



# The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of NORMAN (NORM) ROSENSTOCK



May 21, 1924 – April 24, 2020 Started modeling in 1932  
AMA #L1670

Written by NR (2000), Updated by NR (08/2010); Transcribed by NR (3/2000); Edited by SS (2002), updated by JS (09/2007, 08/2010, 06/2011, 07/2016, 08/2020, 03/2021), Reformatted by JS (01/2010)

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## Career:

- Modeling for over 78 years.
- First job was cutting balsa for H&F Model Airplane Co.; cut wood for a *Brooklyn Dodger* kit.
- Worked for the Mite Engine Manufacturing Company, Walt Schroeder was my boss; tested and ran more than 4,000 diesel engines.
- Machinist for 30 years.
- Licensed A&P Aircraft Mechanic; worked for Curtiss Wright in the 1950s, building Turbo-Compound Piston & Sapphire Jet engines.
- Taught in Nassau County school system for 12 years.
- 1989: Author of a book, *Tales of an Ancient Modeler*
- 1996-2017: Served as volunteer AMA Historian.

## Honors:

- 1993: Model Aviation Hall of Fame inductee
- 1998: AMA Keeper of the Flame Award
- 2000: Howard McEntee Award
- 2000: Vintage Radio Control Society (VRCS) Hall of Fame inductee
- 2003: Received the AMA Fellowship Award, becoming an AMA Fellow
- 2003: Frank and John Zaic Memorial Award [“John A. Zaic Memorial Award”]
- 2006: VRCS’s Walt Good Lifetime Achievement award [“Dr. Walter Good Technical Achievement award”]



*c. 1932: Norm with a Curtiss Goshawk*

I started building models at the age of eight in 1932. The turn on for me was seeing a model that one of my classmates had built and brought to school for show and tell. I then found that the local candy stores carried the popular 10-cent kits. I started building every kit that I could afford. When I found out that model flying was taking place at Van Courtland Park in the Bronx, New York, I went as often as I could. That was an hour’s ride by subway. I saw my first gas job fly there. I was taken by the adventure of gas power.

I was desperate to have my own engine. In 1938, when I was 14-years-old, I got my first engine. It was a \$10 Brown Jr that just became available. We were still in the Depression and \$10 was hard

to come by. That is when I got my first lesson in economics and the work ethic. My parents had a small shop and I had to work for the business for eight weeks (during the “Season”) to earn that money.

I remember designing and building my first gas model. It had a six-foot wingspan and I don’t remember if it ever flew or what even happened to it.



*c. 1941: First time out flying after cutting off the fingers on my left hand.*

By 1940, my friends and I started a club called Mercury Mites. I became the club president. We were all kids; the average age was 16 or 17. Our sponsor, Mercury Models Company, would rent a truck and take us to Creedmore, Long Island – all of us with our models for a contest or a day flying.

One day a number of my fellow club members came to my house with a request. “Norm, we’re tired of building airplanes that are less than satisfying. You have always designed and built your own models and they fly well. Could you design a model for us, a club design, one that we could all build?”

It was then that I designed a model called the *Mirage*. It was a 72’ wingspan model with a 12 inch cord. The fuselage had a pylon (as was typical in those days, influenced by the *Zipper*) and was powered by a .60-size engine. It was a success. About eight of the club members built them, powered by Brown Juniors, Ohlsson .60s and Super Cykes.

In 1941, I got my first job was in the model airplane industry at age 17. I cut balsa wood for H&F Model Airplane Company. The kit that they were cutting the wood for was for Sal Taibi’s Brooklyn Dodger kit.



*c. 1940: The Mercury Mites, with the Mirage model on the right*

Unfortunately, I also managed to cut off some fingers on my left hand. While I was recuperating from my accident, Tony Cocaro of Mercury Models had bought out the tooling and parts for the Perky engine. So, in 1942, I worked for Mercury Model Airplane Company building Perky engines. I was then 18-years-old and exempt from the Army due to the injury that I suffered.

In order to assemble these “perky” engines, Tony sent me to Nutley, New Jersey, to the Bantam factory, where the shop foreman tried to teach me how to lap cylinders to the pistons. The shop foreman was Walt Schroder.

By 1942, we ran out of machined parts, so Tony set up a machine shop to manufacture the needed components. Due to the War, he could not get any steel for any other purpose than was work, so we went into war production. As a result, I gained a new profession, Machinist, and a deferment from the draft.

By 1943, my hand had healed well enough and the Army, being desperate for men, inducted me into the military despite my disability, and I spent three years in military service. I became the company armorer (weapons repair.)

Then, in 1944, I was shipped to Fort Lewis Washington. Seattle was about a half an hour ride from the base. I made contact with members of the Seattle Guideliners. I spent a year in Seattle, building and flying Control Line with them.

There I met Francis Reynolds. I used to hitchhike into town every weekend, and spent the weekend as a houseguest of one of the club members of the Guideliners, Jack Shinn. I made many friends there and have recently reestablished contact with some of those great guys.

About ten years ago, Francis Reynolds started writing a technical column in *Model Builder* magazine, so I reestablished contact with him. I placed an application in his name for the Model Aviation Hall of Fame and he was inducted in 2001.

By April 1945, I shipped out overseas to Okinawa. On my return, I was discharged from the Army in Fort Dix, New Jersey, on St. Patrick's Day in 1946. Within one week, I had built a new model and was out flying, trying to re-contact my circle of modeling friends and catch up with all of the modeling that I had missed.

I started flying U Control Speed and entered all of the local contests like the Mirror meets. The Mirror was a Brooklyn, New York newspaper and meet sponsor. During my Speed flying days, I met up with the famous Bill Seidler. We became fast friends.

I started my work for the Mite Engine Manufacturing Company. My Speed flying buddy, Bill Seidler, was a good friend of Walt Schroder who was running the shop, and had got a job with this company. He then suggested me as an employee. They produced .09 model diesels. I worked for Mite for over a year and did all of the engine testing and diagnostics, running and testing about 4000 engines.

