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Award from A1

innovations to the Pitts design aircraft, a series of light aerobatic biplanes designed by airplane designer Curtis Pitts.

Horvath testified to high regard in which he held Pitts' own contribution.

"He took everything out you didn't need to fly and only left exactly what you needed," said Horvath. "And so he really changed aerobatics and aviation."

Horvath's fascination with aircraft began at 10 years old in part due to his fortuitous proximity to Creswell Airport.

"We just happened to be in a really cool area here in Creswell, Oregon, where there's a lot of really neat aviation stuff going on if you care to look," he said.

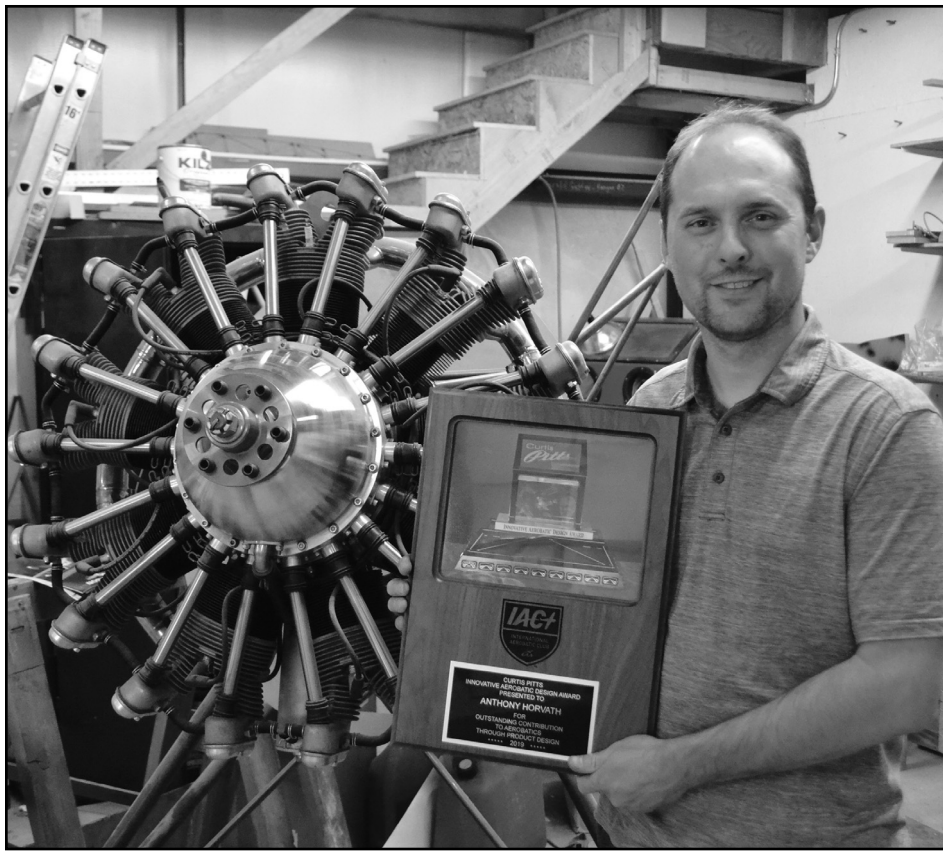
Horvath would watch as local pilot Steve Wolf practiced his performances, spinning and twirling above Horvath's house.

Impressed, Horvath wrote a letter to Wolf and was subsequently invited to take a tour of the airport where his interest only grew.

"It just sucked me in," recalled Horvath.

His early curiosity with piecing out how things worked combined with the community of people "building airplanes out of nothing" took hold of his imagination.

Maintaining a presence on the Creswell Airport through his youth, Horvath eventually went off to Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath



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Specialty Aero owner, pilot and airplane builder Tony Horvath displays a plaque commemorating his Curtis Pitts Memorial Trophy award.

Falls where he would get a degree in manufacturing engineering technology.

Following his graduation in 2004, Horvath returned to work for Wolf in Creswell where he built planes, parts and pieces for big names throughout the airshow circuit.

When Wolf retired a few years later, Horvath struck out on his own by launching his custom fabrication business Specialty Aero, a company that grew to serve customers all over the world in its specialization of aerobatic planes.

One of the catalysts for starting the businesses, Horvath said, was a contract to build an airplane for Sean Tucker, a famed aerobatic aviator whose airshows, sponsored by

the Oracle Corporation, have achieved worldwide recognition.

Tucker's plane, the Oracle Challenger III, is due to find its way into the Smithsonian next year.

In addition, Horvath's list of builds and modifications now include other notable aircraft such as Wyche Coleman's Wolf Pitts Samson II, Peter Kohmann's Pitts S-1T, and Pete Diaz's Pitts S-2S.

Horvath continues to produce popular parts for Pitts builders, including performance parts for the Pitts S1-11 and Pitts S1, making him an integral part of the Pitts community and "grassroots" aerobatics as well as being an aircraft builder himself.

Ever humble, however, Horvath put it simply.

"I just kind of do whatever people need," he said.

Each year since 2009, the membership of the IAC nominates outstanding volunteers to be recognized for their contributions to the sport of aerobatics. While the award recipients have typically been recognized at the IAC Annual Member Meeting at in Oshkosh, Wisc., this year, due to coronavirus-related cancellations, the award was shipped to the recipients' homes.

Horvath said while he isn't the kind of the person to seek out awards, he appreciated being nominated by others campaigning for his recognition.

"It's sure an honor to have gotten it," he said.



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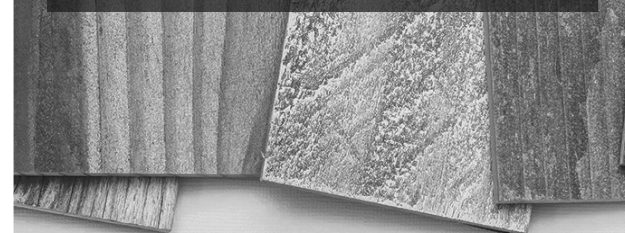


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