
Autobiography of Don Peck

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Written by DP (c. 2003)

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I began this wonderful hobby in Athens, Alabama, flying 1/2A U-Control and Free Flight, then advancing to the Top Flite *Ringmaster* powered by Fox and K&B .35 engines. I built my first Radio Control transmitter in 1955. My mentor, Ed Stone, assisted me in the Babcock rubber band escapement and forty-eight volt vacuum tube receiver, which flew the OK Cub engine and *Mini Mambo Special* airplane. The transmitter was rudder-only control with one click for right and two clicks for left. Those were the days to build straight models!

In 1964, I discovered Citizenship ten-channel reed equipment with Bonner servos. This led to World Engines Controilaire and my first Pattern airplane of the 1960s called the *Taurus*. After moving to Huntsville, Alabama in 1967, the Kraft line of proportional equipment dominated my AMA Pattern flying and competition events. After working as frequency monitor for the 1972 F3A Masters selection held in Huntsville, I became involved with the AMA as a contest director and District V Contest Coordinator in the 1980s. In 1981, the Rocket City Radio Controllers Inc Club (RCRC) of Huntsville was again selected as the F3A Team Selection Site. As Chief Judge, I enjoyed the Master Team Selection, which included inviting all judges from both the Unified Scale and Pattern Judge Association (USPJA) and qualified former competitors. This experience led me to judge the 1983 Rough River Kentucky Masters, the 1985 AMA Seguin, the Texas Nats, and the F3A Master Team Selection. I have many fond memories of Dick Austin and me judging together with the Senior Pattern Association (SPA) President, Bruce Underwood, and Tournament of Champions (TOC) Chief Judge Emeritus Jim "Doc" Edwards, including the Eglin Masters in Fort Walton, Florida.

During the 1980s, I met Mr. Walt Schoonard, owner of Miniature Aircraft Supply, at one of the many "Schluter Cup" helicopter events he sponsored. I still have his audio tapes on how to set up the *Heli-Boy* and helicopter flight instructions. I faithfully followed all of Walt's instructions with my 1972 model one, five-channel Kraft airplane radio, and enjoyed many successful flights. My helicopter friends finally convinced me to fly the Schluter *Champion* on mode two using radio equipment designed for helicopter pilots.

Former AMA President Don Lowe gave me my first judging experience with the TOC-style large gas engine aircraft. The 1996-1999 Masters World Aerobatics Championship, held at the Joe Noll field in Greenville, South Carolina was a great Aresti and free-style experience to judge.

I have had the honor of holding the Huntsville, Alabama Rocket City Radio Controller Inc Club presidency for two years, and serving as Vice President for the North Alabama Radio Control Association (NARCA) Club in Harvest, Alabama. Since judging the AMA's 1999 Nats, the position of AMA Pattern Contest Director has kept me active with the AMA. I have served as

contest director for RCRC and NARCA events.

As a member of the Scale Pattern Association (SPA), International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA), NSRCA, as well as from flying in District V Pattern events, I have thoroughly enjoyed my short retirement from teaching thirty years as a high school band director. Flight training has always been a major interest, including the Huntsville, Alabama Aviation Challenge at the US Space and Rocket Center Training Program. As Program Coordinator and Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) at Aviation Challenge, I was responsible for instructing eighty students per week in techniques of radio-controlled aircraft, including individual training in flying Radio Control aircraft. This program included all construction and maintenance of the six aircraft used for training. You might even say I still love to teach!

My latest adventure in Radio Control modeling has been ducted fan jets with the aid of my jet mentor, Art, and his wife, Jonnie Azlin. I have acquired the special AMA waiver to operate production gas turbine jet engines. I would like to thank my wonderful wife, Carolyn, for her untiring patience and support for thirty-eight of my fifty-two years of modeling.