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## Remote flying club at AHS

High winds sometimes reduce the wild blue yonder to the four walls and ceiling of the gym at Acton High School, but a little bad weather doesn't ground members of the school's remote control airplane club – they fly in the school instead of on the outdoor playing field behind the school when conditions aren't right.

Run by automotive teacher Mike Zimmerman, members of the remote control airplane club build their own their four-to-eight ounce remote control airplane out of foam and carbon roads and share the hardware that allows their creations to swoop and soar like real planes.



Zimmerman, who has flown remote controlled helicopters as a hobby, said he's always been interested in all types of machines and flying. He has a business that does aerial filming and has worked on several airborne documen-

taries, but prefers to stay on the ground, as he is "scared of heights."

Although Zimmerman has belonged to several remote control flying clubs in the past 16 years, he found the politics of the clubs spoiled the fun of flying.

"I just couldn't handle the politics and I figured if I started up a club with kids, there wouldn't be any politics and we'd have a good time," Zimmerman said, adding two students joined the club last year and this year he has five students.

Plans off Internet  
"We take plans for planes off the Internet and cut them out and I've got a motor, a controller and a transmitter and I teach the kids how to fly," he said, adding it costs about \$25 to build a plane and he fundraised to come up with the \$600 to \$700 for the motors and controller.

"Most of the (male) members are mechanically minded. The type that liked to tinker with their bicycles or cars and enjoy doing something different," Zimmerman said, adding that anyone with reasonably good video game skills can fly a remote control plane, although flying a remote control helicopter is much harder, like balancing a ball bearing on a sheet of plywood, he said, and much

more expensive at between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

The Acton remote control airplane club got some nice publicity recently when a crew from the Outdoor Life Network came to the school to tape a segment for R.C. TV (Remote Control TV) on the club featuring members and Zimmerman showing off their flying skills in the gym. Zimmerman had appeared on one of the first R.C. TV shows about helicopter flying and worked on a commercial for one of the electric helicopters on the market.



Zimmerman said he doesn't "baby sit" club members who learn building skills and how to fly.

"I want them to teach me new things."

The R.C. TV segment on the Outdoor Life Network featuring the Acton club can be viewed on Youtube at Acton High R/C Club.

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