



Ryan Enders
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: October 15, 2025
Subject: ERA25LA374 Pilot Rated Passenger Interview
Contact: Andrew T. Vela

Mr. Vela was contacted via telephone to discuss the accident of N859SS. The following is a summary of that conversation.

Mr. Vela was asked to provide information that was missing from the 6120 provided by the other pilot.

He confirmed his middle initial was "T".

Date of birth: [REDACTED] and certificate number [REDACTED].

City of Residence is Houston, TX

Mr. Vela stated that he was sitting in the back seat.

He has a 1st class medical and a tail wheel endorsement. He estimated that his total flying time is about 2800 hours, and he has about 30 hours in tailwheel aircraft. This was his first attempt at landing a Cub.

When asked about the purpose of the flight, he stated that they had gone to a fly-in nearby and were returning to their initial departure airport. This was not an instructional flight, and the other pilot had asked him midflight if he wanted to take the controls for a little. During the descent, he was asked if he wanted to attempt the landing.

Mr. Vela stated that he has SMEL-I for airplane and an ATP. He does not have any instructor certificates.

Mr. Vela was asked to provide a statement about the accident sequence. He stated that they were coming back from a fly-in not too far away. The pilot in command flies this airplane from the front seat, so Mr. Vela sat in the back seat. The pilot asked him at altitude if he wanted to take the controls for a bit, to which he agreed. Mr. Vela flew the airplane for a while and started the descent. During the descent, the pilot asked Mr. Vela if he wanted to attempt the landing. Mr. Vela agreed if the other pilot was on the controls with him. During the landing attempt, the airplane bounced, and Mr. Vela had the other pilot take over on the controls. The other pilot took the controls, and they bounced again left of the centerline, resulting in a 180° ground loop. The airplane came to rest partially on the runway and partially in the grass.

-End of conversation