The AMA History Project Presents:  
Autobiography of 
RAYMOND (RAY) JUSCHKUS  
February 23, 1930 – June 12, 2020  
Modeler since 1938  
AMA #2658  

Written & Submitted by RJ (08/2005); Edited by JS (09/2005), Updated by JS (09/2008), Updated by JS (09/2009, 11/2020)

Career:
- 1945:- Member of AMA
- 1945-1950: Member of New York Gashoppers
- 1950s:- Professional photographer, currently retired
- 1960s:- Member of Flushing Model Airplane Society
- 1980:- Member of Long Island Silent Flyers
- 1980:- Member of Eastern Soaring League
- 1980- :Associate Vice President of AMA District 2
- Articles written for Flying Models and Quiet Flyer magazines

Honors:
- 1946: Photographed while flying by New York Daily Mirror, photos published in newspaper issue
- Won third place in C/L Navy Carrier at Miller Field
- 1962: Won first place in C/L Navy Carrier and seventh place in C/L Stunt at the Chicago Nats
- September 2006: Dave Mathweson presented Ray with the AMA Distinguished Service Award at the Northeast Aeronautic Technology (NEAT) Fair for being an AMA Associate Vice President for 25 years.

The following autobiography was written and submitted by Ray Jusc'hkus, and edited by Jackie Shalberg.

My Biography
by Ray Juschkus

It all started when I was six years old. I was in the candy store up the street from where I lived. I saw a boy a little older than me buy a two-cent model plane. It was two pieces of balsa wrapped in a little plan that made the wrapper. The next day, as I was walking along the street, I found an empty soda bottle. In those days, a glass soda bottle was worth a two-cent deposit. I ran to the candy store, got my two cents, and bought a two-cent model. I brought it home and looked it over, but it required a knife to carve the fuselage. I begged my Mom to let me use one of hers. She gave me an old one she no longer wanted. I spent hours trying to sharpen it and finally got it to cut the way I wanted it to.

I finished the model in about two weeks, later finding out I needed glue to attach the wing and stabilizer to the fuselage. I think I made about ten of those models. Then I heard Captain Midnight on the radio. If you sent a label from a bottle top of Ovaltine, they would send you a
glider with folded wings and a catapult. When it came in the mail, I put it together, took it to the park, and flew it for hours. I decided after that to build my own flying model and by then WWII had started, so I got one of the last balsa kits at a Hobby Shop. It was a Bell P-39 Air Cobra. The framework came out fine, but the covering was a mess. Balsa was not available during the war and most of the kits were made of cardboard, which turned me off. In junior high, I built Spotter models for the Navy. One I remember was the Lancaster Bomber.

In 1945, I found a hobby shop that sold a used O&R 23 gas engine for around $15.00. Although the war was coming to an end, you could not buy a new engine. I asked the man to hold it for me; that I would be back when I got the money. I sold baseball cards and took back soda bottles for deposits to scrape together enough money to buy the engine. Then I had to save to get a coil, condenser, battery and prop to see if I could get the engine to run. It ran fine. I was looking in a new hobby shop, fairly close to my house, when I saw a Free Flight model called the Spearhead, and it was just right for the O&R 23. At age fifteen, I got a part-time job in a photo shop working in the darkroom. I had to wash and dry black and white prints and sort them. I managed to save enough money to buy the Spearhead and join the AMA. Dues were a dollar and you got your AMA number on decals and a nice lapel pin, which I still have.

I worked on that Spearhead whenever I had a moment and when I finished it I took it to a field in Queens called Creedmoor. It got its name from the Mental Institution that was just next to it. I took a subway and a bus to get there. At the field, I started the engine and launched the Spearhead. It flew, but it did not have any turn in the Rudder. I ran as fast as I could to catch up with it. It landed in a farm that belonged to the institution. I got it back, packed it up, and went home. I wanted to have someone who knew more than I did to help trim it. Still, it was on that day that I was hooked and knew I would pursue this hobby for the rest of my life.

