The AMA History Project Presents:
Autobiography of ROBERT (BOB) DAVIS

AMA
ACADEMY OF
MODEL AERONAUTICS
Bringing Modelers Together Written by AMA Staff (06/1991) and (1/2009); Transcribed by JS (05/2008), Updated by JS (1/2009)

The following was published in the January 2009 issue of Model Aviation *magazine. Bob was inducted into the 2008 Model Aviation Hall of Fame.*

Bob Davis is a lifetime modeler. His early aircraft experience included the diesel-fueled Drone Diesel engine marketed by Leon Shulman. Bob's nomination came from longtime modeler and friend, Stu Richmond.

In 1975, Bob formed the Davis Diesel Development Corp., which developed Davis Diesel Converters. These converters were precision-manufactured add-on units for existing glow-powered models and were first demonstrated at the 1975 Dayton Nationals. Bob's company also offers specially blended Davis Diesel fuels.

A Davis Diesel Converter Head, placed on a standard glow engine (in place of the glow head that comes with the engine), offers several advantages. The engine is quieter in flight and will develop more usable power. The power can be used to turn a larger, more efficient propeller. The engine sucks in less air and the venturi's air sound is lessened. The engine needs no glow plug.

Additionally, converting an engine to diesel power generally extends the life of the power plant. Model diesel fuel's kerosene adds natural lubricity to the engine. Compared with an equal volume of standard glow fuel, the kerosene will run longer and yield more horsepower. The converters are available for all popular glow engines.

Another division of Davis Diesel is Carbonic Motors. This division has produced the ultimate in quiet power, bringing CO_2 technology to another level of usefulness. This alternative to expensive, heavy electric motors or winding rubber bands offers a simple, reliable, quiet, and lightweight power plant in larger, more usable sizes.

Davis Diesel's CO_2 motors and diesel-conversion engines operate at sound levels considerably lower than comparable gas engines. Bob's development of SoundMaster mufflers, "soft" engine mounting, tuned pipes, and a variety of other products are significant contributions in the effort to decrease the noise produced by model aircraft.

Bob received AMA's Technical Achievement Award in 1990 for his many contributions to model engine technology.

The following was published in the June 1991 issue of Model Aviation *magazine. Bob received the 1990 AMA Technical Award.*

Bob Davis was honored for his many contributions to aeromodeling and his ability to develop new applications for established products.

He has greatly expanded the use of the CO_2 motor. Originally designed to propel small Free Flight models, Davis has produced CO_2 models as large as .20 cubic inches that can be used in Radio Control models. He also applied the concept of diesel engines to aeromodeling. Through his development of diesel conversion heads, almost any model engine can be converted to a diesel in a matter of minutes. The use of such engines is practical for all categories of model aviation.

Like the Burgdorfs, Davis has also been on the leading edge of technology to ensure the quieter operation of models. His CO_2 motors and diesel conversion engines operate at sound levels considerably lower than comparable gas engines. His development of mufflers, tuned pipes, and vibration isolators for engine mounts are also significant contributions in the effort to decrease the noise produced by model aircraft.

An active aeromodeler since the age of eight, Davis resides in Milford, Connecticut. Since 1975, he has owned and operated Davis Diesel Development. Before the opening of his modeling business, he worked for various companies in the design and instrumentation of laboratory and medical instruments.

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