



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JAY GERBER



Written by JS (04/2013); Added to HP files by JS (08/2013); Update by JS (09/2015)

---

*The following was published in the April 2013 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the "I Am the AMA" column, written by Jay Smith.*

*Jay Gerber was inducted into the AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame in 2015.*

---

## **I Am the AMA Jay Gerber, NFL Filmmaker**

*JS: How did you get involved with model aviation?*

JG: As a young boy, my fascination with airplanes grew stronger with every plane that passed by the apartment we lived in. Articles showing the Spitfires, P-40 Flying Tigers, bombers, and planes of all types as well as building simple kits sparked my interest in model aviation even more.

My dad took me to the 1939 World's Fair. I remember the aviation display. Dad was supportive of my interest and bought me little stick-and-tissue models to build. This was a big investment on his part, as mom and dad had very little to share.

I grew out of the age of girls and college parties with marriage and children, and my interest returned to models. I began trying to figure out how to control them remotely starting with escapements and then reed-type controllers.

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

JG: Modeling had a significant impact on my 46-year career with the National Football League (NFL). The technological advancements that I brought to the NFL had roots in modeling. Trying to get the escapements and reed controllers working and learning about radio frequencies led to innovation at the NFL.

The development of the frequency coordination program, transmission of the Super Bowl to the world outside the US, and converting NFL films to digital video were achievements that had their roots in modeling.

I'm very proud to be honored with the designation as an AMA Fellow member. I am also a Life Member with license number L-48.

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

JG: I'm happy that I can still fly what I love the most: Pattern-type planes. For example, Integrals, Valliants, Osiris, Spark, and all two-meter types as well as the smaller 60-inch Osiris are lots of fun.

At age 81, I don't compete anymore, but I'm delighted that I can still fly some decent maneuvers and come home and build models or "tinker" in the work shop.

*JS: What are your other hobbies?*

JG: Besides my primary love, RC modeling, I found my way into full-scale flying and was fortunate to own a Cherokee 180 and then a Cherokee SIX 260. I spent time getting my private instrument, commercial, and twin ratings.

I sold the Cherokee SIX to a ham radio retailer. As part of the sale I received a ham radio station. This led to my extra class license as an N3AW and a ham radio contest station where I competed in many worldwide phone and CW [Morse Code] contests.

I also play the piano and started taking lessons at age 72. Of course, what would retirement be without adding a few rounds of golf into the mix as well?

*JS: Who (or what) has influenced you most?*

JG: There were many wonderful and talented modelers whom I had the good fortune to meet and fly with. Many were part of my efforts to produce informative and entertaining films/videos for the AMA, notably Ron Chidgey, Phil Kraft, and Doc Edwards and his Daddy Rabitt

Walter and Bill Good were an inspiration to me as well as to the entire modeling fraternity. They were responsible for the first radio control of a model, and to watch the movie *The Good Brothers [The Pioneers]* is a delight in understanding how far we have come with technical innovation in our sport.

My Precision Aerobatics mentor was a talented flier, designer, and builder of Pattern ships, George Asteris.

My greatest inspiration was the late, former AMA Executive Director John Worth. It was through John's love of the AMA that we forged ahead with innovative concepts to share AMA with the outside world.

*JS: Could you tell us a little about the modeling films you have made?*

JG: Some of the movies that I made for the AMA are listed. It was John Worth's insight and enthusiasm to build the AMA and its membership that interested me in trying to help by producing films that captured the excitement, fun, and beauty of model aviation.

