



The AMA History Program Presents: Biography of BILL WISNIEWSKI

May 5, 1929 – 2007 Started modeling in 1937
AMA #6258



Submitted by NASS (11/1996); Transcribed by NR (11/1996); Edited by SS (2002), Updated by JS (10/2008), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

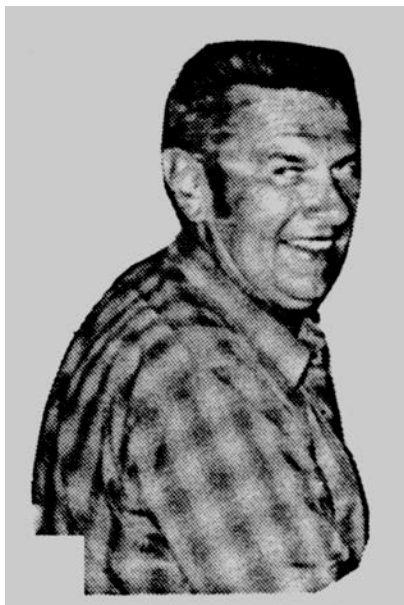
Career:

- Manager in research and development for K&B Manufacturing Inc.
- 1950: First to use a pen bladder tank in model aircraft
- 1957: First man to use really “hot” fuel
- 1964: Developed Schnurle port engine design
- 1965: Developed the TOP-FLITE speed props
- 1966: Inventor of tuned exhaust pipe for model engine use

Honors:

- 1979: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
- Recipient of the North American Speed Society (N.A.S.S.) only Life Member Award

The following biography was submitted by the North American Speed Society's newsletter, the “Speed Times.”



When it comes to Control Line speed no name is more synonymous to the sport than that of “Uncle Willie,” Bill Wisniewski. I'm sure we could do an entire “Speed Times” issue devoted to Bill’s unbelievable accomplishments and innovations in the sport; however, we will try to keep it to one page.

Like many top Control Line speed men, Bill hailed from the Northwest – Olympia, Washington to be exact – where he attended St. Martin High School and also St. Martin College. In 1948, Bill made the trek to Southern California to attend Northrop Aeronautical Institute in 1948 and 1949 earning an A&E License. Bill then worked for Northrop Corporation for 10 years and was working part time for K&B until he went on full-time in 1959. Bill is, of course, married to Bev and they have three fully-grown children. Mike, Mindy and Rick.

Some of the innovations Bill came up with over the last 40 years include the first guy to use a pen bladder fuel tank (1949). Willie also adapted the Schnurle porting system to model engines (1964); he had design development into the Top-Flite speed props and, of course, adapted the Motorcycle tuned exhaust principal to model engine use around 1965. Most all of the racing engines since the K&B 15R (1961) have been designed by Willie which includes the K&B 29R, K&B 6.5 (40), the K&B 65 among many others.

One of the all time best Control Line speed designs ever is the Pink Lady series of models designed by Bill that have a history going back to 1956. The name came about due to Bill's passion for the color pink on his models at the time and when Texan speed flier Frank Stone saw one at the 1956 Dallas Nats, he quipped, "Hey Willie those ships look just like a pink lady my wife was drinking last night." The name stuck.

With these models over the years, Bill has held on and off the Class A, B, D, Form 40 FAI (15), and FAI Class II records. The records in many cases were outrageous for their time, for example his Torp 19 class A Pink Lady circa 1955 to 1958 held a speed mark higher than the class B (29) record in 1957, 154 for A against the 153 for B. That speed might seem tame by today's standards but 154 mph with an old plain bearing Green head Torp 19 was really something in those days.

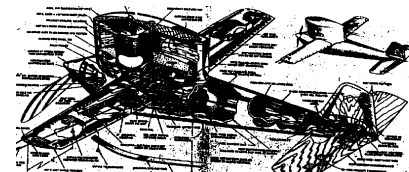
Around 1958 Willie got the bug for World Championship activity and got involved in the new 15 size FAI stuff, he built his own motor, qualified for the 1960 World Championships and should have won hands down but lost out to Rossi who actually whipped the model during the run. Willie went back, did his homework, became world champion in 1964 and again in 1966, and was second in 1968. Bill figures to have built over 75 speed models in all classes during his speed career and has so many National meet wins we cannot list them all on this page.

Bill, because of the many contributions to aeromodeling, became an AMA Hall of Fame member in 1979, one of the few deserving ones in recent years, by the way, and, of course, is our NASS president holding down NASS number 1. Bill has been such a force in speed for the past 45 years that there is no reason to believe he still will not dominate in the future with the new 10% fuel rule. We expect to see the Wisniewski name holding down a few of the National records again soon, as guys as sharp as Willie are hard to stop.

The following is another excerpt from "Speed Times"

Bill Wisniewski Awarded N.A.S.S. Membership

As you know, each of you have your own personalized nametag and number and the question



arose as to who gets number one. Here's how we devised it.

We reserved the very low numbers for the builders of the sport, the guys who have obviously contributed the most, have been doing it the longest, and have gained worldwide fame through their continuance in the hobby.

To no one's surprise, Bill Wisniewski was the unanimous choice for N.A.S.S. No. 1 – his record stands for itself. For some of the newcomers, we thought it might be interesting to do a short profile on Bill's career.

Originally, a Northwest Speed Flier from Olympia, Washington, Bill started Control Line speed flying in the 1940s, where he quickly became the class of his area. He moved to Los Angeles, California, in the early 1950s and there began an incredible string of innovative ideas, many of which we use today. Some of Bill's “firsts” include the following:

- 1950: First man to use a pen bladder tank in model aircraft
- 1957: First man to use really “hot” fuel
- 1964: Developer of the Schnurle port engines design
- 1965: Development into the TOP-FLITE speed props
- 1966: Inventor of the tuned exhaust pipe for model engine use

Along with all of this, Bill has worked for K&B and designed all of the hot engines for them since 1961. I think you will agree, if anyone deserved No. 1, it is Bill Wisniewski!

Bill Wisniewski contest record at major championships

- 1955: 1st A speed - Nats
- 1956: 1st 1/2A speed, 1st A speed - Nats
- 1957: 1st A speed - Nats
- 1958: 1st A speed - Nats
- 1960: 1st A speed - Nats; 2nd F.A.I. Speed Championships
- 1963: 1st A speed; 1st B speed – Nats; 1st C speed - Nats
- 1964: F.A.I. speed, World Champion
- 1965: 2nd B PROTO - Nats
- 1966: F.A.I. speed - World Champion
- 1967: 1st B speed; 1st C speed – Nats; 1st Proto speed; 2nd A speed - Nats
- 1968: 2nd F.A.I. speed - World Championships
- 1971: 2nd A speed - Nats
- 1978: 3rd B speed, 3rd Proto speed - Nats
- 1979: 1st B Proto speed, 2nd B speed - Nats
- 1980: 2nd B speed - Nats
- 1981: 1st B speed – Nats

AMA History Program

National Model Aviation Museum

5151 E. Memorial Dr.

Muncie IN 47302

(765) 287-1256, ext. 511

historyprogram @ modelaircraft.org

