THE PROFESSIONAL FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

MENTOR

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 1

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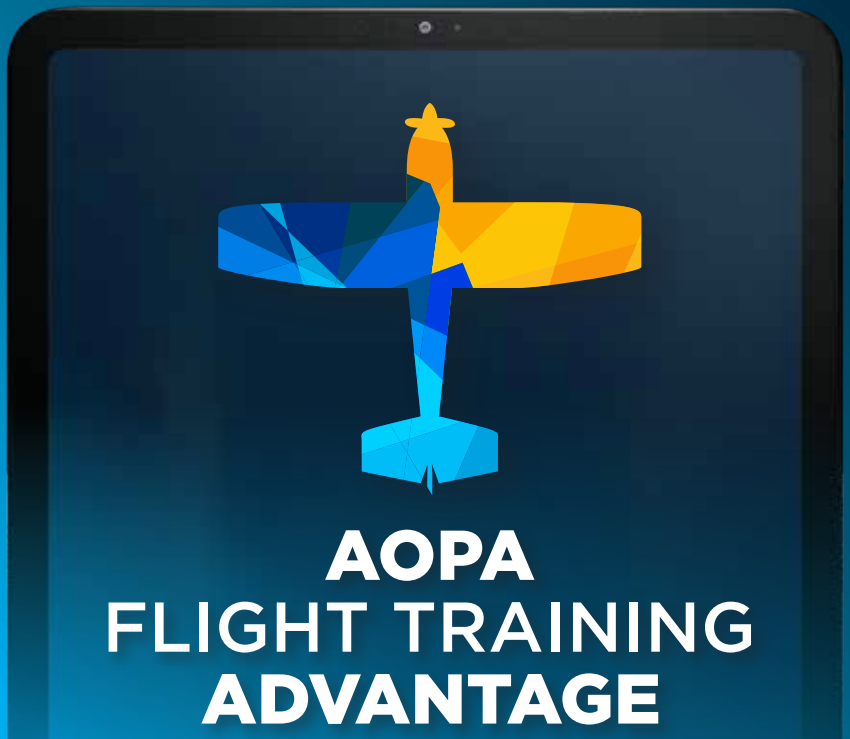

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MENTOR

www.nafinet.org

Mentor is a how-to magazine dedicated to improving the teaching skills of aviation instructors of all disciplines.

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position **Report**

Karen Kalishek,
NAFI Board Chair

Teaching to the Test

One of the presenters during a recent CFI webinar I attended stated that "teaching to the test" is a problem. Giving an example, he noted that none of the new flight instructors at his school teach pilots to recover from a full stall. "Teaching to the test," they only recover at the first sign of a stall. I quickly sent a chat comment that private pilot Airman Certification Standards (ACS) require applicants to demonstrate recovery from a full stall. There is no other option. Rather than teaching to the test, in reality those instructors are not preparing candidates to meet testing standards. Twice since then, I've heard the "teaching to the test" phrase used as a negative connotation relating to flight instruction, and it seems to be gaining steam. There is something about that phrase that makes our heads want to sagely nod in agreement, but let's think about what it implies. Why would teaching to successfully pass an FAA pilot examination indicate inadequate instruction?

If teaching to the test is a bad thing, does that indicate there is a problem with the test? Are the ACS and Practical Test Standards insufficiently robust to properly assess a pilot's readiness for certification or an added rating? The FAA makes it clear that the testing standards are the minimum to be met for pilot proficiency. If a pilot does not meet minimum standards, the desired certificate or rating, flight review endorsement, or FAA WINGS flight credit is not received. Perhaps there is a concern that proficiency requirements are superficial and can be passed by someone using rote memorization rather than higher-order levels of learning. Let's take a look at one of the more controversial items in the Private Pilot Airplane ACS, the task "Maneuvering During Slow Flight." What is the pilot examinee expected to demonstrate? From the Knowledge area, "the applicant demonstrates understanding of: Aerodynamics associated with slow flight in various airplane configurations, to include the relationship between angle of attack, airspeed, load factor, power setting, airplane weight and center of gravity, airplane attitude, and yaw effects." Examiner guidance and training makes it clear that an applicant's evaluation must be on a deeper level than rote memorization. Pilot candidates are asked questions that include describing and explaining their answers. For example, a private pilot candidate could be asked to describe and explain how and why slow flight with a 200-pound friend as a backseat passenger would be different than when flying solo. The Risk Management area includes six separate items that assess the applicant's ability to identify, assess, and mitigate risks associated with slow flight. What about demonstration of slow flight skills? Many flight instructors were dismayed when the skills relating to slow flight were changed several years ago. I was one of them, and like many of us, I continued teaching both the old-style method of flying with an activated stall warning as well as in accordance with the updated ACS. While I still believe there is value in both, I've reconciled with the current ACS since it provides a

The ACS were not developed by a group of nonpilots in an ivory tower, but by an FAA-industry coalition of experienced regulators and aviators, including pilot examiners and flight instructors.

valuable assessment of piloting skills and awareness with an increased margin of safety.

A pilot who has been taught and can demonstrate the knowledge, risk awareness and mitigation, and skills relating to slow flight in accordance with certification standards has shown the ability to be a safe pilot in that flight regime. The ACS were not developed by a group of nonpilots in an ivory tower, but by an FAA-industry coalition of experienced regulators and aviators, including pilot examiners and flight instructors. NAFI was part of the working group. The ACS are an effective means to assess pilot proficiency when employed as intended. What if they are not used objectively as designed? Is worry about teaching to the test not about the testing standards but instead about exam administration? Examiners are expected to prepare a customized plan of action for each individual. If an examiner provides a virtually identical scenario and series of questions to every candidate, then the real possibility of "teaching to the test" for a specific DPE arises. That is not a problem with the testing standards, but with the examiner. It compromises safety by creating an opportunity for pilots to slip through the cracks without being fully trained. Please discuss any test administration concerns you have with the examiner or, if necessary, the relevant FSDO managing specialist.

We are all entering a bright new year filled with opportunities. As demand for flight training continues to build and more new pilots take to the skies, it is more important than ever to maintain our NAFI vision of "Safer pilots through excellence in flight instruction." NAFI's promise to you in 2024 is that we will continue to support and promote flight instructor excellence with even greater education, mentorship, and advocacy throughout the year.

The FAA makes it clear that the testing standards are the minimum to be met for pilot proficiency.

YOUR FEEDBACK

AIRMAIL PAR AVION

Turn on the ELT

Eds. Note: NAFI Board Chair Karen Kalishek wrote "Tiger Country, Part Two," which appeared in the October 25, 2023, edition of eMentor. *Kalishek outlined a theoretical disastrous outcome resulting from an unprepared pilot encountering engine failure in mountainous terrain.*

Hi Beth,

Karen makes an excellent point about switching on the ELT during an emergency before touchdown. Yet few emergency checklists include turning on the ELT, which should be one of the first steps. Maybe this is something that needs to be updated by OEMs and flight schools.

Sincerely,

Matt Thurber
Editor in Chief
AIN Media Group

Triggered a Tear

Eds. Note: NAFI Board Chair Emeritus and Board Member Robert Meder wrote "From GA to Osprey," which appeared in the September/October 2023 issue of Mentor.

Bob,

I'm working my way through my aviation pile of magazines today and just finished reading your article, "From GA to Osprey." I don't usually provide feedback to things I read, but yours triggered something in me. I found it very well written, inspiring, and emotional. I had nothing to do with the events, and it brought a tear to my eye while reading it.

Well done!

Mark Voigt

Good Review

Eds. Note: Greg Wilson wrote "Mastering Decision-Making," which appeared in the November/December 2023 issue of Mentor.

Beth,

Thanks for adding the PAVE checklist to my article. That was a nice touch. And I really like that the Boots article about hazardous attitudes was right after mine. That was a nice touch as well. I just finished reviewing the issue, and it was very good. I really liked reading about the Air Force pilot that flew with Gen. Yeager in the On Your Wing column.

Thanks,

Greg Wilson

Pleased Reader

Mentor magazine is awesome. Wow, what an interesting mix of stories by and for members. I love the back page focus, too. You keep thinking up fresh ideas and member involvement.

Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D.
author of 101 Trailblazing Women of Air and Space: Aviators and Astronauts

New Mnemonic

I read with interest the Position Report "Asking Questions" in the November/December 2023 issue of *Mentor*. As noted, rote memory is a steppingstone in

YOUR FEEDBACK

the laws of learning with mnemonics and acronyms being a key part of pilot training. Afterall, who doesn't remember and/or use acronyms like AV1ATES or ATOMATO FLAMES? In some cases, rote memory is all that's needed. Take for example, AV1ATES — each of the letters or number represents a yes or no response to ensure FAA compliance before flight.

A – Annual inspection – Yes/No
V – VOR check within the past 30 days (for IFR) – Yes/No
1 – 100-hour inspection (if aircraft is for hire) – Yes/No
A – Airworthiness directive compliance – Yes/No
T – Transponder 24-month inspection – Yes/No
E – Emergency locator transponder (ELT) 12-month inspection – Yes/No
S – Static source 24-month inspection – Yes/No

While the acronym identifies the items, the compliance is binary. If any single item results in a no, the aircraft is not compliant for flight (mission dependent with respect to IFR and if the aircraft is for hire).

The same could be said for ATOMATO FLAMES with respect to the equipment required on board an aircraft for day VFR flight, as per FAR § 91.205. Each item in the acronym represents compliance, but why? Personally, I always struggled with ATOMATO FLAMES so I broke it down into something more meaningful to me and in the process elevated it above rote memorization. The mnemonic I came up with is SEA-463. Stick with me as I explain. If you notice ATOMATO FLAMES has 13 letters and the "463" part of SEA-463 adds up to 13, but it's the SEA or Safety, Engine, Aviate that elevates this mnemonic above rote memory. Why does the FAA require each of the 13 items for day VFR flight? It can be broken down into safety, engine monitoring, and the ability to aviate. Since I teach students in the C-172, I use SEA-343 and note the differences for retractable landing gear, temperature gauge (for liquid-cooled engines), and manifold pressure gauge.

S – Safety – 1) seat belts, 2) anti-collision (beacon), 3) ELT, and 4) landing gear position indicator (if the aircraft has retractable landing gear)
E – Engine – 1) tachometer (for each engine), 2) fuel gauge, 3) oil temp (for each air-cooled engine), 4) oil pressure (for each engine using a pressure system), 5) temperature gauge (for each liquid-cooled engine), and 6) manifold pressure gauge (for each altitude engine)
A – Aviate – 1) airspeed indicator, 2) altimeter, and 3) magnetic direction indicator (magnetic compass)

Thank you for an outstanding publication. As a recently certificated flight instructor, I've increased my capabilities as a pilot and instructor due to the caliber of articles in *Mentor* magazine.

Regards,
Mark Pierce
Yorktown, Virginia

Remembering Bill David

I've noticed as I've had more birthdays that I find myself reading the obituaries of people I know. It happened again recently when I heard that another friend had died.

He was more than a pilot; he was an aviator, a retired airline pilot, a highly experienced flight instructor, and a builder of aircraft. He was a strong and passionate proselytizer of the "religion" of aviation, believed fervently in lowering barriers for people to get involved in flying, and was one of the warmest, friendliest, most generous people I've ever known. He loved words and learning about where they came from. He was a great storyteller and even loved listening to other people's stories. I've been blessed to have met his wife and his children, and nothing tells you more about a person than the people they love. In short, he was a mensch.

