

Pilot Profile: Don Finney

by Russell Knetzger

Pittsburgh's loss has been Milwaukee's gain. In spite of family roots in his boyhood hometown of Pittsburgh, where he attended grade school, high school, plus some technical college, Don Finney, now age 57, 24 years ago in 1983 chose Milwaukee to advance himself. Through the temp agency "Manpower, Inc.", Don worked for **Carma Laboratories, Inc.** in the Franklin Industrial Park visible east of our field. In short order Carma hired him directly. Now Don is production manager.

Carma was founded 70 years ago by Albert Woelbing, who personally hired Don. Carma's sole product is a household staple in America. Pictured below, it is those instantly recognizable little white jars of lip balm called "**Carmex**" with the equally recognizable black Carmex lettering on yellow lids.



Don has participated in the process to introduce other flavors, with accompanying change in the lid artwork, pictured here. Don was also part of the introduction of small tubes and small "sticks" of Carmex. Sticks are new, with tubes favored by women and jars by men. But the company has kept its focus on lip balm. That focus has seen the company grow from 10 employees when Don started in 1983, to 100 now.

The exact formula of Carmex is a proprietary secret but Don is able to say important ingredients are highly purified lanolin and cocoa butter. Founder Woelbing was active daily in the business through age 97, living to age 100 at his death 5 years ago. The founder's sons continue the business.

Don's duties are to keep production flowing by ordering the quantities of product raw materials, the jars, the caps, the cartons, and seeing to finished product transportation out to the marketplace. Overseeing good working order of production machinery is another aspect of the job.

Don is well known for visiting our field on his lunch hour, since the Franklin Industrial Park is only one half mile away. Some times he will put in a flight or two, and some times just chat with fellow pilots.



Don Finney at the field with his new 35% Yak, 104 inch span, weighing 27.5 lbs., powered by a Desert Aircraft 6.0 cu.in. twin cylinder engine, 27"/10" prop.

Don's love for models is part of a larger love of aviation. His father ran a packaging business that included mothballing surplus military equipment in cocoons. Preserving the famous Enola Gay B-29 bomber that ended WWII was among his dad's projects. That business required his father to fly a lot, and the company kept a Bonanza V-Tail. For longer trips Don can remember seeing his father off at the airport onto beautiful "Connie" Lockheed Constellation airliners. At home Don was always building model airplanes, from static to rubber powered, to glow engine u-control.

But it was not until 2002 that Don graduated to R/C, starting at our field with a Hangar 9 Trainer under flight instructor Floyd Katz. Don now does some pontoon flying from his lake cottage in Green Lake County, where he and wife Shirley weekend. Piloting an R/C helicopter is Don's next goal.

Through Don's efforts last year Carma donated to our field its used Bolens riding mower, with indestructible hydrostatic transmission. It does supplemental mowing by club volunteers, and if cared for, will give many more decades of service.

RAMS Horn, August, 2007, Bill Stilley, Editor
Rainbow Aero Modelers Society, Franklin, Wisconsin