

MEMBER  
SPOTLIGHT

» Getting to Know  
COPA Pilots

» Andrew and his  
wife, Mindy, with  
their SR22.



**LAURIE EINSTEIN KOSZUTA** has been a freelance writer for many years and along with her husband, John, now owns a Cirrus SR22. With John as the pilot-in-command and Laurie as the partner, they regularly travel to see family, visit friends and enjoy our beautiful country. You can read more of Laurie's work on her website: [www.laurieeinsteinkoszuta.com](http://www.laurieeinsteinkoszuta.com).



From Toy Planes to Treatment  
Plans: How Andrew Wickline  
Took Flight on a Mission to Heal

by Laurie Einstein Koszuta

**When Andrew Wickline was five years old, he began logging flight hours in his own aircraft – a blue metal die-cast replica of an F4U-1D Corsair Fighter in Marine colors, which he carefully hangared in his bedroom.** Over time, Andrew's imaginary flight log tallied more than 5,400 hours of soaring the vast skies of the Pacific Theater, gliding over the hills of West Virginia, cruising through the cornfields of Ohio, or in the backseat of a Chevy Suburban and flying missions in his Grandma Zee's basement.

"I was inspired by the TV show Baa Baa Black Sheep," Andrew recalled. "My parents even let me stay up late just to watch

it." The series dramatized the real-life exploits of U.S. Marine Corps aviator Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington and his World War II squadron, VMF-214. Captivated by the show, Andrew set his sights on becoming a fighter pilot, a dream that quickly became his first lifelong ambition.

That dream, however, was cut short in third grade when Andrew began having trouble seeing the board and was prescribed glasses. At the time, wearing glasses automatically disqualified candidates from military flight training. With that door closed at such a young age, Andrew was compelled to set aside his passion for aviation and seek a new direction.





## Finding a New Mission

At the age of 10, Andrew's mother opened a flower shop, which gave him time to start experimenting in the kitchen. "I thought maybe I'd be a chef," he said. "But I don't like seafood, and by 12 or 13, I realized I'd probably never be more than a Western Sizzlin' steakhouse chef."

Growing up, Andrew spent his weekends and summers with his aunt from West Virginia, who had worked her way up from lab technician to head of the department at a hospital. He admired how she helped sustain the critical access hospital, and that's where he learned to draw blood and operate the blood analyzer machines. He also met a physician there who seemed to do a little of everything, from treating heart attacks and setting bones to delivering babies. That versatility further inspired Andrew to consider medicine. "I liked science and helping people," he recalled. "That motivated me to apply to medical school."

“I was initially planning to become an internist,” Andrew said. “I was in my third year of medical school when I realized I didn’t enjoy the work and began questioning my choice. Fortunately, my very next rotation was in orthopedics. I saw patients recovering quickly, which was gratifying.” While initially considering specializing in hand surgery, Andrew’s perspective

shifted again during his residency. “We encountered some very intense cases, and that’s when I chose to focus on joint replacement surgery instead,” he explained. His decision was further driven by his experiences with complex cases and the rising challenges of addiction among complex hand surgery patients.

## Racing, Recovery and Reconnection

Outside the hospital, Andrew pursued another passion – the thrill of high-speed car racing. He launched Know Breaks Racing and in 2018 won the T2 Championship on the SCCA Majors Tour while driving a 2015 Mustang.

But when Mindy, his wife, was diagnosed with a serious health issue, Andrew decided to step away from racing to support her. Later, he felt a profound difference when he tried to return to racing. “Without regular practice and training,” he said, “I felt slow, was no longer winning and was frequently frustrated. I just wasn’t enjoying it, which Mindy pointed out and I quit for good.”

That's when Andrew turned his attention back to aviation, realizing how vital flying and racing had been as mental escapes from his high-pressure medical life.





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A New Altitude

Andrew’s passion for aviation was re-ignited during a memorable trip to South Africa and Zambia with Mindy. They took a commercial flight to South Africa, but a trip to Zambia usually required traveling in a twin-engine turboprop.

