



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of JAMES (JIM) R. SCARBOROUGH



Born March 23, 1934 Began modeling in 1946
AMA #218

Information submitted by JRS (06/2003); Written & Edited by SS (06/2003), Reformatted by JS (01/2010)

Career:

- 1947: Received first place in his first contest
- Competed in the Nats from age 21 until he was about age 40 and received many trophies, including first places
- Competed in FAI competition while he was in his 20s
- Held the outdoor ornithopter record for many years with a plane of his own design
- January 1976: Had a construction article for his B-C Free Flight model published *Model Builder* magazine
- Has held every office in the Thunderbug Model Airplane Club, including serving as club newsletter editor for about 12 years
- Served as vice president of AMA District X for nine years
- Has been an AMA-sanctioned contest director for 40 years (as of 2003)
- Wrote a monthly column for Model Aviation magazine while he was a vice president
- Served as business manager for the first few United States Free Flight Championships

Honors:

- 1985: AMA Meritorious Service Award
 - 1986: AMA Fellow
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The Beginning

James started modeling at age 12 when his dad bought him a 25-cent Piper *Cub* kit. James built the kit by himself and had a bit of difficulty figuring out how to cover it. He found that gluing it together wasn't nearly as difficult.

Four years later, in 1950, he joined his first club, the Inglewood Flightmasters in Inglewood, California. He stayed a member of that club for about seven years.

To fly his early models, James had to travel by bicycle. He would strap the models to his bike then ride about six miles to Western and Rosencrans to fly. This was a very famous site. It also had a cement ring for tethered racecars.

Competition

James began competing in 1947, before he even joined his first modeling club. In his first contest, he flew a Jasco *Thermic 50* glider and received first place.

The competition bug hit and James found himself competing in the Nats by age 21. He continued to fly in the Nats until he was about 40-years-old. During which time he has won many trophies at the Nats, including first places.

He did compete in FAI competition when he was in his 20s, but didn't compete internationally. He flew a lot of A-2 gliders and a little FAI gas.

Experiments

Throughout his modeling career, James has designed and experimented with hundreds of models. He didn't limit himself to one specific type of modeling, but instead has worked with just about every type of model except for scale models, including indoor models. For many years, he held the outdoor ornithopter record with a model of his own design.

James had the plans and an article published on a B-C Free Flight model, which he evolved from the original Texan by Miller. The article ran in the January 1976 issue of Model Builder magazine.

Leadership

James has also been very involved in his local modeling club. He has held every office in the Thunderbugs Model Airplane Club. He was editor of the club's newsletter, Bugs Buzz, for about 12 years.

During the 57 years (as of 2003), that he has been a member of the AMA, he served as vice president of AMA District X for nine years. James has also been an AMA-sanctioned contest director for 40 years, during which time he has directed innumerable local, regional, and national contests.

James served as the business manager for the first few USFFCs (United States Free Flight Championships – class AAAA meets) that were held.

Publications

Aside from the aforementioned construction article and his time spent as club newsletter editor, James also wrote a monthly column in Model Aviation magazine while he was a vice president.

*(signed) James R. Scarborough
June 2003*

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