

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Attachments: Memo to the NAFI Board of Directors (PDF)
Proposed Supporting Resolutions (PDF)

National Association of Flight Instructors in Crisis

THERMAL, CA--Recent developments at the Board level of the National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI) have led to the creation of the *Take Back Our National Association of Flight Instructors Committee* -- TBO NAFI. This committee, comprised of NAFI members, including Master Instructors and several Regional and National Flight Instructors of the Year, is calling for swift and sweeping changes to the governance of NAFI.

A NAFI Board of Directors meeting on Friday, October 24th failed to address the clear and immediate concerns presented to the Board by TBO NAFI in the form of two documents. The first, a Memo to the Board of Directors signed by thirty-three members of TBO-NAFI, and the second, eighteen supporting Resolutions, outlined the concerns and the needs of a significant element of the NAFI membership base.

The crisis began two weeks ago when NAFI members learned that two of the most productive, well-liked, pro-instructor, and long-standing members of the Board--JoAnn and Sandy Hill--would not be re-elected to their positions and would be relieved of their day-to-day administration of the NAFI Master Instructor Program. These issues served to focus long-due attention on the broader governance issues plaguing the NAFI Board.

The TBO Committee underscores that the crisis involving NAFI has nothing to do with the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), which is affiliated with NAFI. The TBO Committee appreciates all that EAA has done over the years to support instructors and to advance the flight instructor community at AirVenture. The issue is with NAFI governance.

The first informal meeting of TBO Committee members and others who wish to participate is scheduled for Friday, November 7, at 1:00 PM in the entrance lobby of the AOPA Expo in San Jose, CA. The TBO Committee has also established a web site (www.tbo-nafi.org) that presents a chronology of events leading up to the current crisis. Additional information will be posted there as warranted.

END

Additional Background Information:

1. Why TBO NAFI has decided to go public:

While seeking to have their voices heard and working to resolve the governance issues raised as a consequence of the Board's actions against the Hills, the TBO Committee claims the following:

a. For the two weeks leading up to, and including the Board meeting, the NAFI Board remained dismissive, unresponsive, and uncommunicative with regard to the concerns raised by TBO and others.

b. The NAFI Board provided two brief responses during the two-week period. Those responses were targeted specifically only to those who sent in e-mails to the Board regarding the current issue. The majority of the NAFI membership apparently was not included in the correspondence from the Board.

In spite of repeated requests by individual NAFI members to notify the entire membership about the crisis, the NAFI Board apparently refused.

c. Since NAFI is affiliated with EAA, President Tom Poberezny personally addressed the NAFI Board at its meeting. Poberezny urged the Board to move away from its deeply divided factions toward one faction that serves the interests of the membership. In a memo from Poberezny to the NAFI Board dated October 21, 2008 (see item #2 below), Poberezny warned, "*the credibility of the ENTIRE NAFI Board is in question.*"

d. Contrary to a demand made by the TBO Committee in its Memo to the Board, the NAFI Board has materially changed the status of the Hills vis-à-vis their administration of the Master Instructor Program.

e. Contrary to a demand made by the TBO Committee, the Board did not re-elect the Hills. The Board instead postponed the vote; however, the Chairman retains the authority to call for a vote at any time with a simple phone call to other Board members.

f. Three days prior to the Board meeting, TBO made a last ditch attempt at a resolution by inviting NAFI Chairman Phil Poyner to speak via phone to the Hills. The Hills were amenable to such a conversation. The Chairman did not respond to the invitation.

According to Rich Stowell, who signed the Memo to the Board on behalf of the TBO NAFI Committee, "The Board of Directors remains myopically focused on an internal squabble. The TBO Committee and others in the aviation industry, however, remain deeply concerned about the larger picture, namely: the long-term viability of NAFI as a professional organization that is responsive to, and is driven by, its membership."

Since the NAFI Board continues to keep the concerns of the TBO Committee isolated from the rest of the NAFI membership, releasing the contents of the Memo and the

Proposed Supporting Resolutions to the media is seen as the only avenue available to communicate with the broader NAFI membership and others who share concerns over NAFI's current governance structure.

2. Poberezny Memo e-mailed to the NAFI Board, dated October 21, 2008:

NAFI Board Members,

I've asked chairman, Phil Poyner, if I could speak to the Board as the first item on the agenda this Friday morning. I will be there at 8:00 a.m. This is a very pivotal Board meeting for NAFI. EAA is very proud of its relationship with NAFI and the contributions that we have made, in cooperation with the NAFI leadership, to its programs, growth, and financial viability. All of us, either individually or collectively, want to do what's best for NAFI and its members. I'm asking each of you to come to this meeting with that mind set.

As a result of the proposal not to re-elect Sandy and JoAnn Hill, a significant response has been received from the membership addressing not only that issue but others such as Board structure and participation, by-laws, elections, etc. I've spent a great deal of time over the last week reading letters, talking with NAFI members, and Board members and can assure you that the credibility of the ENTIRE NAFI Board is in question.

Whether it's reality or perception, the fact is that a strong negative feeling exists, and the Board must address it with actions that will serve NAFI, both short and long term. Action must turn a negative into a positive. I respect the dedication and passion of each Board member. At the same time, I feel strongly that the Board must objectively discuss and evaluate its options before any action is taken. I will be presenting two proposals for the NAFI Board. Your thoughtful consideration of these proposals will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tom

Tom Poberezny, EAA #40000
President
EAA—*The Spirit of Aviation*