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Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 33

A monthly publication of the Dr. Alexander M. Lippisch Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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## Captain Chesley Sullenberger

By Armin Jacobs

I heard that Captain Chesley Sullenberger was writing a book about US Airways Flight 1549 that ended up in the Hudson river in January 2009. I went to our library here in Monticello and asked them if they had a copy. They said if they decided to add it to their list I would get a call. I did not expect much from the group in charge because when I see a listing of "new additions " at the library there is never any book that I would care to read. Much to my surprise a month later they called and said they had a copy of Captain Sullenberger's book " Highest Duty " reserved for me.

The book co-written by Jeffrey Zaslow is his life story . He was born and raised in Denison ,Texas. He lived close to a small airfield and his love of airplanes was with him at a very early age. A crop duster pilot taught him to fly and he earned his pilot license when he was sixteen years old in 1968.

Sully had aspirations of attending the US Air Force Academy. The Sullenberger family did not have any political ties to get an appointment to the academy but managed to get an appointment by impressing those people in Texas with his knowledge of aviation.



He graduated from the Air Force Academy with the class of 1973. He was voted the best in his class for his flying skills. During his years in the Air Force he was a F-4 Phantom pilot.

Safety was always foremost in his mind. He talks about numerous incidents in his career. Always curious to know what went wrong and how outcomes could have been different.

Captain Sullenberger is very much a family man. He and his wife Lorrie have been married since 1989 with two adopted daughters. Being an Airline Captain is not easy for family life and much is said about the scheduling that require long days away from home and flying clear across the country to report for work.



It is evident from the book that Captain Sullenberger is always interested in making flying safer. He has studied every major airline disaster trying to figure out what went wrong and what could have been done differently. He talks about the United disaster in Sioux City and the conversations he has had with Captain Al Haynes since his ditching in the Hudson river.

After reading the book I can fully understand how Captain Sullenberger reacted the way he did when the geese hit the fan. His thought processes were quick, accurate, and without panic. He was totally in command and did not let controllers screw up his thoughts. He knew instantly how far his Air Bus glider would fly and he knew the best speeds to maintain and the correct speed for ditching.

We could use a man of Captain Sullenberger credentials in Washington DC heading up the FAA or the NTSB!

# Read Back: Hypnotizing Maria

By Jim Meade

If one sees a book by Richard Bach with an airplane on the cover, one picks it up. In fact, there are two airplanes on the cover. One is a C182 with no N number, but we learn later it is N2461E. We see it as from the cockpit of a T-34, of which only the right wing is visible. The two planes are above a scattered layer which we find is north of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In the Cessna is a woman whose pilot husband is incapacitated. She knows almost nothing about flying. The Richard Bach character in the T-34 is known as Jamie Forbes. He's a grey-haired flight instructor who lives a happy life. He's blissfully heading home from Washington State to his wife in Florida.

Forbes hears the woman on 122.8 saying she thinks her husband is dead. Forbes coaches the woman through maneuvering the plane toward Cheyenne where she makes an uneventful landing and he pushes in the throttle and departs on his way. Bach is very good at this kind of writing.

The next day, Forbes reads the North Platte, Nebraska paper which has a story quoting the woman as saying Forbes hypnotized her into flying the plane. The rest of the book is a 30 year flashback to when Forbes was hypnotized by a magician. It worked. As he sat in the diner eating his breakfast, a woman approached and asked to sit with him. It turned out to be the wife of the hypnotist that he hadn't seen in 30 years, but the wife hadn't aged 30 years. In fact, we find out later that the wife has been dead for two years but had a daughter.

Forbes spends the rest of the book flying the T-34 back to Florida. Since it's Bach writing, we have to have a couple of thunderstorms. Bach is a great thunderstorm describer. He's also a great writer about flying. He makes me feel like I'm in the cockpit with him.

As you know, my feeling is there are very few books about airplanes and flying. Books are about something else and airplanes and flying are part of the book. We pilots put up with this because we love to read about flying. Because of that, we put up with bad flying magazine writers, with weird philosophical books by St. Exupery, Shute, Gann and, yes, Bach. Most of the time we aren't too disturbed by the philosophical tangent. We know a writer can't write just about airplanes so we forgive him.

This book is 154 pages long. From page 18 to page 147, we get quite a philosophical dissertation. In the last few pages, Forbes is called by a woman on his unlisted number, which she found scrawled on the back of a magazine she found in her shopping cart. She wants to take primary flight instruction, which he doesn't usually give. She talks him into it and we find out she is the daughter of the magician and the (dead) woman Forbes met in the North Platte diner. Confused? Don't worry. The book is small, the print is decent size and the spaces between the lines is generous, so the 158 pages doesn't take too long to go through.

I'm not saying don't read this book, but if you read it to get Richard Bach at his usual high standard of talking about flying, read the first 20 pages or so and then shamelessly skim the rest. You won't miss a thing. Of course, if you want philosophy then you should read it all. This should be a good lesson to me to not pick up every book with an airplane on the cover, even if it is written by Richard Bach.

Hypnotizing Maria was published in 2009 by Hampton Roads Publishing Company.

# Chapter 33 Calendar

**Jan 30 11am-2pm** Annual Chili Fly-In, Greenfield Municipal Airport

**February 19-20** Annual Midwest Aviation Maintenance Symposium and Trade Show, Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines, Iowa

**Mar 9 7-9am** Iowa Airports Breakfast on the Hill, State Capitol Building, Des Moines, Iowa. All IPAA members invited

**Apr 21-22** Iowa Aviation Conference, Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel, West Des Moines, Iowa  
For more information, visit [iawings.com](http://iawings.com)

## Next Meeting

Randy Hartman has graciously allowed us to use his Hangar 51 (East Tee Hangar at Cedar Rapids Airport) for our meeting.

Marv Hoppenworth has a tools demo/presentation. We can also open it up to other show-and-tell so if you have something bring it along

Time: 10am-noon.

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