



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DAVE MILLNER



Written by JS (12/2015); Added to HP files by JS (03/2016)

The following was published in the December 2015 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the "I Am the AMA" column, written by Jay Smith.

I Am the AMA Dave Millner, IRCHA president

Jay Smith: How did you get involved with model aviation?

Dave Millner: I owned a hobby shop. I thought about flying, but I mostly did 1/12-scale on-road racing and 1/8-scale gas car racing.

A fellow came into my shop with an old Hirobo Shuttle. He said, "I am tired of trying to fly this thing. Can you sell it or do you have anything to trade?" I traded some old motorcycle parts and I was in the RC helicopter hobby really cheap. I thought to myself, I'll never do this any cheaper.

I made friends with fliers from Dayton, Ohio - Mark Wilson (who recently passed away), Chris Patton, Wendell Atkins, and Don Chapman. Before long, the Shuttle was airworthy and I was off mastering the hover, the loop, and roll with the help of my new friends.

JS: How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?

DM: When one reflects on a question like that he usually realizes much of it has been the people in the hobby. Many of my friends are from across the country and around the world. Then let's not fail to mention that the IRCHA [International Radio Controlled Helicopter Association] Jamboree for the last 10 years has become an important part of my life.

Through my involvement with the Jamboree, the skillsets I developed spilled over into the full-scale aviation event organizing as well. I had done a couple small, full-scale fly-ins, when I was able to get involved with Chris Patton and the Wright Patterson Air Force Base events department in planning for the 2010 Doolittle Raiders reunion.

It was wildly successful and led to another reunion in 2012, which surpassed all records for the number of B-25 bombers in one location since World War II.

I am heavily involved with full-scale aviation, sit on the board for Champaign Aviation Museum [in Urbana, Ohio], and I nearly took a position to run an airport, which would not have happened had I not been involved in RC.

JS: What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?

DM: I pretty much fly only helis. I have flown some multirotor craft. I recall local club members, after watching me fly my helicopter, saying "bet you can't fly an airplane." Needless to say, the pits were quiet after taking off, flying, and landing an airplane on my first try.

I fly a couple of foam wings and I own a dust covered airplane that has yet to be airborne. I have been flying helis for nearly 30 years now and it still is a passion, not an obsession.

JS: What are your other hobbies?

DM: My strongest passion is photography. I have been shooting pictures for 40-plus years. I share those images on Facebook and other outlets, and sell a few, but it is more about the images than making money with it. Photography is simply for me.

JS: Who or what has influenced you most?

DM: I think it is safe to say that we're all influenced by all of the people in our lives. What one person does not give you, another offers that strength or skillset by which we use to make ourselves better people. One such person is Ed Noble.

Ed has been in RC for years, and built TOC [Tournament of Champions] aircraft for champion pilots. He flies full-scale airplanes. He constantly amazes me with his ability to analyze anything from a manufacturing process to find a better way to build machinery. My hat is off to that, yet his commitment to family and friends never seems to have limits. That alone inspires me to be a better person.

JS: When thinking of the IRCHA Jamboree, what are you most proud of?

DM: Mostly it is carrying on the principles that founder Don Chapman envisioned when IRCHA was founded. When the organization was at an all-time low, Ron Kummer and Ron Lund breathed life back into IRCHA. Continuing what they initiated and expanding on it makes me proud.

Finally it is the world-class event we have built. Notice I say we. As I walk or drive around the Jamboree site, it is gratifying that people greet me and say, "Nice job, Dave! Great event, Dave!"

I cannot take the credit. It is team of IRCHA board members that makes your event what it is. When I am no longer involved, I am sure that they will be able to take the event to its next level.

So that is the long answer to your question. The short answer is IRCHA has become a benchmark that other events aspire to and measure against. That is a legacy with which anyone can be proud to be involved.

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