When he first introduced himself to me in an Ohio airport lounge, he stuck out his hand and said, "Hello, I'm Bill David. You know you should never trust a man with two first names." We both laughed, and I trusted him ever since.

The occasion of our meeting and subsequent relationship

made me think he saw the opportunity to make a new friend and expand aviation — which he saw as a huge far-flung family — in every circumstance. How our meeting occurred illustrates the truth of his belief that aviation is a family full of friends you haven't yet met.

In May 2006 I was working in the publications department at EAA headquarters in Oshkosh and enjoying my sixth year of owning my own airplane, a 1963 Piper Cherokee STC'd with a 160-hp engine — N3617K. A colleague had a family emergency back east and asked to borrow my plane to get himself there. On his way back to Wisconsin he ran into weather beyond 17K's capability and left the plane at TDZ, Toledo Executive Airport, in Millbury, Ohio, and took a rental car to finish his trip.

Sometime later I went down to Ohio to retrieve the airplane and was dismayed to discover that the little window next to the left seat had been left open, and 17K's interior had been soaked by the storms that kept her there. Her seats and carpets were squishy wet, and she was not in any shape to be flown home.

The FBO was as gracious and professional as any pilot could ask, and towed her into a hangar, set up big fans to dry her out, and set folks to work both cleaning her interior and performing a mechanical inspection. Although I was assured all would be well, I would have to spend the night. Depressed and unhappy, I realized I needed at least coffee, if not doughnuts.

I wandered over to the lounge, obtained the caffeine and carbohydrates, sat down on a nice couch, and as if by magic, this Bill David fellow showed up. I later learned that he was the newsletter editor of EAA Chapter 582, based there, and apparently a sort of "mayor" of the airport.

All these years later I can still remember the joy Bill emanated as he took me under his wing. He whisked me off to a luncheon with various interesting airport folks and EAAers, followed by a similar dinner, a return to the hangar to check on 17K that evening, and then a ride to a nearby motel after I refused his gracious offer to come to his home where a bed was available and I could meet his wife and daughters. A ride back to the airport the next morning completes the picture.

We said goodbye that morning, and for my entire five-something-hour flight home west around Chicago's airspace and then north to Wisconsin, all I could think about was having been befriended by a guy with two first names.

Bill called me that evening to make sure I was home safe. We started talking about writing and about books and about our wives and children and dogs. His EAA chapter later invited me down in my capacity as EAA-editor-guy to make a dinner speech. Bill and a friend of his flew up to Wisconsin in a light twin to get me, and he made sure I got some right seat time on the trip. That visit created the opportunity to meet Bill's amazing wife, Brigitte, and their daughters.

Friendship grew. We saw each other at Oshkosh and during various trips around the country. I left EAA and came to NAFI to help with its words. Bill wrote some articles for *Mentor* and for other aviation magazines, and I am as proud of having encouraged him in that as if he was one of my own children.

William "Bill" Joseph David died on October 31, 2023, when the Cherokee Six he and his old friend and fellow CFI Hal Durbin were flying in Ohio crashed, killing them both. He was 70 years old. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Brigitte; three daughters, Kristina, Kasandra, and Katelynn; and two grandsons, William "Billy" and Benjamin.

He learned to fly, soloing at 16, in my home state of New Jersey, and the Garden State connection solidified our relationship. He retired from American Airlines as a captain, taught people to fly whenever anyone asked, flew a Pietenpol, and founded the Toledo Buzzards Light Sport Aircraft Club, which provided affordable lessons to its members and fulfilled his dream of making flying accessible to everyone.

If I was writing on paper (as we geezers used to do), to publicly say goodbye to a friend, the paper would be wet. The tears began when I heard Bill's voice in my head as I was about to type something about "Flying West." I can hear him saying that if we looked that up, we'd see a reference in the Oxford English Dictionary about the theory that the phrase is based on Celtic traditions of the west as the home of the dead. And that some Native Americans believe the spirits of good hunters and of the brave leave us here to go west to a country where game and fish is abundant, and war is unknown.

I have not been a religious person since my early teens. I may have asked too often, tearfully, about where — after life — goes the comfort of sleeping near as you can be to the one you love. Or the touch of their hand in the dark of night. Or your memories of the faces of your children.

I will say this; if the west is heaven, he is there. He's there shaking hands and finding ways to help. If anyone can make angels fly even better, it's Bill David.

I smiled when I read in Bill's obituary that he had a special relationship with every dog he ever met. You can bet he's petting all the dogs he finds there.

David Hipschman
NAFI Editor Emeritus
Damariscotta, Maine

Learning the Lessons

Beth Stanton, NAFI Director of Publications and Editor

"Lessons are only learned when we change behavior," Richard McSpadden once said.[1] "Unless we change behavior, it's simply a lesson observed." Last year, fatal accidents with flight instructors onboard shook the aviation community. Individuals with decades of teaching experience — McSpadden, executive director of the AOPA Air Safety Institute and former Thunderbirds commander; Alaskan aviation legend Jim Tweto of Discovery Channel's Flying Wild Alaska; and Bill David, beautifully eulogized by David Hipschman on page 6 of this issue — all dead in plane crashes. With bewilderment and shock, we ask, "How? Why?"

We believe that years of experience and safety-conscious behavior mitigates the risks inherent in flying. To some degree this is true. However, the laws of gravity and physics apply equally to everyone. The fluke of an instant can snuff out even the most experienced aviator.

A few months ago, when a new CFI, who exhibited hazardous attitudes, and his student died in a crash, it somehow seemed "easier" to comprehend. The disbelief and outrage resulting from this training accident reverberated through the flight instruction community. Aviation journalist and CFI Meg Godlewski wrote a powerful opinion piece, "Death by Time Builder," in *FLYING Magazine*'s e-newsletter. You can read it at *www.flyingmag.com/death-by-time-builder*.

Josh Flowers, CFI and creator of the Aviation101 YouTube channel with 300,000 subscribers, posted an intense, carefully worded video, "Death by Flight Instructor: Advice for Students, Pilots, and Instructors." You can watch it at *www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdvkR0o0VZA*. At the time of this writing in early December 2023, this video had amassed 420,000 views and 2,500 comments. According to Flowers, it has been shared across the world. He reports it has made the rounds in the flight and training departments of several large flight schools and university flight programs. It has been translated into Russian and shared on the Мама, я опять летал! (Mom, I Was Flying Again!) podcast.

An article, "When Instructors Crash: Learning from tragedy," based on this video is on page 20. Commentary from NAFI board members and officers is included. I was moved by NAFI Board Chair Karen Kalishek's deeply compassionate statement: "The CFI involved will not have an opportunity to learn from his mistakes, but we can help to prevent similar tragedies."

The November/December 2023 issue of *Mentor* included an article about hazardous attitudes written

Scan to see Flowers' video on YouTube.

by Boots. He expressed frustration with the seeming lack of options pilots have when observing hazardous attitudes in others. "When these types of hazardous attitudes are exhibited by experienced pilots and CFIs and we see them directly, the question again is: What are we supposed to do? It seems that ignoring them unless it's our own student is the only answer. Not a good situation in my opinion," Boots wrote.

It's not a good situation, but there is always an opportunity to shift the paradigm. This particular accident with instructor-aboard scenario is sparking discussions encouraging people to call out red flag behavior and taking a hard look at the quality control challenges in an industry that is scrambling to make more pilots. McSpadden said: "We owe it to the pilots who've perished and their families who endure the painful analysis to learn as much as we can from these tragedies and change our behavior in response."[1]

[1] "Analyzing Pilot Error: It Shouldn't Matter, But It Does," *AOPA Pilot*, June 1, 2022

Read *Mentor* in Digital

This issue of *Mentor* magazine marks the inaugural edition available in an interactive digital format. It may be read on your phone, tablet, or computer, and allows NAFI members to link directly to online resources. An intuitive toolbar guides readers easily through the digital content. To access the digital edition of *Mentor*, an email will be sent announcing when the new issue is ready. It is also available at the NAFI website.

NAFI Board Member Gregory Feith Receives McDonald Award

The 2023 National Aeronautic Association McDonald award honorees are Gregory Feith, Wilson Leach, Jim Richmond, and Robert Stangarone. The Wesley L. McDonald Distinguished Statesman and Stateswoman of Aviation Award was established in 1954. The annual award honors outstanding living Americans who, through their efforts over an extended period of years, have made significant contributions to aeronautics and reflected credit upon America and themselves.

Feith is an aviation safety expert and advocate who encourages best practices and aviation safety awareness, especially for CFIs. He is a well-respected and recognized leader in the instructor community. NAFI congratulates Feith for this recognition of his significant contribution to aviation safety.

NAFI NEWS

Support the NAFI Annual Fund

Please give now to the NAFI Annual Fund. NAFI has introduced a new fundraising portal to help streamline the process of receiving donations from our supporters. In addition to income from membership dues and sponsorships, donations are an integral part of our financial planning. Your gift will ensure continued access to NAFI's educational programs and advocacy work on behalf of flight instructors.

Flight instructors have both an immediate and lasting effect on aviation safety and the continued growth of our industry. Instruction is so much more than teaching skills. CFIs are responsible for setting a good example, teaching responsibility, managing risk and safety, and supporting continuous improvement. A good instructor also understands that learning to fly offers deep emotional satisfaction. Who can forget the excitement of first taking the flight controls?

Flight instruction is a big job. That's why NAFI has supported this vitally important part of the aviation community since 1967. NAFI seeks to mentor, educate, and advocate for those in our profession by offering the tools and programs you need to give the very best to your clients.

We know you appreciate valuable content such as Mentor*LIVE*, the Professional Development Program, *Mentor* magazine, *eMentor* newsletter, social media platforms, and more. These programs require financial support from partners like you.

You will begin seeing a new blue DONATE button on NAFI's website as well as other communications from NAFI. Your philanthropic support helps us promote aviation education and safety. You can donate at *tinyurl.com/NAFIAnnualFund*. Thank you for making a gift today.

NAFI Attending Spring Conferences

FSANA SM
Flight School Association of North America

February 21-23, 2024
Flight School Association of North America (FSANA) 15th Annual International Flight School Operators Conference and Trade Show
Las Vegas, Nevada
FSANA.com

REDBIRD FLIGHT SIMULATIONS

March 5-6, 2024
Redbird Migration 2024
Lone Star Flight Museum
Houston, Texas
RedbirdFlight.com

SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo

April 9-14, 2024
SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo
Lakeland, Florida
FlySNF.org

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK
bstanton@nafinet.org

2024 Flight Instructor Hall of Fame Nominations Open

Nominations for inductees in the 2024 Flight Instructor Hall of Fame are now open. The deadline for submission of nominations is April 30, 2024.

The Flight Instructor Hall of Fame award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to aviation education and flight instruction that reflect credit to themselves and their profession. It highlights the vital role flight instructors play as a foundation for the safety of the entire national air transportation system. Each year, one or more deserving flight instructors become inductees and are honored with a ceremony at that year's EAA AirVenture Oshkosh.

NAFI sponsors and administers the award, but please note that this award is available to all eligible instructors. Retired flight instructors and others who meet the eligibility can become inductees.

Once eligibility is established, the following list determines the selection criteria: Candidates will be judged on their contributions to aviation and their sustained accomplishments toward aviation education. For example:

- Enhancement of aviation safety.
- Development of effective/ innovative teaching techniques.
- Advancement of professional standards.
- Development of significant technical support.
- Achievement of professional excellence.
- Creation of innovative instructional materials.
- Partnering on projects with the FAA and/or industry.
- Being a role model for and a mentor to other aviation educators.

