
Biography of ARTHUR J. MAY

Began modeling in the 1930s Circa 1918 to May 14, 1993 AMA Number: 741

Transcribed & Edited by SS (4/03)

Career:

- In 1934 won the Manitoba Provincial Championships senior division and the National Scale contest in Toronto, Canada
- Started the Missouri Slope Model Aero Club in 1939 and 1940; served as president many times from the club's start up through the late 1970s
- Directed regional meets in 1947 and 1948
- Directed virtually all local meets in his area from 1960 through 1988
- Contributed articles to Flying Models magazine
- Owned and operated May's Camera and Model Shop from 1967 to 1984; donated many trophies and kits as prizes
- Served as a judge at the 1968 Nationals
- Promoted model aviation by doing things such as teaching new pilots to fly and giving kits to youth who couldn't afford to purchase them

The following information on Arthur J. May is taken from the Hall of Fame application that Theodore R. Stockert (AMA 28558) submitted on his behalf in January 1989.

An Overview of His Modeling Career

At age 17, in 1934, he won the Manitoba Provincial Championship senior division. The same year he also won the National Scale contest at Toronto, Canada.

In 1939 and 1940 he worked to organize and start the Missouri Slope Model Aero Club. The club was dormant during World War II, but was reactivated by Art in 1945 and 1946. He served as club president many times from 1939 up into the late 1970s.

In 1948 he flew his first Radio Controlled (RC) model using a radio built by two friends who were interested in radio. The plane flew over 100 flights before crashing.

Art was involved with contest directing as well. In 1947 he was the director for a regional meet in North Dakota. The next year he directed a regional meet in Helena, Montana. From 1960 through 1988, Art directed virtually all of the local Bismarck, North Dakota (his hometown), contests.

Aside from all of his leadership roles concerning model aviation, Art also was involved with the publishing industry. He contributed articles to Al Lewis for Flying Models magazine and, as a good friend of Jimmy Walker, Art contributed a Golden Age picture of Jimmy to Hal DeBolt for publication in the late 1980s.

Art's modeling expertise didn't end on the field. He opened May's Camera and Model Shop in 1967 and ran it until 1984. Throughout this time Art donated many trophies and kits as prizes. As of 1989 his stepson was managing the store.

Supporting Remarks from Theodore R. Stockert

In 1968 Art was a judge at the Nationals in Olathe, Kansas; 1968 was the last year the Nationals was sponsored by the Navy. He belonged to the Charles H. Grant Model Airplane Pioneers, which was the forerunner of the AMA. He flew all types of models from rubber-powered Rise-off-Ground (ROG) to RC models. He is presently (1989) flying 1/4-scale models.

Over the years it's hard for me to imagine anyone doing more to promote model airplanes than Art has. His unrelenting efforts include training new pilots, helping to build, giving models, radio and engines to people, especially young kids who couldn't afford the cost, and constantly cajoling reluctant modelers to join AMA. Some of the young people Art helped with modeling are now grown men and include an airline pilot, a doctor and a NASA scientist at Los Altos, California. A few years ago as our club members labored until after dusk pouring concrete at the flying field Art drove into town and bought fried chicken, French fries, buns, gravy and soft drinks for 25 to 30 workers. This was in addition to a substantial cash contribution for concrete.

Art still (in 1989) has not let up at age 71. At our recent state meeting Art gave a comprehensive and informative presentation on new frequencies.

I would like to add a few personal experiences I have had involving Art. When my youngest son, Tom, was 9-years-old he was my constant flying partner and enjoyed the camaraderie of the other flyers. On a field mowing one night Tom pushed a mower for two and a half to three hours and refused any offers of relief. During one of my breaks, Art said, "Look at that kid work; no kid should work that hard and not get a reward." After we finished mowing Art told Tom to come to the store the next day and he would give him a kit. The next day as we drove to the store I explained to Tom that Art would probably give him a simple stick kit or peanut scale model to get him started. You can imagine Tom's surprise, and mine, when Art handed him a Falcon 56 kit. I have never seen him happier or prouder than when we returned home and he showed his mom his kit. He built the kit with my help and flew it, a Kaos 40 and a Contender for the next six years. Tom is still an active flyer and for several years was our newsletter editor/publisher.

Three years ago due to work pressure taking up my building time and some unusual attrition of my planes we had our annual fun-fly coming up and I was without a plane. Once again it was Art to the rescue. He gave me an Akro-Bipe complete with a Webra Blackhead 61 and servos. All I had to do was install my radio. I recently (as of 1989) asked him if he would like it back and he said, "Nah!"

Every year a half dozen or so Canadians come down from Winnipeg for our fun-fly. On Saturday night Art has always taken them, our club officers, my wife and I and our son, Tom, out to eat. He has also made the trip to the 1/4-scale-giant scale meet at Grabber Green, Manitoba, and other meets. He will also do things on the spur of the moment. For example the local modelers meet for coffee-breakfast each Saturday morning at 8 a.m. then go to the model shop to buy our week's supplies. At one breakfast Art mentioned the fun-fly at Grafton, close to 300

miles away. Two hours later he was on his way along with my son, Tom. They flew both days and didn't return until 1 a.m. because on the way home as they drove past the Fargo Flying Field they saw models flying and stopped to fly.

