

My Friend Jack

After I retired in 2001, I decided to get back into flying radio controlled models, which I had set aside for about 15 years. I built a small electric foam plane which I intended for indoor flying. Then I called the school district to find out about using one of the local gyms. They told me another person had called looking to do the same thing, and gave me the fellow's phone number. I called the person named Jack Dunn, and was on the phone with him for two hours! We immediately hit it off as "kindred spirits", and flew RC planes together up until Jack decided to discontinue in about 2010. During that decade of RC flying we often rode together to and from various flying fields, and did a lot of talking along the way. That's when I discovered we are both "Aeronca Champ Bigots", believing it to be one of the best sport and trainer planes ever! When I told him I used to take my future wife on dates in one, he grinned from year to ear and smiled, sharing that he once owned 7 of them!

It didn't take me long to discover that Jack is a very special person. It has truly been my honor and privilege to know him, be mentored by him, and spend hours visiting with him. Having kind of a "renaissance man" kind of brain, Jack can talk knowledgeably about a plethora of subjects. And what he doesn't know about he is anxious to learn. I remember one time telling him that I had synesthesia (I see names as colored objects). Jack immediately wanted to know all about, and did some research on it, and then asked me "Do you have any other things like that?"

Jack is also a true Southern gentleman, which really comes out in him when he is teaching things to others. [*His teaching method is to determine what you already know, and then fill in the blanks so to speak.*] Here is an example of his "gentleman-ness". My wife and I needed to fly to Boston to attend our son's graduation from MIT. Due to a kind of claustrophobia, I was unsure if I could be in an airliner for hours on end. I explained it to Jack and asked him if he would take me up in a light plane a few times to see if I could deal with it. He did so, in a Cessna 150 I rented (actually being the instructor he is, he had me do all of the flying, since I possessed a Private Pilot's license from years gone by). Months later I learned that Jack actually had both his pilot's license and his medical renewed just so he could do this for me – and he never said a thing.



Jack and I traded off being the president of the local RC club for many years, and because of both of our interest in aerobatic pattern flying, we created a Special Interest Group (SIG) in our club, and even chartered it as the only chapter of the Senior Pattern Association west of the Mississippi. For several years Jack mentored a handful of us regarding building, flying, and having events for pattern planes. The flying skills of all of us greatly improved thanks to Jack. In addition a lot of us gained immensely from Jack sharing his knowledge of how airplanes fly, building and trimming techniques, club organizational issues (like creating a constitution), and a never ending process of sharing himself with others with the "need to know". Jack has really "made a difference" to all of us with the luck to know him! Not only Jack, but his wonderful wife Jean. Many is the time she has made lunch or "tea and cookies" for groups of us anxious to just hang out with them. We love both of them!

As stated elsewhere on this site, having been around Jack for years, and benefitting and being entertained by his years of experience involved with our mutual love of airplanes, it seemed "necessary" for me to do what I could to share the Jack Dunn experience. Consequently, the creation of this web site and the video stories available. It is my hope that it will give you a glimpse into what I have experienced by having known Jack for these last 15 years. I encourage any of you, whether you already know him or not, to contact and or visit with him. I know it would make him happy.



- = Roy Pettit = -