



RVator's Log

Newsletter of the Twin Cities RV Builder's Group

June 2018

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Upcoming Events

July 23 - Twin Cities RV Builders Anoka Extravaganza and Hangar Flying Competition. Anoka County Airport, MN.

See page 8.

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**Minnesota Wing
Van's Air Force**

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Shop Notes

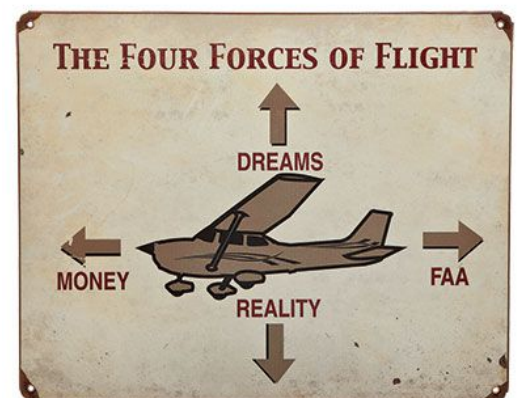
- Doug

Back in my working days at the now extinct hometown airline, my arrival at MSP for a trip followed a rather predictable series of steps. I'd often park in the parking garage because I hated riding the crew bus, which seemed to take a half an hour to wind its way from the employee parking lot to the terminal. I'd check in, get my mail and then make a beeline for the newsstand to stock up on the morning's Star Tribune, USA Today, Wall Street Journal and maybe grab the latest issue of Time magazine. Of course I also had the obligatory copies of Sport Aviation, Flying, and AOPA stashed in my flight bag. I used to tell aspiring professional pilots that if you were not a voracious reader, you were getting into the wrong business. Flying the fancy jets was cool, but a good portion of your day was spent sitting around airports and you can only watch so much CNN on those obnoxious TVs that hover over everywhere in the terminal.



My fellow crewmembers constantly harassed me for shelling out good money to actually "buy" a USA Today. Man, they cost a buck!! Most of the captains I knew would stumble over themselves as soon as the passengers got off and crawl around under the seats looking for a used copy. Rumors went around that after USAir put the Airbus in the Hudson River, Capt. Sully wasn't really wading through his sinking airplane assuring all the passengers were off. He was actually looking for an old Wall Street Journal because he knew he'd be stuck at the hotel for a couple days. Yep, pilots are cheap!!

Which brings us to our all-consuming passion: RV building and flying. No one said this hobby is for the fiscally faint of heart. Most of the RV folks I know have a pretty average income and likely have made a number of financial sacrifices to fuel their hobby. My wife and I have always been pretty ardent budgeters over the years and so too it was when we built the RV. We had a pretty fixed pile of dollars and tracked the expenditures closely during the build process. We had always owned an airplane of some form or another so we were prepared to manage the budget to handle building and then flying the RV-7. This topic came to light recently after



reading this quote by David Kenny in the May 2018 issue of Aviation Safety magazine:

"We are repeatedly surprised by the number of people who get involved in something as inherently expensive as aviation, and then try to pinch pennies. Whether its running the tanks dry trying to reach fuel that's 20 cents cheaper, deferring maintenance until accumulated damage makes repair costs ruinous or balking at paying for an extra hour or two of instructional time, pilots can amplify long-term risks by trying to shave immediate expenses."

I am certainly not disparaging anyone for being frugal and making wise economical decisions when it comes to building and flying their RVs. But consider that the standards for building, flying, and maintaining our aircraft are more crucial than one's garden tractor or automobile. Building and operating an AB aircraft provides lots of latitude compared to a FAA-certified flying machine. You may not have the annual oversight of your friendly A&P mechanic so the temptation may be to cut corners and scrimp to save a buck. Don't do it. You owe it to yourself, your passengers, and your fellow RV pilots to build and maintain your aircraft to "aviation standards." Sometimes that requires a painful dip into the checking account!!

