

Model-plane enthusiast to help library mark aviation centennial

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One hundred years ago the Wright brothers proved that man could fly.

Today Jim Overesch, president of the Shawnee Mission Radio Control Club, teaches youngsters how flight is possible.

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' historic flight, the Johnson County Library will sponsor a presentation by Overesch at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 16 at the Oak Park Library, 9500 Bluejacket. During the presentation, Overesch will use some of his model airplanes to illustrate the principles of aviation.

"What I want to do is give the children a rough idea as to how an airplane flies. Most kids see an airplane in the sky and don't know how it stays up there or what keeps it up there," said Overesch, a Lenexa resident. "Hopefully, they'll be able to look at an airplane now and know what makes the thing fly."

The principles of flight are similar for small, model airplanes and large aircraft alike, Overesch said. To achieve flight, both small and large planes must have their combined forces of lift and thrust be greater than their load and drag.

"A model airplane flies exactly the same as a full-scale jet aircraft," he said, "except you're doing it from the ground instead of from a higher elevation."

In addition to explaining how airplanes fly, Overesch plans to discuss the significance of the Wright brothers' achievement.

"One of the things that I've always admired about the early aviation pioneers was that they were putting themselves in a



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Jim Overesch takes model planes, like this one of a RV-4, around the area and makes presentations on the principles of flight. Overesch is also the president of the Shawnee Mission Radio Control Club.

machine and saying, 'In theory, this should work,'" he said. "Before the Wright brothers, nobody had ever made a propeller for airplanes. People had made propellers for ships, but having a huge bronze propeller wasn't going to work. So, they

Celebrate flight

Gardner Library will also host a children's event in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' historic flight. Children of all ages are welcome to decorate their own airplane ornament from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., or from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13 at the library, 137 E. Shawnee St. No registration is required. For more information, call the library, 856-7223.

had to carve one of their own. By today's standards, a propeller that's 85 percent efficient is pretty good, and theirs was 80 percent efficient. They just took a couple of pieces of wood and figured out how much pitch and diameter they should have."

Overesch said his interest in flight started in his youth, when he lived near the Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base in Kansas City, Mo.

"For some reason, I never got into full-scale aviation, but I've always been into models," he said.

Overesch said he hoped his lecture at the library would motivate young children to take an

interest in aviation and perhaps in working with airplane models.

"A lot of people build from scratch where they just get the plans and go from there. Or they make their own plans, and sometimes that works," he said. "It's proof that if you can get enough power, anything will fly."

Models vary significantly, Overesch said. The most basic control-line airplane is connected to its user by a thin, metal wire. More complicated model airplanes can travel as fast as 60 mph, be controlled through Internet technology and even have their own black box, Overesch said.

"Virtually, the sky's the limit with modeling," he said. "You can spend as much or as little as you want to."

For more information about the presentation, call the library at 752-8700.

The Shawnee Mission Radio Control Club, which has more than 100 members, flies its model planes throughout the year at Shawnee Mission Park and meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at the Lenexa Senior Center, 13425 Walnut. For more information about the club, visit the club's Web site, smrcc.tripod.com.