



RVator's Log

Newsletter of the Twin Cities RV Builder's Group

Shop Notes

- Doug

March 2020

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Upcoming Events

There will not be a Spring Meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions. Hopefully we will meet again this summer.

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Van's Air Force**

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According to Van's website, on average 1.5 RVs are completed and flown EVERY DAY! At last count 10,660 RVs have been completed. Think for a minute. That is totally amazing!! So why is that? I'll contend that there are very few aircraft, either certified or amateur built, that have the versatility in performance that RVs possess. And.... you have the "pleasure" of building it!

My RV-7 is a perfect example. Up front is an Aero-sport IO-375 (195 hp). I can go out for a little aerial therapy most any time and just sightsee around the neighborhood at 6-7 gph and still blow the doors off a Cessna 172. Not as cheap as joyriding in a J-3 but at least I have heat! And every takeoff (especially on a cold winter day) is the poor man's cat shot. Off the ground in 400 feet and climbing at 2000 fpm+.



I have found one great advantage to cross-country RV flying is going up and up and up if the need arises. My first exposure to this was an early trip to New Mexico in my RV-4. If I recall we had 4 other RV's in our group on the way to the Land of Enchantment RV fly-in. It was a nice clear VFR day and we were all flying at different altitudes to determine the most advantageous winds aloft. I think I was buzzing alone around 6000 feet and one of the guys wondered how it was up higher. Well... give me a minute and I'll find out! Up on the prop control and then the throttle and 60 seconds later I'm at 8000 feet for a wind check. That would have been a slow chug in a 172.

Jean and I have made several trips out west in the RV-7 and after installing a portable oxygen tank in the baggage bin, flying above 10000 feet becomes a viable alternative.

On our longest trip to California we cruised across the Nevada desert at 12,000 feet. Well above the heat and bumps of the day and I was amazed that we suffered little in cruise

speed and were saving some serious gas. On the way back were at 13,000 eastbound when center asked if we could do 15,000 to let's some F-16s chase each other below us. Easily done.

The following year we flew to Maine for vacation and as we overflew northern Ohio we began to encounter building cumulus. My RV-7 has electronic ignition, which does tend to make the engine run hot the higher you go.



FL 150 just southwest of Erie, PA deviating around showers. TAS 163 knots burning 6.5 gph.

But using the Tom Berge method of cooling the engine with lots of fuel and air (a slow rate of climb, full throttle and full rich mixture), temps stayed in the green. We asked for 15,000 and eventually leveled off just above the bumpy clouds. If anything, those RV wings begin to look shorter and shorter the higher you climb but it still felt rock solid in the thinner air and we enjoyed a smooth flight.

Yes, these are very versatile machines whether you are running over to Eau Claire for a burger or embarking on a multi-day trip across the country. Use good planning, don't push your self-imposed limits and do remember they are toy airplanes. You'll be rewarded with some great flying memories.

Cats in Planes

-Alex Peterson

It was 3.5 years ago when my wife's mom passed away. We drove to Aberdeen where her mom lived, jumped through some hoops to get me back to Henning. I had the plane up at Henning, and had an important meeting in Madison and I needed to either drive or fly to. Anyway, I flew the cats and stuff back to ANE, drove home, dropped off the cats and drove to MSN. They howled a bit when I first started the plane, but really went to town when I put in takeoff power! We flew relatively low, maybe 1500 agl, due to ceilings near STC. Air was rougher'n a cob. Anyway, here are a couple pictures. The second cat carrier is buried in the baggage area.



Florida Report

-Bob Pittelkow

Just to drop a line from Cedar Key, Florida. Judy & I now "snowbird" here for a couple of months to get out of the Minnesota winter. We're sitting on the condo balcony watching the pelicans skim the Gulf waters in ground-effect!

Now and then I recognize an RV overhead lining up for CDK. Cedar Key is on the Nature Coast (west) of Florida midway 'twix Tallahassee and Tampa. Directly west of Gainesville, it is truly a "landing strip"; no facilities, no hangers, no fuel, no nothing except a portable outhouse, but has about 2300 feet of good paved runway ending at the water's edge. Seafood is fantastic! I've been told there is a phone number to call for golf cart transportation downtown (couple of road miles bridging from isle to isle). Was a very pretty solid black Pitts S2 parked out there yesterday along with a couple of store-boughts.

