



Yvonne Marinus

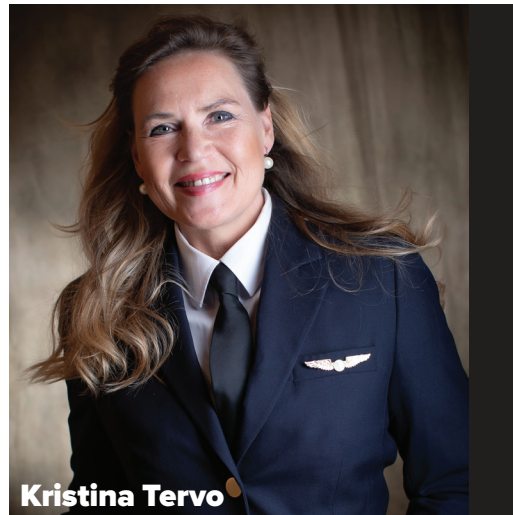


Katherine Hilst

BOB ENGLEBRECHT



Amanda Ferraro



Kristina Tervo

NATHALIE SICARD

SAFETY FIRST

Four Women Who Focus on Business Aviation Safety

BY ANNE SALAFIA

Pilots Katherine Hilst, Amanda Ferraro, and Kristina Tervo, along with maintenance professional Yvonne Marinus, have all moved to the safety end of business aviation.

Katherine and Yvonne work with the safety and maintenance programs of the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC)—International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO), developed in 2002, and International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH), developed in 2014.

Amanda and Kristina provide IS-BAO training through their own businesses.

IS-BAO and IS-BAH standards exceed FAA regulatory requirements and, when a flight department implements the practices, its stature and credibility are elevated, according to Yvonne, auditor accreditation manager with IBAC. The programs consist of three stages and are voluntary.

A nonprofit organization, IBAC promotes the growth of business aviation and sets the world standard in safety practices.

Yvonne Marinus has been around airplanes since she was a kid.

"I was in the cargo compartment of an airliner before I was in kindergarten," Yvonne says. She remembers her father handing her up to the guys in the compartment when he was a maintenance technician with United Airlines. "I'm a third-generation airplane maintenance person. It's in my blood," she adds.

As Yvonne neared her 22nd birthday and would lose her flight benefits, she thought, "Dang, I've got to get a job with United!" Two weeks before her birthday, the airline hired her to make aviation maintenance manuals.

Some 37 years later, Yvonne has earned an airframe and powerplant (A&P) license, completed airplane composite work, attained auditing accreditation, and received an associate degree in technical design.

As auditor accreditation manager at IBAC, she vets and accredits 400 auditors for the IS-BAO and IS-BAH programs. Auditors ensure that operators comply with aviation regulations. "They check the safety management system specifically and then go into the different segments of operation—training, OSHA, environmental, emergency response plans, security, company manuals, flight ops, maintenance and aircraft equipment, dangerous goods transportation, and fatigue management for the crews, all those things," Yvonne says.

She oversees and trains auditors, reviews their work, and certifies them. "The largest loss of revenue in business aviation is from damage done when aircraft are being serviced or moved on the ground," she notes. "We audit the handling companies just as we do the operators."

Yvonne made her way to IBAC through varied safety-related jobs with weighty responsibilities. She worked on United's hangar floor

in a maintenance planning position and issued work cards to technicians in a carefully coordinated order. When a Boeing or an Airbus jet came in for heavy maintenance, she might issue 3,000 job cards. When the jobs were completed to her satisfaction, she signed off on the work and the aircraft went back into service.

"I like to try new things so I learned how to do advanced composite repairs and ended up teaching that for United," she says. Before maintenance technicians could touch aircraft made of composite materials, they had to take 80 hours with Yvonne.

She also worked as a controller with United and orchestrated all aircraft movements around the San Francisco, California, maintenance area, including what was coming in and out of SFO maintenance, the status of the work, and the allocation of the work to the different hangars.