It has been and is a real experience being Art's friend. Just going to coffee and listening to him talk, not only about models, but full-scale aircraft, engines, etc., provides a wealth of information. I have told many of our local modelers that if they don't take advantage of all Art's knowledge they are making a mistake. I can't think of anyone who has had a more positive effect on my modeling or on my son Tom's modeling and self esteem than Art has. He is a rare individual.

*(signed) Theodore R. Stockert
January 21, 1989*

The following is a list of questions that Ted Stockert answered on behalf of the May family for the Model Aeronautics Association of Canada. He submitted them to the AMA History Program in July 2003.

1. What is your earliest modeling memory?

Not much is known before 1934 other than Art was always interested in aircraft models and full-sized.

2. Did you have an influence, e.g., a person/club who got you started?

Art's father, John, was his biggest influence; very mechanically inclined.

3. What was your first really successful model?

Not known.

4. How long have you been modeling now?

Art modeled from his early teens until he died May 14, 1993.

5. What are your top three all-time favorite models?

The Tiger (also Gypsy) Moth, the J3 Piper Cub and Fairchild F71C, F-24 and C8. He built an RC model of the F71C that had wings that folded back along the fuselage for storage when not flying.

6. What is your least favorite model and why?

Anything covered with Monocote due to lack of realism.

7. What is your favorite full-size aircraft?

The J3 Cub.

8. Have you ever done any flying of full-size aircraft?

Yes. Art had a private flying license.

9. Do you have any hobbies besides aeromodeling? What are they?

Photography and woodworking.

10. What do you do (or used to do) for a living?

Worked for a power plant (commercial air conditioning), worked at an oil refinery and owned May's Camera and Model Shop until he retired at 65-years-old.

11. What are your views of the use of modern materials, engines and radios in Old-Time and nostalgic models?

Art preferred staying as close to real models as possible with materials. He was usually on the cutting edge of technology with radio equipment.

12. What sort of car(s) do you drive?

Art usually had a vehicle suitable for model transportation such as a station wagon and later drove minivans.

13. Do you have any specific building place, e.g., basement, shed, whatever?

Early on, Art built in his basement. Later on he built a 24- by 30-foot (approximate) shed that was heated, air conditioned and equipped with table saws, drill press and even a 12-inch metal turning lathe.

14. When building a model, which is your most favorite process?

Balsa, plywood, spruce with fabric covering and dope finish.

15. Your least favorite process?

Anything with Monokote, etc.

16. Have you ever had a lay off from aeromodeling? If so, why?

No.

17. If yes, when and why did you restart?

N/A

18. Do/did you regularly read any modeling publications? Which ones?

19. What model clubs and/or associations do you belong to?

Art belonged to the Academy of Model Aeronautics, Experimental Aircraft Association, the Missouri Slope Model Aero Club (which he founded), was a charter member of the Vintage Modeler's Association and the Giant Scale Association. Earlier as a Canadian citizen, he belonged to Canada's equivalent of the AMA and the local club. He was still a member of all of the above when he passed away.

20. What is your fondest memory or anecdote from aeromodeling? Please feel free to go beyond a single incident.

I believe his GHQ engine, which he could never get to run and threw into the Red River of the North. And the joint venture with his childhood friend, Don McLeod, and a Brown Junior.

21. Do/did you regularly enter contests?

Yes.

22. What contests do/did you enter?

Mall shows, some pattern events and also fun-fly events.

23. What events do/did you compete in?

See question 22.

24. What models do/did you use? What power sources?

Many modified planes based on the Kwik-Fly, powered by ignition gasoline in the early years, some gliders, glow powered .40 to .60 size and later the chain saw type engines.

25. What success(es) have you had?

Art was very innovative and successful.

26. What was (were) the source(s) of your modeling supplies and equipment? What are your present sources?

Early years sources were mail order, basement type stores and later Art owned May's Camera and Model Ship and did a superb job of supplying the modelers.

27. Do/did you design your own models?

Yes.

28. If so, were any of the designs published?

Not to my knowledge.

- End -

Photographs of ARTHUR J. MAY

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All photographs were submitted by Art's family through Ted Stockert in July 2003.



Art and friend Don McLeod
in a photograph taken in
Winnipeg, Manitoba in
1935.

Art and Don McLeod in a
photo taken at Bismarck,
North Dakota, 55 years
after the above photo.





A picture of a Fairchild 71-C.

Art's model of a Fairchild 71-C.



Art working on a Fairchild.



Art with his Fairchild in 1990.

Art and a friend with a plane Art designed and called his Mayl Plane. The photograph was taken in the late 1930s.



Art and some of his friends at a model airplane meet in Winnipeg in the late 1930s. Art is on the far right.