

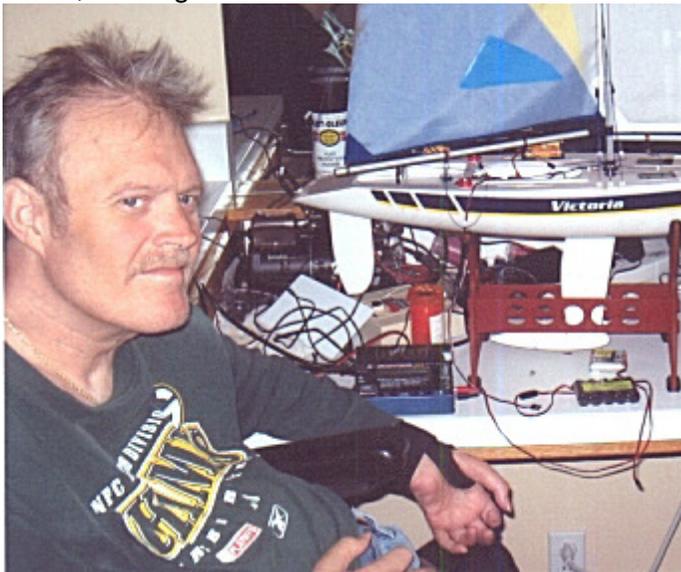
Pilot Profile: Mike Lutzenberger

by Russell Knetzger

Michael Lutzenberger in his 52 years has lived two distinct lives. For the first 33 years it was a conventional but active life centered in western West Allis. There his father, Ralph, a machinist at Kearny & Trecker's 108th Street plant (now Quadgraphics), and mother Shirley, in the 1950s built one of the first new homes at S.105th & Dakota, in what was mostly vacant territory. In 1974 Mike graduated from West Allis Nathan Hale High School, located still farther out, on S. 114th and Lincoln Avenue.

Mike gravitated to sales work, especially enjoying high fidelity music equipment sales for Schaak Electronics, (8 track, then cassettes), and the very earliest computers, Commodore 64s evolving to IBM PCs. Especially gratifying to Mike was his love of winter downhill skiing. Each year he would do a winter vacation to ski the famous runs of the Rocky Mountain slopes— Vail, Breckinridge, Jackson Hole, Aspen, Snow Bird. He got to ski them all.

Back in Milwaukee, winters he taught skiing at Crystal Ridge on S. 76th & Rawson. On Dec. 18, 1989 while waiting for a student, he suffered a fall which broke his spine in the upper back, paralyzing him from the chest down. His second life began. The past 19 years Mike has had to adjust to a life of Patience. Living alone in a specially equipped home on S. 4th & Morgan, Mike waits for visiting aides to lift him from bed in the morning, and to put him back to bed at night. His hands are unfeeling. To use a screwdriver on a model boat or plane, he uses arm pressure to squeeze his hands onto the driver, twisting it with his teeth. . .Patience.



Mike Lutzenberger with his R/C model sailboat, which he sails in the Jackson Park Lagoon, traveling via his van, modified (\$65,000) to wheel chair access and arm controls.



Michael Lutzenberger with his all foam, 71" span R/C sailplane Multiplex Easy Glider, 24 oz., brushless electric, which he soloed on during 2007 at our field.

Mike has never been in his own basement, so model work is done in parts of a spare bedroom, and of the living room. That may change. He has negotiated with his insurance company to install an elevator to the basement, and make an expansion of the first floor. He will need to move offsite for a few months while the work is done. More patience.

This remodeling may somewhat speed his productivity. He has a 1/4 scale Taylorcraft built by Don Finney (160 Magnum glow engine) awaiting final touches. There also is ready for spray paint trim work another all foamy from Multiplex, their twin engine "Twin Star," 56 inch span, weighing 51 oz. Mike will stay with electric power for that model.

Mike can do spray painting in his garage, reachable by a long tarp-covered outdoor ramp, right from his kitchen door. The garage stores his radio controlled lawn mover, which fascinates friends, watching him cut his own lawn while sitting in his wheel chair. He values these elements of self-reliance, including remote light switches, flooding his home with his beloved music, and sitting at his computer, another window to the world, from which he orders models.

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