

A Tribute to Lee Hines

by Bob Galler

This year at my hotel, the Motel 6 in Eloy, on Friday night the 14th of January, 2022, I met Lee Hines. Lee was getting out of his vehicle, struggling, walking with 2 canes. I did not recognize him, since I hadn't seen him in over 40 years, and that only in magazine photos. I saw some planes in his vehicle, and offered to help, and he asked me to carry his bags and open his motel room door. I was glad to do so.

He told me he was Lee Hines, and this might be his last visit to the SWR, or contests in general, due to his conditions. I was amazed he drove alone from California. I introduced myself. He didn't know me, of course, but he was happy to meet me and glad for the help. I met him again two days later at the same motel, prior to his departure.

Later I thought , that was a great man. I am sure he designed several free flight hand launch gliders and at one time held an indoor glider world record.

The most famous glider he designed was the Sweepette. The Sweepette came in several versions, both indoor and outdoor designs. It was kitted many times and often sold in hobby shops in plastic bags including an airfoil shaped wing. The Sweepette is flown by many guys even today. It appeared in the 1959-61 Model Aeronautic Yearbook, and magazines around the same time. Let's see now- that is 60 years ago!!!

As a point of interest, and an event I will never forget, in 1992 I built several Sweepettes and entered the 1992 Nats FF HLG event. The contest was probably the last large combined Nats prior to moving to Muncie. It was held at Westover AFB in Chicopee , Ma.

I placed 6th, which doesn't sound great, but got a plaque, photo below. There were at least 20 entrants, some of the best in the US. So I was proud of that place.

Here's a short bio for Lee Hines ---

Lee was born in 1938. He began model building in 1950 around Omaha, Nebraska and read Model Airplane News among other magazines. In 1953 his family moved to Torrance, California and was super excited to meet more modelers in the mecca of Free Flight.

And meet them he did --- Taibi, Mahieu, Giliam, Hal Cover, Stan Hill and others. He loved gliders and got into HLGs. His mentor was Joe Foster.

In 1957 he got so good he broke the one minute indoor barrier. Then as still an AMA Senior, he broke the record with a flight of 71.6 seconds. A time that would be outstanding even today with discuss launchers.

Then, at only 19, Lee set the all time world record of 77.2 seconds! A few years later he set another record of 82.5 seconds, the first in the world over 80 seconds, at Edwards AFB April 19, 1964., later broken by himself with 2 flights of over 1:24.4 and 1:22 January 10, 1965. That record lasted many years.

Lee was also a champ in other events, such as FAI events. All that is just a brief tribute --- long my Lee still live! The plan on the next two pages for a Sweepette is from the July 1965 issue of *Model Airplane News*

