

People

CLOSE-UP

Teen trades car keys for wings

By ANGIE MARTIN
Chronicle Staff Writer

When Willie Mathewson turned 16 a few months ago, he didn't ask to borrow the keys to the family car. Instead of getting his driver's license in August, Mathewson earned his student's pilot's license. And now the N. C. School of Science and Math junior says he knows exactly what he wants to do for the rest of his life -- fly.

"I told my Mom, I don't want a car, I want a helicopter," said Mathewson. "I won't have to worry about parking." Mathewson doesn't even have his driver's learner's permit, his mother said.

Although he owns neither a car nor a helicopter, from the time he takes off the runway and becomes airborne, a single engine Piper Tomahawk is under his control. "It's a small plane and I can't wait until I get started with multi-engines," Mathewson said.

Mathewson is currently enrolled at the Piedmont Flight School. He already has more than 45 hours of flight time under his belt. Now, Mathewson is aiming even higher. "When I turn 17 I'll get my private pilot's license and I probably won't have my driver's license by then either," he said.



He's scheduled to take the eligibility test for his private pilot's license in February. But it was last spring that Mathewson signed up for flying lessons, after his mother, a Piedmont Airlines employee, told him about the courses. But since age six the future aeronautical engineer wanted to fly. A family friend and Air Force pilot also inspired Mathewson to try his wings and for his 16th birthday, on August 8, he got his first official license.

"I still think it's fun. It's exciting. When you get in there it's like you're a bird," Mathewson said.

He said that at one time he had given thought to becoming a computer engineer. "Early in life I said, 'oh wow, computers.' And we got one at home and I

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played with it a little bit but I'm not real good at it."

But flying is different. "It's just one of those things I like to do. Like some people like to drive cars. I mean, well, that's more dangerous than flying a plane because if you're flying a plane you can land it even if the engine cuts off," Mathewson said. "The purpose of the emergency procedures is to teach you how to land it and land it safely and be able to walk away from it." Mathewson is confident in his skills and in the training he's received from his instructor, Norman Wiginton.

Before Mathewson actually got off the runway, he received preliminary training in a flight simulator. "It's different when you fly in a simulator," he said. He describes the simulator as though it were a video game. "With a simulator you're like -- 'this is fun' -- but once you get in the regular airplane you're like -- 'Wow! This is really different!'"

Not to underestimate his ability, Mathewson said that he always thinks about what would happen if something went wrong when he's off the ground. It happens all the time. "We'll go flying and (the instructor) will turn off the power and he'll turn the gas off to make it stall. You have to know how to make it stall and what to do to keep it in the air," he said.

Mathewson recalls that one of the most exciting



Above, 16-year-old student pilot Willie Mathewson wraps up a flight session. At left, he checks his instrument panel in preparation for flight (photos by Santana).

things to occur during his flight training was when he had to fly donning a special hood. "You can't see anything except the instrument panel," he said. "We were flying along and the instructor told me to go in a certain direction and a certain compass heading, and I was flying that way fine and then he said, 'alright, now fly this way,' and Mathewson found himself headed directly toward Mount Pilot.

In another incident Mathewson was again required to wear the hood. "I was in the hood and my instructor said, 'alright, what I want you to do is tell me which way we're going...and I'd say 'well we're going toward the right. We're turning up.' And he said 'take off the hood.' I took off the hood and we were turning left and going down." Learning to trust the instruments is sometimes difficult.

"I was scared," he admitted. "That's one thing you have to worry about when you're flying in clouds because the mountain can just jump out in front of you."

Flying with a blinding hood on is one hurdle he's overcome. Other hurdles he'll have to climb in order to secure his private pilot's license include nighttime

and cross country flying, but he's looking forward to it.

"The fear of it isn't really in me. I'm not really afraid of it because it's just one of those things I like to do," he said.

Not only does Mathewson enjoy flying, he takes joy rides on his 10-speed bike. He is also a recognized cross country runner at his school. He is an active member of Dreamland Park Baptist Church's usher board.

Academics are also a priority for Mathewson. As a junior at the N. C. School of Science and Math in Durham, he enjoys vigorous academic preparation. "My favorite class is physics," he said. "You experience so much in that class and then you see how things relate to life and that even affects the airplane. I can think about that when I'm flying," he said.

