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# The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of LUTHER F. HUX

Born in 1943    Modeler starting in 1954  
AMA #68821



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Written & Submitted by LFH (01/2003); Formatted & Edited by SS (01/2003), Updated by JS (03/2008, 09/2016), Reformatted by JS (09/2009)

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## Career:

- Began experimenting with Control Line and Free Flight designs of his own during high school
- Has spent much time designing and flying unique models for the Virginia Air Show Squadron
- Has duplicated landmark aviation events such as space shuttles
- Well-known for his Project Snapshot series
- Coordinated model air show at the Dulles Expo in 1982
- Currently (2003) the coordinator for the Dulles Plane-Pull Program for Special Olympics model displays
- Maintains the AMA exhibit at Dulles International Airport
- Arranged to have model aviation displayed at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum on the mall and at the Smithsonian's Garber Restoration Center
- Taught model aviation classes for the Smithsonian Residents Associate Program and for the Fairfax County adult education program
- Member of the Virginia Air Show Squadron for 23 years and has performed in over 140 air shows
- Wrote numerous articles for modeling and non-modeling magazines as well as contributed photos for publication
- He and his work have been referenced by other authors
- Coordinator of numerous AMA public relations events
- Served as an AMA representative for special events
- Has spoken at many model clubs and worked on numerous displays and exhibits

## Honors:

- 1998: AMA Pioneer Award
- 2003: Model Aviation Hall of Fame Inductee [title changed to AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame Award in 2009]

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## Luther Hux's Model Aviation Résumé

Just a few years ago, I had the pleasure of giving Bill Winter a good laugh when I presented my Starship Enterprise Radio Control model for his approval. He once wrote that I could make a barn door fly, and it gave him great pleasure seeing my off-the-wall designs. I often reminded him that he was the one who started it all by giving me the technical training I needed to make those odd models fly. I read one of Bill's books, Designing Model Aircraft, while in high school. Using his information about design, I began experimenting with Control Line and Free Flight designs of my own. After several failed attempts at a pylon Free Flight, I returned to the Bill's book to review the troubleshooting section and apply his recommendations. It flew out-of-sight on the next flight and was not found for two weeks. That led me to return to Bill's book again to study the section on eyedropper tanks and using a dethermalizer.

Most of my spare time after school was spent hanging around the Halifax county airport in North Carolina. The airport allowed us to set up a Control Line flying circle that probably clocked more airtime than the full-scale aircraft. My favorite models were Sterling's U-Control profiles that were powered with a McCoy .29 engine. Later, I began scratch building my own profile designs. Only one of my models has survived from my youth – a U-Control twin .049 P-38 lighting wired with lights for night flying. Even then, I had to do something different from the norm.

It would be more that 20 years later, before I would fly my first Radio Control model, a Goldberg Ranger with an OS .10 engine. The radio was a used World Engines three channel. Since that first Radio Control model, I spend most of my time designing and flying unique Radio Control models for the Virginia Air Show Squadron.

Some 30 years after reading Bill Winter's book on model design, four of my scratch-built models were mentioned in Bill's more recent book, The World of Model Airplanes. Most of my models today are off-the-wall designs. Either they have fabric wings like Paracraft, no apparent wings like the Starship Enterprise or the whole thing is completely asymmetrical which describes ZigZagonal exactly. Then there is the Radio Control hot air balloon that has no hot air. It has also been great fun duplicating landmark aviation events like the space shuttle Columbia and Voyager flights. With Bill's help, I was able to take to the air on the first flights for most of these designs.

Probably my best-known models are the Project Snapshot series. I took aerial photos of many famous landmarks from Snapshot II. These photos included the USS Yorktown aircraft carrier, National Geographic Society, and NASA's space shuttle Enterprise.

I have flown at Dulles International Airport several times taking aerial photos from Snapshot to record the building progress as the airport grew. I coordinated the model air shows at Dulles Expo 1982. Today I am the coordinator for Dulles Plane-Pull program for Special Olympics model displays and continue to maintain the AMA exhibit at Dulles that I designed and installed with the help of Virginia Air Show team members.

I arranged to have model aviation displayed at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum on the mall and at Smithsonian's Garber Restoration Center in Silver Hill. I have taught model aviation classes for the Smithsonian Residents Associate program and Fairfax County adult education.