A couple of years ago we had some "excitement" when a student from Gainesville in a Cherokee ran out of runway during landing. His pride was hurt (can a student pilot have pride?) and, after a few days, they trucked the airplane out. I'm sure the bird flew again with a new prop, etc. All is well with us. Judy has no lingering effects of her facial TIAs of last year. I'm well, deaf as the proverbial doorknob, and I sure do miss my Vans RV7. My advice: Fly as much as you can while you can. I get so envious when I receive your missives! Keep them up. My regards, Bob

A Pleasant Surprise

- Frank Huber

Having finished my aircraft in August of 2018, this year was my first chance to fly my RV-7A to Oshkosh. I flew down on Monday morning and got right in flying at the higher altitude on the arrival. After parking in the RV area, I made my way to the experimental aircraft registration booth. I gave the volunteer my information and told him this was the first time for the aircraft I finished building in 2018. He congratulated me and

then yelled to all the volunteers that there was a pilot, who had brought his finished project to Air Venture for the first time.



Everyone stopped what they were doing and started singing a song that in a very clever and humorous way congratulated me for my perseverance in finishing my aircraft project. It was great! After finishing my check-in, the volunteer said there was going to be an award ceremony. So he grabbed another volunteer and came out in front of the Homebuilder Welcome center. I was then presented with a beautiful Perseverance Award plaque while the other volunteer took some pictures of



the event. I have it hanging in my hangar. The EAA does a great job recognizing all the hard work we put into completing our projects and create a memorable experience the first time you bring it to Air Venture.

A Time to Remember

- Frank Huber

Col Bud Anderson, WWII triple ace, outstanding test pilot, a man of honor and service, inductee in the National Aviation Hall of Fame and a national treasure has been my personal hero for over three decade. So when I decided to build an RV-7A, I knew that I would paint my aircraft in Col Anderson's paint scheme like his WWII P-51 Old Crow to honor him and tell his story. When I finished test flying my aircraft, I had the guys at Midwest Aircraft Refinishers paint her up in the Old Crow paint scheme.

I really wanted to share some pictures of My Old Crow with Col Anderson, but I could not find an address to send them to. Fortunately my nephew, Aaron found out that Col Anderson's son handled all of his father correspondence. So, unknown to

me, he sent some pictures of my aircraft to Col Anderson. A few weeks before Oshkosh I received two signed pictures from Col Anderson. One was his Old Crow P-51 on the tarmac in Europe. He signed it "Frank this is the real thing". The other picture was of him flying a P-51 Old Crow at Oshkosh. He signed it " Frank, Mustangs forever". So now I had an address, so I wrote to thank him and tell him I planned to tell his story to Young Eagles and anyone else I had a chance to tell it to.

A week before Oshkosh, I got an email from Connie Bowlin, president of EAA War Birds of America. She told me she had seen the pictures of my RV-7A and although it is not a real warbird, she invited me to have my aircraft next to two real P-51 Old Crows during Col Anderson's Warbirds in Review. That was an offer I could not refuse. So I flew down on Monday for a 1:00 PM Tuesday War Birds in Review. I taxied my aircraft into the Fighter Alley and parked in the grass next to the Warbirds in Review area. When Connie started the program, she talked about my aircraft and why I had painted it in the Old Crow colors. Then everyone got enjoy Col Anderson telling stories of his WWII experiences. For a man ninety-seven years old, he tells the stories with clarity as though they just happened recently.



After the presentation, Col Anderson went to the War Birds gift shop to sign autographs. I wound up near the end of an hour and a half hour line with an Old Crow hat for him to sign. I couldn't help but notice the care he took in signing each item his admirers put in front of him. When my turn came, I introduced myself as the person, who has my aircraft painted in his Old Crow colors. He told me he was blown away when he saw them. He couldn't have said a nicer thing. I got a picture with him, which was a great way to end a time to remember.



Restarting the Stalled Project

- Bob Collins

The other day, I was interviewing Sam Kurtz of Sarasota, for an upcoming article in Kitplanes profiling a guy whose project stalled somewhere along the road of life. He's trying to get it started again and hopes to be flying next year. It'll be a challenge. He's just now ordering the finishing kit for an RV-7.

But what he said about his urgency hit me like a cold bucket of water.

"I'm 73," he said. "I figure I only have about 5 or 6 years left" to fly his dream.

I'm not sure if Sam is currently flying anything (I don't think he is) and his tale is one of sticking to it, but the reality in his quote offers a significant truism: our ability to build and passion to fly can have a shelf life.

His spirit is renewed but the flesh is weaker. He can't hold both a gun and bucking bar anymore so he needs help. Arthritis has taken its toll. And he finds that all the numbers in his head when he's building don't sort themselves out the way they once did.

Whenever I go to the hangar to see if there's pattering around I can do on the RV-12 project, I think of Sam. But there isn't anything to be done. I've reached the point in the plans when I need an engine, currently priced at about \$36,000. And Van's is now collecting a Minnesota sales tax.

