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# Newsletter

July 2009  
Issue No. 200901

**President  
Wayne Horntvedt**



**Founder  
Dr. Dave  
Van Nostrand**

After 14 years as President of Wings of Mercy, MN I have turned over the daily operations to an individual whom I believe will continue our mission. Wayne has been with us a number of years and I welcome him whole heartedly to take on the role of President. Please give him all the encouragement and support you have given me over the past years. Wayne Horntvedt, our President, is located in the Twin Cities. Henceforth, we have changed our mailing address to PO Box 1921 Maple Grove MN 55311.

My new role as Founder entitles me to be an active board member. I will provide advice, wisdom, ideas (it was my idea to get the "Miracle on Hudson" flight crew for this years benefit and did it pay off!) and provide much need history of the organization. I will still give presentations to organizations interested in our mission and most importantly of all, I will continue to fly.

I am very excited about our benefit September 26<sup>th</sup> at the Buffalo airport. Our speakers, **Air Traffic Controller Patrick Harten and Flight Attendant, Doreen Welsh are both from the Miracle on Hudson flight.** We hope they will be with us a few days to assist in spreading the word of our mission to television and radio stations. If you come into contact with them before and during the event, let them know how much we appreciate their taking the time to come to Buffalo MN for our benefit. We are providing their transportation but that is all. They are coming out of the kindness of their hearts.

We will be roasting a pig with all the trimmings, hopefully watch a small air show and most of all, the speakers will be outstanding. I am really looking forward to that occasion.

We want to extend a warm invitation to you and your friends and family to this benefit.

It is a privilege to be writing to you for the first time as President of Wings of Mercy, MN Inc.. To provide "Wings to those in need", comes from the heart for all of our volunteer pilots, nurses and board members as we serve the greater Midwest. I began with WOM first as a Second in Command pilot, then a Pilot in Command, next as a Board member and now as the organizations President. But the joy and sense of stewardship still comes from providing wings to those in need like the family Richard LaBute and I flew to Cincinnati just last month so the children could see a specialist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

I want to first take this opportunity to thank Dr. David Van Nostrand whose vision and sense of community service created Wings of Mercy. "Doc" has elected to step into the position of Founder and continue to serve as a board member. After many years of serving as the day-to-day leader of Wings of Mercy, he has decided to turn the "Pilot-in-Command" role over to someone new. Under his leadership, almost a thousand mercy missions have been flown to serve the greater Midwest and to those in need. All of us at Wings of Mercy thank him for the many years of service and appreciate his continued involvement and support of this great organization he founded.

Secondly, I want to express my appreciation to our Board of Directors. Over the last year, we have seen a significant change to the membership of the Board. For this organization to continue to run for another 14 years, our board members dedicate their time and talents and it is very much appreciated by all. Our current board members are listed below with their contact information listed on the last page of this newsletter.

<i>Flight Director:</i>	<i>Richard LaBute</i>
<i>Safety Director:</i>	<i>Steve Nelson</i>
<i>Nursing Director:</i>	<i>Lisa Hiltz</i>
<i>Treasurer:</i>	<i>John Villas</i>
<i>Secretary:</i>	<i>Roger Seim</i>
<i>Founder:</i>	<i>Dr. David Von Nostrand</i>

I would also like to thank all past Board members for their service to this organization.

We could not conduct our service without the support of others who serve: Kate Ritzer, Outreach Director; Janet Seim, Administration; and Glenn Young, Operations Coordinator.

And last but certainly not least, a huge thank you to the volunteer pilots and nurses who donate their time and planes to carry out our missions. They are the heart and soul of Wings of Mercy and we appreciate their service and commitment to serving those in need.

I can not complete my remarks without mentioning our upcoming annual Fundraising Benefit. We look forward to seeing all of you and please join us in an exciting opportunity to hear from people involved in the "Miracle on the Hudson". The Board of Wings of Mercy has put together a great opportunity for all of us to share our gifts for those in need while experiencing flight and service in a unique way. See you there. *Safe Flying*



**Safety Director  
Steve Nelson**

**Ear Pressure**

One of the questions I always ask patients before a Wings of Mercy flight is about any ear, sinus infections or colds they may have. An inner ear problem can block the eustachian tube in the ear which can lead to severe ear pain during descent from the increasing air pressure as we prepare to land.

Air Traffic Control normally expects aircraft on an IFR flight plan to descend at least 1000 feet per minute. Like many pilots, I consider this to be an unrealistic rate for unpressurized planes, especially when traveling with passengers. When given a descent clearance on a Wings of Mercy flight, I normally advise ATC that we will be descending at 300 fpm "for patient comfort". This gives ATC advance notice of our vertical profile and they've always been cooperative in working us down slowly.

The slow descent helps the passengers ears adapt to the pressure change. Of course they can also get additional comfort from swallowing or chewing gum to help equalize the pressure. Sometimes, however, our patients can't perform or understand these instructions. In this case you may need to take further steps to control the situation.

If ear pain becomes a problem, you can advise ATC of the ear problem and tell them you want to return to a higher altitude. This allows the ear drum pressure to equalize and reduces the pain. At the higher altitude you now have additional time to assess your options and work out the situation.

