

CFIDarren Newsletter

# Regional Pilot Confessions, RunwayFinder

Issue #39

February 13, 2012

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## Quote of the Month

*"You're in charge but don't touch the controls."*

- Shannon Lucid, recounting what the two Russian cosmonauts told her every time they left the Mir space station for a space walk, 1996

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Thank you for taking the time to read this safety message

This edition brings an Unusual Special on the best selling IFR Checkride Prep Book on the market. Included is some weird news about a "security threat diaper" and Confessions of a Regional Pilot. At the end of this email, check out the Hoverbike, good to 10,000.

**Valentine's Day Tomorrow** - Don't forget!

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Thanks for your continued support... Darren

## Weird News

HUFFINGTON POST - It wasn't a security threat that kept Qantas flight 825 from the skies, but rather a smelly, dirty diaper. The plane was en route from Darwin to Brisbane, Australia Sunday when passengers started complaining of a strange odor. And, in that situation, Qantas procedures dictate that the plane land as soon as possible, reports ntnwes.com.au. The plane landed in Mt. Isa.

A Qantas statement said an "odor" was detected, but the commenters at The Aviation Herald pinpointed the real culprit. "Unfortunately the fumes turned out to be a very smelly nappy dumped in the fwd toilet," posted Frank Smith.

Because the Mt. Isa airport couldn't handle a plane as large as a Boeing 767, the passengers had to be removed from the plane by forklift, five at a time, in a process that took two hours. A new plane picked them up in Mt. Isa and brought them to Brisbane. Their original craft later joined them in Brisbane, with their luggage.

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### Winter Flying

#### (PocketLearning)

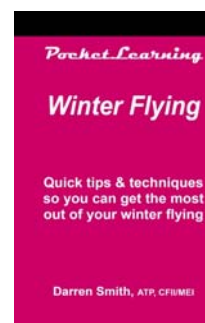
This 44 page guide offers quick tips & techniques so you can get the most out of your winter flying - safely. Includes information on Winter Preflight, Induction Icing, Carb Icing, Airframe Icing, Tail Stalls, Hypothermia Strategies for Reducing the Risk, Winter Survival Kit, Aeronautical Decision Making, and the Personal Minimums Checklist. Regular price: \$8 (Free Shipping to US addresses). ISBN: 978-1468035070

### Aviation Acronyms, Contractions, & Mnemonics (PocketLearning)

A complete pilot resource for aviation acronyms and contractions for every sector of aviation. Written by a pilot for pilots, this book provides instant answers to weather reports with confusing codes and aviation material with undefined acronyms. This book has been in constant publication since 2004 and is frequently updated. For free lifetime updates, register your book (instructions included). 90 pages. Designed to fit in your flight bag, size 5" x 8" Regular Price: \$12 (Free Shipping to US addresses). ISBN-13: 978-1468069501

### Using the NASA Form (PocketLearning)

Practical advice and tips using the NASA form when you've violated the FARs. This guide will walk you step by step through filing a NASA safety report. It will tell you the techniques and traps to submit a good report AND keep your pilot certificate unblemished. You only have 10 days to submit your report, so this is the tool you want to have ahead of time. As airspace gets more complicated, and the economy doesn't allow us to fly as much as we'd like, the chance of making an error go up. Well I said error, but the FAA looks at these little errors as FAR violations which put a pilot's certificate at risk. The NASA form is the get out of jail free ticket. What most pilots don't realize is that a poorly written/executed NASA form could be excluded meaning there's no protection. Here's the product that helps you save your ticket. 40 pages. Designed to fit in your flight bag, size: 5"x8" Regular Price: \$12(Free Shipping to US addresses). ISBN: 978-1468096262



## RunwayFinder.com Going Down

A fantastic little website we discovered last year is now calling it quits. Started in 2005 by Dave Parsons, a software engineer to help in his efforts as a student pilot, RunwayFinder was hit by a patent infringement lawsuit by FlightPrep. The mood across the internet is negative towards FlightPrep for their perceived efforts to stifle innovation.

### Practical advice for using the NASA form when you've violated the FARs



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### On his blog, Dave writes:

"RunwayFinder will be shutting down at the end of February [2012]. It's been a great 7 years, but it's time to fold her up. While I understand AeroNav's need to re-capture costs, the new chart fees along with other [FlightPrep] licensing fees will put RunwayFinder firmly into the red. If this were the only issue, I could try collecting donations. However, the site needs continuous maintenance: the airport data format is changing this year, the weather gathering needs updates, and improvements are needed to keep up with the latest browsers and mobile devices. I've had many people suggest alternatives, but unfortunately there is no way to keep it going. When I started RunwayFinder in 2005, viewing aeronautical charts online was difficult. I was learning how to fly, and wanted to look at charts from across the country to dream about where I could fly some day. Being a software engineer, I wrote some code, collected a bunch of data and charts, and RunwayFinder was born. It made a little money along the way, all of which was plowed into legal defense. Despite that, it's been a fun project and a great learning experience. Thanks to all the pilots out there that used the site, and especially those that helped out along the way."



### Instrument Rating Checkride Reviewer

Finally, instrument rating help! This 340-page review package is designed to help you to get through the Instrument Checkride. Includes [Learning IFR Enroute Charts](#) and [Pilot's Radio Communications Guide](#) and [Visi-Hold™](#) (see below) as a bonus. This package can be used as a self study guide or by flight instructors to provide IPC / Checkride preparation. Designed to fit in your flight bag, size: 8.5" x 6"-Sent USPS

Media Mail with Delivery Confirmation Tracking Number, arrives in 5-10 days. Regular Price: \$25 (Free Shipping to US addresses) ISBN: 978-1468068955 [...more information](#)



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Darren Smith, ATP, CFII/MEI

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### Learning IFR Charts

a pink cover instead of the usual red cover.

