



## The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of KATIE BOSMAN



Transcribed & Edited by JS (01/2014)

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<http://dev.amafoundation.modelaircraft.org.364elmp01.blackmesh.com/stories/katie-bosman>.*

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**Katie Bosman**

From a young age, Katie Bosman was enticed by flight. Perhaps it came from her parents' love of birds, and the art pieces they put together to capture the essence of their flight. Her fascination with flying continued after her first model aviation club exposed her to the facets of model aviation. The hobby was an inspiration throughout her whole life. Not only did she learn about physics and science, but the hobby helped her to build her confidence by exposing her to public speaking, taught her the importance of camaraderie and being a good sport through competition, and eventually lead her to realize her love of journalism. Today Katie continues to be immersed in the world of aviation as a full-scale pilot and Marketing/Tech Writer for her own company, GRT Avionics.

Although Katie enjoyed the arts, she wanted to explore other areas that would peak her interests. She asked her parents on a regular basis to let her sign up for an activity—one that would help her discover more about herself. She got her wish at eight years old when her parents signed her up for a model aviation class sponsored by 4-H in her hometown of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.

Aviation changed her life.

*"My dad and I went for a discovery flight in the airport FBO's Cessna 172. I remember looking out the window at the tire as it left the ground, thinking WOW, so this is what the birds feel like. A couple weeks later I went for a ride with a club member in his Breezy ultralight and was blown away to a much, much higher degree. There was no windshield or doors; we were just out there*

*on seats with nothing to block the view. It was magnificent. I said "Nevermind, THIS is what the birds feel like!!"*

Katie was thrilled. She knew she would love it because of her fascination with things that flew and because of her desire to put things together. She soon became very involved with her club, the Bay Flyers Model Club, and asked for her first set of plans to build a Comet J3 Cub for Christmas. Assembling the model was harder than she expected. She spent a great deal of time working on the model, but asked for help from Larry Huber, an experienced modeler. Larry became a great mentor in Katie's life— one of many as she continued to grow as a modeler.

Katie would tell anyone that she was "hooked" on model aviation right away. Her club made her feel as though she was part of something special, and never judged her about anything other than the models she would bring in to show everyone. The club she was involved in encouraged her to share her pieces, and to be proud of them. Sharing information with the club helped her to build confidence and develop public speaking skills.

Although her parents strongly encouraged Katie with the hobby, she had to wait for them to be able to afford an RC model for her. They did, however, take her every year to the annual EAA convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Her first trip to the show led to her first full-scale-plane ride, a moment Katie said she will never forget. The ride in the airplane inspired Katie even more, and she told her parents she would do anything to get her own RC model.

Katie's parents agreed to purchase her an RC model in exchange for doing her chores complaint free for a month. Katie took great strides to take care of her model, even learning about weather patterns to predict when the safest times to fly would be.

Her skills improved, and at the age of 15 her club encouraged her to compete in the National Aeromodeling Championships (Nats). Katie won her first competition, and instantly became a local celebrity, and a kid that others in the hobby wanted to watch. Her new experiences as a competitor led to her club asking her to write for the club's newsletter. She credits this opportunity as one that inspired her to pursue journalism when she enrolled in college.

Because of her model aviation skills, grades, and club activities, fellow club members encouraged Katie to apply for the Charles H. Grant Scholarship offered by the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Katie applied and received the top offering of \$10,000 in 1995 at the age of 18, which helped pay for her first two years of college. Katie graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications & Graphic Design.

Like many other modelers, college life and a full-time career left her with little time to continue in the hobby. As she adjusted, she again attended an EAA event in Oshkosh and her interest in model aviation was renewed. Her passion for flight only continued to grow as she got the opportunity to learn to fly full-scale at a small airport located near her home. Before visiting the airport she did not think she could afford the lessons, but another aviation mentor gave her a good price and the opportunity to work with an aircraft that taught her how to make small repairs.

In 2003, Katie was invited to become an intern in EAA's youth education department. She was enticed by the organization's goal of taking 1 million children on an airplane ride by the end of the year. With her new private pilot's license, she helped EAA obtain this goal, which led her to pursue her next goal of obtaining a commercial pilot's license.

She decided to attend Middle Tennessee State University, with a scholarship from EAA, to get this license and a master's degree in aerospace education. She hopes to one day use this degree to teach aviation at the college level.

Katie's professional career continued to blossom as she became a corporate pilot, where she was regularly on-call. She also took a part-time job with Jabiru USA, the world's largest distributor of Jabiru brand aircraft and aircraft engines. Katie accepted a full-time position with Jabiru later, and was featured in 99 News, a female pilot publication.

In 2010, the shift in the economy hurt sales at Jabiru so Katie decided to make a career shift and take a position on the west coast for several months working for another aircraft manufacturer. But, Katie started to miss the Midwest, her family, and the informal environment of a small company. So, in the fall of 2012 she journeyed back to the Midwest to work for GRT Avionics, a company that would utilize her extensive experience she gained when working for Jabiru. GRT is a small company that manufactures electronic flight instrumentation for experimental kitplanes and light-sport aircraft. Katie is in charge of writing the installation and pilot user manuals, marketing program, and she created and now maintains the company website.

Model aviation provided Katie with the right tools to make a difference in the workforce:

*"My background as a flight instructor helps me with my current job because education is a major part of writing effective installation & user manuals-- and in a much more focused sense, I taught many pilots how to use GRT equipment when I was a flight instructor for Jabiru USA. So, it's all related-- my current job builds upon all of my past collegiate and career experience, and that's why I really enjoy what I do. I miss flying the Jabiru and Lightning airplanes, but a desk job is much more predictable. And, when I finish my own airplane, I'll be able to fly for fun on my own terms!"*

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