



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DANIEL NOVAK



Written by AMA staff, DN (04/2007); Transcribed by JS (02/2008), Updated (08/2009)

The following was published in the April 2007 issue of Model Aviation magazine, with updated information from Daniel. He was a 2006 AMA Scholarship winner.

Daniel Novak of Iowa City, Iowa, is the recipient of a \$4,000 Charles Hampson Grant scholarship.

Daniel has been involved in modeling since he was eight years old, beginning with Whitewings gliders. When he was in elementary school, his grandfather taught him how to build rubber-powered Free Flight models. "I was amazed that something 'old fashioned' could outperform the store-bought models I was familiar with," he wrote.

In eighth grade, Daniel joined AMA and the Iowa City Aerohawks and learned to fly RC using a Hangar 9 *Xtra Easy* trainer.

"This model has served me well," he wrote. "It has survived many projects from the addition of an internal drop box to service as a glider launch. It will be tested again with the addition of a set of floats which I am designing for use in my club's first float fly."

Daniel has a reputation for unusual designs and enthusiasm for aeromodeling among his fellow club members. "I started designing and flying my own models a few months after I soloed," he wrote. "A Sopwith Camel-esque biplane made from deli trays followed by a triplane with a stick fuselage were my first attempts at scratch building."

He has also tried 3-D flight with foam and carbon models and even some impromptu Pylon Racing. He designed an RC sport-scale Piper *Cub*, suitable for indoor or outdoor flying, to take with him to college.

Daniel was a member of the cross-country and track teams in high school, lettering in cross-country all four years. He was elected team captain of the cross-country team his senior year.

He began taking cello lessons in elementary school and later played in the high school symphony orchestra, the pit orchestra, and in chamber ensembles. Daniel hopes to join the orchestra at Iowa State.

He was a junior counselor at Camp DuNord in northern Minnesota for several years through the camp's Leadership Development Program. He took on the responsibilities of a full counselor, planning and guiding various wilderness, paddling, and youth activities.

Volunteering in his community and outside it has been important in Daniel's life. He participated in Habitat for Humanity, helping raise funds, build homes, and construct an office in the organization's store for reusable building materials.

Through Rotary, he traveled with his family to Xicotepec in the Pueblo Mountains in Mexico. They constructed a school for children whose parents could not afford to send them to school. "It is amazing for me to see what simple things are lacking in these areas and realize how fortunate I've been," he wrote.

Since he was in sixth grade, Daniel operated his own lawn-care business, enjoying the flexible schedule and the opportunity to work outdoors.

He also worked one summer at a restaurant that opened near his home. In the first week, the new restaurant generated a large number of customers for the small group of newly trained employees and Daniel wrote, "That week, although it was trying, was an important experience. I now have great respect for service workers and understand the paramount importance of customer satisfaction."

Daniel was in the Honors program at Iowa State University in pursuit of a degree in aerospace engineering, and then transferred to St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota in preparation for Architecture graduate school. Aviation continues to influence his ideas about sculpture and structures.

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