I finally got the plane trimmed and flew it for some time. After that, I built a Skyrocket by Leon Shulman with an Arden 09 engine, and flew that for an entire summer until it crashed. Next, I built a StratoStreak. While I was flying that one at Creedmoor, I found out that the New York Daily Mirror was going to have a model airplane contest for the first time, the Daily Mirror Model Flying Fair. The newspaper sent a photographer to take pictures of us flying at Creedmoor. My picture was in the middle photo section of the paper. My mother was so proud. She showed it to everybody. That was in 1946. At that time, I became a member of a club called the New York Gashoppers.

As time went by, we started to lose fields. The firsts to go were Creedmoor and Hicksville, the later becoming a shopping mall. The handwriting was on the wall. Free Flight was dying and my hobby was starting to look like a lost cause. We went to a contest up in West Point and it was there that I saw the first Glo plug. Control Line was gaining in popularity. I saw a demonstration where they did not need a coil, condenser, and batteries to fly a Control Line plane. I built my own plane and was on my way. At first, I got dizzy and had to overcome that. We flew at Flushing Meadow in the large parking lot that is now Shea Stadium. My interest grew in Control Line Stunt and I built a model called the Warrior. It had flaps and could loop like nothing we had ever seen before. Then came the Drone Diesel, the Hot Rock and many more. We would take a train home and a lot of the people went to sleep from smelling the ether from the diesel fuel.

I then joined the Flushing Model Airplane Society around 1960 and was flying Stunt every
weekend until one of the members challenged me to fly Navy Carrier. I kept telling them a person did not need talent to fly Navy Carrier. That started a friendly feud. We were at a contest held at Miller Field in Staten Island and one of the members of my club, George DeAngelo, lent me a Navy Carrier model. It was his backup. That was my first contest in Navy Carrier and I placed third. I think that was about 1960. That winter I built my first Navy Carrier model, a Grumman Avenger. When I went to contests, I would enter two events, Stunt and Carrier. I was on the rise and winning contests in New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. In 1961, the AMA Nationals came to Willow Grove, PA. The whole club went and we did a clean sweep of the Navy Carrier event; first, second, and I was third. I was determined to go to Chicago in 1962 and I was going to be National Champion. I ended up winning and placing seventh in Stunt - a great year.

The Navy ran the Nats in those days and they invited me and a friend to Pensacola, Florida. I won this trip due to my win in the Navy Carrier event at the Nats. We were able to see new Navy pilots take-off and land on a carrier. It was the carrier Antietam. We went out into the Gulf of Mexico and had the thrill of seeing Navy pilots fly off a carrier deck for the first time. The Nats kept going to places I could not attend because they were too far away. I had just become a father and my wild days were just about over. I would attend contests on occasion. Around 1975, a friend introduced me to Radio Control. Needless to say I was drawn in and started to learn how to fly. I found a place to fly; Cedar Creek Park was dedicated as a flying field. I had to retrain my way of thinking because of my Control Line experience, but I managed to learn and was enjoying it very much. That lasted about seven years.

I saw some guys flying Sailplanes at the Dayton Nationals and it reminded me of my Free Flight days. I took it up seriously and started to attend contests. I joined the Long Island Silent Flyers in 1980 and the Eastern Soaring League, and have flown in competition for the last twenty-five years. Also, in 1980, I was appointed to Associate Vice President of District 2 by then Vice President John Byrne, and have been in that position since then.

I have attended Executive Council meetings in both Reston and Muncie from time to time. John Grigg and I struck up a great friendship when he was AMA President. He invited my wife and me to the dedication of the Reston building. That was a thrill. He later became Vice President of District 2, appointed me his right hand man, and served in this capacity until his premature death. I miss him very much! He wanted me to run to take his place as Vice President, but I lost the race.

