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# The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of STANTON (STAN) KING

Born 1961      Started modeling in 1971  
AMA #184997



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Written by JS (07/2005); Edited & Formatted by JS (07/2005), Updated by JS (04/2006), Reformatted by JS (10/2009)

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## Career:

- c. 1971: Built and flew kitted Control Line models & Cox control line models
- 1979: Graduated from Webster Groves High School, 1979, worked for his father as an electrician & for Northwest Electric
- 1983: Boating accident
- 1985: Early member of the St Louis Radio Control Flying Association, also member of Signal Chasers, Radio Control Flying Association, and Columbia R/C
- 1987: Published article in *Model Aviation*, February 1987
- 1991: Flew to Italy to attend exposition sponsored by the International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA)
- 1994-2000: Flew a Blimp for Southwest Bell, SAVVIS / KIEL center
- 2004: Donated CG Ultimate Bi-plane and custom built Ace R/C "Silver 7" transmitter to the National Model Aviation Museum
- December 2005: Elected President, St. Louis Radio Control Flying Association

## Publications:

- Magazine Article, "Technical Director's Report", *Model Aviation*, February 1987
- Newspaper Article, "Pilot Has A Feel For Model Planes", *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 23, 1991
- Photograph, "Flying Machine", *The Columbia Star*, October 24, 1991
- Magazine Article, "From the President", *High Flight*, Winter 1991
- Newspaper Article, "Flyin' High", Terry Edelman, 1991
- Magazine Article, "Float Fly", *Model Builder*, January 1993
- Magazine Article, "Around Giant Scale", *R/C Report*, August 1993

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*The following narrative was compiled from two phone interviews with Stan in May of 2005 and an article by Bob Underwood in Model Aviation magazine, February 1987, p 128-129. This narrative was written by Stan and Jackie Shalberg.*

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## The Beginning

Stanton King, Stan for short, was born in 1961. As a child, he would mow lawns and save his allowance, riding miles to the hobby shop on his bicycle, to buy model airplanes. His first airplane was a Carl Goldberg's *Red Devil*, a kitted adult Control Line model. He also flew a *Lily Satan*, as he wanted a more symmetrical and aerodynamic model. There were plenty of *Cox PT-19s* and *Stuchos* as well, all Control Line.

Stan graduated from Webster Groves High School (Missouri) in 1979 and worked with his father at King Electric & A/C and also for Northwest Electric as an electrician. In 1983, he struck his head while diving from a boat and as a result was paralyzed from the neck down, with no use of his legs and little use of his arms, also known as C5/C6 quadriplegia. It took a few years, but

after the accident, a friend took him out to see Radio Control airplane models. This is when his interest in modeling reemerged.

As a quadriplegic flying a model airplane, he needed to use modified equipment. Radio control was more suited for his condition than his childhood dabbles in Control Line. In fact, R/C was the perfect choice, and a friend, Dan Twomey, helped with the process. Dan's airplane, the *Gentle Lady*, was hard to control – the transmitter did not work for Stan. The key to controlling a joystick was taping his fingers together, but with his fingers bound, he found most transmitters had stick configuration which could not withstand the weight of his hand, and he could not pay attention to both the airplane and his hand at the same time.

After only two or three tries, Stan found a transmitter he could use. Experimentation with Kraft radios with Silver Seven or Ace guts is where it began, and long, stable control handles were added which Dan Twomey adapted. Dan used an Ace Olympic 5 transmitter and created “a special eight-inch transmitter stick and stronger springs to help center the stick.” (Underwood, *Model Aviation*, 1987) Then along came Tom Runge from Ace R/C who allowed Stan to custom design a Micropro 8000 transmitter. Stan traveled to Higginsville, Missouri, where Tom asked him if he would be willing to travel and demonstrate his abilities at fly-ins.

