



# The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of ROBERT D. (BOB) STALICK



Modeler since 1959      Born October 17, 1937  
AMA #26731

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Written & Submitted by RDS (12/1999); Transcribed & Edited by SS (08/2002), Updated by JS (10/2008), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

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## Career:

- Charter member of the Willamette Modelers Club of Oregon (WMC)
- Served as WMC's secretary and treasurer; editor of the club's newsletter (WMC Patter) since 1962
- Served as a contest director since the mid-1960s; directed at WMC indoor and outdoor contests since that time
- Contest director of the 1996 Indoor World Championships in Moscow, Idaho
- Served on the FAI Free Flight Team Selection Program for the AMA during the 1970s; was its chairman for two years
- One of the three founding members of the National Free Flight Society (NFFS); served as the first president and later was a board member
- Elected NFFS president in 1997; was elected for a second term which began in January 2000
- An initial promoter of the Society of Antique Modelers; he suggested the name
- Worked in education in Oregon until his second retirement in June 1999
- Served as AMA District XI vice president from around 1966 to 1972
- Served as the AMA scholarship committee chairman from around 1972 to 1982
- Columnist for American Aircraft Modeler magazine (1968 to 1975) and Model Builder magazine (1975 to 1978 and 1982 to 1997)
- Wrote articles for other model magazines including Model Airplane News, American Modeler and Model Aviation

## Honors:

- 1973: AMA Distinguished Service Award
  - 1976: AMA Meritorious Service Award
  - 2002: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
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I became interested in flying model airplanes as a grade school student in Oregon City, Oregon. My mom helped me build models from the old Jack Armstrong paper models that came with Wheaties cereal during World War II. I also tried my hand at Joe Ott and Comet Structospeed models. I built the full range of Monogram Speedee Bilt models, but it wasn't until my neighbor got a K&B .19 engine as a gift that I really got hooked on gas models. Soon, other friends showed up with different engines and we ran them in the backyard of my parents' farm. That did it! I finally got my first gas engine, a Baby Spitfire, and my first gas model, a Berkeley Baby Bootstraps when I was 14-years-old. They were Christmas gifts and since I was out of school at the time, recuperating from the effects of polio, I was able to do the building. It was a laborious process, as I recall, but by the time the weather had cleared, I had the models finished, I knew

how to start the engine, and I went out into the back pasture to fly it. It did fly. Not too well, but for me it was wonderful.

I soon got my driver's license, my car, and my after-school job. Modeling became a memory until I was driving by Delta Park in Portland one Sunday with some friends and saw model airplanes being flown. We pulled off the road and watched as a model drifted over the freeway



and landed just off the roadway. We drove down to where the action was happening and watched. The old feelings were rekindled. While I was a college student, I had several chances to visit the Eugene Toy and Hobby Shop and to buy a few things, such as a rubber model kit and some supplies. I kept busy studying, building a few models, and reading all of the model airplanes magazines of the day. Then, I discovered my first Zaic Yearbook. I was re-hooked. I had never seen such a publication.

After graduation from the University of Oregon in 1960, I got married to my wife, Barbara, and settled into my first teaching job at Albany High School. While standing around during the first back-to-school meeting for teachers, I overheard two of the guys talking about a new model airplane club that was being formed. I butted into the conversation and joined them at one of the first meetings of the Willamette Modelers Club of

Oregon (WMC). This club had an initial membership of about 50 people of all ages and flew Free Flight, Control Line and Radio Control events. The club sponsored at least one contest each year for each of these categories. In time, the Control Line and radio guys went their own ways and the club became a full-time Free Flight club. The membership still hovers around the 50 mark. Dues for club membership, which includes the newsletter, remain at \$6 per year – the same as the dues were in 1960.

I have served as secretary and treasurer of the club, but since 1962, my major contribution has been as editor of the club newsletter, WMC Patter. This newsletter is the longest running, continuous club newsletter in the Northwest and is published eight times each year. It features Free Flight-related information, hints, tips, and plans in addition to the activities of the club and its members. Originally, WMC Patter was produced on a portable typewriter and reproduced on a hand-cranked ditto machine. Over time, the typewriter was replaced with an old Apple IIc computer and a dot matrix printer and eventually the current iMac with an inkjet printer. The newsletter is reproduced at Trump's Hobby Shop in Corvallis at no cost to the club.

