

Pilot Profile: Bill Belonger

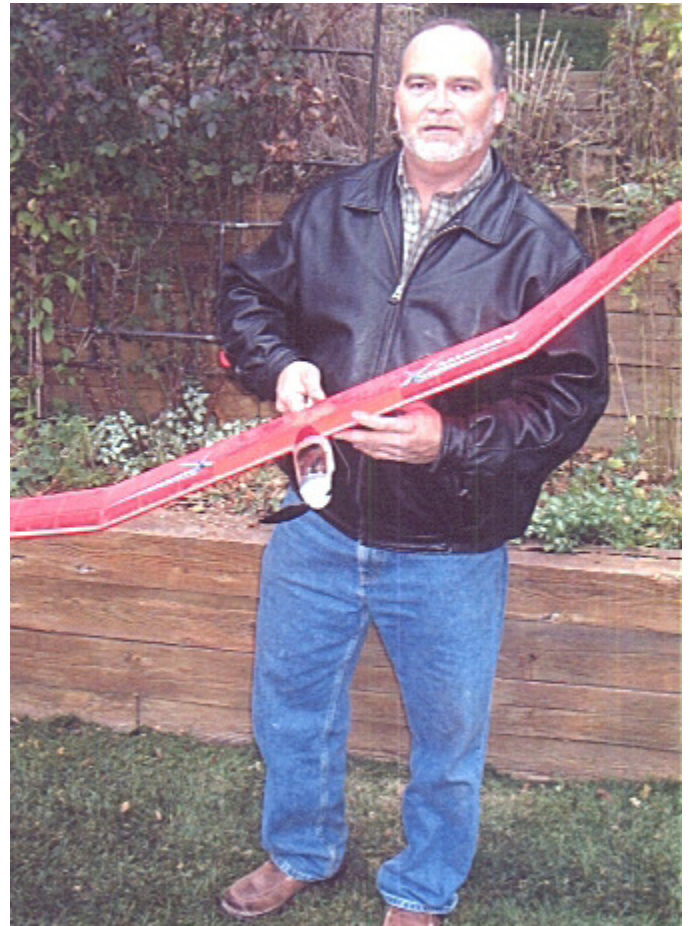
by Russell Knetzger

Bill Belonger is one of our newest members, joining just this Fall, soloing in September on his Nexstar trainer, shown below. Bill became re-interested in model aviation by hearing and watching his neighbor, Don Finney, test run his engines in his corner backyard, which faces toward Bill's home on W. Arthur Avenue. That is in West Allis, just south of Greenfield Park, where Bill has watched informal R/C activity such as helicopters and sailplanes. That flying reminded Bill of aeromodeling in his youth, with rockets and control line flying.

At the Milwaukee County R/C Model Airplane Flying Field on Oakwood Rd. in Franklin, Marv Anderson and Roger Olsen gave Bill flight instruction just about to soloing, when Floyd Katz was on hand to complete the training.



Above: Bill Belonger standing in front of his raised back yard in West Allis, with his 63" inch span Nexstar trainer, Evolution .46 cu.in. engine. The multilevel garden is tended by his wife, Carol.



Above: Bill Belonger and his 4 foot wingspan Ascent electric powered ARF glider

Although a beginner, Bill has enough small engine experience that he spotted an inherent problem in the fuel supply of the Nexstar ARF, and with Marv's support, changed over the tank to a proven brand.

Bill's ability with engines, etc. comes from his job. He is an auto mechanic and shop foreman for all 117 vehicles operated by UWM, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. That ranges from police cruisers to sidewalk vacuums and riding lawn mowers. Bill points to his education in small engines at Bay View High School as his start, going from there to service station work, including Bill Maynard's at 30th & Loomis Rd., and the Bob Tolkan car dealership. He also did foundry work at Maynard Steel while going to MATC night school for his metals and auto shop training. Now age 50, Bill has been at UWM since 1991. With his ASE Master Mechanic status, certified in all 8 automotive areas plus his ASE CNG (compressed natural gas) certified rating for truck and automotive, UWM now has 30% of its fleet on CNG, and 30% are E-85 vehicles.

RAMS HORN, December, 2008 Russell Knetzger, Editor
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