

## **THE BRODAK FLY-IN 1997 – 2019**

### **LARGEST EVENT OF ITS KIND IN THE UNITED STATES**

The Brodak Fly-In, launched in 1997, reflected John Brodak's love of the sport of control-line flying, and his commitment to drawing new enthusiasts to building and flying. His hope, he said before the first Fly-In, was "to host an event where people could get together and have some fun."

John's dream of an event where enthusiasts who build and fly control-line model airplanes could compete in various categories, swap ideas, and get to know one another better started small. The first fly-in lasted three days and drew about 30 people.

The event drew the attention of national magazines devoted to model aviation and, over the years, began to attract builders and flyers from across the United States and Canada. It also drew attention from control-line flyers from as far away as Australia, where editors of a local publication praised the idea and John's efforts to rekindle interest in control-line flying.

As the event grew, the Fly-In hosted fliers from as far away as South America, South Korea, South Africa, and Australia. Attendees at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Fly-In included a camera crew and reporter from the Argentinian television show "The Aeromodelista." The videos of events and interviews were broadcast on a national sports channel in Argentina and were posted on YouTube.

The Brodak Fly-In became the largest event of its kind in the United States, drawing hundred of model-aviation pilots who competed over six days in Carmichaels, PA, on flying fields that John built on property at his home. Events ranged from precision aerobatics and combat to "Ladies and Youth Only" basic flights and "Junkyard Wars, a competition in which a team must build and fly a plane made from scrap.

Events were divided into beginner, intermediate, advanced, and expert classes. The Brodak Fly-In wrapped up each year on Father's Day, an acknowledgement that control-line flying is generally a family affair. Most competitors brought their families, stayed for the entire event, and enjoyed the camaraderie of family-style meals.

During the lifetime of the Brodak Fly-In more than 3,000 pilots completed more than 12,000 flights, not counting practice flights. As a group, contestants logged more than 65,000 miles – or more than twelve roundtrips from New York to Los Angeles. Each year, the Brodak Fly-in became one of the busiest airports in the tri-state area, based on take-offs and landings.

The sound of model-airplane engines was not the only sign that the Brodak Fly-In was taking place. Over the years builders and flyers spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in the local community, and Carmichaels got regional and national attention through advertising and news coverage of the event.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We encourage you to share with us your fondest memories of the Brodak Fly-In. We hope to include them in the materials at the Brodak Museum.