Switches were placed on the left side of the radio so Stan could switch the mixer on & off. He coupled the aileron & rudder for ground control. He discovered that a rubber band placed around his fingers would guarantee that he no longer needed to look at his hands to move the stick, focusing attention on the airplane instead. A Plexiglas square was added to the stick to keep Stan's hand from falling down and resting on the trims. He used his whole arm to fly, since he does not have feeling in his hands. It was helpful to have a smaller company with knowledgeable staff near to him build his transmitter. He has been designing a mouthpiece so that his tongue can control the throttle. Currently, he uses a stick to slap with his hand, but for a Warbird which he has working on, he needs a good throttle control.

In these years of rediscovery and relearning flight, Stan joined organizations to help him learn and grow. He was one of the first members of the St Louis Radio Control Flying Association and is an active board member. Around that time, he also joined the Signal Chasers, of which he is now an honorary member, and spent a short time as a member of Columbia Radio Control.

It only took a year and a half for him to be able to fly well enough on his own. After perfecting flying with the adapted transmitters, he was chosen from the U.S. disabled Radio Control flyers and attended a 1991 Italian exposition in Sicily sponsored by the International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA). Jim Vanloo, president of IMAA, accompanied Stan to the meet along with his brother Brett and good friend Mark Speckert. Stan found he knew little Italian, but everyone he met at the meet was friendly and helpful. He demonstrated his new moves in front of modelers from France, China, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, and England (many countries were involved in this large fun fly-in type event) with a Carl Goldberg *Ultimate Bipe*. He had received the plane the night before he left for Sicily. There was a modeler representing each of the European countries, demonstrating the height of technology from their country and their own take on flying models.

Stan also demonstrated at Big Bird Fly-ins and competitions for Ace R/C to support the company. He spent several summers doing this, traveling for Ace R/C around the country with his nurse, hitting Indiana, Iowa, Arkansas, and his home state, Missouri. He was hired in 1994 to

fly a blimp at the Kiel Center every home game for the St. Louis Blues hockey team, Billikens basketball, Ambush soccer, Viper roller hockey, and Stampede arena football, as well as for odd events like the Harlem Globetrotters and Sesame Street on Ice. The first blimp he used was thirteen feet long. He used this one to demonstrate to the building owner how it worked and handled, and then talked them into upgrading to a nineteen-foot blimp. He worked up to five days a week, flew up to three times a day, with little time left over to fly his own Radio Control airplanes. The last contract was with Southwest Bell in 2000. When SAVVIS took over the Kiel Center, they neglected to renew Stan's contract. He is back to spending his summers flying Radio Control and keeping up with modeling organizations. In December of 2005, the St. Louis Radio Control Flying Association elected him President.

Stan's other interests also occupy his time: fishing, boating, and anything related to Radio Control. He holds a General Class Ham operator's license (NONVK). In 2004, to continue the advancement of knowledge about model aviation for all people, Stan King donated his CG Ultimate Bi-plane and custom-built Ace R/C "Silver 7" transmitter to the National Model Aviation Museum.

Stan attributes much of the beginning of his opportunities, including the trip to Italy, to a *Model Aviation* column by Bob Underwood in the February 1987 issue. He would also like to thank Todd Geger, Dan Twomey, Craig Roberts, Art Schaefer of Schaefer Hobby, Tom Runge from Ace R/C, and his family for supporting him. In the beginning, his Mother swamped for him (was his pit crew). He states he owes them a lot, more than he "could ever repay." Stan says, "You know how much work is involved in these things. It's amazing and it can be gone in a second. Each of these guys is really good about helping me out if I wreck them. They'll take it home and fix it up and before you know it, I'll have another plane. Not to mention they're working on their own stuff. It's a very thankless, tedious job, there's no doubt. I have the best friends you could possibly have and I met everyone that was mentioned through this hobby, except my family of course. You know how it works – there are hundreds and hundreds of hours that can be all over in a second."

I couldn't put it better myself. For those of you wishing to try their hand in flying for the first time, Stan recommends starting with the G2 Simulator. It is much cheaper and easier than rebuilding an airplane.

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**AMA History Project**  
National Model Aviation Museum  
5151 E. Memorial Dr.  
Muncie IN 47302  
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511  
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