Between the time I spent on engine testing, plus the time on the *Endurance* model (for five



***c. 1947: New York Mirror Meet.  
My U-Control Speed entry, a  
McCoy .60-powered speed biplane  
named the Black Bagel.***

years) and the subsequent six years of flying diesels in the S.A.M. Texaco events, I estimate that I had accumulated 2550 hours of diesel engine operations to date (as of 2004.)

When Ray Arden made the glow plug a commercial success, the future of the diesel was doomed. Mite closed their doors shortly afterwards.

In 1946, I met Leon Shulman. He was starting his business then, producing the Drone Diesel. We have been good friends now for 64 years (as of 2010.)

In 1948-1949, I enrolled in the Roosevelt Aviation School. After 20 months of study, I earned my FAA (then CAA) Aircraft and Engine License. I got a job at a local seaplane base as a licensed aircraft mechanic. My first job in aviation paid me \$25 a week, plus one hour of flight instruction a week. That lasted about eight months and then I was once again looking for a job.



After a day chasing down jobs, I ended up hanging out at the local hobby shop called Tambe in downtown Brooklyn. I was offered a job at the hobby shop, and I worked there for almost 2 years as salesman and then manager.

Up until then I had been building and flying U Control Speed, flying in every contest I could get to, but I had started to tire of this rat race. It was during this time that I started in Radio Control. I built eight Radio Control models that year and made some interesting developments in Radio Control during that year and a half. Many of my customers of those *Tambe* days are still good friends. That is over sixty years ago (as of 2010.)



- I designed the Electron Radio Control model. It included a new method of receiver mounting using foam rubber. Previous to this, all receivers were mounted with rubber bands. The article was published in the December 1950 issue of *Flying Models* magazine, their first Radio Control article ever published by them I believe.
- I designed what I believe to be the first handheld, self-contained transmitter. It was published in the July 1951 *Model Airplane News*. In this article, I also show the use once again of foam rubber for mounting the receiver instead of the rubber band suspension system that was popular then.
- I also used the handheld transmitter to compete in Radio Control at the 1950 Dallas Nats, where I met Jim Walker. I made many new Radio Control friends there. See article in the November 2000 issue of *S&E Modeler*, titled "The Ol' Transmitter."

After returning from the 1950 Nats, I returned to flying at Curtiss Field on Long Island. It was also about that time I joined the Brooklyn Skyscrapers. That is where I met Bill Winter. My closest friends at that time were Bill Winter, Phil Greenberg, and Ed Mahler.

Ed Mahler used to work for me part time, in the hobby shop. He went into full scale aerobatics and died in a crash in 1976. Bill Winter and I had been close friends for almost 50 years until he passed in 1998. My buddy Phil Greenberg passed away in 2009.

In 1951-1954, I finally got my opportunity to use my A&E license (called A&P today.) I got a job working for Curtiss-Wright in New Jersey, building the Turbo-compound 18-cylinder radial piston engines used to power TWA's *Constellation* airliner. Later, I was moved into their new production line of their own Sapphire Jet engine assembly.

Somehow, through all of this, I managed to find my wife, Bella, and we were married on July 26, 1953 and raised two children. It has been 57 years now (as of 2010). In 1956, we moved to Wantagh, Long Island, New York. Bill Winter lived in the next town. He and his wife Sylvia were frequent visitors to our home, especially on Saturday nights when they would come over to our house for coffee and conversation.

Then in 1956, I became a charter member of the Long Island Drones Society (LIDS). The club was successful in promoting the use of Mitchell Field for model flying; it was decided to hold a very large meet there to impress the county officials.

We knew that the county had plans to develop Mitchell Field into an industrial park, and that our days of flying there were limited. We felt that all of this activity in our annual meets would get the attention of the county officials. We advertised in the local papers inviting local people to come and witness this grand event. Sometimes as many as 1,000 locals came to see our meets.



**1960: (l-r) Jimmy Tantillo, Bill Winter, me, and Phil Greenberg at the then-active Mitchell Field.**

The effort was successful. Cedar Creek Park was under construction at the time, and a beautiful flying site was established. I visited that flying site recently in 2009, and 45 years later it was a pleasure to see this site still in use by the local clubs and flourishing.

In planning their first meet, it was decided to have as much media coverage as possible. I became the club's photographer. Because I was on speaking terms with many of the magazine editors (Bill Winter, Walt Schroder, Don McGovern, etc.) I was able to get many of our contest photos published, thereby improving the image of the LIDS. I still have

about a thousand pictures of those days.

This practice of meet coverage was not something that the magazines did in those days, but after a few years of accepting my photos, it piqued the magazines' interest and the magazines started sending their own people to our annual meets to get their own coverage.

I was vice president of the LIDS for two terms, president for two terms (1964-1965) and a member for 30 years (1956-1986). That was when I left Long Island for Florida.

In 1956, Bill Winter and I attempted to try to set an FAI Radio Control endurance record, resulting in a series of articles in *Model Airplane News* called "Dawn to Dusk" by those involved: Bill Winter, Pete Chinn, Ed Lorenze, and myself.

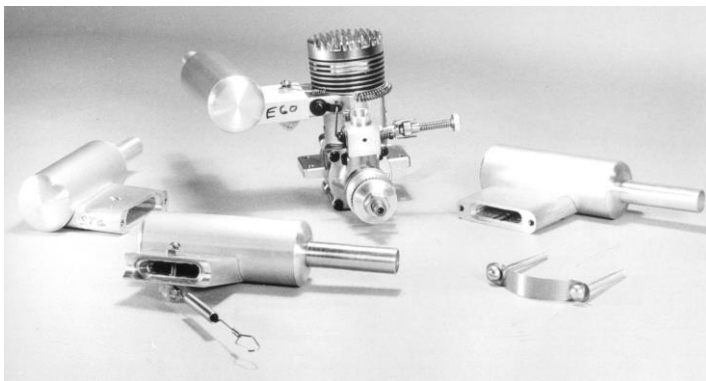
The record at that time was 3 ½ hours set by Ken Willard. We were attempting to set a record of 12 hours, with escapements and a super-regen receiver.

