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International
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EDITOR

Lance Phillips
lance@twinandturbine.com

EDITORIAL OFFICE
2779 Aero Park Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone: (231) 946-7770

PUBLISHER

Dave Moore

PRESIDENT

Matt Kenny

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Kurt Bainbridge

PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR

Jake Smith

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Marci Moon

TWIN & TURBINE WEBSITE

www.twinandturbine.com

ADVERTISING

Jenna Reid
816-699-8634
Jenna.Reid@VPDCS.com

ADVERTISING OPERATIONS AND ACCOUNT MANAGER

Betsy Beaudoin
1-800-773-7798
betsybeaudoin@villagepress.com

GENERAL AVIATION

ADVERTISING INFORMATION
Aviation.Publications@VPDCS.com

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

Rhonda Kelly
Jessica Meek
Leah Backus
P.O. Box 968
Traverse City, MI 49685
1-800-447-7367

To change mailing address,
email rhonda.kelly@vpdcs.com

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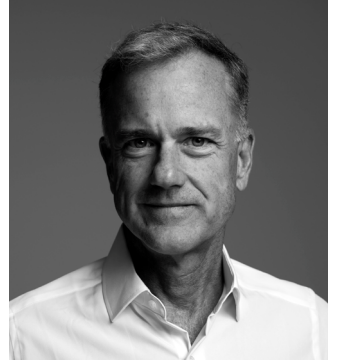
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COVER PHOTO:

Photo courtesy of Dog is my Copilot.

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Flying South for the Summer

I remember summer vacations in rented Senecas, Saratogas, or Navajos in the 70s and 80s. Often, those flying trips would take the family south of our home in Texas. A memorable excursion one year took us to Belize; I think it was called British Honduras back then. There is a little island off the mainland called Ambergris Caye. The island at the time had a packed conch-shell-covered runway, no lighting, and very sparse aircraft services. I wouldn't even call it an airport; just a remote landing strip.

After a fuel and lunch stop in Tampico, Mexico (at which my younger brother became ill from a hamburguesa at the airport), we made it to Belize City on the mainland for customs checks. My parents both spoke Spanish and were regulars flying privately south of the border, so they knew the routine.

Once the dog and pony show was complete at customs, we were on our way again. The short hop to the island was uneventful, but the sun was setting, and visibility dimming. My dad called down to the radio operator on the island, asking if they could light the runway in some way. That they did.

Once in the pattern, we saw the solution. Two pickup trucks, one on each end of the runway, were shining their high beams toward the other truck. It wasn't the same as REILs, but it would do. Night hadn't completely set in; we had just enough light to continue.

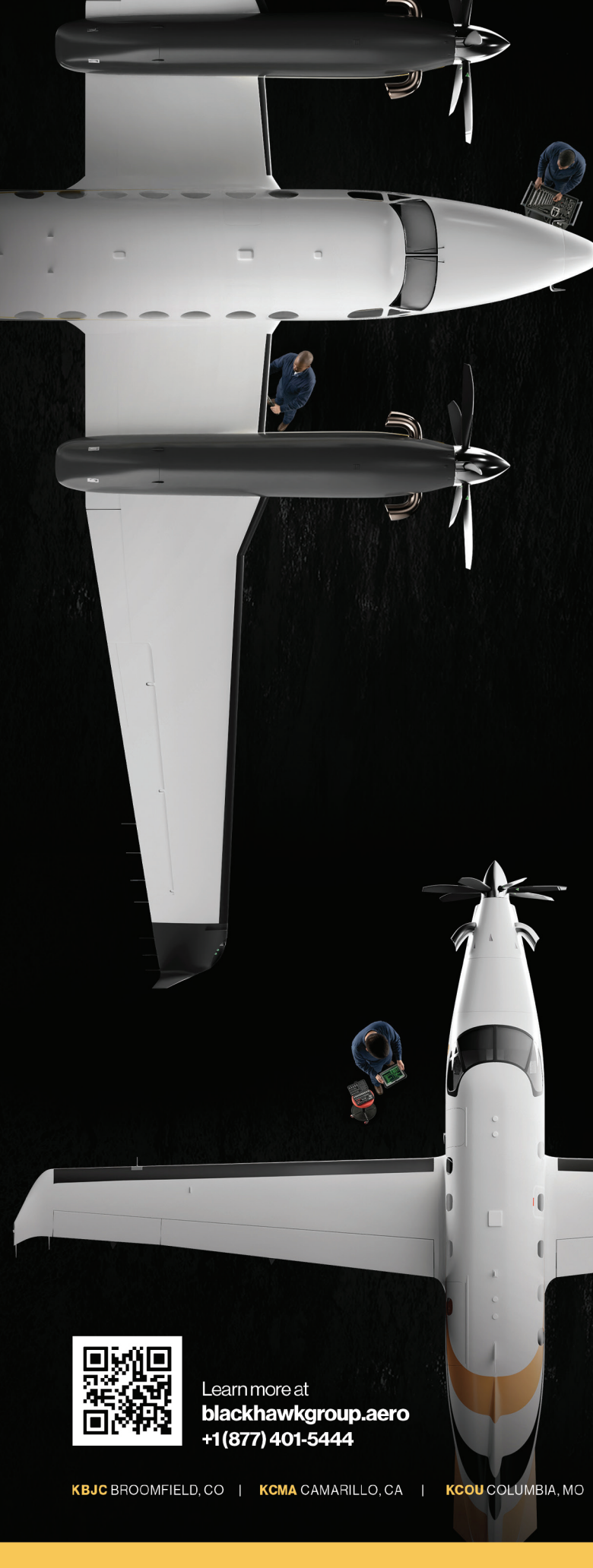
Those were the days. The island, back then, was populated mainly with locals. There were no big houses or expensive golf carts, and evenings consisted of great seafood, neighborhood soccer matches, and watching sunsets over the gentle waves of the reef. I haven't been there for a long time, but I sense it has changed.

Dig in and enjoy this month's article on international trip planning. It has changed quite a bit since I was a kid. We also get to experience family flying as Lawrence Searcy takes us on a journey, discovering the value of family time and disconnecting.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Lance Phillips in black ink.

