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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TREE LINE:
Rachelle Haughn interviews Joe Krush

Meticulous details are often required to build indoor, lighter-than-air model aircraft. For Joe Krush, spending hours and days creating works of art is what he's accustomed to and what he enjoys. As he approached his 100th birthday in May of this year, Joe, a renowned illustrator, reflected upon his life, which has been filled with personal and professional achievements.

Rachelle Haughn: How long have you been an AMA member?

Joe Krush: As long as AMA has been in existence, I guess. [AMA was established in 1936.] I [first] belonged to the AMLA (Airplane Model League of America). I built my first kit in 1931. It was a kit by Wanner & Company, a Baby R.O.G.

RH: When did you learn how to fly?

JK: I've been flying model airplanes, I guess, my whole life. About 60 years ago, I got into RC. I flew indoor models with the Valley Forge Signal Seekers (I'm a founding member) and flew with the East Coast Modelers indoor club. I was a member of the PMAA (Philadelphia Model Airplane Association) from 1933-1935.

I got interested in competing in the 1990s. I went to East Tennessee State and competed for three years [in the AMA Indoor Nats].

I belong to the Scale Old Timer Society (of Philadelphia). I still go out to the Valley Forge field every day, but I don't fly. I help people see what's wrong with their airplanes and help them.

I help with the local Science Olympiad group that meets at the Welsh Valley Middle School. I'm for more members taking care of their own schools. [Club members] need to try to build something, find out what the problems are, and go back and help [the students]. They're just waiting to be helped!

RH: What's your experience with building and flying small, indoor model aircraft?

JK: I've built a lot of them, I'm sure. I started with a simple rubber band-powered elevator glider. I flew with escapements in the Nats and did a touch-and-go once. I did indoor RC. I got a design from someone in Lakehurst. I built model boats, too, until about 15 years ago. I've always liked to fly.

RH: How long did you compete in indoor Free Flight?

JK: I competed for three or four years in the Indoor Nats. One year, I got first in Ornithopter and Mini-Stick. I beat Bruce Holland by 1 second, which he never let me forget. I recommend the hobby highly and that you build your own aircraft.

RH: Were any of your model aircraft designs ever published or kitted?

JK: One did appear in Frank Zaic's book, *1959-61 Model Aeronautic Year Book*. It was the first RC model I built. [The model was a low-wing RC. Joe also illustrated the cover of the book.]

RH: What's your secret to living to be 100?

JK: You need a solid-gold guardian angel. I really wish I knew!

I had a heart bypass at age 75. I was a figure skater until age 75 and a swimmer. I think keeping active --- keeping active with the kids (in the hobby).

RH: How do you plan to celebrate your 100th birthday?

JK: I was hoping for no party, but I teach an art class and they're throwing me a party. They're a wonderful group.

I have more of a reputation as an illustrator. I illustrated *The Borrowers*, record album covers for about 12 years, about 50 children's books, and spent 32 years freelancing for *Reader's Digest*.

RH: How has your history as an illustrator come into play with building model airplanes?

JK: I draw up all of my plans. Occasionally, I give talks on colors to use on airplanes. I recommend never painting them green. You can't see them landing.