



The *SENIOR PATTERN ASSOCIATION*

Official S I G (Special Interest Group) of AMA

**Dedicated to the Building, Flying and Competition
of Vintage Pattern Model Aircraft**

SPA NEWSLETTER www.seniorpattern.com WINTER 2024

VINTAGE PATTERN FLYING FOR ALL AGES!

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There are many items of importance in this issue of the newsletter, from the passing of SPA founder Mickey Walker, to the recent BOD meeting. There are several major proposed changes to the SPA rules (to the extent that I do not believe there will ever be a need for further major change). These proposals require that a membership vote be taken. It is important that everyone renew their membership, (or become a Life Member), so that your vote will count. Do it now!!....Duane Wilson, Newsletter Editor

SPA Founder Mickey Walker



My favorite photo of Mickey Walker around 2011 with his "classic" Daddy Rabbit

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Jeff Owens

VICE PRESIDENT-

Frank Cox

WEBMASTER &

SEC/TREASURER-

Jim Johns

PAST PRESIDENTS-

Mickey Walker

Bruce Underwood

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Jamie Strong

APPOINTED-At large

Phil Spelt

ELECTED-

Terry Boston-East

Chris Berardi -West

EDITOR-

Duane Wilson

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Join our Discussion list from within the webpage or inform any officer and we'll "sign you up". It's like a gigantic Mailing-list, but at NO CHARGE. A service to membership and potentials from SPA.



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The Senior Pattern Association was founded 33 years ago by Mickey Walker. His career in aeromodeling is detailed on the AMA Hall of Fame section of the AMA web site - a link is currently listed on the SPA home page. Also (page 5), is a brief description by Mickey as to how SPA came to be - it was formed to be an organization devoted to low cost fun pattern competition as it was decades ago. Mickey's keen insight led to the organization we know today where we can celebrate and enjoy competition using familiar airframes from days gone by. Mickey passed away on February 10, We will miss him, but at the same time we will celebrate the continuation of the Association he founded.

Much has been written in various forums about the declining participation in many forms of competitive aeromodeling. We have experienced it in SPA, but so has AMA pattern, helicopters, and other areas. There seem to be a number of reasons, depending on whose articles you read. But some common reasons cited include a decline in the number of folks who build airplanes, a decline in the number of suitable ARFs, and a wealth of competing activities and interests which then leads to a loss of interest in the practicing needed to excel in a competitive activity. Competitive modeling organizations have struggled with this and sought ways to improve participation. For SPA there is the additional complication that we compete with designs that are long out of production and, therefore, kits are harder to come by. ARFs have helped, but they come and go on an irregular basis. Some are so popular that they sell out almost immediately when a new shipment arrives. With our cutoff date of January 1, 1980, the newest allowed designs are at least 44 years old. This makes it hard for a prospective member wishing to join SPA to find an aircraft with which to compete. This problem is not new. Over the years our cutoff date has been moved - it was originally 1970 when Mickey founded SPA. This year again the Board of Directors discussed these issues always with an eye towards how to increase participation in our events. The Board has approved a 4-point plan to address some of the issues described above. Because elements of this plan signify a marked departure from past practices, the Board is calling for a vote of the current membership on the details of the plan. In the near future a notification of and instructions for the electronic voting will be sent to all current members. 2023 SPA annual memberships expired on December 31, 2023. If you want to vote on the plan, make sure your membership is current!

In order to increase the availability of suitable airframes in an attempt to increase participation in our contests, the Board of Directors is proposing the following:

- [Move the cutoff date to January 1, 1992](#) since that is the first year that AMA went full turnaround in all classes except Novice.
- [Allow the use of tuned pipes at the discretion of the CD, thereby conforming with local noise regulations, if any.](#) Many planes designed and flown between January 1, 1980 and January 1, 1992 utilized tuned pipes. Therefore moving the date without allowing pipes would defeat the purpose of this change. This is not as big a change as it may seem as so called "tuned mufflers" have long been allowed.
- [Allow any ARF that is patterned after a period correct design or is similar to planes from that era.](#)
- [Allow any design that meets our engine/motor/prop specifications, although the use of period correct pattern designs is still encouraged.](#)

It is felt by the Board that these four points will make it easier for new members to find suitable airframes for competition, thereby increasing contest participation. Watch for an email with directions to register your vote!

In other news, the competition schedule for the East division is published on the SPA website. In a departure from prior years, there is no schedule for West division contests. Last year's intense weather in the West led to a very low level of participation and to the cancellation of some scheduled events. No CDs stepped forward this year to schedule a contest. Instead, SPA members intend to travel to various clubs to have a series of one day pattern fun fly events in order to introduce potential new members to SPA competition. It is hoped that this will increase interest enough to make it possible once again to schedule contests in the West division - perhaps in cooler parts of the year!

