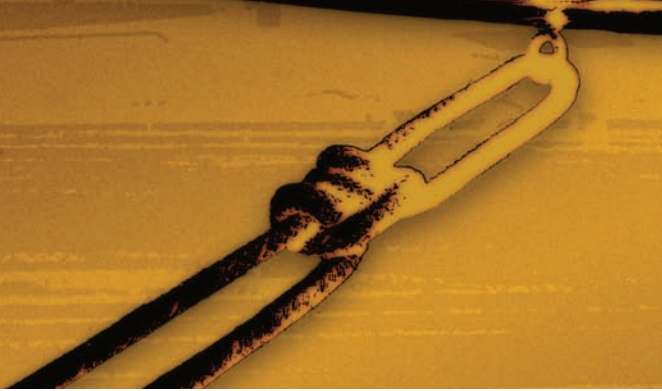




SUSAN PARSON

Postflight



Nothing Left to Chance

I often quip nowadays that the acquisition of an iPad has restored me to the status of Literate Human Being. Given all the work-related material stuffed into my briefcase, the perceived burden of carrying “real” books was too much and, besides, where on earth do I store them when I’m done? (Yes, I have heard of libraries ... but I like to highlight as I read.) Happily my magical electronic device allows me to carry and store eBooks—including all manner of aviation books, manuals, checklists, and guides—with no additional weight or storage penalties. It’s a beautiful thing.

Association and Correlation

I tend to select my eBooks in much the same way as I surf the Internet. On the Internet, one link leads to another and I somehow slide from a review of human factors in the Canary Islands (Tenerife) crash to researching cultivation of vanilla in Madagascar (no joke—I really did that) in the space of 30-45 minutes. Similarly one eBook leads me to another, and another, and yet another. A recent reading chain took me from a book on Disney

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management practices to *The Experience Economy* to the memoir of a Reagan-era Secret Service agent.

By now you may be wondering how, if at all, my admittedly quirky reading habits relate to *FAA Safety Briefing*, loss of control (LOC), or even aviation writ large.

There is an answer.

Steeped as I am in aviation (I bleed the blue of 100LL), I somehow manage to associate and correlate almost everything to my favorite subject. As I worked with the magazine team to create, edit, and shape the individual articles and the overall package for this special Safety Standdown issue of *FAA Safety Briefing*, a number of the pieces that I read, or wrote, on LOC prevention and training brought to mind the leave-nothing-to-chance mentality and discipline described in the Secret Service agent’s memoir. His business as head of the Presidential Protective Detail was one in which life and death are at stake—literally.

Our business as pilots is much the same. We hope that no one is gunning for us but, sadly, no one has to be. As accident statistics demonstrate, pilots are doing a painfully effective job of gunning for themselves. It brings to mind the comic strip character Pogo’s best-known observation that “we have met the enemy...and he is us.”

We Can Do Better

Aviation in general, and general aviation in particular, have more than enough challenges without adding the enemy within. With that in mind, the specific topics for the FAAS Team’s third annual Safety Standdown were carefully selected with a view to vanquishing one of the deadliest pilot enemies, LOC-inflight. Similarly, we crafted, shaped, and sequenced the corresponding articles in this issue of *FAA Safety Briefing* to support the information provided in the Safety Standdown presentations. Our goal, as always, was to make the material relevant, timely, practical, and interesting ... even captivating.

If I could summarize a central message from this issue, though, it comes down to the idea emblazoned in the title: Leave Nothing to Chance. Knowledge is the foundation, so learn everything you can about the “academics” and aerodynamics in LOC-I. Know yourself. Know your aircraft. Know your operating environment.

Also important is skill. Go beyond what’s required to pass a test, and use every flight to build and sharpen your stick-and-rudder skills. If your finances permit, consider investing in specialized upset prevention and recovery training provided by a qualified instructor. It may be the best training investment you’ll ever make.

And, last but not least, be sure your attitude—the mental one as well as the aircraft version—is upright. Springtime flying beckons ... leave nothing to chance to make it a safe and happy flying season.

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