I've retired now after tending retirement accounts for so many years and I could simply withdraw the money out of the accounts, but then you have to pay taxes on that, which adds another \$10,000 to the equation. And with the markets melting down, is it a good idea to bail at lower value? I could put

the engine on the home equity, but there's still a balance from having to buy the hangar a couple of years ago after the owner developed cancer and I was faced with moving airplane parts strewn about. I also found it costs a lot of airplane money to fly a family of 6 back to New England twice in just a couple of months, but who could plan the timing of mothers dying? And the Van's service bulletin required a quick \$350 to replace a nose gear leg that had exactly zero hours on it. And so on and so forth.

So many questions. So much life.



The secret to restarting a stalled project is obvious and should be familiar to anyone who has flown an airplane even once: don't let it stall.

But once it does, prepare for the process of trying to put the project in the priority line of the other elements of life that are tugging at resources and time all over again. Sometimes it doesn't make it to the top of the list.

It's been more than three years now since I last flew an RV – when I ferried my RV-7A over to Grand Rapids, Mich., and its new owner. That's a long time to go without flying and now more costs – the cost of getting proficient again – pile on.

In the intervening years, I lost hearing in the "good" ear too and now require hearing aids to function, even though I have to pretend too often that I heard what you said.

When I went flying with Warren Starkebaum a few weeks ago, I noticed something troubling: I couldn't hear the radio with my spiffy — and now useless Lightspeed Zulu II headphones. So now I'll shop at Oshkosh this year to see if there's an alternative. You have to be able to hear the radio. What I've found, too, is the longer you're on the ground, the more comfortable you get with the idea of staying there. You start asking yourself whether you really still have the passion to fly. Or whether you even belong in the sky.

Curiously, Sam Kurtz solved that problem by joining a flying club, but he thinks that actually helped keep the project idled.

“That took care of my flying,” he said. “I flew with them over 450 hours in last 12 years. It was kind of a mistake in a way even though it did help me keep current.”

What got his project restarted? His daughter is grown now and moved to Middlebury, Vermont. Sam thinks the RV-7 will be the perfect machine to go visit her once in awhile.

But also there's that other motivator: the sense that time is running out.

A TOM'S LIFE

- Tom Irbeck

Editor note: It's been almost two years since we lost our good friend Tom Irbeck in a sailplane accident in Florida. Last fall club member Dale Field had the pleasure of meeting Tom's sister Gloria and she gave him a copy of this narrative that Tom authored just a year before his death. It's story of a life full of adventure growing up in Minnesota and a life intertwined with aviation. It's a long but pleasant read so it will be divided into four installments. Kick back and enjoy....



Part One

I was born in a house on the North West side of Hinckley, MN. Sister Gloria remembered the name of the house as the “Barton Maternity Home”. When you're driving out of Hinckley to the north, just before Hwy 61 makes a bend to the NE, you would turn left, west, on 2nd Street N. You would cross over the railroad tracks, and the house was around ¼ mile on the right side. Doctor Stephan was the delivery doctor on May 31st, 1943. My Mom had mentioned a number of times that I was not an easy baby to deliver, which meant she was in labor for many hours. Mom was around 5'4" tall and around 120 lbs. There were some comments made, that I was a big baby, over 10 lbs. and around 22" in length. My Dad was in flight training for the Army Air Corps, and Mom had gone home to stay with his Mom and Dad, during the later portion of her pregnancy. Two of my favorite pictures are, Dad in his uniform with Mom, Gloria and myself sitting, then the one while Dad was home from B-29 training, sitting on my Mom's lap in the back seat of a Piper Cub, J-3 at the Benson Airport, 1945, I was a little over 2 yrs. old. Dad is in the front seat. Mom said I liked to shake the stick, and I still like to

shake the stick. Our Family would become good friends with John Benson. Mom and Dad would usually stop in on John's

birthday, for a birthday wish. Dad, Henry August Irlbeck was also born in Hinckley, MN on May 5th, 1918, to Monica and

Joseph Irlbeck. The Irlbeck farm was located round 3 miles west of Hinckley. There were six kids, Louie, Paul, Joseph, Henry, Mary and Catherine. Mom, Gladys Virginia Lieberg was born on July 21st, 1918, in Wyoming MN, to Nellie and Frederick Lieberg. There were three kids, Clinton, Gladys and Martin.

Some of my early memories were living on Desoto Street, as my Dad was building our new home at 477 E. County Road A2, St. Paul, MN. Very few memories, as I was only 4, but I remember going up to our future home, while my Dad was working on the house. The house that we rented was the first home south of A2 on the west side of Desoto, kind of down in a lower area; it was only around 300 yards to our future home. A2 was later renamed Roselawn Avenue. Gloria and I have discussed when moving into the house, and we believe it was the spring of 1947. My Dad did most of the work on the house, he did have help, and we think it was grandpa Irlbeck and brother Joe, while he was working as a block layer for my Uncle Mart's new construction company, “Lieberg-Peterson Construction Company”. When we moved in, it was still under construction. I can remember the wood floors, not carpeted yet, the front steps not completed. Mom and Dad had Bob in their room, and Gloria and I had the other bedroom on the first floor.