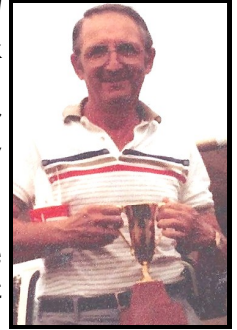
In closing, my wish to all SPA members is blue skies and smooth flying!

SPA Founder Mickey Walker passes away at 92

By Duane Wilson—Editor



We learned on February 10th that the man who started SPA (with the dream of returning to Pre-Turnaround, [single pass, back and forth] maneuvers, “like the good old days”), has passed away. Mickey had not participated much in our competitions for the past 15 or so years, (though he attended some local contests), but for those lucky enough to have know him personally, from SPA’s early days, his loss to us was heart-felt—he had enriched our lives.



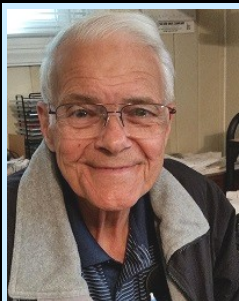
Back in 1991, the pattern competition we had traditionally flown since pattern’s earliest days, had morphed into the European style of flying. Not everyone (especially in this country), had joyfully and obediently approved of and adapted to the new format. Mickey fondly remembered traditional pattern, but it was officially gone forever, (or so it seemed), but thinking “out of the box”, Mickey had ideas of his own.

With the help of several of his pattern buddies from the Atlanta area with similar sentiments, Mickey drafted a set of simple rules adapted from the **best of AMA**, and the Senior Pattern Association was born. When I say “best of AMA”, I’m specifically referring to the AMA rules considering Novice Class— keeping competition “basic.” Novice Class by rule prohibited the use of retracts, and its (then), expense and complexity. Mickey expanded that concept throughout ALL competition classes, and deliberately focused competition back to the **skill of the pilot rather than the advancement of the model.**

He originally based SPA on the concept of the Senior PGA, complete with age requirements; you had to be **45 years old**— but I can personally vouch to the fact that idea didn’t last long. I joined at the inaugural SPA contest at the age of 40. (However shortly afterward I got out of RC for many years-unfortunately).

The return to “single pass” competition, though critical to SPA, was only part of the reason for its success; equally important was Mickey’s insistence to the philosophy of “simple and inexpensive”. This was deliberately built into the rules to discourage a repeat of what happened in AMA, with its seemingly endless trend towards more competitive, high performance, (and resultantly more expensive), models over time. That said, almost immediately folks were asking Mickey if this or that modification could be made legal. This opened a “Pandora’s Box” of sometimes controversial rules change proposals. **Still all in all, the rules were kept relatively true to Mickey’s original “simple and inexpensive” ideal for many years**, with more recent sweeping changes coming naturally as the times, and our current RC environment evolved. Over the past 30-plus years, out of necessity we have had to liberalize the rules at times to promote membership, but the rules changes have been positive and beneficial for SPA. You get all the thrills, pressure, and beauty of pattern airplane competition while flying planes that cost no more than any other comparable sized aircraft at the field.

Continued...



Comments from long time SPA President Bruce Underwood (SPA15)

As Kenny Rogers points out in his song "GOODBYE".....is so tough to say that to a friend of so many years.

The welcome was voiced by his Son and the Eulogy by his Daughter.... both excellent points and delivery. The message by a relative (I think on Rebekah's side...a PASTOR)....was just SUPER. He articulated the success of Mickey's Marriage, Family, Business, religion and heavily

acclaimed his contributions to model aviation. His P51 Mustang was displayed right up front with a huge photo of Mickey and his recent KAOS.

The Pastor acknowledged several times Mickey's founding of the Senior Pattern Association and his membership in the Academy of Model Aeronautics HALL of FAME.

The choice of songs delivered eloquently by the duet of Kristin and Aaron Brooks were so timely especially the closing one, "I'LL FLY AWAY".

The Carmichael Funeral Home in Smyrna, GA was literally "packed" with relatives and friends who shared tears of regret at Mickey's passing, Laughs of Joy when reminded by the Pastor of some events, and even more tears of joy when reliving association with such (quoting the Pastor)....a wonderful Christian man.



Competitors at SPA's 20th anniversary contest—a wonderful tribute to SPA's founding and its creator. It was like “homecoming” with some folks returning especially for this one contest. Mickey is ninth from the left, second row. To quote the NOV-DEC issue of the newsletter, “without Mickey, we’d still be out there “froggin’ around” flying random loops and rolls, or flying AMA turnaround or IMAC at a lot more cost, while probably not having as much fun—thanks again Mickey for everything!!!



