



# The AMA History Program Presents: Autobiography of JOHN WORTH

Modeler since 1932  
February 20, 1924-October 23, 2011  
AMA Number: 13



Compiled & Submitted by NR (7/1996), JW (06/2011)

Transcribed by NR (8/1996), JW (06/2011)

Edited by SS (2002), Updated by JS (10/2008, 04/2011, 06/2011, 10/2001)

## Career

- 1938: Joined the AMA
- 1948 – 1954: Free Flight contest board member
- 1962: Radio Control (RC) Contest Board Member
- 1963-1964: AMA President
- 1964 – 1991: AMA Executive Director (27 years)
- 1966: Adviser; helped organize the National Free Flight Society (NFFS)
- 1991 February - present: AMA Executive Director Emeritus
- 1996: Assistant Historian; helped organize new AMA History Program
- 1967 – 1992: 25 years as FAI-CIAM secretary

## Honors:

- 1964: AMA Fellow
- 1978: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
- 1990: NFFS Hall of Fame
- 1990: Vintage RC Society Hall of Fame
- 1990: Howard McEntee Award
- 1992: Society of Antique Modelers Hall of Fame
- 1981: FAI Tissandier Diploma for International Aeromodeling Leadership
- 1986: Elder Statesman of Aviation, National Aeronautic Association

*The following are excerpts from John Worth's autobiography, Worth Remembering -- An Autobiography, 86 Years --1924 Through 2010.*

## Section 4. FROM NASA TO AMA

For several years I had been involved as a volunteer officer in the association (known as the AMA). I was on several AMA committees and did a lot of writing in connection with them.

In 1962 I was nominated to be a candidate for the 1963 AMA Presidency. I did not seek this or encourage it. In fact, even though I ended up on the AMA election ballot I did not campaign for the position. So it was a complete surprise when I was notified that I had won the election! I found out later that Bob Hatscheck, who was then the AMA Secretary-Treasurer, very well-known and respected (who I knew from New York days), had campaigned strongly for me.

I didn't know what to do about the situation when I received a phone call from Carl Wheeley at AMA's Washington headquarters asking me to please come there to see what would be involved.

In fact, he advised that AMA was in a crisis situation and that a special committee meeting had been scheduled for the following weekend to decide AMA's future.

I decided that the least I could do was attend the meeting and see what was going on. So I drove the 3 hours from Hampton and met with the special committee members. Besides Carl Wheeley, there was Frank Ehling (also a former New Yorker), Walt Good—an old friend and the current AMA President whose term was about to expire—and several other AMA officers.

I learned right away that the current AMA Executive Director, Russ Nichols, the chief office staff member, was in the hospital and unlikely to be able to resume work soon, if ever. Meanwhile, Frank Ehling and Carl Wheeley were attempting to keep the office staff of six together, under the handicap of a bad financial situation. Not only were AMA funds very low, the association had many creditors who were demanding payment for past services.

A basic problem was that although it was the beginning of a new membership year, when income from those paying their annual membership dues was expected to refresh the AMA treasury, the rate of renewal membership payments coming in was lower than usual, just barely able to pay the staff.

Meanwhile, there was an annual model industry trade show scheduled to take place in Chicago within a couple of weeks. At this event each year the AMA Executive Director had been able to solicit donations to AMA from industry supporters of the association. If AMA was not able to be represented at the trade show, this usual source of income was in danger of being lost or greatly diminished.

Frank Ehling said he thought he could hold off the AMA creditors and would be willing to try, if I could go to Chicago on behalf of AMA to solicit industry donations. After much soul searching I said I would be willing to give it a try, to see if a new President on the scene could be effective in raising funds, with the proviso that I might have to resign if unsuccessful.

The committee agreed to meet again the following month, to see whether AMA's financial situation was improved or not. To make a long story short, I can say that my reception in Chicago was positive in getting renewed support from the hobby industry, Frank Ehling got the creditors to hold off, and the AMA membership renewals began to come in stronger than before.

I therefore agreed to stay with the Presidency for a while longer, with monthly meetings of the AMA special committee to continue. So it developed that I traveled to Washington for the next few months. Although the membership annual dues payments continued to come in even though not strongly, it was enough with the industry donations, to keep the office staff working.

Another factor was that AMA's "parent" organization, the National Aeronautic Association, from which AMA was spawned some years ago (1936), had agreed to not pressure AMA for its annual franchise fee which enabled AMA to participate in international aeromodeling activities. These activities included world championship competitions and recognition for world records.

Modelers paid extra fees to AMA to participate in these activities and if this income was delayed in payment to NAA, AMA's current financial situation would therefore be improved while membership dues renewals continued to come in during the year. Thus AMA was able to limp along, stretching out payments to suit the income as it developed.

In the meantime it was confirmed that AMA's Executive Director would not be returning. His health problems were too severe. The special committee then asked if I would consider taking that job in his place. They noted that AMA's financial position was improving, though very slowly, and with a new Executive Director on the scene it could be dramatically speeded up.

I said I would consider it after discussion at home. When I told Lil about the possibility she was not enthusiastic but she was willing to go along if I wanted to make the change. I noted that I had gotten tired of the NACA/NASA job after almost 20 years there and that I welcomed a change, especially if I had the chance to make the new job successful. I was optimistic that the future with AMA could be a new lease on life for the family.

The idea of moving to the Washington, DC area was exciting, with a modern lifestyle there and new schools for the kids, and a challenge to make a difference in a national organization, with international connections. I noted, too, that I had a lot of vacation time built up with NASA so that we could travel for a month across the country, on full salary from NASA, something we had wanted to do anyway.

After Lil and I agreed to make the change, I notified the special committee that I would be willing to be the new Executive Director starting in 1964, after completing my 1963 term as President. In the meantime I notified NASA of my intent to resign after using up my vacation time, but with the possibility that I would not resign if my other plans did not work out.

With that background I proceeded with the vacation plan, getting a new set of tires for our station wagon, and planning to go across the country to California and back, spending a week at the AMA National Championships in July at the Los Alamitos Naval Air Station in southern California.

We headed west by going south first, then across the lower states toward California. We planned to minimize travel expenses by not using motels unless really necessary. Our way of doing this was to have a large aluminum cargo carrying case strapped to the roof of the station wagon, in which Chris and Barb could sleep at night, while Lil, Mark, and I slept inside the wagon.

By parking at national parks and other protected open areas we could avoid or minimize overnight costs and we could eat snacks in the car. This largely worked out well, needing only an occasional overnight motel for sleeping and showers. One interesting stay was at an Indian reservation in the southwest that had outdoor showers for tourists. Another was at a national park in the Midwest where we woke up in the early morning to the pounding of hundreds of buffalo hooves on the ground within a hundred yards of our parked wagon.

A couple of times we were able to park at motel parking lots where the rooms were all rented for the night but we were allowed to use the parking lot only if we used the motel restaurant for dinner or breakfast. I didn't keep records but I think we slept in motel rooms only about half a dozen times on the 30 day trip.

Our trip to California included a couple of special experiences. One was when we detoured from El Paso, Texas to go across the border into Juarez, Mexico. We were in there only about fifteen minutes when as we went down a dirt road in the middle of a housing area we were yelled at by the people on both sides of the road.

It took a few minutes to realize that were telling us to turn around because we were on a one way street going the wrong way. So we got turned around and back across the border, but we never did see a one-way street sign along the road. But we saw enough to feel that we didn't want to explore Mexico any further.

The hardest part of the trip was crossing the desert in Arizona on the east side of the mountains leading to California. Luckily, we had filled our cooler with ice and water before entering into the desert area. It was scalding hot inside the station wagon because we did not have air conditioning. So we soaked towels in the ice water and wrapped them around our heads.

That made proceeding reasonable although not very comfortable. We had to rewet the towels frequently during the couple of hours across the desert. I worried about the tires which though they were new were the cheapest that Pep Boys sold. But they held up okay through all of the desert and to the first gas station in California.

Once we got past the mountains into California the weather cooled considerably and after we got a full tank of gas we proceeded to San Clemente. This is where Lil's sister Betty and her marine husband Bob Pelott were living. Bob was stationed nearby at Camp Pendleton Marine base in southern California.

San Clemente was right on the beach overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It was a beautiful place that we enjoyed for a few days. We were able to get all refreshed, including a car wash for the station wagon which had gotten all dirty in the desert. We had a nice reunion with Betty and Bob except for one incident.

Bob suggested that he would look after little Mark while the rest of us went down to the beach for a couple of hours. We walked along the beach and got our feet wet in the surf. It was a great day and a highlight of the trip so far, except for when we got back to the house.

While we were gone, Bob had taken Mark to the Marine base and into their barber shop. He got a GI haircut for himself and also one for Mark. Instead of his golden curls that Lillian loved there was Mark with a bald head except for a short stubble of hair. When Lil saw this she blew her stack and cried. She, and we, including Betty, were really upset. It spoiled the visit and we left shortly after.

We drove north for about an hour, to the naval air station where the National Model Airplane Championships would be held and we found the nearby college which was renting out their dormitory rooms for AMA officials and their families. This was a typical arrangement for the officials at the various naval air stations that hosted the annual championships.

During the week, while I was busy being the highest ranking AMA official at the naval air station, interacting with naval officials who were assisting with the competition activities (many navy pilots served as judges scoring the flights of the competitors), Lil was able to drive the kids around, shop, and sightsee.

I didn't have much time to be with them. Besides the daytime activities I was involved with AMA Executive Council meetings most nights. The Council is a group of 15 elected AMA members, representing members from their home districts, acting as a Board of Directors for AMA. We spent a lot of time exploring AMA's problems and making decisions regarding the future of the headquarters operation in Washington.

We had a good rapport regarding what needed to be done and they looked to me to establish new policies and procedures, with a relatively free hand to do whatever I thought was necessary to improve AMA's finances and services that might encourage more modelers to become members.

Basically, we agreed that improving AMA's liability insurance coverage for members, providing an expanded membership magazine to members, and improving services to AMA clubs should have high priority, to be implemented as finances permitted. The most positive feeling that came out of the meetings was that my taking on the Executive Director position for the following year would do the most to stabilize the situation.

During the week I got the impression that the AMA members on the scene were happy that the organization seemed to be revitalized, with a lot of talk about good things to come and support for the ideas that were being explored. My presence on the scene seemed to encourage positive thinking about a new direction that AMA taking.

When the Championships ended, our family was in a good mood. Lil and the kids said they had enjoyed the California visit, especially since we had managed to spend a day at Disneyland, a great treat we all enjoyed. So we headed back East, on a more northerly route to take us through the middle of the country.

We got to see the big Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon, plus lots of other famous places. Near the end of the trip we stayed over in Tennessee to take in the Grand Old Opry, with Jimmy Dean and many famous entertainers performing. This and a couple more days of driving finished off our month away from home. All in all it had been a great experience, one for a lifetime of memories.

Back home there was a lot to do to finish off the year, such as finding a new house near Washington, selling the one in Hampton, phasing out of the NASA job at Langley Field, getting

the kids in new schools, etc. The goal was to be settled in the DC area by the year end, with me in the job of AMA Executive Director beginning the new year of 1964.

Note: since I had been elected as President of the AMA for the term of 1963-1964, it was necessary to have a new president for 1964 since I was changing over to Executive Director for that year. The AMA special committee for the transition therefore appointed Maynard Hill to take over as President for the second year.

Maynard and I had known each other for many years so that transition was compatible and welcome, especially since he lived near Washington and we would be able to work closely together and in agreement with what needed to be done. We were also both compatible with Frank Ehling and Carl Wheeley at AMA Headquarters so that we had a good team to work with.

But first I had to find a house for our family in the Washington area. That took a couple of weekends, working with a Virginia real estate agent. We ended up buying a 5 year old (practically new) house in Fairfax, Virginia, about 20 miles due west of downtown D.C. At almost the same time we were able to sell our Hampton house. So that all worked out quickly.

As soon as that was done I resigned from the NASA job and got the family moved to Fairfax; a fairly smooth transition. Then we got the kids transferred to schools in Fairfax, also without a lot of trouble. All of a sudden, it seemed, we had transplanted ourselves within about a month, ready for a whole new life beginning in 1964.

I was able to visit the AMA office briefly a few times to meet with the office staff and get familiar with the office operation. Frank Ehling noted that I then needed to get ready to go to Chicago, for the annual hobby industry trade show, where it was hoped that I could be successful in raising money for AMA.

It was winter time and not a very good time for travel, but the event was too important to AMA to not make the trip. At the trade show, industry firms signed up as sponsors for AMA competition events (such as the National Championships) for the coming year. The sponsorship fees covered both putting on the events and also providing some surplus income to the AMA.

Very shortly after moving into our new house a huge snowstorm buried the whole DC area. We were house bound for a few days, not able to drive on our residential area streets. I was lucky, when the streets were somewhat cleared, to get a cab to get me to the airport for the Chicago trip.

But the rest of the family was stuck in the house the whole week I was gone. It could have been a very bad situation, except for the fact that a dairyman from a nearby farm, who normally drove through our neighborhood to sell his products, was able to get through to his regular customers there and also to take care of what Lil needed.

He actually went out of his way to provide more than his usual line of products. He was a Good Samaritan who did far more than his normal service. The neighborhood and especially Lil really

appreciated his help while I was gone. It was a case of how much a single person can make a difference by going the extra mile to do more than anyone had a right to expect.

At the same time, in Chicago, we were snowbound, too, although in a big hotel and trade show building. We had all the indoor conveniences but couldn't go outside. But that was helpful for me because I was able to spend more time with exhibitors and industry friends, to help generate more support for AMA. They were happy that AMA seemed to have a new lease on life, with a full time Executive Director again.

When the snow cleared as the show ended and the airlines were flying again, I was happy to get back with a briefcase full of sponsorship commitments and donations; a very successful conclusion to the week in Chicago.

After I returned to the AMA office, the special committee met again, to review how things had gone since I took on the Executive Director job. One member of the committee, Ed Sweeney, Sr., was the President of the National Aeronautic Association. He and I had gotten along well during the previous meetings. After this latest meeting he asked to speak to me privately.

I knew him to be very well off financially and I wondered what he wanted to talk about. He said that his son, Ed Sweeney, Jr, was about to finish college in Colorado. Senior said he wanted his son to get into the business end of the model airplane hobby and that he wanted my advice as to job possibilities.