Bill and I had at least five official attempts and built four different models, and after five years on this endeavor, came close by had to quit as we ran out of time and money. Those five years cemented a friendship with this extraordinary man. These articles became the reference for other duration attempts that followed.

After five years, four airplanes and many attempts, the project was abandoned. Total flight time and testing amounted to 400 hours using a half a dozen different engines and four different radio systems. We were too ambitious (12 hours or bust) too soon. The technology was not there yet. We had started with escapements!

In 1965-1966, I designed a Radio Control model called *The Wild One*. It was published in the September/October issue of *Grid Leaks* (p. 14), an *Ace R/C* magazine. It was a low-wing Enya 60-powered model employing the then-popular reed-type equipment.

We were having a noise problem at Mitchell Field. If this were to continue, we could lose the field. There were no mufflers available in this country at that time, so the club members resorted to buying imports. One day at the flying field one of the club members showed me a muffler that he had bought from England. It was falling apart, mostly due to a poor design.



This modeler said to me, "Norm, you're a machinist, look at this lousy muffler, couldn't you build a better one than this?" I took the muffler home and examined it. The next day during my lunch break, I fashioned a new muffler. After he flew with that muffler for two weeks, I had to suffer the compliments that he and others

bestowed on me, and shortly after, I had a dozen guys asking me to make them a muffler. I manufactured the model muffler in 1964 to 1970.

I designed and produced the first American-made model engine muffler, under the name of B&N Model Accessory Company. I produced and sold more than 5,000 muffler units.

My life took a new turn in 1970 when I entered the teaching profession. This required my going back to school to earn my degree. This was very hard on my modeling. I attempted to use my background in modeling in my teaching. I was to some degree successful in my efforts to teach modeling. The problem was that school administrators were not modelers and were not supportive.

I did have enough time, though, to do a few projects. One was the design and development of a series of 1/8-inch Scale Radio Control racecars for a company called MCE. In 1970, at the request of the company owner, I designed three 1/8" Scale Radio Control racecar chassis.

I was team manager of the five drivers at the 1970 ROAR Nationals in Virginia. Due to the method by which the cars are raced, we often found our five team drivers competing against on another. This was brought about by the fixed channel frequency assignments of each car.



So, in that year, I came up with the idea of each team transmitter having a channel switching setup so that they could utilize any of the five frequencies in the 27 MHz Radio Control band. I designed what I believe to be the first Multi-RF channel modification of the transmitter, so that team members would not be racing against each other.

The manufacturer was very pleased with the results and the new cars went into production. However, about a year later they ceased production when the company closed its doors.

In 1971, I built a .60-powered helicopter. It was difficult learning to fly in those days, as we had no stabilizing gyros. In 1972, the LIDS ran their annual meet on the old runways at Mitchell Field. I asked our contest director, Tommy Feico, to run a helicopter event. He declined, saying that he knew nothing about helicopters. If I wanted a helicopter event, I could run the event myself. So, I ran what is probably the first helicopter contest ever run in this country and it was won by Horace G. Hagen. Today, he is chair of the AMA's helicopter contest board.

I designed and published an article for a small .19-powered biplane called *The Wren*. It caught the eye of *Flying Models* editor Don McGovern. It was published in a 1976 issue that magazine. (p.38)

I got interested in giant scale in late 1978. I designed and built the 1/4-scale *Church Midwing*. It was scaled up from the 1/8-scale version kitted by Gene Thomas at that time. The model was published in *Model Aviation* in 1981. (p. 10)

In 1979, I signed a contract with a local hobby shop owner who wanted to get into the kit business. He authorized me to design a 1/4-scale model for kit production. I decided on a quarter-scale model of the Waco HKS-7 cabin biplane, powered by a 3.15 cu in Kawasaki engine. It took the better part of a year to research, design and build this 35-pound airplane and complete the plans.

The Waco was chosen as the first project and this required many returns to the airport. The full-scale prototype for this model was at the Bayport Aerodrome in Bayport, Long Island. I continued hanging out at the local airports looking for the data on a number of other model designs I had planned to build when I found the Waco that I wanted to build there. It belonged to a gentleman named Gus Genoa. With his cooperation, permitting me to photograph and measure his airplane, I was able to create my version.

When the model was completed, I brought it down to the Bayport Aerodrome on Sunday to show it off and hoped to get the approval of the people there. I happened to be the day they were having their monthly full-scale antique aircraft club meeting. I placed the model at the entrance of the hangar, and as the members came in, they saw the model and voiced their approval. I was gratified. Shortly afterwards they invited me to join their club, the Antique Aircraft Club of Greater New York (AACGNY.) I was a member for about ten years until I moved to Florida. Shortly after moving into my new house, I received a beautiful plaque from the members, inscribed as such: "Norm Rosenstock – In recognition of your continued friendship and service to our organization – AACGNY – 1997." It hangs on my wall together with all my awards to this day.

In 1980, I attended and flew the Waco at the Nationals in Ohio. A young fellow named Don Godfrey convinced me to join his new emerging S.I.G. (Special Interest Group) the I.M.A.A. (International Model Aircraft Association). I still hold my membership and my number # 424.



In 1981, I started my plan business, using the *Waco HKS-7* model as a first design. I went on to develop a *Great Lakes Trainer* and *Great Lakes Special*, a *Farman Moustique*. All together, I created seven designs.

In that same year, while attending the



Westchester WRAM Show, I was approached by then-editor of Model Airplane News, Art Schroeder, to write an article on my trailer that I built for transporting my Waco. It was to be in a book published by Air Age Publications called *Giant Steps*.