I made friends with a boy living a few doors to west. In my early years, Paul DeFlorin and I did everything together. We both got bikes when we were 7 years old. I'm pretty sure the bike cost \$7 dollars and I paid half of the \$7 dollars, a 20" wheeled bike. Every Saturday was movie day on Payne Avenue. Mom would usually drive us to the theater, Gloria, Paul D. and myself, drop us off, do some shopping and then pick us up when it was over. One of the memories I have was the cost of 5 cents, but it was raised to 10 cents, and remembers Mom saying that it was getting expensive. Gloria said she could remember us walking to the movie theatre too, which was around two miles south of our house.

1st and 2nd grade, I went to Edgerton Elementary. It was a relatively short walk east of our house, about ½ mile. I don't have any special memories of going there, except they had an outdoor skating rink in the winter, and we played some hockey often. I remember my skates as being used, and not having much ankle support, and I wasn't the fastest skater, but I could “raise” the puck, and that was a big deal. After having gotten my shins beat up, I made some shin guards. My Dad cut some lumber into 1 inch wide strips, about ¼" thick, and about a foot long. My Mom sewed them together with some canvas, 4 for each leg, added some padding for the knee, and I had my shin guards. My first grade teacher was Ms. Bucher, naturally we called her “Booger”, when she wasn't around. For some reason, I don't remember much about 2nd grade.

St. Jerome's built a new grade school, and they started with 1st through 6th the first year, then expanded to 1st through 8th grades. I then started in 3rd grade to 8th grade there. St. Jerome's was the Catholic Church to the west of our house about ½ mile. We went to mass every morning, before we started class. Our nuns were very strict but fair. Dad and I got involved with scouting, as St. Jerome's was a good sponsor of this program. I never made Eagle Scout, but did get many merit badges and we did a lot of camping, right up my alley.

A couple of times, before a big snow storm, I would put up an old Army tent that Uncle John Phaller had given us, 5X7 wall tent, and we would sleep in it during the storm. It was not far from the house, kind of interesting that Mom and Dad thought this was normal for me. I had an old army sleeping bag, and we would also throw on some blankets, don't ever remember getting cold. I think I liked snowstorms, as I made a sail to attach to our toboggan. We had a storm come along, remember the wind blowing strongly out of the Northwest. We took the toboggan out to the field behind our house, just to the north, attached a sail that I had fashioned and fit it to our toboggan and we were off like a jack rabbit. It was snowing pretty hard, and couldn't see where we were going, but we were going. Ended up hitting a fence, but luckily, no one was hurt, it was fun.

When a new priest came in as an assistant to Fr. K., Father Raymond was a young go getter, and started a little league program and a basketball program. I was better at baseball, but didn't really become any sort of a star, as I spent spare time hunting, biking or building forts.

Father Ray was very well liked by all, maybe a little too well liked by Sister Dennis, one of the younger good-looking nuns. They left and got married about 5 years after Father Ray came to St. Jerome's. Father Ray was also a pilot, and got called on the carpet by the local police. One nice winter day, while flying an airplane, he went buzzing some of the icehouses on McCarran's Lake. Someone had thought it was my Dad, and while interviewing Dad, he let slip that he thought Father Ray was flying that day. Nothing became of it, but it was a fun joke and story for the local priest to be out having too much fun flying. We missed him and Sister Dennis when they left. My six years at the St. Jerome's School went by very fast, many fond memories. My sister, Gloria was the brains in the family. Her report cards were mostly A's. Mom and Dad rewarded us with a \$1 dollar bill for every A that we got, which was big money at that time. Tom would only get a few, while Gloria raked in the cash. Gloria was also well thought of by the nuns. When St. Jerome's had a May celebration, Gloria was selected as the young lady to put the crown on the statue of the Virgin Mary, in front of the church. We were all very proud of her. Jim Strommer, a good friend became a priest, and we have seen each other a couple of times over the years. Dick Pietsch, Don Brennan, Terry Erickson, Tiny Ryan, Dave Flip have become lifelong friends. Some of us went on to Alexander Ramsey too. My buddy Paul D. stayed

at Edgerton for grade school, and later moved, and the Oscarson family moved into his house.

Paul D. and I enjoyed the outdoors, and that is where we usually were. We had "forts" in the woods, a tree house behind our house, and a tree house, out in the woods too. In the early 50's, TV's were just coming out. Paul's parents got the first TV set in our area. I would go down there on Saturdays to watch the one or two channels, and the cowboy stories. Around this time, I had seen one of the shows with the Indians shooting bows and arrows, and decided I would become an Indian. Paul liked the cowboys, and he got himself a couple of cap guns, and usually wore his guns when we went out into the woods. He also got a cowboy hat. I built my first bow around this time. I was probably around 9 yrs. old. Had cut a small oak tree down, and split it, carving a bow out of it. I then found some straight branches, learned to glue feathers on it. I put nails in the end for the tips. Got to be a pretty good shot too. Somewhere I got a feather or two, and would stick them in a band around my head. We must have really looked cool.