It was obvious that he wanted his son to get established in a position of importance and that he would be happy to finance Jr's entry into the business where he could become a major player. Amazingly, this coincided with some news I had recently come by, that could fit Sr's wish very well.

The news was that the top model airplane magazine on the market, American Modeler (formerly Air Trails), was being sold. It was being published in New York. Its Editor was an older friend of mine from New York, Bill Winter. Bill was up for sale, too, along with the magazine. I suggested to Ed Senior that that if he bought the magazine, with Bill as the Editor, this could be the perfect training ground for Ed Junior.

Bill, the old pro, could teach Junior the model magazine business and, eventually Jr could own the business. Fitting the situation neatly was that Jr was an AMA member and a modeler, who was already interested in models.

I suggested to Ed Sr that the ideal situation would be for the magazine to be published in Washington, DC, where Bill, Ed Jr, and I could be helpful to each other. Ed Sr said that would be good because so much of his NAA duties were in DC and he'd like to have Jr nearby. He said he'd like for me to check with Bill about the possibility of moving to DC.

I called Bill and he said he would have no problem moving and that he'd like to be closer to AMA and NAA, because of the aviation friends he had in both organizations, a fringe benefit for the magazine.

Very quickly, then it all came together. Ed Sr bought the magazine, Bill moved to the DC area with his family, settling in Fairfax, Virginia near the Worths. Bill established a magazine office in D.C., near AMA's office, and resumed publication almost overnight. Shortly after, Ed Jr finished college and moved east to live with his dad.

Junior then became Bill's assistant, working side by side with him to learn the business. His modeling background was a big help since he knew the magazine's subject and needed only to learn the ins and outs of producing the pages, selling advertising, and details of the printing process.

Within a couple of months the new magazine was in business, picking right up where American Modeler had left off in New York. The magazine was the biggest in a field of several other model magazines and sales picked up right where they were in New York. Bill Winter had the new magazine going with hardly a gap between it and the previous magazine.

The big thing about American Modeler magazine was that it had a huge circulation, about 100,000 copies per issue. That fact, the relocation and new control of it, with Bill Winter as the editor, and AMA being so close to it all, spawned some far out thinking about how all this might somehow help improve AMA's financial situation.

One day Bill Winter offered an idea, born of his years in the publication business. He said, first of all, that AMA's little pamphlet, that served as its monthly communication to its members, was pitiful, costing more to print and mail, than it was worth. He said that if AMA members could receive, instead, his American Modeler magazine, with pages of AMA news included, it could be a big inducement for people to join the organization.

The idea was grand, we all agreed, but we wondered how such an idea could be realized. Bill then said it actually was quite feasible, needing only a friendly publisher for AMA to take advantage of the situation. He noted that for a publication that sells 100,000 copies a month, additional copies cost only a dime each to print more.

So, he noted, if AMA could pay so little a month for American Modeler magazine, the members could receive the top magazine in the field at no extra cost. He further noted that the magazine could include about a dozen AMA pages in each issue, at practically no extra cost. Further, he said, mailing costs for big quantities are very low, all out of proportion to the size and the weight of the mailing.

Furthermore, he said that American Modeler sold many of its issues by subscription, in addition to those sold at newsstands. Thus, it would not be necessary to set up any special mailing arrangements. All in all, AMA could have a major magazine sent to its members every month at little or no more than it worth currently paying to send out its little booklet.

The potential for tremendous AMA growth was obvious. Not only would AMA members be getting a top of the line magazine for only about a dime a copy per month that they normally would have to pay about \$6 a year extra for, that magazine could include many pages of AMA news. But the biggest benefit to AMA could be that the many thousands of who bought American Modeler at a news stand or by a subscription, but who were not AMA members, would be getting AMA News to tell them about the organization.

Normally a commercial magazine publisher would not agree to such an arrangement. It could mean that their regular buyers would simply join AMA and effectively get the magazine free of extra charge. If enough regulars made the switch the publisher would lose many full pay buyers. In that case, the income from regular buyers would diminish and only the only other income would be from advertisement sales would be available to offset expenses.

The unique situation in this case was that the new owner of American Modeler was not dependent upon the income from the magazine. He was financially independent. He was also friendly to AMA, anxious to see that organization grow bigger, stronger, and a major element of the National Aeronautic Association family of sport aviation enthusiasts.

Also, we knew that any transition would be gradual—it would probably take a few years before the magazine publisher would suffer a serious loss of income. Also, many of the regular buyers would never become AMA members—they might be aviation fans but not model airplane people.

Regardless, the magazine owner and the editor agreed to help AMA in this manner and over the next few years AMA membership numbers increased slowly but steadily. Along the way the magazine's name got changed to American Aircraft Modeler.

The effect on AMA of the magazine was dramatically positive. The AMA membership total had dropped from about 20,000 members in 1963 to about 17,000 in 1967. But with the new magazine/membership arrangement, after that year the total climbed rapidly so that in 9 years (1966-1975) the total had risen to 50,000!

This helped AMA tremendously but hurt the magazine company enough, due to the transfer of previous subscribers to AMA memberships, that it was decided by Ed Sweeney Jr to discontinue American Aircraft Modeler magazine. But rather than let the magazine die, AMA bought it. The name was changed to Model Aviation, the Official Publication of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, with Bill Winter retained as editor.

Meanwhile Ed Jr had gotten more interested in full scale planes so he no longer needed the magazine as his main activity. Also, his father had died and Ed inherited money from the Sweeney family, so he was doing ok financially, except that creditors were demanding payment for unpaid magazine bills.

AMA helped him by paying off the creditors and AMA thus got the magazine cheaply. With Bill Winter still producing the publication, on AMA's behalf, and with AMA financially solvent, the membership growth continued steadily.

Sidelight: during the war, Norm Ward was the command pilot of our B-29 that went overseas to Okinawa. After the war, when Bill Winter became the editor of AMA's magazine, he needed an advertising sales manager. On the AMA staff working for me was Lucille ("Lu") Ward, Norm's wife. She suggested that Norm could do the advertising job and Bill Winter agreed to offer it to him.

So we had this interesting situation where my former pilot was now working for me. It worked but Norm didn't seem to like the role reversal. But it prevailed until Bill Winter had to retire due to health problems. Then Norm and Lucille divorced when he went alcoholic and died. Lu continued with AMA but retired when AMA moved to Indiana.

By that time I had retired and AMA was at its peak of growth. But the growth wasn't all due to the magazine. It was also due to another situation that was happening at the same time. In the early 1960's the bulk of members were free fighters and control liners. Radio control fliers were in the minority. This was due to the fact that in order to fly models legally with radio control, the pilots had to be licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

To get a license required taking a test based on knowledge of electronics. Most of those interested in radio control did not want to do what it took to pass the test. But they wanted to fly so there was a lot of illegal (unlicensed) activity going on. This also meant that there were lot of model fliers who were not inclined to become AMA members.

But during the early 1960's AMA had initiated a campaign to influence the FCC toward liberalizing the law regarding radio control. Over several years, as the AMA membership grew due to the magazine appeal, finances had improved enough for us to hire a prominent D.C. lawyer who had been an FCC commissioner.

He was able to direct an AMA Frequency Committee we had organized, on how to petition the FCC for relief from the regulations which were stifling the growth of radio control activity. I worked with the committee to go through the steps necessary to propose a change in the FCC regulations. The effort required several years of patient persuasion to get the FCC to finally accept our 'case' for relief starting 1966.

What the FCC did was to authorize a license-free group of radio control transmission frequencies for model airplanes, boats, and cars. When this happened, many thousands of modelers who evidently had been operating illegally suddenly became visible. They were obviously very grateful to AMA for leading the license-free FCC campaign and the result was a huge influx of new AMA memberships.

Within 10 years AMA memberships increased to over 100,000, practically all of it from those who classed themselves as radio controllers. To reflect this growth AMA's magazine content more prominently featured radio control interest, without diminishing content for other interests. Thus the total picture of AMA's membership was greatly expanded, due mostly to the combination of the new magazine and the change in FCC regulations.

When Bill Winter finally retired and Carl Wheeley took over as Editor, the AMA membership growth continued unabated, so much so that when I retired in 1991 it was at an all-time high of over 160,000 members— a total that has not been exceeded since then.

Footnote: I was AMA Executive Director for 27 years. During the 19 years since then there have been six other people serving in that position!

## **Section 5. AROUND THE WORLD WITH AMA**

When I became President of AMA I had no idea regarding how much travel might be involved, even though right at the beginning of my term in 1963 I needed to be representing AMA at a hobby industry association trade show in Chicago. Later I needed to attend AMA Executive Council meetings in various cities across the country. These were board of directors-type events to deal with budgetary and policy making decisions.

But there was another class of travel that was largely international. This involved meetings and events in connection with AMA's status as the U.S. aeromodeling representative to events of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale. These included twice a year meetings of the FAI's Committee for International Aeromodeling (C.I.A.M) in Paris, France, and also FAI world championships competitions which were held all over the world.

Only occasionally did I participate in the FAI competitions (as an official judge or jury member) but the twice a year Paris meetings were mandatory. Also, I needed to be present at AMA's annual national championships since AMA Executive Council meetings were held there in the evenings after the daytime competitions.

The first Paris meeting for me was in the spring of 1964. It, like the others to follow, required being away from home for a week. While my transportation across the ocean would be provided by AMA (through the National Aeronautic Association) any other travel expenses (hotel, meals, etc.,) would be up to me to cover.

When this meeting was scheduled, Lillian and I decided to make it a joint business and personal travel affair. She had never been out of the country and this would be an opportunity for both of us to combine business and pleasure. Back then the airlines promoted what was called a Fly Now, Pay Later plan. It provided for monthly payments to cover the airline ticket.

We signed Lil up for this and she would travel on her own and meet me in Paris. My travel was provided by the National Aeronautic Association through a special arrangement they had with the military, to enable USA representatives to attend international meetings.

Actually, several AMA officials traveled to meetings in this manner. I would book the hotel rooms for the group, including any wives, and the officials would pay separately to cover the costs for the wives. The net result was that the men would attend FAI meetings during the day and the men and women would get together at night for meals and sightseeing.

It was a great arrangement which we were to enjoy for many years. It also expanded to include extra days on each trip to visit other locations besides France. As a result we got to see much more of Europe than we initially expected. Many times we were invited to spend a night or two as guests in the homes of representatives from other countries.

So we got to visit with FAI friends in England, Ireland, Switzerland, and Germany. We also were able to use extra days to visit Spain, Luxembourg, Lichtenstein, Belgium and the Netherlands. En route we also got to stop over briefly in Iceland. On one trip Lillian also got to visit Portugal on the way to meet me in Paris.

Besides these trips to Europe, we were also able to visit other parts of the world. In addition to the meetings in Paris, the FAI typically had a General Conference in a different country each year, as part of a program to have its members visit all FAI countries.

For this program, however, Lillian and I had to pay our own way—there was no assistance from AMA or NAA to cover the cost, although NAA did provide credentials for us to attend as part of the official NAA contingent. When these opportunities came along my situation at AMA had improved considerably so that we could afford to pay for the trip.

As a result of this program Lillian and I were able to expand our travel experience to include visits to Australia, Japan and Canada. In addition, when I was designated as a Jury member for the 1977 World Championships in South Africa, we were able to visit there. The same thing happened for a World Championships in Mexico.

Add to all that my wartime travel to Okinawa, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, the total number of countries visited comes to twenty. Except for the wartime travel, all the rest came during my 27 years with AMA and practically all of it was with Lil. Our only regret was that our children were not part of the foreign travel scene, but we all together and shared our great 30 day cross country drive to California and back during 1963.

A very special part of all this travel was the times Lil and I were invited to stay for one or more nights with friends in various countries. This included Jim and Emma Clarke in Ireland, also Dr. John Stuart. In England: Ron and Betty Moulton, John and Marion Jones, George and Betty Cox, Henry and Dora Nicholls. In Germany: Werner and Inge Groth, also Dr. Erna Roth. In Switzerland: Helmut Ziegler and his wife. In South Africa: Don Mackenzie and his wife.

The Mackenzies were British, with a home in South Africa. While we were with them they said they were going to sell their house and move back to England, because of an expected revolution that would make the British unwelcome. The revolution did come, after Nelson Mandela was released after many years in prison and his assumption of leadership in South Africa.

One of the most interesting visits came out of the World Championships in South Africa. While there we got to know Jimmy Clarke of Ireland and his wife Emma. Jim and I spent a lot of time together there and so did Lil with Emma. Lil was talking about her Irish relatives, saying she would like to visit Ireland and look for information about them.

Jim and Emma invited to us to come and stay with them. At the same time the Irish Team Manager, Dr. John Stuart, said that if we got to Ireland he would be happy to show us around Northern Ireland after we visited the Clarkes in Southern Ireland. Stuart also said he would also look up the history of Lil's relatives in Southern Ireland and show us where they lived.

We got to visit Ireland and contacted the Clarkes. They picked us up at the Dublin airport and took us to their house, after giving us a quick car tour of Dublin. While we were with the Clarkes we heard from Stuart that he had found a lot of information about Lil's relatives and that he would be happy to escort us on a tour of visiting them. He noted that the relatives were anxious to meet us.

It all worked out that we got together and visited several of the family houses and also the church and its cemetery that held some of the deceased family members. The basic family name was Boyle. We also met the McDaid family and stayed with them—they were part of the Boyle heritage.

At first the McDaids were friendly, but cool; until it came out that we were not there to claim any family heirlooms, that we were only interested in confirming the family history. The McDaids then relaxed and we enjoyed being with them. They were obviously well off, with a big house, a farm on a beautiful lake, and three Mercedes cars in their parking lot!

After we met all the relatives, Stuart took us in his car to his home in Northern Ireland. To get there we had to cross the border from Southern Ireland and this was by way of a British military outpost, with armed guards. We had no problem there because Stuart had doctor's license plates from Northern Ireland. But the scene reminded us that the two sections of Ireland were still at war.

Stuart lived with his parents and they welcomed us and showed us the room where we would be sleeping. It was a nice house and his parents were polite but reserved in talking with us. We had a light dinner with them and Stuart said he would be taking me with him to a model club meeting in Belfast where his friends were anxious to meet an American.