The article was called How to Build a Big Bird Trailer. The need for the trailer was brought about as I was driving a small sports car, a Datsun 260Z. The car was so small that I could not transport the model internally, hence the trailer. With this trailer, I was able to drive to the 1980 Nats in Dayton, Ohio, where I competed.



It was during one of the AACGNY monthly meetings that I met Joe Kovel. I had heard of Joe and his *K.G.* since I was a kid. But there he sat, big as life. We became fast friends. One day, he told me about his volunteer work in the Nassau County's Aviation Museum located at the old Mitchell Field in the few remaining hangars. He did restoration work for the museum.

In view of my being a member of the club and having an aircraft license, he induced me to join their merry group. I met the museum curator and was welcomed on board as a volunteer.

We helped in the restoration of various ancient aircraft, such as Admiral Byrd's *America*. This was a Fairchild aircraft he used in his Antarctic exploration. Once again, my camera came into play. I did a considerable amount of photography for their archives.

My very good friend Joe Raspante passed away in 1985. I had known Joe for some thirty years. A few years before he died, he told me that he donated his eleven-foot wingspan *Willie III* to the Cradle of Aviation Museum on Long Island. When I asked him why, he responded that when he died, the plane would probably end up in the garbage. At the time, the AMA did not have a museum, so this was his only choice.

While I was a volunteer at the Cradle of Aviation Museum, I confirmed their ownership of the *Willie II*. It was stored in the museum warehouse and I thought it was slowly being destroyed due to neglect. I



***June 1986: At AMA's new Museum in Reston, Virginia the day that Bill Winter and I brought Joe Raspante's Willie III for the collection. (l-r) Me, John Worth, Bill Winter, Frank Tlush, Frank Ehling, Mike Granieri, Hurst Bowers (the first Museum Curator)***

spoke to John Worth at the time, telling him of my concerns about this historic aircraft.

It was then that John told me the AMA Headquarters in Reston, Virginia had started up its first museum, and Hurst Bowers was the curator. With the support of John Worth and the Curator, a letter-writing process was started for loaning the model to the new museum at the AMA.



It took two years before the Cradle of Aviation Museum finally called me to come to their warehouse to pick up the *Willie III*. While waiting for the *Willie III*, I had suggested to Hurst Bowers that he request John Roth's *Volksplane* they had as well. About two weeks after picking up the *Willie III*, I was called to pick up the *Volksplane*.

Then, in June of 1986, I drove 300 miles to Virginia. I stayed at Bill Winter's house that night, and on the following day we brought the two airplanes to the museum. When I arrived at the AMA headquarters, I noted that the new

museum was truly beautiful, but there was no record of the people who designed and built these beautiful planes. I stated then to John Worth that the Museum was great, but without any history they were just beautiful things. I said to John, "You need a historian." He agreed, and his reply was "soon."

[Editor's note: The *Willie III* and the *Volksplane* were loaned to the AMA; the *Willie III* was returned to the Cradle of Aviation Museum; the *Volksplane* was eventually changed from a loan to a donation to the National Model Aviation Museum and is currently in the Museum's collection.]

During the 12 years that I was teaching, I had returned to school to get my required teaching credits. As a result, I graduated from Stony Brook University in Long Island, New York, with my Master's degree in 1982.

Teaching is very stressful so that by 1982, at age 58, I decided to retire, to spend my days building models and designing models for my plan service. This could not last long as I soon decided that I wanted to get a computer. I felt that I could enhance my modeling with the use of a computer. I did not want to dissipate my retirement income, so I did the unforgivable – in 1985, I went back to work. I took a job in my own town as a machine tool inspector for a company called Manhattan Tool Supply. They were a machine shop supply company that imported much of their products that they sold. These imports needed to be inspected for the required quality.

I quickly had the money I needed for the computer, but decided to remain with this job, as for the first time in my life I found a job that was fun! I stayed with this job until I moved to Florida in

1987.

I had written a couple of stories about my modeling past on my new computer. I was showing them off to a few of my contemporaries at the Toledo who when one of the people who read the stories asked if I could write any more. I said "Sure. Why?" It turns out they (Dick Phillips and John deVries) were owners of ViP Publishing. I wrote nineteen stories.

It was on this first computer that I started writing my book, *Tales of an Ancient Modeler*. The book was started in 1986, while still living on Long Island. After we relocated to Royal Palm Beach, Florida the next year, I continued to write it. It was completed in 1989.

When Art Schroeder left *Model Airplane News*, new editor Dan Santich did not have anyone to write the *Giant Steps* column. He asked me to do a couple of articles for him until the job was filled. I was guest columnist for the June and July 1984 issues.

In 1986, I made a trip to Israel and met up with a great bunch of modelers there. I was taken to a local meet and upon returning home wrote an article about my experience there. It was published in the May 1986 issue of *Model Aviation*. (p. 56)

On the passing of Joe Raspante, I decided to write his biography as a tribute to him. It was published in the December 1987 issue of *Model Aviation*. (p. 56) Using the biography as a basis of his accomplishments, I submitted an application for the *Model Aviation Hall of Fame* for him, and he was inducted in 1986.

Having moved to Florida in 1987, I attended the 1988 Nats in Tidewater, Virginia. While there, I met Dave Platt and discovered that he, too, lived in Florida. We got together frequently afterwards to do some model flying. When he moved to Palm Bay, Florida (about 100 miles north of where I live, about 1 ½ hours drive), I used to travel up there about once a month to fly with him.

He was at that time into rubber and 1/2A Texaco. With Dave's encouragement, I tried to get back to rubber-powered models after a fifty-year absence. One of my projects was a Dick Korda rubber model, which flew well. Then a Jabberwocky, and then I took the Korda model plans and enlarged it 1-1/2 times – from a 44-inch span model to a 66-inch model. I tried to power it with rubber, but it was just too hard to get enough turns into its rubber motor. So instead, I tried to power it with a .049 Cox engine converted to CO2. It was fun flying it. I later wrote an article about it in July 1994 issue of *Flying Models*. I found that flying Rubber and Free Flight and the cross-country chase were just too strenuous on this old man (I was 70 then,) so I gave it up and put more time into Radio Control 1/2A Texaco.