The nominations go to a panel of judges who are independent individuals from diverse backgrounds who name the inductee(s). No NAFI staff or board members take part in the judging process.

For complete information on the Flight Instructor Hall of Fame and instructions on how to submit a nomination, visit *www.nafinet.org/flight-instructor-hall-of-fame.*

New Special Interest Group (SIG)

Flight Simulator Instructors Group

Wednesday, January 10th at 7:00 PM ET

(This group meets the second Wednesday of every month)

Group Leader: Gabriel Accascina

Simulator Instructors

For those interested in all things Flight Simulators (FTD/AATD/ATD) and home computer-based simulator instruction. Join us for a community discussion to share ideas on topics ranging from instructional techniques, best practices, how to build your own setup, or anything the group suggests. Share stories, learn trade secrets, and build camaraderie.

MASTER CFIs

ABOUT THE NAFI MASTER INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM

The NAFI Master Flight Instructor Accreditation is earned by aviation educators based upon a system of advanced professional standards and peer review. The accreditation identifies and publicly recognizes those teachers of flight who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to excellence, professional growth, and service to the aviation community. The NAFI Master Instructor accreditation is for two years and may be used to renew an FAA flight instructor certificate. Applicants must have been a CFI for two years and have given 1,000 hours of flight instruction. In addition, candidates must meet and document activity in four NAFI Master Instructor categories (Instructor, Educator, Service to the Aviation Community, and Professional Activity).

Members of the National Association of Flight Instructors work as independent instructors, at flight schools, universities, FBOs, corporate flight departments, and in the military. Since 1967, NAFI and its members, who teach in 30 countries, are dedicated to increasing and maintaining the professionalism of flight instruction. NAFI members influence active pilots daily: students working to become pilots, current pilots training to advance their skills with new ratings or certificates, and pilots who seek to improve their skills with recurrent training. NAFI also serves as an advocate with industry and government as a voice for flight instruction. NAFI helps shape the current and future direction of flight training. For more information about NAFI or the NAFI Master Instructor program, call *866-806-6156* or visit *www.nafinet.org.*


Elayne Humphrey

ELAYNE HUMPHREY
Earns NAFI Master Instructor Accreditation

The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Elayne Humphrey has earned accreditation as a NAFI Master Flight Instructor.

Humphrey's love of aviation started when she was inspired to become an astronaut. She grew up in the Washington, D.C., area watching airplanes take off from Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National

Airport and wished she was on those airplanes. As a teen, the luxury of flight lessons was not a possibility, so she postponed her dream. After graduating with a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and a master's degree in marketing research from the University of Texas at Arlington, she got married, raised two kids, and had her own website design business. During the 14 years she was homeschooling her kids, she never gave up the hope of flying one day. Finally on May 2, 2018, after taking her first flight lesson, she knew she had found the life path she was longing for — combining her passion to teach and her desire to fly.

In the past five years, Humphrey has gone from student pilot to CFI, CFII, MEI, and earning a seaplane rating — a highlight of her flying time thus far. She won the Ladies in Flight Training scholarship and trained in floatplanes in Talkeetna, Alaska. This led to a great relationship with Alaska Floats & Skis at AK8 where she created and leads a yearly CFI intensive course.

Humphrey's goal is to inspire others to know that they can do "it" — whatever "it" is for them. At every stage of flight training, she has sought to help people have confidence to pursue their dreams. Each new adventure has opened more possibilities for her to give back to the aviation community. To inspire others, during the month of May for the anniversary of her first lesson, she gives away free lessons.

Her free time is spent reading about and watching aviation-related or instructor-related videos and challenging herself to learn new techniques and knowledge to make her a better pilot, instructor, and mentor. When she is not flying, she loves being outdoors, taking care of her plants, golfing, and traveling with family and friends.

NAOYA "TAMA" TAMANAHA

Earns Third NAFI Master Instructor Accreditation

The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Naoya "Tama" Tamanaha has earned accreditation as a NAFI Master Flight Instructor. This is Tamanaha's third NAFI Master Accreditation.

Tamanaha has been an active CFI for more than 31 years, including 19 years at the USAF Flight Training Center in Japan. He has mentored more than 1,000 pilots, from teenagers to retirees, with aviation goals varying from private to professional and military-aspiring pilots. He was an FAA designated pilot examiner from 2000 to 2013 and has issued more than 200 FAA pilot certificates and ratings.

He has been a FAASTeam representative for more than 23 years, serving local communities including high schools, colleges, aviation organizations, and Coast Guard, on and off bases in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. He has a weekly radio show in Japan, which promotes aviation to the nonaviation community.


Naoya "Tama" Tamanaha

Tamanaha's passion and skills in aviation earned him a U.S. immigration visa. His next mission is to increase the number of Master Instructors who can contribute to the aviation community.

Tamanaha currently works for AirSmart Aviation Academy as a chief flight instructor specializing in the pathway program to AirSmart first officer position. He also flies as a PC-12 captain for AirSmart.

MASTER CFIs


Gene Peterson


Asaf Shmulevich

GENE PETERSON

Earns Third NAFI Master Instructor Accreditation

The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Gene Peterson has earned accreditation as a NAFI Master Flight Instructor. This is Peterson's third NAFI Master Accreditation.

At age 69 and with more than 41,000 hours of flying, Peterson continues instructing and flying charter for a Part 135 business doing organ transplant work. His wife is a flight attendant, two of his sons are pilots with Delta Air Lines, and the third holds a private pilot certificate and is a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

ASAF SHMULEVICH

Earns NAFI Associate Master Instructor Accreditation

The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Asaf Shmulevich has earned accreditation as a NAFI Associate Master Flight Instructor.

Shmulevich grew up in Israel and previously served in the Israel Defense Forces. Being around Air Force pilots and personnel triggered his interest in aviation.

In 2015, Shmulevich started working as a flight attendant for a major airline in Israel and was eventually promoted to business and first-class flight attendant in charge of passenger safety.

During layovers in the United States, Shmulevich began pilot training and realized he wanted to do that for the rest of his life.

Shmulevich moved to Maryland in February 2020 to pursue his aviation goals, earning his pilot ratings and then flight instructor certificate. He began to mentor new CFIs, became a safety director, and is now an FAA Safety Team representative.

Currently Shmulevich is an FAA Gold Seal instructor, AGI, CFII, MEI, and works as a charter pilot on a PC-12.

KENNETH SOLOSKY

Earns NAFI Master Ground Instructor Accreditation

The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Kenneth Solosky has earned accreditation as a NAFI Master Ground Instructor.

Solosky began learning to fly in 1988 and earned his private, instrument, commercial airplane, and ATP ratings at Farmingdale's Republic Airport.

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK
bstanton@nafinet.org


Kenneth Solosky

Originally from Mineola, New York, Solosky retired from the New York City Police Department Aviation Unit as a lieutenant/chief pilot in 2007. He was chief pilot and helped lead the aviation unit during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Upon retirement, he served as the chief pilot for the Newark, New Jersey, police department for three years.

Currently, Solosky is an ATP-airplane and -helicopter, CFI-helicopter, advanced ground instructor, instrument ground instructor, and sUAS Part 107 (drone) pilot. He teaches at the Airborne Public Safety Association's annual conference and has taught domestically and internationally on aviation-related topics. He is a regular contributor to the Airborne Public Safety Association's magazine *Air Beat*.

Solosky is a ground instructor for Nassau Flyers and teaches its private and instrument ground school courses. Additionally, Solosky is associate professor of aviation at the State University of New York at Farmingdale and teaches undergraduate aviation courses.

Solosky serves as an FAA Safety Team representative for the Farmingdale FSDO. He is currently employed by Northwell Health, and among his varied duties is being chief pilot for its sUAS program. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's University in public administration and a Master of Arts degree in criminal justice from City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Solosky currently lives in Mineola, New York, with his wife, Susan, and their two sons, Kenneth and Patrick.

The Right Seat

Your questions answered by industry experts

By Jen Watson, Dana McIlwain, Josh Watson

Question

I heard a rumor that my student wants to change to another instructor. I really thought we were getting along well. What do I do? How can I keep my student?

Answer

Dana: Such a great question and such a tough situation. The relationship we build with our students can make a large impact on our life — either positive or negative. The same can be true for your student. Think back, do you have any instructors you will never forget? Do you have any instructors you wish you could forget? Have you forgotten any?

Inter-cockpit relationships are imperative for successful flights and successful learning. The truth is, not everyone is compatible, regardless of how well you get along outside of the aircraft, and that is perfectly fine. In the training environment, the student must be able to trust the instructor. This encompasses trust for safety and trust for knowledge. If at any time that trust is compromised, the teaching and learning environment is compromised with it.

Inter-cockpit relationships are imperative for successful flights and successful learning. The truth is, not everyone is compatible, regardless of how well you get along outside of the aircraft, and that is perfectly fine.

If you are concerned about your student wanting to change to another instructor:

1. Realize the training journey is for your student, not for you. The situation does not need to be made personal. Rather, look at it as a professional decision. Your responsibility, as an instructor, is to foster the best learning experience for your students — even if that means moving them to another instructor.
2. Discuss it with your student. Don't be emotional — it's not personal. In a professional, non-threatening way, try to determine how your student is feeling about training with you. You may ask what your student likes and dislikes from various lessons. Ensure you fully understand their goals and fears so you can give them the best training possible. Every student learns in a different way just as every instructor teaches in a different way. It is entirely possible your teaching methods do not align perfectly with your student's learning process. Use this conversation as a learning and growth experience for you as an instructor. Attempting to change the way you teach could result in your instructing seeming disingenuous and still not work well.
3. Suggest the student take a lesson or two with another instructor and then meet back up later to discuss how it went. Work with the other instructor to see how the student did. This should be a team effort to get your student properly placed. If you are aware of which instructor the student wants to work with, that should be the instructor you suggest. If you are not, pick someone whose personality you think most closely resembles your student's needs. Don't forget to discuss your plans with the other instructor first. Make this a positive experience for your student. It's not an easy task for a student to tell their instructor they wish to work with someone else. Give them freedom to try working with someone else. One scenario is that your student finds the perfect match and remembers how understanding and helpful you were in that matchup.

In another scenario, your student realizes they were properly matched in the first place, and you both can go on knowing your student has full trust in you.

Question

Does my aircraft need an airplane flight manual to be airworthy?

Answer

Josh: The answer is yes, and sometimes no. This is not a trick question, but rather one that students will ask, and it is important to have a complete answer for them. If in doubt, go to the FARs, and in this case, there are a few sections that give us guidance.

§91.9(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, no person may operate a civil aircraft without complying with the operating limitations specified in the approved Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual, markings, and placards, or as otherwise prescribed by the certificating authority of the country of registry.

