



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JOE MALINCHAK



Written by JM (2013) and RH (2014); Reformatted by JS (09/2013); Updated by JS (07/2014)

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## Joe Malinchak

Model aviation and full-scale aviation have been a major part of my life ever since I was a boy. I was only around four or five years old when my Mom let me play with my Dad's U-Control model that he had built and flown. I was very fascinated with the model, and all things that fly. My Dad passed away a few months before I was born, and I think it was meant for me to have that model. I am not sure what happened to the airplane, but I think it really kick-started my interest in model airplanes.

My first experience flying an RC model was when I was around 12. My mom took me to our local hobby shop, which had several RC airplanes hanging from the ceiling. I was so interested; I just had to learn how to fly. The owner sold me a single-channel model that was built up and ready to fly with a Cox engine and an Ace Pulse Commander RC system installed. I learned to fly the model all by myself, as no one around me knew how to fly RC airplanes.

I was very fortunate to grow up around a family of full-scale pilots who regularly flew off our privately owned grass airstrip. My Uncle Lou would take me up in his Aeronca Chief and let me fly. My cousin Gene would also take me up and let me fly as much as he could to give me some flight time; my dad taught him to fly. I soloed at the age of 16, and stated my journey of becoming a professional pilot by attending the Prescott, Arizona, campus of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

In school I became the president of an RC club called "Little Riddle Fliers;" we had fun traveling to modeling events that were held throughout the year. It was at one event, the One Eight Air Force Fly-In in Phoenix, Arizona, that I watched my first micro-sized model airplane fly. It had close to a 25-inch wingspan with the Cannon RC system installed—the smallest available system at the time. I was instantly hooked, and ordered a system to experiment with. I converted some all-foam, 19-inch wingspan, FF Scale model airplanes to micro RC and flew them at the next One Eight Air force event!

I graduated from Embry Riddle in 1986 with a Bachelor's degree in Aeronautical Science and shortly afterward started my first flying job as a flight instructor at Mac Dan Aviation flying at the Caldwell Airport in New Jersey. I spent two years as a flight instructor before landing my first airline job as a co-pilot with Pocono Airlines, Inc. The company unfortunately went out of business, and I had to find another flying job. Most of the pilots, including myself, were hired by

Suburban Airlines, flying the Shorts 330 and 360. I now work for US Airways Express/Piedmont Airlines, Inc. as a captain on the De Havilland DH-8 100 and 300. To date, I have accumulated more than 22,000 hours of flight time flying many different types of aircraft.

After college I continued my quest to build smaller and lighter airplanes. I started experimenting with the new CETO micro RC system and soon realized that I needed a lightweight power system to fly my airplanes. I played around with CO2 motors when I was a boy in some FF models, but needed a little more information on them, so I contacted Henry Pasquet, an expert on CO2 motors, and we quickly became friends.

I love to build Scale models, and I thought that it would be great to build models in the same scale as plastic models. With this idea in mind, I built the world's first 1/72-scale RC model airplane, which first flew in the summer of 2002. My 1/72-scale F4U Corsair weighed only 5 grams and used a one-gram Gasparin G2.6 CO2 motor and a 500mg single-channel receiver. I recently built the world's first 1/72-scale electric ducted-fan powered jet, a MiG 15, which first flew on August 10, 2010. The model ended up winning the Best Jet award at the 2010 JR Indoor Electric Festival.

I have happily designed several airplanes for Plantraco Microflight, around their Butterfly receiver. I designed the Plantraco 1/48-scale Classroom Fighters, 1/72-scale models, and the Micro Butterfly.

Other highlights of my modeling experience include becoming involved with the National Indoor Remote Control Aircraft Council (NIRAC), on which I served as vice president for two years. I also organized and ran the Indoor Night at the NEAT Fair for several years with my wife, Cindy.

I met Cindy in 1989 at the Lincoln Park Airport in New Jersey, when I was furloughed from Pocono Airlines; we were married two years later. Cindy developed an interest in model airplanes after watching me build them in my basement, so I helped her start her first model, a Peck Polymers Nesmith Cougar Peanut-Scale kit powered by a Brown A23 CO2 motor with a very lightweight single-channel receiver built by Fritz Mueller. She flew it at the 1998 Small Fly-In and won the coveted Flying ACE Award with her first airplane!

Today, Cindy and I are still building and flying micro RC models together. We love to travel to some of the various modeling events across the country, hopefully inspiring others with our micro airplanes!





