

Rich Andresen

I was very fond of Steve and I will miss him greatly. He had the most unique sense of humor I have ever experienced. But, we were more than friends, we were brothers in Christ. Steve had a deep and beautiful faith, which was an inspiration to me. In his last communication to me he said "pray for me Rich, that's where the power is." I did pray for Steve continuously. And although we are all disappointed with the answer, I know that Steve is in better hands now. Who can know the mind of God? Maybe the Lord needed a master storyteller. Steve is healed and he is in paradise. I thank God for that.

I can volunteer a few anecdotes, but my memory has faded on this stuff. Ted and Jim Estep can probably remember some of the details however.

I had an old 1953 Chrysler De Soto that was made of tank armor. Steve had nicknamed it "Hernando." This car was bought for \$75.00 in New York and driven to Tennessee. It looked like it had been through both World Wars. The left rear door had a huge rust hole in it, which we had filled with many empty beer cans. Every here and there, one would fall out, usually on campus. When it came time for me to take it back to New York, we decided to improve its appearance a little. So while down at the farm, we emptied several rounds of buck-shot into the rear end of it. The story that I took back to New York was that this was not anything unusual, just the way they say so-long to Yankees down there!

Steve and I were the founders of the ETSU flying club. We went to Stone Mountain, Georgia to purchase our first plane, a 65hp Aeronca Champ. After being assured that it had just had a "major overhaul", we looked over the log books, paid \$1,500 in cash, and flew off toward East Tennessee. The major overhaul turned out to be a "shade-tree overhaul" – by the time we got to the vicinity of Chuckey, we had a high oil temperature and low oil pressure. We quickly picked out an open field to land, in case of an emergency. In the glide from about 3,500 feet, the oil cooled, so we decided to fly at minimum power toward Johnson City. We barely made it to the airport. After a *real* overhaul and deeply in debt, we launched the club. It was a great success. We added a second plane within a year, a Piper Colt. I credit the entire success of the flying club to Steve, who never became discouraged or negative. He was a very positive guy and never let problems interfere with good fun.

I can also say that if it were not for Steve, I would not be a Delta Captain today. When I arrived at ETSU, I was an airline *wannabe*, but I did not really believe that I could ever become a real pilot. I had grown up in New York City, a gray and overcast place with a pervasive negativity in the atmosphere. I had majored in physics and was offered a job with NASA when I graduated. My parents were dumfounded when I turned it down. I just wanted to fly! Steve encouraged me every step of the way, believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself. His positive attitude and "don't take no for an answer" disposition was instrumental in the fulfillment of my dream. I kept on toward that goal with his encouragement and finally made it. Thanks Steve – I love you!