

# TEXAS FLIGHT

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Instructor Spotlight

In this issue, we'll be featuring our latest recipient of the prestigious AOPA Flight Instructor of the Year Award for 2024, John Schaffer

### Aviation Trivia

What was the nickname for the H-4 Hercules aircraft that made a single flight in 1947?

Which famous aviator was indirectly involved in the "Crime of the Century" in 1932?

What was the duration and route of the first Commercial Airline flight?

### Welcome Back Howard

Texas Flight welcomes back Howard Davenport to the Texas Flight Family. Howard will bring his 52 years and 21,000 plus hours in various facets of general aviation and flight training to enhance our Quality and Safety Department. Read more about Howard on Page 2.



### Student Spotlight

It's not often we get a NFL Superstar signing up for flight training at Texas Flight, but there's always a first time. Please welcome Halapoulivaati Vaitai, who we affectionately call "Big V," to the Texas Flight Family.

"Big V" is nearing the completion of his Private Pilot training in our CE-182 having approximately 45 hours. His goal since recently retiring from the NFL at 31 years of age is to become an airline pilot. He chose Texas Flight because of our structured syllabus, AOPA recognition, and quality of the instructors.

"Big V" attended TCU and was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles franchise in 2016 to the position of Swing Tackle. In 2018, he was part of franchise history when the Eagles won their first Super Bowl against the highly favored New England Patriots led by the legendary, Tom Brady, in a score of 41 to 33. After 4 years with the Eagles, he became a free agent and was picked up by the Detroit Lions at the position of Right Tackle. (Cont)



## Welcome Back Howard

Texas Flight is happy to announce the return of Howard Davenport to our Administrative Staff as the Director of Quality and Safety in the Flight Training Department. With a resume that covers almost all facets of General Aviation, he is a valuable source of information to our students and flight instructors alike. Formerly an inspector with the FAA, Howard holds a Commercial Pilot Certificate with ASELS, MEL, IA, RH, and Glider. He is a flight instructor in ASME, IA, RH, and Glider with over 21,000 hours. He has flown in all 50 states of the U.S, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, 8 countries, 4 continents, and 2 Atlantic Crossings ferrying CE-208's to Africa.

He was a member of the World Famous Cole Brother's Air Show from the mid-70's throughout the 80's performing in a Stephen's Acro and De Havilland Super Chipmunk. During his 7 year stint as a bush pilot in Africa, he became the 1st and only pilot to perform the Inverted Ribbon Cut over the source of the Nile River in Uganda.

"V" played for the Lions for 4 years until his retirement in 2023. He decided to retire early to prevent more injuries which could affect his planned flying career.

"V" currently resides in Houston with his lovely wife, Caitlyn, who I might add was a star herself with the TCU basketball team, and his 3 beautiful children. They also own a 205 acre spread in Iola, Texas, where he has cattle and plans to eventually acquire some chickens and other poultry.

Pictured with Texas Flight Owner, Myron Hulet, and Quality and Safety Manager, Howard Davenport displaying his copy of the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

## Instructor Spotlight



John Schaffer is a Gold Seal Flight Instructor who is the Assistant Chief Instructor at Texas Flight Aviation. He is only one of two Texas Flight Instructors who have received this prestigious Flight Instructor of the Year Award from the AOPA for the Southern Region of the United States. He recently traveled to Denver, CO. to receive his award at the Redbird Migration. (Cont)



John holds Airplane Single Engine and Instrument Airplane Flight Instructor ratings along with Instrument Ground Instructor. He has accumulated 1500 hours total flight time. The way he prepares his students for the practical test has been praised by Pilot Examiners. He is respected by his students, peers, and those in management for his superior attention to detail and dedication to the job at hand, which are producing the pilots of tomorrow.

It is bitter-sweet that we must say goodbye to John at the end of March, as he has recently been accepted to Commute Air (United Express) Airlines. We are honored to have had him as our Assistant Chief Instructor and mentor to many within the Texas Flight family.

Blue Skies and Tailwinds, John!!! You will be missed!!

