

On Approach

Avemco® Policyholder News



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AN OPEN LETTER FROM MICHAEL DONOVAN, PRESIDENT OF AVEMCO INSURANCE COMPANY



This issue of Avemco's *On Approach* newsletter marks the beginning of our 60th year of protecting general aviation pilots and their aircraft. That makes this the ideal moment for me to thank our valued customers who have made such a long history of service possible. The loyalty of Avemco customers is unparalleled in the aviation insurance world. We have been privileged to serve some pilots for as long as 40 uninterrupted years. And thousands of Avemco customers have stood with us for more than 20 years. With this level of loyalty and commitment from our customers, we are continuously inspired to raise the bar on the quality of products and services that we provide.

Throughout the past 60 years, some things have remained unchanged in our approach to doing business. We were then and remain the only "direct" aviation insurance company in the United States, meaning there is no insurance broker that stands between you and us. We're also the only aviation insurance company that actively encourages our customers to call us whenever they have a question, a problem, or a complaint. Giving you a direct line to the underwriters in our Frederick, MD home office means you're always in direct contact with someone empowered to make decisions and solve problems and to approve coverage based on your unique situation and requirements

Another thing we remain firmly committed to is encouraging pilot safety. We sponsor safety

webinars, seminars, and other educational series designed to raise awareness of the simple ways in which you can protect yourselves and your loved ones by being a safer pilot. We regularly publish the *Avemco PIREP* safety articles by noted CFIs, aviation experts, and Avemco staff. Among our initiatives is our support of the WINGS Pilot Proficiency Program from the FAA's Team. Avemco recognizes the dedication of each participant by sponsoring and shipping a WINGS lapel pin, in coordination with the FAA, after each phase of the course. In honor of our 60th anniversary, we are sponsoring two new safety podcasts: *Flight Safety Detectives* and *Flying Magazine's I Learned About Flying From That*. I encourage you to listen to both. You'll find them as informative as they are entertaining.

Once again, from all of us here at Avemco Insurance Company, a very warm thank you and we look forward to being your insurer of choice for many more years to come! If there's anything at all we can do to make your experience with us better, we would love to hear from you.

Safe flying!

Michael Donovan
President



A GOLDFINGER PLANE LIVES ON

With the recent passing of Sean Connery, who starred in the first seven James Bond movies, it's a good excuse to reflect on some of the underrated costars of all 25+ films: the flying machines. Everyone remembers the cars and gadgets, the villains, and the women known as the Bond Girls. But to pilots, there are also aircraft to appreciate and lots of them.

Starting with *Dr. No*, virtually every Bond flick features at least one aircraft in a prominent role. There was the Wallis WA-116 "Little Nellie" Autogyro in *You Only Live Twice* that Q loaded with missile launchers, machine guns, and flame throwers, surely exceeding weight and balance by a few hundred pounds. The Bede BD-5J Acrostar Micro-Jet made the opening sequence in *Octopussy* a nail biter. In *Thunderball*, Bond took a Bell Aerosystems Rocket Belt for a spin. Even the Space Shuttle had a starring role in *Moonraker* a full year before it flew in real life. There have been other aircraft in other Bond movies including a British Aerospace Harrier T.10 in *The Living Daylights*, an Aero Vodochody L-39 Albatros stuck by Bond in *Tomorrow Never Dies* and an ominous black SIAI-Marchetti SF.260TP flown by the evildoers in *Quantum of Solace*. None of the actors who played Bond flew any of these aircraft, but who cares?

Then there was *Goldfinger*, which featured a veritable air force of planes and helicopters. If you've never seen *Goldfinger*, here comes a spoiler alert.

Auric Goldfinger's personal ride in the movie was the airplane generally regarded as the first dedicated business jet, the four-engine Lockheed L-1329 JetStar designed by Kelly Johnson. The jet made a quick costume change and appeared again later in the film as the C-140 military transport that was the instrument of Goldfinger's not-unexpected demise by getting sucked out a window. Elsewhere you might have noticed several other aircraft making cameo appearances. The ungainly Aviation Traders ATL-98 Carvair flew Goldfinger's solid gold Rolls Royce back home for some bodywork. A Hiller UH-12E4 helicopter schlepped Goldfinger's surprise gift to Ft. Knox. And a Brantly B-2 helicopter was dispatched to rescue Bond, who decidedly did not wish to be rescued while in the process of forming an alliance with his former foil, Pussy Galore. Which brings us to the real aerial stars of the movie, the five Piper PA-28 Cherokees of Ms. Galore's Flying Circus. Despite the movie appearing dated to viewers nowadays, it was vastly ahead of its time, by portraying Ms. Galore as the business owner and trainer of an all-female squadron of pilots.