Well, now the story gets interesting. Paul and I had watched a cowboy and Indian battle, in the fight, one of the Indians had shot the hat off the cowboys head. Bingo, I had to give that a try! So, I told Paul D. to ride his bike by me, and I would shoot off his hat. To this day, I can remember Paul D saying, "I don't think that is a good idea". I convinced him, telling him I was a good shot, and not to worry. I would shoot his hat off his head. I was standing on a little hill, on our front lawn, and Paul rode his bike by me around 15' away. I drew back as he came along, and let the arrow fly, but it hit a little low, going through the hat and sticking in his head. Paul let out a howl, and started for home, with the arrow bouncing up and down as he pedaled. I took off on a run after him, and pulled the arrow out, but the nail stayed in his hat and head. Paul pedaled home, and shortly thereafter, we got a call from Paul's Mom, informing my Mom of what happened. My Mom said, "His Dad will take care of this". I was sent to my room, and told to wait there until Dad got home. When Dad got home, Mom explained what happened. Then my Dad asked me what happened, so I told him. He said he was going to have to give me a "whack" for doing something wrong. My Dad told me a number of years later, he almost broke into a laugh, because he could picture what had taken place. My Dad had "BIG" hands, and a good whack I received, and promised not to do a dumb thing like that again. My Dad and I were very close. I never feared him because he was always fair and loving. It took Paul D a week or so to come back and play with me, he forgave me, but I think he kept his eye on me whenever I picked up my bow.

When I was 7 years old, I got my own .22 single shot rifle. I was not allowed to shoot it around our St. Paul home, but always took it north to Hinckley for shooting. Going to the dump and shooting rats was the most fun. Butch and I did a lot of squirrel hunting. Uncle Joe and Aunt Lila lived next door to Grandma Irlbeck, they had 5 kids, Butch (Gary), Pete,

Jim, Debbie and Roger. Butch and I did a lot together. When I was 12, I bought a Stevens automatic .22, and had it for many years. It's very interesting thinking back, that my parents let me go hunting at the age of 8 with my own 22. Around the age of 11, I started going deer hunting with my Dad at their Hunting Camp, 12 miles east of Sandstone MN.

This was a fun camp as my two uncles, John Phaller and Joe Irlbeck were there too, plus a couple of my cousins, also some other friends of Dad, Bob Oberg, Bert Anderson and John Greenly, usually around 10 of us. The first two years, I didn't carry a rifle, but when I turned 13, my Dad gave me his Winchester .351, as he had just upgraded to a 35 Remington. We went out and did some shooting, so I got to carry it with me that year.

I shot my first deer at the ripe old age of 13, a nice 10-point buck. That was in 1956. I was one of the standers, and the drivers chased up a nice buck toward me. It was running pretty fast and I started shooting, I hit it around the 5th shot, but it was still going, so had to put in another clip, and a couple of more shots brought it down. It was the biggest buck shot that year, and I was pretty proud of it too. I did an antler mount, and have it to this day. I think I shot 17 deer and one bear there during my hunts, but Dad had the record, of over 45 deer, two bears and one wolf. My brothers Bob and Paul would also join us as they got older.

Also in our early TV years, I almost gave my mother a heart attack. Cowboys were the heroes, riding horses, and saving the girls from the bad guys, who always wore black hats. About this time, we were going to have our house blessed. Also, my Mom had been encouraging me to become a priest. We had now started school at the new school for St. Jerome's, and I was in third grade. We went to mass every day before school started, and we had a great priest, called Father Kachinski. I was going to be an altar boy, and had made a little altar in our basement. I had taken the training very seriously, and naturally Mom, thought I would make a very good priest. Father K was coming over to bless our house. Mom was very proud of me as I had my little altar in the basement all set up for Father K to see too. I guess I had given Mom the idea that I wanted to be a priest, like Father K. When Father K was going through the house, and blessing it, Mom said that Father K had to see Tommy's altar. He was impressed. Mom then said "Tommy, tell Father K what you want to be when you grow up". Well I had recently seen a cowboy riding his horse with a pretty girl, and decided, that was better than being a priest. So, I told Father K, "I want to be a cowboy". I think my Mom's jaw just about popped open far enough to hit the floor. Father K said something like I'd make a good cowboy. And that was the last I heard about being a priest. I did become an "altar boy" until leaving St. Jerome's School, and going into 9th grade at Alexander Ramsey.

