



Photo by B.J. Thomsen

Mickey Duke, the chief flight instructor at McKenzie Flying Service, has been flying since 1972.

Flight school puts reporter in control

By B.J. Thomsen
Of the Emerald

The plane was tiny, like a gnat, compared to the immense United Airlines jet parked farther down the tarmac. The cockpit was well under an arm span wide, and the dashboard was filled with an alarming array of switches, numbered dials and lights.

I strapped myself into the seat, with the help of my instructor pilot, Mickey Duke. I was apprehensive but eager about the flight.

As the wheels of the small plane left the black asphalt runway, a feeling of detached freedom and a new understanding of how an airplane flies became one in my mind.

I had flown before but only as a passive occupant, much like one would ride a bus or the train, without a complete understanding of what was happening.

The controls on an airplane, I discovered, are nothing like that of a car, and as the pilot let me take control of the little Cessna 152, I felt like an infant just learning to walk.

As the plane continued to climb toward the gray-and-blue patchwork sky, I fought to keep straight in my head the functions of the ailerons, flaps, rudder and elevators.

"Flaps are for roll?" I wondered aloud. "No, flaps are used to increase lift," Duke reminded me. "Ailerons are for roll."

I remember back to the film strip I watched as part of the introductory flight I was taking at McKenzie Flying Service before going out to the plane. Sure enough, ailerons, the flaps on the wing that move opposite each other when the wheel is rotated, allow the pilot to tip the plane either left or right.

The rudder, the moveable vertical section in the tail, allows the pilot to turn left or right by moving footpedals and serves the same function as the front wheels on an automobile.

And the elevators, the moveable part of the tail's horizontal section, allows the

pilot to nose the plane up or down.

I found it difficult enough just to keep the plane flying straight and level, and when I tried to bank left, I discovered that not only must the wheel be turned to control the ailerons, but the right pedal must be pushed down to turn the rudder. If I turned the wheel only, the plane began to roll but not turn, and if I pushed the pedal only, the plane began to slide sideways without banking.

Finally, as Duke guided me through the maneuver with his set of controls, I managed a banking turn to the left, with the right wing pointing high above the horizon and the left wing pointing to the winding creeks of Fern Ridge Reservoir 1,400 feet below.

"That's about an average turn," he told me as he took the controls and put the plane into an even steeper bank.

I found myself clutching the armrests on my seat, certain that the plane was going to suddenly slip out of the sky. He smiled reassuringly and leveled out the plane.

He then began to throttle back the power to the engine and asked me if I knew what a stall was. I wasn't sure, but I knew that it must be more serious in a plane 1,000 feet above the ground than in a Volkswagen at a stop sign.

He didn't seem to think so, and he continued to slow the plane until the stall warning began to buzz. Suddenly we dropped as if we had hit an air-

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