

Pilot Profile: James Bennett

by Russell Knetzger

At age 11, James is the youngest member ever of this club. He now attends the 6th Grade at Greenfield Middle School, at S. 35th & Barnard, where math is his favorite subject. Last year he attended school at Port Townsend, Washington. It is 40 miles northwest of Seattle, on the other side of Puget Sound, but 80 miles by road. His family, mother Stephanie & father Bill Bennett, had moved there 3 years earlier to be near his father's mother, Carolove Hegstrom, in the last stages of Bill's terminal cancer. He died on Dec. 14, 2008 after an eight-year struggle, beginning here in SE Wisconsin while he worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway. At first that work was as a Signal Maintainer at Brookfield, WI, but as his cancer made field work too hard, he transferred to Dispatcher at Minneapolis, MN. Upon reaching disability status, the family moved to Washington State.

Canadian Pacific Railway



U.S.
Navy

Above: Father Bill Bennett's work/service symbols.



Below left: James Bennett and his first R/C trainer, an electric motor power Eflite, selected by research before Milwaukee move. Instructor: Phil Schumacher
Family photos: James, Dad,-Bill, & Mom-Stephanie

Above: James with the RAMS Club Nexstar ARF trainer he is borrowing (64" span. OS.46 engine) to learn fuel-engine flight. Main Instructor: Phil Schumacher, assisted by Mark Meyrose.

While in Port Townsend, fellow church members, Dave Fess and Dean Rosenthal, gave James some flying time in a twin engine 1966 piper PA30. Dave and Dean are retired United Airlines pilots. That flying helped hook James on aviation as an interest.

With Grandma Hegstrom retiring to Las Vegas, that left less reason for James and his mother to remain in Port Townsend. Father Bill had no roots, being an "Army Brat" living all over, wherever the US Marines stationed his father. Bill chose the U.S. Navy for his own military service. Mother Stephanie did not want to return to her stark home state, Utah. Mom and son chose to come back to SE Wisconsin where they had close friends, and to join Stuart Briscoe's Elmbrook Church on Barker Rd., near I-94. Its large size offers a variety of functions for small families like the Bennetts.

For this 2009-2010 winter, James wants to build an R/C balsa aircraft kit, for the experience, and to occupy his spare time. Their home on S. 92nd and Cold Spring came with a basement work space.

RAMS HORN, January, 2010, Russell Knetzger, Editor
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