In one instance, I needed to climb back up 2000 feet then work with ATC on a 100 fpm circling descent into the St. Paul area as the patient's mother had him sip water every 30 seconds. The sipping aided to stimulate his swallowing action and equalize his ear pressure. ATC was very accommodating and worked with us the entire way.

In another instance, we were over Rochester at 10,000 feet and beginning our descent into Minneapolis. By 9500 feet, an adult passenger had ear discomfort, and by 9000 feet it was beginning to become painful. A quick call to ATC and we were back to 10000 where the pain subsided. A slow descent coupled with the passenger holding their nose and "blowing hard" (aka "Valsalva" maneuver) resolved the problem.

Ear problems in flight don't occur often, but they must be addressed promptly. In severe cases, the pressure could lead to a ruptured eardrum.

As a Pilot in Command, you have the ultimate authority for the safety of the flight and your passengers. Work out descent rates with ATC that will work for you and your passengers. Don't be afraid to refuse clearances or instructions which may compromise your patients comfort. ATC has a lot of great controllers, and they are willing to work just as hard as you to give your patient a safe and uneventful flight.

**Dear Friends,**

Newsletters come, newsletters go, but the constant reason for our being is "providing Wings for those in need". There are so many cases of children, adults, families, people in need! I really hesitate to say "no". The fact is however that only 1 in 4 queries actually becomes a mission.

Our mission schedule was quite heavy this spring. We received more than the average number of out of the ordinary missions such as children and/or families seeking specialized care as far east as Cincinnati. For our Minnesota based pilots, co-pilots and nurses this means a hard 10-12 hour mission day, a lot to ask of volunteers! The summer schedule has been slower than the spring, but we are still flying 6-7 missions per month and looking forward to a busy fall.

The annual Benefit is coming up in September. This year our theme will be a "hanger ball", partying under the wings of the planes that make it happen. You can read elsewhere of the guest speakers, band and possible surprise, but the know ye all that the centerpiece roasted organic pig was raised on our farm. He should be very tasty indeed!!

We would really like to see as many of our pilots and their planes join the Benefit this year. Wings of Mercy pilots, co-pilots and nurses will receive a complimentary ticket with their RSVP by 18 September. We will hold their tickets at the door. Of course, family and friends are invited and encouraged, but they will need to purchase a regular ticket. Hope to see you at the Benefit at the West Metro Aviation hanger, Buffalo, MN.

Finally, tell your friends and neighbors about Wings of Mercy. Join our Adopt-A-Flight program. Get involved, stay involved and please keep our pilots, co-pilots, nurses and patients in your prayers.

*Mark your calendar now!*  
**September 26, 2009**  
*Fall Fundraiser*



**Missions Summary Report**

*Monthly Breakdown*

Year	Total	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1995	28				3	1	2	4	2	7	6	1	2
1996	42	1	5	3	2	2	1	1	6	8	4	5	4
1997	50	2	2	5	5	9	4	4	4	1	4	4	6
1998	42	3	3	2	2	3	9	1	9	3	4	0	2
1999	60	4	3	6	4	7	8	7	3	7	4	3	4
2000	79	7	7	9	8	10	2	6	2	4	7	10	7
2001	61	1	5	3	5	7	2	6	6	7	7	7	5
2002	105	9	3	12	6	11	5	14	9	11	5	12	8
2003	69	11	8	8	7	0	3	4	9	5	3	6	5
2004	54	4	6	3	7	0	3	7	2	4	7	8	3
2005	52	2	2	4	3	7	3	5	6	5	5	5	5
2006	26	8	2	9	5	2	6	6	5	5	5	7	9
2007	69	8	6	9	5	5	4	5	8	5	7	5	2
2008	31	3	2	3	3	0	1	3	2	0	4	9	1
2009	36	5	9	4	6	8	4						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>63</b>

Total Beneficiary Mileage since beginning = 581,032.00

Total Beneficiary Mileage 2009 = 27,331.00

**Children flown = 428 missions, adults = 389 missions. Totals do not add up to total number of missions because earliest missions did not compile statistics.**

Wings mercy missions have transported patients to the following hospitals:

Mayo Clinic, Rochester	234	Milwaukee Cancer Place	15
Children's / Msp	53	St. Cloud Hospital	10
Gillette/ St. Paul	39	Bethesda, Twin Cities	3
Fairview Hospital, MSP	134	Children's, Out State	12
Parker Hughes, Roseville	35	Regions, St. Paul	2
Shriner's	125	Others	38

**Pilot Volunteer Hours**

Year	Total	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2001	691						44	65	108	178	121	116	59
2002	1363	125	49	130	95	163	61	172	81	148	78	154	107
2003	916	164	108	99	99	0	48	63	127	60	38	65	45
2004	841	64	83	39	113	0	38	90	61	98	98	103	54
2005	787	29	33	68	54	105	40	70	88	92	56	77	75
2006	388	124	29	127	78	30	77	67	90	62	69	102	124
2007	1009	120	100	146	64	68	50	61	117	61	106	82	34
2008	402	24	38	35	40	0	10	31	32	0	60	118	14
2009	481	60	114	62	80	95	70						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6878</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>512</b>

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