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Recurrent Training

by Ed Verville



Beautiful skies above Tucson

I had the pleasure this past week of attending recurrent CL-604 training at FlightSafety International in Tucson, Arizona. The location was a plus; some of my colleagues were attending training in Delaware, where the first day of class was cancelled due to a large snowstorm. Not to mention the thousands of flight cancellations that occurred in the Northeast.

Recurrent training is something professional pilots undergo every six, nine, or twelve months, depending on who they work for and which training program they are approved for.

My wife teases me that I should not have to study and prepare so much for something I have been doing for decades. I know she likes to “tease” me, but I don’t think she understands the level to which we are trained and tested at each recurrent training session. There are few things as arduous as a two-hour oral exam and four hours in the flight simulator with your training partner under the watchful eye of your examiner.

Our Bombardier Challenger training started on Monday morning with eight hours of ground school or

classroom training on airplane systems. The following two days were a mix of two and one-half hours of ground school, four hours in the flight simulator, with an hour and a half of briefing and de-briefing. Our ground school was delivered masterfully by our instructor, who has been instructing for thirty years. He was able to add important details and nuances that most instructors have not captured. Topics consisted of engines, fuel, electrical, hydraulic, pressurization, bleed air systems, as well as limitations, performance, weight & balance, and on and on.

In addition to instructing, the TCE is verifying or evaluating that you can fly each maneuver to ACS standards. If a TCE is not available, your last simulator training session must be with a TCE who will provide a "stand-alone" checkride. This may occur if you have been assigned a newer instructor or someone who is not qualified as a simulator examiner. A "stand-alone" checkride is always required for any pilots who fly charter (FAR Part 135) or airline (FAR Part 121) operations. There are variations of this for FAR Part 121 Air Carriers who

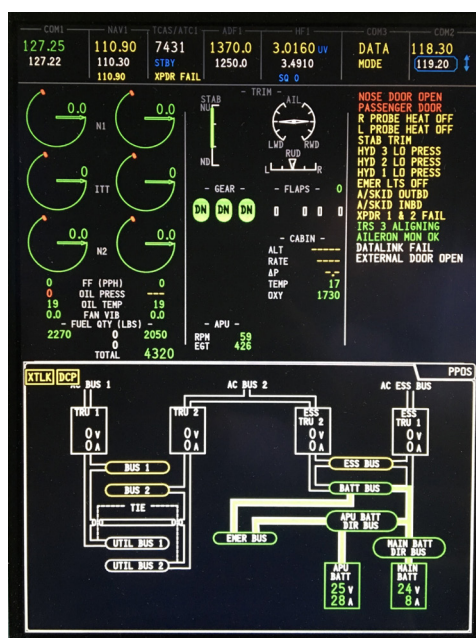
are approved to train under AQP or the Advanced Qualification Program. They may have an evaluation called a Line Oriented Evaluation or LOE.

During my years of flying, I've had the privilege of being a simulator instructor and TCE for several years. I remember how frustrating it was when students would show up unprepared for training. As a line pilot again, I always study hard and practice hand-flying skills before I head to recurrent training. I want to make the decision easy for my evaluator to pass me each time. **T&T**

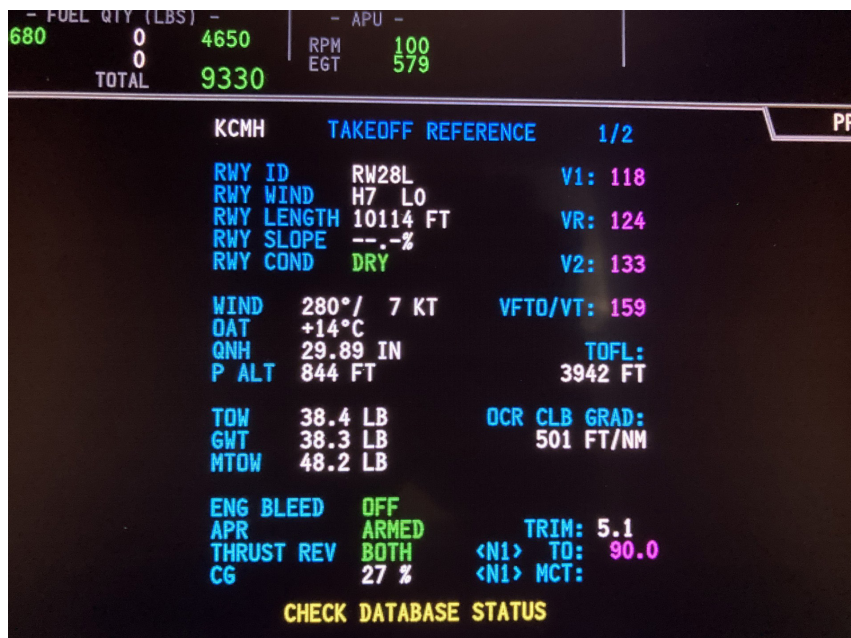


Ed Verville is an experienced FAA instructor and examiner for business jet pilots and aircrew programs. He has 15,000 flight hours in more than 100

different makes and models and holds type ratings in the Bombardier CL-65, CL-30, CL-604, and Boeing 747. Ed has been instructing RNP-AR Approaches for the past three years.



Simulator EIS and systems



Takeoff performance review from Columbus, OH



Inside the Challenger simulator



The Challenger's head-up display.



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...the real value of a plane for me is in the personal emotional value that private aviation returns.





Beginning the trip – Lubbock, Texas

Airtime is Good for the Soul

by **Lawrence Searcy**

I am often asked if owning a plane is worth the money. The answer is complicated because an airplane is expensive and, in my opinion, never really pays for itself if you are calculating “worth” in terms of dollars made because of access to private aviation. The common argument is that business aviation saves time and makes money for the user because the businessperson can visit multiple locations in a short period of time, access clients, and make a deal that could not have been made over the phone or by using traditional travel. All of this may be true (or maybe just a justification), but the real value of a plane for me is in the personal emotional value that private aviation returns.

In the car business, we define employees as “productive” and “nonproductive”. These labels do not mean that the non-productive employee is worthless. Instead, it means that the employee’s direct monetary contribution to the bottom line is harder to track. My role as President qualifies as a non-productive employee because I do not sell a particular item or service that can be directly traced to gross profit like a salesperson or technician. I analyze the plane the same way I do nonproductive employees. It provides a service that cannot be precisely measured but certainly contributes to the betterment of the organization. In the end, the question comes down to “is the expense worth it?” For me, and my business, the answer is a definite yes. I’m able to go to regional manufacturer meetings, board meetings, and visit other business locations fast and efficiently.