The following is a listing of projects, publications, and events covering the past 23 years since joining the Virginia Air Show Squadron.

### **Participation in AMA Sanctioned Air Show Program**

Member of the Virginia Air Show Squadron, a sanctioned AMA show team, for 23 years. Performed in over 140 air shows. Designed, constructed, and flew specialty models such as:

- Paracraft: a powered parafoil parachute that could fly at a mere five mph
- Burt Rutan's Voyager: a nine-foot model of the aircraft that flew around the world nonstop; wings carry the signatures of the pilots and designer
- RC space shuttle Columbia: released from a carrier plane, the model recreated the famous shuttle landings

- Christopher RC Parachutist: a one-foot tall, articulated parachutist; project included a smoke trail for the decent
- Snapshot Twin: a twin engine, twin boom model used to carry the space shuttle and to release streamers
- RC Hot Air Balloon: a helium-filled balloon powered by independent props
- Me and My RC: a LTA blimp in the shape of an Radio Control cola soda bottle, with Radio Control labels; based on a commercial slogan of that time
- Sugar Pup: a trainer model designed by me, used for Teddy Bear parachute drops
- SST: a semi-scale Concord capable of unusual landing angles and slow speeds
- Flying Express Mail package: an actual Express Mail package that flies
- 4Mation: four jet fighters joined together, based on Ken Willard's Blue Birds
- Zig-Zagonal: an asymmetrical design in which nothing was lined up
- Starship Enterprise: a flying copy of Paramount's Next Generation starship
- Osprey XV-1: a twin rotor autogiro

Many of these models required considerable time and testing to qualify as safe show candidates. They made great icebreakers at model displays and generate a lot of interesting conversation.

## **Publications**

- Authored the following Model Aviation magazine articles:
- Project Snapshot: Radio Control aerial photography, June 1979
- Project Snapshot On the Road: Radio Control aerial photography, June 1980
- The Powered Parafoil: September 1980
- RC Hot Air Balloon: March 1981
- RC Space Shuttle: September 1981
- Snapshot Twin: August 1982
- RC Space Shuttle II: May 1982
- AMA Show Teams: show team promotion, July 1983
- Christopher RC Parachutist: January 1983
- Please Repeat That: Silkscreen techniques, April 1983
- A Day with Project Snapshot: aeriels of space shuttle at Dulles, May 1984
- Paracraft flying parachute: April 1985
- Improve Your Workspace: January 1985
- AMA's Space Shuttle Exhibit: May 1986
- U-Control Voyager: November 1987
- Amazing Models: unique show team models, March 1987
- Sugar Pup: Radio Control trainer, June 1987
- Mini-Voyager Glider: July 1988

Contributed photos to:

- AMA Salutes Burt Rutan: by John Worth, Spring 1987
- Safety Comes First: column by John Preston, aeriels
- Reynolds Numbers: by John Hunton
- Just for the Fun of It: for several columns by Bill Winter

Designed and produced publication:

- High Flying Fun: AMA's Air Show Team brochure, summer of 1987; distributed by show teams for over 10 years.

Wrote or contributed major content for articles in non-model aviation publications:

- Mechanics (Japan): Space Shuttle and Snapshot Twin, May 1983
- Popular Mechanics: Project Snapshot aerial photography, February 1982
- Parachutist, Radio Control Parachutist: Only a Dummy would Jump from 500 feet, April 1991
- Kite Lines: Space Shuttle paper glider, Summer-Fall 1983
- Comal Today: 3-D rotating model airplane graphics, issue 19

Notes on Project Snapshot magazine articles:

Remote controlled aerial photography from model aircraft published in Model Aviation magazine 1979, 1980, 1983 and 1984 included, Kings Dominion's Eiffel Tower, Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown (CV10), Goddard Space Flight Center, National Geographic Society's Membership Complex, Wright Patterson Air Force Base (AFB) Air Force Museum, Hampton Coliseum, Dulles International Airport (three times), Xerox International Training Center, Quantico Aviation Museum, other Radio Control model aircraft in flight, NASA's space shuttle Enterprise on 747 at Dulles.