The club meeting was very friendly, typical of model airplane groups everywhere and it was quite late when we got back to Stuart's house. There his mother was upset with us for being late and she had scared Lil badly about how dangerous it was to be out late in Belfast. But we finally all got to bed and in the morning had breakfast. We were anxious to leave because the night had not gone well for Lil.

Stuart then announced that he was driving us back to Dublin. His mother got upset at that because she didn't want him driving across the border. She suggested he put us on the train to Dublin, but Stuart said that could be more dangerous because trains on that route had been bombed before!

Stuart prevailed and we got in his car. On the way he said he was driving because he wanted to visit his girlfriend in Dublin and he didn't want to use the train. All went well and we got back to the Clarkes without any problem.

Stuart told us that the North-South Irish situation was very unstable. He said any car left unattended on Belfast streets would be towed away, on the assumption that a bomb might be in it. This made our visit to Northern Ireland memorable but with a chill that made us feel lucky to be out of there.

By contrast the south of Ireland was a happier, friendlier, place. We really enjoyed being with the Clarkes in their cozy 2 story house in a nice suburban residential neighborhood. A couple of years later we came back to Dublin, stayed at the Clarkes house again, and Jim lent us his second car to go wherever we wanted, as long as we didn't cross the border!

On other visits to Europe we stayed with Henry Nicholls and his wife, also Ron and Betty Moulton, also George and Betty Cox, also John and Marian Jones. These were all great visits and helped us appreciate the British connection to Americans.

We also had a nice visit staying for a few days with Helmut Ziegler and his wife in Switzerland. He was a former officer in the World War 2 German submarine service. Where they lived was like out of scene from The Sound of Music, in a mountain village. We also stayed with the German aero club's FAI aeromodeling representative, Werner Groth, and his wife, and enjoyed their hospitality. This visit led to another adventure in Germany and the USA involving other Germans and their place in history, but that's a whole other story told elsewhere in this journal.

Still another interesting visit, though just for a few hours, was with Camille Gerard, the FAI aeromodeling representative from the little country of Luxembourg, and his large family. The name Camille is misleading—instead of being female, he was a chubby friendly older guy. His family was a very happy group, delighted to meet with Americans.

Our favorite place to visit, however, was the home of Gordon Burford and his wife, Josie, in Australia. Gordon, besides being an FAI aeromodeling representative, was a famous model airplane engine manufacturer. He traveled the world frequently and we were with him several times in Paris and he visited with us in Fairfax several times, and we visited with him in Australia.

The house the Burfords lived in he had designed himself. It was a circular house with a huge atrium whose roof was supported in the middle by a big tree he had imported from China. Aside from the big central room, other rooms were attached to the outside of the circular wall: bedrooms, his private workshop, and his "factory" where he made his engines and model stuff.

Outside the house he had a big wooden deck surrounded by trees that always seemed to be full of birds. Each evening the birds would line up like soldiers along the rear fence and he would feed them one at a time until all had eaten. He had actually trained them into this routine and it was disciplined orderly process. Each bird ate then returned to the trees they had come from. It was always a great treat to see. Nearby, too, were always kangaroos, which made the whole scene say Australia.

Thinking back to England, George and Betty Cox were always great to visit. She had been an ambulance driver in World War II and she had many interesting stories to tell about that experience. It was obvious that for her the war was hard but rewarding. So she was happy to be living quietly in a lovely cottage in the country.

George, when we met him, besides being a modeler, was also one of England's top aviation illustrators and he was an accomplished landscape artist. He also was retired as a local schoolmaster. From several years of being good friends we are most pleased to have on our house walls a group of his paintings which mostly are scenes from where they live in the country.

Thinking back to our visit to South Africa, this was unique. To get there we had to fly via South African Airways, from New York to Johannesburg, with one brief aircraft refueling stop at the tiny Isle de Sol (Island of the Sun) on the Equator, just off the coast of West Africa.

As our flight approached the island we were told to lower all the passenger window shades in the main cabin. We were told, too, to keep them lowered through the landing, the refueling, and the takeoff. That seemed strange, something we never encountered before.

In addition we were told, as we came off the airplane and walked into a small building near the airplane, not to look around. We had to walk between two columns of armed guards until we got into the building. The guards were in uniform but we saw nothing to identify the country they were from. There were also many dogs in the area near the building.

Once inside we could use the bathrooms and get some water to drink, but there was nothing else - nothing to buy, no signs, nothing to look at other than the bare walls. We were not allowed to out of the building, either, until time to re-board the plane. As we sat and waited about an hour there was a lot of passenger discussion concerning the strange situation.

There was a lot of speculation that this all had something to do with South Africa's then current outcast political status in the world. We had heard that South African Airways could not use airfields in many countries for refueling. It was rumored they had made a deal with some small country, that the little island was part of, to pay a lot of money for refueling rights.

The distance from New York to South Africa was very great and the island was about halfway between. Without refueling the airplane would have had to carry a tremendous load of fuel to make the flight non-stop. Also, a very long non-stop flight would be very tiresome for the passengers and crew.

Whatever the real situation, it was an interesting interlude that made the trip different than any other. Since our trip we have noted that South African Airways now, many years later, makes the same trip non-stop and in much less time.

Note: looking at a map of Africa shows two small islands off the west coast near the Equator, but neither of them is identified as Isle de Sol.

South Africa was fascinating to visit. One initial impression of the Johannesburg area was that the streets and roads were spotlessly clean. We learned that disposable paper products were not allowed. Another was that the night sky was brilliantly lit by bright stars, no doubt from the very southern location of that part of Africa. We enjoyed the sparkling stars at a rooftop party that our hosts invited all the world championships participants to.

While in South Africa we stayed at the Burgerspark Hotel, in Johannesburg, which was ultra-modern and first class all the way. This was where practically all our group of the foreign participants in the world championships were booked. From there we were bussed each day to and from the Swartkops Air Force base at Verwoerdburg.

We also had a great visit to one of Johannesburg's very big department stores. It and its parking area was all located below ground, made from what was previously a big diamond mine. The top three levels were for the parking garage and the store was located on the four floors below the garage areas, all accessible by elevators.

In all respects Johannesburg was a major city, equivalent to places like London, Paris, etc. Whereas the name Africa suggests a primitive environment, the city was a complete contrast to that thought; modern in every respect, regarding offices, transportation, homes, stores, etc.

Yet one of the tour events our travel arrangements included was like a trip back in time. The event was held in what looked like a sports ring used by bull fighters in Spain—a huge bowl of seats many rows down into a pit. The base of the bowl was a flat dirt field where African natives performed many of their traditional dances.

Their costumes and makeup made them look ferocious, especially with the spears they waved around constantly as drum beat music echoed off the ringed area. Some of the performances were fearsome recreations of war dances, with much singing and shouting.

There was an intermission where the atmosphere was transformed with proper British refreshments: tea and crackers in white crockery. The contrast with the native African dancing and costumes was striking; something to remember for many years to come, especially at the photo session afterwards when the paying guests got to pose with fierce looking natives made up like cannibals.

Also memorable among our world travels was our trip to Japan. As one who came close to being in a bomber over Japan in 1945, had not the war ended just a few months before our B-29 crew arrived on Okinawa, it was only natural to wonder what Japan was like many years later.

Although by the time of our trip we had seen on TV a new Japan come out of the war, the amount of change was amazing. It was as if there had never been a war with Japan. Everything we saw was modern, natural enough with so much of the country having had to be rebuilt, but the degree of change seemed incredible. But we should not have been surprised-- we saw the same thing in England, France, and Germany.

But the difference in Japan was more noticeable because it was not so much a matter as with the other countries where so much was rebuilt to what it was like before the war. In Japan, at least in Tokyo, it was more a case not of rebuilding, but creating a new a whole new world.

Later, as we toured outside Tokyo, we saw much of the country as it was before the war; more rural. Probably the most significant change was from thatched straw type roofs of the past to more modern solid structures. But perhaps the biggest surprise was that we felt welcome everywhere we went— friendliness to Americans was felt everywhere we went; very much like we felt when visiting Germany.

The Japanese Aero Club invited all our foreign FAI visitors to a very special event, a welcome dinner hosted by one of the princes of Japanese royalty. After the dinner we were treated to special performances by Japanese dancers, including a group of very talented children; an interesting mix of traditional and modern dancing.

Recalling the total spectrum of our trips around the world, our visit to Mexico in connection with another world championships for model flying, produced several different experiences. The event was held at a former military airfield away from Mexico City where we stayed at a very modern American Marriott hotel. Our room was about eight floors up, overlooking a beautiful beach.

The first impression was great, but that turned sour when we discovered that the room's closets were full of bugs. A call to the management resulted in a change of rooms, but even though we didn't see any more bugs, we had the feeling they were close by.

Each morning a local taxi was provided by the event officials to get us to the model airfield. The taxi was a nice idea, but the half hour ride was very hot. I noticed that the taxi was supposedly air-conditioned but when I asked the driver why it wasn't cool, he laughed and said "No Freon!"

When we got to the airfield we saw armed guards all around, although the area was empty of anyone except our world championships people. I asked why there didn't seem to be any military activity on the field except for the guards. We were then told that the guards were for our protection "from the banditos who might want to rob the foreigners!"

Apparently the abandoned airfield was where the bandits normally operated, but for this international event they were chased out, presumably to return when our event ended. We had

noted previously that there were zones, particularly in Mexico City, where tourists were protected from criminal activity.

Upon arrival at the international airport in Mexico City we were warned to leave the airport only by the airline bus transportation. Our airport hotel was only one block from the airline terminal, but we were told to not try to get to the hotel by foot.

When the airline bus entered the hotel driveway we noted that there were guard towers on each side, with armed guards looking down at us. When we checked in at the hotel desk, we were told to not leave the hotel except by cabs or the special bus transportation provided by the hotel. Aside from that chilling warning the hotel was very hospitable!

The week long model event went very well and a farewell party for all the foreign participants was planned for Saturday night, before our departure the next day. We used the hotel elevator to get up to the penthouse dining hall that overlooked the beach way down below.

For about an hour we enjoyed visiting with our foreign friends, saying our goodbyes over cocktails. Then, just as dinner was about to be served, an announcement came over the speaker system that we had to leave the floor immediately and go down to the beach while the dining area was searched for a bomb!

There was shock, but no panic, only confusion caused by too many people trying to get on the single elevator or all trying to use the stairways at once. We were told that it would be announced when we could return to the dinner. But after we got down to the beach and waited for over an hour, there was no announcement.

A couple of our host club members then came to us and said that the money the club had collected to pay for all the dinners was stolen! The dinner had to be called off because there was no way the club could pay for it. The event at that point simply disintegrated into a mass of confusion.

By this time it was about 11 pm and everybody returned to their hotel rooms to pack up for the Saturday morning departure by bus to the airport. It was a sad end to the week's events which otherwise went well. But the Mexican Aero Club members were greatly embarrassed by how it ended and were not much heard from again on the international aviation scene.

But our Mexico adventure had more to give before we got back to the USA. We got to the airport okay and were standing in a long line to the airline ticket counter. It was taking a long time and it was annoying. Then a very richly dressed Mexican couple came by us and pushed their way into the beginning of the waiting line.

I was upset and started to protest, when I was quickly hushed by some other people near us in the line. They said that the couple represented some kind of royalty and if we protested too much the Mexican police would intervene and we would be dragged off and possibly be arrested for disturbing the peace.

It was obvious that the other people in line were as upset as we were and that the airline personnel didn't want any fuss to be made. They said that the man was a "Don" and that he had privileges above those of ordinary citizens. The other people said that the best we could do was to leave the situation alone.

So we went along with the crowd and after getting our tickets cleared, settled down in the terminal building seats to wait for our flight to be called. Nearby, there was construction going on. Up on a platform about 20 feet above the floor there were a group of carpenters cutting and nailing boards on a wall. Pieces of board were falling, as were lots of nails and sawdust.

On the floor below the platform were a couple of workers picking up the boards and nails falling down all over them, in the middle of a cloud of sawdust. It was as if the workers didn't exist; nobody cared about them and they were expected to keep cleaning up the mess raining down on them. It was apparent that these workers were on the lowest rung of the Mexican caste system.

That was our last impression on leaving Mexico and the flight home was uneventful except for a bit of satisfaction upon departure from the airplane. As we were going through Customs clearance there was a separate line for non-USA people. In that line, protesting vigorously was the Mexican Don and his people, wanting special treatment. They didn't get it. They were told to stay in line and be quiet.

It was with a lot of satisfaction that we left that scene behind. But it reminded me of our first trip to Europe, when we arrived at British Customs and we were asked where we were from. I answered quickly: "America!" The British Customs officer then just as quickly and with a smirk on his face asked: "North, Central, or South?"

That was a quick education in geography and it was justified. I got an instant appreciation of how others in the world see us. It also reminded me of another arrival incident some years later, when we arrived in Hawaii from Australia and were greeted in a big meeting room by a Customs worker with a heavy Hispanic accent who pointed to a big U.S. flag and said: "Velcome to da United States!"

All put together, the years of world travel on AMA business included a great deal of personal enjoyment. It was a great mix of business and pleasure. Lillian and I were extremely lucky to have been so involved with so much in so many places with so many people.

Throughout the 27 years of AMA activity it has been a special treat to have her by my side during all the traveling outside the country and also at the many national and international events held in the USA, such as the annual national championship and world championship activities.

She was often an active volunteer worker in our remote headquarters operations, usually at the public address system microphone, coordinating messages to and from the field activities. Her contribution over the years resulted in her receiving two special honors. One was her being designated a "Fellow", a very special award for extensive and varied service for AMA.

The other was also very special. At the 1998 AMA Celebration of Pioneers Banquet in Muncie, Indiana she was presented with a unique plaque called the Keeper of the Flame. Only one other person has received this award, intended to honor women who have helped their husbands in AMA work over a long period of time.

## **Section 6. RETIREMENT**

In the year 1988 I was approached by the then AMA President Don Lowe who said he had been asked by the AMA Executive Council to explore with me as to when I might consider retiring. I told him I thought it would be appropriate when I reached age 65, in 1989. Don said that time would be agreeable and that we should plan a phase out for the end of that year.

AMA held a retirement party for me in Reston, Virginia, near the end of 1989, with the AMA Executive Council and the AMA Headquarters staff in attendance. At that time it was noted that while I would have no official duties at the end of 1989, they would like for me to be at AMA Headquarters during 1990 to be available for any problems that might arise during the new Executive Director's transition.

