

Mentorship Journal Entry #5

©2009 Jonathan Messiers,
all rights reserved.

If you are reading this, chances are you're at least slightly interested in flying planes. And if you do want to fly, chances are you know that there are a lot of steps involved in achieving that goal. Well, a week and a half ago, I began the journey to being a pilot. I took my first flight lesson! I am dedicating this week's journal entry to this incredible opportunity, even though it technically wasn't a mentorship meeting.

As we were driving to the airport, I was slightly nervous. Of course, that feeling was immensely outweighed by the knowledge that I, Jonathan Messiers, would be embarking on a flight that, while only 30 minutes long, would be an exhilarating step into the rest of my life! Actually, my first word was *avion*, airplane in French (I was born in Paris, France). So I always felt that I was going to start flying early.

When we arrived at the airport, Dorothy had already parked the aircraft by the office. A bunch of my friends and family came to watch me. After we had gone through a little briefing and completed the preflight check, I strapped myself in and felt snug in the cushioned cockpit. By the way, I forgot to mention that this is Dorothy's personal aircraft. It was a huge honor to be allowed to fly in this plane. As I waved goodbye to my relatives and friends, a friend of Dorothy's pulled the prop and started the engine.

We moseyed down the taxi way and made our way to the runway, where Dorothy turned the plane in a 360 to check for any planes that were landing. When that was done, and we were on the runway, Dorothy poured

on the throttle (engine output lever that controls the power of the engine—like a gas pedal) and we roared down the tarmac and pulled into the sky. It was incredible. As we lifted into the air I could see the smiling faces of my loved ones. I can't imagine the size of the grin they saw on me.

As we gained altitude, Dorothy told me about some of the basics of talking on the in-flight radio. For instance, when it was my turn to take control of the airplane, I would say, "I've got the airplane." And when it was her turn, she would say the same thing. We started to fly over to Lake Dexter, a giant lake with a dam in Creswell. When we were over the lake, I got the airplane and I started to go into a controlled right turn all the way around. Then I did it again. Then I did a left turn. I was amazed at how touchy the controls were. The handling was great. I expected to be pulling at half strength on the stick, but I only had to nudge it gently. After about 5 minutes of this routine, Dorothy instructed me to do a 180 and follow the Willamette River. We passed over Springfield and headed to Eugene.

While we were flying over Tugman Park, I noted that I lived somewhere around here. So I asked Dorothy to take the plane. She had the airplane, and I started giving directions. We flew over Safeway, and I saw the Edgewood Pool. After walking that route for 10 years now, I was pretty sure about where my house was. I confirmed that it was my house when I saw my mom's red car (our friends drove us over here) and I saw the painter's pickup (we're getting our bathroom redone). Actually, I talked to him a couple days later, and he said he saw my plane! I could even see a skateboard on my neighbor's trampoline.

Anyway, it was almost time to get back. But I couldn't go without doing one more thing. As we headed back, I asked Dorothy if we could fly by Spencer Butte. Not the school, mind you, as we had already flown over

that searching for my house. I'm talking about the mountain! We started for it, gaining altitude, and we could see someone standing on the rocks! I remembered all those times hiking up there and looking at the view. That was crap compared to this! I don't think I'll ever be excited about climbing a mountain again. Not when I looked down on it from 2500 feet in the air! As we flew by the person, we waved our wings at him/her, which is tilting the plane back and forth in a waving motion. Well, as fun as that was, we needed to get back.

So we headed back to Creswell Airport, where Dorothy taught me how to call in the approach. I remember most of it.

"Creswell traffic, Champ 1-5-2-8-Echo on 45, 33 Creswell." That means that I am coming in for a landing on airway 45.

"Creswell traffic, Champ 1-5-2-8-Echo on downwind, 33 Creswell." That means I'm downwind of the runway and coming in. Of course, Dorothy was doing the flying all this time. I'm not ready to land yet.

"Creswell traffic, Champ 1-5-2-8-Echo on base, 33 Creswell." This means I'm at the general area and going on to final

"Creswell traffic, Champ 1-5-2-8-Echo on final, 33 Creswell." Finally! This last radio message lets everybody know that I'm coming in for a landing.

We touched down with a bump, and taxied down to the office, where everyone cheered for me! I stepped out of the plane, and into the embrace of my family and friends. Although, I have to say I was slightly disappointed to be on the ground after going up and flying myself for the first time. In the office I received some big flight manuals that my mom had ordered for me. I'm running out of time here, so I'll wrap it up. After we said our goodbyes

and I recovered, we went to Tasty Thai to celebrate. It was one of the best days of my life.