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Nappanee club is flyin' high

By PHOEBE MUTHART
Staff Writer

It's not as easy as it looks. Flying a radio-controlled airplane is a challenging but fun hobby. Luckily, there is a group in Nappanee that can help with all aspects of flying.

The Nappanee Flying Dutchmen Radio Control Flying Club promotes the building and flying of radio-controlled aircraft. The club was formed in the mid-1980s.

The club field is one-quarter mile north of SR 19 on CR 900 West, south of Nappanee. The airfield has a 600-foot-by-230 feet maintained, paved runway, complete with a landing strip and taxi way. The field has approximately 5 acres of parking, with an open flying area of over 100 acres.

Model aircraft, while appearing toy-like, fly just like full-sized aircraft, and care must be exercised in flying them. In fact, pilots who fly both RC and full-sized aircraft will tell you that the RC planes are more difficult. A pilot in a full-sized plane can usually tell which way the plane is going by feeling it in the "seat

of his pants." Radio-controlled pilots don't have this luxury, and must learn the skills needed to steer an aircraft; they are not sitting in.

"It's a challenge," says Kenny George. "Getting it up is easy but getting it back down is hard."

"It takes a lot of eye-hand coordination," explains Dennis Norkus, who helped start the club that has about 27 members.

Yet, Wayne Johnson said, "It's easier to fly the bigger planes." Johnson also has his private pilot's license.

The flying is not without casualties. Flying is limited to only five or six planes at once. Planes crashing is common even with experience. But those who fly say it's a good stress reliever.

"It's an escape," says Norkus. "It's peaceful and relaxing."

The Flying Dutchmen RC Club has two certified instructors to help the novice pilot. The men, Jon Henske and Bob Breese, will assist in any way, from advice on choosing and building a first plane to teaching how to fly.

All members of the club are also members of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. This is the sanctioning body for the flying



HOW IT FLYS — This radio transmitter is what helps fly a radio-controlled airplane.

By Phoebe Mu-

thart

Diagnosis: Alzheimer's

Elder Law is Alzheimer's Planning

The average survival rate is eight years after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, but some people live many years after diagnosis.



READY TO FLY —

Dennis Norkus gets his radio-controlled Citabria airplane, a scale of a real plane, ready to fly. Norkus is a member and founder of the Nappanee Flying Dutchmen RC Club. (Photo by Phoebe Muthart)

of model aircraft. The academy provides the insurance coverage that is required by all clubs. It also publishes Model Aviation Magazine.

The academy's headquarters is in Muncie. There is a museum as

well as a 600-foot paved runway and gift shop.

Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. During warmer weather, the meetings are at the club field.

When it turns cold or inclement,

meetings are held at the Nappanee Airport. All meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

To become a member of the Flying Dutchmen RC Club and learn to fly, e-mail

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