



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of PHIL KLINTWORTH

Started modeling in 1936

AMA # 861



Written and Edited by JF (03/2004), Reformatted by JS (11/2009)

Career:

- Began building Scale models and rubber-powered designs at age 12
- Worked for a model shop throughout high school
- 1948: Graduated from Michigan State with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering
- 1950s: Became a member of the Detroit Balsa Bugs; member of at least three other clubs
- Heavily involved in Society of Antique Modelers (SAM) as a lifetime member
- Involved in National Free Flight Society since its inception
- One of the few remaining rubber Free Flight enthusiasts in Tennessee
- Uses his own designs, except in SAM events

Honors:

- Lifetime member, Society of Antique Modelers
- 1966: AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1981: AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1995: National Free Flight Society Distinguished Service Award
- 1998: AMA Pioneer Award
- Attended Gathering of Eagles Ceremonies, Muncie, IN

*The following information was written and provided by Phil Klintworth and compiled by Joe Fox in
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I started building models in 1936 at age 12 at the urging of my cousin. Started mostly with scale models. A close neighbor friend also built and flew models. Activity in the Lansing, Michigan area was very good. Les Hard was an active promoter, and helped Chuck Ripley and I to build and fly hand-launched gliders. Then on to rubber-powered endurance. While I saw twin pushers fly, I did not build one until SAM's event was created.

When I was in the 9th grade, I got a job working in the local model shop. I worked there until I graduated from high school. This gave me an opportunity for greater exposure to modeling. Leading to the next step: gas models. My first engine was an "ATOM." My first gas model win was with a model with a baby zipper wing and tail and a balsa fuselage that looked like a Wedgy.

Then I built a Comet Mercury with an Ohlsson .23. It was a hot engine and too much for the Mercury in those days. I then decided to build a Zipper for the Ohlsson .23. That was a good move. That winter (1941) we flew every Sunday off the ice at Lake Lansing which resulted in a 1st at the NATS and the state meet that year and a number of other meets.

After the war, I was somewhat active. Won a few events. Graduated from Michigan State University with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1948. I went to work in Seattle for Boeing. It was there that I met Chuck Hollinger and Hank Cole. This was the start of a lifelong kinship

with Hank. We still occasionally get together and go to meets in California. While in Seattle, I did some Wakefield building and flying. Won a few meets while there.

In 1952, I moved to the Detroit area where I worked and eventually retired from Chrysler Corporation. It was also a time I got involved in sailing. One of my co-workers and I built a couple Lightning Sail Boats. I raced them until 1958 when I got back into modeling. With the acquaintance of Bob Bienenstein, Ed Stoll, Carl Redlin, and Dick Kowalski, I got involved with Indoor modeling. My first efforts were Gas and Towline Glider.

At the 1958 NATS in Chicago, through Hank Cole, I met Joe Foster and Joe Bilgri who were modeling buddies from the Oakland Cloud Dusters. Hank now was working at Moffet Field. This started another group of close friends including Manny Andrade, Erv Rodemski, and Bud Romak. The Oakland Cloud Dusters and the Detroit Balsa Bugs loved to compete against each other and party and drink together.

Eventually, I became a member of the Detroit Balsa Bugs. Dick Kowalski and I used to travel together to meets, mostly indoor and outdoor rubber, and towline glider. After Dick kind of faded from the modeling scene, Paul Crowley and I traveled to meets together.

Making the Nordic Team in 1969 and winning the Mulvihill Trophy in 1972 (beating George Perryman after a long battle), I remarried Carl Redlin's sister, Betty, and I got involved in a new home and all that goes with it.

In 1981, I turned the Free Flight Contest Board Membership for District 7 over to Bill Shailor, who is still there. He has had it longer than I did.

I then retired from Chrysler in April 1980. I did some consulting work for a few years and moved south in 1985. First to Lake Cumberland in Kentucky (I was a fishing nut in those days) and in 1986 moved into a new home that I designed and built on a lake in the resort community of Fairfield Glade, TN, where I still reside.

After 4 years of completely finishing the lower level, I got back into modeling. I went to a couple NATS and Indoor World Championships in Johnson City, TN, without models. I went to a big meet at Lost Hills with Hank Cole. This is where Bud Romak talked me into going to the SAM Champs at Jean, NV. It was there I was sold on the SAM organization and the Championships. It was also an occasion to get Carl Redlin to drop in to see what we were doing.

We have not missed many SAM Champs or NATS since; I think only one of each. Of course, Carl has been very successful at the SAM Champs and I have been somewhat successful. That first SAM Champs after Jean was at Taft. Carl brought his motor home and we stayed on the field. Prior to this, we went to the Outdoor World Championships at Lost Hills. It was a great week.

