

Pilot Profile: Phil Schumacher

by Russell Knetzger

Joining the RAMS only a year and a half ago, Phil Schumacher represents a new trend in model aviation – electric powered flight. In his case, using battery-powered electric motors to propel his planes instead of the common alcohol-fueled internal combustion glow plug engines, has resulted in a smaller initial investment, and a quicker learning time to solo. Phil showed up for his first flying lessons the Fall of 2006, with all-foam models of small size and light weight. They needed calm winds, and were not easy to control, but they survived poor landings. A half dozen lessons from Floyd Katz and Russell Knetzger, and he was on his own. Extensive time on a flight simulator between lessons was also helpful.

Calm winds commonly occur in Wisconsin before dusk, and in early morning hours. Phil was able to be at the Oakwood Rd. field during those times by stopping on the way to or from work. He and his wife, Pauline Beck, live in western Greenfield at 121st and Carpenter, and our field is halfway to his work in Franksville, on the Caledonia-Mt. Pleasant border in Racine County. Phil has since graduated to “.30” sized electric motors, so winds are less a concern. So is weather. The photo below shows Phil flying in deep snow this February. Electrics are immune to cold starting problems typical of engines.



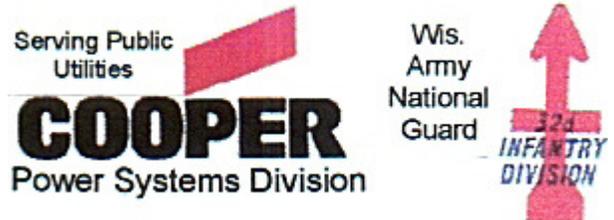
Phil Schumacher flying his electric Typhoon 40” foamy ARF this February, near the Freq. Board, view Southeast.

Electric power is a natural for Phil because his 1971 degree from UWM was electrical engineering, and the work he has done since then has been mainly electrical switch gear research and design. All of that, for 35 years, has been with the same company, even though it has changed names three times. First it was Line Materials, then McGraw-Edison and now **Cooper Industries**.



Phil Schumacher holding his 48” balsa ARF Yak-54 3D Hobby Shop, 1/2 hsp. brushless outrunner electric motor

The Franksville location keeps research activities safely away from South Milwaukee production work. In 1977 Phil helped start the use of computers to control electrical circuits. Now software development dominates his work, especially in monitoring and distribution of currents in the 38kv/10-20,000 amp range, such as serve several subdivisions.



Fortunately Phil was able to blend military service with college and work by joining the **Wisconsin Army National Guard** for a 6 year hitch, being out of state only for 31 months basic at Fort Ord, California.

Before and during high school at Oak Creek, WI (class of '67) Phil did some serious control line model aviation, but college and work ended that. He then occupied himself in astronomy and photography, including astronomy photos he displays at www.cloudtrap.com. His Wehr Nature Center astronomy group now uses Froemming Park, 1-1/2 miles due north of our field, though some members remember using our field at night.

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