The WMC sponsors three major outdoor Free Flight contests and five indoor contests each year. In addition, the club participates in local events such as mall shows and other display-oriented activities.

I have been contest director (CD) since the mid-1960s and have been a CD at our outdoor and indoor contests each year since then. In 1996, I was the CD of the Indoor World Championships in Moscow, Idaho. I served on the FAI Free Flight Team Selection Program for the AMA during the 1970s including two years as chair of the committee.

I was one of the three founding members of that National Free Flight Society (NFFS) in 1966. The other two were Carl Fries and Dick Black, both deceased. The NFFS was the first Special Interest Group affiliated with the AMA. I served as the first president (called the executive secretary) and later as a member of the board. (As a side note, John Worth was a member of that first Board of Directors.) Over time, the NFFS grew and became a mature organization responsible for the promotion of Free Flight activities in the U.S. and within the AMA. The Nostalgia movement was developed and promoted by NFFS, for example. Currently, the NFFS is responsible for co-sponsoring the annual Indoor and Outdoor Free Flight Nationals at Johnson City, Tennessee, and Muncie, Indiana. The NFFS has just under 2,000 members and publishes a monthly magazine and an annual Symposium document.

I was elected to the position of president of the NFFS in 1997 and have served in that capacity since then, just having been elected to my second term of office, which begins in January 2000.

I was also one of the initial promoters of the Society of Antique Modelers (SAM). In fact, a competition held by then President Lee Freeman, to name this new old-timer organization, I was the one who submitted the Society of Antique Modelers as the name of this new group.

I have continued to be active as a competitor in Free Flight competitions in the Northwest and more recently in California. I enjoy flying all kinds of SAM, AMA and Nostalgia gas events as well as hand-launched glider and catapult glider. I have flown indoor gliders and Bostonian, Peanut Scale and similar events. I am just now completing my first outdoor electric scale model. I believe Free Flight has been a wonderful lifetime companion for me. I enjoy all phases of the hobby – building, flying, meeting with fellow club members and Free Flyers, writing columns, articles and the newsletter. It has never seemed like work.

During all of this time, Barbara and I had three children who have since grown up, gone to their choice of universities, gotten jobs, and presented us with seven grandchildren. The two boys in the family, Ted and Tom, have been active at times in the hobby. Ted had participated in the Boeing Management Association Scholarship Program and was a competitor in the U.S. FAI



Team Selection Program during two different cycles. Tom has had an interest in scale and indoor and still competes locally at our indoor contests. Both flew A-2 glider and scale at local meets and the Riverside Nationals (Nats).

Professionally, I taught English and theatre arts at Albany High School for nine years, directed the high school plays and performed in the local little theatre group. I got my Master's Degree from Oregon State University in 1969 and my PhD from the University of Oregon in 1982. I became a high school administrator in Albany and then assistant superintendent. I returned to Albany in 1990 as the superintendent of schools and retired from that position in 1995. I was subsequently hired by the University of Oregon as the executive director of the Oregon Study Council, the research arm of the College of Education, where I worked part-time until November 1998 when I was hired by the newly elected state superintendent of schools to be his interim deputy superintendent until he was able to reorganize the department. I served in that capacity until June 1999 when I retired once again for the last time.

My wife, Barbara, taught in Corvallis School District and retired in 1997 after 21 years in education. Since we are now both retired, we now have time to do some things we have put off. We have traveled abroad and visited our kids and grandkids, all of whom live out of state. I have been able to attend more contests than I could during my work years.

I owe my enjoyment and accomplishments in this hobby to many people: my wife, Barbara, my flying friends, Al and his wife, the late Dee Grell, Jack Shafer and other members of the Willamette Modelers Club, plus the Free Flights of the Northwest who are like an extended family to us.

### **Other Modeling Career Highlights**

- Served as AMA District XI Vice President from around 1966 to 1972
- Served as AMA scholarship committee chairman from around 1972 to 1982
- Free Flight glider and rubber-powered columnist for American Aircraft Modeler magazine from 1968 to 1975
- Free Flight columnist for Model Builder magazine from 1975 to 1978 and from 1982 to 1997
- Occasionally wrote articles and building features for other magazines including Model Airplane News magazine, American Modeler magazine and Model Aviation magazine.

*(signed) Bob Stalick  
December 27, 1999*

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