My Mom and Dad were great parents, loving and always supportive. My Dad and I had a special bond, probably being the firstborn son. We fished and hunted together. I never saw my Dad angry or loud, and when he said something, I always lis-

tened. He always had a project going around the house and could build anything, or repair most. I know we never had much extra money, because if he needed something, we waited until he saved the money. He talked a little about growing up on the family farm, and mentioned they never seemed to have any money to buy things. Money was very tight. When he was around 18, he left the farm to get a job in the Twin Cities. His Dad wasn't too happy, as he needed help on the farm, but Dad had seen his older brother Joe leave, and make enough money to buy a motorcycle, and that impressed Dad.

When Brother Paul was born in 1950, Dad put in some extra work, finishing off the upstairs bedroom. Bob and I got our own bedroom, which was really a big deal, and nice. It was finished in Knotty Pine, and was a fun private room for two boys. We had a beautiful two story view looking north to the fields and woods that we played in. About this time, I picked up an interest in airplanes and started building models. Had some hanging from the ceiling too. I even had some with rubber bands that could fly. The upstairs window was a good launching area, for the models and gliders. Around the 4th of July, we would get some fireworks and fire crackers. I had seen some aircraft blown up on Paul D's TV, and once again we planned to blow up one of my aircraft. We loaded it up with some firecrackers and launched it out the window. It worked perfectly, the plane got out around 20' and blew up, but it was right over my Mom's cloths that she had hung up to dry. Lucky for us, we didn't blow up any cloths, but they did pick up some pieces of plane on the laundry. The explosion was pretty loud and Mom started yelling to find out what had happened. Well, we had to explain our mission to blow up the plane. Mom was not impressed, and made us promise not to do that again. She said something about us not to blow up the house!!!

Brother Paul gave us a fond memory when he was around 2 yrs. old. Our septic system was out in the front yard, and had backed up, so Dad was expanding the system, which meant it was dug up and being expanded with our expanding family. There was a big pile of dirt next to the holding tank, a great pile to play on and in. Dad had mentioned to keep an eye on Paul, and keep him away from the hole, as the tank guy was coming out to pump out the "sludge" that afternoon. Well, little Paul was a fast little guy, and didn't follow directions very well, to stay away from the hole. He was playing on the hill, and before anyone could catch him, he rolled down the hill, right into the hole. A big "plop" was heard, and then a big cry was heard. Dad was digging the drain field, and heard all the commotion, came running over. When he saw Paul in the tank, he jumped in to keep him from drowning in the "poop". He handed him up to me, and I jerked the "smelly little kid" up and out, and put him on the ground. We all immediately headed for the garden hose, and washed everyone off. Dad then made everyone stay out of the front yard, until the septic system was covered.

For a number of years, our family made a little trip up to the north shore of Lake Superior to Caribou Lake, for a summer vacation. This was a tiny little cabin, but much fun, especially fishing on Caribou Lake. My Dad loved to fish, and he and I

would get up around 3 am in the morning to get out, and get the Walleye's. During the day, he would take the younger kids out for crappies, sunfish and northerns. Around that time, the middle 50's Dad decided to build a boat in the basement. I helped him, and when it was finished, it wouldn't fit out of the basement door, so we had to take the door off, and expand the opening. It was a 12' boat, and we spent many days fishing in it. He bought a used 5hp Johnson, and it ran for many years. On one of our early trips to Mill Lacs Lake, when the fishing season had just opened, Dad and I went out. It was snowing, you couldn't see 300', but we used a compass, went out, caught some fish, and came back. All without seeing the sun or more than a ½ mile of visibility. I can remember that my hands got very cold and I could barely hold the rod, but it was still fun.

Grandma and Grandpa Lieberg lived around 30 miles away, on the northern edge of the town of Wyoming, on the east side of Hwy 61. Their house was a small one bedroom, probably no larger than about 800 sq. ft. Grandpa Fred had worked for the railroad, and had a small pension that provided for them in retirement. They did not have indoor plumbing, and my Dad and Uncle Mart spent a day installing and indoor water pump. Then Grandma Nellie did not have to go outside in the winter to get water. She was very happy to have this new pump inside. They had a nice garden, and grew most of their vegetables. I don't remember them having a car, and they would walk a short distance into town for most of their needs. Grandpa Fred died on May 19, 1955, he was 77 yrs. old. About this time, we realized that Grandma Nellie had diabetes, so we took her home to live with us. She never complained, and was losing weight, rather frail. Grandma Nelly died January 11, 1956 at the age of 74.

