

BACK TO SCHOOL

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Aviation student's education takes flight

BY MICHELLE A. ARNTZ
Special to the Record-Eagle

Gone are the days when Harriet Quimby had to disguise herself as a man so she could take flying lessons. On April 16, 1912, Quimby became the first woman to fly across the English Channel. However, the aviator's feat was largely overshadowed by the sinking of the Titanic the same day.

Times have changed. According to Bob Buttleman, director of the Aviation Division of Northwestern Michigan College, women make up 10-20 percent of the program's student body. "The field of aviation has been a 'male-dominated world' but that is changing," he said. "I think many women were told it is not a career for a working woman or for a mom. Plus, the stereotype has been there for it being a career for men."

Buttleman, who completed NMC's program himself in 1970, has been the division director for the past 30 years. He is responsible for 115 students and 32 staff members. A part of the M-



Record-Eagle/Douglas Tesner

Amy Brown is a flight student at M-Tec Aviation Center. She has over 45 hours of flying time in and her goal is to become a corporate pilot.

Tec campus, the school's fleet of 15 Cessnas, a Piper Aztec and a Beechcraft Queen Air, are stationed at the east end of Cherry Capitol Airport. There are also four flight simulators that students will use during the program.

He also noted that Michigan's four seasons offer a wealth of different flying conditions for pilots to gain experience.

Amy Brown, 21, is a Northwestern Michigan College student who is about to begin her second

year in the 37-year-old Aviation Flight Tech Program. She will walk into the classroom just one "check ride" away from her private pilots license for which she is being scheduled.

Amy's program began last

fall with a lecture on the basic structure of an airplane. Classroom instruction includes Aviation Law, Aviation Weather and Mechanics for Pilots. A recipient of the Amelia Earhart Zonta II Scholarship, Amy has since logged the required 40 hours of flight time with her instructor, Chris Martin.

When asked which portion of the intensive program is easier for her, Amy looked skyward to answer, "The classroom work comes more naturally but the flying is a lot more fulfilling."

The idea to fly came out of the blue when Brown told her parents she wanted to go on an introduction flight with an NMC flight instructor. The eldest daughter of Russell and Mary Brown, "Let's go" was Dad's answer, without any hesitation.

And what about her mother?

"Mom had a typical 'mom' reaction. She was petrified," said Brown with a smile, adding that her brother and sister are proud and that they "brag her up" to their friends.

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Heavy weights: Load backpack properly

BY MARK EDWARD NERO
Copley News Service

Although a student may carry a heavy load of course work, another load — the one in the backpack — needs to remain light, physical therapists and orthopedic specialists say.

Backpacks — a necessary tool for many of today's students — can weigh heavily on the neck, shoulders and backs if they're overloaded. Overly heavy backpacks can cause muscle strain, neck and shoulder pain, lower back pain and curvature of the spine, according to physical therapists.

Therapists recommend that a loaded backpack weigh about 10 percent of a child's body weight. So if he or she weighs 100 pounds,

the backpack should be roughly 10 pounds when fully loaded. A typical hard-back social studies book can weigh up to 4 pounds. If you add in a couple of other texts, notebooks and other necessities, plus the approximate 2-pound weight of the backpack itself — you could have a problem, depending on the child's size.

Sturdy, dependable backpacks have become more and more important with time, as in recent years a trend has emerged wherein schools across the nation have eliminated lockers for security and space reasons.

More than 13,260 injuries related to backpacks were treated at hospital emergency rooms, doctors' offices and clinics in 2000,

according to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates. The extra stress placed on the spine and shoulder from the heavy loads that children carry in their backpacks is thought to cause muscle fatigue and strain.

Excessive weight in backpacks could cause some children to develop bad habits — like poor posture or excessive slouching — early in life, orthopedic specialists say. Generally, when children begin to lean forward as they walk, it's a sign that their backpacks weigh more than they can handle.

Another no-no, along with overloading backpacks, is slinging them over one shoulder, physical therapists say. It may look fashionable, but having all that

weight shifted to one side can cause pain and muscle spasms.

Concern over the potential of overly stuffed backpacks to injure children has become so widespread that a Tennessee legislature subcommittee approved a bill in April to limit the weight of public school textbooks.

"These textbooks are throwing these kids' backs out of whack," Rep. Joe

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A rolling book bag may be the best way to take the weight off a child's shoulders. This model, designed by L.L. Bean for ages 10 and older, features tuck-away straps for carrying the pack when necessary.





Back To School





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