With all of the trouble we had with the 1/2A Cox engine, Dave was fed up with the 1/2A Texaco event (what with the SAM rules requiring the use of the Cox engine only), and he indicated that he was going to give up. I liked Dave and did not want to lose my flying buddy, so I came up with the idea of flying an event that would be the same, but different. I suggested that we double

the size of the engine and double the size of the airplane.

So that was how, in 1990, I came up with the idea for a new event: the A Texaco event. It was an event whose time had come. Many people did not continue with the 1/2A Texaco because of the problems with running the Cox engine, and some did not care for the small size of the airplane required. Attendance in the event was dropping off. When I came up with the full A Texaco, the attendance to the event doubled. I collaborated with Dave Platt on the rules of engagement.

But the most important part was the choice of engine –that was left up to the modeler/flyer. The rules were simple. Engine size was from .06 to .20 with a 14 cc-size fuel tank, and it had to be an Old-Timer design (from 1936 to 1956). The net result was A Texaco. We flew this event for 10 years with a great deal of fun and success. Eventually I, with the help of Larry Davidson, introduced this event to SAM in 1994. It has been flown each year since then.

From 1990 to 1996, I flew in 1/2A Texaco, A Texaco, and 1/2A Texaco Scale. I attended at least 75 events over the next six years. I won first place in A Texaco 23 times, second place at A Texaco 16 times, first place in 1/2A Texaco 11 times, and second place in 1/2A Texaco Scale four times.

In 1990, I was published in the November issue of *Model Builder* (p. 26.) I had designed and built a new entry for the 1/2A Texaco, a scaled-down version of Sal Taibi's *Hornet*.

In 1993, Larry Davidson informed me that he was running his club's annual SAM meet and that he was going to have an A Texaco event included in the contest. This was the first time this event was being run outside of Florida. Naturally, I had to go.

My wife, Bella, and I loaded up the van with airplanes and stuff, and drive the 1,200 or so miles to attend that contest. On the return leg, we planned to stop off at Bill Winters' place and spend a few days with our old friends.

Naturally, with the van loaded with airplanes, Bill and I intended to spend a whole day flying. Bella stayed at Bill's house with Sylvia and Bill and I went off to the Hunton Farm. As my friend Dave Platt would say, "We had a jolly good time." We drove from Bill's house in Fairfax, Virginia, to Rixeyville, Virginia, an hour south, to John Hunton's place. We flew up a storm that day. There was just the four of us flying there, Bill, John, Tom Chipley, and I.

The 1994 SAM Champs was held in Muncie at the new AMA flying site. Coincidentally, I was to receive my 1993 Model Aviation Hall of Fame award at the SAM Chaps. Larry Davidson informative me that he was going to be the Radio Control Contest Director at the very same



*The original 500 square inch Miss America.*

Champs and introduce the A Texaco event for the first time. (SAM has run this event every year since.)

To kick off this new event, I created a 500-square-inch version of my Miss America, powered by an O.S. 10 with a diesel conversion head and published it in a 1994 issue of *Model Aviation*. This article was offered as a suggestion for an A Texaco design. It was published prior to the 1994 SAM Champs with knowledge that the event would be included that year.



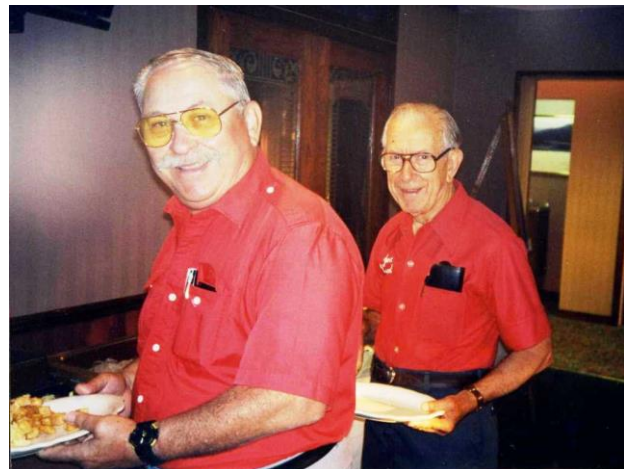
***1994: Receiving my Model Aviation Hall of Fame award from Bob Underwood in Muncie, Indiana.***

Also in 1994, I published my six-quarter Korda in the July issue of *Flying Models*. Having built and flown the 44-inch standard Korda Wakefield model, I decided to try scaling up the design. I decided that a fifty-percent increase would make an interesting model. So, if you divide 44-inches by four, it comes out to 11 inches per quarter. If you use six quarters, six times eleven equals 66 inches, hence the name. It flew originally with rubber, but I did not have the arm strength to wind it fully, so I powered it with a Cox engine converted to CO2 for the article.

1993 to 1994 were both good and bad years for me. The good was that I was informed that I was elected into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame. I chose to have it presented by my friend Bob Underwood at the AMA headquarters in Muncie, Indiana. That year the SAM origination was holding their Champs in Muncie. It was a double whammy for me, as in addition to being inducted into the Hall of Fame, the SAM Champs was going to run my Texaco event for the first time.

The bad news was my long-time buddy Phil Greenberg, who was going to accompany me to the SAM Champs, was recovering from surgery in the hospital. The day before I left for Muncie and visited him at the hospital, he was in no eminent danger, but could not accompany me on this trip. I drove the 1,200 miles alone. I was not a happy camper.

On arriving at the AMA headquarters in Muncie, I was informed by Larry Davidson that Bill's wife, Sylvia, had passed away. This saddened me. Between the loss of Sylvia and Phil's hospital surgery, I was very depressed. This week should have been a joyous occasion but it lost its luster.