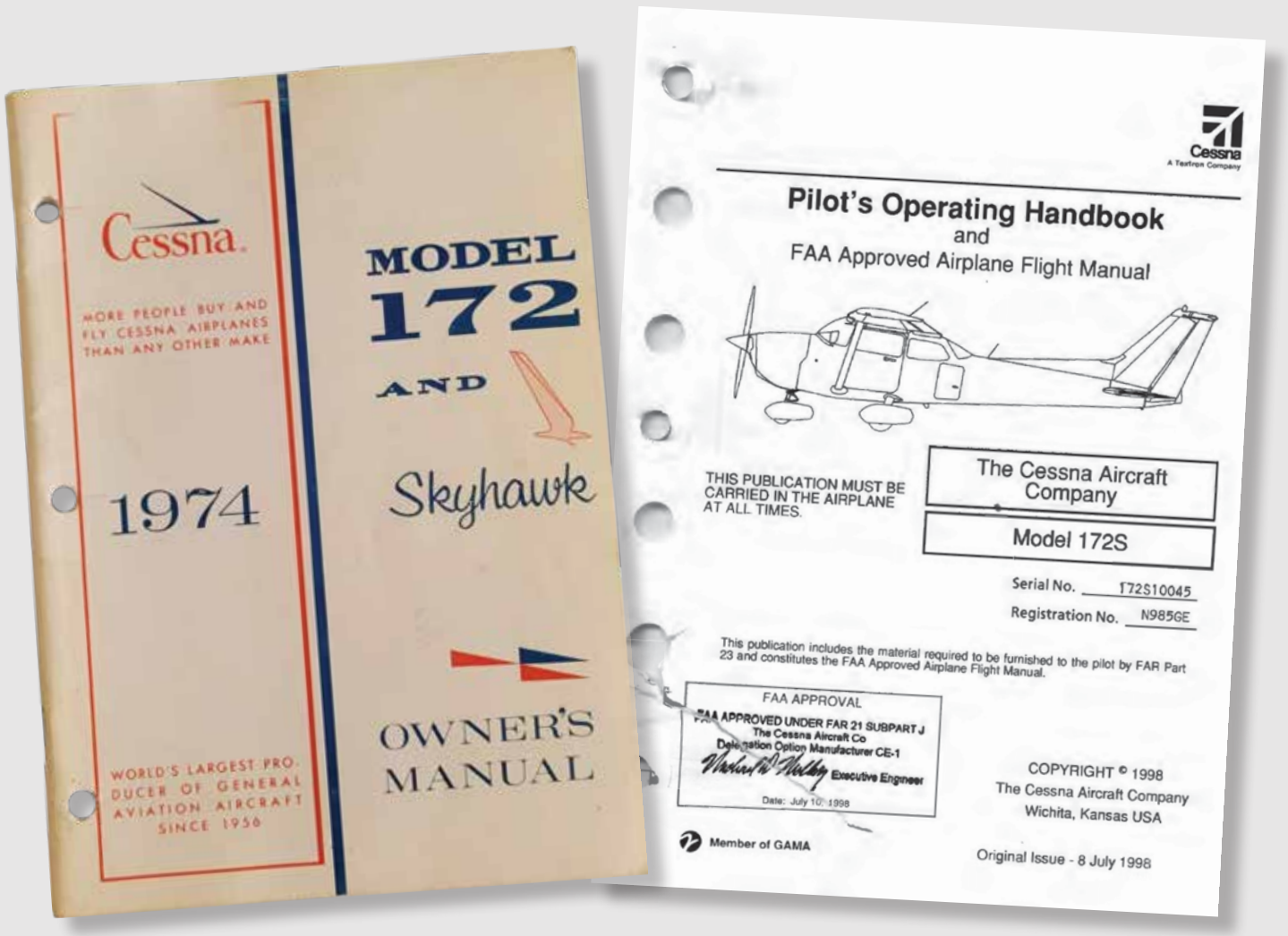
This explains that we need a flight manual and further in the regulation it states:

§91.9(b)(1) For which an Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual is required by §21.5 of this chapter unless there is available in the aircraft a current, approved Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual or the manual provided for in §121.141(b).

We must follow to §21.5 to see if the airplane flight manual is required for our aircraft.

§21.5(a) With each airplane or rotorcraft not type certificated with an Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual and having no flight time before March 1, 1979, the holder of a type certificate (including amended or supplemental type certificates) or the licensee of a type certificate must make available to the owner at the time of delivery of the aircraft a current approved Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual.

§21.5 states that if our aircraft was born after March 1, 1979, it is required to have an aircraft flight manual (AFM). This is why a 172P has an AFM and a 172M has a pilot's operating handbook (POH). When we are going through AROW and we get to O, this distinction becomes important. We want to make sure that our operating limitations are present. With experimental aircraft it is quite easy because when a special airworthiness certificate is issued, it will be accompanied by operating limitations from the FAA. With certified aircraft it is much more dependent upon how the aircraft was certified. Back to our example, the 172M has a POH for the make and model as well as placards and markings.



The 172P was born after March 1, 1979, and so the AFM is required along with the placards and markings. This manual is unique to the aircraft and must have the aircraft serial number on it. These books contain much greater detail about the aircraft.

Armed with a few FARs, we can get clear answers to the student.

Question

I recently took over a student who soloed in a tailwheel aircraft, but their former CFI did not give them a tailwheel endorsement. Do they need §61.31(i) to solo? If so, what happens to all their solo hours?

Answer

Jen: Once upon a time I tried earning my scuba diving certificate in Monterey Bay. I was fine, keeping my claustrophobia tightly under control, until the last day. The wind kicked up, whipping the ocean into a mass of churning sand. Visibility was minimal, and the long stalks of kelp we were navigating through danced about in the waves. Their swaying, cloying motion unraveled the tenuous grip I held on my fear. Certain they were out to trap me in their endless maze, I lost the battle of nerves and swam rapidly toward the surface.

I remember being lost in the weeds as a new instructor, and picking my way through endorsements reminded me of that tall kelp forest — murky, distorted, hard to find a clear path, danger lurking everywhere, and a high price that could be extracted for the smallest mistake. Based on the frequency I'm asked about endorsements, I'm not the only one who has battled their deceptiveness.

Do they need §61.31(i) for solo? I've heard the argument that because the make/model is specified in §61.87(n), they can solo any aircraft without anything further needed. My school has been teaching in tailwheel aircraft since 1960, and long ago this logic was accepted. Then along came a request for the FAA to clarify. Well, ask and ye shall receive, but be careful what you wish for.

In a Letter of Interpretation to Mr. Grayson, issued January 4, 2010, the FAA's chief counsel stated the following:

Based on the frequency I'm asked about endorsements, I'm not the only one who has battled their deceptiveness.

Under the plain language of the regulation, the additional training requirements specified in §61.31(e) through (j) are not ratings limitations. The ratings limitations in §61.31 are contained in paragraphs (c) and (d) of that section. As such, because a pilot must be properly rated in the aircraft and properly rated and authorized to conduct the flight in order to act as pilot in command, student pilots and checkride candidates are required to comply with the additional training requirements and hold the appropriate endorsements prior to acting as pilot in command of the aircraft designated in §61.31(e) through (j).

So, yes, in addition to the normal solo endorsements, a solo student absolutely needs a tailwheel (or complex/high-performance) endorsement and the training specified for its issuance to solo in a tailwheel aircraft.

Great, but now what happens if they were soloing without the endorsement? Unfortunately for the student, any DPE I know will not allow those hours to count since they were ill-gotten gains. The same is true if they flew solo past their 90-day expiration. The DPE cannot certify hours that weren't legally accrued.

These are unfortunate situations I've seen happen too many times, like a DPE discounting cross-country time because the student did a few extra landings at one of the airports (and thus wasn't flying cross-country for a portion of the time logged) or not allowing the night time to count because the student was under a hood (aka double-dipping).

There are steps instructors can take to mitigate many of the errors that could cost your student hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars.

- If you are a new CFI, ask a senior CFI or your chief to review your endorsements, especially if it's for a unique situation like a glider pilot adding ASEL to their private certificate. Lots of kelp to work through on that one!
- If you are good at research, FAA Letters of Interpretation offer loads of straightforward answers to help decipher many gray areas.
- Contact your FSDO if you still aren't sure and the advice you are being given from others is not consistent.

Pro tip: To make it easy for your student to know when their 90 days is up, ask Siri, "What date is 90 days from [the date you gave the solo endorsement]," and then list that on the endorsement and/or in their calendar with an alert.

Have a question?
Email rightseat@nafinet.org

Jen *and* ***Josh Watson*** *are co-owners of a flight school in San Jose, California. Jen Watson holds certificates for ATP AMEL, CPL ASEL and ASES, CFI, CFII, MEI, and AGI. She is an FAA Gold Seal flight instructor and two-time NAFI Master Flight Instructor. Josh Watson is an A&P mechanic with inspection authorization. He earned his instrument rating and is pursuing a commercial pilot certificate with the eventual goal of becoming a CFI.* ***Dana McIlwain*** *earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees in flight training and worked as an academic director for a Part 141 school. She has been a flight instructor since 2015.*

Precautionary Landings

Know when to make the call

By Barry Schiff

Author Barry Schiff in 1956 at age 18 as a newly minted CFI. He's been an active CFI ever since.

Eds. Note: This article first appeared in the Proficient Pilot column in* AOPA Pilot *magazine.

For the purpose of this discussion, landings fall into three categories. First is the normal landing. Next is the forced landing, when a pilot has no option other than to reconnect with Earth, usually because of total power loss. The precautionary landing is last. This is a premeditated landing — *on or off an airport* — when continued flight is possible but inadvisable.

According to this definition (which I confess is of my own making), lightplane pilots have an option not available to those who fly heavy iron. An off-airport landing often can be made safely in a small airplane but is not a viable option for those who fly jetliners.

There are innumerable occasions when a pilot might decide that a precautionary landing is safer than continued flight. The most obvious is when fuel is in critically short supply. Numerous pilots annually risk their lives and those of their passengers by not considering this option when uncertain of the amount of remaining fuel. Instead, they overfly one safe haven after another (including airports) until their anxiety is answered with deafening silence. They fail to consider that a discretionary, off-airport landing on a field of their choosing is far preferable and safer than a forced landing without power.

The same strategy can serve as a valuable safety valve when in marginal weather conditions. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, "Any pilot who becomes trapped in weather and does not give serious thought to the feasibility of a precautionary landing *on or off an airport* (emphasis mine) often accepts the most dangerous alternative: continued flight."

There are, of course, many other circumstances that could justify a precautionary landing. These include:

- Partial incapacitation of the pilot, especially when worsening.
- Partial power loss.
- Any worsening engine difficulty (in single-engine airplanes).
- Serious airframe/powerplant vibration.
- Impending nightfall when the pilot is untrained and the aircraft is inadequately equipped.
- An oil leak of significant magnitude.
- Structural damage such as a serious bird strike, a broken or cracked windshield, hail damage, strut failure, and so forth.
- An indication of low oil pressure, excessive and uncorrectable cylinder head temperatures, or abnormally low fuel pressure. (An alarming indication by a single gauge may be insufficient cause for emergency action unless there is an additional indication of abnormality; the problem could be a faulty instrument.)
- Any worsening and threatening system difficulty (such as electrical fire and/or smoke) or flight control problem.

In other words, a precautionary landing is a viable option whenever continued flight is likely to become more hazardous. Unfortunately, it is seldom discussed during training because it is not a maneuver. Rather, it is a state of mind. It is a willingness to consider this alternative when conditions warrant.

Intentional off-airport landings are rare because pilots are not mentally prepared to use this option to escape worsening conditions. Many situations that justify such a strategy often develop into the drama of a forced landing (or worse) under more challenging circumstances because pilots are reluctant to correctly evaluate and acknowledge their status.

The flip side of this coin is that off-airport operations are not without hazard. They do impose a risk of damage and injury. A pilot who lands in a field, totals the airplane, and later learns that he did have enough fuel to reach his goal will be hard-pressed for an explanation. Conversely, he might not have had enough fuel.