But what about the flip side? Most of us also use our plane for personal reasons. What is the productive use of your airplane when flying yourself to go fishing or taking the family for spring break? Is owning the plane “worth” the cost of flying it? If you measure the “worth” in terms of dollars and cents, then it may be hard to justify the personal use of a plane. It is certainly more expensive than driving. If, instead, the measurement is emotional reward, most pilots would agree that the benefit outweighs the cost. Pilots love to fly regardless of the mission. When we are grounded for maintenance or severe weather, we constantly look skyward and measure the car trip against the time it would have taken in the air. There is just something about flying that is better than just about everything else. Flying for work is fun, but flying with your family is even better.

When I first started flying, my wife refused to fly with me and precluded my kids from tagging along. Her stance on family flying ended the next summer when it was time for the kids to go to camp in Arkansas and North Carolina. Suddenly, packing the kids in the plane seemed a better option than several hours in the car. Flying eliminated the long drives and several days away from work for the round-trip to camp. Then, two or three weeks later, we had to do the trip again for the pickup. As I look back over those years, the emotional bonding with my kids in the plane cannot be measured. As youngsters, they loved the introduction to flying, seeing the ground from up high and asking questions along the flight. But of all the trips I’ve made with my kids, their college tours have always been my favorite. These excursions were a sort of last hurrah before they became adults and started making their own





In the Oklahoma end zone



Jane in front of the University of Alabama football stadium

decisions far away from the safety of our house and watchful eye. Within a year of our college exploratory tour, the kids would be gone, and our relationship with each other would transform from parent-child to adult peers. Time had passed us by. As parents, my wife and I mourned their leaving, while the kids jumped at the opportunity for independence. For the older two, when we finally

dropped them at college, I felt as though we aged while they matured. We were left with one at home, and he would soon be following in their same footsteps.

For each of the pilgrimages, we planned a multi-day, multi-college visit trying to see as many university campuses as possible in the shortest window of time. March 2026 was the last of these tours as my now

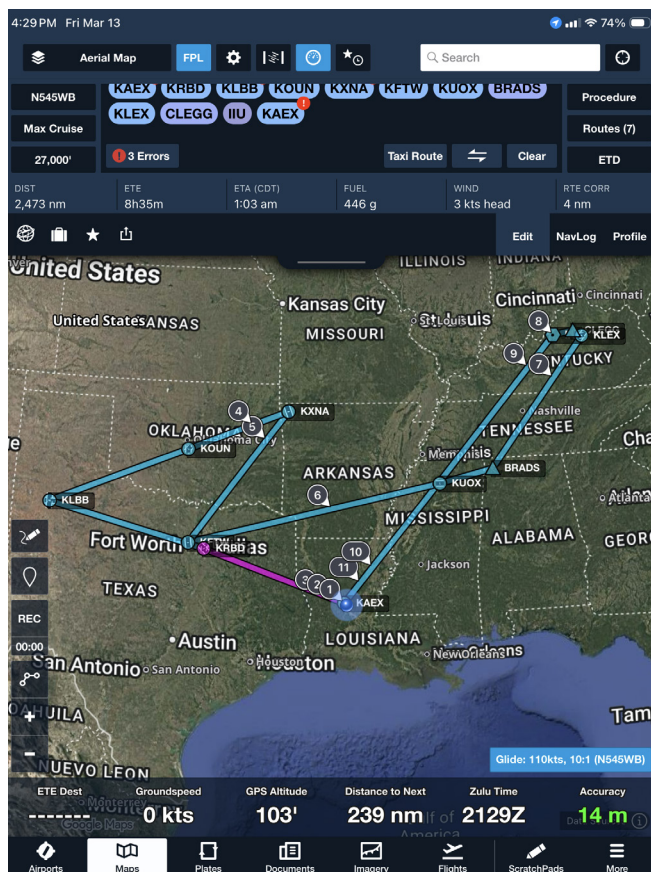


Lawrence Searcy, Caroline Searcy, Ted Ratcliff, and Rob Ratcliff



My daughter Jane with Auburn University in the background

eighteen-year-old son and I finished his five-state journey. In April 2016 and again in January 2019, I planned similar trips with our older daughters. For all three children, we visited different regions of the country and vastly diverse schools.



Our full route for the 2026 trip

With our oldest daughter, she had a friend graduating in the same class who was interested in the same schools. His dad and I are close friends, so it made for an excellent opportunity to partner up and split costs. We covered the entire east coast from Virginia, down to Tennessee, and into North Carolina. Over five days, we visited six schools, flew 1780 miles, and spent 14.1 hours crammed into our 1981 Mooney M20J. I did a similar trip again two years later with our second daughter, visiting schools mainly in the south. The trip was a little easier because she had narrowed her choices to three schools in Texas and Alabama. We visited her top three choices in two days, covering 1,240 miles with a mere 9.7 hours behind the yoke. Seven years later, my son and I loaded up and headed out for what is likely my last college tour (unless I am still lucky enough to still be flying when my grandkids go to college).

This one really hit home. He is the youngest, and his college tour marks the beginning of our empty-nest phase in life. There is now a realization that my wife and I are on the backside of the curve. My son chose to visit southern schools with big-time sports programs. We had four days to tour six schools in five states. Only with private aviation is such a tour possible in that short amount of time with the distance between visits. In all, my son and I traveled 2,500 miles, visited nine airports, six colleges, and spent about 11.5 hours in the plane. We rented six cars, ate at Chick-fil-A a total of five times (there is a Chick-fil-A on every college campus, and nuggets are easy to eat in a rental car while hustling to another airport), and racked up enough



Outrunning the weather from Oxford, MS to Lexington, KY

Hilton Points to get upgraded rooms. We graded the various FBO's on their free snacks and kindness of the staff. Texas Jet in Fort Worth wins by a landslide with their free golf shirt, ice cream, and loads of complimentary chips. After my son's generous interpretation of "free," they may need to revamp their gratis snack program.