Mickey and Rebekah

For those of you who recently joined SPA or are from the West, I'm sorry you didn't have the chance to meet him personally and get to know him—you'd understand SPA's roots a lot better. He knew what his vision for SPA was to the point that at times he would leave his own organization until he could inwardly “make peace” with the changes, (no matter how necessary they were.) I became active again during one of those periods, and didn't meet him for a while, (just read his commentary), but he couldn't leave it for long. He loved the hobby of RC pattern competition, and his “child” SPA. He once spoke at a dinner and said how glad he was that SPA had expanded into a new region, and hoped it might someday might go national.

On a personal note, I wrote two **Model Aviation** articles specifically about SPA, (7/2007, and 8/2012.) I remember sitting in his vehicle, just the two of us as I interviewed him about SPA history for the article. I've taken the liberty of posting my favorite photos.

I was fortunate to buy the last of six “Walker Daddy Rabbits” he built in the winter of 2016. A few months later, a hand-written letter arrived “from out of the blue”, with him saying he liked the way I finished it, and appreciating the articles. I still have that letter as a valuable, unexpected keepsake. I flew that Rabbit for many seasons before damaging it at Knoxville a couple years back—but it's still repairable!



Rt top photo— Glad I found this photo. I was about to crop it more, but Mickey's SPA#1 Rabbit is in the background. Bottom: One of my favorite photos with my Walker-built Rabbit.

Mickey In His Own Words “Why SPA”?



I have been asked a thousand times why, and how I started the SPA. I think the best way to answer this question is to give you a little background as to who I am.

My name is Mickey Walker, I am a lifetime modeler, I have competed in free flight, control line, RC Pattern, sail planes, helicopters, pylon racing, and most any thing else that flies. My first pattern contest was in 1953, flying home made radio from a magazine article. From this point on I was hooked on R-C. From 1953 on I used every kind of RC equipment available, single channel reeds and all the early proportional equipment.

In 1978 I grew tired of the way pattern was going, too complicated and expensive. In 1979 all my friends had given up pattern for the same reason. So I flew in my last pattern contest in 1979.

During the summer of 1990 I began to think about the fun we had in the sixties and seventies flying pattern. I also play golf, so I got the bright idea of why not a Senior Pattern Association, like the Senior golf association. So I started to put things on paper, and it was simple since I had been there, to make a set of rules, by laws etc. In March of 1991 I called a meeting of my old friends and they were very excited about it so we formed the association. The first Masters Championships were held in October 1991.

From this point on we have continued to grow. This year we have had a total of seven Masters' Championship Contests. We try to keep things as simple as possible, and keep things as they were in the sixties and seventies.

Mickey Walker
SPA Founder

2024 Senior Pattern Association Board of Directors Meeting-Minutes

The annual meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) of the Senior Pattern Association (SPA) via Zoom was called to order by President Jeff Owens at 10:08 a.m. EST on February 10, 2024. Others in attendance were Vice-President Frank Cox, Secretary/Treasurer Jim Johns, East Representative Terry Boston, West Representative Chris Berardi, Member At Large Phil Spelt, Coordinator of Special Projects Jamie Strong and Newsletter Editor Duane Wilson.



The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Jim Johns. 2023 Opening Balance was \$4,340.56, income was received was \$1,736.36 and expenses of \$1,471.19 were paid, leaving a closing balance of \$4,605.73. A copy of the 2023 bank summary report was emailed to all board members and is included at the end of this document.

The East District Contest Calendar was discussed by Jamie Strong. Chris Berardi and Frank Cox reported that the West district will not be holding any official SPA contests in 2024. Problems cited included last summer's extremely hot weather and the lack of available ARFs. The availability of ARFs and kits was discussed.

Jim discussed the 2024 Southeastern Model Show, commonly known as the Perry show. SPA will again have the same three tables in the McGill Building, Tables M50-M52. Jeff and Jim indicated that they plan to attend and man the SPA booth, and Duane said he will try to attend depending on his health. Discussion of signage for Perry followed as all our old signage and banner were destroyed in Jeff's house fire. Duane said he had planned to work on new signage but his medical condition prevented it. Jeff mentioned a local sign shop in his area owned by a Tallahassee club member that might be able to help.

Jim reported that he had just received notification from Roy Thompson that SPA Founder Mickey Walker had passed away. All expressed their sadness at the news.

Jeff mentioned that Dave Phillips is planning a get together/camp in/fly in at Mac Hodges field in Andersonville, GA before and after the Perry show. All were invited to attend.

Continuation of the Masters class in place of Senior Expert class was discussed. It was decided to continue the current experiment with the Masters class through the 2024 season and table a decision until a later date.

