



## Last Flight

by Bernald S. Smith, Trustee

Soaring Safety Foundation

Don't have a last flight! Unless it's because you've retired from flying. SSF advocates First Flight! That's our program where we urge everyone to make their First Flight of each year, one with a Glider Flight Instructor. Not a BFR, but just a flight to add to the middle name of SSF: Safety. Your safety. Is it worthwhile? What if you're the most experienced pilot in the world? What if you're much more experienced than any flight instructor you might be able to find?

Several years ago, Bruno Gatehbrink, of Germany, told us something that I find to be true in my case, too. He (and I) know of no one who has died in a car on the drive to the airport, which is a term many use to show how safe gliding is, that the safety concern one should have is the drive to the airport, not the glider flight itself. I don't know anyone who has died in a car at any time, much less just the drive to the airport. But I do know, personally know, too many glider friends who have died in glider accidents. Sure, I've been flying a long time, but so what! We lose friends nearly every year!

What SSF would like to do is find a way to reach everyone flying gliders to impress upon them the need for constant vigilance from the standpoint of safety. Make safety not your middle name but your first name by choosing (It's up to you, we can't force anyone!) not only our First Flight program, but to fly safely every day, every week, every month, all year, and all your life so your last flight is not your last flight.