For doing that I would have the title of Executive Director Emeritus and would be on salary through 1990. But I would be located in an office in AMA's Publications Department across the street, accessible to the HQ staff, but with no duties or responsibilities. I agreed and said that I would stay busy during that year bringing AMA's history up to date.

It was also agreed that I would attend a January 1990 model industry trade show in California as part of the AMA contingent and it was there that a big party was thrown at which I was the guest of honor under a big overhead banner that proclaimed me as AMA Executive Director Emeritus. This was my official departure party by the industry people and I made a speech thanking them for the support they had given to me and the AMA during the years.

After returning home I finished out the year at AMA doing AMA history work and then faded from the scene. But it should be noted that I had disagreed with the AMA Executive Council's choice for my replacement, a former assistant E.D. who I had previously tried to fire but was not allowed to do so by the Executive Council.

For several years he had been trying to influence key HQ employees by proposing himself as my ultimate replacement and this was causing dissension among some staff members. He also had been promoting himself with Executive Council members to be selected as my replacement.

In fact, during the last couple of years prior to my retirement even before it was known that I would be leaving AMA, there were efforts on the part of several other employees who wanted to get me out so that they might become the new Executive Director. One was my assistant E.D.'s girlfriend in the office who had broken up the assistant's marriage to a non-employee. She wanted the job for herself or for him.

Also, my public relations director and my insurance programs director were each trying to get me out, so they might be considered for the job. The PR guy actually worked in cahoots with the AMA President at the time to have himself promoted to the E.D. job.

So there were four people actually working behind the scenes to promote themselves to become Executive Director. Meanwhile, several of the Executive Council members were favoring one employee or another to take my place. It made for an annoying situation that helped me accept the idea of leaving AMA sooner than I might have.

When my retirement was announced, the Executive Council went through a supposedly open selection process to choose my replacement. But it seemed obvious that the outcome was preordained in favor of the person I had tried to fire, to the great disappointment of myself and other candidates I had recommended. So I had little choice but to proceed with the year of being separated from the basic office staff, working on the AMA history, with essentially no contact with the new Executive Director. That suited me because I wanted nothing more to do with him.

This extra year on salary with no interaction with the staff amounted to a bonus in lieu of a genuine retirement benefit. There were no medical insurance or other benefits. So I left quietly when the extra year was up. My history work was essentially ignored; no response at all from the Council when I turned it in. A further kind of insult was that after I was gone they gave the new E.D. a \$5,000 annual salary increase

When I left, individual employees told me that the HQ operation under the new Executive Director was not a happy one. There were factions pro and con with dissensions between departments. Meanwhile AMA had bought new property in Indiana and for the next year or so everyone was busy making the transition to the new location. Some staff people made the move, many didn't.

So there many new people involved in the Indiana operation and there was a very satisfying development. This is that within 3 ½ years of my leaving, the Executive Council fired the Executive Director that replaced me and neither he and his gird friend have been heard from since!

In fact, in the 18 years since I left AMA, there have been four other AMA Executive Directors and a search was on in 2010 for a fifth! In between these various choices my former Executive Secretary, Joyce Hager, served as interim Executive Director between searches, to "hold the fort" until the new person was chosen. She should have been the one selected a long time ago, but that didn't happen. She is now, at the end of 2010, being considered again to be assistant to the new E.D., or perhaps being named to become the Executive Director herself.

## **7. LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT**

The international travel experience ended when I retired from AMA in January 1991, after 27 very busy years of activity, with good health throughout. Within 6 months of retirement,

however, I was diagnosed with Colon Cancer. It was as if it had been waiting for me to settle down to a quieter life.

Successful surgery of the cancer resulted in 3 more years of seemingly good health, but in 1994 a health checkup showed that cancer had reappeared, but this time in my liver. Surgery again was successful, but in another 3 years, in 1997, cancer reappeared in my liver. This time surgery was followed by a year of weekly chemo-therapy treatments.

But in the many years since the third cancer operation there has been nothing further; an exceptional outcome. Because of that happy result I was able to get busy again, working at home instead of commuting. I found myself writing many articles about model airplanes.

During the mid-1990's, because of advances in electronic technology, it became possible to build and fly very small radio controlled models. This made it possible to fly such models close to home and even indoors in places such as school gymnasiums. This kind of activity developed a demand for information concerning how to do it, where to get the products needed, who was involved, etc.

As a result of the obvious demand for news of this relatively new aspect of radio controlled model airplanes I started to produce at home a monthly newsletter about the activity and I began to sell the products necessary for others to get into it. This was a mail order business and the newsletter, called Cloud 9 RC, served as a catalog as well as an information source.

I then received an offer from a commercial model magazine publisher to create a new publication, called RC Micro Flight, which could be sold to subscribers. I liked the idea of being paid to write for this publication. The first issue was printed in December 1999 and was a professionally produced version of my newsletter, with the addition of articles from other writers.

RC Micro Flight continued for four years, through the February 1995 issue, when the publisher decided to discontinue it. A lot of subscribers were unhappy about that and I decided to create an electronic internet-based equivalent monthly magazine type publication which I called RC Micro World.

It was almost instantly successful and I soon had hundreds of subscribers from all over the world; from 33 countries! In the process I had to learn how to use a computer, but this came quickly. The great improvement over the original newsletter was that RC Micro World did not involve printing and mailing copies—I created the original, put it on the internet and subscribers could then see it whenever they wished.

The first issue was for May 2005 and it has continued monthly for over 5 years, keeping me busy all that time at home. It supported my hobby and has provided reasonable extra income to supplement Social Security paychecks.

For the first four years of producing RC Micro World I also operated a model airplane mail order parts business from the house, but I gave that up in 2009 when the work involved got to be too

much along with producing the website magazine. So producing the online magazine is now my only work activity, other than writing a quarterly model airplane article for a commercial printed magazine called Park Pilot, which is produced by the AMA.

Until last year and for several years prior, I attended a few special out of town events, as a sideline to producing RC Micro World. Each spring I went to an annual show in Toledo, Ohio, called the RC Expo, where I had a booth under the website name. I also went to the fall NEAT Fair in New York State, also with the booth. These trips were to provide a visible presence of RC Micro World, to promote more subscriptions.

In October of 2009 I added another special event, in Pennsylvania, called KIEF (Keystone Indoor Electric Festival). This event was held in a huge inflated sports dome and it had advertiser booths plus model flying. At this event a new health problem showed up. After a lot of walking back and forth in the big dome I suddenly felt very weak.

After a few minutes sitting and resting I was able to walk again. But during the next couple of days at the dome, the weakness continued after walking for more than 5 minutes at a time. Arriving back home, after an all-day drive, I decided that I needed to visit my doctor. My regular quarterly visit to him was due the same week so I waited a couple of days rather than seek a special appointment.

When I saw him and told him of my weakness, he had my blood tested and said that I needed to go immediately to the Emergency Room of the nearby Reston Hospital. At the hospital, I was quickly admitted for further examination and treatment for what was diagnosed as Anemia, caused by low readings for my white and red blood cells.

What followed were a series of tests and an infusion of a couple of units of blood. After a few days in the hospital I was allowed to go home, but with further exams to come within a week. After that there were hospital stays for a few days each in the months of November, December, January, February, and March; each time with more units of blood infused and with more tests to try to determine the cause of the poor blood production.

April and May followed, with more blood infusions, but on an out-patient basis, so I didn't have to stay overnight. But it was a difficult routine, in the middle of a cold winter and even a record snowstorm. That made travel to the hospital difficult. The situation did not look good for a quick "cure" for the blood problem.

In the middle of all this, there was a major complication involving Lillian. Back in October, after I had come home from Pennsylvania, she had fallen out of bed in the very early morning hours. When I tried to help her get up I couldn't do it in my weakened condition. It took a 911 phone call and an emergency team of firemen to get her off the floor and into their ambulance and a trip for emergency room hospital treatment.

Her situation was complicated by the fact that she had a replacement right hip and a replacement right knee, done several years ago, plus she has since had a bad left knee. All this, even before

the fall, made it difficult for her to walk and she had been using a rolling walker chair for several years. So she stayed in the hospital for a few days before she could come home.

The end result of her situation was that we had to hire daily assistance for her at home for a couple of months, all this while I was going in and out of hospitals. To help her situation, daughters Barbara and Chris alternated taking time off from work to supplement the help of the paid workers.

Barbara was local, living in Washington, D.C., but Chris lived in Florida and had to fly in to stay with us for a week at a time. Meanwhile, son Mark was shuttling me back and forth from home to doctors and hospitals. It was a wild couple of months, after Christmas, to deal with all this and it became obvious that something had to be done to change the routine.

Chris then decided on a radical but more practical way of dealing with the problems of Lillian and me. After retiring a few years ago from working for her D.C. based company called Circle Solutions, Chris and her husband, Steve, and son. Jeffrey had moved to Florida. But she had recently resumed work for the company, at home, using her computer and the phone.

She and Steve, after Chris had made several trips to Fairfax to help Lil and myself, which disrupted their family life, offered to have Lil and I come to Florida and live with them. This helped her situation by not needing to be away from home and also did not require Barbara's time away from work. It also eliminated the need for paid workers to help Lillian get around the house in Virginia and be looked after.

Another major benefit to us is the fact that in Chris' location in Sarasota, Florida, excellent medical facilities are nearby and not subject to winter weather travel problems. The area is also famous for superior medical facilities and doctors to treat older people.

We therefore now live in Florida and are likely to stay there. I have had the help of one of the country's top blood doctors since May and in July he was joined on my case by one of the top heart/cancer doctors. Between the both of them I'm getting weekly exams for blood status (with blood infusions as necessary, 2 or 3 times a month, or more) and an extensive series of tests regarding my heart.

Meanwhile, Mark is caring for our house in Virginia, which is close to where he works. He and Barbara also visit us occasionally in Florida. For them the trip is a vacation, especially since they can enjoy the use of Chris & Steve's swimming pool when they are with us. Daughter Monica, who still lives in her home in Virginia, also is able to visit us in Florida occasionally.

In late 2010 the situation improved further when Barbara sold her Condo in D.C. and moved nearby in Florida, buying a house there with the money from the Condo sale. This resulted in her being available to help Chris look after their Mom and Dad. In making this move she was able, as in the case with Chris, to keep her D.C. job, operating remotely via her computer at home.

So, life has radically changed for us since the end of 2009 and although it has stabilized considerably since mid-2010. Lillian and I celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on September 9 the same year. Considering our ages, 86 for me and 84 for Lil, we're very lucky to be still functioning.

As I have always said (and which Lillian hates to hear), it could be a lot worse. I'm optimistically looking forward to reporting much more about where we go from here and I give thanks every day for having four great children to help us and to carry on the Worth name when Lil and I will no longer be in this world

Meanwhile, even with all the medical attention I've been getting in 2010, I continue to produce RC Micro World, using my laptop computer to generate the website words and to communicate daily with those who contribute news and information for it. While I'm in the hospital about once a week for a six hour session of getting transfusions, I have the computer on my lap and my cell phone at my side while I'm in the bed, so I stay busy.

There's no boredom or pain involved and the hospital nurses (both male and female) all seem to marvel that I'm upbeat during all this. They're very supportive and help make the time go quickly. It's a different aspect of living that I didn't expect to be doing six months ago, but it has turned out to be far better than it could have been.

So, while it lasts, life goes on and putting all this down on paper helps to assure that all that has been involved is not forgotten.

## **Section 8. ASSORTED ADDITIONS:**

### **A. VISITING BURT RUTAN**

While in California during 1980 Lil and I went out to the Mojave valley to look up an AMA member who had gained some fame as a modeler when he was younger, but who had gotten more famous as an adult. This is Burt Rutan who as a teen ager had won an event at the AMA National Championships (Dallas, Texas 1960) with his twin engine Control Line scale model. He also was first in one other event and placed in 3 more.

In later years he became more famous as the designer and builder of unique full scale aircraft that became extremely popular among those who built their own aircraft from plans or kits. In fact he was acclaimed at that time as the number designer in the world of those who were home builders of personal aircraft.

At present, he is even better known as the man behind a private effort to get people into space that are willing to pay for the cost involved. In fact, he is the head person of the group which has built the first rocket powered aircraft, the Space Ship One to carry a passenger into space. He has since been perfecting Space Ship Two, to carry paying passengers into space on a continuing basis.

But back in 1970's he was known more simply as the leader of his company, Scaled Composites, which was doing things nobody else was doing at the time. He was regarded as a free thinker who did not operate by ordinary rules. When we visited him he had just completed a contract with the Defense Department to build a special military aircraft.

His contract was simple: give him the specifications for the aircraft and its expected performance and leave it to him to deliver it. If he failed to produce what was desired it would cost the government nothing, but if he was successful he would then be paid. This was a highly unusual contract for the government to agree to, but Burt's history and reputation was so good his offer was accepted. Burt delivered what he promised and his business prospered.

Burt greeted us as old friends from his model building days and he praised how AMA had grown during my years as Executive Director. At the end of our happy visit he gave us several items for the AMA Museum, including the thesis he wrote for his college degree and the model he had won the National Championships with.

## **B. THE SPACE SHUTTLE**

After leaving Burt we headed for an airport nearby where a special event was to take place. This was to be first time that NASA's Space Shuttle was to be flown attached to the top of a 747 transport aircraft. The purpose of this was to provide a means for the Space Shuttle to be returned to Florida if, after coming back to earth from a space mission and due to weather or other problems in Florida, it had to land in California.

This was the first time such a piggy-back arrangement would be tried for such large and heavy aircraft and if it failed the future of the Space Shuttle program would be seriously compromised. So this test flight was to be a major historical event and Lil and I, due to our previous NASA connections, knew about it and were able to be witness to it.

I knew about it because a couple of AMA member friends, John Kiker and Owen Morris, who also worked for NASA, had helped prove the concept. They had built radio controlled models of the Space Shuttle and the 747 transport plane, coupled them together, flew them as a unit, then separated them in flight and landed each separately.

So Lil and I were there as spectators when the actual full scale demonstration took place. It went successfully, as we knew it should, from the earlier model test flights. It was a big thrill, therefore, to part of the scene that was covered extensively by the news media.

## **D. VISITING THE APOLLO PROJECT**

When we lived in Hampton on Patrician Drive, our next door neighbors were Alan Kehlet and his wife. Alan and I worked for NASA at the same time. But after NASA's Apollo's project to put a man on the moon was established, Alan went to work for the North American Aviation Company in California, which won the contract to build a series of Apollo capsules to be used to carry the astronauts to the moon.

