JIM RICHMOND

Jim grew up in a small town in Indiana (Sullivan) where he had very little contact with other model builders. His rubber and gas powered planes were the first ones in town.

When he was five years old, the penny gliders and 10¢ kits attracted his interest. Before he could read, his grandmother helped with the plan reading. The meaning of the word "fuselage" really had them stymied, but he managed to complete a Waco D military as his first kit project. It didn't look like much, but would sort of fly across the room.

Then at age 10½ he built a Quaker Flash and acquired a GHQ engine. The GHQ wouldn't run of course, but his Uncle Harold from Dallas came to the rescue. He was a model builder and just happened to have a Dennymite on a Clipper firewall in the trunk of his car when he paid a visit. The Quaker Flash received a quick nose job to accept the Clipper gear and presto, they had a flying gas model.

At age 12 he made a trip by bus to Dallas to visit Uncle Harold, and it was there that he first saw real modellers in action. The Sunday flying sessions were a sight to behold, and there were many exotic wonders in Johnny Clemens' hobby shop. During this visit he completed and flew a Dennymite-powered Demon. This plane provided many interesting flying sessions during the next few years and was lost and returned on three different occasions.

By the age of 15, Jim had developed a new free flight design which he called Upsi-Daisy. This plane, powered by a Forester 29, won two meets in competition with the Purdue Aeromodelers. He had to cut the wing in half in order to carry it on a bus to the contest in W. Lafayette. Its first win (and his) was dramatic, as it stayed aloft for 2 hours and was in sight from the field for more than 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, he had formed a small club in Sullivan, and he remembers an indoor meet they held. He handicapped himself by limiting his wing span to six inches but won anyway. That was his first indoor win. (Shades of things to come!)

While in the Navy, Jim became interested in U-control, primarily due to limitations in building and flying space. He made a small yellow ukie powered by an Atom that could be dismantled so it would fit in with his gear. He called it The Banana (it was about that size), and it was fun to fly on the parade ground in the evening.

By 1948 Jim was discharged and back in college. He had developed some decent speed models and formed the Terre-Haute Pylon Busters club. The high points of his U-control activity were a stunt first at the Midwestern States Champs and a jet speed first in 1949 at the Plymouth Internationals.

From 1961 to 1962, Jim and his son progressed from handlaunch gliders to Easy "B"s, to paper stick and to indoor stick. In 1966 Randy won the junior national championship, and in 1967 Jim started breaking indoor records and made the FAI indoor team with a first at the West Baden finals.

The 1968 World Championship in Rome was his first such competition, and his "Lucky Jim" reputation was established when he won it with an all-out last flight. This first FAI plane design was the NFFS indoor plane of the year in 1968.

In 1969 he made the team again with a record 41:45 flight at Lakehurst and did well at the Nats with first in cabin and in paper stick using the new Paper Tiger. Five new indoor records were set that year.

In 1970, the FAI team journeyed across Europe to Romania to fly underground in the Slanic salt mine. Being no match for Jiri Kalina in that site, Jim placed second, but his luck was holding up well, for the nice girl assigned as their interpreter was later to become a good friend. Finally in 1975 they were to be married.

Then the one gram weight rule was imposed, which effectively pulled Jim's fangs, for he could no longer build the lightest planes. At the 1971 team selection finals, he had the right idea, but the new planes with nine and ten inch cord wings were years away from complete development, so he bowed out of international competition temporarily. But he continued to do well at the Nats and was Indoor Champ in 1970, 1971 and 1972.

In 1973 Jim made a good effort but failed to make the team at the Tulsa finals. He did set a new AMA Category II FAI record in Detroit that year.

During 1974 and 1975, he put his act back together and made the indoor team at the Lakehurst finals using his new Catwalker design.

His usual good luck deserted him at the 1976 Cardington World Champs. Although his ninth place finish was his all time worst, it was enough, along with lots of help from Romak, for the team to win first place. He was Nats indoor champ that year and set two more records in paper stick and FAI.

In 1977 Jim again made the indoor team, this time at Akron. FAI records were set in both AMA Categories II and III.