The succeeding years have been a lot of fun. Now, flying most of the rubber events has gotten to be time consuming. I like to test all the models I plan to fly at the SAM Champs. This takes a good 4-6 weeks of effort. Then to go to the SAM Champs the last two years to very windy conditions and little flying on my part.

Another meet we have included since 1998 has been Eloy, AZ. This was the Southwest Regional Championships in January. Carl and I meet and spend a couple days test flying. Then two days of rubber models and a third day for Carl to fly his electric radio model. A great field and usually even better weather. A truly fun meet and a nice winter reprise.

While I have not done any Radio Control flying, I am about to start. My knees are causing me a bit of trouble at 80 years old. My chasing days on the trail bike are over. In my community, there is a group of model sail boaters. They race once a week on our lake. I am now getting into that. I still plan to fly outdoor models on a more selective basis.

Organizations I belong to are the Academy of Model Aeronautics, National Free Flight Society, and Society of Antique Modelers as an active member. Overall, it has been a great hobby for me. I have met so many friends throughout the country and the world. I still see fellow model builders from the 1941 NATS. All of these friendships mean so much to me. The Detroit Balsa Bug experience was a great one. Now living where I am, being one of only a few rubber-powered free-flyers in the state makes me appreciate the Balsa Bugs even more.

I have been active in Old Time Rubber events for the last 10 years. I have won Commercial Rubber twice and 4 oz. Wakefield and a number of high places in other rubber events.

National Competition

- 1940: First Place in Class B Gas Senior with high time for the class; Winner of Ohlsson & Rice Trophy
- 1960: Participated in Nationals with Detroit Balsa Bugs Championship Team, Dallas, TX
- 1961: First Place, Open class Indoor Paper Stick, Lakehurst, NJ
- 1962: First Place, Open class Indoor Paper Stick, Chicago, IL; First Place, Open class Microfilm Stick; Winner of Stout Indoor Trophy
- 1964: First Place, Open class Indoor Paper Stick, Dallas, TX
- 1969: First Place, Open class Outdoor Hand Launch Glider; Winner of Tulsa Glue Dobbers Trophy
- 1972: First Place, Open class Mulvihill Stick, Glenview, IL; Winner of Mulvihill Trophy

FAI Competition

- 1950: Wakefield competition in Sacramento, CA
- 1960: Indoor Team Finals, Detroit, MI. Runner up to future brother-in-law, Carl Redlin
- 1968: First Place in Nordic, Bong, WI. Also competed in Wakefield. Went to Wiener Neustadt, Austria and finished 31st. Team placed 6th
- 1970: Wakefield and Nordic Finals, Albuquerque, NM
- 1972: Wakefield Finals, Caddo Mills, TX
- 1997: First place, F1G, California Free Flight Championships, Lost Hills, CA; First place, Gathering of Turkeys, Pensacola, FL
- 2000: First place at Southwest Region Free Flight Championships, Eloy, AZ

Records

- 1960 and 1961: Indoor Stick Class B, Category II
- 1962 and 1964: Indoor Paper Stick, Category II

Leadership

- 1961 to present: Contest Director and Administrative Leader. Ran numerous Indoor and Outdoor meets in Detroit area
- 1962 to 1981: Free Flight Contest Board member, District 7
- 1963: Chief Tabulator at NATS at Los Alamitos, CA. The first time in a while, the day's results were printed the same day as the event. I had several Navy personnel working who did a fine job. While I improved the system, it was not long after that they were computerized.
- 1963 to 1966: Chair of the Contest Board. I developed a system with forms to require the Rules Change Proposer to state the rule to change and to submit the new language. Up to this time, the Chair did all the proposal work. I also set up an Indoor committee to trim down the number of events to the most popular. I tried to get more AMA members involved. I feel I transformed the Board into an effective unit.
- 1964: Ran the FAI Power Event, Dallas, TX
- 1966: Ran the Wakefield Event, Glenview, IL
- 1988 to 1992: Official Timer at the two Indoor World Championships at Johnson City, TN. I timed the Swiss team both times along with Jim Clem.
- 1994: Ran the National Indoor Meet at Johnson City, TN with the able assistance of Bob Bienenstein

Other

I attended the opening ceremonies of AMA Headquarters at Muncie, IN. I also attended the Gathering of Eagles Ceremonies at Muncie.

I was instrumental in getting the ball rolling to get John Worth to run as President of AMA in 1962. I suggested it to Bob Hatschek, who then carried the ball to Howard McEntee, who then convinced John to run.

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