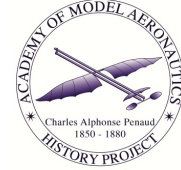




The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of BUNA ALLEN (“MICKEY”) WALKER



September 30, 1931 – February 10, 2024
Modeler starting in 1936 AMA #7633

Written & Submitted by MW (08/2002); Transcribed & Edited by SS (08/2002); Updated by JS (10/2008, 02/2024)

Career:

- Built identification models for the government during World War II
- 1947: Won first place in Class C Gas at his first contest in Griffin, Georgia
- Starting in 1947: Flew in many model contests throughout the Southeast; continues to fly in contests at present (2002) including contests of the Society of Antique Modelers (SAM)
- 1954: Won third place at his first Radio Control contest, the Southeastern Model Meet
- 1972-1978: Opened and ran Complete Model Supply to ensure modelers could continue to model after the previous local hobby shop closed
- 1985-1987: Remanufactured the Cobey Waite engine after buying the rights to it from Michael Drozda
- 1994-Currently (2002): President of SAM chapter number 47 also newsletter editor of The Dixie Playboys for the chapter
- 1996: President of the North Georgia Flying Circus Club Charter member of the Thermal Thumbers Club of Metro Atlanta
- Founder of the Senior Pattern Association (SPA); served as president, newsletter editor, chair of the board and contest director for the SPA Masters Championships
- Helped Curtis Moates with the design and development of the Equalizer
- AMA contest director and leader member
- Started numerous clubs and organizations including the Tri County Radio Control Club, the Cobb County Radio Control Club and the Cobb County Radio Control Competition Team; served as president of all of these

Honors:

- 1998: AMA Pioneer Award
- 2002: Model Aviation Hall of Fame

The Beginning

Mickey Walker started modeling in 1936 when he received a solid model of Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis plane as a gift. His first flying model was a rubber-powered kit by the Comet Model Company. He lived in Macon, Georgia, at this time and had access to a flying field less than a mile from his family's home. He spent many hours at that field watching the more experienced modelers fly and flew Free Flight Rubber there from 1937 to 1941.

Mickey received and built his first gas model in 1941. It was a Stanzel Interceptor with an Ohlsson and Rice 23 engine (he still has the engine). During the war, gasoline was rationed and people were encouraged not to fly gas-powered models, so Mickey worked with a local hobby

shop to build identification models for the government. These models were used to train pilots and anti-aircraft gunners. From 1941 to 1945, Mickey built and flew mostly rubber models, including a Comet Sparky, a Comet Gull, and a Flying Cloud. After the war, gas-powered building resumed and Mickey was able to first build a Scientific Coronet followed by a Comet Sailplane and a Cleveland Playboy Senior.

Competition

Mickey's first gas model contest was in 1947 in Griffin, Georgia, where he took first place in C gas. Mickey continued to fly Free Flight in contests around the Southeast including Southeastern Model Contest in Atlanta (1947 to 1952), Spartanburg, South Carolina (1949 to 1953), Crossville, Tennessee (1951 to 1953), Tullahoma, Tennessee (1952), and Plymouth Area Contest (1947). Mickey also flew in Control Line contests in Marietta, Georgia, from 1948 to 1952.

Mickey starting flying Radio Control in 1952 and flew his first Radio Control contest in 1954 at the Southeastern Model Meet – Naval Air Station, Georgia, where he won third place. He flew in numerous Radio Control Pattern contests from 1953 to 1979; flew Radio Control Pylon Races events from 1965 to 1978; flew Radio Control helicopters from 1976 to 1978; and flew Radio Control sailplanes from 1976 to 1979. In 1980, Mickey shifted his focus to Society of Antique Modeler (SAM) events (Free Flight). He flew in contests around the Southeast from 1980 to 1990 including the SAM Champs in Massachusetts in 1986. He continues to hold a SAM membership and flies SAM Radio Control events. Mickey was a charter member of the Thermal Thumbers Club of Metro Atlanta (TTOMA) and flew in many TTOMA events, both rubber and gas. Mickey also founded the Senior Pattern Association (SPA) and has competed in SPA events every year since 1991.