So, when is a precautionary landing advisable? There is no definitive answer; it is a judgment call. Consider, however, that a planned, precautionary landing is almost always survivable, whereas the same cannot be said about forced landings, collisions with terrain, and untimely descents caused by other emergencies. It ultimately boils down to determining how much risk a pilot is willing to accept.

Opting for an off-airport landing is a difficult decision. But we must acknowledge that there are times when the alternative, continued flight, is potentially more dangerous. This is when a pilot should weigh the variables and decide upon a course of action that offers the greatest probability of survival before the passage of time and distance eclipse the option. Such a pilot is the captain of his fate, not the victim.

Writer and former TWA captain Barry Schiff has flown 363 types of aircraft in more than 60 years. Schiff's articles have appeared in 116 different military and civil aviation publications. He is chairman of the AOPA Foundation Legacy Society.

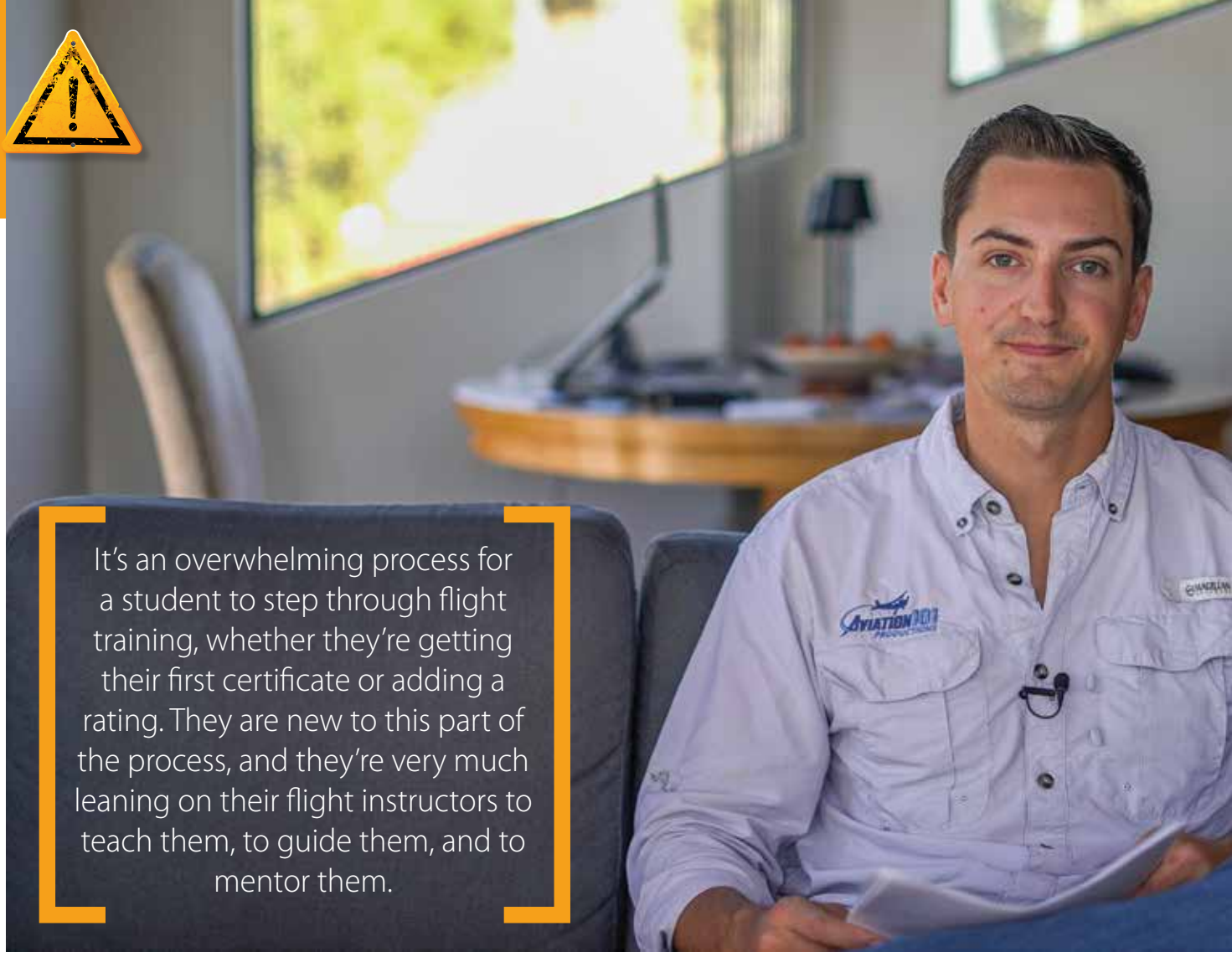
WHEN INSTRUCTORS CRASH

Learning from tragedy

By Josh Flowers

Eds. Note: The following article is based on a video Josh Flowers posted to his Aviation101 YouTube channel November 1, 2023.

I'm a pilot and flight instructor. I have a burning passion for aviation and just as much of a passion for filmmaking. I started making aviation YouTube videos in 2010, and as I've grown up and matured alongside my content, I've made it my mission to showcase safe practices while sharing the beauty this world has to offer through the lens of a camera.



It's an overwhelming process for a student to step through flight training, whether they're getting their first certificate or adding a rating. They are new to this part of the process, and they're very much leaning on their flight instructors to teach them, to guide them, and to mentor them.

I make a firm point not to drift from that mission while creating content. I'm not going to drift into the realm of accident reports and debriefs. There are channels that do that respectfully and do it well. I watch those people, I learn from their videos, but I don't aim to create that content. I don't have the credentials, I don't have the experience, and I don't have the desire.

Showcasing safe practices while sharing the beauty this world has to offer — that's my wheelhouse, and I don't intend to change lanes. But in this one instance, I will divert from my normal format.

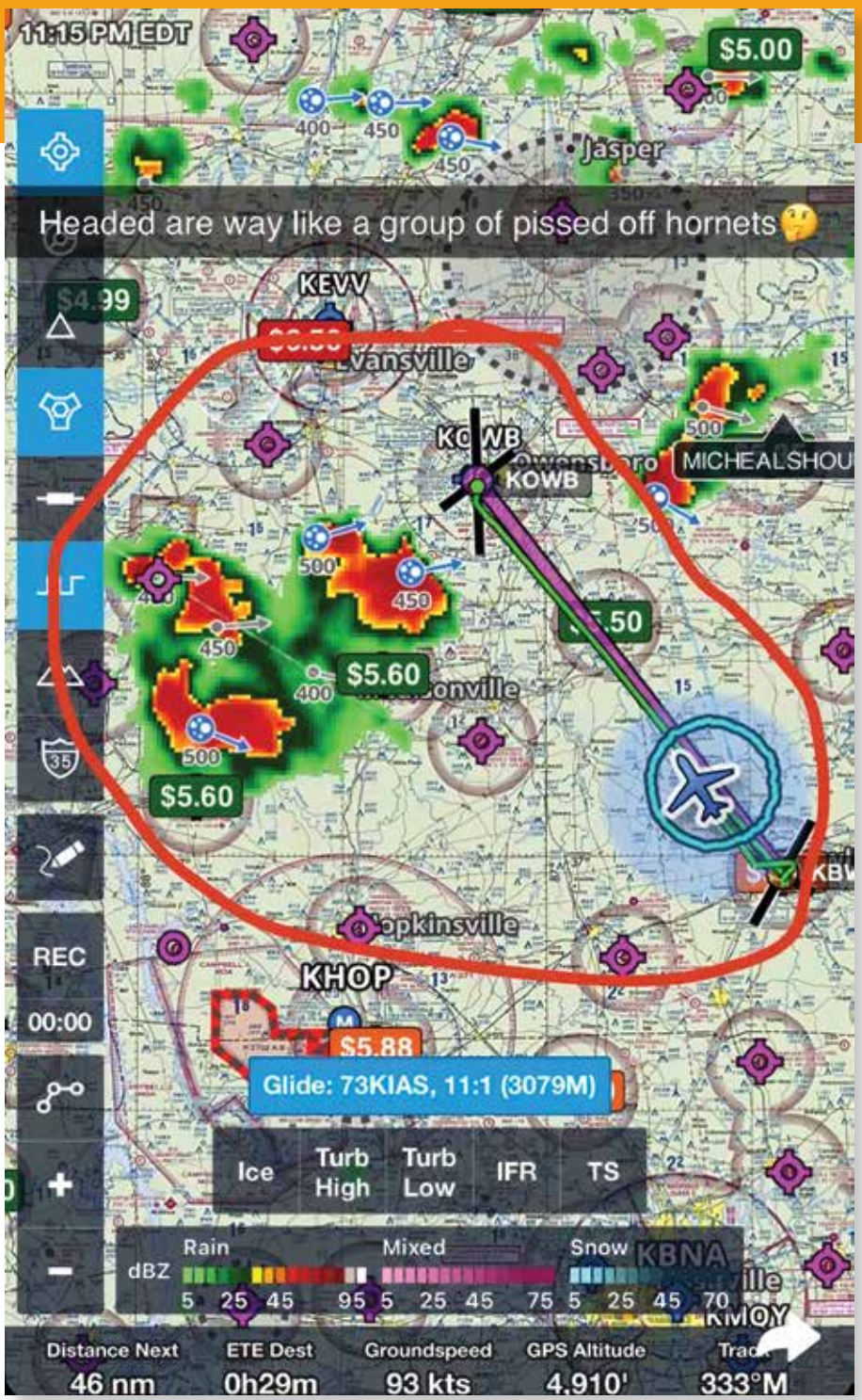
The fatal accident rate in general aviation is unacceptably high compared to other facets of aviation, and we must get serious about becoming safer, more disciplined pilots, more responsible aircraft owners, and more professional flight instructors.

On September 27, 2023, there was a fatal airplane crash. You may ask yourself, which one? It's sad that we have so many in general aviation that we have to ask that question to narrow it down. In Ohio County, Kentucky, a Piper PA-28 came apart in-flight after penetrating a supercell — they flew into a thunderstorm. It was a training flight, a student and a flight instructor on a night cross-country, and both suffered fatal injuries. The aircraft was ripped apart, and the debris was scattered over 25 acres. I'm not talking about this to go off about what I think caused the crash or what could have been done differently. That's the job of the NTSB, and it's very good at that job. At this point the NTSB has already released the preliminary report, and to those of us who are paying attention, it's blatantly obvious what happened. I wrote this to talk about a fatal human factors issue that massively contributed to or, dare I say, caused this accident.

My girlfriend, Chelsea Smith, and I were out traveling, but we heard about the accident almost before news of it broke publicly since it happened in the immediate area where her family is from. We got a couple of texts from friends saying, "Fatal crash in Ohio County, it wasn't me." It's gut-wrenching to hear about this, especially as active aviators. Imagining the sheer terror these individuals felt in the final seconds of that flight is hard to stomach.

Relatively quickly after we heard about the accident, a screen recording surfaced via text to us, and within a few hours, it was already on the news and in the hands of the FAA. The screen recording is of the flight instructor's Snapchat. He was taking photos and videos before and during the accident flight that revealed a dynamic between him and the student pilot that broke my heart, and made my blood absolutely boil.

First is a video of this CFI shaking his head in disappointment. He then flips the camera to show the student slowly going through his preflight inspection



with a checklist and flashlight in his hand. The caption reads: "Me and this student would not get along if he was my full-time student. I've seen faster at the special Olympics."