Photo of Christopher Radio Control parachutist was taken from Snapshot II as the parachutist was released creating a photo of a Radio Control parachutist, from a Radio Control airplane, taken with a Radio Control controlled camera. Model Aviation, January 1983, and a Bill Winter's "Just for the Fun of It" column.

One of the National Geographic Society's photos was published by the society as a postcard with a printed caption crediting the photo to myself while flying a model airplane. This postcard, created in June 1980, was published in Model Aviation, Snapshot Twin, August 1982.

A space shuttle Enterprise photo take at Dulles International Airport was presented to Congressman Wolf for display in his office. The presentation was carried in Model Aviation magazine, May 1984. The space shuttle photo was also requested by and presented to NASA Headquarters and the Goddard Space Flight Center Museum for public display. This photo is also on display at AMA's exhibit at Dulles International Airport. All copies carry credits stating the photo was taken from a Radio Control model aircraft.

### **Articles and References by Other Authors:**

- The World of Model Airplanes, William J. Winter, p5, "Luther Hux's smaller scale shuttle duplicates the landing procedures of the real shuttle. Although his mother ship is an ordinary model that also carries a camera capable of taking excellent bird's eye view pictures."; p38, illustration of Snapshot 1; p39, illustration of Hux Paracraft 1.
- Radio Control Model Airplanes, by John Carroll: p5, Radio Control Space Shuttle by Luther Hux, model aviation experimenter.
- Cartographic /Photographic Techniques, Aerial Archaeology, by R. Parsons, p15, Bibliography heading, Hux, L. (1979) "Project Snapshot," Model Aviation, 5, no.6 June 1979, pp.61 to 125.

- United States Patent 4,399.969, Other Publications heading: Paracraft-The Powered Parafoil” by Luther Hux, Model Aviation, Sep 1980, pp cover, 62-65 and 122.
- Washington Post, Spirits Soar at First Model Planes Museum, March 26, 1984, photo caption: “Astronaut and model flier Robert (Hoot) Gibson, left, signs a Radio Control model of the space shuttle built by Luther Hux, right.”
- Northern Virginia Sun, Vol. 43 No.112, May 12, 1980, Radio Control Hot Air Balloon flown at a rally in support of Congressman Wolf.
- Fairchild World, Interview and photos about Project Snapshot, Nov. 1979
- National Geographic Society News and Views, Interview and aerial photo of NGS membership complex, September 1980
- Goddard News, NASA Newsletter, Goddard by Model Airplane, Interview and aerial photo of Goddard Space Flight Center from Project Snapshot.
- Rockwell News, June 1986, Rockwell employee who worked on the space shuttle, re-enacts the Space Shuttle landing using plans from Hux published in Model Aviation.

### **Coordinator for AMA public relation events:**

- Fun-N-Flight: Fairfax County Park Authority event, a model expo with hands-on building and flying for the public. Promoted and developed this program myself. Program included Radio Control buddy box flying, Radio Control air show, build and fly U-Control .049 models, U-Control air show, Delta Dart building. Booths manned by local merchants and clubs that included kites, full-scale ultra-lites and gliders. July 1983 and June 1984
- Wings & Things: Smithsonian's Garber Restoration Facility, static demos, annually since 1988 until 1992 and then bi-annually the past six years. Program now discontinued while the Garber Facility relocates at the new Dulles building.
- Fly-By-Night: Smithsonian Summer Evenings Open House, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, summer of 1988 and 1989. Arranged for four area clubs to participant in four separate static demos each year in the Hall of Fame wing of the National Air and Space Museums.
- Dulles Expo 1982: Event coordinator for AMA static exhibit and all day air shows. A two-day event, summer of 1982. Model aviation made up the only flying portion of the show. All full-scale aircraft were static displays except for the Concord and Confederate Air Force fly-by.
- Dulles International Airport Tri-centennial Celebration: static display by Virginia Air Show Squadron, spring 1992.
- Dulles Plane-Pull for Special Olympics: static display by Virginia Air Show Squadron, May 1998, 1999, June 2000 and September 2002.