“The problem was that we missed a flight on a larger plane,” Andrew commented. “The next morning, when we walked out to the tarmac, Mindy spotted four bigger planes and said, ‘Thank God, we’re not flying in that little one over there.’ Sure enough, she had pointed toward a Cessna 172. A 21-year-old pilot, who appeared to be about 15 was waiting for us and Mindy exclaimed, “This cannot be our plane!” He looked at her and said, ‘Yes, ma’am, it is.’”

Although Mindy was hesitant, the couple flew to Zambia without any issue. Sitting in the right seat brought back Andrew’s old desire to learn how to fly. After years of talking about it with a pilot friend, he finally took action.

In May 2023, Andrew took a discovery flight and just 48 hours later, signed up for flight training. He took lessons in a Cessna 172 at his home airport, Syracuse Hancock International (KSYR). By October he earned his private pilot’s license and decided to purchase his own aircraft. “I had a conversation with a couple of guys I really respect at the hangar. I was leaning toward a high-wing aircraft, possibly a Cessna 206 Turbo. They fly fast and have decent load capacity, but the downside is they don’t have Flight Into Known Icing (FIKI) certification. The weather around Syracuse can be tricky, especially with



⏏ Exploring the Outback from above – Cirrus style.

ice up until May, so it’s something to consider. But they suggested that if I was going to spend the money, I should look at Cirrus.”

Not long after, Andrew bought a 2021 SR22 GTS G6 with 250 hours on it. “I had no experience with a glass cockpit and autopilot,” Andrew noted. “It is a high-performance plane that flies differently from what I had learned on, so it was difficult and required time to adjust. It took longer than I thought it would to transition, but CSIP Jim Spaller and ATP Mike Zella were great instructors.”

Andrew completed his training by April and earned his IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) rating in August. In under two years, he logged more than 400 flight hours while maintaining a demanding, full-time orthopedic practice.

He has since flown rented Cirrus aircraft in Australia, over the Grand Canyon, Sedona, Arizona, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Most of his personal flying is business, spreading the low opioid recovery protocols by giving lectures at conferences and meeting with fellow surgeons.





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### The March 2 a Million

Currently, Andrew uses his Cirrus SR22 to fuel a broader mission: the March 2 a Million – his personal goal and initiative to help one million patients recover from joint replacement surgery with little to no opioid use. “I want to stop addiction to pain pills after these types of surgeries,” he said. “Through my books, I educate patients on how they can have a better recovery. I want to help one million joint replacement patients steer clear of opioid complications and risk.”

Similar to “What to Expect When You’re Expecting™,” Andrew developed a comprehensive recovery protocol, Less Swelling Less Pain, Total Knee and Total Hip, which guides patients starting six weeks before surgery and continuing for 12 weeks after. Endorsed by more than 80 surgeons worldwide, the protocol has shown measurable success, including some of the lowest opioid use and post-op swelling rates ever reported.

“I now use my Cirrus to meet other orthopedic surgeons who want to see their patients recover safer and faster. These surgeons are all encouraging their own



Andrew, with daughter Mallory in front and wife Mindy in the back.

patients to go to [www.March2aMillion.com](http://www.March2aMillion.com), claim their personal number on the internet Wall of Fame, and be a part of a nationwide movement to stop over-prescribing opioids and start focusing on safer recovery protocols.”

A forthcoming video documentary highlighting this mission is in the works. “There is a financial disincentive to make protocol changes,” Andrew offered. “I want to reward surgeons who are actively making these changes because they refuse to allow patients to become addicted. The documentary and social

media attention will identify these surgeons as thought leaders in our field.”

Owning a Cirrus has transformed how Andrew balances work, family and mission. “I can leave at 10:30 a.m., visit family or do business in another city, and still be home for dinner at 7 p.m. That’s what my SR22 makes possible,” he said. “Becoming a doctor may have been my third career choice, but it’s the one that made it possible to live out my first.” ☺

[www.March2aMillion.com](http://www.March2aMillion.com)  
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