***1994: Having breakfast with Joe at the motel where we stayed in Muncie, Indiana.***

The only thing that brightened up the situation was the fact that my good friend Joe Kovel, then 80-years-old, drove 700 miles just to be there for me when I got my award. When I found out the day before I got my award was Joe's birthday, I threw a party for him at the motel dining room. We must have had over a dozen people attending.

After returning home, I called Bill to console him for his loss. Although Bill had a very large family, he was, in his day-to-day life, all alone. He could no longer drive and unless someone came to his house and took him flying, he sat at home alone.

I suggested that next fall I might repeat the earlier flying experience, load my van with models once more, drive down to visit with him, and do some flying. He was euphoric. We chose a date and he suggested that we call John Hunton and see if we could fly at his place as we had done two years earlier. I called John and when told him of our plans he was elated.



*Three friends from the past: (l-r) Me, Phil Greenberg, and Bill Winter.*

Then I suggested, perhaps we ought to invite some of Bill's old friends and cronies to join us. John was enthused and said that he would take care of it. I then suggested that perhaps we could make this an annual event. Again, John was in total agreement. My suggestion was that we call this event "Winterfest."

That started an annual trek to Rixeyville for the annual Winterfest. Not counting the original event, which took place in 1993, we had one in 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998. It continued until Bill passed away in December 1998. One last

Winterfest was held in October of 1999 as a memorial for Bill. The field was dedicated to Bill, and now known as Winterfield.

After my bringing the *Willie III* to the museum, I had suggested to John Worth in 1986 the need for a historian, but John Worth retired from the AMA before this could happen. There was still no historian.

Then the AMA moved to Muncie, Indiana; that was not the time to complain. However, at the 1994 SAM Champs, eight years after I first spoke to John about it. I took up the banner over again. During the SAM dinner the then-Executive Director of the MAA



*1997: Winterfest at the Hunton farm. On Bill's right is an Australian publisher of the magazine Airborne, Merve Buckmaster. On his left is Bill's friend, Me.*

got up to speak. Not being a modeler, he explained that he was gaining knowledge of modeling by reading my book, *Tales of an Ancient Modeler*.

I was shocked and delighted at the same time. On arriving home I started to write to him, about our need for a historian. His tenure did not last long, but all of my letters giving argument as to why we needed a historian were then sent on to the new museum curator, Gary Prater. Gary called me and we spoke on the phone for some time. He was very enthusiastic and totally for the concept.

He in turn spoke to George Aldrich, Vice President of District V who was also a museum advisor. This started a correspondence between the three of us that went on for at least a year. Then I got a phone call one Monday morning in the first week of May in 1996. It was George Aldrich.

“Norm, I just got back from an executive board meeting. Your proposal for a history program was discussed. I got good news and I got bad news,” he said. I replied, “What was the good news?”

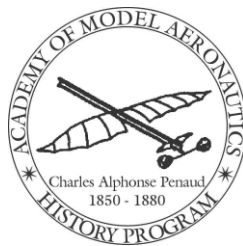
“Well, we’re going to have a historian!”

“Great. So what could be so bad about that?”

“The bad news is - you are it!”

This is not what I expected. I thought of many who were better qualified for the job, then I realized if I refused to take the job, the show would be over. In May of 2010, I will have been AMA’s historian for fourteen years.

In the year 2000, I created a much-needed insignia for the History Program. With the aid of Bill Hannon, who provided the graphic image of Claude Alphonse Penaud, I created the insignia as shown below:



In 1998, I sent in two applications for the Model Aviation Hall of Fame, one for Jack Albrecht and one for George Steiner. Both were inducted into the Hall of Fame for that year. All in all, I have sponsored the following people:

- Joe Raspante (1986)

- George Steiner (1998)
- Jack Albrecht (1998)
- Francis Reynolds (2001)
- Stuart Richmond (2001)
- Burt Rutan (2006)



*2000: At the WRAM show with Bella, receiving the McEntee Award and Vintage Radio Control Society Hall of Fame plaque*

At the 1997 Winterfest, one of the guests was a longtime friend of Bill Winter, Mr. Merv Buckmaster from Australia. Merv was the editor and publisher of the Australian model magazine, Airborne. He and Bill had been friends for years corresponding by mail.

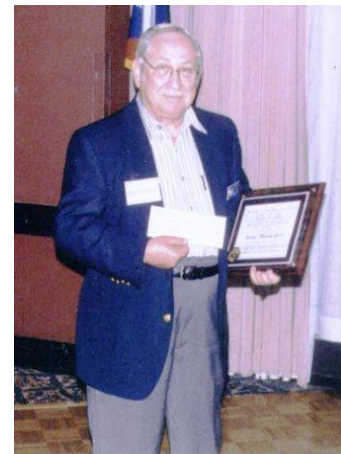


When John Hunton and I were making up the guest invitation list for that year, we tongue-in-cheek sent him an invitation to come to the 1997 Winterfest. He surprised us all by coming.

At the Winterfest, I met Merv for the first time and we hit it off. As a result, he invited me and Bella to come visit him at his home in Benalla, Australia. This we did two years later, in 1999. Aside from all of the sight-seeing, we spent three days as guests of Merv and his wife, Joan. I met some of his Aussie friends and flew Merv's airplanes. It was a memorable trip. We still keep in touch.

Then, in 2000, I received an invitation to attend the Westchester WRAM show. This invitation was to receive the prestigious Howard McEntee Memorial Award for my work in Radio Control development in the early days. While there, I also received the Vintage Radio Control Society's Hall of Fame award.