Planning a trip over multiple days in multiple states is never easy, and weather is always a factor. All three college tours required navigating weather, avoiding ice and wintry mix, and a lot of full IFR flying. Even though one tour was in January, one in March, and one in May, we encountered similar weather on all three trips. My logbook notes describe the events as "dodged weather and deviations cost us an hour." And, "Glad to get home, ice storm expected tomorrow." Somehow, even with weather challenges, we never missed a tour. We spent hours sitting in FBO's waiting out the weather or running for the plane trying to get airborne ahead of an oncoming line of storms. Despite some dark skies, we adjusted schedules and trekked on.

Looking back at all three trips, a day or a week difference in planning could have derailed the trip entirely. This last trip I scheduled during my son's spring break in March. If his break had been a week earlier or a week later, the whole tour would have been cancelled because of major weather events in the South and Midwest. Reviewing my notes from the first trips in 2016 and 2019, major weather delayed our arrival for two college tours, but none were cancelled. There was definite divine intervention for all three excursions.

The bonding time I had with my soon-to-be adult children is something that is irreplaceable. My wife wanted me to do these trips alone because my work schedule usually prevents me from taking time for one-on-one events like this. Spending hours upon hours in rental cars, on student tours, in hotels, and in the cockpit, we enjoyed meaningful time with each other that is nearly impossible in the digital age. In the air, there is no Wi-Fi or cellular. It is just two people sitting, pilot and co-pilot, passing the time in conversation. The bonding is different from a road trip because there is no connectivity except to each other. The funny thing was that sometimes there was so much talking that I instituted the DNDD rule (Do Not Disturb Dad), mainly during the critical phases of flight.

Just recently, Starlink changed their subscription plans for general aviation, making the addition of in-flight connectivity too expensive for many general aviation pilots. Pilots in chat rooms and online forums are lamenting Starlink's new pricing plan and begging the company to rethink and offer a reasonable subscription price for onboard Wi-Fi. Some pilots advocate that it makes working during the flights possible by receiving texts and emails, and they contend that their passengers are happier being connected. I disagree. Onboard connectivity in General Aviation can be unsafe for pilots, but more importantly, being disconnected for a few hours is good for the soul. We have been connected for so long, it is hard to remember how nice it is to be free of the constant ringing and buzzing of a cell phone.



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Washington and Lee University

While business aviation is great, nothing compares to quality family time without the digital distraction. My older two have moved out, and both are getting married. One is moving to Seattle, which seems a world away even with the speed and endurance of the TBM. My youngest is now not far behind. My dad used to tell me that life passes you by at amazing speed. He was not wrong. My advice to any parents who still have kids in the house is to take

a college tour (or any trip) before it's too late, and the kids are grown up and move out.

Harry Chapin's 1974 hit "The Cat's in Cradle" tells the story of a father too wrapped up in his career to spend time with his son. As the son grows into a man, he mimics his father's behavior, and both become isolated. The song highlights the irony of lost familial bonds and opportunities. Our digital environment encourages and rewards detachment. As parents, we must cut the stranglehold of the digital world as often as we can. There is no better place to isolate outside distractions than in the front seat of a plane where access to the digital world is restricted. We cannot stop the new environment of WiFi everywhere, but we can periodically isolate ourselves from the digital noise pollution. Trips with your kids are our opportunity to tune in to our children one last time before they drop out of our nest and into a new one. Go flying, enjoy the scenery, and chat with your child. It is good for your soul (and theirs), I promise. **T&T**

Lawrence S. Searcy Jr recounts stories from more than 20 years of aviation experience. A 1,600-hour private pilot with an instrument rating, he is also an entrepreneur, attorney, rancher, and outdoorsman who flies himself and his family across the country for both business and pleasure in their TBM 700A. His previous aircraft include a Mooney M20J and a Piper Malibu Mirage.



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Editor's Pics

Photo & Story
by Lance Phillips



BACK IN JUNE 2022, THE PINNACLE AIR NETWORK CONDUCTED ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH VALLEY. DYNAMIC AVIATION, PINNACLE'S HOST, SUPPORTS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, PROVIDES WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT, APPLIES STERILE INSECT TECHNIQUES, HAS AN AIRBORNE DATA ACQUISITION TEAM, AND PROVIDES ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS AERIAL APPLICATION SERVICES. MISS VIRGINIA IS DYNAMIC'S DOUGLAS C-47 CONVERTED TO A DC-3 CONFIGURATION. IT SITS IN PRISTINE CONDITION AND IS RIGOROUSLY MAINTAINED. I TOOK THIS SHOT WITH MY LEICA Q3 FULL-FRAME 28 MM CAMERA, ITSELF A REMARKABLE MACHINE.



International Trip Planning

by Peter Fraser



Flying your own aircraft to foreign countries is especially challenging, yet an extremely rewarding experience. It is not difficult, just requires a bit more planning and thought.

First thing is to decide where to go – a quick trip to Mexico or Canada, or an around-the-world adventure. You are only limited by your imagination, your heart, and of course your wallet.

Firstly, be sure to check with your insurance agent that the countries you want to visit can or will be covered by your policy. Generally, there will be additional costs and sometimes considerable costs – especially if going to Europe, which has extremely high liability requirements.

If you are flying turbine equipment, fuel will rarely be an issue. With piston engine aircraft, be sure to check that AVGAS is available, as overseas it is often in short or no supply.

Once you decide on the places you want to visit, string them together in an order that makes the most sense. Decide what will be your longest acceptable leg, bearing in mind sometimes the alternate will be much more distant than is normal in the US. Now you have the basic route established; do the actual flight routing on Jepsen,

ForeFlight, etc. Making sure to note MEA'S, one-way airways, restricted airspace, etc.

Flying overseas entails some additional steps. When leaving the US, you have to submit an EAPIS and get a return approval before departing. When returning, in addition to filing EAPIS, you need to contact the local CBP office to get landing approval. Only once this is done, you are cleared to enter the US. You will also need to get a CBP sticker for your aircraft and secure it in an accessible place. More and more countries are requiring EAPIS filing. Also, many countries require prior approval to operate within their airspace, both for landing and overflying.