Alan was one of the early engineers on the Apollo project and we had often talked together about it when we were both at NASA. On one of my subsequent trips to California for AMA, I decided to call Alan to see how he was doing since his family's move. He was happy to hear from me and suggested that I visit him at the North American company so I could see what he was doing.

At the company gate he had arranged for me to be admitted, on the basis that I was a NASA employee with a security clearance. He met me on arrival and started to show me around the factory. One section was partitioned off from the rest of the factory and this was for the work on Apollo—the rest of the company was devoted to producing other aircraft products.

Alan took me into the Apollo area and started to tell me about what he was working on when a man who was obviously a security guard came up to us and asked me where my Apollo I.D. was. I didn't have one and as Alan started to explain that I was an old friend and NASA employee, but the guard said I was not allowed in the area.

The guard further said I was subject to arrest unless I could come with a good answer to the lack of proper I.D. It was obvious; too, that nothing Alan said helped the situation. It was finally decided, however that the NASA boss of the project would have the final say about what would happen next.

A phone call was made to NASA Headquarters in Houston, Texas and it turned out that the "boss" was an old NASA model builder friend, Caldwell Johnson. When he found out that the person in question was me, he was upset but he told the guard that I was not a security problem but simply unauthorized to be in the building and that I should be escorted out right away.

But first he raised hell with me for being there, then with Alan for inviting me, saying that friendship, even with an NASA I.D., was no basis for letting me see the project. That ended my visit and I was happy to get out of there. It had no lasting effect on our mutual friendships, but it made me realize how serious the project was regarded, all based on not letting the Russians know what we were doing, since they were in a race with us to get to the moon first.

## **E. THE FRANK ZAIC FAMILY**

Way back before World War 2, when I was a teen ager, I used to occasionally visit a model airplane supply shop in the lower Manhattan area of New York City. The business was known as JASCO, for Junior Aeronautical Supply Company. It was run by a couple of brothers, Frank and John Zaic.

In the model airplane world they were famous for offering the finest quality products, at reasonable prices. It was depression time in the late 30's and their place was on the second floor of an old building in a rundown neighborhood. Entrance was by a side street door, with only a JASCO sign outside. The door opened to a set of stairs up to the second floor.

Upstairs was not like a store; more of a workshop, with machines and stuff piled everywhere. But this is where Frank and John lived and made products for people all over the world who appreciated what the Zaics offered through their little pamphlet of a catalog.

The catalog, in fact, was what sold the products, using many of Frank's artistic drawings and helpful hints from both brothers as to how to use their products. Their catalogs over the years are considered as collector's items, treasured for their originality and cleverness.

JASCO suspended operations during World War 2 as Frank went into military service. When the war ended, JASCO resumed business but on a much bigger scale than before. The company produced a line of kits, featuring original design models that were unlike any other. They were prized for the quality of materials included, the originality of designs, and the flyability of the designs.

In fact, one of Jasco's models, a simple little all balsa wood glider, aided by the company's instructions, helped me learn how to make models fly well and to create my own designs. I also learned from the instructions how to write information for other modelers.

Frank Zaic's lasting legacy for modelers is a series of annual books he produced and sold since 1937, which many modelers have credited with having the most influence over their building and flying activities. I'm proud to be one who has several of my designs and articles in his books.

Over the years the JASCO business blossomed and provided a good income for the Zaics. Frank married and eventually retired and moved to California. His wife, Carmen, and he were inseparable and they traveled everywhere across the USA together. Meanwhile JASCO became JETCO, run by Frank's sister and other family members.

Aside from the model business Frank had been a leader regarding aviation interests, initially with the National Aeronautic Association, going back to the early 30's. In fact, he was a major influence in creating the Academy of Model Aeronautics in 1936 as an independent organization within the NAA family.

In later years, after the war, when I became involved with AMA, Frank's advice and guidance helped me to assume a leadership role that was instrumental in guiding AMA out of a deficit operation into a profitable partner with NAA.

Frank and his brother John are no longer with us, but before they passed, John had established a fund to recognize and reward individuals and organizations for their contributions to advancing the art of aeromodeling. When Frank died, his wife added more money to what is now known as the Zaic Memorial Fund.

That fund was donated to the AMA, with me designated to decide how the money is used, a responsibility I have carried on for several years. When I can no longer carry out this responsibility, AMA becomes the administrator, to continue carrying out the program in accordance with a legal directive provided by me and authorized by Mrs. Zaic.

## **F. MEETING THE ASTRONAUTS**

When I changed from working at Langley Field from the old side of the air base, called the East Area, to the newer side called the West Area, there were many new NACA buildings. It was like an independent city, with workshops, a large airplane hangar, laboratories, wind tunnels, and a cafeteria.

There was also a multi-purpose building for recreation, meetings, shows, and special events. It was simply called the NACA Activities Building. Outside there was a playground for young kids and also ball fields. It was a great gathering place for families and popular for picnics.

When I wasn't working at the hangar, Lil and I would take our young kids to the playground. One time when we were there we met a group of men who were there for some kind of meeting inside the building. But they had come early and visited the playground before going inside.

Lil and I were there pushing the kids on the swings but could only do two at a time. The men who were nearby came over and offered to help with the swings. They pitched in and had all the swings going at once. They also introduced themselves as new NACA employees and gave their names, but the names didn't mean anything to us until later.

A few days later there was an official NACA press release about the men and they were shown on television. This was at the time that the name NACA was changed to NASA, to reflect a new emphasis on space flying instead of airplanes. The men were introduced as the new space pilots called astronauts. We then connected the names and the faces with the men who had pushed our kids on the swings.

Within the next few months I got to meet some of the astronauts officially, in connection with work I was doing in relation to the space program. I met John Glenn, Neal Armstrong, and Frank Borman. John Glenn went on to become the first man to orbit the earth in a spacecraft, Frank Borman was one of three to be the first men to go around the moon, and Neal Armstrong was to be the first man to set foot on the moon surface.

In meeting with Armstrong, Glenn and Borman in the early NASA days I learned that they had been modelers and AMA members when they were younger. Frank Borman told me he built and flew models with his sons, until he got famous by his flight around the moon, after which his NASA public relations activity kept him too busy for the model stuff.

Neal Armstrong also attended some of our national events and a visit to the AMA headquarters in Muncie, Indiana after his moon landing fame had quieted. He seemed happy to meet with modelers there and talk about his own modeling experiences and many AMA people were delighted to talk with him one on one or in groups. His unannounced appearance there was a real treat and he seemed to enjoy just being there.

## **G. THE NAVY DAYS AT AMA**

In my first year as President of AMA (1963) I attended the U.S. Navy hosted National Model Airplane Championships, held at the Los Alamitos Naval Air Station in southern California. Previously, as an ordinary AMA member, I had attended the National Championships (called the NATS) in 1949 at the Olathe Naval Air Station in Kansas,

I drove in my car from Virginia to Kansas with a young modeler friend, Bruce Alwood. For both of us it was a great adventure, seeing the country on our own. I had with me a special radio controlled model that I had built to enter in the National Championships. It had the words Control Research painted in large letters of the model's side, to promote the new mail order model parts business Bill Poythress, Dick Coen, Ed Lorenz, and I had created earlier in 1949.

We had thoughts of possibly placing high enough in the radio control competition to gain some publicity to promote the new business. The flying went well although I just missed scoring high enough to win a trophy. But the other contestants said the model was great and that our products would sell well and they welcomed Control Research into their world.

These National Championship events were part of an official U.S. Navy program to attract potential recruits for the Navy's drive to sign up new pilots. The program began in 1948 and continued annually until discontinued in 1972. The program was supported by the AMA and the hobby industry.

Besides providing personnel to help staff the event (as judges and timers) the Navy let us use their airfield for the model flying and they provided housing for AMA officials. They also flew the officials from the nearest naval air station to their homes out to wherever the National event was held, typically at different locations each year.

The program operated for 24 years and was a major part of AMA's competition activity. It even included, in each of the last 9 years, an all day cruise on the Lexington aircraft carrier after a Championships, for the young winners of Nationals events, plus the AMA officials who acted as chaperones for the youngsters.

The carrier cruises were out of Pensacola, Florida, and the Navy provided air transportation from the Nationals site to and from Pensacola. During the day's cruise model fliers flew their Nationals winning models off the carrier deck, providing a great show for the carrier's Navy personnel.

After returning from the day's cruise all the AMA'ers had a Navy dinner, a night sleeping in officer quarters, and a Navy breakfast, before being flown back to the naval air station nearest their homes. All of this was intended to attract as many youngsters as possible to joining the Navy. The Navy/AMA program ended in 1972 when it became evident that not enough youngsters were being recruited to justify the expense. But for 24 years it was a big boost for AMA.

After that, from 1973 to 1995, AMA was in a strong enough financial condition to able to rent or get permission to use civilian airfields for the National Championships, aided by the fact that the event brought many tourists into the event locality.

Beginning in 1992, when AMA purchased land in Indiana, it was big enough to host the National Championships, but it needed to be developed into a suitable airfield for that purpose. That took a few years to do, but in 1996 the National Championships was held on the AMA property and it has been held there every year since.

## **I. HISTORIC ROCKET PIONEERS**

As a sidelight to our 1990's visit with Werner and Inge Groth in Germany, they took us to see a new museum there, dedicated to the science of rocketry and one of its founders, Professor Hermann Oberth. The Professor was one of two pioneers credited with the creation of rocket motors, back in the 1920's. The other was Robert Goddard, from the USA.

The museum in Germany was established by Dr. Erna Roth, daughter of Professor Oberth, in honor of her father. Dr. Roth was also a friend of the Groths. When we visited the museum, the Groths introduced us to Dr. Roth and she invited us to all have lunch together. During lunch we learned that the Professor was still alive and anxious to meet with Americans. Dr. Roth was particularly interested in the fact that I worked for NASA.

She said that her father had been invited by NASA scientists to visit with them in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss his part in the history of rocket motor development, but that he would need help in making travel arrangements. Lillian and I offered to help and Dr. Roth said she would accompany her father to the USA.

Further discussion resulted in Lillian and I inviting both of them to stay at our house in Fairfax, Virginia, and that we would provide any local transportation they would need for meeting with the NASA people. Out of this developed an invitation from Dr. Roth to have lunch at her house in Germany so that we could meet the professor there.

That luncheon went very well and the professor was very happy to meet us and discuss his visit to the USA. When I told him that I was an officer in the National Association of Rocketry, the American organization for model rocketry, he was particularly pleased that I knew of his early work and that his name was familiar to young people.

Although in his 90's Oberth was apparently in good health and anxious to travel. When Lillian and I left we had the names of NASA people to contact regarding the professor's visit. We made the contacts after we got home and learned that a special welcome program was planned for Oberth at the prestigious Cosmos Club in Washington and that a large list of scientists would be attending to greet the professor and honor his pioneering history.

When the professor and Dr. Roth arrived in Washington we met them at the airport and took them to our house. They were both pleased to be staying with an American family instead of a

hotel. They were with us for several days and we enjoyed their company. The professor was pleased that we had an exercise bike and he used it several times during the visit. We have a photo of him on the bike obviously enjoying himself. He also enjoyed walking with us in the neighborhood and seeing the dogs and cats there too.

On his big night we took him to the Cosmos Club and left him with people he knew there then later picked him up from the club and took him back to our house. He was very happy that he had such a great evening at the club and that he was remembered by so many there. He said it was one of the best times of his life.

He and Dr. Roth returned to Germany and he died not long after. But Dr. Roth returned to the USA several times after that, because she had friends over here. On one of her visits to us she had with her the widow of Dr. Werner Von Braun. At this time he was very famous as a leader in the American military rocket program, in contrast to his World War 2 work as Germany's leader in Hitler's effort to bomb Great Britain with V-2 rockets.

After World War 2 ended Von Braun was brought over from Germany to help with our space race against the Russians. Despite his war work for the Germans, which he claimed was forced on him, Von Braun became a key person in the USA's rocketry program, despite lots of controversy about him and his dual country role.

During my NASA days I had one item of work that involved Von Braun. He was in charge of a project at the U.S. Army's Redstone Rocket base in Huntsville, Alabama. His people needed to use one of NASA's facilities at Langley to test a mechanism for a space satellite. The mechanism was to switch on a valve in the rarified air of space, to inflate a huge plastic balloon that was carried up to high altitude by a rocket. The big balloon had a silver coating which was to reflect signals sent from earth.

The mechanism used a small radio control receiver and it had to operate in a very big vacuum tank at Langley Field. The big tank would have its normal air pressure inside reduced by big pumps to get the atmosphere inside the tank to simulate the very rarified air way up in space. It took several hours of pumping and when the air inside (or lack of it) was reduced sufficiently a radio control transmitter outside the tank would be actuated to switch on the receiver inside the tank to turn on the valve to inflate the big balloon inside the tank.

The receiver sent from Von Braun's group in Alabama turned out to be defective. While at work I was called into the office, was told about the problem and was asked if there was any way I could fix it. I was known at Langley as a radio control hobbyist and was told that time was critical. The balloon test was scheduled for the next day and it would be the only opportunity for weeks to do the test.

I said I would try to adapt one of my hobby receivers to the balloon valve but had no idea how it would operate in rarified air. They said they needed for me to try it, on the chance that it might work, or else the project would be set back for a long time. So I said ok, but that I would need overnight to get the receiver ready.

The next day I brought the receiver from home and hooked it up for the test. Then, after we put it in the vacuum tank, they started pumping the air out, and we waited until the air pressure instruments said the conditions were right for the test. This took several hours but, finally, it was time to switch on the transmitter. One push of the button did it and almost immediately one of the engineers yelled that the big balloon inside the tank was inflating!

They were very happy and so was I. Later I got word that the test was successful and that Von Braun was very pleased, because his project was on schedule. I never heard from him personally, but his engineers assured me that my bosses at Langley would be thanked for getting me involved. In the end I got a hearty handshake for my part in the project and I was thankful that my radio control know-how and model stuff had contributed to the NASA space race.

## **J. TWICE AT THE WHITE HOUSE**

Once, during my later years with AMA, when George Bush Sr. was President of the USA, I was one of about 80 people invited to a special luncheon at the White House. This was as part of a tribute arranged by Barbara Bush, wife of the President, recognizing all the museums in the Washington, DC area.