I have been a professional photographer for over fifty years and am now enjoying retirement. I have written for Flying Models magazine and had several covers doing kit reviews. I have just finished a Playboy, Sr. and it is supposed to be in Quiet Flyer magazine as a review. I now fly whenever the weather is nice and I have around seventeen models of various types.

-Ray Juschkus
OFF ON TRIAL HOP goes smart little number made by Ray Juchkos, Brooklyn, while two other contestants ready their ships for flight. More than 1,000 will compete at the Air Show and Flying Fair for thousands in cash prizes. Top award will be a $3,450 plane.
1946: This was the official program for the first Mirror Model Flying Fair

1946: Interior of the Program: prizes for the winners of the Mirror Model Flying Fair
Interior of the Program: Leon Schulman was the Contest Director for the Mirror Model Flying Fair.
1962: Newspaper clippings from Ray's days in Brooklyn: receiving a trophy at the Glenview, Illinois Nats, and advertising for Consolidated Models, Inc.
c. 1962: Ephemera from Ray’s competition days: a contestant’s numbering tag, photograph, and newspaper article.
The following was published in the January 2011 issue of Model Aviation magazine after Ray was inducted into the 2010 AMA Hall of Fame.

**Ray Juschkus**

Ray Juschkus has been a modeler since 1938 and an AMA member since 1945. He started flying FF models when he was eight years old, collecting soda bottles and selling baseball cards to pay for the two-cent balsa airplanes. The label from a jar of Ovaltine scored Ray a glider with folded wings and a catapult.
Deciding to build his own model, Ray was able to purchase a balsa kit, a Bell P-39 Air Cobra, at a local hobby shop before the advent of World War II dried up the balsa supply. The frame was great, but the covering was not.

In 1945, Ray purchased a used O&R 23 gas engine for roughly $15. After purchasing needed accessories, again by selling baseball cards and soda bottles, he got the engine in operating condition.

“I was looking in a new hobby shop, fairly close to my house, when I saw a Free Flight model called the Spearhead, and it was just right for the O&R 23,” he wrote.

Ray got a part-time job in a photography shop.

“I managed to save enough money to buy the Spearhead and join the AMA. Dues were a dollar and you got your AMA number on decals and a nice lapel pin, which I still have,” he wrote.

After completing the Spearhead and installing the engine, Ray took the model for its first flight. It flew but it didn’t have any turn in the rudder. Knowing he needed help trimming the model from someone with more experience, Ray packed it up. Later he wrote, “It was on that day that I was hooked and knew I would pursue this hobby for the rest of my life.”

In 1946, Ray became a member of the New York Gashoppers, but times were changing. Fliers of the time were starting to lose flying fields to development, so Ray and others tried CL flying.

“My interest grew in Control Line Stunt and I built a model called the Warrior. It had flaps and could loop like nothing we had ever seen before,” he wrote.

Ray joined the Flushing Model Airplane Society and flew Stunt every weekend. Another club member challenged him to try Navy Carrier, and that became the other event he would enter at contests. Eventually he went to the Nats in 1962 and ended up winning Carrier and placing seventh in Stunt.

Fatherhood curtailed Ray’s involvement some and the events he attended had to be closer to home. In 1975, a friend introduced him to RC. He was drawn to the sport and learned to fly RC aircraft.

RC lasted until Ray saw some men flying Sailplanes at the Dayton Nationals.

“It reminded me of my Free Flight days. I took it up seriously and started to attend contests,” he wrote. Ray joined the Long Island Silent Flyers and the Eastern Soaring League in 1980 and has been flying competitively since.

In 1980, he was appointed an Associate Vice President (AVP) by then-District II Vice President John Byrne and still holds that position. Ray received the Distinguished Service award for 25 years of service as an AVP.

Ray has written articles for Flying Models, Quiet Flyer, Fly RC, and MA. A professional
photographer for more than 50 years, his work has graced the cover of Fly RC. At 80 years old, Ray is still an active flier!