You can usually check each country's requirements and all other requirements in the AC-U-KWIK Managers World edition. There are other sources, but it is often easier to contact one of the companies that specialize in obtaining clearances

Universal, Skyplan, World Fuel, and Jeppesen will have up-to-the-minute information. I spent decades ferrying aircraft around the world, getting my own clearances and negotiating on the ground to get the cheapest deals, often not using a ground handler at all. However, on holiday and especially with guests, I highly recommend you use

handlers at each ground stop. Yes, it is expensive, but negates almost all of the trouble, hassle, and time that will occur without them.

Once you have your routing, stops, and schedule organized, the next step is to hire a company to obtain all your overflight and landing approvals. These companies can also arrange ground handling and fuel at each stop. It is beneficial to try to work with handlers at each stop directly, as you can often negotiate lower prices than going through an agent.



Once you decide on a company, you will need to provide them with:

1. The route/stops/schedule and: Many times you will need to add the FIR entry and exit points.
2. Aircraft documents - C of A / C of R – notarized letter of approval if you are not shown as the owner / Insurance – be sure it covers the countries you are visiting and states such/ Radio license / Noise certificate if you have one / Aircraft performance info if going to high altitude airports.
3. Crew documents – Passport/Pilot License – make sure it has the English proficiency note on it/Medical certificate/Radio license.
4. Passengers -Passports. Most of the Flight clearance/ planning companies can also plan and file the flight plan electronically, provide weather and NOTAMs. They can email or fax this to you at your hotel or to the ground handler. This way all you have to do at the airport is call for your start and airways clearance. Of course, there is a cost for this type of service. Really depends on how involved you want to be.

Make Copies

1. Everyone's passport/Crew passports/Crew Licenses /Crew Medicals.
2. Aircraft C of A/C of R/Radio License /Insurance certificate/Noise cert.
3. Flight plans for each leg
4. General Declarations. These are forms that you need to present at each international arrival and departure. You should make sure you get at least one stamped copy leaving each country. You will present this on arrival at the next country; it proves you left the last place properly and legally.

Fill out as much as you can in the flight plan and General Declaration forms, then print more copies than you think you could need.

Buy a multi-slotted, see-through folder and separate each of the above files into separate pockets. You will often be asked for these documents; if you can quickly pull them out of your folder and simply hand them over, it will save a lot of time and will also be appreciated by the authorities. It shows them you are organized, professional and will make everything else go more quickly and easily.

Print more of all the above than you think you could need – lot easier to throw away extras at the end of the trip rather than try to find a printer in a hot, airless airport office, as the locals get more and more frustrated. Being well prepared will negate so many delays and awkward situations.

Ground Handling

If you get handling, be sure to have several contact phone numbers and also emails. The most frustrating situation is to get to the airport after arrival or ready to depart, expecting to be met by the handler and no one

is around. So, especially before you head off to the hotel after arrival, be sure you have a meeting place and time allocated at the airport – unless they are picking you up at the hotel. It is very easy to hurry off after arrival without making these plans.

Sometimes you will need to pay for handling services, landing, parking, security, etc. on the spot. Most places now take credit cards; otherwise, US dollars are almost always acceptable, although the Euro is preferred in many locations. Often when working through a flight planning/handling company directly, they will simply bill you after the fact.

At some airports, Immigration/Customs/Police will come and meet you at the aircraft – often taking a cursory glance inside. Be vigilant, but not pushy- they are just doing their job and are generally polite and efficient. At other airports you will go through a separate private terminal for general aviation and at others – the worst – through the main terminal. Regardless, the handler will lead you through, hail a taxi outside, or, if you requested, will have transport arranged (though this is not necessary and usually is at least 100% more expensive than a simple taxi). Always make a specific arrangement as to what time and exactly where to meet the handler for your departure. Nothing worse than arriving at the main terminal searching in vain for your handler. Make sure you



Fueling in TJBQ yes the Mils is awkward

have good contact telephone numbers and names. This is easy to forget in the hurry to be on your way to the hotel.

Country clearances – yes you can do it yourself; again AC-U-KWIK will give you almost all the information you need. Generally it is very time-consuming and tedious. The worst part is if you have delays – then it will be up to you to contact every downstream country and renegotiate or update the clearances. On holiday and especially with guests, just let a professional company handle it.

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Weather and Best Times to Travel

The FBO or handler should be able to provide you with enroute and terminal weather along with NOTAMS (be sure to check these, much more important than in the US, although you should always check regardless of location). There are now numerous apps that can provide worldwide aviation weather – an example being “Windy”. Check various weather apps out before your trip.

I chose to fly around South and central Americas in September/October/November. Ran into almost no bad weather and only did two real IFR approaches in Cartagena, Colombia and Brownsville, TX – just low clouds and rain. Good idea to research the weather patterns and history of your destinations to be sure you are going at a good time.

Hotels and Tours

On our three months of travel throughout South and Central America, I used a travel company in Lima, Peru (Vamos Expeditions). I had worked with them previously, and they did a magnificent job. Again, if you use one company to make the arrangements, then if delays or plans change, it is only one call to the travel agent who will coordinate all downstream changes. If you are doing it yourself, be ready to make numerous calls to sort out the changes. Also, using a travel agent usually costs you nothing, and they can often get you better deals.

Fuel

I usually try to fuel immediately after landing – before customs, immigration, etc., but certainly before leaving the airport. This way you will be ready to depart when you want – nothing more frustrating than arriving at the airport and being told it will be an hour or more for fuel, as many commercial flights are taking precedence.

I check with various fuel suppliers (AEG, World Fuel, etc.) then also with the handler at each stop to obtain the best pricing. I usually end up using AEG or World Fuel about 80% of the time. One big advantage is that at each location you have a fuel release; it is simply a sign and go, no cash or credit card needed. You will need a printed fuel release for each fuel location – make sure to carry at least two copies per location and make sure the dates are correct.

If you use AVGAS, be sure to check availability at each stop – many places no longer stock this type of fuel.

Charts, etc.

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Learn about Intl flight plans, differences in Intl ops compared to US.

If you use FAA IFR procedures, you will be ok almost all the time. Some of the differences are:

1. Start-up clearances are almost always required. I usually try to obtain my start-up and IFR clearance before start on my handheld. In Europe you will generally



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only get a departure and squawk code; the remainder is per your Eurocontrol pre-approved flight plan.

