cox.net</p> <p><b><u>Vice President:</u></b> Mark Motter (757) 876-5507 CVA_Mark@verizon.net</p>	<p><b><u>Secretary:</u></b> Fred Hill (864) 441-1120 fred_hill07@yahoo.com</p> <p><b><u>Treasurer:</u></b> Jon Persons (757) 603-1929 mrpersons@hotmail.com</p>	<p><b><u>Safety Officer:</u></b> Cliff Casey (757) 342-4358 rccasey@verizon.net</p> <p><b><u>Field Marshall:</u></b> John Hofmeyer (804) 829-2555</p>	<p><b><u>Activities:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Field Maintenance:</u></b> Randy Rogers (757) 784-7181 RRogers72@cox.net</p>	<p><b><u>Newsletter</u></b> Alan Fry (757) 229-7698 AlanWF- CVA@Outlook.com</p> <p><b><u>Training:</u></b></p>
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