The next clip is a video of the CFI tapping his fingers on the fuselage as the student appears to be getting the cockpit ready for this night cross-country. The caption reads: "I don't have to be up at 4:30 a.m. tomorrow or nothing. Let's take our sweet ass time and have a conversation instead of getting this 3-hour flight done."

The next clip is of the takeoff, and the caption reads: "This is gonna be a long 3-hour flight with Forrest Gump Jr. Let me tell you this, he is not still the smartest in his class."

Next is a clip showing the cruise portion of the flight, followed by a photo leading us to the next caption, which reads: "1.6 hours into the flight of me giving it to him straight up. Forrest says: 'I don't mind you being hard on me, I know I need it.' Me thinking to myself: 'Did you really think I cared if you minded?' But what I actually said was, 'We're flying planes not driving a car, we can't have these weak areas this far in the game.'"

The next and final slide of this recording is a screenshot of ForeFlight showing a few severe thunderstorms along their route. The caption reads: "Headed *our* way like a group of pissed off hornets."

Not long after that, the aircraft requested an IFR clearance, remarked about severe turbulence with the air traffic controller, and was advised by ATC to make an immediate turn to the east to get away from the weather. Then radar and radio contact were lost.

The NTSB will piece together all the details in due time to give us the full picture

of what happened so we can learn from this. But here's where I'm no longer willing to stay silent.

I do not care about what anyone does in their personal time — what they post on social media or who they hang out with. That's not my business.

However, when you cross into the arena of exercising the privileges of an FAA certificate, that is now my business. It's all our business, and it's the FAA's business. As FAA certificate holders, we all have a duty to represent our industry well and call out unsafe, damaging, unprofessional, and hazardous conduct.

It's an overwhelming process for a student to step through flight training, whether they're getting their first certificate or adding a rating. They are new to this part of the process, and they're very much leaning on their flight instructors to teach them, to guide them, and to mentor them.

If this CFI's Snapchat caption is accurate, it sounds like the student was aware of his weak areas, whatever those may have been, and was humble enough to address that openly. The CFI then mocked his humility.

As part of the Fundamentals of Instructing curriculum that flight instructors are tested on before earning the instructor certificate, we study the Five Hazardous Attitudes in Aviation:

1. Anti-Authority: "Don't tell me."
2. Impulsivity: "Do it quickly."
3. Invulnerability: "It won't happen to me."
4. Macho: "I can do it."
5. Resignation: "What's the use?"

All of these could become severe safety risks in anyone if gone unchecked. That includes you, and that includes me.

This CFI, in this Snapchat instance alone, displayed three out of five:

1. Impulsivity: Rushing the student to just get it done with the "I have better things to do" attitude. When you're on the clock as a flight instructor, your time belongs to mentoring that student, and to the safety of that flight. Period.
2. Invulnerability: Flying into bad weather for the sake of getting back to Owensboro/Daviess County Regional Airport.
3. Macho: "I can do it better" than you. The Forrest Gump Jr. slur.

Positive qualities in an instructor include challenging you, stretching your comfort zone and knowledge a little more in each lesson, and doing so in an encouraging, professional, and respectful manner.

I'm not convinced this instructor knew the hazardous attitudes. He was certainly blissfully ignorant to the fact he was exhibiting them, and honestly probably hadn't laid eyes on them since his Fundamentals of Instructing written exam.

Based on the immature arrogance, lack of sound judgment, and publicly disrespectful attitude, I believe this guy had no business acting as a flight instructor. I know for a fact he went to a fast-track flight school to crank through his certificates and ratings to build time to go to the airlines. That's great — it's a path many choose, and it can be the easiest and most cost-effective way to get your minimum hours for the airline transport pilot certificate. But if you're going to use student pilots as steppingstones to your success, you had better be willing to give that job — and everything it entails — the respect it demands.

There are three pieces of advice I'd like to leave here:

The first one is for the student pilots out there. I'm talking to those of you who are maybe thinking about learning to fly someday, those who are working on their first certificate like private pilot, or those who already have certificates and ratings but are training for the next rating.

- Positive qualities in an instructor include challenging you, stretching your comfort zone and knowledge a little more in each lesson, and doing so in an encouraging, professional, and respectful manner. Feedback and criticism should *always* be constructive, and never destructive.
- If your instructor is chronically beating you down with insults, passive-aggressive jabs, and a disrespectful attitude (i.e., destructive criticism), you are well within your rights to communicate with them about that. Tell them you're not a fan of the way they deliver negative feedback to you, get their thoughts, and have a two-way conversation about it. If they're not receptive and blow you off, go to their boss. If they're the owner of the operation, then ask around and shop for a different school, or switch instructors.
- There are good and bad instructors of all types. It is even better if you can find one who is a career CFI — meaning they are not merely using you as a steppingstone to get hours or money. They instruct because they love it. Those instructors are usually going to give you a better experience in learning to fly, and God, how I wish there were more of them out there.
- You're the customer. You are paying *them*. Research them, Google their name, ask them about their career and experience, ask around to see if they've been fired from other flight schools and if so why. You're trusting your life to this instructor, both when they are in that seat next to you and when you're signed off and flying solo with their taught habits, so get to know them and advocate for yourself if you have to.

The second piece of advice is for the pilots out there, whether you're a full-time professional pilot or you fly for fun on the weekends.

- Be the best role model you can be to other pilots and students. Use conservative judgment, and make safety a ritual, not a talking point. Use a checklist at every phase change. It baffles me how many pilots *don't* use a checklist, as if they're above that "student pilot crutch."
- Be disciplined in your flying. You don't always have an instructor there to give you

feedback on your behavior or judgment, so it's up to you to hold yourself accountable to be the safest pilot you know.

- Fly with other pilots who you respect often and be open to feedback in the cockpit. Just remember that not all feedback is good feedback — be a critical thinker.
- Go up with a flight instructor more often than your flight review requires you to and take recurrent training seriously. Don't limit your recurrent training to the bare minimum that the regulations require. You owe it to yourself and your passengers to be more than a bare-minimum aviator.
- Pilots are ambassadors to aviation just as much as instructors are. Be a respectable aviator, never stop training, employ safety-centric habits in your flying, and be a positive role model for new pilots … and old pilots too for that matter.

Lastly, to all flight instructors out there.

- The law of primacy is another piece of the Fundamentals of Instructing curriculum. It states: "Primacy, the state of being first, often creates a strong, almost unshakable, impression." Students are absorbing everything you say and do, habits and attitudes — the good *and* the bad.
- Your job isn't simply to bark at a student when they screw up, log the hours, collect their money, and schedule the next time. We're expected to be role models, and we took an oath to be professional ambassadors to aviation.
- Think back to high school or college. Who was your favorite teacher or professor? I'd be willing to bet they were the mentor figure you could visit in their office any time with your questions. They asserted their leadership in a respectful way, and made you feel *good* about yourself while showing you the way to success. I can think of several of those awesome people in my schooling.
- If you're going to use your instructor certificate as a steppingstone to a flying career, that's fine — that's great! But you better take it seriously because your actions and conduct are directly affecting other people's lives and the pursuit of their own career and dreams.
- I invite you to check your ego, put yourself in each of your students' shoes, and ask: What kind of experience am I giving these students? Even better, *ask* your students to give their honest feedback about you and the services you were hired to provide to them.
- Be ready for constructive criticism. Don't get defensive, hear them out, and have an adult conversation about it. Don't let your own hazardous attitudes put a stop to a constructive conversation or prevent it altogether.

There are so many amazing flight instructors out there doing an amazing job as aviation ambassadors. At the same time there are so many downright bad flight instructors who are far too arrogant, immature, and disrespectful to hold that certificate. It's our job as aviation ambassadors to:

1. Be aware of our own hazardous attitudes first and foremost — that's called humility.
2. Call out unprofessional behavior when we see it. It might be uncomfortable, but it's required.
3. Put a stop to unsafe habits and attitudes before they lead to a fatal accident, like this one.

Looking at the details of this accident and all the others like it has really forced me to look inward at my own behaviors, attitudes, and judgments. Of course, the image I see isn't without flaws, and I invite you to do the same thing with yourself regularly. That's what I'm going to do. We, as an industry, can do better than this.

I want you to stay happy, stay healthy, stay current, and most importantly, stay proficient. Students, keep an open mind and advocate for yourself. Pilots, be safe and responsible aviators. Never stop learning. Instructors, check your ego. Be a positive role model to your students and be the change that we need in aviation.

Josh Flowers is an active flight instructor who has combined his passion of aviation and filmmaking with his Aviation101 YouTube channel. He has an audience of 300,000 subscribers, fulfilling his mission of showcasing safe flight practices while enjoying the beauty the world has to offer, one flying video at a time. You can find him at www.Aviation101.com.

NAFI Commentary

The tragedy that occurred in September hit many of us in the instructional community like a gut punch. We were left reeling in shock at the CFI's actions from preflight to the flight's tragic conclusion. Focus has been on the publicly available postings of the CFI from that evening, but we can anticipate that the NTSB investigation will extend well beyond that event. The NTSB will likely work to develop a fuller picture of the individual through interviews, previous social media posts, training records, prior flight actions taken, and other activity. The question of "Why?" inevitably arises. Why did the flight instructor behave as he did? In this case we will never know, but it seems clear that he was either not familiar with or not complying with the professional responsibilities of a flight instructor. Several points extracted from The National Association of Flight Instructors Code of Ethics follow:

We, the members of the National Association of Flight Instructors, accept the responsibility to practice our profession according to the highest ethical standards.

Therefore, we pledge always to:

- **Provide** a safe and effective learning situation for our students.
- Continually **improve** our own teaching and flying skills through education and operational experiences.
- **Adhere** to safe practice and to applicable federal and state aviation regulations.
- **Treat** all fellow flight instructors with respect.
- **Conduct** both our professional and personal lives in a manner to reflect credit on the profession and to set an example of self-discipline for all pilots.
- **Encourage** our fellow flight instructors and the organizations in which they teach to uphold and support these principles, and to question and resist those practices that may undermine or defeat them.

Attitude, ethics, and behavior are closely related. Points about aviation hazardous attitudes have been raised in relationship to this accident, but let's also consider the attitude of professionalism. Developing professionalism as a fundamental trait of every flight instructor can mitigate unprofessional behavior. Why would a flight instructor not demonstrate a professional attitude? There are numerous possibilities that are situationally dependent. Role models, training, and flight school culture are but a few considerations. Another may be related to the short-term nature of flight instructing for pilots seeking an airline career. The average pay for a new CFI springs to mind as well. The money and benefits received from flight instructing pale in comparison to that anticipated as a new airline hire. The non-commensurate responsibility/reward profiles can result in a belief that the flight training role is a less professional, temporary position. What can be done? It's up to us as a community to look both within and without, assess our own attitudes, and promote professional ethics consistently throughout the industry. This September accident is a sad reminder that aviation can be non-forgiving. That event resulted in the heartbreaking loss of two lives. The CFI involved will not have an opportunity to learn from his mistakes, but we can help to prevent similar tragedies.

Karen Kalishek,
NAFI board chair

Kudos to Josh Flowers for a carefully worded response to a bad example set by this flight instructor that resulted in a tragic outcome.

As a new IFR learner, I encountered a flight instructor who had an obvious case of superiority due to his vast experience or knowledge gap over me. A CFI should not subject learners to this kind of behavior. I recognized the problem was not me and avoided this CFI after one lesson. My professional concern now as a CFI is that one lesson could be all it takes to end up in this situation. If we observe something like this happening with a fellow CFI, we should be willing and able to step up and diplomatically confront the situation both for the learner's benefit and for the industry. The learner (and most likely the CFI) may be put off by the exchange, but the idea that the learner has a say in what is happening will be revealed in the process.