2. Transition levels differ in each country - they are notated on the IFR approach charts. It can be as low as 4,000 feet. The normal practice is to use standard setting once given a climb to a flight level, and set local when given an altitude on descent. Altimeter setting will be given in Hectopascals rather than inches. Many modern altimeters have both inches and Hectopascals, or the ability to switch between types. Otherwise, just print out a conversion table – obtainable from the internet.
3. Altimeter settings will be given as QNH – same as altimeter setting in US – gives the height above sea level. QFE (seldom used) gives the height above the specific airport you are landing at, and the altimeter will read zero on landing. Always read back the QNH.
4. Whenever you are above the transition level, you are now at a FLIGHT LEVEL – so if the transition level is 4,000 feet and you are at 6,000 feet when talking with ATC, you are at Flight Level 060.
5. When flying overseas, you will transit FIR's (flight information regions) similar to centers in the US. They control all traffic and ATC coms in their area. On charts you can find the boundaries and ICAO identifiers depicted by jagged lines.
6. When filing a flight plan, you will need to add: FIR/ETE, which is the ICAO identifier plus the estimated time enroute from departure to that point. Enter this in Item 18 as shown here for a flight from Fort Lauderdale (KFYE) to Grand Cayman (MWCR). Also add the Cube overflight or any other clearance number in this area. The main issue with ATC is to speak clearly, slowly, and use proper ATC terminology. Also try to listen to what

is being said and not to the accent. If in ANY doubt, ask for clarification. For example, if you are cleared to a point a long way down your route past multiple enroute points – be sure whether you are cleared by the route or DIRECT to that point.

Be cautious when given a descent clearance – sometimes you will be cleared to a low level which is below some of the MEAs; you still need to abide by these altitude restrictions and ATC expects you to do this yourself. When going into an unfamiliar destination it pays to get down as soon as you can and slow down as well – nothing worse than trying to get down, slow down and comply with unfamiliar routings while trying to keep ahead of the airplane. Planning and briefing the arrival well ahead of initial descent is well worth the effort.

7. Outside radar airspace you will need to give position reports. These are given in a specific format:

Position/time/Flight level

Next position/estimated time

Next position.

Time is always ZULU/UTC, but never say ZULU or UTC – this is a given.

Example:

Gander N123AB position---

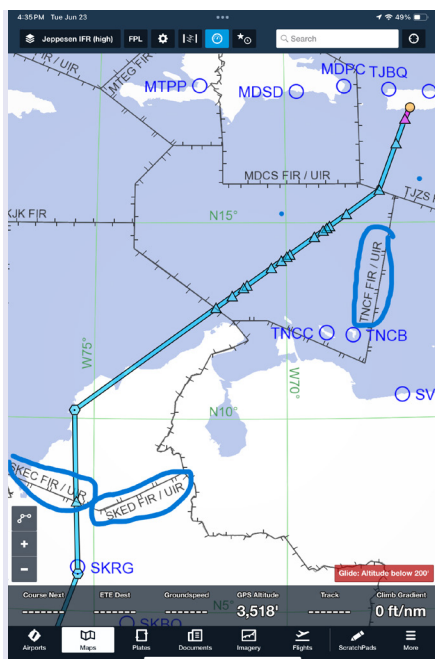
N123AB Gander go ahead---

N123AB checked ALPHA 1230 flight level 260

Estimate Bravo 1315 next Charlie.

Always use the complete call sign and DO NOT say Cessna or aircraft type unless asked.

8. When outside radar coverage, transponder to 2000 unless told otherwise.



FIR boundaries shown Puerto Rico to Colombia



FIR boundaries Colombia and Ecuador



Route of flight Puerto Rico to Ecuador avoiding Venezuela airspace

Good practice when outside radar is to use SLOP (Strategic Lateral Offset Procedure) – just offset your track ½ or 1 mile right of track.

Also, if your ETA changes by more than 3 minutes you need to advise ATC.

Don't blindly accept an ATC clearance without checking that you can comply with any restrictions and they are sending you where you want to go. I have on many occasions been given routing for the opposite direction I wanted to go. So just be proactive and keep good situational awareness.

It can be very confusing once on the ground at an unknown airport, especially if immediately you are given a complicated taxi route. Try to look at the airport diagram ahead of landing, assess where you will exit the runway, and then figure out what the logical taxi route will be. This will be a huge help and hopefully avoid embarrassing mistakes or long delays as you try to figure out where you are and where to go.

Extra Thoughts

I secure a couple of credit cards/cash/copies of Passport/Pilot License/Medical etc. in a safe place in the aircraft. It is very unlikely you will have anything stolen or lost items, but it is nice insurance. In 40 years of worldwide flying, plus overseeing thousands of international operations, I have never had any aircraft broken into at the airport. Airports are often the most secure locations in a country – especially sketchy ones.

The more organized you are, the better. You will find that the flying is the easiest part. Although with modern communications and a good handling company it is not hard or overly complicated. The main thing is to be polite, patient, and remember you are a visitor to their country.

One other thing is whether or not to wear a uniform. A simple white uniform shirt with epaulets is the most I have ever used, and it does help, especially in the third world. Do have a bright ramp security vest and, if possible, print up some crew ID's. All helpful but not strictly necessary, especially with good ground handling.

Aircraft spares – your maintenance provider will be able to work with you on a list. Basic tools and first aid kit. Of course, if over water – life raft, life vests, and survival suits if flying a single.

Not a bad idea to have soft drinks, snacks, etc. to give to handlers and fuelers, instead of cash tips. I try to avoid giving cash tips as it sets up an expectation for the next aircraft. However, we are privileged and very rich compared to ground staff, so let your instinct be your guide on this issue.

If you are worried about the possibility of the aircraft being broken into and drugs etc. being put aboard, you can get security stickers online to affix at each opening. Although in 40 years and thousands of operations we have never had anything like this happen.

I like to arrange luggage so I can take the minimum needed for each location. I carry a soft bag to put in a

couple days' worth of clothes, etc., rather than haul my entire luggage to each hotel, when I don't need half the stuff. Also, it makes for quicker immigration/customs the less you have.