Mathewson is also creative. He spends as much time as he can constructing posters, and a once beloved stamp collection is now "buried in his drawer." He's even found a way to incorporate his academic requirements with his love of flying. Aerial photography is one of his hobbies. On his most recent flights

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ABOUT TOWN

N.C. Dance Theater to feature dancer Mel Tomlinson

Mel Tomlinson will perform and choreograph a piece for North Carolina Dance Theater for its Jan. 8 and 9 performances at 8 p.m. at the Stevens Center in Winston-Salem.

Tomlinson will choreograph a pas de trois called "No Right on Red," to the music of Mort Garson. Not only will this be the world premiere of "No Right on Red," but it will also be the first work professionally choreographed by Tomlinson. He will also be performing in "No Right on Red."

Artistic director Salvatore Aiello's "Journey" with music by Malcolm Arnold will also feature Mel Tomlinson in a pri-

mary role. This will be the American premiere of this ballet.

The performances will also include "Napoli: Act III Diversiments" by Bourdonville with music by Helsted, Pauli, and Lumbye and the world premiere of "La Mer" by Nebraska with music by Debussy.

Mel Tomlinson was a guest performer for the Dance Theater in its opening show in October. He has been a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet and the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater. He was the first recipient of the North Carolina Prize (1983) awarded for outstanding work in the visual or perform-



Tomlinson's "No Right on Red" debuts at the N.C. Dance Theatre performances at the Stevens Center on Jan. 8 and 9.



ing arts and has been extremely active in educating the public about dance. Presently, he is on the faculty at the North Carolina School of the Arts.

North Carolina Dance Theater, under artistic director Aiello, is one of the most sought-after professional dance companies in the country. The Dance Theater, headquartered in Winston-Salem, was founded in 1970 by Robert Lindgren and is a professional affiliate of the NCSA. Last season, the Dance Theater earned critical acclaim in New York City. The 16 dancers have mixed impressive backgrounds and have toured selected locations throughout the United States and Europe.

Sawtooth Center is helping residents face old man winter with an uplifting program we have created for the entire family. Family Night at the Sawtooth

features a 25 percent savings to multiple registrants for the new Wednesday and Friday night classes. Two popular versions of our basic drawing classes specifically designed for entry level students are to be offered. "I Can't Draw/Yes I Can" for adults and "Drawing on the Right Brain" of children.

Wednesday's adult class will be taught by Mary Ann Zotto, beginning on Feb. 10, and ending March 9. The Friday adult class will be taught by Susan Holloway and will begin Feb. 12 and run through March 11.

Both the Wednesday and Friday Children's classes will be taught by our youth program coordinator, Judith Kenney Reising, and members of her staff who have been trained in Betty Edward's "Drawing on the Right Brain" of children.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FRIDAY, JAN. 8

• The School of American Ballet will host an audition at 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the North Carolina School of the Arts. For more information call 770-3399 extension 3207.

SATURDAY, JAN. 9

• "The Tax Reform Act of 1986 for Business and How It Affects Your Business" will be presented by the Minority Business League from 9 a.m. until noon. The seminar will be held at the Reynolds Health Center Cafeteria. Patrick Grimes will be the seminar facilitator. For more information and reservations call 723-3552.

• Registration for the Open 35 Years and Over Men's Basketball League continues until 5 p.m. at the Winston Lake Family YMCA. For more information on the league fee and session starting dates call Norman Joyner at 724-9205.

SOCIAL NOTES

Noted African Children's Choir to perform locally

The African Children's Choir is scheduled to appear in Winston-Salem on Jan. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

The African Children's Choir is sponsored by the Ambassadors of Aid (AOA), a non-profit, interdenominational Christian organization primarily involved in relief and development work in Uganda.

Despite a legacy of turmoil in violence in their Ugandan homeland, 24 orphan children, ages 5 to 12, have safely arrived to sing in North America. The concert funds the continued development of children's homes and schools.

The AOA currently has six children's homes in Uganda.

The choir has performed worldwide an throughout North America, Western Europe and the United Kingdom.

United Kingdom.

They have also performed with the Vancouver Symphony, as well as at Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, the McDonald's Corporation's "Gospelfest," and Lou Rawl's "Parade of Stars" television.

Their lively and inspirational concerts feature gospel music and African melodies.

While performing with the choir the African children receive extensive Bible training and the experience of performing for thousands of people.

Funds raised for the choir concerts benefit the AOA's endeavors, including the maintenance of six children's homes in war-torn Uganda.

AOA also sponsors a literacy



The African Children's Choir will present a performance in Winston-Salem Friday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m. at Redeemer Presbyterian Church. school program operating in cooperation with Uganda's Ministry of Education. AOA has 175 Ugandan children under its direct care with an additional 100 receiving educational support.