While the 140 hp to 180 hp Cherokees were flying in formation bent on helping Goldfinger accomplish his destructive goals, one of the pilots called out, "Speed 2-2-0!" That's not the biggest technical inaccuracy in *Goldfinger* - it's not even in the top ten - but it's the one that gets the biggest groan from pilots. Still, James Bond movies

aren't meant to be documentaries, they're about fun! And one of the Cherokees that got significant screen time is still a whole lot of fun for its most recent owner, Aaron Pietras, a CFII, MEI, and Civil Air Patrol Lt. Colonel in Greenwood, Indiana.

A chance encounter led Aaron to buy the Cherokee a couple of years ago. Its link to celluloid immortality was a selling point. He has big plans to return the PA-28-150 to its former Hollywood glory. Aaron intends to repaint it in the original red and white scheme with the Flying Circus logo on the side, just like in the movie. But wait. There's more. He wants to redo the interior with the Goldfinger, and James Bond logos embroidered on the seats. And here's the kicker: Aaron intends to mockup a set of gas canisters just like the Pipers sprayed over the troops guarding Ft. Knox, then display the Cherokee at AirVenture and other airshows.

The end? No, just the beginning. Aaron is doing all this not only because he's a huge James Bond fan, but because he wants to use the Cherokee to promote the real-life role that women play in aviation. He has two teenage daughters, Morgan, and Emma, whom he's teaching to fly. Morgan has expressed interest in traveling to airshows and other venues as an emissary to encourage girls to take up flying. Sounds like a fun project and a good cause, doesn't it? All Aaron needs is for Q to mount a rocket assist engine to help the little Piper get up to that 220 kts promised in the movie.

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD TO THE LEFT SEAT

*Avemco Insurance Company recently interviewed three female pilots, each at a different stage in their training, experience, and careers to obtain their reflections on the arduous journey to the left seat. **Current statistics show that female pilots make up 7.9% of the U.S. pilot population¹. That number has ticked up slightly in recent years and perhaps partially due to the attitude, determination, and support system the pilots highlighted below have developed?***

It's tough to find the time, energy, and finances for flight training. Think back on your experiences, past or perhaps current. Now try it as a woman who is juggling a career and raising children. It can be done, but the challenges are daunting. Jolie Lucas is a full-time psychotherapist. She's also the founder of the Mooney Ambassadors organization and is a frequent blogger for AOPA. Magdalen Dale is an underwriter and aviation insurance specialist for Avemco Insurance Company. She's a student pilot who's not letting the pandemic get in the way of her lessons. Both Jolie and Magdalen learned to fly in their 40s while raising teenage children. Pia Berqvist is a First Officer for SkyWest Airlines as well as a GA pilot and contributor to publications like FLYING and Plane and Pilot magazines. She earned her ATP and began a long-deferred career as an airline pilot when her son was nine.

Not surprisingly, the attitudes about flying that each developed as a young girl shaped their attitudes toward becoming a pilot as an adult.

Jolie comes from a flying family, with a father who had 10,000 hours in his logbook and routinely piled the kids into the family Mooney for weekend

trips instead of the family station wagon. To Jolie, flying was so mundane and boring that she had no desire to do it herself. After all, who gets excited about learning to drive the family station wagon? But when the long-dormant bug bit, it bit hard. She went from her first lesson to checkride in just four months, a significant feat for anyone. "The way that I approached it was similar to the way I approached graduate school." She says.

"Make time away from family count, flying two or three times a week. I drew on the experience of childbirth, which is extremely hard. You must go through it by yourself. So, you draw on the inner strength that you have bringing those kids into the world. I think that I used some of that strength of being a mother. I used those same feelings of perseverance and dedication."

Magdalen Dale, on the other hand, grew up in a traditional Father Knows Best kind of family. Magdalen's mother once told her, "Honey, women just



don't fly airplanes. As much as I think it would be awesome, we just don't." Magdalen never really felt encouragement for learning to fly until she created her support system. In the eighth grade, she joined the Explorer Scouts and found a community that made her believe she could do anything, even the impossible. Still, it didn't push her over the edge into learning to fly. That didn't happen until after four children and a divorce later. How did she do



it? She says, “Anything you do, there’s a balance. There’s sacrifice across the board, and you have to choose what’s important to you.”

Today, Magdalen’s support system includes her fiancé, who’s also her CFI, and the dozens of pilots she talks with regularly in her job as an Avemco underwriter. “Working in aviation and talking to pilots all day has made it easier. They all encourage me to keep at it and remind me that all the work will be worthwhile. That helps with the motivation. When I feel, I can’t do this, and there’s just no more time in my day to study, I talk to a pilot or a brand-new student, and they are so excited. It re-energizes me.”

