



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JOSEPH (JOE) J. BESHAR

July 21, 1923 - August 26, 2014

Modeler starting in 1936

Lifetime AMA Member #175



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Information submitted by JB (08/2003); Also Written & Edited by SS (09/2003); Updated by JS (10/2007, 05/2008, 08/2014)

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## Career:

- 1939: Placed first in class B at the first Skyscraper Club local contest
- 1940: National Class A gas-powered Free Flight record holder
- 1975: Placed first in Old-Timer at the Nationals
- Has designed numerous Free Flight, Radio Controlled and electric models
- Has served as president of four model airplane clubs
- 1975 to 1978: Served as president of the Society of Antique Modelers (SAM)
- Mid-1970s/late-1980s: Helped start four model airplane clubs
- Has served as AMA District II vice president for three years
- 1975- : has directed at least one contest every year
- Has had over 69 modeling articles published
- Writes a monthly column on flying site assistance for Model Aviation magazine
- Helped teach model aviation through the Hillsdale Flyers Control Line club
- 1988: Founded Vintage RC Society
- 1989: Founded Bergen County Model Airdrome

## Honors:

- 1987: AMA Distinguished Service Award (Raising funds for mortgage depletion)
- 1987: Carl and Beth Goldberg Vital People Award
- 1990: SAM Hall of Fame
- 1990: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
- 1995: AMA Meritorious Service Award, AMA District II Vice President
- 2001: AMA Fellow
- 2004: Vintage RC Society Hall of Fame
- 2004: AMA Meritorious Service Award (Helped clubs acquire flying sites)

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*The following information was completed on a form by Joe Beshar, then written by AMA Assistant Historian Stacey Shannon.*

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## The Beginning

Though Joe started modeling at age 13 with solid model kits offered in his local hobby shop, he did not join his first model club until 1939, at age 16. The club he joined was the East Paterson (New Jersey) Model Airplane Club.

The first flying model he built was a Curtiss Hawk P6E when he was 15. A counselor at summer camp helped him with the model. For Joe, the hardest part was covering the model. Building the wings was his favorite part because it was flat work.

## **Competition**

Joe's first contest was in 1939 when he was 16. It was a Free Flight contest sponsored by the Skyscrapers in Creedmore, New York. He competed and placed first in class B with a Comet Mercury Free Flight model powered by an Ohlsson 23 ignition engine.

In August 1940, he achieved the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) gas-powered class A national record. (The NAA was a predecessor to the AMA.)

Although he was active in local competition through the years, national competition for Joe did not happen until 1975 when he was 52. He placed first in Old-Timer at the 1975 Nationals.

## **Experiments**

During his years in modeling, Joe has not only flown models but also designed Free Flight, Radio Control (RC) and electric models. These include the Shrike in 1989, which was published and kited by Lanier RC, the first U.S. turbine-powered Komet ME 163 in 2000, a Free Flight class A Bantam-powered Fox in 1940, an Infra Red indoor model in 2002 and an electric-powered B-17 Flying Fortress, giant model 10-1/2 foot model, in 1996.

## **Leadership**

Joe has served as president of various modeling clubs including the Old-Time Eagles, the North Jersey RC Club, the Hackensack RC Club, and the Interstate Flying Club. He also served as president of the Society of Antique Modelers (SAM) from 1975 to 1978.

Joe helped form four different clubs: the Old-Time Eagles in 1975, the Interstate Flying Club in 1976, founded the Vintage RC Society in 1988 and the Bergen County Silent Flyers in 1989.

He has been involved with leadership in the AMA, serving as AMA vice president District II for three years, and, since 1975, has directed at least one contest every year. He became a contest director in 1971. Since June of 1998, Joe has served as AMA flying site coordinator.

In total, Joe is a member/honorary member of the following clubs:

- Pennsylvania Ave RC Society, #463
- Old Time Eagles MAC, #1048
- Lakeland Aeromodel Club, #421
- Hudson Valley RC Club, #4880
- Bergen County Silent Flyers, #2768

- Wawayanda Flying Club, #3916
- Interstate Model Flying Club, #1852
- Hackensack Valley Flyers, #985
- Metropolitan Sport Squadron, #262
- Augie's Fellowship of RC Flyers, #5065

## **Publications**

Joe has had over 69 articles published in modeling magazines consisting of construction, design, techniques, etc. He writes the flying site assistance monthly column for Model Aviation magazine.

## **Education**

He helped with teaching model aviation to others through the Hillsdale Flyers Control Line club.

## **Awards**

Joe, a graduate of Michigan State University with a BSME (Bachelor of Science of mechanical engineering), is a member of the Model Aviation Hall of Fame and the SAM Hall of Fame. He has also received an AMA Distinguished Service Award, an AMA Meritorious Service Award, been named an AMA Fellow and received the Carl Goldberg Vital People Award. An aviator, he was awarded the air medal with Oak Leaf Cluster during World War II serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

*(signed) Joseph J. Beshar  
August 2003*

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*The following was published in the March 1988 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Joe was a recipient of the 1987 Carl and Beth Goldberg Vital People Award.*

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Joe Beshar, from Oradell, New Jersey, has supported model aviation for more than 50 years. In 1940, Joe set an official world record in Class A Gas Free Flight. However, Joe has demonstrated his love for this sport by giving to others over a long period of time. As a club officer, as a procurer of flying sites, as a teacher and Contest Director, he has helped countless people. He is currently directing a drive to reduce the AMA National Center mortgage. He has served on FAI committees. He has written and published dozens of articles in a wide variety of hobby publications. Joe well deserves the recognition.

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*The following is an update by Joe Beshar, written in 2008.*

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In February 2005, communicating with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Joe succeeded in getting the EPA to write a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), defining an alliance with AMA for the use of closed EPA Superfund sites for model flying fields.

In 2008, he conceived, designed and released the “Fly the RC Adventure” program, an educational course for high school students describing how to learn and participate in model aviation.



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