* * * * *

Another RV-12 is airborne

- Doug

We are beginning to see more RV-12s taking to the skies. Here's the latest report from Wilbur Orson in New London, MN:

"Finally got some paint on my RV-12. It was painted at Park Rapids Aviation. They have what I would consider a multi-million dollar facility. Lot's of good people to work with there too. I would recommend them to anyone. It took longer than than I thought, but I suppose it's expected this time of year. To my understanding, they have a paint contract with Qwest Aviation out of Sand Point Idaho. They fly the Kodak's in from there and paint them at customer's request. So it seems they painted my airplane whenever they could squeeze it in. Lot's of other airplanes too. They also have a large maintenance facility where they do regular maintenance. This time of year, however, they are putting on a lot of floats for the summer water flying. I only have about 42 hours on the Hobbs. Hope to fly a lot more this summer. See ya soon!"



More Tom Irlbeck musings...

-Doug

At Tom Irlbeck's memorial service in May, we heard story after story about all of the lives that he touched over the years. He had this "can-do" attitude in life where he would always find a way to accomplish a task put before him.

One of the memories was that of Eric Petersen and how Tom played a key role in the completion of his RV-6A. Eric posted this note on Van's AirForce shortly after Tom's memorial:

Tom was instrumental in the completion of my RV. My father and I worked together for many years to build our RV6A, but when it was ready for flight, my father was too disabled to fly it and I did not yet have my license. Tom performed the first flight, and flew off the 40 hours. Then we winched my dad into the rafters of the hangar, and lowered him into the plane. Tom took Paul on his one and only flight in our RV. Thanks Tom, I will never forget you and your help...



Eric's photo brought back even more memories and I found this note I had written about Paul back in 2008:

*"This is such a great story I have to pass it along. The father and son team of Paul and Eric Petersen started their RV-6A WAY back in 1992. This summer their new RV finally made it's first flight with super test pilot **Tom Irlbeck** at the controls. As Paul told me it only took them 5685 days to finish the pro-*

ject! Paul is a peach of a guy and a consulting engineer by trade. He has forgotten a zillion times more than I'll ever know about things technical and he has always been a great resource to the members of the Minnesota RV Builder's Club.

Over the years MS has challenged Paul but it has hardly slowed him down. He always attends our meetings zipping around in his electric scooter sporting his trademark tam-o-shanter gracing us with his ever-present grin. Paul and his son Eric (who is working on his private license) never faltered in plugging away on their -6A.



After Tom finished flying off the test time, he called me one day and told me he had to figure out a way to get Paul in his airplane and so he could finally fly his handiwork. I figured Tom would find a way especially turning Paul and his son Eric's respective engineering minds loose on the task. So a few days ago, Paul went flying with Tom with mechanical help from Eric. I think the photos speak for themselves!!'

A New RV Private Pilot is Born

-Tim Olson

This week was a big week for us and my family. Danielle hit her 17th birthday, which means she was finally eligible to take her Private Pilot practical



test! As any of you who followed my websites will know, Danielle was my number 1 helper in building the RV-14...a plane we decided to build for the kids to learn to fly in, and for me to scratch my aerobatic itches. She had been flying the RV-10 since 2015 with me, and then started flying the RV-14 since we finished it in 2016. In 2017 she was finally able to start logging her time with me, as I got my CFI ticket. So it's been a heck of a ride.

Her first 3.8 hours were in a C150. Somewhere along the way she put .8 hours in a PA-28R-201 Arrow just for the heck of it, because I wanted her to see what a real pig of an airplane felt like compared to RV's. Other than that it was tons of RV-14 time and a fair amount of RV-10 time. She took her practical with around 117 logged hours, but that doesn't account for maybe 35 hours that she had that weren't logged, due to me not having a CFI ticket soon enough. She was actually basically able to land the RV's just fine before she even started flying her first official lesson on 6/25/15 with another instructor. From 7/30/2015 thru 1/14/2017, nothing was logged, because any flying she did was with me, and I wasn't a CFI. But on that cold January day, we logged our first time together in the cockpit as CFI and Student.