Experiments

Mickey built his first radio equipment from scratch with skills learned while working in the flight line electric lab at the Lockheed Aircraft Plant and repairing car radios in his father's Studebaker dealership. He has since built many radios and related equipment for himself and friends. In addition, Mickey has built several model engines for his own use and made numerous parts for antique engines, which he has restored to excellent condition.

In 1971, Mickey worked with his close friend and long time flying companion, Curtis Motes, to design a Radio Control Pattern model called the Equalizer. The design was not published, but many were built and flown in competitions around the Southeast. Several are still around as many kits were sold after the first design.

Leadership

Mickey joined the AMA in 1941 (number 7633) and is now an AMA contest director and leader member. Throughout the past 61 years of modeling, Mickey has been a member and leader in numerous model clubs. Some of the best remembered are the following:

- The Kitty Hawk Club (1947), member only

- Tri County Radio Control Club started by Mickey and Al Pinson. Mickey served as president from 1955 to 1958.
- Cobb County Radio Control Club started by Mickey in 1962. He served as president from 1962 to 1968, vice president in 1970 and president again from 1971 to 1973. He worked with Cobb County commissioners to secure and establish a flying field on county property, which is still in use today.
- Started the Cobb County Radio Control (CCRC) Competition Team in 1970 for people who wanted to fly Radio Control Pattern; served as president from 1970 to 1979.
- Served as president of the North Georgia Flying Circus Club in 1996.
- Has served as president of the SAM chapter number 47 from 1994 to the present. He also serves as the newsletter editor – The Dixie Playboys.
- Member of the Model Engine Collectors Association, number 1916
- Member of the Board of Directors of the Paulding County Model Aviation (former president)
- In 1991, Mickey established the Senior Pattern Association (SPA) for Old-Timer Pattern flyers. The concept of the SPA was also appealing to younger flyers who disliked the high pressure of the present AMA Pattern events. Thus, many younger members joined the SPA as well. These younger members are still encouraged to participate in current AMA events. Mickey served as president from 1991 to 1997, was elected chair of the board of directors in 1998, and still holds that position at present. He has served as contest director for the SPA Masters Championships, which are held annually in September and attract flyers from all over the country. SPA contests have been held all over the United States.
- In 1998, Mickey received the Pioneer Award from the AMA.

Publishing Experience

From 1991 to 1997, in addition to founding and serving as president of the SPA, Mickey published and distributed the association's first newsletter, Mickey's Hangar. The newsletter was instrumental in communicating the SPA's bylaws, contest news, and current events. It was distributed from coast to coast.

Currently, Mickey is the editor of The Dixie Playboys, the newsletter for the Society of Antique Modelers chapter number 47.

Hobby Industry Involvement

In the early 1970s, Cobb County lost its local hobby supply store. Rather than see interest in modeling wane, Mickey found the resources to open a small hobby shop (Complete Model

Supply) to fill the void. Profits were slim to none, but he did keep the doors open from 1972 to 1978 so that local modelers could continue to build and fly.

In 1985, Mickey purchased the rights from Michael Drozda to remanufacture the old model engine – Cobey Waite. He stopped production of this engine in 1987.

Conclusion

On a personal note, Mickey Walker has accomplished all of these measures in model aviation with his wife of 53 years, Rebekah, by his side. She has attended almost every contest and has always been supportive of his endeavors. He also has four children, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren that are all very proud of him. Mickey has helped and mentored numerous model aviators throughout the years. He is truly a role model and highly respected by all who have ever had the pleasure of flying with him.

*(signed) Mickey Walker
August 27, 2002*



1989: Mickey with his ME .109 built from a Dave Platt kit.



1998: Mickey with a modified Taurus model airplane.



1993: The Senior Pattern Masters Championships. From left – Ron Van Putte, Mickey Walker (president) and John Fuqua. The airplanes are A-6 Intruders.

*1993: Mickey at the Senior Pattern
Association Masters contest with an A-6
Intruder.*



**This PDF is property of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Permission must be granted by the AMA
History Project for any reprint or duplication for public use.**

AMA History Project
National Model Aviation Museum
5151 E. Memorial Dr.
Muncie IN 47302
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