Arrogance can happen at any rate of payment for the CFI, so I respectfully say that this could be one of many reasons a CFI may feel underappreciated and therefore lash out at a learner over the (obvious to you) simple mistakes made. It is indicative of a problem with the CFI, however, not the learner.

The risk management courses King Schools have are very good and should become a focus in training for the purpose of making the flight training industry's safety record improve. Hazardous attitudes in flight instruction should be red flags for learners and especially for CFIs. The Kings have made these courses free to NAFI members due to the importance of the subject of risk management in flight training.

Gus Putsche,
NAFI board member

Eds. Note: You can find the King Schools Risk Management Course Bundle here: tinyurl.com/NAFIRisk.

As an organization, this accident both frustrates and fuels a desire to reach more CFIs with our safety and professionalism message. All accidents share the same root cause — hazardous attitudes. While this particular accident manifested through a young flight instructor — one in which he and his student paid the ultimate sacrifice — let us not forget that no one is immune

WHEN INSTRUCTORS CRASH

Learning from tragedy

to accidents. Hazardous attitudes and get-there-itis have claimed many lives through various other manifestations. Our struggle as an organization is how can we both use every accident as a teaching moment for every CFI (because no one is immune to accidents), yet have the ability to reach those who are most on the fringe of susceptibility?

Thank you for being a valued member of NAFI and taking advantage of its numerous educational resources — from this magazine, to NAFI Summit, Mentor*LIVE*, *eMentor*, More Right Rudder podcast, NOTAMs blog, NAFI Professional Development Program, and the Professional Development Center at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh. Your dedication and commitment to safety and professionalism drives our industry. Please tell a friend of the resources and value of your membership as we together raise the level of professionalism in flight instruction. Through connections and word of mouth you will help us help those who need it most.

Adam Magee,
NAFI treasurer and board member

I posted two comments to the CFI Discussion Group, Certificated Flight Instructor, when I first saw this video. 1. Last summer, I spoke about the morality of being a CFI at the NAFI's Professional Development Center at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, and again at NAFI Summit. I've always been passionate about this subject and am even more so now. It's very simple: It's not "just flying." We can affect people's lives for good or for evil, depending on our attitude. As I tell every one of my students, I'm not training for them — I'm training for every trusting soul around them. 2. The accident rate is going down. However, the second highest category of fatal accidents is instructional flight, which is patently crazy. The safest flying in general aviation should be instructional flying! We're the ones who should be setting the example and ensuring everything comes out well every time.

Robert Meder,
NAFI board member and chair emeritus

1. This profession is not a game. It is life and death.

2. This profession can kill you. Yes, you. In an instant.

You either strive every day to act like a professional, care about your passengers and students, live by a non-negotiable code of ethics, and have integrity. Or you don't.

You either make risk mitigation your primary job, or you decide hope is a strategy and leave it all to chance.

You either acknowledge that not *all* risks can be mitigated and treat the fact that you may not know when you're departing on your last flight with the maturity that it demands, or you're fooling yourself.

You either step up as a leader and refuse to tolerate risky, asinine, or unprofessional behavior around you, or you brush it off as "just one bad apple" and decide it isn't your problem.

It's not just about you. It never was. Grow up. Step up.

Aaron Dabney,
NAFI board member

Through their teaching and guidance, flight instructors play a critical role in shaping the future of aviation. As professional educators, they must maintain unwavering integrity and professionalism. They must resist the temptation to appear on social media as a method of self-aggrandizement. It certainly is not a place to publicly shame students for their weaknesses or mistakes. Instead, instructors must foster trust and respect, and cultivate a safe space for learning and growth. By remaining steadfast in their commitment to ethical teaching practices, instructors garner respect from their students and develop a meaningful learning environment, which enables their students to develop similar qualities.

Brian Schiff,
NAFI board member

When I taught captain leadership classes at the airline, I asked the soon-to-be captains what their new responsibilities would be. The usual responses were safety, setting the tone, being the single point of contact for irregular operations, good communication, and buying the beer on the overnights. All those and others are certainly true. But then I would go on to say that I was going to raise the bar. I told the class that every time they flew, they were potentially responsible for the outcome of the entire industry. And if they didn't believe it, to think about two events, separated by a month in 2009 — US Airways 1549 and Colgan 3407. In the first, through the actions of the flight deck and cabin crew, words such as heroes and miracles were used. The next month, due to the actions and inactions of the flight deck crew, in addition to lives lost, the professionalism of the industry was called into question, especially at the regionals. Many new rules came out of Colgan that have impacted the industry forever.

It is no different in general aviation. Regardless of the plane or the mission, we all can impact the industry in a positive way by being professional, by being a mentor, and by sharing the joy of flying with others. Or we can be the subject of criticism, ridicule, and loss.

It's all about our legacy. We don't have to be involved in a 1549 or 3407 type of event to make an impact. We can do it one flight at a time, one day at a time, one person at a time. Our legacy is not created when we're gone. It's formed by how we live.

Paul Preidecker,
NAFI president

Your Voice

An instructor's words matter

"So now that I am a CFI, do you have any advice or pro tips for me?" I asked. My DPE smiled and said, "Never forget that you are the voice the student will hear when you are not in the airplane." With that profound nugget of wisdom, he shook my hand and wished me the best of luck.

I sat down at the table in our hangar and thought about what he had said. It was such a profound statement that I found myself a little taken aback. Sure, I often heard my instructor's voice in my head while I was flying, but between digesting the FARs, teaching mock lessons ad nauseum, and delving into the minutia of every FAA publication I could get my hands on in preparation for my checkride, I guess I never quite appreciated just how profound the responsibility and privilege was to teach someone how to fly and how much weight my words and actions carried.

Over the coming days, I spent a lot of time figuring out what kind of "voice" I wanted to be. It turns out the answer to that question felt nearly as complex as the CFI checkride itself.

I knew I wanted to be the voice of encouragement, and not anger. To lower my voice when they do something unexpected, not raise it. I wanted to be their biggest cheerleader and celebrate their successes at each point along the way. Their success would be my success, and their failures my failures.

I knew I wanted to be the voice that was reassuring. To remind them that things

By Michael D. Hodge Jr.

are sometimes hard, and that the presence of challenges doesn't mean that they don't have the intellect or kinesthetic ability to become a pilot. To sit down and help them dissect the obstacles they are facing and see how we can work together as a team to get through them.

I knew I wanted to be the voice of patience. Sure, listening to the ASOS for the umpteenth time this lesson is annoying, and answering the same question over and over can make one question their sanity. However, it's important to remember that we are all learning, especially student pilots. Their inability to retain the wind information despite it being the fifth time they've listened to it isn't due to some desire to annoy their flight instructor; it's just that they are overwhelmed. I find maintaining that perspective important.

I knew I wanted to be the voice that reminded them to slow down and think. Don't rush through your checklists. Yes, I know that you've done the preflight a thousand times by now and you "have it memorized." Still, pull out the checklist and use it, and if the day comes when you are in an emergency and your thoughts are racing as fast as your heart is, take a deep breath, slow down, and think. Put aside your emotional brain for a second, and work through the problem logically and deliberately. I believe in you; now believe in yourself and FLY. THE. AIRPLANE.

I knew I wanted to be the voice that encourages a thirst for knowledge. To motivate in whatever way I can to be a mass consumer of all things aviation. To help encourage that desire to keep pushing, to keep striving to improve, all while reminding them to embrace the journey. The more we learn, the safer we are. Let's see if we can change our perspective of the theoretical knowledge from something we have to learn to something we want to learn.

Finally, I knew I wanted to be the voice that encouraged my students to be good stewards of aviation. To reach out to their fellow students and help one another through the challenges that obtaining a new certificate brings. To encourage them to get involved in the local community and give back. What a great gift we have to be able to do this. Why not share it with the world?

I guess I never quite appreciated just how profound the responsibility and privilege was to teach someone how to fly and how much weight my words and actions carried.

I'm not sure my DPE knows just how important that one sentence was. In a lot of ways, it encouraged me to sit and really think about what kind of flight instructor I wanted to be. I'll be the first to admit that I am human, and all the above is more of a journey rather than a destination.

But every time I have the desire to rush through a checklist because the lesson is running behind or I find myself being dismissive of a student's frustrations or concerns, I'm reminded of that quote. What kind of example am I setting? Am I modeling the behavior I want to see in my student? Asking myself those questions helps me maintain a healthy sense of perspective and pushes me to be a better flight instructor, and human.

To old instructors, and new instructors alike, I'd like to ask: What kind of voice are you?

Michael D. Hodge Jr. is an independent CFI/AGI/IGI based out of Sheboygan, Wisconsin (KSBM). He is passionate about the art of flight instructing and the psychological aspects that come along with it. When not instructing, he works as a web-based software developer and enjoys spending time on his hobby farm with his wife and two young children. Hodge may be reached at mike@sheboygancfi.com.

By John J. Gagliano

FAA Legal Interpretations

Be careful what you ask for

Any advice contained in this article is general and subject to change. You must contact an aviation attorney licensed in your state for specific and current legal advice. All links and internet search results found below were current as of August 2023.

As an aviation attorney I'm often asked to interpret ambiguous aviation regulations or asked for general advice about regulations. There are a couple of problems that arise when I'm asked to perform a regulatory analysis. The first problem is that a general scenario may be an incomplete picture of exactly what is going on in the real world in a particular situation. There are infinite possible combinations of legal issues that can arise from the operation of aircraft. A good illustration of this phenomenon has arisen from past *Mentor* articles that contain general advice about regulations. The CFIs who read this magazine are quick to point out when that general advice is not applicable to a specific situation or when a particular caveat is overlooked. I appreciate these reader comments because I learn from them; hopefully other readers do, too.

The second problem with questions about regulatory interpretations is that there is only one interpretation that counts for most pilots — the FAA's interpretation. Aviation attorneys, CFIs, and other aviation professionals can provide an analysis to determine how the FAA will interpret an ambiguous regulation, but the FAA is the definitive authority unless or until a court says otherwise. In many circumstances, federal courts are required to defer to the FAA's "reasonable interpretation" even if others may have more reasonable interpretations. This is called the Chevron deference doctrine, and you can Google it if you want to know more.

Don't worry, the FAA's customer-friendly culture and commitment to crystal clarity has a solution to your gray-area regulation blues. The FAA offers (for free!) detailed legal interpretations of various regulations that have arisen from real-world questions from airmen and operators. These interpretations are available instantly on the FAA website, which has recently revamped regulation resources into the new Dynamic Regulatory System or DRS for short. You can access the DRS at *DRS.FAA.gov*.

To find FAA legal interpretations you can go directly to this address: *DRS.FAA.gov/browse/legal_interpretations/doctypedetails*. Or you can click one of the 18 main headings on the left side of the DRS main page at *DRS.FAA.gov* — find "Regulation Related Documents and Reports" and then "Legal Interpretations."

Once you are in the "Legal Interpretations" section of the DRS, you can browse the 1,032 legal interpretations the FAA has published. You can browse by "Status," and the three options are "Current," "Historical," and "Pending." You can also browse by "Title," and the FAA offers titles such as Agramonte 2013 Legal Interpretation and Zomnir 2012 Legal Interpretation. Though the titles are not exactly helpful, you can also enter a keyword, one or more regulation sections, or other search criteria.

