

Our Member Spotlight for November 2011 - Dick Hansen



Dick was 6 years old in 1938 when he saw the Douglas triple-tailed DC-4E fly over Salt Lake City, Utah, on one of its demonstration flights. Shortly afterward, his dad took him out to the salt flats west of town and he watched two men running along each wing tip of a large free-flight, gently lifting it into the air. He was hooked! He bought a 10¢ Comet PT-17, because he thought, "if one wing is good, then two wings have to be better, and it doesn't cost any more than a single wing."

In late 1941, Dick's family relocated to Portland, Oregon. Dick spent the Saturdays of the next four years going to town to hit all the dime stores to buy more kits. In 1946, he joined the Portland Gashoppers Free-Flight Club. His family had moved to N.E. Portland in 1945, just three blocks away from Jim Walkers American Junior Aircraft Company. He robbed balsa wood out of their trash cans for the next few years. Dick then switched to "u-control." His last free-flight was a Berkeley Brigadier with an Ohlsson .19 for power, with spark ignition. His first u-control was a Snuffy Biplane with spark ignition. He switched to glo-plugs in 1947.

Dick entered Benson Polytechnic High School in 1946 and took the four-year course Technical Aviation. During his Junior year, he joined the U.S. Navy Reserve. He joined a flying club that summer, and, three months later, received his Private Pilot Certificate.

After two years of active duty at N.A.S. Anacostia, Washington D.C., Dick went back to his old job as an apprentice optician. He had married during active duty, and, five children later, joined the "Weekend Warriors" Patrol Squadron VP-891 at N.A.S. Sand Point, Seattle, Washington, flying as an Aviation Machinist Mate 1st Class while Plane Captain on Lockheed P2V-5 Neptunes.

In the late 1950's, Dick built a Mac II transmitter and a Lorenz twin-tube receiver (frequency 27.255).

Dick owned and flew a Stinson 108-3 Voyager from 1960 to 1962, when it was "totalled" in a windstorm.

In 1962, Dick and others formed the Portland Skynights R/C Club, AMA #707. He was the first treasurer, and was president and vice-president a few times.

In 1966, Dick drew plans for a 100-inch scale Curtiss Jenny, which was pictured on the cover of *American Aircraft Modeler* (the earlier title of *Model Aviation*). Plans are still available.

During 1993-95, Dick worked with film director Ben Burt in association with Lucasfilm Ltd., along with Proctor Enterprises, performing the flying scenes for the movie, "Young Indiana Jones and the Attack of the Hawkmen," which is available at fine video-rental stores everywhere.

Since the early 1990's, Dick has been operating Hansen Scale Aviation Videos, and continues to work with Proctor Enterprises as their unofficial test pilot (he has built and flown nearly all of their large-scale kits).

Dick thinks his major contribution to model aviation is the introduction of his "scale aircraft" series of one-hour videos for "community access" TV. He met with the manager of Willamette Falls TV, Dave Ling, and, with his help, it became the #1 show on Channel 11 CATV in 1990. WFTV is known as the model airplane channel in Portland. To date (Aug 2010), Dick has 208 one-hour shows playing in the Portland metro area, McMinnville, and Canby, Oregon. The show has even played in San Antonio, Texas, and Muncie, Indiana, and Seattle, Washington. He says his second major achievement was getting Dave Ling back into model building and flying!

Dick Hansen's association with the U.S. Scale Masters started in 1986 at the Fountain Valley, California, Championships, as a spectator. In 1987, he qualified at the Northwest International U.S. Scale Masters Qualifier at Farragut State Park in northern Idaho, and has flown in the last twenty-three U.S. Scale Masters Championships; he placed in the top ten a few times, and had a high flight score in 2005. In 2008, Dick was awarded the Harris Lee Lifetime Achievement Award at the U.S. Scale Masters Championships at Sarasota, Florida.

In 1989, Dick scored 1st Place in Precision Scale at the AMA Nationals, and, in 1992, prior to the World

Scale Championships at Muncie, Indiana, he came in 2nd Place in the AMA Invitational Shootout Contest. Dick also has won the Northwest R/C Seaplane Championships nine times.

Dick has written and had published articles on foam floats, spoked wheels, and building his designed 100-inch Curtiss Jenny. More than seventy years after purchasing that Comet PT-17, Dick says, "I love biplanes, especially those of WWI and the Golden Age."

In 2010, Dick Hansen was inducted into the Academy of Model Aeronautics' Hall of Fame. He continues to travel, fly and video.
