

Where are they today?

George Ostler Loves to Build Airplanes

By Jack Kolb

In the fall of 1945 the war had just ended and the United States military was processing hundreds of thousands of young men back into civilian life.

One of these youngsters was a gentleman who had served a full four years in the U.S. Navy as a "Ship's Cook" with the rank of "Petty Officer 2nd Class." For the most part in his naval career George Ostler and his ship worked out of Subic Bay in the Philippines. Since the timing of discharges was rated on points or length of service, George was on early release to become a civilian.

Our subject found himself in St. Paul — a foreign city and a foreign country from his origin. George was born in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. At age two-and-one-half he moved with his parents to San Jose, Calif. Young George eventually became a naturalized citizen of the United States.

Why did he come to this foreign city of St. Paul?

Well, while in the service he happened to be stationed at Moffet Field in Sunnyvale, Calif. On a blind date he met a beautiful young lady who happened to be a Wave, also stationed at Moffet Field. Lorraine and George were married June 10, 1944.

Lorraine was from St. Paul, so upon discharge George acquiesced to making their future home in the Twin Cities area. Upon arrival in St. Paul George began looking for work and even looked in the ad section of the *Pioneer Press*. Midland Hills Country Club was looking for groundsmen. George was the first to apply, and in October of 1945 he began his career in Golf Course Management.

Emile Picha had just left Midland Hills that fall, and brother John Picha had become Superintendent. Shortly thereafter John Picha left and was replaced by Clarence Reynolds. George, the new employee, was a fast learner, and after four years as a journeyman apprentice he was named superintendent, succeeding Clarence Reynolds. Reynolds was leaving Midland Hills to join Gordon Brinkworth a "Peripatetic Superintendent" starting construction of North Oaks Country Club.

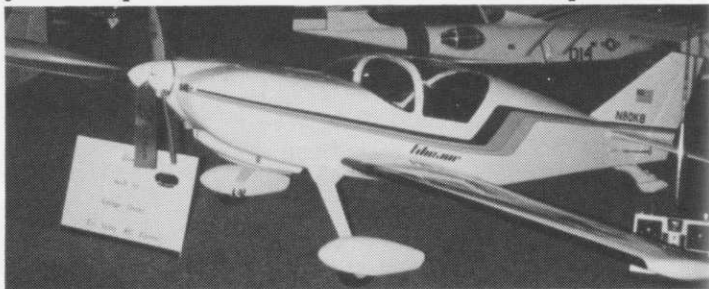
Enter George Ostler as the new Superintendent of Midland Hills Country Club. George labored in his new position for six years. An Associate member of MGCSA, Paul Miller, of the old R.L. Gould Company, was sort of a mentor to George and invited George to accompany him to a MGCSA meeting which was being held in a supper club at the intersection of Como Avenue and Rice street in St. Paul.

Paul had convinced George that the association would benefit his career and George signed on as a new member in 1949. George's contributions to the MGCSA were many. He spent nine years on the MGCSA board, serving as

president in 1979, treasurer for two years, membership chairman two years and research chairman one year.

In 1955 a new position beckoned and George Ostler became the Superintendent of Hillcrest Country Club in December of that year. Until George's retirement five years ago, he had spent 36 years at Hillcrest.

For those who called on George, there was always a presence of immaculate neatness to his shop and office, but just as impressive were the beautiful model airplanes that



1/4-Scale Glass-Air

First Place Blue Ribbon on Prop

he built. George is a member of the AMA (Association of Model Aeronautics), the IMAA (International Model Aircraft Association) and the TRI VALLEY R/C (radio-controlled) FLYERS. One had to approach George's home with trepidation as young George Jr. was a rocket enthusiast and had parachute retrievals landing in a four-block area around their home on Shryer Ave. in Roseville.

George happens to be an aviator, but he does his flying from the ground. The planes that he flies are not toys but radio-controlled pieces of ingenuity crafted by his own hands and beautifully replicated copies of full sized classics. George's pride and joy is a quarter-scale Davis-D1, vintage 1929, tandem-open-cockpit plane identical to the one in which this writer had his first aerial ride (from an



1/4-Scale Davis-D1—1929

itinerant barnstormer in 1932). The accompanying photo is not in color — but if it were, you would see that George earned a Blue Ribbon (first place) on this quarter-scale Glass-Air.

George's retirement was marred by the passing of Lorraine Ostler in August of 1992.