

Lyn Freeman

Writer, Pilot, Wag: Aviation's Laugh-Loving Adventurer Joins Us

Meet Lyn Freeman. Witty Lyn Freeman. Wacky n' Wild Lyn Freeman.

We all have wondered: whatever becomes of the class clown, the kid forever sent to the principal's office? He becomes Lyn Freeman. Whatever becomes of the guy who flees Oklahoma City for Hollywood, writes what he calls "incredibly bad" movies and okay TV, eventually becoming founder of Build-a-Plane (buildaplane.org), a terrific program that gets high school kids tinkering in the classroom with an actual metal-and-systems aircraft and as a benefit falling totally in love with aviation? He stands before you: Lyn Freeman.

Of course, being Lyn Freeman is a pretty great thing to be. You, if you're Freeman, get to be the newly named Editor at Large for yours truly, *Flying Adventures Magazine*. That means flying off in pursuit of airborne adventure and returning with stories that are told with the characteristic Lyn Freeman eye for all that is exciting, wonderful and fun about the people, places and entertainment each issue of *Flying Adventures* covers.

Welcome, Lyn.

"I have always looked woefully at the guy who at 16 knew he wanted to be an orthodontist and still is today – happily," says Freeman, a pilot whose ratings include instrument, commercial, CFI, multi-engine, ATP. "I look at guys like that and think, gee, wouldn't it be nice if I, too, knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. Fact is, I've never known!"

That's another nifty thing about being the attorney's son who leaves Oklahoma for a degree in "motion picture production" at the University of Southern California: you get to think orthodontia is not so hot and instead write screenplays for a living, more or less. Most don't sell, but so? Once in a while you see your words re-written 40,000 times until they are not recognizable and up on the big

screen in something like *Without Warning*, starring Martin Landau and Jack Palance ("at a low in their careers," Freeman cracks), a movie that becomes something like the highest grossing film in L.A. – for a few days. Meanwhile, because you were a kid who was the right-seat fixture in dad's Piper Clipper practically since diapers you want to fly. Badly. So, there you are, befriending, gruff-



man, how your life changes. No longer are you imagining yourself, as Freeman jokes, a great Hollywood "artiste, an auteur, who can sit home cranking out things that bring in \$300,000" a page. Now you are a journalist out on stories. Way better. It's better because, jeez, you find yourself – in the interest of research – flying the military's T-38. "You talk about a rocket ship! Oh my gosh!" says the smitten aviator. You are flying to Alaska and in a Cessna 185 on skies you are following the Yukon Quest dog sled race 1,000 miles across the tundra ("oh my heavens!"). You

now you've gotten yourself a terrific wife (Jodi) and welcomed son Cody (now 15) into your world. And life is pretty fine, writing regularly for television now, flying charters in the afternoon, and evenings stopping by the collection of retail dive shops you own. Around 1989 the I-want-out itch arrives, as it will, and if you're Lyn Freeman you move the family to Big Fork, Montana for six years among the lovely pine trees.

Well, naturally, if you're Lyn Freeman by

"I was naive enough to think I could mail-in projects and Hollywood would send a check," he says. But no. Hollywood doesn't go for *that*, which finds the writer soon enough back in Malibu, on the payroll of Paramount Studios. Still, Montana is an incredible memory, especially for the Forest Service contract that sees you flying a Cessna 206 on "typical small town" adventures along the lines of search and rescue. Little do you know when you are plucking rafters in distress off a river you're merely warming up for the big, BIG flying adventures to come. That is, if you're Lyn Freeman. And since you *are* (if you are), you are oh-so-ready when the job comes up of Editor in Chief of *Plane & Pilot* and *Pilot Journal* magazines. They tell you, "it's not rocket science," as Freeman recalls, so you take it and

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Freeman and wife Jodi

are hanging out at the Klondike gold rush town of Dawson at the Sourdough Toe Cocktail Club, toasting grizzly-like people who drink their Canadian Club spiked by a "disgusting, brown, nasty" human toe. *No kidding*. Whether you are flying yourself on a lodge-to-lodge African safari or winging into extinct volcanoes via floatplane, you are, in Freeman's words, "doing the most exciting, incredible thing you can do in airplanes, which is go places."

Around 10 years into *Plane & Pilot* and *Pilot Journal* a light bulb goes off. Says Freeman: "I couldn't get this idea to leave my mind. I had to exorcise the demon!" What's super about being Lyn Freeman is that your demon is not like anybody's. It's that unique. *Yours* is this amazing, great plan to put a plane in every school so kids can get hands-on experience with wiring, engine overhaul,

systems, etc. and learn just how incredible and wonderful and fun it all is, a life in love with aviation. Today's Freeman's Build-a-Plane, his nonprofit program in cooperation with the Thomas W. Wathen Foundation, is taking off like the "rocket ship" he once got to fly. And as Editor at Large of *Flying Adventures*, whatever becomes of Lyn Freeman now is only yet to be seen.

"Most days I feel incredibly blessed to not know what I want to be when I grow up." He laughs: "it has allowed me to always feel like the dog who just broke out of the yard. Every fireplug, every light pole, is a brand new adventure for me."

And if you're Lyn Freeman, the adventures will keep on, keep on, keep on coming. Lucky us.

Look for Freeman's feature stories in future issues of the magazine. ✕