In 2017 on her 16th birthday, she soloed the RV-14, which was a great milestone, but it was also a long long wait until she turned 17 to be eligible to get her Private Pilot Certificate...something she was probably ready for much soon-

er. She had roughly 30 logged hours. So for much of the past 12 months, we were flying to improve skills, boost her aviation knowledge, learn airplane systems, and take trips...where TONS of practical knowledge comes from. We honed her crosswind technique, one day even flying 90-degree crosswinds that were 19G28 with her putting it down perfectly. If I was going to turn my girl loose with an airplane, I wanted to know that without a doubt she had all the skill she needed to be safe. She flies well in formation, and really integrated herself as not just a pilot, but also a good *RV* pilot. She knows how to make radio calls as a formation lead, and is someone I trust in the air.

I think I will choose to look back and the 17 year age restriction as a blessing, not a curse for her, and certainly not for me, because it forced us to spend our time *together* in the air. As a dad who is extremely pained by the thought of having an empty nest in a little over a year, this was truly one of the best experiences of my life. Bob Turner, you have no idea how thankful I am that you piped up and pushed me to get my CFI. I owe you big time.

Anyway, as we spoke about insurance, and CFI ratings on the RV-10 Matronics list back in about September 2016, it also got me worried about finding not only an instructor who'd be willing to fly with her in an RV-14, but also a DPE who would do a practical test in an experimental. When I talked to the MSP FSDO about doing my CFI check rides, I found that there are FSDO people who will refuse to ride in experimental airplanes. My inkling was that there are probably quite a few DPEs who would feel the same. So it was a worry for me as to whom I would get for her check ride.

Back in 2017, just before OSH, I had another local CFI, Gordy Smith, take his Multi-engine CFI Practical with Doug Rozenaal in Mason City, IA. Gordy was the other person who was instrumental in pushing me to pursue the CFI myself. He took the time to come to me after he did my Flight Review, and tell me that with the airplane and flying knowledge I gained in the past 20 years, it would be a shame not to share it with others as a CFI. That push, along with Bob Turner's nudge, was what it took to light my fire. Gordy also mentioned that Doug, who I didn't even know was a DPE, also flies a Harmon Rocket. That planted the seed, and I knew whom I wanted to go to for Danielle's practical. Doug is a legend of a pilot in some circles. If you don't know who he is, Google will give you lots of info, and it will amaze you. He flies all sorts of Warbirds, in formation, and for airshows, including at Airventure, among many other places around the country. When OSH 2017 arrived, I set out to meet him and see if he'd be willing to do a practical test in a bit less than a year from then. He said to call him a few weeks ahead and he'd check his schedule.

Well, this week it all worked out. Danielle and I, despite lots of preparation, were nervous as heck...to the point of even becoming physically sick with colds from lack of sleep and stress. I *knew* she could fly the plane well, but a practical test is intimidating no matter how good you fly. Add to that

the level of knowledge you need to pass the Oral, considering you don't know exactly what you'll be asked, and it gets you worked up. I think it's also harder now than it was back 20 years ago for me, as there are now questions potentially about TSA regulations, and the FAA has many initiatives called special emphasis areas, such as Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT) prevention, Runway Incursion Avoidance, ADM and Risk Management, Single-Pilot Resource Management (SRM) and Crew Resource Management (CRM), Aviation Security, TFR's, and many more key points they expect students to learn. Besides the general stress, there was the added fact that this was my very first student, and my very first one who I sent to practical test, so any deficits would reflect directly on ME. But, she pulled it off in a big way, I must say. As a CFI, I was very satisfied by the comments Doug gave when they got out of the airplane, but as a father, it brought extreme pride. Suffice it to say, he was very pleased with her performance in all aspects. He was also very pleased with her ride...the RV-14, and had many good things to say about it.

All in all, I can't think of a better complete package experience for all of us. This was an airplane that my family built, but Danielle had participated in a large share of the build. She helped pick the paint scheme, and helped paint the entire airplane. She was there for it's first flight, and then soon after, she started flying it herself. She learned to fly in the airplane that we built, and we spent our time together for over 100 hours of flying, pursuing the rating(s) that she and I both got. And then she took her practical with someone I'd consider to be about the ultimate examiner, being evaluated by someone who has very high standards. She is now also part of a larger RV community too, that has been a very supportive source of encouragement for both of us.

