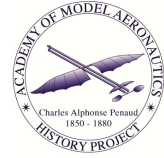




# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JEAN G. PAILET

May 21, 1931 – February 6, 2026  
Modeler since 1936      AMA #2222



Written & Submitted by JGP (04/2003); Recorded by NR (04/2003); Edited & Formatted by SS (05/2003), Reformatted by JS (11/2009), Updated by JS (12/2010)

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## Career:

- Won his first contest in 1947 with a record-exceeding speed of 96.5 mph
- Placed first at the Philadelphia Flying Circus
- Attended virtually every Nationals from the 1960s through the present (2003)
- Competed in Control Line stunt in the 1960s and 1970s and had designs published in aeromodeling publications
- Served as chairman of the AMA's Control Line Contest Board
- As an AMA-sanctioned contest director ran numerous local Control Line and indoor Free Flight contests
- Founder and longtime president of the Long Island Association of Model Airplane Clubs
- Won the individual hand-launched glider event and the team hand-launched glider event at the 1985 Nationals
- Some of his most successful designs include the Skylark and Zephyr (Control Line stunt models) and the Shuri-King, Genie and Tow Soar Two glider (Free Flight models); the Shuri-King was named the National Free Flight Society's Small Gas Model of the Year in 1994
- Established the first national record in the AMA's new 1/2-A classic power event in January 2002 with his Classic 320 model, which was published in Model Aviation magazine later that year

## Honors:

- 1970: AMA Distinguished Service Award
  - 2010: AMA Hall of Fame
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Born May 21, 1931 (no silver spoon in my mouth, but a tube of Ambroid clutched in my little fist).

As young as age 2 my aunt would take me to Tex Foster's Hobby Shop in Richmond Hill, New York, to view all wonderful flying creations hanging from the ceiling.

Began my first building attempts at about age 5. Mostly rubber-powered scale kits ranging from the 10-cent kits sold at the corner candy store to complex models from Cleveland and Miniature Aircraft.

Acquired my first engine at about 12 or 13-years-old; a Brown D with the bent wire needle valve.

My first gas model (as they were then called) was a Scientific Flagship. It flew like a bird (dumb luck, I guess) and survived three engine changes from the Brown to a Dennyrite to an Ohlsson.

In my mid-teens (immediately post-World War II) Control Line became the rage for me and many others. My first flight was on a Jim Walker Fireball powered by an Ohlsson .23. It consisted of one perfect wingover – straight up and straight down!

I persevered and gravitated to speed models. First notable year of competition was 1947 when I won my first contest with a record-exceeding speed of 96.5 mph. Model was my original design powered by my self-modified ignition Torpedo .29. Official timer for the flight was Walt Schroeder.

Placed first at the Philadelphia Flying Circus with an Arden .09-powered original design speedster.

Was a member of the eastern team that competed in the East-West Challenge Meet in Saint Louis, Missouri.

Attended my first Nationals in 1948 at Olathe, Kansas (made the trip in a 1931 Ford). Flew in the speed and stunt events but with little success.

Joined the Army Air Corps in early 1949 after graduation from high school and flew on photomapping missions on B-29s and B-50s everywhere from Alaska to Puerto Rico to North Africa to the A-Bomb test site in Nevada.

Still managed to squeeze in some modeling activities, particularly while stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. Did a lot of speed flying with the model airplane club there, including weekend trips on an Air Force C-47 to contests elsewhere.

Discharge from the Air Force brought my college years on the G.I. Bill. While pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree I was fortunate to find summer employment at Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation near my home on New York's Long Island. This ultimately led to full-time employment at Grumman.

Began my full-time employment at Grumman in 1956 as a wind tunnel model design engineer (the dream job for any model airplane enthusiast!).

It is an absolute fact that my career in the aerospace industry would not have been possible had it not been for my aeromodeling experience.

Attaining an MBA (master of business administration) degree led to administrative positions and ultimately to management.

I retired (early) as manager of engineering administration in 1987.

Modeling activities during my Grumman years included attendance at virtually every Nationals from the 1960s through the 1980s.

I also found time to get married in 1956 coincident with starting at Grumman. We raised two sons who were very active modelers during their junior and senior years. Bruce won the Junior National Championship in 1973; Barry won it in 1975.

Both set numerous indoor duration records and Control Line speed records while they were actively competing. Although they are no longer involved in the hobby, grandson Brendan is showing some slight level of interest.

My competition activities gravitated toward Control Line stunt in the 1960s and 1970s, and a number of my designs were published in the aeromodeling press.

In 1967, I aimed for a place on the U.S. stunt team preparing for the World Championships. I did make it to the team finals, but did not make the team.

During the same general timeframe I served numerous years as a member of the AMA's Control Line Contest Board and ultimately as its chair. During that tenure, I co-drafted the contest board procedures document that is still in use with some updates. These activities resulted in my receiving the AMA's Distinguished Service Award.

As a contest director, I ran innumerable indoor duration and outdoor Control Line contests on Long Island.

As a founder and longtime president of the Long Island Association of Model Airplane Clubs, I contest directed the only major triple-A combined Control Line, Radio Controlled (RC) and Free Flight contest on Long Island (at Mitchell Field) since the long-ago Mirror Meets.

In the mid-1970s, I returned to my first true love – Free Flight.