## Texas Flight Acquires Beaver Air Services and Equipment to become Beechtec Air Services

Texas Flight has recently acquired Beaver Air Services and Equipment, one of the nation's premier Beechcraft recommended facilities specializing in Beechcraft single and multi-engine piston twin maintenance under the new name of Beechtec Air Services. Beechtec is seeking recommendation by the American Bonanza Society's roster as a recommended maintenance shop. And owners from across the country flock to KDWH regularly to have their aircraft maintained by highly trained and experienced technicians specializing in Beechcraft for their maintenance needs. To ensure a smooth transition, Beechtec has kept the original technician staff, some of whom have worked in the shop for 23 years.



Following the acquisition, Beechtec has partnered with Texas Flight Aviation to provide AOPA Award Winning highly experienced and seasoned instructors to owners wishing to do flight reviews, upgrade, instrument proficiency checks, and insurance required proficiency training. These select instructors are members of the American Bonanza Society and have completed training per their rigorous standards.

Pictured is Howard Davenport (right), Beechtec's Chief Flight Instructor, with Beaver Air Services founder, David Beaver (left).

# Back to the Basics - Stick and Rudder, Sight and Sound - The Romance of Flight



By Howard Davenport

Aviation has certainly changed since I received my Private Pilot Certificate in 1973. I learned to fly right here at David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport when there was no tower and only two flight schools on the field. I hustled every airplane owner on the field to get them to allow me to wash their airplanes for \$20, or sweeping their hangars for \$10 in an attempt to garner enough funds for an hour flight at \$16.00 per hour for the little Grumman TR-2, and \$5.00 per hour for the instructor. As unbelievable as it may sound, in those days you soloed in 8 hours unless you had a major malfunction in your ability to fly that plane. There was a reason you soloed in 8 hours back then, and that is because you were taught to fly by attitude, stick and rudder, and sight and sound. The basics of flight were stressed; not glass cockpits, gadgets, and eyes glued to the panel.

In those days, you didn't have use of the airspeed indicator, VSI, inclinometer, or attitude indicator for the first 3 to 4 hours. Those instruments were covered up. Your attitude was the nose of your airplane relative to the horizon. You knew if you were slipping or skidding in a turn by using the rudder to make the nose of the airplane follow the turn correcting for adverse yaw and feeling it in "the seat of your pants," which is where that term originated. If your butt moved across the seat to the outside of the turn, you were skidding; to the inside of the turn you were slipping. You didn't need to be staring at a ball to recognize this when your eyes should have been outside the cockpit. You were part of the airplane....not detached from it.

