

**AURORA MODEL AIRCRAFT CLUB
A Brief History**

Revised 12 Jan 05

The club was started in the early 1970's (71?), by Norm Bowen, Dave Ker and Ken Colby. It was strongly influenced & supported by the then new "Aurora Hobbycrafts" hobby shop and its proprietor, Mr. Keith Faulkner

The first club meeting was at the residence of Ken Colby in Aurora. Subsequent meetings were held at Wellington St Public School then at Victoria Hall, a small facility on Mosely Street in Aurora. You could count on most of the 15 or so members to turn out at the meetings.

"AMAC", in the beginning, was primarily a control line and free flight club, however all types of model aircraft activities were both welcomed and encouraged. Flying was done in the parking lot of the plaza located at Yonge St. and Murray Dr. after store hours or when it wasn't too busy. It became apparent that flying there was not a good idea due to traffic & proximity of the general public. Permission was soon granted to fly off the football field at the nearby Dr. G. W. Williams High School. All flying at this site was Control Line. There were obvious disadvantages to this arrangement so the search for a field continued.

Some of the members that flew exclusively control line models were the Bloom brothers Robin and Richard, Norm Bowen and Alan Lord, there were others but names have been forgotten.

Another field was secured behind the Sterling Drug Company, site of the present Canadian Tire Store. Some RC flying was done here. Unfortunately this was just a field, on a hill with the grass uncut and a very nearby forest. Hand launching the plane was the order of the day here. At that time one of the few members to bring a multi Channel RC plane out was Dave Ker. This would be amusing to those who know him as he was well known primarily in the C/L speed circles (pun intended). Radio control continued to grow and by 1975 had become the main activity. The transmitters used then were quite basic compared to the electronic wonders we have today. Some of the manufacturers were Kraft, MRC, and Heathkit.

Permission was obtained to fly off the Cossar farm at Henderson and Seaton Drives, in the south end of Aurora, until the farm was sold. In 1974 a new flying site was secured at Jack Allen's sod farm located on the east side of Woodbine Ave about a kilometer north of Aurora Rd. To fly R/C at this field you needed not only MAAC and Club membership (unless you were a guest) but also a "FIELD PERMIT" which was issued by the club (see attachments). Also required was a Department Of Communications (DOC) license which was needed to legally operate the radio transmitter. Control Line fliers were exempt from requiring the field permit and could also fly from the same sod farm.

Early Fun fly events were sponsored by Keith from the hobby shop complete with Keith on the PA sound system and numerous "door prizes" such as kits, engines, covering & assorted parts. Very large crowds usually came to these fun flys with parking filling the entire area to the east of the house at the Allen sod farm. Members would be "volunteered" to take a shift at parking lot.

Membership cards and field permit (courtesy of Mike Foster) from 1974 and 1975 show Norm Bowen as the club President followed by David Ker in 1976 and Ken Colby in 1977 and 78.

The club received its charter from MAAC on 30 May 1978. The application was signed by Ken Colby, president and Mike Foster, secretary. The original certificate was signed by Warren Hitchcox, MAAC president, and one of the secretaries, Linda McNicol, Brenda Wilson, or Linda Patrick.

The club grew rapidly as the word spread about the terrific flying site and an emphasis on having fun. A supplemental field was "offered" by Mr. Sifton (owner of Buttonville airport). This flying site was located south of Bloomington Sideroad between Leslie and the present 404 highway. It was also his manicured polo field. We flew several times from here but voluntarily gave it up due to fears of plummeting a model through Mrs. Sifton's green house or "interfering" with Dash 7's undergoing short field test on the Sifton's full size runway adjacent to the polo field. However some flying was done on the Sifton Polo Field as entertainment between matches.

In 1985 a club constitution was introduced and a frequency board was put into use.

In 1985 Jack Allen withdrew permission to fly off his field. After considerable negotiation flying was again permitted but with very strict rules and restrictions. In 1986 a second flying site was found at Brown Hill. In 1987 Jack Allen's farm was sold and flying there ended in Nov. 87. Permission was obtained to fly off a Lapani sod farm on Bales Rd, located a few hundred meters east of Woodbine, north of Aurora Rd. Flying continued on the Bales Rd. field. In 1991 a new field was found near Woodbine and Wellington streets on the Calvert farm. This was an excellent field and flying continued there until Mr. Calvert's death in 2000. The club's lease was not renewed for the 2001 season. The club then flew off a Lapani sod farm in Zephyr. This was some distance from Aurora so a search continued for another flying site.

In 2002 the club was incorporated. This was necessary as negotiations were being held with the town of Aurora for permission to use some of their property as a flying field. The town did not want to deal with a group that was not incorporated. Later when the club applied for a Trillum grant the Province would deal only with a group that was incorporated. The incorporated name is "Aurora Model Aircraft Club", the same as the original club.

In 2003 permission was obtained to use the property at 15085 Leslie St. (just south of Wellington) and has a lease for that field from the town. Considerable work was needed to prepare the field and road and so an application was made for a Trillium Grant. This was approved and money was spent to improve the road, the field and the facilities. Formal opening of the field was held on 19 June 2004.

List of past presidents:

<i>1974, 5</i>	<i>Norm Bowen</i>	<i>1998, 9, 00</i>	<i>Al Duguid</i>
<i>1976</i>	<i>David Ker</i>	<i>2001, 2</i>	<i>Bill Henderson</i>
<i>1977, 8</i>	<i>Ken Colby</i>	<i>2003, 4</i>	<i>Frank Panacci</i>
<i>1996, 7</i>	<i>Ian Paisley</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>Murray Berman</i>

My thanks for assistance on preparing this story go out to:

<i>Roy Bourke</i>	<i>Murray Berman</i>
<i>Ken Colby</i>	<i>Bill Henderson</i>
<i>Al Duguid</i>	<i>Linda Patrick (MAAC)</i>

With special thanks to Mike Foster who supplied much of the history and also the attachments.

Cec Wood