At the 1978 World Championships at Cardington, his luck was back, and he won it with two 42 minute flights. It seemed that he had a ten year cycle going on world champs wins. Romak finished a strong second, and Jim had mixed emotions about bumping him out of a double victory. The Catwalker was NFFS indoor plane of the year, and he set a new FAI Category III world record of 36:21 with the new Starwalker. The new AROG Atrium Insect also did its thing by setting a new Category II record.

As reigning world champ Jim didn't have to battle for a team slot in 1979, so he turned his attention to world record attempts. The Category III world record was broken at West Baden with a flight of 44:43. Then, after a series of disasterous attempts, a patched up Starwalker did 52:14 to capture the absolute world record at Akron. He was also able to set a new AMA Category II FAI record of 37:52 at West Baden with a Catwalker that he had just completed prior to its flight.

Jim recalls the Indoor World Championship held in West Baden in 1980 as an interesting competition, but "I can say from experience that it is a lot more fun being a team member than it is to fly as an individual. Everything went wrong the first two days, and I was almost hit by falling plaster twice. I finally came alive the last day and two good flights put me in first place until the very end when Rodemsky uncorked a beauty to win it."

Jim's Starwalker was NFFS indoor plane of the year in 1980, and the Catwalker barely passed up Harlan, who had just set a new AMA Category III FAI

record of over 47 minutes the day before at Akron.

In 1981 Jim was able to win a place on the team once again, this time at the finals in Santa Ana. His Catwalkers were then rebuilt in preparation for the upcoming World Championships to be held again in the cold Romanian salt mine. "Airframes were strengthened, airfoils were thinned, new high thrust props were made and much testing was done in an effort to be prepared for the challenging site."

In 1982, the Paper Tiger was proclaimed NFFS indoor plane of the year after many wins and particularly after exceeding the 30 minute mark to set a new Category III paper stick record the year before. Then it was off to the salt mines of Romania. They all had their share of problems, but "it was an unforgettable experience. I was in first place at the end of the fourth round but couldn't improve and had to settle for a third place bronze medal."

In 1983, Jim realized he was past due for a new FAI plane design, for it was becoming increasingly difficult to stay competitive with the old Catwalker. The first of the Flim Flam plane series was designed and built, and that plane got him on the team at the West Baden team selection finals. "I flew it carefully during competition but let it out on the last flight when it showed its stuff with the longest flight of 37:42."

During the winter a new armada was built, and his biggest problem was finding a way to get those monsters with 9½" chord wings into his small model box. This problem was finally solved by the use of plug-in tail booms and folding wing posts.

Jim had toyed with ideas for extracting more energy from rubber motors for years and finally came back to one he had developed 20 years before; the variable diameter prop. He made two of them for the Flim Flam, and in 1984 flew the Starwalker with one of them at Rantoul, Illinois, to set a new Category II world record of 34:07. National records were also set with the Paper Tiger and the Atrium Insect at this meet.

The Flim Flam won first at the U.S. Indoor Champs and also the Akron regional team selection meet, and then it was off to Nagoya for the World Championships. The first flight of 39:51 used the V.D. prop, as Rodemsky named it (for variable diameter), and that was the longest flight of the meet, and in fact, the longest Category III F1D flight ever made. "The other fliers and managers came in droves to view and photograph this miraculous propeller, and I enjoyed it immensely. Needless to say, I won this World Championship, but my most prized award was the Toyotomi Cup which was given for most ingenious design."

Jim has held engineering positions at Sunbeam and General Time and is now employed at Mallory Timers Co. During the past 20 year period, he has been Group Leader, Senior Design Engineer and Engineering Manager. He recalls his most outstanding accomplishment to be the design of a new electric clock movement that was produced by Sunbeam for 20 years. He has 16 patents relating to mechanism designs.

Should any doubts remain as to Jim Richmond's credentials, the following summary should put them to rest.

- Currently holds three World records (Indoor).
- Currently holds ten USA National records (Indoor).
- To date has set four Indoor World records and at least 31 National Indoor records.
- Has competed in seven World Indoor championships (the last five in succession).
- In World Indoor championship competition has achieved three gold medals, two silver medals and one bronze medal.



Jim launches in Romanian salt mine—1970