If you search, for example, "flight in-

struction" and select the "current" status, you get 226 results. The first two results have nothing to do with flight instruction. The third result, titled "Arthur 1995 2 Legal Interpretation," tells us the FAA's criteria for determining a "pilot in command" during flight instruction. The next result, which is related and similarly named "Arthur 1995 Legal Interpretation," tells us that "no medical certificate is required" for CFIs who do not act as pilot in command even if they are giving instruction for compensation. The Part 61 gurus among us will note that 14 CFR § 61.23(b)(7) *currently states explicitly* that no medical certificate is required "when exercising the privileges of a flight instructor certificate if the person is not acting as pilot in command or serving as a required pilot flight crewmember." But in 1995, when this interpretation was written, Section 61.23 did not have this section included.

As in the example above, the FAA's regulatory interpretations can provide a window into the evolution of regulations. In this case what began as an interpretation of an ambiguous regulation turned into today's § 61.23(b)(7). This brings us to an important point: The FAA's legal interpretations **are binding** and not often changed. Anyone can request a legal interpretation, but ***extremely careful consideration should be given before you submit an interpretation request to the FAA***. If the FAA's answer is not something that you anticipated, you are stuck with it, and so is the entire flying community.

The FAA's legal interpretations are written by its lawyers, who are not required to be pilots or CFIs. The legal interpretations are not issued instantly; the FAA's lawyers take time to research past interpretations, court cases, and internal FAA legal memoranda, which are typically not publicly available. Sometimes the interpretations don't make common sense to those of us who spend our lives and livelihoods in the cockpit, hangar, shop, or dispatch office. This is all the more reason to carefully consider submitting a request for an interpretation to the FAA.

> Aviation attorneys, CFIs, and other aviation professionals can provide an analysis to determine how the FAA will interpret an ambiguous regulation, but the FAA is the definitive authority unless or until a court says otherwise.

As CFIs we will not know every answer to a student's or a pilot's questions, but we must know *where* to get an answer. For straightforward questions, the answers can often be found in the *AIM/FAR*. For more complex questions, the FARs may be a starting point but may not give a definitive answer. As we all know, many of the FARs themselves are tough to read, much less interpret. A knowledge of existing FAA legal interpretations should be an important tool in every CFI's toolbox. Not only are the interpretations important for answering potentially complex questions, ***but the FAA's directives in the interpretations are binding upon us*** unless or until they are changed or superseded by a court ruling or a new interpretation or regulation.

The old Latin principle that "ignorance is no excuse for the law" holds true for regulations as well as written interpretations. If a pilot violates the holding of an interpretation, they could face an FAA inquiry. Because of the near-permanent ramifications of the FAA's legal interpretations, CFIs should ***strongly caution*** students, pilots, owners, and operators against requesting new legal interpretations from the FAA.

John J. Gagliano is a Florida Bar board certified aviation attorney, a former Navy pilot and flight instructor, ATP, current CFI, and a NAFI board member.

NAFI SUMMIT

NAFI

OCTOBER 24-26, 2023 | LAKELAND, FL

Summit Success

NAFI's inaugural CFI symposium delivered

By Robert Meder

After more than a year of planning, NAFI Summit 2023 — the first national summit geared toward flight instruction — was a resounding success. Held October 24-26 at the SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Center for Excellence at Lakeland Linder International Airport in Lakeland, Florida, the event attracted more than 200 attendees from the United States and abroad. Eighteen NAFI sponsors were also represented at the event, giving attendees the opportunity to interact with them and view their products.

The goal of NAFI Summit was to promote safety and professionalism in the flight training community through education. This was accomplished through 27 presentations throughout the event.

Brad Palmer, manager of the FAA General Aviation and Commercial Division, and Everette Rochon, FAA Aviation Safety manager, provided the keynote address on Wednesday morning. From there, topics ranged from a designated pilot examiner panel discussion regarding current trends in flight testing to presentations about advanced teaching skills, the use of technology, understanding issues in physical and mental wellness as they apply to flight training, and reminders about some of the fundamentals of flying.

"The speakers represented a range of knowledge and expertise," said Dr. Victor Vogel, NAFI board member and Summit speaker. "The design of NAFI Summit afforded an unparalleled opportunity for interaction and discussion. Senior flight instructors heard presentations that will enhance the educational opportunities for their students in the future. In addition, a wealth of useful information will be available in the video recordings of the sessions and presentations."

All courses were eligible for credit in the FAA's WINGS program. Attendees racked up an impressive total of more than 875 Advanced and Master WINGS credits, demonstrating their commitment to aviation safety. Samantha Bowyer, associate professor of aeronautical science at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, was a key player in helping to plan and organize the event. "One of the biggest success factors was the attendees," she said. "It was their attitude, involvement, excitement, and collaboration that really made this event such a success."

NAFI Summit wasn't just about educational presentations. It was an opportunity to network and reaffirm long-established relationships while forming new ones. "One of my favorite ways to welcome members into NAFI is to tell them, 'Welcome to the family,'" said John Niehaus, NAFI director of program development. "One of the ways I market the association is to say, 'We saved a seat for you at the table.' NAFI Summit was a way to hold true to both of those statements. The event welcomed members to a family gathering where we could rekindle a shared love of aviation, teaching, and learning — all while networking with the best the industry has to offer."

Attendees racked up an impressive total of more than 875 Advanced and Master WINGS credits, demonstrating their commitment to aviation safety.

A highlight of the event was the dinner on Wednesday evening, with a presentation by John and Martha King discussing how to conduct a successful business in the flight instruction industry, based on their lifetime of experience. "It is a rare opportunity for any industry to assemble the nation's best talent, and the inaugural NAFI Summit did just that," Vogel said.

"I think this event proved that NAFI is in a great position to use this sort of platform to best support CFIs who are using flight instruction as a career path or as a 'steppingstone' — although I hate that term, perhaps, 'intermediate job' is better — to become better, more effective, professional, and safer pilots," Bowyer said.

"This is an event that needs to be repeated annually and needs to be promoted among new flight instructors who will acquire invaluable teaching skills and profitable management techniques for their learning environments," Vogel said.

NAFI Board Chair Karen Kalishek and President Paul Preidecker noted considerable enthusiasm and energy at the event, from both attendees and sponsors. Kalishek expressed appreciation that everyone involved in putting the event together did an outstanding job. NAFI is especially grateful for the support of the SUN 'n FUN staff who helped expedite a smooth-running event. "I think it went off as close to as planned as one could hope for its first year," Bowyer said. "We learned some great planning strategies for the future."

The real measure of success comes from what the attendees had to say. "I had an amazing experience and learned quite a lot to take with me," said attendee Miguel Goldfield. "What really completed the event was meeting so many experienced instructors, examiners, the FAA, and high-

profile individuals from the field. Many of which have helped me view my future with a shining light. A future I can succeed in, and a future I hope I can help with."

Les Abend, columnist for *FLYING Magazine* and Summit speaker wrote, "Thanks for making me feel welcome. The depth of knowledge and content presented at the event was a reflection of the organization's value. Please accept my compliments for its success. Hoping that the 2023 attendance is worthy of another summit."

"As we were working through all the details needed to bring NAFI Summit together, a colleague asked me what I thought success would look like," Preidecker said. "I thought for a moment and said that success for the first Summit will be measured by having a second Summit."

Planning for NAFI Summit 2024 is already underway. More details, including dates and location, will be announced soon. Thank you to all who attended NAFI Summit for your dedication to help elevate the flight training community.

Robert Meder served as NAFI's board chair for eight years and continues to serve as a board member. He is a CFI, CFII, and MEI. He retired after a 40-year career with a major western railroad. Meder and his wife, Carol, reside on the edge of Spirit of St. Louis Airport's Class D airspace. He dreams of getting a DC-3/C-47 type rating and enjoys being a Cubs fan deep in Cardinals territory. Meder recently bought an F33C Bonanza at his wife's insistence.

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Andrea McGilvray

On Your Wing

Meet a NAFI member

By Patrick Howell

Last summer, I spent a few days volunteering at the NAFI tent at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh. I met NAFI members and also people interested in joining the organization. We were asked, "Do I have to be a CFI to join NAFI?" The enthusiastic answer was, "Absolutely not!" Let's meet Andrea McGilvray, a new NAFI member who is well on her way to earning not just her fixed-wing CFI, but also her rotary-wing CFI.

Patrick: How did you get your start in aviation? You mentioned that you had a break and found your way back in.

Andrea: My accidental introduction to aviation happened in 1987. It was far from something I ever thought I would want to do. My father had an ultralight and a partner in a Cessna 150, but that was his thing, not a family thing. During my first flight in a Beaver ultralight, my world changed. Not only did I fall totally in love with aviation, but I also removed myself from party friends and worked two jobs to fly. Due to life and finances, I stopped flying in 1994.

I got back into flying in 2015. In 2021, I was talking to a friend and fellow aerobatic competitor. We were the same age at the time (56). Knowing what she accomplished in her airline career, I asked if she would start training to become a commercial pilot at this point in her life, and she said absolutely. That is what spurred me into earning my instrument rating in 2022 and then my commercial certificate for both fixed-wings and rotary-wings, as well as adding on rotary instrument and multiengine ratings in 2023.

Patrick: What has it been like pursuing your rotary-wing CFI?

Andrea: My first flight in a Robinson R44 was March 2023. Since I have experience in tailwheel aircraft, I could hover on the first day, but it took the third flight to hook me into "must learn this new skill." My training for fixed-wing CFI was already in the works, but this just gave me a detour on how I was going to get there. Since my love of aerobatics and now flying helicopters is almost equal, I felt starting my career as a CFI for rotary would provide me the means of flying helicopters without owning one. My goal before my introduction to helicopters was to teach upset/recovery/spin training and basic aerobatics in my Decathlon, which I still plan on doing.

Patrick: With your background in aerobatics, what is something you hope to pass on to students from that part of your flying?

Andrea: There are multiple parts of aerobatics that have helped me fly both helicopters and airplanes. The biggest one is my feet work without my head. If the aircraft is not doing what it needs to do, my feet can fix it. The second takeaway is that I don't have any fear of the aircraft since I am the one in control. I know the limits and know how to stay inside of them. When I practice aerobatics and ask my aircraft to do things that are challenging, it talks to me. If I push it too hard, it will do something other than what I want, and I must correct it. When you are high off the ground, if the aircraft breaks into a stall/spin or falls out of a maneuver, it is a good learning experience. This translates into flying nonaerobatic aircraft also.

Patrick: As someone who's both an A&P mechanic and a pilot, what's one thing you wish more CFIs knew about aircraft maintenance?

Andrea: Maintenance errors are real, and when an aircraft comes out of maintenance, they really need to know what they did and why. A&Ps are human and make human errors.

Patrick: Of all your experiences, which one do you think has been the most valuable in your flying career?

Andrea: Learning to fly a tailwheel aircraft. If I had it my way, everyone would learn in a tailwheel aircraft. I also want everyone to learn what it feels like to be "out of control" and to be able to fix it. Learn to be ahead of the aircraft.

Patrick Howell *is a CFI/CFII/MEI, CSIP, and NAFI Associate Master Flight Instructor. He is a former B-52H Stratofortress instructor navigator. Howell teaches with Revv Aviation at KCBF in Council Bluffs, Iowa. When he's not teaching, he's remembering how to use his feet again in a 1947 Aeronca Champ. Howell is glad he's finally found a use for that English degree he got in college.*

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