At the 1985 Westover Air Force Base Nationals, at age 54, I won the hand-launched glider event and was a member of the three-man team that won the hand-launched glider team championship. The glider flown was my Arm Soar design.

At the 1992 Nationals (also held at Westover) my Shuri-King design won both the ½-A gas and F1J events and was second in the A gas event. The model continued to perform well in contests throughout the northeast and Midwest during the next few years.

In 1994, my Shuri-King design was named the National Free Flight Society's Small Gas Model of the Year.

In 1996, my Genie design won the Nationals' F1J event and in 1998, it won the ½-A gas event at the Nationals. It was also published as a construction article in the AMA's *Model Aviation* magazine.

America's Cup competition in 1998 found me fourth in F1H and fifth in F1J.

The following year I dropped a spot to fifth in F1H but moved up to second in F1J.

The F1H model used in the America's Cup and other competitions was my Tow Soar Two design that was published in Model Aviation magazine in 2000.

During the 1990s, I performed a series of thrust, torque and horsepower tests on a number of commercially available props for ½-A and F1J engines.

The test results were published as technical papers in two issues of the Symposium Reports of the National Free Flight Society, in 1991 and 1999 respectively.

In January of 2002, I established the first national record (11 minutes, 46 seconds) in the AMA's new ½-A classic power event.

The model flown was my Classic 320 design, which was subsequently published in Model Aviation magazine later that year.

(signed) Jean G. Paillet  
April 2003

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*The following was published in the January 2011 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Jean was inducted into the 2010 Model Aviation Hall of Fame.*

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Born May 21, 1931, Jean Paillet won his first contest in 1947 with a record-exceeding speed of 96.5 mph.

“As young as age two, my aunt would take me to Tex Foster's Hobby Shop in Richmond Hill, New York, to view all the wonderful flying creations hanging from the ceiling,” Jean wrote.

Jean's first gas model was a Scientific *Flagship* that survived three engine changes: a Brown, a Dennyrite, and an Ohlsson.

“In my mid-teens, Control Line became the rage for me and many others,” he wrote. “My first flight was on a Jim Walker *Fireball* powered by an Ohlsson .23. It consisted of one perfect wingover – straight up and straight down! I persevered and gravitated to speed models. First notable year of competition was 1947 when I won my first contest with a record-exceeding speed of 96.5 mph. Model was my original design powered by my self-modified ignition Torpedo .29.”

Jean attended his first Nats in 1948 at Olathe, Kansas, competing in Control Line Speed and Stunt.

After graduating from high school in 1949, he joined the Army Air Corps, flying photo-mapping missions in the United States, Puerto Rico, and North Africa.

“Still managed to squeeze in some modeling activities, particularly while stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C.,” he wrote.

After leaving the service, Jean went to school on the G.I. Bill, then joined Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation as a wind tunnel model design engineer.

“It is an absolute fact that my career in the aerospace industry would not have been possible had it not been for my aeromodeling experience,” Jean wrote.

Jean married at roughly the same time and was the father of two sons who took up aeromodeling. Son Bruce won the Junior National Championships in 1973 and Barry won it in 1975. Both set numerous Indoor Duration records and Control Line Speed records while they were actively competing.

Jean competed in Control Line Stunt in the 1960s and 1970s, and a number of his designs were published in the aeromodeling press. He served many years as a member of the AMA’s Control Line Contest Board and ultimately as its chair.

“During that tenure, I co-drafted the Contest Board procedures document.” Jean received the AMA’s Distinguished Service Award for these activities.

He CD-ed numerous Control Line contests as well as Indoor Free Flight events on Long Island.

“As a founder and longtime president of the Long Island Association of Model Airplane Clubs, I contest directed the only major triple-A Control Line, Radio Control, and Free Flight contest on Long Island (at Mitchell Field) since the long-ago Mirror Meets,” Jean wrote.

In the mid-1970s, Jean returned to flying in Free Flight events. At the 1985 Nats, he won the Hand-Launched Glider event and was a member of the three-man team that won the Hand-Launched Glider team championship, flying Jean’s *Arm Soar* design.

Jean retired from Grumman as manager of engineering administration in 1987. Some of his most successful designs include the *Skylark* and *Zephyr* (Control Line), the *Shuri-King*, *Genie* and *Tow Soar Two* glider (Free Flight); the *Shuri-King* was named the National Free Flight Society’s Small Gas Model of the Year in 1994.

In January of 2002, Jean established the first national record (11 minutes, 46 seconds) in the AMA’s new ½A Classic Power event, flying his *Classic 320* design, which was published in *MA* later that year.

Jean was the recipient of the Distinguished Service award in 1970.

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*The following biography was in the October 1964 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the section about those running for AMA’s presidential and vice presidential seats, titled “About the Nominees.”*  
*Jean ran as a candidate for the District II Control Line Contest Board position and was elected in 1965.*

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AMA L.M. Participant in aeromodeling for over 20 years. Began with rubber-powered models, gliders, and Free Flight. Started Control Line in 1945 and been an active competitor in Control Line ever since. Has helped organize Control Line contests, including work on FAI team selection program. One of the founders of Long Island Association of Model Airplane Clubs,

Inc. and its President and Chairman of Board of Directors since its inception. Active in programs to obtain flying sites and in Junior participation.

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