## Confessions of a Regional Pilot

*Excerpted from FoxNews & airfarewatchdog.com*

**Is it true that you get paid less than some flight attendants?** Yes, but it depends on the airline. Most of us are doing this because we have a passion for aviation and plan to move up in the industry. We do not plan to fly 50-seat regional jets all of our life. While the hefty salaries of experienced pilots may not stay as high as they once were, we are not doing this for the pay. We earn experience by flying regional jets and that experience will help us fly for larger airlines with mainline aircraft where the pay is higher.

**How do you earn the hours needed to qualify to be an airline pilot?** Many of us begin very early taking flight lessons and earning our hours. Others come through the military and earn their hours flying during their training or in school. They are the lucky ones because their training is paid for; school is the biggest expense for non-military pilots. It is a double whammy to have loans to pay for school and survive on such little pay. But, we love what we do so much that we deal with it.

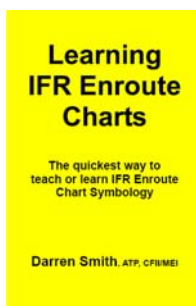
**Do you get paid more if you trained with the military versus at a flight school?** No, we all start at the same pay at my airline although it depends if you're hired as a first officer or captain.

**Do you ever find yourself being treated differently by more experienced pilots because you are so young?** On the flight deck, it depends. Most pilots respect each other and their decisions although occasionally advice and recommendations for how to do things are shared. However, there are a few more senior pilots that were furloughed from major airlines that now find themselves flying regional jets. They feel like they are superior to those who are just starting out and often seem a bit condescending. It is all part of the learning experience though. Being a pilot is just as much about learning to work with various personalities as it is about actually flying the airplane.

**How do you survive on such a small salary?** For one thing, we are like flight attendants, and we have crash pads in our bases. These are apartments, houses, or sometimes even trailers that we all share as pilots. We are never all there at once meaning we all pay a portion of the rent, and then we use the beds a few nights a month. It is a lot cheaper than a hotel or paying for an apartment. Secondly, almost all of my friends have a second job. They are real estate agents, temporary workers, part-time coaches, or even eBay pros. We do what we have to do to survive, but our lifestyle is not glamorous. It is all fueled by the hope to grow our career while building our skills as a pilot.

**Is it true that you sometimes sleep in the airport?** There have been times when crew scheduling has us





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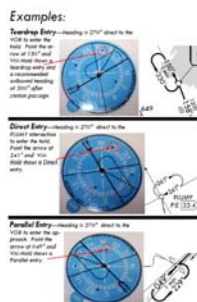
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operate flights into cities that arrive after midnight and depart around 4-5 am. In these instances, it makes little sense for us to take a shuttle to a hotel, check in, sleep for only a few hours, and then have a wake-up call an hour and a half before departure. What ends up happening is that we have "quiet rooms" in some terminals with La-Z-Boy style loungers, pitch-black surroundings, and absolute quiet. We get more rest knowing that we are at the airport, but it never qualifies as sound sleep. The media likes to make it seem that we slurp coffee in the airport bar all night, but we do have a place to sleep. It is not entirely restful, and our schedule only allows for one of these on a multi-day trip, but it does happen. This is becoming rare, but it happens. We will have more extended rest periods built into the trip later down the line.

**Why would you even accept this job if the schedule is so intense?** This is a stepping-stone for almost all of us. The major airlines typically hire from the regional carriers so this is a great avenue for growth. Sadly, there are also a lot of pilots who have been furloughed from their jobs flying the big jets at the majors who accept jobs flying for regional carriers because that is their only option.

**Why do pilots have to go through the same security checks that passengers do? Isn't that counter-intuitive?** That's exactly what we think! If we have the controls of the aircraft anyway, it makes more sense to ease the lines by clearing pilots in advance. Some airports have a test program and waive us through (Baltimore has this in some terminals for example), but others are still struggling to implement it. For now, we must go through the same charades as passengers except it really is pointless for us.

**The airplane has a legacy carrier logo name on it; is that who you work for?** No. While regional jets often bear the branding of a major legacy carrier, we are often a smaller independent airline that operates under the banner of the larger carrier to provide flight connections and additional frequencies to their system of flights. These smaller airlines operate as subcontractors and have different safety procedures, training departments, and management teams than the larger airlines although, all of this is governed by the FAA to insure everything is up to par.

## Hoverbike



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## Safety Factoid

Pilots mismanage fuel flow to the engine an average of three times per week.

## Video of the Month



World's First Human-Powered Ornithopter

Students at the University of Toronto have built the first succesful human-powered Ornithopter (a machine that generates lift through the flapping of its wings). Dubber "The Snowbird," the flying machine achieved. The flight lasted a scant 19.3 seconds, but it is still longer than any other attempt. You can find more info about the project here.



Chris Malloy has built a hoverbike from motor cycle parts that can fly 173 mph at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Bonus - you don't even need a pilot's license because it is classified as an ultralight! It lacks many safety features now, but he plans on adding parachutes and perhaps a covering for the giant fans. This from Wired Magazine:

*An Australian chap named Chris Malloy has built a hoverbike from motorbike parts, and he claims it can fly at 173 mph at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Those are theoretical figures for the time being because the contraption hasn't flown too far yet. Malloy bases those outlandish specs on the 231-pound device's thrust-to-weight ratio. It consists almost solely of a pair of massive propellers powered by an 1,170-cc engine good for 107 horsepower. The fuel tank contains enough juice to give it a range of 92 miles at a cruising speed of 92 mph. The pilot's right hand controls the thrust of the rotors, while the left adjusts the angle of the control vanes, pitching the nose down or up to move forward or backward. Turning the handlebars turns the machine.*