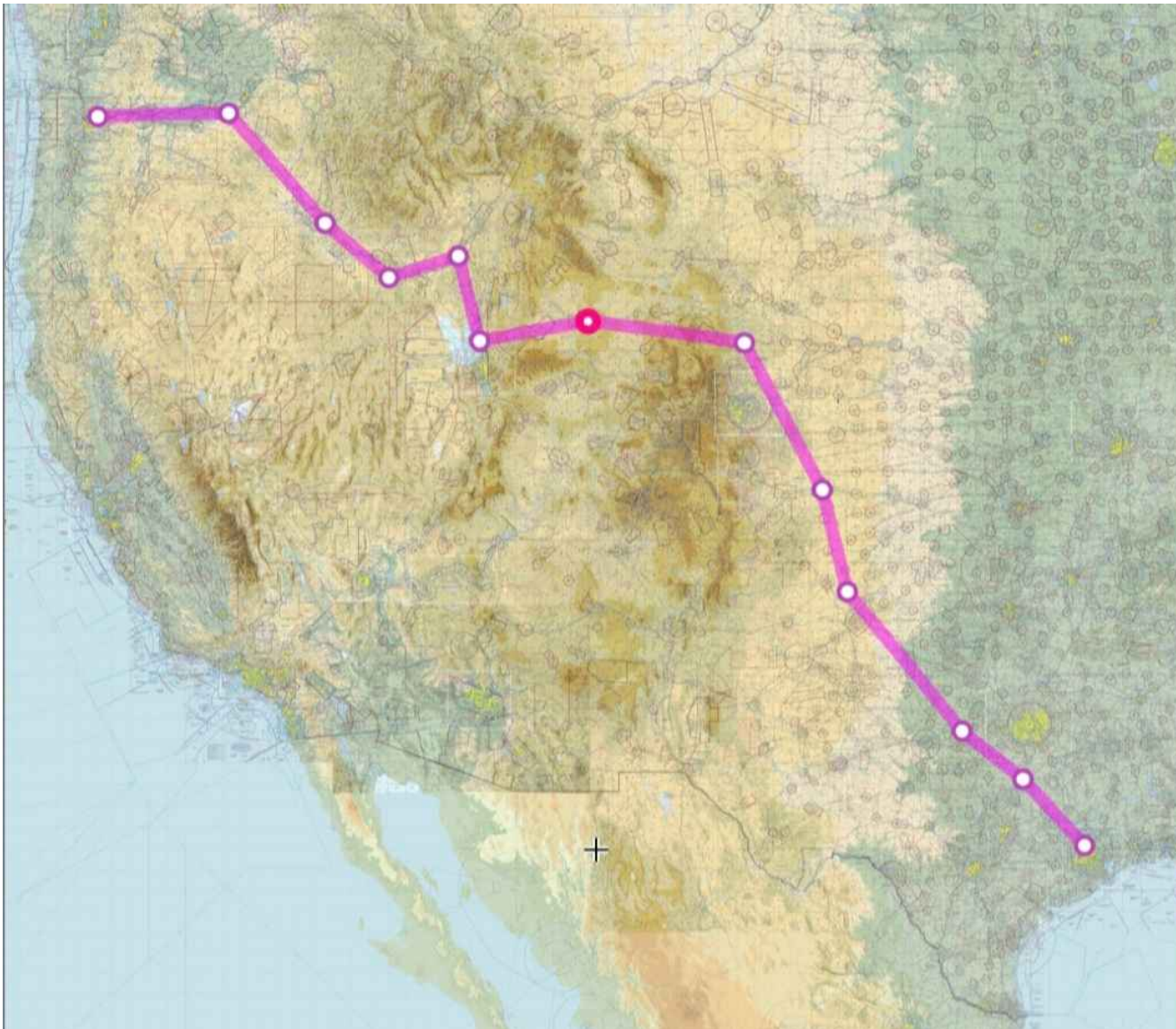


Another area of modern-day flight training I find remiss is the teaching of pilotage and dead reckoning. After my return to Texas Flight, I was informed by one of the instructors that I was going to need a subscription to Foreflight. Not to feel inadequate in front of a peer, I smiled and excitedly agreed to purchase an iPad and subscription although I was too embarrassed to admit I didn't know how to use it! Technology is great, but it comes with a price tag other than dollars. It breeds complacency and over-reliance on equipment that can easily fail. The wings of that airplane don't know if you have Foreflight or not. There only concern is the airflow necessary to produce lift.

Us old-timers refer to those that can't get from Point A to Point B without a \$100,000 glass panel a "Child of the Magenta Line." I often wonder how many pilots can use visual references on the surface to determine an approximate wind direction and velocity, compute ground speed using only a watch, chart, and some basic elementary math skills, and interpret a segmented circle at a non-towered airport. These are basic fundamentals of flight planning that unfortunately are shoved in a bottle with the instructions "Break Only In Case of GPS Failure." If you're proficient in the fundamentals, the glass and magenta line is just an added bonus and not a crutch.

Pilotage is defined as navigation with reference to landmarks. These landmarks can be highways, towns, bridges, railroads, rivers, towers, and any number of things that can be easily identifiable on the surface and is conducted under visual flight rules. It's one of the simplest forms of navigation available to the pilot, has no extravagant cost associated with it other than a chart, and reduces the chance of getting lost if you plan your course with adequate landmarks. It also requires that you keep your head out of the cockpit where it should be!

