



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of PETER ALBIN



Written by JS (12/2016), transcribed and reformatted by JS (12/2016)

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Peter Albin

Professional musician with Big Brother and the Holding Company

by Jay Smith

Jay Smith: *How did you become involved with model aviation?*

Peter Albin: My older brother was a major influence by letting me see how he built and flew a U-Control [Control Line] model, powered by a Fox .35 in the early 1950s. He also designed and built model boats out of balsa wood. I would go with him to the local hobby shop to buy supplies.

I built my first stick-and-tissue model when I was 12. I became interested in World War I biplanes when I was in my early 20s. I was also influenced by Ron "Pig Pen" McKernan when he showed me his completed Sinbad glider.

JS: *How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?*

PA: When Big Brother and the Holding Company went on the road for extended periods of time, I would build small models in my hotel room. Sometimes I would fly them over the heads of the audience and let them become souvenirs of the show.

During the '70s, I worked part time at a local hobby shop, then worked full time at a wholesale distribution company that focused on dollhouse supplies and supplies and tools for architectural modelers. I also taught aeromodeling for a few years at local schools.

JS: *What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?*

PA: I've concentrated on small, stick-and-tissue Free Flight Scale models. I started with WWI biplanes, then branched out to all sorts of types: early flying machines, Golden Age, World War II, postwar designs. I build mostly from kits, although occasionally I'll find a plan I like. I've dabbled in RC gliders and model rocketry, but I concentrate on flying Indoor Scale [models].

JS: *What are your other hobbies?*

PA: I collect various things - stamps, flattened pennies, spinning tops, T-shirts, and yo-yos - but mostly '60s rock posters. I also enjoy N Scale model railroading.

JS: *Who (or what) has influenced you most?*

PA: I was influenced and mentored by some great aeromodelers in the San Francisco Bay Area: Hal Mackinson, Tom Brennan, Mat Callahan, and Paul Stober. I've also been influenced by authors and designers such as Bill Hannan and Walt Mooney.

Model magazines also influenced me. I got some great hints and tips from articles in *Model Builder* magazine, *Flying Models*, *Jr. American Modeler*, and, of course, *Model Aviation* magazine.

JS: *Looking back over your musical care what are you most proud of?*

PA: I'm proud of Big Brother's 1968 recording, *Cheap Thrills*, on Columbia Records, and proud of the many performances all over the world.

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