



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of GAVIN SMITH



Written by AMA staff (02/2009), transcribed & reformatted by JS (10/2011)

The following was published in the February 2009 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Gavin was both a Charles Hampson Grant scholarship and Weak Signals scholarship recipient.

2008 Scholarship Recipients—Gavin Smith

Gavin Smith, of Bavaria, Kansas, is the recipient of an \$8,000 Charles Hampson Grant Scholarship and a \$1,000 Weak Signals award. Gavin will be attending Wichita State University.

At a young age, Gavin's fascination with aviation was cultivated by his father. He started flying simple aircraft such as paper airplanes, rockets, rubber band stick-and-tissue aircraft, and hand-launched gliders.

His father has a longtime interest in airplanes, and after being away from RC for nearly 20 years, he began to teach Gavin on small electric trainers. The two advanced to build a Piper *J-3 Cub* from a kit.

Gavin's interest in electrics evolved to his current participation in slope soaring. He became a charter member of Wings Over Wilson in 2004, and recently designed and built a slope glider as a prototype for a multimotor-powered design.

Gavin has competed in the Super 77 Combat event and the Midwest Slope Challenge where he placed second in Combat class.

"Although I enjoy the competitive side of flying RC," Gavin wrote, "by far the part I enjoy most is simply flying for fun with my father."

Gavin graduated from Salina High School Central first in his class with a weighted GPA of 4.24. He was recognized as a Kansas Governor's Scholar.

In high school, Gavin was involved in Science Olympiad, the Forty Hayes State Math Relays, the Trig-Star competition, the American Mathematics Competition, and the ECO-meet competition. While competing in the Science Olympiad, he medaled numerous times at the regional and state levels in the Wright Stuff event and Remote Sensing.

Gavin was actively involved in varsity boys' swimming and student council, as well as marching, concert, and jazz bands. As a member of the boys' swim team, Gavin was a league champion numerous times and competed at the state meet each of his four years.

Since middle school, Gavin has volunteered during the summer reading program for the Salina Public Library and been an active member of the Young Adult Advisory Board at the library. He has also volunteered at the Smokey Hill River Festival, put in countless hours for the Salina Aquatics Club as a timer, and is a big brother through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Salina.

During the past two summers, Gavin worked for Jack Cooper of Leading Edge Gliders building kits of slope soaring airplanes. He has also attended EAA AirVenture at Oshkosh for three years as an employee of CAV Aerospace, informing people of the TKS deicing system.

Gavin will be pursuing a degree in aerospace engineering at Wichita State University. He plans to someday own a small aircraft design and manufacturing company.

Best of luck, Gavin, and congratulations!

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