Pia Berqvist grew up in Sweden, where she fell in love with the idea of flying early on, inspired by a trip to an Air Force base and by an uncle who was a charter pilot. But Pia thought it would be impossible for her to fly. She had never met a female pilot. As a young woman, she moved to the U.S. and became friends with a flight attendant who told her that, yes, in fact, there are a few women pilots and, yes, it is possible. A few months later, Pia was on her way to getting her license. She became a CFI, then a demo pilot for Cessna, working towards a career in the airlines. She had the good fortune and bad timing to be hired by SkyWest Airlines on

September 10, 2001. After 9/11, she was laid off, and her airline career ended before it began.

Pia continued to fly small planes and write for aviation magazines. It would be 18 years before she got another crack at SkyWest. By that time, her son was nine years old, and Pia had to be away from him for two months while she earned her ATP and went through ground school. Nobody knows better than Pia, the value of a strong support system. “The other parent must be willing to step up. One of the reasons there aren’t that many women pilots is because it is hard to be a mother and a pilot.” She adds,

“Making sure that your children know their mother can do whatever she loves and whatever she wants to do.”

Magdalen Dale puts it this way, “I’ve just made it work, that’s all. I want to do this. It’s important to me. I love it. It’s amazing. It was one of those things on my bucket list. I’ve done a lot of other crazy stuff. I learned to snowboard when I was 45. I figure if I could learn to snowboard at 45, I could learn to fly an airplane at 47.”

The imperative to find a way to do something just for yourself is ingrained in most flying moms. Jolie Lucas calls it “grace and grit”. “I try to give myself grace when I’m learning something, but I also have to exhibit grit. Which means letting me take time away from my family toward something good for me. So, was it hard for me working and learning to fly? Yeah, it was. Women underestimate that we can do it. I love being a Mom, but I’ve always had a life of my own as well. Our decisions must fund our dreams. If we believe we can do it, then we make decisions that fund that.”

¹ <https://www.wai.org/resources/waistats>



Flight Safety Detectives

Avemco is also a major sponsor of *Flight Safety Detectives*, a compelling podcast presented by two world-renowned aviation industry consultants, Greg Feith and John Goglia, who offer the ultimate insider view of everything to do with aviation safety. *Flight Safety Detectives* will take you behind-the-scenes to review the facts and little-known details on deadly air crashes and issues impacting general aviation and the commercial airline industry.

I Learned About Flying From That (ILAFFT) By Flying Magazine

Avemco is the exclusive sponsor of Flying Magazine’s brand new *I Learned About Flying From That (ILAFFT)* podcast. *ILAFFT* has been Flying’s most popular magazine feature for more than 70 years and for the first time, it’s being brought to life with stories directly from the mouths of the folks who have narrowly escaped disaster and lived to become better pilots because of it. Twice a month, veteran air show announcer, entertainer, and pilot, Rob Reider will talk with another pilot who has learned about flying from getting into a bad situation. They will share their experiences, lessons learned, and answer questions that often don’t get asked in the printed columns.

Subscribe to both podcasts on Spotify, iTunes, or Google.

10,000 REASONS TO COMPLETE ONE PHASE OF FAASTEAM'S WINGS PILOT PROFICIENCY PROGRAM



Every pilot knows the more they learn about flying, typically the safer they will become. Most pilots are aware of the FAASTeam's WINGS Pilot Proficiency Program (*WINGS*). They may even know how easy it is to sit in on a *WINGS* credit seminar and walk away a more educated pilot. Yet fewer than 1% of active pilots complete any of the three phases of the *WINGS* program. How come?

Paul Burger felt that it might be a lack of incentive. He reasoned that more money could create more incentive. A veteran pilot and retired financial company executive, Paul and his wife, Fran, put up tens of thousands of dollars of their own money in hopes of encouraging pilots to complete at least one phase of *WINGS*. Each year, the Paul and Fran Burger *WINGS* Sweepstakes awards \$10,000 in a random drawing to ten pilots who have completed a *WINGS* phase: Four \$1,500 prizes, four \$750 prizes, and two \$500 prizes.

To enter the sweepstakes, a pilot must complete

a phase of *WINGS*. That means earning six credits consisting of Knowledge credits (Courses, Seminars, or Activities from either the FAA or from AOPA, ASA, Sporty's, Gleim Publications, and others) and three Flight credits (with an instructor). It's worth noting that completing any phase of *WINGS* eliminates the requirement for a flight review. Additionally, earning a new rating qualifies as completing an entire *WINGS* phase.

What would prompt someone to dedicate so much of his own money to encourage strangers to participate in the *WINGS* program? Paul experienced up close the pain caused by an accident that shouldn't have happened. He lost two close friends, young people that were like members of his own family, who went for a ride with a pilot they trusted to be safe and proficient, but whose inexperience and bad judgment caused an accident. That tragedy set Paul Burger's life on a new course, determined to do everything he could to prevent similar accidents.