This all starts with pre-flight planning. Back when I was traveling across the country performing in Air Shows, I started my planning well in advance of the flight. This included forecasted weather, the terrain I'd be crossing, airspace restrictions, fuel stops, available maintenance facilities, emergency medical facilities, hangar facilities, and runways with adequate runway length. It's also a good idea to make a call to a FBO along your route and talk to a pilot in the area you are flying to and find out any peculiar phenomenon in the area, especially in mountainous terrain. My show planes had no radio, and no navigation equipment, yet I never got lost, and I was never late for a show. Very "easy-peasy" when you know your airplane and navigate by pilotage. Flying IFR (I Follow Roads, Railroads, and Rivers) by using pilotage can provide the pilot and passengers with a very memorable experience you can talk about for years to come. As an example, I will discuss a flight 4 years ago from Portland, OR, to KDWH in a 65HP no radio, no NAV airplane with a student.



A student had purchased a 1946 Taylorcraft in Portland, OR., and needed to get it back to Houston. This airplane had a 65HP Continental engine, no radio, no navigation equipment, no electrical system (hand propping), and just the bare minimum of required VFR / Day equipment. The only logical way to fly this airplane back without a cockpit full of portable expensive gadgets was 6 Sectional Charts, plotter, pen, and most importantly, a watch.

After a thorough pre-flight, including weather, NOTAMS, plotting our course and fueling up, we departed a small, uncontrolled airport east of Portland and flew southwest 4 miles to pick up the Columbia River heading east to Pendleton. Upon reaching our cruising altitude and leveling off, we checked our ground speed by marking our current location on the chart and starting our time. Since our airspeed indicator was in MPH, we used statute miles on the chart. After 5 minutes, we again marked our location, took the distance traveled in that 5 minutes, and multiplied that by 12. That gave us our groundspeed. We arrived abeam Pendleton within 2 minutes of our estimated time of arrival.

After refueling in Pendleton, we headed southwest following the interstate performing the same calculations as noted above, and picked up the Snake River in Idaho. We continued along the Snake River until landing at a small airport in Southern Idaho to refuel. After a quick lunch, rest, and re-fueling, we headed south to the eastern shores of the Great Salt Lake in Utah, which was a fantastic landmark for a checkpoint, for an overnight stay in Malad City with the magnificent Wasatch Mountain Range waiting to the east in front of us.

Careful planning was necessary for crossing the 11,000 ft Wasatch Range. The mountains rise steeply from the valley's base elevation of 4,330 ft. With the service ceiling of the little 65HP Taylorcraft being only 14,500ft, and getting there was a struggle, we needed to find a mountain pass that would not only give us horizontal and vertical clearance from the terrain at the altitude we were able to fly, but an emergency landing site, if needed. We picked a winding pass south of Malad City that would give us adequate clearance with an interstate super highway directly below us. Even at an altitude of 9,500 ft MSL, the peaks of the Wasatch were towering above us. Groundspeed changed several times due to the Venturi Effect of the wind in the pass, but it was a smooth ride all the way to the border of Wyoming.

After landing in Wyoming, it was smooth sailing once we navigated north of a mountain range west of Cheyenne. Elevation was decreasing, winds were favorable, and visibility was CAVU. An overnight stop in southeastern Colorado with some great food and rest put us back in the air early the next morning headed for home. You may ask how we made it into KDWH without a radio? Simple, in the old days before cell phones, we would land out an outlying non-towered airport, use a pay phone, and call the tower with our Registration Number, aircraft make and model, and ETA. The tower would give us instructions, and we would watch for the Light Gun. Now, with cell phones, we just call from the airplane with the same result.

Despite their shortcomings in the basic fundamentals, I am proud of the pilots I have been able to have had under my wing, whether Private or Flight Instructor. Most have subsequently become the best airline pilots in the industry, and I would without reservation entrust them with the lives of my family. "Blue Skies and Tailwinds." - Howard



**Plotting the route**



**I Follow Roads Panel**



**Ready to depart**



**Snake River**



Come join us for a fun-filled day of fellowship, food, games, prizes, static displays, and other activities including a bounce house for the kids at our Annual “Spring Into Summer” party at the Texas Flight hangar on Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Meet the Texas Flight staff, exchange stories, and bring your friends to introduce them to the exciting world of aviation.

For more information, email [texasftaviation@gmail.com](mailto:texasftaviation@gmail.com), or contact Michael at 832-717-0766

Hope to see you here!!