At the same time, the Model Aviation Hall of Fame system was in trouble. Dave Brown, AMA President at the time, called a planning meeting at the AMA show in Pasadena, California to





restructure the Hall of Fame. Attending the meeting were: Jack Albrecht, Jerry Neuberger, Charlie Mackey, Doug Holland (AMA VP), Dave Brown (AMA President) and Anita Storey (wife of past president Keith Storey.) After much discussion, an ad hoc committee was formed and charged with the task of writing a set of rules for the Hall of Fame. Commissioned for that ad hoc committee was Jerry Neuberger (Chair), Charlie Mackey, Bill Netzband, Jack Albrecht, and me.

After about nine months of deliberation and a major meeting in Sand Diego, the job was complete. The rules were given to all Hall of Fame selectors for ratification and an election was held for the first official Chair. The results came back in November of 2001. The new rules were ratified and I was named first Chair of the new Hall of Fame Selection Committee.

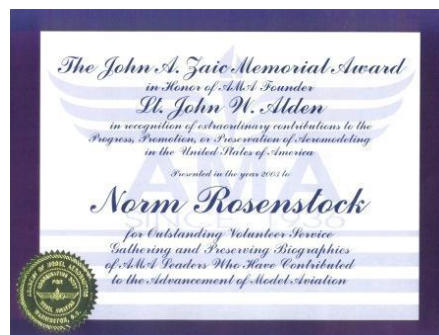


*2006: Me with Burt Rutan.*

Then, in June of the same year, I attended the AMA Gala, celebrating the opening of the new AMA headquarters building. At the dinner the following night, I spoke of the support and help I had received from my Associate Historians and presented them with awards. The awardees were Charlie Reich and Evan Towne, who were both there that night, and Jim Bennett and Jim Simpson, who could not come and received their awards via mail.

The Model Aviation Hall of Fame never had an identifying insignia. In 2001, with the help of Bill Hannan, I created the new Model Aviation Hall of Fame logo for the Selection Committee.

In April of 2003, I attended the Toledo Hobby and Trade Show. On the fourth, I was presented with the Frank and John Zaic Memorial Award by John Worth for contributions to the advancement of model aviation. This was an annual award that was accompanied by a grant of \$1000. At the same Toledo Show on Saturday, I was awarded one of the AMA's highest awards, the Fellowship Award, by AMA President Dave Brown.



In August of 2003, I received a phone call from the president of the Model Engine Collectors Association (MECA), Woody Bartelt. He asked if I would come to Tulsa, Oklahoma to lecture

on my experiences with various old engines, i.e. The Perky, the Mite Diesel, the Super Tiger diesel, and the Cox engine as used in 1/2A Texaco. I said yes.

Note: Back in 1986, when John Worth was AMA's Executive Director, he bestowed upon me the unofficial title of "Friend of the AMA Museum."

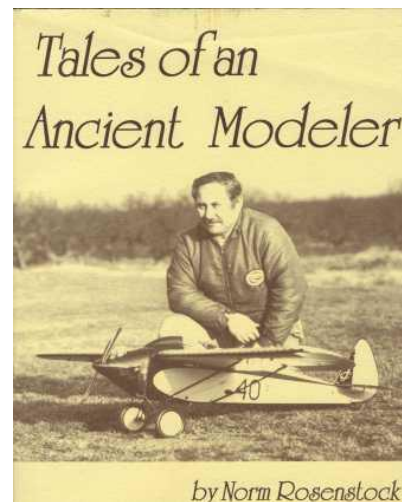
## Summary of events:

### A) As a friend of the National Model Aviation Museum:

- **1985**
  - Solicited from John Schneider his collection of Nats photographs to the Museum
  - Talked to Jim Funduk about giving his beautiful *F-104* to the Museum
- **1986**
  - With the help of the AMA's executive director John Worth, and the Museum's Curator, Hurst Bowers, persuaded the Cradle of Aviation Museum on Long Island to: 1) Release the Raspante airplane, *Willie III*, for loan, 2) Release John Roth's *Volksplane* for loan, 3) Delivered both airplanes to the museum in Reston, Virginia on June 18, 1986
  - Found home movies of the 1939 and 1940 Nats and made them available to the AMA to duplicate and make accessible to all AMA members this piece of modeling history
  - Found Joe Raspante's son, Joe Jr., and prevailed on him to lend me all the photos and newspaper clippings of his father's collection (more than 60 items) to reproduce for the Museum; these were then given to the Museum.

### B) Personal achievements

- **1986**
  - Submitted an application for Joe's posthumous induction into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame. It was approved per a receipt letter as of June 25, 1987 from Don Lowe, president of the AMA at the time.
- **1987**
  - Started writing my book, *Tales of an Ancient Modeler*. It was a book of historical anecdotes of my youth, modeling in Brooklyn, New York, and modeling as I grew up. Writing this book took three years.
  - Authored the biography of Joe Raspante, which was published in the



November 1987 issue of *Model Aviation*.

- Moved from Long Island, New York to Royal Palm Beach, Florida.
- August 18: Bob Aberle submitted my name as a candidate to the Model Aviation Hall of Fame.
- **1988**
  - Started flying Old-Time (SAM) models. It began with ½A *Texaco*, and then conceived the idea of a Class A *Texaco*. I collaborated with Dave Platt on designing the rules for the event.
- **1989**
  - Finished my book, *Tales of an Ancient Modeler*. The book was published by VIP Aero Publishers and went on sale.
- **1993**
  - Collaborated with Larry Davidson to modify the A *Texaco* rules to conform to SAM parameters. Larry had the first A event at his August Meet in Calgary, New York. This is the first time this event was ever run outside the state of Florida.
  - April 21, 1993: Bill Cohen submitted my name as a candidate to the Model Aviation Hall of Fame.
  - April 1993: Leon Shulman submitted my name as a candidate to the Model Aviation Hall of Fame.
- **1994**
  - February 8: I received a letter notifying me that I was inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame.
  - Fred Mulholland included the A *Texaco* event in his Pasco County (Tampa) Florida meet in January.
  - The SAM Champs to be held in Muncie, Indiana (AMA field). The A *Texaco* event was included for the first time in its line-up of events.
  - The presentation of the Model Aviation Hall of Fame award was made (by my request) by my good friend Bob Underwood at the 1994 SAM Championship, in Muncie, Indiana on September 14, 1994.
- **1996**
  - May: Appointed AMA's Historian
  - July: helped John Worth run the Celebration of Eagles, a gathering of modelers together in Muncie to celebrate the AMA's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- **1998**
  - September: Awarded the AMA's Keeper of the Flame Award, Once again helped John Worth, with the Celebration of Pioneers.
- **2000**
  - February 27: Awarded the Howard McEntee Award for development in the area of early Radio Control
  - February 27: Inducted into the Vintage RC Society Hall of Fame
- **2003**
  - April 4-5: Awarded the Frank and John Zaic Memorial Award plus a check for \$1000; also awarded an AMA Fellow award
- **2005**