He founded the *WINGS* Industry Advisory Committee and the Advocates for Aviation Safety Foundation and has worked hand in glove with the FAA to promote participation in the *WINGS* program. Yet the *WINGS* Program still struggles to gain widespread awareness. This, despite a FAAS-Team report that correlated reduced accidents with pilots who completed phases. Finally, Paul took matters into his own hands and out of his own pocket, endowing the *WINGS* Sweepstakes along with his wife Fran. The AOPA Air Safety Foundation, NAFI (National Association of Flight Instructors), SAFE (Society of Aviation and Flight Educators), and 32 other organizations all endorse the *WINGS* Sweepstakes.

Complete information on the Paul and Fran Burger *WINGS* Sweepstakes is at [WINGS Sweepstakes](#). You can learn about the FAASTeam *WINGS* program [here](#).

READBACK

Readback is your chance to tell us what you think about everything we have to say and do - including our PIREPs, articles, emails and previous issues of the *On Approach* newsletter. Content has been or may be edited for length and style before publication.

RESPONSES TO MARCI VERONIE'S "FLIGHT SIMULATORS-WORTH THE TRIP"

I enjoyed your article regarding the value of flight simulators. Your article was very timely as my wife and I have decided to set up a home flight simulator as a Christmas present to each other. We're doing this with two central goals. One, as a tool to help me stay more proficient in IFR operation, and two, as preparation for my wife to take a Pinch Hitter course to be able to land the airplane in the event of an emergency.

--John Vesey

..., my simulator experience has been less than satisfactory. In the past year, I have spent time in two different Redbird simulators, at two separate flight schools. I believe that both simulators were early versions of the Redbird product line, but both made me feel that I was using Microsoft Flight Simulator software, rather than a more sophisticated and realistic system. The flight

controls were very "loose", with little to no tactile feedback on the yoke as compared to the feel of my C182. Instrument approaches were therefore very sloppy; it was much more difficult to track an ILS beam than in the actual airplane. Cockpit layout of switches and controls were of course not the same as the airplane I fly, and that alone caused me some problems with the simulated flying. I acknowledge that more time in each machine probably would have overcome that issue.

I applaud Avemco for encouraging pilots to gain some training over the cold winter months, but please realize that not all simulators will provide realistic training that will improve pilot performance. I walked away very frustrated from both of my experiences.

--Jim Green

RESPONSES TO GENE BENSON'S "DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS"

GOOD article! Recognize distraction. Finish what you were doing, before you were distracted.

--Raul Boerner

I have a switch on the intercom that silences everyone in the airplane except the pilot and ATC. Presto, no background chatter.

Before start-up, I keep the passenger(s) in the lounge until the pre-flight has been completed. That way I do not forget things like the oil cap or the wheel chocks.

--Erik Thomas

This PIREP is good, especially the lead-in, thanks for sharing. As a student with 75 hrs of training, this kind of acknowledgment to the aviation community is comforting to me. It lets me know this is a struggle regardless of experience and I don't have to suffer in silence with "is it just me".

--Troy Sockwell

Thanks for sharing Gene Benson's PIREP on distractions. His humor helped to make what could be a dry and heavy subject relatable and memorable. I intend to read excerpts at the next meeting of my Ninety-Nines chapter.

--Sandra Smith, AGI, Chair of the Kitty Hawk Chapter of the Ninety-Nines

We cannot be reminded of basic crucial safety items too many times!

--Don Hedeman





Trustpilot

Avemco Insurance Company

Reviews 380 • Excellent

★★★★★ 4.8 ⓘ

Scott Schultz
1 review • US

★★★★★ Invited Feb 3, 2021

This would be the third insurance...

This would be the third insurance policy I have obtained from Avemco and I'm always impressed with the customer service, even during the stay at home policies instituted during covid.

Ryan
1 review • US

★★★★★ Invited Feb 4, 2021

Great Job

Great job and made it easy to change planes. It took a quick 15 minute phone call, wait time included, with closing a week away to finalize.

Andrei Danin
2 reviews • US

★★★★★ Invited Feb 3, 2021

Straightforward buying process

Nothing to complain about. The buying process is very straightforward: all options are explained, an example policy is provided, everything is clear upfront.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Visit our profile to read, rate, and write a review on your experience with us at [Trustpilot.com](https://www.trustpilot.com)





We'd love to hear from you!

Let us know what you think of our *On Approach* newsletter.

E-mail us at avemcomarketing@avemco.com





KEEP US ON YOUR RADAR






AND CONNECT WITH US TODAY!

Did you know that Avemco Insurance Company is the provider of the WINGS pins you receive?



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Avemco Policyholder News

WINTER 2021

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