Because AMA had established a model aviation museum in Reston, Virginia, a suburb of DC, I represented the organization. Included with the luncheon was a tour of the White House and some presentations by the White House staff concerning what they did and how it related to the overall operation of the various departments. It was a very impressive experience.

The President was not present, but Barbara Bush hosted the luncheon and she proved to be a down to earth regular person. She broke the ice early in the meal when soup was served but without any spoons. She simply picked up her bowl with both hands and drank from it. This set the Pattern for everyone else and we simply followed suit. From that moment on, the luncheon was a relaxed and chatty affair.

Years later, during the Christmas holiday week in 2008, our family was treated to a White House tour as a result of daughter Barbara having a friend at Circle Solutions, the company where she and daughter Christine worked, in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. The friend was the wife of one of the new staff members at the White House under the then very newly elected President Obama.

Barbara's friend, through her husband's status as a computer network coordinator with the White House, was able to include us in a special private tour that was more extensive and casual than the typical public tours. As a result we got to see much more than is usual and to spend more time on the visit.

It was particularly interesting to visit the Press Briefing room which is often seen on TV with dozens of newsmen questioning the President's Press Secretary. With just a few of us in that room we were able to spend some time there and sit in the news representative's chairs. I was even

able to stand at the rostrum where the Press Secretary (and sometimes even the President) stands and talks to the assembled crowd.

There was one hitch in getting cleared to visit the White House. The names of all special tour participants had to be cleared in advance before being allowed to go through the security gate. The rest of us: me, Barbara, her friends, and Mark and Monica, were cleared, but Lillian's name had not been properly submitted. It took some time and the help of our White House friend to get the name problem cleared up, but finally all was okay and we were admitted.

## **K. THE AMA-FAI AEROLYMPICS**

During July 1-6, 1974 at the Naval Air Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey, the AMA hosted – on behalf of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI)—the first multi-event world championships that included the three major aeromodeling categories : Free Flight (both Indoor and Outdoor), Radio Control (Aerobatics), Scale (Control Line and Radio Control), plus International Radio Control Soaring and Pylon Racing events.

Especially significant was the fact that this was the first time that Iron Curtain countries took part in an international aeromodeling event in the USA; indicating a start of thawing out of the “cold war” that had previously existed. This result, happening on a U.S. Naval Air Station, was considered miraculous at the time.

The huge size of the event required exceptional coordination of all the categories involved for not only the competitions, but also for the lodging and meals required. Aiding greatly to easing the transportation needs for all those attending from Europe was a model industry effort to provide trucks to carry the many model boxes from all the flights arriving at JFK airport in New York to Lakehurst, then back again after the event was over.

There were many flights involving different airlines. About 40 participants were from England, and about 200 more came from other countries. Americans volunteered to meet the flights and assist the transportation effort. Many of them also served as officials for the competitions. It was a great example of people to people cooperation.

The job that the AMA people did, under my responsibility as Executive Director, was rated as “exceptional and extraordinary”. Besides all the competition coordination, it included booking an entire ‘closed for the summer’ modern multi-story hotel and providing bus transportation to and from the hotel to the airfield. Nothing as complex as this event has happened in aeromodeling since then and it’s not likely to. It stands as one of the proudest achievements of my AMA career.

## **L. OTHER PEOPLE OF NOTE**

Besides all those already mentioned in this biography, many others should be credited with also having a positive influence on my thinking. Among those, in alphabetical order, are Bob Aberle, Frank Anderson, Tom Atwood, Hurst Bowers, Jin Woo Choe, Joe Clements, Johnny Clemens, Jack Felter, Roland Friestad, Stefan Gasparin, Bill Hershberger, John Hunton, Laird Jackson,

Abbott Lahti, Art Laneau, Nick Leichty, Don Lindley, Fritz Mueller, Stew Meyers, Jim Obrien, Bill O'Dwyer, Henry Pasquet, Warren Plohr, Nate Rambo, Dave Robelen, Norm Rosenstock, Harry Shoaf, Ed Slobod, Don Srull, Jeff Troy, Sergio Zigras.

Each of those mentioned contributed to my basic knowledge and expanded my thinking about what really counts in this world and/or how to do things better.

Sidelight: In our Washington, D.C. Maxecuters Club, several members of which are listed above, our club president Stefan Prosky is the son of famous stage and screen actor Robert Prosky. While I lived in the D.C. area I had hoped to meet the father, but he died in 2008 before that could happen. But knowing his son is special enough, a nice guy and fine modeler.

## **M. SPORT FLYERS ASSOCIATION**

Before leaving AMA I had talked to various AMA officers about my concern that the organization was heavily competition oriented, yet there was increasing growth in sport flying—flying for fun rather than in contests. I noted that in order to attract more members AMA needed to cater to the fun fliers, perhaps with a greater percentage of the budget to develop specific programs for them.

I didn't get much sympathetic response, so I decided to leave the subject alone for a while. But, not long after I left AMA I began to see more evidence of what I had been talking about. More clubs were becoming fun fly types while competition groups seemed to stay essentially at about the same numbers. Note—even though I was no longer doing AMA business I was still attending trade shows and other activities that kept me in touch with what was happening.

At one point I was approached by a couple of people who said they were interested in establishing a fun-only type of national model plane organization, offering a publication and liability insurance to those not really attracted to AMA's bias toward competition activity. They said they were willing to hire me to write for their publication.

Since I was no longer employed by AMA and not collecting any regular paycheck I accepted their offer and began to write articles for them. I even attended a couple of trade shows and helped man their advertiser's booth. This upset a number of AMA officers who accused me of being a traitor. But I told them that if AMA simply did more for the sport flyer, perhaps at a lower dues rate, the new Sport Flyers Association would disappear.

Meanwhile the SFA was helping to pay my bills so I could do things that AMA no longer paid me for. Furthermore I was hoping that AMA would see the light and do more for the sport flyer. If they did AMA's growth could continue as before. Unfortunately, it soon turned out that the two people (husband and wife) behind SFA were not very high-minded. They really wanted to grab off a big chunk of the AMA membership and make a lot of money out of it.

I got disenchanted with working for them and soon quit. Meanwhile they got into a big legal squabble with AMA, involving lawsuits and lawyers. It was a nasty mess before it all ended, with

the SFA going out of business and AMA having spent a lot of money in legal matters. It took a long time afterward before my name was no longer “mud” with some AMA officers and I was accepted again as a loyal friend of AMA.

Time has finally healed most of the wounds that resulted and I’m not proud of how I was taken advantage of by SFA, but I’m satisfied that if AMA people had listened to me in the first place about doing more for the sport flier, the whole SFA episode could have been avoided. Since then AMA has created a Park Pilot branch of AMA, with a reduced membership cost, and I am writing a column for the AMA magazine provided to the Park Pilots and getting paid by AMA to do that.

I have also been doing AMA history writing again and have been serving as the AMA History Subcommittee Chairman. I also served for a while as Assistant AMA Historian, working with the Historian, old friend from New York Norm Rosenstock.

In addition, I have been administrating the Zaic Memorial Fund for AMA, distributing grants, awards, and paying expenses for history projects to inform AMA members of how their organization has served them over the years. I make no money from this, but it is satisfying to know that nobody else volunteered to do this work which has made me more friends in AMA and helped heal whatever wounds that may remain.

As AMA member 13 (that number, automatically awarded because I was the 13<sup>th</sup> AMA President) I hold the lowest AMA number currently in existence. That’s something no one else can claim, at a time when AMA numbers run well over 100,000.

## **O. PROMINENT PEOPLE**

Besides those already mentioned, there were others who had become famous in their own worlds and I got to know them fairly well from working with them, some through the National Aeronautic Association, some through the AMA, one from high school. Some examples:

### **General Brooke E. Allen**

Allen was one who became famous when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. His B-17 was one of two which managed to take off and help defend Hawaii by chasing away attacking aircraft. After the war he retired from the Air Force and was hired to be the director of the National Aeronautic Association.

When I became Executive Director of the AMA, I had many meetings with him and we often had lunch at a local restaurant in Washington, D.C. He attended many AMA events, such as the National Championships and also occasional AMA Executive Council meetings. He was very helpful in arranging Air Force sponsorship for AMA officials traveling to international meetings of the FAI.

However, after all his exciting war service, Allen was bored with office work and was largely a figure-head to give prestige to the NAA. He used to gripe about his wife not wanting him to be at home and interfering with her social life. One of his regular rituals to help pass the time was to go to a nearby barber shop to get a haircut and also to have his shoes shined.

He died quietly in 1992 and I attended his funeral in Arlington National Cemetery.

### **Colonel Mickey Roth**

Also retired from the Air Force, Mickey was Allen's assistant at the NAA and he did most of Brooke's paperwork. Mickey and I got along very well and after he retired I stayed for a few days on one of my trips to Florida with he and his wife at his house there which had a great swimming pool. He also had a busy military career and was bored with office work, but he did good helping whenever I needed the assistance of military contacts for AMA projects.

### **Major Gen. John R. Allison**

He was on the board of directors of the National Aeronautic Association, as was I. He also was President of the Air Force Association. He was a well-known airplane pilot who had flown many of the new planes that were developed for use in World War II. During the war he flew P-40's with the Flying Tigers over the Pacific Ocean and was an "Ace", credited with shooting down at least 7 Japanese aircraft.

He was particularly interested in model airplane activities because he believed they were very useful in trying out new ideas. He was also involved in a special model building project. In this case it was for a 5 foot long model boat which he built as a test vehicle for justifying a patent he had applied for. The boat was modeled after an ocean-going freighter and his patent application was for the boat to be driven by a large airplane type propeller on top of the boat.

The boat was intended to be faster and actually simpler to operate than conventional boats which had props that operated below water level. Also, because the boat's engine and large propeller were located above the hull, more cargo could be carried in the hull.

John had built the model boat out of hard wood and it was about a foot wide. He approached me to see if I could provide the motor for the special prop and for the radio control equipment to be installed. I was able to do that and after the boat was finished we took it in his car to a lake in Fairfax, Virginia.

We put the boat in the water from the shoreline and ran it up and down the lake several times. It worked very well and John was very pleased with my work. We enjoyed several lunches together discussing further tests. But the project got stalled when John couldn't devote more time to it. So I wrapped the boat in plastic and put it under the deck of our house. It has remained there for many years because I lost track of John and he is presumed to have passed on.

## **Jay Gerber**

Jay and I first got to know each other through the AMA. He was a modeler who worked for National Football League Films. He was one of their top cameramen. When he was in the Washington, D.C. area to film a game he would occasionally call and invite me to attend a game and see how games were filmed for television.

At one point he said that he would like to produce some model airplane films for AMA. No charge would be involved. He would attend events like the National Championships or the Aeromodeling World Championships, if one was to be held in the USA, and his films could then be available for AMA members to see.

Mark got really interested in these film projects and though only a young teen ager he and Jay got along fine. Jay took on the role of mentor to Mark and taught him many aspects of filming, the film business, movie cameras, etc. From this association Mark developed a great interest in movie-making and all the electronics it involved. Mark's follow-on career development in the television field was largely inspired by Jay's encouragement.

Jay went on to become a major officer with NFL Films, coordinating all camera work for all the football games in the league, setting standards for coverage and quality over the huge network of sites and teams. He was the Founder of the NFL Game Day Frequency Coordination Program that makes it possible for all officials and cameramen at games to talk to each other by radios without interfering with each other.

He also created separate films related to football and the personalities involved. His film work for AMA similarly involved features concerning famous modelers that have provided historical accounts of their achievements.

## **R. WHY MODEL AIRPLANES?**

In my current senior years, although I stay busy with model airplane activity, I occasionally think back to how so many years of such activity began and why it is still so strong today. I remember that it was back in the early 1930's that airplanes captured my imagination. As with many youngsters of those days, I was fascinated by the great news stories involving aviation of those times.

With no television, the radio and newspapers were the main means of learning about what was going on in the world. And, because the very new achievements in aviation were getting a lot of publicity, they were easy to get excited about. First time flights across the ocean to Europe got a lot attention, especially in the Sunday comic strips.

Living in New York City enhanced the situation because planes constantly flew overhead and local airports were nearby. A great experience was to visit an airport and see the airplanes come and go. Seeing them rise off the ground and also come down from above and land was exciting.

What also helped was to go to Saturday movies, as many of us did, and see and hear the newsreel stories about airplanes and the people who flew them.

In the early 1930's simple and cheap (10 cent !) ready to fly balsa wood model airplane airplanes could be bought at local nickel and dime stores like Woolworth's, Kresge's and Newberry's. The little planes were rubber band powered and could be flown almost anywhere: local streets, parks, back yards, etc. Even though it was depression time the models were so cheap and easy to buy they were good gifts for kids, available for a few pennies.

Very soon, too, local hobby shops sold model planes, in addition to model cars and boats. And local hobby shops were great places to hang out. One of those, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, was run by Bill Poythress and his mother, Kay. Bill was 4 years older than me and he had gone beyond the buy it and fly it stage of modeling by building his models from scratch (taking sheets of balsa wood and cutting out his own designs and gluing them together).

Bill was attending the Haaren High School of Aviation and influenced me to do the same when I got old enough. He taught me how to use tools (especially razor blades) to cut the wood and put the pieces together. He also showed me how to adjust and balance the models so they would fly nicely instead of crashing. But in those early years I mainly flew the dime store models because they were so cheap and mostly flew well without a lot of fussing with adjustments.

I remember flying these models when we had family outings to Rockaway Beach at the Atlantic Ocean near the famous amusement park at Coney Island. The only problem with that location was that it was typically very windy; too much so for most model flying. But, occasionally there was calm weather and the model flew well, way up high and without worry about it being caught up in a tree or blown out of sight by the wind.

Most of my very early model flying, however, was in the local park near our house on North Henry Street, or at the much larger McCarren Park about a mile away. At that time I also spent time at the local Boys Club and a lot of the time was building and flying models indoors. The Boys Club was great because more modelers were involved and we got to learn from each other.

In my teens, I had finished elementary school and started to go to high school, near Central Park in the Manhattan section of New York City. We had a model airplane club in the school and we often flew models in the park, sometimes competing in contests to see whose model would fly the longest. The club provided medals to winners in these meets; I still have one of the medals somewhere in my collection of model memorabilia.

