



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JON BARTOSHEK

Started modeling in 1946

AMA #13573



As told by JB (06/2004); Written and Transcribed by JF (06/2004)

Career:

- c. 1947: Joined first model club in Solon, OH
 - Has flown Free Flight, Control Line and Radio Control
 - 1950s: Raced various cars in competition
 - Scratch-built model of AVN-8 from blueprints at Smithsonian
 - 1994: Started JBK Products, a home-based business
 - Currently Vice President of Tri-County Barnstormers of New Waverly, TX
 - Longtime member of Civil Air Patrol in three states
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The following story was compiled from a phone interview in June of 2004. Joe Fox, Assistant Historian, put the responses together.

A well-traveled man, aviation has been one of the biggest things in Jon Bartoshek's life wherever he has gone. Modeling entered his life at age 8 in Florida. Jon lived with his uncle, a member of the Air Force, in Boca Raton. He remembers watching B-17 bomber crews taking off at 3 A.M. on Tuesdays and the tremendous roar of their engines as nearly 300 of them thundered out in shifts.

Jon recalls his first model was a 25-cent Comet Aircoupe kit. He remembers the 10-cent Testors glue as well. Jon speaks with amusement as he recalls telling fellow modelers how long he really has been modeling. His first affiliation with a model club was at age 11 in Solon, OH, on the outskirts of Cleveland. He remembers a buddy down the street getting involved in modeling with Jon and then 12-16 more kids joining in, and a club was born.

Jon also recalls building a Waco AVN-8 model and the simplicity of the rudder controls. He enjoyed its ease in flying and the way everything seemed tied together. He also flew some Control Line at the end of the airport in Solon. Another early memory was Jon's desire to ride on a full-scale Waco AVN-8 airplane and his mother's absolute refusal to let her son fly in one. Then one day in 1951, Jon and his father took a ride. Upon safe return, Jon's mother did not speak to his father for about three days!

Jon Bartoshek is an avowed modeler, and admits his love for building and flying for fun rather than flying in competition. However, the first competition that Jon entered was the Indoor Rubber event sponsored by the *Cleveland Press* around 1952. Jon did not place in either of the first two years of participation in the *Press* event. He recalls using microfilm and the minor improvements in duration that entailed.

Jon has also been involved in full-scale auto racing across the United States. He has raced Austin-Healey and MG in the late 1950s and early 60s in Florida and also in Laguna Seca, California.

Perhaps more than any other aspect of his own modeling career, Jon enjoys building the planes. Recently Jon went to Washington, D.C. as guests of Congressman Jim Turner of Texas. On his trip, Jon was allowed to visit the Paul Garber Research Facility at the Smithsonian. Here he got blueprints for the Waco AVN-8, which he had not seen since his childhood days.

After using the Garber facility, Jon contacted the one person he could track down that owned a full-scale 231-E. This person was Damon Coleman in Missouri, and Jon pursued the chance that he could build a model of the favorite plane of his youth. Jon describes the joy of seeing a plane that one has not been in for years and compares it to the joy experienced by veteran bombers who see the old bomber planes roll back out in front of them and the child-like expressions that follow.

Jon's affiliation with model clubs has followed him wherever he has gone. In Florida, he was a member of the Skyhawks of West Palm Beach. Living in Colorado, he belonged to the Arvada Associated Modelers and in Texas; he was a member of SMASH, the Small Model Airplane Club of Harlingen. Jon is currently the Vice President of the Tri-County Barnstormers, AMA Charter #1605. Jon speaks of the Barnstormers with great pride, a club with a privately owned 40-acre flying site and over 150 members. He writes a column on re-kitting in the club's monthly newsletter, *Propwash*.

Jon Bartoshek is well known in the modeling world as the man behind JBK Products. JBK came from humble beginnings as a sort of cottage industry. JBK mixed and sold model fuel and sold it at major contests. The JBK fuel was a mix of a special lubricant, which was Jon's claim to fame ("if you have to add oil to your fuel, you have the wrong fuel."), methanol and nitro methane.

JBK was in existence from 1994 to 1998, when Jon pulled out of the business of mixing fuel. While JBK was around, Jon set up booths at the Toledo show and sold cases of his fuel. These were the heydays of JBK. He also took 200 gallons to the Lubbock Nats in 1994 and set up near the Control Line flyers. Jon speaks proudly of the speed records set by users of JBK fuel at that contest. He set up at Muncie in 1996, as well, selling his product.

The demise of JBK came in 1998, and comes with an interesting story. Jon, finding it difficult to make money while using UPS as the carrier of his fuels, began researching other means of getting the fuel to the shelves of hobby shops. The problem was the hazardous material fee that UPS imposed on Jon, \$10 for every case. So, Jon began to go through a private carrier. Upon walking into a Texas hobby shop that carried JBK fuel, the UPS deliveryman who knew Jon reported seeing a leaking jug of fuel in the shop. He reported his finding to the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Transportation, who pressured Jon out of the business with fines.

As an educator, Jon has given numerous demonstrations of model flight to the Boy Scouts around 1994. He worked as the Flying merit badge coordinator for 3 years. In this endeavor, he

got a local hobby shop to donate Control Line planes and bought .049 engines. He also has given presentations at local elementary schools and acted as an Information Officer for the Civil Air Patrol from 1996 to 1999.

These days see Jon out flying frequently. He continues to build and re-kit planes. He is a staunch supporter of aviation in the classroom and in public and is a devoted member of the Barnstormers and of AMA.

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