

## Pilot Profile: Andy Runte, DVM

by Russell Knetzger

The “DVM” stands for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, something Andy Runte wanted to be since he first helped his mother care for a litter of abandoned kittens when Andy was about 8 years old. Now he is age 34, and buying the veterinary practice where he is now employed. The clinic, Alta View Veterinary, is at Forest Home Av. & Cold Spring Rd., not far from his home, on S.55<sup>th</sup> & W. Plainfield Av.

Knowing what you want to be that early has some advantages. Andy’s dad Don and his mom Johanna agreed to fund his attendance at Marquette University High School, an all-boys Catholic High School on Wisconsin Avenue near 35<sup>th</sup> Street, where tuition and academic standards are both high. From age 14 Andy volunteered and worked at small animal clinics near the home his parents still occupy, at S. 80<sup>th</sup> & W. Howard Avenue. That small animal contact confirmed his choice of professions, and gained Andy valuable experience.

Graduating from Marquette High in 1991, having taken all their science courses, Andy then majored in pre-vet at UW-M. From there he was successful in earning one of the 60 in-state slots at UW-Madison’s School of Veterinary Medicine. That program, like Medical School to be a physician, is four years, including one year of practical experience. In 1998 Andy graduated with his doctorate. While the degree requires knowledge of both small and large animals, Andy has limited his practice to the typical household mammals of dogs, cats, hamsters, etc.



Throughout his grade and high school years Andy maintained an avid interest in model aviation. This was fostered by his father, Don, who was quite active in control line flying with the CircleMasters Flying Club here in Milwaukee. However, Andy also branched off into free flight, and maintained many years of high activity with the Bong Eagles. Both he and his father held officer positions with that club.

Andy did a lot of competing with the Bong Eagles, at the DNR Bong Recreation Center in Kenosha County, winning a case full of trophies. His specialty was outdoor hand launched gliders.



**Andy Runte, DVM, with his current model aviation love, “combat,” here with a .15 cu.in engine powered Slow Survivable Combat aircraft. Meant for beauty? No. Rugged and disposable? Yes.**

Andy forayed into radio control in 2004. He flew an OS.46 cu.in powered Nexstar, with its “simulated flying home computer package.” His instructor was Russell Knetzger. Andy is now teaching his dad to fly at the spacious **MARKS** sod farm in Wind Lake.

Shortly after soloing, “Combat” flying caught Andy’s eye. At first Andy liked how the maneuvering honed his pilot skills. But then Andy’s old free flight competitive spirit surfaced. Now Andy practices with his main mentor, Bill Geipel, and with fellow combat pilots Bob Maciejewski, and Bryan Lorentzen, each trying to cut off the other’s trailing streamer Andy has gone to two Combat events at the AMA NATS level, 2006 to watch, and 2007 to compete.

Andy and his wife, Laurie, are expecting their first child in April.

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