



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of KENNETH (KEN) E. RUNESTRAND



June 5, 1934 - c. 2011/2012 Started modeling in 1947
AMA #2499

Written & Submitted by KER (03/1997); Transcribed by NR (06/1997); Edited by SS (2002), Reedited and Reformatted by JS (01/2010);
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Career:

- Contest Director
 - QSAA Pioneer #P-024
 - IMAA Founding Sponsor #FS-34
 - Served as IMAA District Director
 - Writes column in *RC Modeler* magazine, *Big is Beautiful* from 1985 to the present [1997]
 - His Eagle Squadron newsletter, *Flight Report*, had a nationwide mailing list.
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At 62 years, born in 1934, I am still breathing, just another modeler for over 50 of those years. After orange crate biplanes and solid model kits, flying models began with American Junior Interceptors, stick-and-tissue models in the early 1940s. (Who hasn't set one on fire and chucked it from the barn roof?) I couldn't wait for the new box of Shredded Wheat that had the World War II profile models printed on balsa sheets that separated the biscuit layers.

Powered modeling began in 1947. I flew Free Flight, Dakota biplanes with .049 OK Cub engines and a Scientific *P-51* U-Control model. I stepped up to Torpedo 29, O&R 23 and Veco engines, and models such as the *Warrior*, *Brave*, *Goldberg Shoestring* and, of course, a *Ringmaster*. Radio Control started in mid-1960s with a Sterling *Mambo Special* with a reed system that was the size of the whole fuselage. The *TriSquires* with Bonitron Galloping Ghost system had some success. I bought a Kraft *Gold Medal* with KPS-10 servos in 1968 and never looked back. Still on hand, the radio was used into early 1980s, with 9-foot span with Quadra-powered models. Also, I still have a PCS (Proportional Control Systems) that Cliff Weirick marketed. They were generic Kraft radios with a stacked PC board receiver and brown vinyl transmitter. I loved those ads, and then Cliff married the woman in them, which broke my heart.

I built Goldberg *Skylarks*, *Falcons*, *Ugly Stiks*, and then began designing and scratch building foam-winged door-skin models. I built about four a month, selling three to club members to finance the hobby.

My first pattern ship was Bridi *Kaos* that flew oh so nicely after my "hot" little creations. I didn't have the patience to become a real pattern pilot. I started building bigger beginning with the Senior *Telemaster*, Nosen *J-3s*, and various *Citabrias* in the mid-1970s. An OS .80 or Fox 74 just wouldn't do it, but Quadra gas engines appeared just as Eddie Morgan was getting a gang together for a quarter-scale meet in Las Vegas in 1977.

The *Citabria* with a Quadra Q-35 made it, and I became pioneer member #P-024 in the Quarter Scale Association of America (QSAA), as did about eight giant nuts from the Sacramento area

that went. During this time, I was doing my own article, *Aerie*, for the club newsletter.

In 1978 and 1979, a local giant scale interest group was formed with me as president, chief cook, and bottle washer. The club, Eagle Squadron, later became Chapter 1 of the International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA) when it was founded in 1980. I became a founding sponsor # FS-34. My Eagle Squadron newsletter, *Flight Report*, which had a nationwide mailing list. My *Aerie* column began regularly appearing in the IMAA newsletter, *High Flight*, and the QSAA newsletter, *The Quarter Scaler*. The club sponsored/co-sponsored 11 annual giant scale fly-ins at Merwin Ranch, a sod farm near Sacramento, from 1979 to 1991. I was contest director from 1983 on, for the last seven of those meets. The annual event even drew the German *B-17* team, as well as notables such as Bob Beckman and Norm Goyer. It was a model flyer heaven until Bill Merwin retired and we could no longer use the event location.

I served as IMAA district director for District X from 1984 to 1986. I regularly attended the annual QSAA events. Then, at the October 1984 meet in the desert, I was approached by Dick Tichenor of *RC Modeler* magazine. Dick Phillips had left the magazine and the *Big Is Beautiful* column. I was asked to pick up the reins and my first column appeared in the March 1985 issue of *RCM*. It has continued to this day. [1997]

I became a published designer in 1978. A plan was drawn up at the urging of others for my 9-foot Piper *L-4* design, which appeared in *Scale RC Modeler* in December of 1981. A 9-foot Piper *PA-18 Super Cub* followed in 1982, as did my 10-foot Pober *Pixie*, an EAA parasol design that appeared in November 1984 issue of *Scale RC Modeler*.

Float plans followed, as well as other designs, and all plans were made available to others, although I never endeavored to make a business of the plan service. The designing is done to please myself, and then I offer them to others. Designing and drawing continues, but is done for my own enjoyment with an AutoCAD computer program, and information usually appears in the *Big is Beautiful* column.

I have never been more than any other modeler has and my writing endeavors have only been an effort to share the fun I have with others in the wonderful world of modeling.

(Signed) *Ken Runestrand* AMA 2499

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