International flying is not as intimidating as it seems. Be well organized, be current, be proficient on the radio, know your aircraft. Have patience, have a sense of humor and a sense of adventure, and it will be a great new experience. Your airplane is a magic carpet that can take you almost anywhere. Flying yourself to far-away destinations makes the journey both rewarding and challenging. It will reward you with great memories and great stories.

Information

USA - Aircraft customs sticker: apply and buy at dtops.cbp.dhs.gov.

US EAPIS – you need to obtain a login at eapis.cbp.dhs.gov. Once done, you can create a profile and do all EAPIS filings online.

CARICOM: the organization for many of the Caribbean and Central American countries.

Create an account at caricomeapis.org. Once done, you can then submit EAPIS for all compliant countries.

You can get copies of General Declaration forms off the internet

You can get copies of ICAO flight plan forms off the internet

Sample IFR flight plan KFXE to MWCR

Copy of chart highlighting the FIR boundaries and identifiers. On almost all nav screens, tapping on the FIR boundary will bring up the ICAO identifier code.

Obtain AEG and World Fuel accounts at the respective websites. There are various other fuel accounts available and easily found with a Google search.

Innumerable companies provide flight clearances and planning services. They are easily researched via the web. I mainly use Skyplan of Canada, as they have provided great service over many years. However, many other companies can supply similar services. 

Peter Fraser spent forty years delivering all types of aircraft from crop dusters to Boeing 747s all over the World. Started out ferrying single-engine pistons across the Pacific, no GPS or long-range nav in those early days. Slowly worked my way through twins, turboprops, small jets, commuter aircraft, and ended up with new Boeings and Airbuses. 16,000+ hours, landed in 140+ different Countries, have flown over 150 different aircraft types. I am type-rated in: Airbus 320 series, ATR-42, ATR-72, Boeing 717, 737, 757, 767, Cessna C-500, Douglas DC-9, MD80, MD90, FK100, LR-JET, DHC-8, HS-125, DA-20, SA227. Float and Glider. I also ran Southern Cross Aviation, one of the largest ferry and flight test companies, personally overseeing thousands of other deliveries and flight tests.

Check out my book: "World Beneath My Wings" on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Also, my wife's Instagram blog is @airsafari.sa

Dog Is My Copilot

by Grant Boyd

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOG IS MY COPILOT



Dog Is My CoPilot (DIMC) transports animals from overcrowded shelters to adoption centers. The organization relies on the use of general aviation aircraft and is closing in on 50,000 total animals rescued, currently flying about 1,000 animals per month.

The non-profit was founded in 2012 by Peter Rork, MD, who had been a pilot since he was a teen. His parents

had begun giving him a flight lesson each year starting on his 12th birthday, and four years later he soloed for the first time. Rork earned his pilot's license before his driver's license, due to New Jersey laws at the time.

He continued to foster a love for aviation and worked as a charter pilot performing Chesapeake Bay tours while in medical school. Rork went on to practice orthopedic surgery for



Dr. Peter Rork



three decades and has since retired, now focusing much of his attention on growing DIMC.

When he first began flying dogs, Rork was flying about 100 to 150 hours a year around the Western United States for personal reasons. His medical practice was initially in Sun Valley, Idaho, followed by Jackson, Wyoming.

"One of my patients asked if I would fly some dogs from Idaho Falls down to Denver, which was for the Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies (which has the fitting acronym, GRRR). I found that very rewarding," he said.

"It was probably about seven hours of flying, and there were three dogs, so

it was a very expensive way to do the transport. But for those dogs it was a game changer because they were all slated to be euthanized."

Free time outside of his medical practice was often already spent in the cockpit, and he began transporting animals for several organizations. These efforts ultimately created DIMC as it's known today.

The organization had a strong group of volunteer support from the beginning, and their passion for helping animals was often greater than its bank account balance. The group knew that having a larger aircraft would be the best bet at expanding their impact; they just had to find a way to make it happen.

"...it was a very expensive way to do the transport. But for those dogs it was a game changer because they were all slated to be euthanized."

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4Y	11Q	59G
4Z	11T	59J
5C	11Z	59K
5T	12C	59R
5Y	12E	59S
6C	12H	59U
6E	12L	59W
6H	12U	59X
6N	13F	60C
6S	13G	60G
7G	13Q	60M
7L	13R	60N
7Q	13S	60U
7T	13U	60V
7V	13V	61B
7Y	13Y	61C
7Z	14D	61D
8C	14E	61E
8E	14F	61F
8G	14N	61H
8Q	14S	61J
8R	14Y	61K
8T	15C	61X
9C	15G	61Z
9D	15Q	62L
9M	15W	62N
9T	16D	62P
9W	16H	62Z
9Z	16K	63C
	16T	63H
	16V	63N
	16Y	63Q
	16Z	63U
	17D	63Z
	17K	64A
	17Q	64B
	17V	64R
	17X	64T
	17Z	64U
	18K	64V
	18Q	64X
	18R	64Y
	18S	65C
	18T	65P
	18Z	65T
	18Z	65Z
	4AB	7JX
	9AD	9JX
	4AE	3JY
	3AF	7JY
	9AH	9JY
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	4AN	6KA
	5AN	5KB
	7AN	7KB
	8AN	9KB
	9AN	6KC
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	6AU	7KK
	7AU	6KL
	9AU	5KN
	6AV	6KN
	9AV	7KN
	9AW	8KN
	4AX	9KN
	6AX	2KQ
	7AX	6KQ
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	7BG	4KV
	8BG	6KV
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	6BI	2KW
	9BI	2KX
	4BH	7KX
	6BH	2KY
	9BH	8KY
	5TG	3TG
	9TG	5TG
	2TK	3TK
	3TK	5TK
	3TL	5TL
	2TN	4TN
	6TN	3TP
	3TP	1TQ
	5TQ	7TQ
	8TQ	4TR
	3TR	6TR
	7TR	1TU
	2TU	6TU
	7TU	8TU
	8TU	9TU
	9TU	5TY
	9TY	5TY
	5TZ	6TZ
	8TZ	2UA
	7UA	2UC
	8UA	8UC
	9UA	2UD
	5UD	6UD
	8UD	9UD
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This initial trip, and many after it, in the Caravan was to a shelter in Merced, California, which averages about a 94% euthanasia rate. The newly acquired turboprop's impact was substantial from the outset and today flies animals all over the country, with volunteer pilots flying DIMC's Cessna Grand Caravans.