While still in high school, it was common for a bunch of us modelers to meet on weekends to fly models at Van Cortland Park, north of Manhattan in the Bronx section of New York. This park was a subway ride, from Queens, through Manhattan to the end of the subway line in the Bronx. Because the subway ride took about an hour we often finished partially built models on the subway ride.

We sometimes applied covering to the framework of unfinished models on the train, using “dope” to adhere the paper or silk covering material. When we did this, the very strong smell of the dope permeated the subway car we rode in (usually the first car of the train) and other people on the train moved to other cars to get away from the smell, so we often had the car to ourselves for the last part of the ride.

At the park, we played a game with the police. They were not supposed to let us fly models there. But it was a very large park and it took them about an hour to make their circle of the park to check on any problems. They were very punctual, so we always stopped about 5 minutes before they were to appear and we played ball or some other quiet game until they were gone.

When they came and went, we resumed flying. This worked for about a year and by that time we had found places to fly closer to home, like out on Long Island, just outside of New York City where there was then a lot of undeveloped land. A most popular location was at the location called Creedmoor.

There was a large hospital nearby, but otherwise it was an empty area without houses or businesses that might be bothered by our activities, which were typically on a Sunday. This model flying was during the early 1940's, when I was in my late teens. It was the time period when I graduated from flying simple rubber band powered models to gasoline engine power.

I remember saving pennies, nickels, and dimes, to gradually accumulate a total of about twenty dollars to buy my first brand new model airplane engine. I wanted a particular new little engine, called the Bantam. When I had enough money I went to the local post office and bought a money order. I then waited a couple of weeks for the engine to show up in the mail.

When about a month went by with no engine delivery, I mentioned this to some older modelers. I was asked how and where I sent the money and I said I paid for it at the post office and still had the receipt. When asked, I showed them the money order, still in my possession. They laughed at this dumb kid who didn't know the money order had to be sent in the mail to the company selling the engines!

After getting over that embarrassment, I sent the money order (to New Jersey) and two weeks later I had my engine. Then I got involved with building a model for it, to fly at the Creedmoor site. Meanwhile, what I didn't know was that my mother was in the hospital near where we flew. She had long been hospitalized for a mental breakdown when several of my brothers had died due to diseases that were rampant in the city in the late 20's and early 30's.

I hadn't any contact with her since pre-school days and was completely unaware of her location. My older brother Frank looked after family matters and he didn't tell me until years later where she was. By that time I was out of high school and off to Virginia. I actually got to see her many years later when Frank took me to another hospital where she had been relocated, but by that time she was very old, didn't know us, and died soon after.

Looking back to the Creedmoor days, that's where I finally got to build and fly my own models and thought seriously about making some money doing it. Dick Coen and I were high school buddies. He lived in Jackson Heights, Queens, one of the stops off my daily train ride to and from school. I often spent weekend afternoons at his house where we built models together.

Sidelight: Before flying at Creedmoor, Dick and I flew models at various other locations. One was a little field called Holmes Airport, used by small private planes and a Goodyear blimp right in the heart of Jackson Heights. This was convenient to Dick's house. But this site soon closed down because a much larger commercial airfield, called LaGuardia Airport was being built nearby.

This led us to search out other places to fly. One was at Canarsie, a beach area at the end of a subway line where there was an empty field at the east end of Brooklyn next to Jamaica Bay, across from the then relatively small Idlewild airport that later became the huge Kennedy International Airport. We were able to fly there for a time, while the bigger airport was under construction. But when that work was done and commercial aircraft began to use Kennedy, we went further East, To Creedmoor.

This was when I created my own original design for a gasoline engine powered model. Dick worked in a famous hobby store called Polk's, after school and weekends in midtown New York, diagonally across the corner from THE big and famous R.H. Macy's department store. He got the materials we needed from the hobby store and we built the model together.

The model was unique, a flying wing, without a conventional tail assembly. The editor of Air Trails magazine, AL Lewis, heard about when he was in the hobby store (world renown as Polk Brothers) and said he would like to publish an article about and the plans for the model if we could prove it would fly.

We did that in a local park and the model design was published in the July 1942 issue of Air Trails magazine, the modeling publication with the world's largest circulation (over 100,000!). From that time on Dick and I became known in the model world and the best part was that we had gotten paid for doing the article. This was just at the time we finished high school and headed for Virginia. It was a big start for a couple of just graduated high school kids who were going south to work for the federal government as World War II started.

Later, with the war over, in 1946 Dick and I got together again and teamed up to design and build another unique model. It was small and radio-controlled; the smallest such model to have appeared in a magazine anywhere. It was published in the July 1948 issue of Air Trails magazine and gained us a lot of recognition among radio control fliers who were mostly older electronics oriented types. The publication showed that radio control could be for all modelers; a dramatic shift in thinking that soon led to a tremendous expansion of the number of radio control fliers.

From these very public exposures to the business side of model airplanes, the hobby became a profession and career that has lasted over sixty years, as described in more detail elsewhere in these pages.

## **T. FLYING MODELS IN NEW ENGLAND**

Over the years Lillian and I, with our kids, visited the Sienkiewicz family in New England many times. It was always a grand reunion, like a big picnic, especially when the weather was good and we gathered outdoors at the back of the houses we visited. In the later years the most common meeting place was at the Reardons (Bobbie and Bill), in Whitely, Mass.

I especially enjoyed this location because it was on a slope looking over farm fields, the highway about a mile away and the valley beyond. It was a great place to fly models and I always tried to have one or two with me when we visited the Reardons. Bill was a modeler, too, so we often flew together there.

In previous years, when the Sienkiewicz family was located more “downtown” in or near Northampton, Massachusetts, I flew in a public park area. Frank and Peter were usually with me when I flew models there. They were teenagers then and while they never got into model flying themselves they enjoyed seeing me do it.

I was working for AMA at the time and three times over the years (1983, 1985, and 1992) the National Model Airplane Champions were held at Westover Air Force Base, Chicopee, Mass., near where various Sienkiewicz family members lived, so I was able to show them what that week-long event was like. They seemed to enjoy being with me as one of the top officials showing them around and explaining what it was all about.

One of my long time modeler friends, Dick Sherman, also lived in New England and I visited him there several times. Dick and his wife had two houses side by side; theirs and one inherited from one of their parents. Dick converted the second one to be a Model Airplane Museum and its three floors were filled with model planes and historic artifacts about models.

Dick and I knew each other from work we did on writing up the history of AMA. During World War II he was a pilot in the Marines. In fact, he was a good buddy of another pilot who was in the famous Black Sheep Squadron, Henry (Hank) Bourgeois, who had fought alongside the famous “Pappy” Boyington in the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

I knew Dick but not Hank and neither did Lil, until one day shortly after we had moved into our new house on Patrician Drive in Hampton, Virginia. Our only daughter at the time, Chris, was with us then and she was just a baby. One day came a knock on the door and there were two Marines outside.

I knew one-- Dick Sherman-- but I didn’t know the other one. Knowing Dick, I invited them in and very quickly we all became friends. Dick noted they were new in town and hadn’t booked a hotel room, because Dick wanted us to recommend a place to them. We said they could stay with us but we didn’t have any extra beds.

They said there was no need for beds—they were used to sleeping anywhere any time with the Marines and that the floor was OK with them. Actually, it ended up with Hank on the couch and Dick on the floor! They stayed the night and we had a great time talking war stories. From this experience we became longtime friends. Dick went to New England to be with his parents and Hank went to Louisiana to take over his family homestead which had been left to him when his parents died.

Dick became an airline pilot after leaving the Marines. After retiring from commercial flying for the airlines he continued flying for personal enjoyment. On one of my side visits to him and his model museum, he invited me to share a ride in his personal sailplane (glider) which he kept at a local airport.

He had what was considered the “Cadillac” of sailplanes, a two place all metal aircraft. I was thrilled to do this—I had never had a glider ride and practically all gliders were for one person only. So I was eager for this once in a lifetime opportunity to fly silently through the air without an engine as a noisy distraction and with an obviously top skill pilot at the controls.

Dick arranged at the airport for another plane to tow us into the air at the end of a long cable pulling on the nose of the sailplane. The other plane got us quickly and quietly up a few thousand feet and Dick cut us loose from the cable. So the power plane was suddenly gone and we were sailing along high above the roads, buildings, houses, and shopping centers below with parking lots full of cars.

It was all marvelous, except for one unexpected situation. The ride was NOT quiet! While there was no engine noise, there was a lot of rushing wind noise and worst of all; the metal covering on the sailplane rattled like someone was beating on a big tin can! It was really distracting, as I had expected the flight to be smooth and silent. It was smooth but definitely not silent!

Otherwise, it was a great experience; especially when Dick put the sailplane into a fast spiral descent and I could see everything below, which had gotten to be very small when we were up high, rapidly grow to normal size as we got near the ground. Then Dick showed off his great pilot’s skill as we got near to the airport, crossed closely over the trees and slid down to a beautifully smooth landing on the grass alongside the runway. Of all the many hours of flying I have been involved with over the years, this single experience was the most memorable.

## **U. TWO SPECIAL EVENTS**

Twice, in the years after retirement, I was asked by AMA to organize, promote, and act as Master of Ceremonies for major events to recognize and honor certain AMA members for their special status. The first, in 1996, was called the Celebration of Eagles. The second, in 1998, was called the Celebration of Pioneers.

In both of these events Lillian was with me at the head table of the banquet hall of Ball State University at Muncie, Indiana. We shared the table with past presidents of the AMA and their wives. Hundreds of AMA members and their female partners were present to share in the

banquet and the ceremonies. There were lots of speeches and applause as dozens of special plaques were handed out and photographs were taken.

The night before, a special reception had been held at the AMA museum for all the celebrities to greet each other and renew friendships. The atmosphere was like a huge family gathering. One historic sidelight was when I presided over a special meeting of famous modelers in the AMA Library, probably the first time this particular group assembled at the same time and place.

The conversation was inclined toward simply getting to know each other better and to tell of some of our experiences. We filmed the meeting and AMA has it for the historical record as part of the video recording we made of the whole 1998 event. Besides myself as the host of the meeting there was Henry J. Nichols and Ron Moulton from England, Dick Korda, Charles Mackey, Norm Rosenstock, George Reich and Tim McCoy.

A special treat at the 1966 event was when Neil Armstrong, before he became the first man to set foot on the moon, visited us at the Sunday afternoon model fly for fun session at the AMA airfield. The following year, 1967, he was to make his first space flight and then, in 1969, he landed on the moon.

At our 1966 event he noted that he had built and flown model airplanes for many years, before his astronaut career became too busy for his hobby. The astronaut training program was intense, aimed at beating the Russians to the moon and there was much newspaper and television publicity about the astronauts. He said he appreciated visiting us where he could be 'just one of the guys', without a lot news media attention.

## **OBERTH AND ROCKETRY**

In describing our visit to Germany, I mentioned that we had a special adventure there, but I didn't say what it was. Here it is and how it relates to AMA: while visiting with Werner Groth and his wife Inge Groth (he was the German representative on the FAI's International Aeromodelling Commission) he noted that I was an officer for the USA's National Association of Rocketry (NAR).

This is the equivalent of the AMA, but for models powered by rocket motors. During my years with AMA I had gotten the NAR affiliated with the AMA for the purpose of enabling their organization to participate in international competition via the FAI. Werner noted to me that he and his wife were good friends of Dr. Erna Roth, the daughter of Germany's most famous full scale rocket scientist, Hermann Oberth.

Professor Oberth and Dr. Robert Goddard of the USA were universally credited with each having developed (back in the 1920s) the first successful rocket motors for spacecraft. The Groth's arranged for us to meet Dr. Roth, and then her father, in Germany after an FAI meeting. We all met for lunch at Erna's house. Oberth was interested in the fact that I was an officer in the USA's National Association of Rocketry and also that I had worked for NASA for many years.

He said he hoped I might be able to contact NASA officials who might invite him to come to the USA to discuss the history of rocketry with them. I said I would try to do that when I got back to the USA. He then invited Lil and me to visit his rocket museum nearby in Germany. We joined him and Dr. Roth in going to the museum.

We had a great visit there—it is a very nice museum, with much of it devoted to Oberth's work over the years concerning using rockets to power spacecraft to visit other planets, especially the moon. At this time both the USA and the USSR were deeply involved in programs to do just that. After getting back home, I followed up on my promise to talk to NASA people about Oberth's desire to talk with them.

It turned out that NASA said they could not invite him to visit their facilities, but they said that many NASA people welcomed any opportunity to talk with Oberth. One of them said he could arrange a special meeting of NASA people at a prestigious private social club in Washington, D.C. It was called the Cosmos Club and many NASA officials belonged to it.

A special invitation-only evening was set up for this and I was asked to coordinate travel arrangements with Dr. Roth and her father to come to Washington. I did that and Lil and I invited them to stay with us in Virginia during their visit. I would drive him to the meeting and back. They were delighted with that and it all came to pass.

Oberth had a grand evening at the Cosmos Club and was treated royally by the NASA people there. He said he was extremely pleased with the reception he received and the recognition of his pioneering scientific work. For him it was a great culmination of his career and Dr. Roth told us he was extremely grateful for our part in making the event happen.

We had him for a couple of days at our house and he said he was very pleased to be with us instead of a hotel. He was pleased to be in a typical American home and residential neighborhood. As a sidelight, despite his age, he enjoyed using our exercise bike in our house. He also enjoyed walking in the neighborhood for exercise and enjoying the many pets he encountered.

During his time with us I was able to take him to the AMA Headquarters and model museum in Reston, Virginia where he spent several hours visiting with our staff and marveling at our model displays. It was a happy occasion for all concerned, to meet and have a famous scientist as a guest. He was especially pleased that our operation was independent of the government, completely funded from the dues paid by our members.

A special souvenir I have of the Oberth visit is a beautiful precision-machined aluminum scale model of the original Oberth rocket, in miniature, which was like a trophy in our house. It was made by one of Oberth's students especially for us, in appreciation of our help in making Oberth's Washington visit possible.

