



CHARLEE SMITH

National sales manager, Bob Smith Industries, Inc.

Jay Smith: *How did you get involved with model aviation?*

Charlee Smith: Our dad kept us supplied with plastic and balsa kits that he obtained for pennies on the dollar from a damaged freight warehouse. He also had many old issues of *Air Trails* magazine that kept our aviation fever running high, along with many weekends spent at Van Nuys Airport and Armed Forces Day air shows at Edwards AFB [Air Force Base].

My first attempt at scratch-building was a solid balsa B-25H from *Air Trails* plans when I was 9 years old. In junior high, our model airplane club built and competed with balsa hand-launch gliders and I made my first try at RC with an Ambroid Charger.

Our local hobby shop was a big help with this. With high school taking up most of my time, my next big step at age 17 was scratch-building and learning to fly with a Professor built from *Radio Control Modeler* magazine plans. I still use the same Dremel Moto-Shop scroll saw I used to cut out the parts for this trainer.

JS: *How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?*

CS: Many would say model aviation has been my career. After working as a draftsman and not getting to the finish line of being an aeronautical engineer, my brother and I started making fiberglass RC Pylon kits. This led to having a hobby shop for 13 years and making composite parts for various aerospace firms.

My brother, Bob, eventually saw the light that selling the components used in manufacturing (and modeling) was a much cleaner and more profitable business. So, in the early 1980s, Bob Smith Industries (bSi) started producing adhesives for hobby shops. I joined him in 1989 and we have worked smoothly together ever since.

JS: *Who or what has influenced you the most?*

CS: Bob Palmer was so good at Control Line Stunt in the 1950s that AMA made a category that only he competed in. He was also a lead model maker for the



wind tunnels at Lockheed Martin Corporation. He was a fiberglass composite expert and he taught Bob and me all of the tricks of his trade.

Engine expert, Clarence Lee, along with John Brodbeck, took us under their wings. I designed the aircraft, but it was the power provided by Clarence (and Bob's superb flying skills) that led to championships. Model magazines have constantly provided motivation.

JS: *What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?*

CS: I like to make what hasn't been built before. Currently, I'm focused on models of concepts for full-scale aircraft, in the future and the past. How would you design a piston-powered fighter with the knowledge that was available in late 1942?

JS: *What other hobbies do you have?*

CS: I enjoy photography and reading about aviation and World War II history almost as much as modeling, but the majority of my free time is spent on landscaping (aka yardwork).

JS: *What is your number-one tip regarding bSi products?*

CS: If you use bSi's Insta-Set accelerator, you will find it is also an excellent cleaner. It removes the adhesive residue left by tapes and stickers and is compatible with all surfaces. I used it this past week to remove the scuff marks left by our vacuum cleaner on our baseboards. It saved me from having to repaint them. 

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