



The AMA History Project Presents:
Biography of
CHRISTOPHER (CHRIS) JOHN CHIANELLI



December 26, 1950 – January 20, 2009 Started modeling in 1971
AMA #96021

Written by JS (01/2009); NT (01/2009); Reformatted by JS (12/2010)

The following was written by Jay Smith for the January 2009 issue of Model Aviation magazine.

The Radio Control Show Comes to Your PC

“The Radio Control Show,” launched in September 2008, is a series produced by Air Age Media that features biweekly Webisodes. The show is hosted by Chris Chianelli – a name you may be familiar with if you have ever cracked open an issue of *Model Airplane News* or *Backyard Flyer* or caught an episode of “Radio Control Hobbies” on the DIY Network.

I had the opportunity to ask Chris some questions about “The Radio Control Show” and thank him for igniting the spark that got me into electric-powered flight seven years ago.

JS: How long have you been flying and how did you get started?

CC: I had my first successful flying experience in 1971. My best friend and motorcycle buddy got me into it. His excitement charged me up and I was hooked pretty quickly. We had some really good times. This brings back memories. You know, it’s about people first. For me, radio control flying is about connecting with others and sharing experiences.

JS: Could you tell us a little about your involvement in the hobby industry, such as some of the companies and projects you have been involved with?

CC: I’ve been involved in almost every aspect of the hobby industry. For more than 20 years, I was a staff editor for the industry’s top-rated RC magazines, including *Model Airplane News*, *Radio Control Car Action*, *Backyard Flyer*, *Radio Control Helicopter*, and *Radio Control Boat Modeler*.

I hosted DIY Network’s “Radio Control Hobbies,” “RC Top Gun,” “Workin’ on the Railroad,” “Holiday Workshop,” and “Robot Rivals” television shows. I was also a creative director for an RC manufacturer. And I was a writer for a hobby shop industry magazine.

JS: For someone who may not be familiar with “Radio Control Hobbies” or the new “The Radio Control Show,” as host, what is your goal for the viewers?

CC: To get them excited about all the fun to be had, and to dispel remaining myths about the hobby, such as it being too expensive or too difficult.

JS: The first two episodes of “The Radio Control Show” focus mostly on beginner aircraft. Will you be getting into more advanced aircraft in later episodes?

CC: Definitely. We’ll show viewers everything from scale to seaplanes to aerobatics. “The Radio Control Show” is for anyone interested in RC, from beginners to long-time enthusiasts, so we include tips and information that’s helpful for everyone in each Webisode.

JS: Will the show focus on other RC disciplines such as cars and boats?

CC: Yes, “The Radio Control Show” is about all things RC – airplanes, cars, helis, and boats.

JS: What is the most important piece of advice you would give to someone just starting out in the hobby?

CC: It doesn’t matter who has the most expensive or newest hot product. It’s not about impressing others on the flying field. It’s about having fun and connecting with family and friends. That is what’s important. The myths out there may be off-putting to some people, but hey, if I can do it, anyone can do it. And once you get started, just like me, you’ll be hooked.

“The Radio Control Show” Webisodes average 10-15 minutes, and show topics can be spread throughout multiple segments. Viewers are encouraged to engage in an interactive dialog through Chris’s blog.

The program has gotten off to a good start- so good that Air Age Media had to upgrade its bandwidth to keep up with viewer demand. You can watch “The Radio Control Show” at www.modelairplanenews.com or www.rccaraction.com.

-Jay Smith
MA Assistant Editor

The following was published in the April 2009 issue of Model Aviation magazine, originally from NewsTimes.com.

RC Icon Chris Chianelli Passes

Christopher John Chianelli, a resident of New Fairfield, Connecticut, died of natural causes on Tuesday, January 20, 2009, at his home.

He was born in Mineola, New York, to Russell Joseph Chianelli and Mervine Raphael Chianelli. Chris grew up in Cos Cob, Connecticut, and Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and he graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in geology.

He was married to Julia Soriano at St. Peter Church in Danbury, Connecticut, and was a member of that parish.

Chris was a television personality and industry icon. He worked as editor-at-large for *Model Airplane News* (Air Age Media) in Wilton, Connecticut, and hosted “The Radio Control Show.” He also hosted the DIY Network’s “Radio Control Hobbies,” “Robot Rivals,” and “Workin’ on the Railroad” programs, and had made guest appearances on NBC’s TODAY show.

Chris was involved in charitable functions for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Boy Scouts of America, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tennessee Valley.

He was also a rookie volunteer fireman for New Fairfield/Sherman.

He received the 2005 Hobby Ambassador of the Year Award from *Hobby Outlook* magazine and HobbyTown USA, for promoting RC hobbies and for his charitable work.

Chris is survived by his wife; his dog, Sophie; his mother, who lives in El Paso, Texas; his brother, Dr. Russell Chianelli of El Paso; and his sisters, Margaret Chianelli of Pennsylvania and Liza Bove of New York.

-NewTimes.com

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