#### **JW-- HONORS AND AWARDS:**

1964: Fellow, AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics)  
1965: Certificate of Honor, NAA (National Aeronautic Association)  
1973: Honorary Member, BMFA (British Model Flying Association)  
1978: Model Aviation Hall of Fame, AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics)  
1981: Paul Tissandier Award, FAI (Federation Aeronautique Internationale)  
1986: Elder Statesman of Aviation, NAA (National Aeronautic Association)  
1990: Hall of Fame, NFFS (National Free Flight Society)  
1990: Hall of Fame, VRCS (Vintage R/C Society) (1<sup>st</sup> President)  
1990: Howard McEntee Award (WRAMS club, NY Hobby Show)  
1991: Executive Director Emeritus, AMA (27 Years of Service)  
1992: Hall of Fame, SAM (Society of Antique Modelers)  
2004: Hall of Fame, NIRAC (National Indoor Radio Aircraft Controllers)

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*This following was published in the March 1964 issue of Model Aviation magazine.*

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## **John Worth Appointed Executive Director**

### **Statement by Mr. Worth**

As Executive Director, my goal will be to build on the past achievements of AMA to lead a further expansion of modal aviation promotion and progress, with emphasis on Junior growth. As during the AMA Presidency, when so many helped my efforts, I expect to continue to call on the vast experience of long-time friends from all over the country, to enlarge existing model activities and encourage new interest. While looking ahead, I hope not to forget the intents and purposes of our original AMA boosters, such as Charles H. Grant, Willis Brown, Al Lewis, the Polk Brothers, Walt Billett and many others.

It is my sincere wish to combine personal interest in all AMA members with increased efficiency of operations. The two aims are naturally contradictory, but I intend to make an extra effort to give special attention to members so that as many as possible may feel closer to and more satisfied with Headquarters services and with their importance as members.

Editor's Note: As we go to press, announcement is received of the appointment of Maynard Hill as replacement of John Worth as AMA President. Details of Executive Council action of these appointments appear on page 25 [of *Model Aviation* magazine.]

### **About Mr. Worth**

*Personal* – Age 40, Born N.Y.C., Married: 4 children (3 girls, boy), wife's name: Lillian

*Education* – Haaren H.S. of Aviation, N.Y.C.; Wofford College (aviation cadet training), Spartanburg, S.C.; Alexander Hamilton Institute (Business Management)

*Gov't Service* – 22 years in Federal Civil Service: AAF (Army Air Forces), NACA (National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics), NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). Civil: Aircraft Mechanic, Crew Chief, Flight Engineer, Flight Operations coordinator, Supervisor

of model construction and flight test shop. Military: B-29 aircrewman, Pacific theater.

*Private Business* – Author of many technical articles (mostly R/C) in model publications, model designer/draftsman, writer of model news for press. Partner and manager of pioneer R/C parts, kit and equipment supply firm: Control Research.

*Civil Services* – Secretary of local civic league, President of Local PTA, Chairman of local church fund raising drive.

*A.M.A. Service* – Contest Board member 1948, 49, Radio Committee 1949, 50, 51, Radio Control Contest Board Chairman 1962, President 1963, 64

*Nostalgia* – Built first model, a free flight flying scale Stinson kit, in 1932 (age 8). Was a New York airport bug and qualified by walking and hitchhiking Sundays 10 miles or more to the old North Beach airport (now LaGuardia Municipal), Holmes airfield (now a housing project on the approach to LaGuardia) and Floyd Bennett naval air station. Took to modeling seriously in 1938 by building and flying free-flight rubber-power original designs in the then traditional N.Y.C. flying areas, Central and Van Cortland Parks, with model club buddies from Haaren High School: Bob Dagand, Herb Smith, Pat Blanco, Bill Poythress, Jimmy White.

Built first gas-powered model and joined AMA (then NAA) in 1939, graduated to the larger area sites of Canarsie, Creedmoor, Holmes Airfield. Followed the early (and still) greats of N.Y. area modeling: Frank Zaic, Roger Hammer, Paul Plecan, Ed Beshar, Hank Struck, Sal Taibi, Leon Shulman, Walt Schroder and many others. Flew as a member of the Brooklyn area Clem Sohn Gas Model Club and the Prutapajubeacs (!), with longtime pals Poythress, Chet Kalin, Dick Coen, until completing H.S. in early 42.

The day after H.S. graduation, left N.Y.C. to join hundreds of other modelers from all over the U.S. in migrating to the Langley Field, Va., labs of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), but got a job with the Army Air Forces there instead. Became a member of the then famous and fabulous Virginia Model Assoc., which included the top modelers from everywhere. As the war grabbed most of the VMA modelers, kept active with other migrating buddies from N.Y., Poythress, Dagand, Blanco, Coen, plus Ed Slobod from Pa., until drafted.

After the war returned to Langley, switched employment to NACA, became an active member of the BrainBusters Model Club. The BrainBusters took the place of the old VMA and included many top name modelers who came back to Langley, then reformed into the BrainBusters Internationals Group (BIG) and specialized in FAI type flying. Prominent BIG members were Woody Blanchard, Bob Champine, Joe Boyle, Ben Cleveland, Dick Everett, Charlie Folk, Hewitt Phillips, Frank Parmenter, and many others. Never matched these flyers in competition but became known for making “weirdies” fly: tailless, pushers, canards, etc.

Got the R/C bug in 48, got involved commercially with the old Aerotrol and Control Research ventures with partners Ed Lorenz and Dick Coen. Helped form and lead, together with Don Hewes, Bob Schade, and others, the still active S.E. Va. R/C Group. Directed many of the now

famous and much imitated SEV/RCG RC Roundup-type fly-for-fun annual sessions, with the help of present and former Langley regulars Nate Rambo, Art Johnson, Joe Block, Chuck Libbey, others.

AMA activities gradually increased and, in association with such staunch Academy boosters as Walt Good, Howard McEntee, Maynard Hill, Bill Winter, Frank Ehling, Carl Wheeley, developed a serious interest in the organization. Became aware of the potential of growth through good AMA leadership by seeing the results of the great programs developed by AMA's former Executive Director, Russ Nichols: Plymouth, PAA Load, Navy-hosted Nationals, NAA supported World Championships, etc.

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*The following article was taken from the May/June 1964 issue of American Modeler magazine.*

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## **From NASA to the Academy of Model Aeronautics: Meet John Worth, New Executive Director**

The two most important events from modern times, at least from an aeronautical point of view, were the transatlantic flight of Charles A. Lindbergh in May of 1927 and the orbiting of Sputnik I in October of 1957. In a sense, the first of these gave the world wings and then second took them away. John Worth, the brand new executive director of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, was strongly affected by both of them.

Model building was certainly nothing new when Lindbergh flew the Atlantic but the flight revitalized the hobby and set in motion a new wave of enthusiasm, which led to what can justifiably be called the Golden Age of Model Building – the 1930s.

John Worth was only three years old at the time of Lindbergh's flight, having been born in New York City in 1924, but by the time he was eight he intercepted the rising tide of modeling activity and was hooked, in the grand tradition, on a 10-cent flying scale kit. This first step cast the mold. He built models and models and more models. He flew in contests around the New York City area and belonged to local model clubs; one was the Clem Sohn Gas Model Club. He became a sort of airport bum, junior grade, and frequented many of the Long Island airports just to be near airplanes. He went to New York's Haaren High school, which, he recalls, was the only one in the country at that time in which you could get diploma credit for a course in aircraft mechanics.

For John the plunge into full-scale aviation came very quickly. When he graduated from Haaren High School in February of 1942, World War II was on. One result of the new conflict was a call put out, by NACA at Hampton, Virginia, for people to work in aeronautical research. The day after he left school John answered the call and headed south – along with other model builders such as Hewitt Phillips, Dick Everett, and Frank Zaic who were already on the scene.

For the first, but not the last time in his association with governmental agencies, not all went according to schedule. Instead of joining NACA John went to work for the Air Force as an aircraft mechanic's helper. He did well, however, and by the time he was drafted in 1943 he had

worked up to crew chief in the service, however, he was destined for another serious disappointment. He went into the Cadets but began receiving instruction just as the pilot training program was being curtailed. He was switched to gunnery school and trained at Ft. Myers, Florida, and Alamogordo, New Mexico. He was graduated as a B-29 gunner and went overseas to Tinian and Okinawa just as the war was ending.

For a while, following his discharge John went back to the Air Force, this time as a civilian crew chief. Then he transferred to NACA where he remained until he took the AMA job. He continued work as an aircraft mechanic on NACA research and transport planes (C-45 and C-47) until 1955. One of his duties during this period was serving as crew chief on the "silent plane" project, an L-5 converted by means of a super muffler, and a special 5-bladed prop, to ultra quiet flight.

Now the influence of modeling asserted itself and led to a new job. John had resumed building after the war, principally Free Flight, and some sport ukies as well; but long about 1949, his interest had switched to RC and stuck. In addition to building models and writing articles he formed, with partners, a group called Control Research, which was a pioneer radio control equipment and parts supply house. This was a spare time business and lasted about five years, until 1954. It was through this sort of strong interest that in 1955 John Worth landed the model builder's dream job: he was moved to an NACA project concerned with outdoor RC flying scale models – the Outdoor Testing Unit of the Dynamic Stability Branch of NACA (later NASA). The work, which is a sort of complement to standard wind tunnel research, began with an old AF drone, but currently there is a crew of seven (two engineers and five mechanics) in the unit. John became the shop supervisor.

The Outdoor Testing Unit is essentially a wind tunnel without the tunnel and no wind. The crew is supplied with a shell made in a model shop. They put the necessary RC equipment, instrumentation and parachute recovery systems in it and fly it. Only a few of these projects are powered models that take off and land under their own power. The majority of models are tested in gliding sequences, which begin with a drop from a helicopter and end with a parachute recovery. At least that is the way things were until the impact of Sputnik 1. That turned everything topsy-turvy. Little boys by the dozen forgot about airplanes and went rocket crazy. NACA became NASA (1958). And the whole emphasis of John Worth's job changed. Before Sputnik, it had been a study of the control and stability characteristics of aircraft such as the F-104, the F4H, and the X-15. Now it became "the flying characteristics of vehicles returning to earth and deployment techniques of various recovery systems."

In May of 1963, John took a long delayed vacation. He packed his wife Lillian, whom he had married in 1950 and the four children (three girls, one boy) into a 1954 Ford Station Wagon and spent a month going to and from California via 22 of the States. With the help of many friends who put them up overnight the Worths managed the whole excursion on less than \$500. And why had John had no vacation for so long? Well, the kids got him mixed up in the P.T.A. for one thing. For another he was chair of the RC section of the AMA contest board. As a matter of fact, he was so busy he did not even have time for much at home model building any more. On top of this, he was nominated for AMA president.

This came as a big surprise to John who was in for an even bigger one when he was elected. He had naturally been too busy to campaign. He was much better situated than most past presidents have been, however. His contest board chairmanship had given him some insight into the problems at national headquarters and by the terms of a new AMA policy, instituted just a month before his election, he was forwarded copies of all AMA correspondence. This brought him up-to-date on current business matters. Finally, unlike many a previous president, he was close enough to Washington to get there frequently and the AMA began to show the results. Now selected as its managing head John brings a great amount of valuable experience to the job.

## **Worth Talks about the AMA**

### **The main goal**

“This is twofold:

First, to try to provide more specific guidelines for all aspects of the AMA operation ... to point out what has to be done and the ways in which it is to be accomplished. To establish organizational procedures that will be a help in giving continuity to the succeeding administration. To provide more efficient operation with better returns on the dollar.

“Second: To solidify the AMA's position as the leader in all phases of model aviation, including aerospace. This will require expansion to provide increased services to include new members and improved services to current members. The biggest task is to rejuvenate and revitalize junior interests major aim of 1964 efforts: Emphasis will be on increased promotion of model aviation, on a campaign to obtain more flying sites and on cooperation with hobby and aerospace industries.”

### **Your first acts?**

“I've made appointments to get some stalled committees moving and confirmed others that have been operating effectively. I've established several new study groups to determine major problems and recommend changes. A finance committee to supervise the HQ operation, a by-laws committee to bring organizational procedures up to date and rules revision guide committee to improve rules change procedures for the contest board.”

### **Your biggest problem?**

“This is to provide more effective operation. This is despite the fact that we operate with a large non-paid (elected volunteer officers) staff, requiring most business to be done by mail. This involves the election of more dedicated and qualified people, use of better procedures and communications techniques. We've already noted much improvement and our efforts are continuing.”

### **Relations with the NAA**

“Strong AMA-NAA cooperation is essential to the maximum growth of the AMA. Since a joint meeting (in January 1963) concerned with financial matters we're in closer relationship with the NAA than we have been for a long time. Our benefits include help on a flying site program and

on contest and civic promotion.”

### **Why a dues increase?**

“It simply costs more to service your AMA membership than it used to. Considering what it costs to provide a Model Aviation subscription, your insurance, contest services, FAI programs, representation with many other organizations, a million and one HQ special services, what we receive for our dues still is the best model bargain we can buy.”

### **What can AMA members do?**

“Your support through membership renewal and promoting new members is the best help you can give yourself. Remember: it is your organization and, you only get out of it what you put into it. It's not so much a matter of counting the dollars, but rather one of making the dollars count!”

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*The following is an excerpt from For the Record, the National Aeronautic Association's (NAA) publication. It is from the early 1991 issue.*

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## **February 1990: John Worth Steps Down!**

John Worth, executive director of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, a division of NAA, stepped down from that position on January 31. He had been executive director since 1964.

At the time Worth became the first full-time executive director in 1964, the AMA had a total membership of less than 25,000 and was barely solvent. Today the AMA has membership well in access of 150,000 and net assets of several million dollars.

At a ceremony marking John's retirement, Don Lowe, President of AMA stated “There is no question that AMA is what it is today because of the dedication and leadership of John Worth. All of us in the aeromodeling community are indebted to him.”

NAA President Mal Gross presented Worth with NAA's Certificate of Honor in recognition of his many contributions to sport aviation. He noted: “John, through his long, and dedicated leadership to the Academy has been one of only a handful of people about whom it can be truly said, ‘He made a difference.’ He leaves an organization that is strong, and that is a major influence in sport aviation today. He will be missed.”



*Mid-1990s: John with his self-designed Cement Mixer 6, an electric-powered Radio Control model.*



*John Worth speaks, unknown date.*

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**AMA History Program**

National Model Aviation Museum  
5151 E. Memorial Dr.  
Muncie IN 47302  
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511  
[historyprogram@modelaircraft.org](mailto:historyprogram@modelaircraft.org)