We would continue north to Hinckley, MN to check up on Grandma Monica. Grandpa Joe didn't play much with us kids, but was always a nice Grandpa. He was not a big man, on his draft notice, registered as 5'8" tall, a number of his boys were around 6 foot tall. There was a rumor that he had spent some time on the "chain gang" for making booze during the prohibition days, which was not 100% correct. Katy, while doing family research found information that Grandpa Joe had been turned in for making beer. My kind of Grandpa! He had a small fine, but had to do some work around town for his restitution. Those were hard times, and money was very tight. Remember him sitting in his chair, smoking his pipe. Unfortunately, he died on 25 November 1950, he was 68 years old and I was 7 ½ yrs. old. There are a number of different reasons for his death, but the one that I remember was, he had fallen off the roof while doing some work on the roof, taken to the hospital, and a day or two later died. They listed his death as a heart attack, but my parents thought it was due to the fall and a head injury. Now Grandma Monica was by herself, and one of the most amazing women I have ever known. She was a "fireball" of a lady. She had an earlier injury to her right leg, and had a stiff knee that wouldn't bend, but that never slowed her up. Always on the move, and always making, baking or

doing something, and she was a great cook. Dumplings and chicken, roasts, bear stews, no matter what she made, they were good to eat. I helped her pick dandelions and grapes so she could make wine, and she also had a Concord grape trellis, and made wine and jellies from these. One of her sons, Joe and Lilia lived next door, just to the east of her house. Their oldest son, "Butch" (Gary) and I were great friends. Butch was a year older than me, but we did a lot of hunting and fishing together.

When we were around 14, Butch and I borrowed about a quart of Grandma's dandelion wine. She had them stored in the basement in big 6-gallon ceramic jugs, we poured in some water so no one would notice one was lower than it should be. We took it out to one of our forts in the near by woods on one of our overnights. We both got goofy, and laughed a lot that night. Our Aunt Mary, who never married, often went up to stay with her mother, Monica on weekends. Grandma Monica would live to be almost 101 yrs. old, and would die on March 10, 1985.

The Lindroth Family were very good friends of our family. Ruth and Al Lindroth became friends with Mom and Dad early on from the Hinckley group, and they enjoyed going out dancing on the weekends. As our families grew, we visited each other often. Diane was a year older than me, and Sondra was my age, and then came Larry, Cindy and Jeff. Sondra was an outdoor girl, and we went snow skiing often together. I considered her to be almost like a sister to me. Later in life, we reconnected in San Diego when I was in F-4 training. I remember a sad event, as I had set her up with a good friend of mine on a double date. Mike Brown and Sondra got along great. Unfortunately, Mike was killed in an F-4 accident training accident shortly thereafter. Al was also a hunter and outdoorsman. I remember when he got a ski boat, and took all of us out to White Bear Lake for a day of skiing. He had gotten a new 35hp motor, which at that time was one of the biggest available. I learned to ski that day. We all were having fun skiing. Little brother Paul wanted to give it a try too. Mom thought he was too little, think he was around 5 at the time, but anyone who likes to jump into a "poop" pile, should be able to ski. One of the suggestions was to hold on tight. Well, he sure did that! On his first pull, he almost made it up, but then fell forward, and he didn't let go. Here was this little torpedo, hanging onto the rope until Al cut the power, and he bobbed up like a cork, still holding onto the rope. That was his day of skiing, still with a smile on his face.

At the age of 12, I started to get serious about working. I had some babysitting jobs, for friends of Mom and Dad; we usually got 10 cents an hour, later 25 cents an hour. There was a large truck farm to the north of our home. I think he owned around 300 acres, raised vegetables, mostly tomatoes, some watermelons, squash and onions. He was looking for weed pullers, so I signed up. We initially got 10 cents an hour, then after about a week, if we worked hard, got a pay raise to 25 cents/hr., which was big money.

I was now into big money, got a bank account, and saved most of my money. I became a tomato picker, and got a boost also for the amount we picked, by the bushel. Two things I bought that year, a used 26" Hawthorn bike with a horn and light, it cost me \$12 dollars. I was the big man on the block with the fanciest bike. I also bought a lemon wood bow and some real cedar arrows; they called me "Chief" now. Archery would become a primary sport for me for some 40 years.

One of my bike trips was up to John Benson's Airport, just north of White Bear Lake. I think it was around 12 miles. I biked up and asked John Benson, if I could sit in the "Bamboo Bomber", and early Cessna twin engine aircraft, that also had a lot of wood in its construction, so was nick named, the Bamboo Bomber, that he had in the junk pile. I flew it for hours, in the junk pile. John asked me if Mom and Dad knew I was there, I told him just had taken off. He suggested that I let them know where I had gone, so he wouldn't get in trouble with Dad. Dad and I had been renting one of John's aircraft recently. John would become a very special friend of the family over many years. Mom and Dad would stop in often, especially around John's Birthdays. When I got back home, Mom had asked where I had been. I told her I biked up to Benson Airport, and she thought it was a long way to go, but said I could go back, but let her know when I was going.