### **AMA representative at special events:**

- Smithsonian Kite Festival: Washington Monument grounds in Washington, D.C., spring 1986. Demonstrated Paracraft, a powered Radio Control parachute. The parachute wing used in the demonstration was the Jalbert parafoil kite, sold at the Smithsonian's gift shop. The uniqueness of this demonstration was the use of a model engine to pull the kite and the use of Radio Control to control it. Also, the fact that models are rarely authorized to fly on the mall. Paracraft published in Model Aviation, April 1985.
- AMA’s honorary ceremony for NASA’s Robert “Hoot” Gibson, March 1984: Provided Radio Control scale model of the space shuttle Enterprise and gave a brief tour of AMA’s

space shuttle/747 display. Assigned to unpack the space shuttle/747 exhibit and prepare it for display several years earlier.

- Collier Trophy Awards Dinner: sponsored by the National Aviation Club and the National Aeronautic Association, May 15, 1987, in honor of Jeana Yeager, Dick and Burt Rutan. Radio Control Voyager model display and presentation. John Worth and I represented AMA at the dinner.
- AMA's honorary luncheon for Voyager's designer, Burt Rutan: Provided scale model of Voyager and photos for Model Aviation article, AMA Salutes Burt Rutan, by John Worth, spring 1987.

### **Class instructor on model aviation subjects:**

- Fairfax County Adult Education: Radio Control model construction and flying, December 1982, 1983 and 1984. Occasional speaker in following years during classes held by John Hunton.
- Smithsonian Resident Associate Program: Delta Dart construction, summer of 1986 through 1994. Kids flew finished models on the Mall in front of the National Air and Space Museum. The program included a tour of model aviation exhibits in the museum. Included in the exhibit is the Cub, a Cub Scout predecessor to the Delta Dart they would build in class.
- Smithsonian Resident Associate Program: The Voyager Adventure, April 1988, included a nine-foot span Radio Control model of Rutan's aircraft and a full-scale mock-up of the cockpit.
- Smithsonian Resident Associate Program: The World of Model Aircraft, fall of 1987. Included tours of AMA museum and hands-on flying of Radio Control and Control Line models by participants.
- Cub Scouts: model building, provided instructions on Delta Dart building project to 10 scoutmasters who in turn manned construction tables the following week for more than 60 scouts. Then spoke about model aviation and coordinated the evenings building project assisted by the scoutmasters. Other scout projects were typically 20 builders or less.

### **Guest speaker on model aviation subjects:**

- Northern Virginia RC Club: Radio Control aerial photography
- Goddard RC Club: Radio Control aerial photography, Voyager Adventure
- Patuxent RC Club: Radio Control aerial photography
- QCWA Amateur Radio Club: HAM band Radio Control and Radio Control aerial photography
- Northern Virginia Photographic Society: Radio Control aerial photography
- Christian Center School: Voyager Adventure
- Cherrydale Brigade: Voyager Adventure
- Immanuel Bible Brigade: Voyager Adventure
- MITRE Washington Amateur Radio Club: HAM band Radio Control and Radio Control aerial photography

### **Exhibits and Displays**

AMA exhibit at Dulles International Airport, constructed April 1990 and still under contract through 2003. Designed and maintained the exhibit. Originally constructed by three members of the Virginia Air Show Squadron and myself. Model contributions were originally from the AMA Museum. After AMA moved, NVRC members, Air Show Team members and local hobby shops contributed models. I update the exhibit every 12 to 18 months. The Project Snapshot aerial photo of the Space Shuttle Enterprise at Dulles is a standing feature along with Dulles Plane-Pull participation plaques awarded to the Virginia Air Show Squadron.

### **Contributions to the AMA Museum:**

- Snapshot I Radio Control Aerial Camera Plane
- A Project Snapshot aerial photomontage plaque
- Christopher Radio Control Parachutist
- A plaque for the NASA Space Shuttle/747 exhibit
- Past Member of AMA Museum Patrons

### **Awards**

- Northern Virginia Radio Control Club Building Contest:
- Most Unique, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1992, and 1994
- Second place, Open 1978 and 1979
- Third place, Open 1987 and 1998

Smithsonian Kite Festival (airplane kites)

- First place, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985

AMA's Pioneers Award, 1998

Model Aviation Hall of Fame Inductee, 2003 [title changed to AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame Award in 2009]

*(signed) Luther F. Hux, January 2003*  
*[Updated 2016]*

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