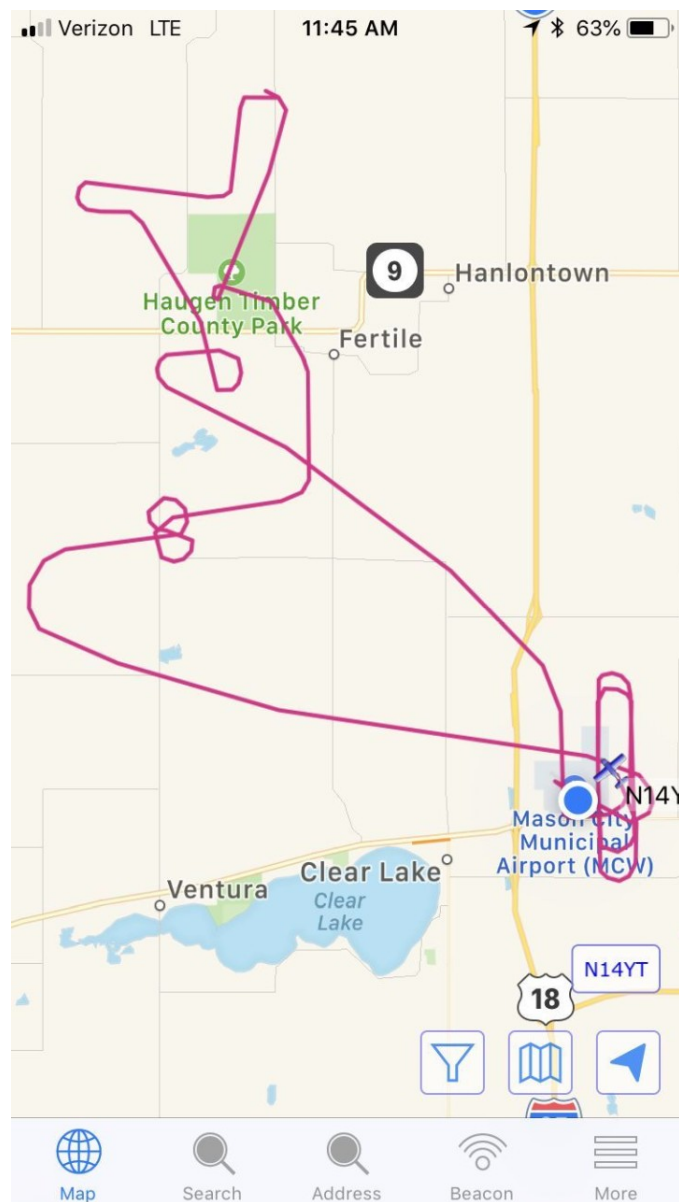
The Checkride (Dad's Version)

We headed down the afternoon before, to Mason City (KMCW), to be ready to go at 9:00am the next morning. As we headed out enroute, we decided to get in-flight FSS weather via radio, just for her experience interacting with FSS for such a request. They informed us of some T-Storm cells just beyond our destination that were headed towards it at 15mph. It was a very hot day, so once we got there, we actually skipped most of our practice flying, preferring to get on the ground.

Once to our hotel, as we waited to check in, we saw a gruesome newspaper article framed on the wall about a plane crash that killed 4, in Clear Lake, IA, where we were staying. It didn't take long to put 2 and 2 together and realize that this was the famous crash that killed Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper...the day the music died.

After we got checked in to the hotel, the storms finally arrived, bringing with them 75mph winds and knocking out the power to the hotel for a few hours. We were flight planning on paper charts via iPhone flashlight, so we decided to just go into town and eat, further away where they had electricity. The RV was safely in Doug's hangar and we were very thankful for that!