The status of the SPA Newsletter was discussed. It was suggested that although Duane has done a masterful job with the newsletter, perhaps a simpler version would be less work. Duane committed to producing a newsletter quarterly. A request was made for articles, and Jim offered an article on his glow to electric conversion.

Terry Boston proposed a change in the aircraft cutoff date to allow the inclusion designs such as the LA-1, Summit and Calypso. Following a spirited discussion, Jeff suggested forming a committee to discuss the issue. Members are Jeff Owens (chair), Phil Spelt, Jim Johns, Terry Boston, Frank Cox and Duane Wilson. Jim will create a Google group for committee email communication.

Webmaster Jim Johns requested a call for a member to serve as an IT backup for him. Jim will provide a description of the need for Duane to include in the newsletter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m. EST.
Respectfully submitted,

Jim Johns, Secretary

2023 SPA Banking Summary

1/1/2023 through 12/31/2023

Category	1/1/2023- 12/31/2023	
Opening balance		\$4,340.56
INCOME		
SPA Income		
Dues		
2023	941.68	
2024	219.68	
Life	575.00	
TOTAL Dues	1,736.36	
TOTAL SPA Income	1,736.36	
TOTAL INCOME	1,736.36	
EXPENSES		
SPA Expenses		
Annual		
Trophies		
East	245.00	
West	123.48	
TOTAL Annual Trophies	368.48	
Computer Software	37.04	
Contest Expenses		
2023	900.00	
TOTAL Contest Expenses	900.00	
Merchandise For Resale	41.40	
Office Supplies	49.27	
Perry Show	75.00	
TOTAL SPA Expenses	1,471.19	
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,471.19	
	Net Change CY 2023	
OVERALL TOTAL	265.17	
Closing Balance		\$4,605.73
Bank Balance as of 2/10/2024		\$5,290.73

Southeastern Model Show

...by Jeff Owens



This year's Southeastern Model Show

(aka Perry Swap Meet) was held on March 1-2, 2024. Greg and Debbie Hoke were hard at work registering folks, running the raffle, and doing whatever needed doing. Greg said the table reservations and ticket sales were the highest he had seen. Indeed, all three buildings were full on Friday morning and there were lots of people filling the aisles. I was there with some SPA signage and my Curare - not for sale, but as an attention getter to start conversations. It worked, as I had quite a few people stop by and

say that they flew a Curare "back in the day." Early on I saw quite a few classic pattern kits - one vendor had 6 on display. My mission was to find a Custom Woodcraft flight box or something similar. In fact, I found three! I chose one that was patterned after the Custom Woodcraft unit, but had been hand made by a modeler who was no longer flying due to medical reasons. The price was right (\$75) so it now has a new home in my workshop. There were also quite a few classic pattern planes in various conditions - one very nice King Altair sold for \$385 RTF. There were at least three Taurus's and several Kaos's of various flavors. One that was an eye-popper was a Phoenix 5 that was listed for \$850 without any equipment - last I saw on Saturday it had not sold.

Jim Johns brought numerous engines, several kits, and his nitro UFO and Deception. He sold both airplanes, as well as several kits. Gordon Talbot had several kits and other items for sale. He sold both Phoenix model Typhoons and I chatted up the new owners about coming to an SPA contest. I had several nice conversations with folks who said they were planning to come to a contest, although I was not able to sign up any new members. Quite a few SPA members stopped by, as well as some former members. Dan Dougherty and Scott Sappington showed up on Friday - Scott said he plans to fly in at least one contest this year. Dan is still involved in building and racing sports cars.



I did buy one kit - a Direct Connection Ultimate Kaos that Jim Johns had for sale. I built one back around 1995 and had it finished to the point that it was ready to cover. Back then I thought I would try AMA pattern again after a layoff of a few years so I sold the Kaos to fellow club member and bought a Pursuit 120 kit instead. The club member finished the Kaos and flew the maiden flight. He said it flew great - right until he flew through the sun, lost control, and crashed. As it turned out, ten years later I was building a Deception and a Cutlass and preparing to fly in SPA contests. I thought at the time that I should have kept that Kaos and have been looking for one since. So, when Jim showed up with a kit I bought it!



As in years past, the crowd started to thin out on Saturday by noon. The activity was much higher on Friday. All in all it was a good show with lots of sales and purchases, as well as the opportunity to catch up with the activities of old and new friends. Check out the SPA web site for numerous photos from the show.

SENIOR PATTERN ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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@

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seniorpattern.
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www.seniorpattern.com

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of Birth: ____ — ____ — ____ AMA Number _____

Telephone (____) _____ E-Mail _____

Mail this form along with check/money order made out to The Senior Pattern Association for \$20.00 to:
Jim Johns 85 Hodge Rd. Dutton, AL 35744 (Life Memberships available).

Jim Johns
85 Hodge Rd
Dutton, AL 35744

