



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JESSICA BUFFORD



Written by AMA staff (04/2007); Transcribed by JS (02/2008)

The following was published in the April 2007 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Jessica was a 2006 AMA Scholarship winner.

Jessica Bufford, daughter of David and Judy Bufford, lives in Vancouver, Washington. She is the recipient of a Charles Hampson Grant scholarship for \$6,400 and a scholarship from the Weak Signals Radio Control Club of \$1,750.

Jessica attended Columbia River High School where she was a member of the National Honor Society and graduated with a 3.97 grade-point average (out of a possible 4.0). In addition to the Science Olympiad, her other extracurricular activities included being the president of the school's chapter of the Model United Nations, organizing trips and running meetings. She also participated in River Art, a school-wide art show.

A participant in the International Baccalaureate program, Jessica was challenged academically and took college-level courses. "IB taught me time management and prioritizing tasks because of the heavy work load given by the teachers."

Active in her community, Jessica was a leader in AWANA, an evening Bible study program for elementary students, and worked as a Portland Rose Festival Parade float decorator. She worked with the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge Bird Fest, the Festival of Trees, and vacation Bible school summer camps.

She began aeromodeling as an eighth-grade student in the Science of the Olympiad. "My first model was abysmal," wrote Jessica, "but they soon improved with the help of the Willamette Modelers Association (WMA) and the mentorship of Andrew Tagliafico, Ed Berray, John Lenderman, and Chris Borland.

She consistently placed in the top five in the Regional and State Science Olympiads between 2002 and 2006, taking first place in the Washington State competition in 2005.

"Since that first airplane, I have learned so much about model airplane building, Jessica wrote. "The whole world of aerodynamics and the science of flight were opened up to me in a very tangible manner. I learned patience and fine motor skills while I was working on building the plane, trying to construct and put together an airplane that would fly."

The members of WMA helped her with tips and guidelines to increase her flying times. "I have attended the WMA flying events regularly," she wrote, "participating in the monthly mass launch and placing in the top three upon occasion."

She participated in the club's two-day symposium that involved flying and workshops where members shared tips and method with other modelers.

In preparing for Science Olympiad competitions, Jessica was able to fly at her school and teach other students to fly. "Teaching was an important step for me," she wrote, "because it helped me learn trimming and winding even better."

Her coaching led to a fifth-place finish at the regionals and a second-place finish at the state level. In addition to Science Olympiad models, Jessica has built catapult launch gliders, expanding her modeling experience.

Jessica is attending Austin College in Sherman, Texas, pursuing a degree in international relations.

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AMA History Project
National Model Aviation Museum
5151 E. Memorial Dr.
Muncie IN 47302
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