When I was 14, I also started working at Uncle Mart's and Aunt Ruthie's farm, just SW of Isanti MN. Uncle Mart and Aunt Ruth's farm just SW of Isanti MN, where they raised around 30 head of beef cattle, and raised some fine horses. Aunt Ruthie was a horsewoman as was Linda. Kathy, the oldest daughter was not into horses or farming, she was a couple of years younger than me. I enjoyed riding horses. One of my favorites was a horse named "Jiggers", a beautiful palomino. I remember towing my brothers and cousins in the winter with a rope tied around the pommel, towing a toboggan down the roads in the winter. Uncle Mart treated me like a son, and was enjoyable to be around, he was Mom's younger brother. They had a 320-acre farm and I would help out plowing and bailing hay. I didn't especially like bailing hay, as I was somewhat allergic to the pollens, and would get a runny nose, but the end of a week, usually got nosebleeds from blowing my nose. I was paid 35 cents/hr., plus I did some trapping of gophers, and made 1 dollar/gopher, big money. Aunt Ruth complained about mice being around the barn, and asked if I would trap mice for 50cent apiece. They had around 5 barn cats, and she couldn't understand why the cats weren't catching mice, but I think they feed them so much; they didn't need to catch mice. Well, my first week must have caught around 20 mice, big money. I went home with a couple of hundred dollars in the bank.

Because I wasn't old enough to drive yet, I often went with Aunt Mary to Hinckley. There was a cute girl, Sharon Reiten who lived 4 houses to the east of Grandma, and we became good friends. She had a couple of brothers too, but I had more fun with Sharon, and consider her my first girlfriend. Sharon would later drop me like a rock, when she found out I wasn't going to marry her after we graduated from high school.

There are many stories about Aunt Mary's driving record. She was a very independent person, who loved to bowl, but it is her driving record that generated many stories. She liked the Chevy Corvair, and I know she had at least 4 to 5 accidents, naturally none her fault. On one of our trips to Hinckley in the winter, we were driving in a light snowstorm on Hwy 61. We were behind a big truck that was going slow, safe for the conditions. Mary thought he was going too slowly, so she pulled out and passed him. The Corvair was pretty good on slippery roads, because the engine was in the back, and she liked to brag about its stability and traction. But, as we pulled back in front of the truck, she cut in a little fast and we started to spin and headed for the ditch. Lucky for us, there was a nice smooth ditch, and as we were going backwards in the ditch, the truck passed us, and the driver was waving goodbye to us. I had to get out and push us out of the ditch, as Aunt Mary gunned the engine, we drove much slower the rest of the way to Hinckley. She told me not to mention it to my Mom and Dad, as they might not let me drive to Hinckley with her, and I didn't, until many years later. Aunt Mary died in 1978 at the early age of 62. We all think her heavy smoking was a factor for this early death of a heart attack.

Around this time, Sept of 1956, Angela Irlbeck arrived in our happy house. She immediately became the center of attention, and was spoiled for at least the next 18 years. I was over 13 years older, so the only time I spent any time with her, was in the evenings around the supper table.

Mom and Dad always had a garden in the back yard, and Mom did a lot of cooking and canning from the garden. There was a time when Dad put in strawberries. They sure were good to eat, but I was usually the head weed puller. Once I started working, picking tomatoes, Dad quit having the strawberry patch. We also had a couple of apple trees in the back yard. In the back, NE corner was a big willow tree. When I was around 10, we, Paul D. and brother Bob built a nice tree house. Dad supplied the lumber.

One day while working, expanding the tree house, I fell out of it, lucky it was only around 10 foot fall, and landed on my back. It knocked the wind out of me, kind of scary, was much more careful after that too. Don't remember the exact dates, but a friend, think it was Don Brannan and I, decided to raid a crow's nest. It was way up in an oak tree. I went up, with a long stick, and knocked two of the little guys out of their nest, to the ground, where Don grabbed them. We raised them, which was a lot of fun. I could "Caw" like a crow when it was time to feed them, and they would come flying in. They left in the fall, and came back in the spring. Unfortunately that summer one was killed by our dog. Dad and Uncle Mart had bought a dog, a chocolate Lab, "Coco" very good hunting dog. We were keeping it at our house that summer. The crow and the dog usually got along well. When the dog wasn't around it's feeding dish, the crows would go over and grab something to eat, if the dog was eating, they would wait. Mom was in the kitchen, and could see the dog house, happened to see what happened when one of the crows went to grab something while the dog was eating, Coco growled, and the crow stepped back. Then Coco went back to eating, and the crow tried to

sneak in and grab a bite to eat, Coco snapped at the crow, catching the shoulder, but immediately let go. The crow was damaged to bad, so we had to kill it. The other crow stuck around until fall, and never came back the next year.

To be continued.....