

# Pilot Profile: Ryan M. Wehr

by Russell Knetzger

Ryan's love of aircraft goes back to his earliest childhood memories, when he would be taken to Gen. Mitchell Airport in Milwaukee to watch planes come and go. He also had an interest in trains, since his father, Floyd, worked in the shops for the old Milwaukee Road railroad. But Ryan's first love remained aircraft.

A Wauwatosa boy, graduating from Wauwatosa West High School in 1998, Ryan could not invest his talents in either planes or trains once his father relocated to the Twin Cities in order to keep his railroad job. The Soo Line bought the Milwaukee Road, and when the Canadian Pacific bought the Soo, the shops left Milwaukee. After high school Ryan also worked for the Canadian Pacific, riding 2nd seat in the engine cab as "conductor", though that job never touches the operating controls.

What Ryan could afford during and after high school was the guitar, and his playing of that instrument led him to the Ale House on Water Street in Milwaukee's downtown "3rd Ward." There he was captivated by the weekly dance evenings, both "Swing" and "Ballroom." He participated, then took lessons, then began to teach. Now he earns his living as a full-time dance instructor at **Casa di Danza** in New Berlin at 214th & Greenfield Avenue.

**THE MILWAUKEE ROAD**  
**CP Rail**  
**Canadian Pacific**



Movies such as "Shall We Dance" and TV's "Dancing With the Stars" have brought steady patronage to dance studios.



**Above:** A ceiling-suspended HO gauge model rail system by Ryan's father, Floyd, riding silently on a sub-rail cork layer around the basement family room of Ryan and Sept. bride Kelsi's West Allis home.



**Above:** Ryan Wehr among his stable of "Park Zone" all-foam, electric motor power 40 inch span models, holds a Corsair, a yellow tipped P-51 Mustang wing showing, backed by a Cap 32. Since soloing last year, these "foamies" are his favorites.

While the joint project of Ryan and his father, Floyd, in erecting the ceiling-hung HO model railroad set (shown below-left) re-established Ryan's railroad roots, it was through a friend of a friend that Ryan finally got back to aviation.

The friend knew RAMS member and instructor Bob Ehlers was a pilot at the Milwaukee County R/C Flying Field on Oakwood Road. A year and a half ago Ryan made his first visit there, and the great welcome by Ehlers clinched Ryan's move into aero modeling. For a learning Ryan selected the familiar Hobbico Nexstar trainer. Using the buddy box training system, Ryan was a fast learner, as Ehlers predicted he would be. Others who Ryan credits with help before and especially after soloing are Bob Scrip, Chuck Beauchamp, and Bill Geipel. Teaching most evenings, Ryan cannot attend many club meetings, but he is a very thankful and strong RAMS supporter.

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