*Joe's "Micro-Flying" column appears bi-monthly, in the January, March, May, July, September, and November issues of Model Aviation. His email is: ioemal@echoes.net.*

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*The following was published in the Other Side of the Tree Line column in Park Pilot magazine, Spring 2014 issue.*

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### **Rachelle Haughn Interviews Joe and Cindy Malinchak**

If you've ever been to the NEAT (Northeast Electric Aircraft Technology) Fair, held annually in September in New York's Catskill Mountains, chances are that you know or have heard of Joe and Cindy Malinchak. This husband-and-wife duo is difficult to miss. They are both passionate about building and flying micro models and organize NEAT's popular Indoor Night for micro aircraft.

While Joe was home on vacation from working as a commercial airline pilot, and after Cindy's shift as a special-needs pediatric nurse ended for the day, Park Pilot's Rachelle Haughn asked them a few questions. Their love for each other and those tiny models was clear.

**RH:** *What attracted you to micro models?*

**JM:** When I was in college in the early '80s, I went to the One Eighth Air Force fly-in in Phoenix. This guy had a 25-inch wingspan airplane he was flying that had a tiny Cannon radio in it. I was amazed!

I immediately ordered a Cannon system, the smallest available at that time. I installed it in a little 20-inch wingspan Bantom rubber-powered FF kit and added a Cox Tee Dee engine and flew it at the next One Eighth Air Force event!

**CM:** We got married and after eight years I asked him, "Why are you always in the basement?"

**JM:** I love building models. It can be as enjoyable as flying them.

**CM:** I said, "That's it, I'm joining you!" I started building my first model airplane, a Peck-

Polymer Nesmith Cougar FF Peanut Scale kit that was converted to micro RC. We've been married for 23 years.

**JM:** She built the Cougar with only a little guidance from me. Her model even won the Flying Aces award at the 1998 Small Model Airplane Lovers' League fun-fly in Little Rock, Arkansas. It was CO<sub>2</sub> powered with a lightweight single-channel receiver. At the time, it was state of the art.

**RH:** *What do you like most about micro aircraft?*

**JM:** It's a challenge to see how far I can push it. I just love miniatures.

**CM:** It's relaxing, too.

**JM:** I can fly the little ones in my front yard or indoors in winter. The smallest one I've built has a 2.5-inch wingspan.

**CM:** I love their size and that they're quiet. If you can make something that small fly, it just fascinates people. I love the look on their faces.

**JM:** The cost [of micros] is significantly less. Most of my models are built out of thin, lightweight foam.

**RH:** *Tell me about the micro models you have designed. Which are your favorites?*

**JM:** I love designing new airplanes, and I have many favorites. Designing a model that not only looks great, but flies well can be very challenging.

I did six designs for Plantraco Microflight of Canada (including Classroom Fighters, the Micro Butterfly, and the 1/72-scale Spitfire and Me 109), so that others could share my experience of flying a small micro RC plane. [Visit [microflight.com](http://microflight.com) to see some of Joe's designs.]

**CM:** That's a tricky question. My Butterfly butterfly airplane is my favorite. I made it after little Grace, my patient, passed away in 2008 when she was 10. Her mom gave the nurses butterfly bushes. Two years ago, it won the Best Micro aircraft award at the JR Indoor Electric Festival [now known as the Horizon Indoor Electric Festival].

**JM:** My little Twin (engine) 1/72-scale A-10 EDF is one of my favorites.

**RH:** *Have any of your designs won awards?*

**JM:** I've won several awards over the years. However, it's the experience that matters – from designing and building new models to flying them at these wonderful events for the public to enjoy.

I've won the Best Jet award three times and the Best Micro award the last few years at the

Horizon event. However, one year Cindy beat me, and won the Best Micro award with her Butterfly Butterfly!

**CM:** I never in a million years thought I would win! I was shocked.

**JM:** Not only did she win the top award in Little Rock in 1998, at Toledo she won second place with her Nesmith Cougar one year when they had a micro RC category. Since then she has been going to events with me. The guys get a kick out of her. Getting your wife to build with you? Amazing! We really enjoy doing hobbies together.

**RH:** *How did your involvement in the NEAT Fair come about?*

**JM:** I've been going since the beginning. My friend, Henry Pasquet, came from Missouri and we were asked to start holding a seminar at the NEAT Fair about the latest developments in micro models. The crowds continued to grow each year, so we decided to bring it indoors.

This year, we had a micro Pylon Racing competition. The competitors had to design a model that used a 6mm motor. The gym is small so most of us had to fly at half power.

**RH:** *What do you two like to do in your free time?*

**JM:** Besides building model airplanes, I also enjoy model railroading, traveling, and catching a movie with Cindy.

I do some light aircraft flying as well, mostly taildraggers, and I write the bimonthly "Micro-Flying" column for *Model Aviation* magazine.

**CM:** I enjoy knitting scarves, making blankets, and designing jewelry.

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