*1971 RC Aerobatic World Championships*

*Those Marvelous Miniatures*

*The Good Brothers [The Pioneers]*

*The Choppers*

*Diamonds in the Sky*

*Wired for Excitement*

*A Plane, a Place, a Perfect Day*

*Judging and Flying [RC] Precision Aerobatics*

**Movies made by Jay Gerber for the AMA**

(Some available for viewing in the National Model Aviation Museum's Lee Renaud Memorial Library)

<b>Film Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Information Source</b>
<b>1971 RC Aerobatic World Championships</b>	Doylestown, PA. About 25 minutes.	AMA's book, Getting and Keeping Flying Sites, p. 30
<b>1974 Nats- Part 1</b>	Lake Charles, LA. No Sound. About 25 minutes. Covers CL, Rat Race, Stunt, Scale, FF General, RC Pattern. Good if someone who was there can narrate.	AMA's book, Getting and Keeping Flying Sites, p. 30
<b>1974 Nats- Part 2</b>	Lake Charles, LA. About 25 minutes. Good if someone who was there can narrate. Covers RC Pylon, Scale, FF General and CL General.	AMA's book, Getting and Keeping Flying Sites, p. 30
<a href="#"><u><b>A Plane, A Place, A Perfect Day</b></u></a>	This film tells about model aircraft and details the areas required for Control Line, Free Flight, and Radio Control flying. A MUST for every flying site presentation to government agencies or other potential site donors. With narration. About 15 minutes long.	1994 AMA Film list
<a href="#"><u><b>Adrift on the Air</b></u></a>	The fun of Free Flight flying, indoor and outdoor, with special narration about outdoor FAI competition: also scenes of night flying. Filmed at Taft, CA and other locations. About 30 minutes long.	1994 AMA Film list
<b>Aerolympics 1974</b>	The World Championships and International events at Lakehurst, NJ. Included are segments showing CL, RC Scale, and RC Soaring. No Indoor, RC Pylon, or Old Timer activities. No narration, but has musical background with original music.	AMA's book, Getting and Keeping Flying Sites, p. 30
<a href="#"><u><b>Diamonds in the Sky</b></u></a>	AMA's latest film (1986) shows all major aspects of Radio Control activity including Soaring, Helicopters, Electric Power, Aerobatics, Pylon Racing, Scale. Thus the world of RC is portrayed in beautiful color and excellent narration concerning what RC is all about. About 30 minutes long.	MA June 1987 p. 110

<b>Fun For a Lifetime</b>	The Trade Shows (WRAMS in NY, Toledo, MACS in Calif.); about 20 minutes.	AMA's book, Getting and Keeping Flying Sites, p. 30
<a href="#"><u>Grand Illusions</u></a>	Film on all types and sizes of Scale Model Aircraft from Peanut rubber-powered types to huge RC types as flown at the 1978 Scale World Championships in England. About 36 min long.	MA June 1987 p.110
<b>The Choppers</b>	About 20 minutes, showing the history, construction and flying of RC helicopters.	AMA's book, Getting and Keeping Flying Sites, p. 30
<a href="#"><u>The Pioneers</u></a>	AMA's latest film (1985) in which the Good brothers - Walt and Bill- tell of their efforts in the 1930s and 1940s to develop a successful Radio Control system. Their own spectacular movies from those days are included, with footage from before World War II and afterward. This is a significant and entertaining part of model aviation history. About 27 min long.	MA June 1987 p. 110
<a href="#"><u>Those Marvelous Miniatures</u></a>	Spectacular footage of all kinds of model flying, from Sailplanes over the Pacific Ocean at Torrey Pines in California to Seaplanes over a lake at Brimfield, MA. Scale models of all types predominate, from tiny Peanut FFs to huge multi-engined RC craft. An all-inclusive cross section of model aviation - the most complete story of our activity ever attempted; excellent for general public showings, as well as for modelers. About 46 min long, this film must be shown on a projector capable of using a 13 3/4-in-dia reel. The superb photography in this film can be best appreciated on a large screen.	MA June 1987 p. 110

[Wired for  
Excitement](#)

Competition Control Line flying in the Speed, Precision Aerobatics, Combat, Racing, and Carrier events. Filmed at the 1979 Nats in Lincoln, NE. About 30 min long.

MA June 1987 p. 110

---

**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