"I was getting burned out [being the only one flying], so I put some feelers out looking for some volunteer pilots. I found two or three guys who, if I paid for their training, would give me back 100 hours of flight time," he said. "They weren't in it to fly an airplane. They were in it because they wanted to save dogs. I really got fortunate to get some people who were as dedicated as I was to the whole process."



“

I really got fortunate to get some people who were as dedicated as I was to the whole process.”







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As the organization grew, fundraising became increasingly important, and DIMC has been successful in creating numerous relationships, including with over 200 animal rescue groups nationwide, and is a Petco Love partner. These efforts enabled them to purchase a second aircraft in 2022, and the Caravan was an easy choice due to its cargo capacity and low operating costs. The group averages about \$800 per hour to fly their PT6-powered turboprops.

"It's about \$1,500 per animal per transport [when only flying one or a few dogs in a smaller aircraft] to between \$60 and \$75 per animal per transport now, depending on how many we take," Rork said.

"I was very keen from the start that I wanted to get as many animals as possible on board. But large dogs weren't getting adopted [as often as the smaller ones], and in the Caravan we can carry 40 large crates, compared to two in the Stationair. But we have stepped back from determining what we need to fill the plane to allowing the sending and receiving groups to determine what animals they think they can adopt out."

A month after getting the second Caravan ready for service with new avionics and a custom paint job, it was flipped over on the ramp by a tornado. The aircraft is repairable, though, according to insurance, and it is expected to return to service soon following a year and a half in the shop. After it was damaged, the group purchased a third Caravan, aptly named "The Third." This aircraft joins "The Big Dog" and "The Sequel."

The organization's operations are nationwide, with an average mission length of about 1,000 to 1,200 nautical miles, and Rork explained that it has long been his goal to have three Caravans. These 208s are based in Lewiston, Idaho, Houston, Texas, and Hattiesburg, MS, essentially dividing the country into thirds. New routes are being opened to serve the East Coast's demand for animal transports.

Even with the volunteer pilots' dedication, their schedules couldn't keep up with demand, so DIMC has

since hired two full-time pilots. The group of roughly a dozen volunteer pilots provides necessary lift when the full-timers need time off. When transporting animals, the aircraft are usually wheels up at 5:00 a.m., following a lot of coordination getting the animals to the aircraft, before what is usually an eight to 12-hour day of flying with multiple stops.

Supporting DIMC's mission has been a true labor of love for everyone involved, and Rork takes great pride in the organization's growth over the past 14 years. It would take pages to properly recognize the hundreds of volunteers who have contributed

along the way. Every donation that comes in generates an email notification for Rork, which he returns with a handwritten note of appreciation to personally thank each supporter.

"For other turbine pilots [they should know], this is not a dog problem. One is either part of the problem or part of the solution," Rork said. "Get off the sidelines, contact your local shelter and offer your help. There are four things that one can do: adopt, foster, volunteer, and/or donate. For every dog that you save, you save two. The animal that you save and the one that takes its place." 



Grant Boyd is a private pilot with eight years of experience in aviation business, including marketing, writing, customer service, and sales. Boyd holds a Bachelor's and a Master's of Business Administration degree, both from Wichita State University, and a Doctor of Education degree from Oklahoma State University. He was chosen as a NBAA Business Aviation "Top 40 Under 40" award recipient in 2020.

“There are four things that one can do: adopt, foster, volunteer, and/or donate. For every dog that you save, you save two. The animal that you save and the one that takes its place.”



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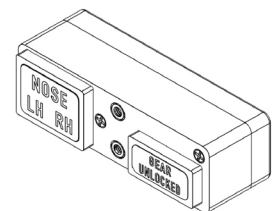
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"Dave, enclosed is your new policy covering your PBaron," said the email from broker Josh Jabour. Josh had found a new carrier, saving me a few thousand bucks. That was the good news. But when I looked at the fine print, I noticed that the "training requirements" section was blank. Was this a typo? Josh answered with, "The underwriter knows all about your training regimen and said it would be redundant to require anything in the policy. Do whatever you want to do."

In 59 years of flying, I had never heard of this.

I was already flying with mentor Doug Moss, completing the American Bonanza Society internet PBaron course, and attending FlightSafety's simulator class in Wichita annually.

It's a trick, I thought. They know that by putting me entirely in charge, I will train even more than my current regimen. This was a brilliant move. Now the pressure was on. I had to up my game!



Single-engine practice



Wise old birds

And so, I began to look around for something new to add. Word of mouth soon led me to BPT (Bonanza and Baron Pilot Training) pbpt.org. Around for decades, this travelling class presents weekend ground schools dedicated to the two airframes. I decided to take a look.

Late March found me in Austin, Texas, for the class. The instructors were some of the oldest and wisest I have met. They let me join them for dinner prior to the class, but only if I paid for margaritas. I glanced around the table and started adding up the logbook hours of these legends. I stopped counting after 100,000!

Indeed, they looked like residents of retirement homes, but that's where the comparison ended. These octogenarians (and older) were the most knowledgeable and best communicators in the business.

I bragged about my 7,000 hours, and most couldn't remember when they had that few. And they handled the margaritas better than I did. The classes were great, and I flew for 3-4 hours of in-plane instruction. They even had a Bonanza/Baron expert mechanic who did a free walk-around on every airplane and then spent an hour with each owner discussing his findings.

All in all, the best "bang for the buck" training experience I have had.

So, who am I trying to impress with all this training? I will be 75 this year. My reaction time and cognitive skills are certainly not what they were 30 years ago. I try to mitigate those factors with increased training. Things happen fast in an airplane.

Case in point. Climbing out of KSHV recently in perfect weather with the AP engaged in NAV mode, the airplane suddenly banked 30 degrees and continued turning off course. It was so sudden and unexpected that my initial thought was that I had an engine failure. A quick scan of those gauges said everything was normal. But the airplane continued to turn. After an AP disconnect and reset, all was normal.

The more you train, the better the outcome.

Fly safe. 

David Miller has owned and flown a variety of aircraft from light twins to midsize jets for more than 50 years. With 6,000 plus hours in his logbook, speaks nationally and writes on a variety of aviation safety topics. You can contact David at davidmiller1@sbcglobal.net.



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