- On hearing of the latest accomplishments of Burt Rutan, I looked through my collection of old photos of the early Nats and found a picture of Burt as a teenager competing at the Nats in the old PAA Load event. This was an event sponsored by Pan Am Airlines. I started to do some research on his years as a modeler. When I completed this task and added it to the History Program files, I then submitted this biography an application for consideration as a Hall of Fame candidate. Burt was selected and the award was made at the AMA's 2006 annual convention show in Ontario, California.

### C) List of Articles Published (as of 2010)

- December 1950: *Flying Models*, the *Electron*
- July 1951: *Model Airplane News*, the hand-held transmitter and a 1/2A Radio Control model design
- 1957-1958: *Model Airplane News*, articles on the Radio Control duration model
- 1964: *Model Airplane News*, photo article, Joe Raspante's Radio Control Model *Willie III's* Last Flight
- September 1966: *Grid Leaks*, *Wild One* .60 Sport Stunt airplane
- December 1976: *Flying Models*, the *Wren*, .19-powered biplane
- January 1981: *Model Aviation*, 1/4 Scale *Church Midwing*
- 1982: *Model Airplane News*, Guest Columnist, *Giant Steps*, story on Radio Control 1/4 Scale Waco, Trailer
- June 1984: *Model Airplane News*, Guest Columnist, "Giant Steps"
- July 1984: *Model Airplane News*, Guest Columnist, "Giant Steps"
- 1985-1990: Submitted 12 stories for the National Model Aviation Museum's *Cloud9* newsletter
- May 1986: *Model Aviation*, Israeli Modeling
- November 1987: *Model Aviation*, biography of Joe Raspante
- November 1990: *Model Builder*, 1/2A Texaco Taibi/Hornet
- November 1991: *Ram*, with Dave Platt, Introducing: Class A Texaco
- July 1994: *Flying Models*, six-quarter Korda
- July 1994: *Model Aviation*, *Miss America 500*
- September 1997: *Flying Models*, Care & Feeding of Diesels
- January 2004: MECA Bulletin #225, P-MB-6 article, "Competition Tuning of the COX .049 Texaco Engine"
- March 2004: MECA Bulletin #226 P-MB-6 article, "The Super Tiger Engine as Used in Duration"
- Also: Submitted 12 stories for the



c. 1940: An original Free Flight design by Norm

National Model Aviation Museum's Cloud9 newsletter from 1985-1990.

#### **D) Organizations Joined (as of 2010)**

- Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA), #1670, member since 1946, Historian since 1996
- Vintage RC Society (VRCS), #24, charter member since July 1989
- International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA), #424, member since 1980
- Model Engine Collectors' Association (MECA), honorary lifetime member since 2003
- Society of Antique Modelers (SAM), member since 1989
- Model Aviation Hall of Fame, Chairman, 2001-2009

#### **E) Club Memberships (as of 2010)**

- The Brooklyn Mercury Mites, served as president for two years, member from 1940 to 1948.
- Brooklyn Skyscrapers, member from 1951 to 1956.
- Long Island Drone Society (LIDS), served as vice president for two years and president for two years, member from 1957 to 1987.
- Gold Coast RC Club, member from 1988 to 1989.
- The Palm Beach Skyhawks, was awarded a plaque and lifetime membership by the club members, member since 1989.

#### **F) Other Accreditations (as of 2010)**

- **1948**
  - Graduate, Roosevelt School of Aeronautics, issued a FAA mechanic's license.
- **1974**
  - June: Graduated CUNY University with certification in machine shop practice.
- **1970-1982**
  - Taught metal shop practice for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).
- **1982**
  - December: Graduated from Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY with a master's degree.

#### **G) List of Firsts (as of 2010)**

- **1949**
  - First RC design this writer believes ever published in Flying Models magazine. The model was called The Electron.
  - The Electron featured the first use of foam rubber, I believe, to mount an RC

receiver. I redesigned the Aerotrol receiver by placing all electrical components on one side of the circuit board and leaving a flat bottom for the foam rubber to rest on.

- **1950-1951**
  - Designed, created and published what I believe was the first self-contained hand-held transmitter. For the first time I was able to hold my transmitter in my left hand and launch my model with my right hand.
- **1970**
  - My first multi-RF channel modification of the transmitter. It had all five RF channels on 27 Mhz. The five transmitters were used in 1/8-scale Radio Control car racing. The transmitters were modified so that the team members would not be racing against one another.
  - I ran what is believed to be the first RC helicopter contest event ever in the United States.
- **1990**
  - Created a new SAM event, the A Texaco.
- **2001**
  - Elected the chairman of the new Model Aviation Hall of Fame Selection Committee.
- **2003**
  - First to receive the annual Frank and John Zaic Memorial Award.

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*The National Model Aviation Museum houses collections from Norm Rosenstock. You can view some of these items through the Museum's Digital Collections here: <https://modelaircraft.pastperfectonline.com/>, by entering "Norm Rosenstock Collection" in the keyword search. Contact the Museum for more information.*

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