When morning came, we quickly filled in her IACRA application and headed to Doug's place. I left them alone for the Oral and hung out in the FBO...North Iowa Air. After nervously pacing for a while, I saw her taxi past, and it was then that I knew the Oral test went satisfactorily well.



As they flew, I tracked them and watched all of the maneuvers. I could sometimes tell exactly what they were doing by the airspeed and path they were flying. Every maneuver that was passed, I smiled, knowing that it was one more that must have been completed successfully.

Around an hour later after doing some additional landings, I headed back to the hangar and was there waiting when they taxi'd in off the ramp. I had heard her radio calls and heard that there was confidence in her voice, so I smiled to myself knowing that it was all going to turn out great.

Sure enough, the report was a glowing report. She had done very well on the oral, and had really pleased him on the practical as well. I knew she had it in her, if she could only calm her

nerves. :) We wrapped it up, and got some lunch, and then it was time to head out for home. By that time there were a couple of lines of scattered storms headed towards home, so we zipped through a clear path to the front side of the storm line, where we could quickly get ahead of it for the 1 hour trip home. We cruised at 9,500' on the hot day, in cool smooth air, next to billowing clouds. As we neared home, you could see a monster of a storm cell coming from the west, making the entire area dark, but we stayed well ahead of it.



On the ground, mom showed up and we grabbed a couple of photos and then all 3 pilots headed home. It was the end of a long day, and a long year.

I'm very proud of my new pilot. There are few things that are as fun and can be as complicated as the skills you gain when learning to fly around the country. To see that she was able to stick with it, and do so well, is a testament to her inner strength. We both thank God for the skills He has given us, and for that I am also proud of her. I know that if she can do this, she can do most anything she sets her mind to. I intend to hold on to my CFI and use it to teach more students over the years, and who knows...maybe I'll even be training 3rd generation family pilots some day.

Build On.....

- found somewhere on the Internet. Author unknown.

Do something every night.

Don't be a hermit builder, seek advice, use your resources...from the late, great Joe Blank, my tech advisor!

You're building an airplane, not a watch. Ken Scott - Vans Aircraft and hangar neighbor.

Don't rivet anything until you absolutely cannot go further on that assembly without doing so.

Building is a perishable skill. If it's been a while, practice on scrap first.

Perfection is the enemy of completion.

Compromise is the enemy of quality

Compromise is natural to good design

Do I absolutely need to order avionics now?

If it can chafe, it will chafe

If it is difficult, you need a new tool

Use the right tool for the job - even if you have to invent the tool.

Think garden tractor, not space shuttle

Don't fix problems you don't have.

Paint your wheel pants one color!

Buy a QB kit



Peter Fruehling and Doug Weiler... way back when... building on.....

Twin Cities RV Builders Group
12 Island View Lane
North Oaks, MN 55127

First Class

TC RV Builders Anoka Extravaganza!! Saturday, June 23, 2018 - eatin' at noon

Bernie Weiss & Pete Howell's hangar at ANE (India Lane)



Summer is here (finally). Let's celebrate with a hangar party brought to you by Bernie and Pete and planned (with unbridled enthusiasm!) by Pete's daughter Kate.

The plan is similar to last year. Members are welcome and please consider bringing along friends and family (we'll even have some activities for the kids and those of us who think like kids!) A fold-up camp chair might be a good idea as well. And of course... come hungry!!!

The website has all of the details: www.mnwing.org. There is a signup form so PLEASE go to the website and register at the Eventbrite link so we have an accurate headcount!!!

Fly-ins are welcome. You can park at the north end of the hangar line (ask for taxi instructions to "Fox Hollow" at the west end of the airport (taxi lane "India")) or on the grass on

India Lane opposite the hangars. For drivers:

From Rte 65: Turn east on 93rd Lane NE. Turn left at airport entrance (gate code 12185). Turn right at T intersection then immediate left on India Lane.

From I35W and Rte 10: Go west on Rte 10 and exit on 93rd Lane. Turn right and take second airport entrance to the right and follow directions above.

Please park on grass or hard surface clear of hangar doors!!!!!! Questions: Call Doug at 651-398-1184

See you then!!!!!!