She remembers the airline had 12 maintenance hangars and says she worked on every aircraft type that United operated during her years there, including the Boeing 747, 767, 777, and Airbus A320, A321.

After 9/11, Yvonne "made the hop" to corporate aviation. In 2008, she relocated to Teterboro, New Jersey, and did contract conformity work there. That's when word of IS-BAO caught her attention.

One day in 2018, she received a call from a former auditing mentor and colleague who suggested she join him at IBAC. She's been there ever since and encourages women to consider corporate aviation and, in particular, maintenance and safety.

"Most people don't know corporate aviation exists. There are some fabulous jobs here," underlines Yvonne, always fond of new ventures. "Just get out there and do it!"

Katherine Hilst's diverse background landed her exactly where she belongs as IS-BAO operations manager. "It's like I've been preparing my whole life for what I am doing now. I couldn't have planned it," says Katherine, who came to IBAC in 2019.

She learned to fly fixed-wing aircraft in high school in New Jersey, earned her airplane and helicopter ratings, and flew helicopters commercially in California by the time she was 28 years old. She co-owned a helicopter charter company in Alaska—NorthStar Trekking—and dropped skiers, trekkers, and guides atop mountains. She delivered geologists to Admiralty Island off Juneau, where the dense population of brown bears roams, and she carried birders to remote areas in search of select species.

Since those long-ago days of adventure, Katherine has earned a bachelor's degree in music from Oberlin College and a doctorate in aviation law from the University of Washington. She has defended airplane and engine manufacturers and has worked as an aviation auditor. An adjunct professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Central Oregon Community College, she teaches aviation, aviation law, and human factors.

At IS-BAO, among other things, Katherine designs and leads education-driven workshops for operators and auditors, encompassing fundamentals as well as the three stages of the IS-BAO program.

She is restructuring the educational portion of the program to better explain the IS-BAO standards—what IS-BAO does, what the



► Energized by new ventures, Yvonne Marinus is a third-generation aircraft maintenance person and encourages women to consider corporate aviation maintenance and safety.



▶ When not working on IS-BAO programs or conducting audit reviews, Katherine joins her husband, Tim Coffey, to perform in their band, Coyote Willow.

audit procedures are, what's expected of the auditor, what the operators need to do, and how they can apply the standards.

"Doing the workshops online, we have global participation, which is awesome!" Katherine says. "Whether you are a first-timer or a Stage 3 operator, you're all in one room where you ask questions, tell stories, and share experiences. It's an amazing cross-pollination of experiences."

Katherine committed to safety awareness when she was flying for Temco Helicopters in Alaska in 1991 and, out on a recovery mission, witnessed a plane that had crashed into a box canyon. She was the first to arrive on the scene.

"It was a turning point," she says. "I saw the crash up close and personal and decided to be proactive in how I approached my aviation career." From that day forward, she aimed everything she did at safety.

"I see a greater consciousness of safety procedures these days," she notes. "I see it when I teach the new people coming up; they talk differently about it than we did 20 or 30 years ago. They are more eloquent and more aware of things to think about."

She points out how swiftly the industry is changing and urges people not to worry about changing course.

"The work I do now didn't exist when I was starting back in the late '80s. I think the industry is going to go places that I don't even know about. It's evolving and it's evolving fast," Katherine says.

When not working on IS-BAO programs or conducting audit reviews, Katherine puts on her cowgirl hat and steps on stage to sing and play cello with guitarist husband Tim Coffey. Their band, Coyote Willow, performs at festivals and venues across the Pacific Northwest, not to mention an occasional Whirly-Girls event.

"I see flying and music as art forms," Katherine says. "With pilots I've looked up to, the machine was always an extension of themselves, just as an instrument is of the musician."

Amanda Ferraro founded her Wisconsin-based business, Aviation Safety Solutions in 2012 and became an accredited auditor for the IS-BAO program in 2013.

She and her team of auditors at Aviation Safety Solutions provide auditing and consulting services for operators and help them attain IS-BAO registration.

"Operators come to the standard to raise their safety bar. IS-BAO is an industry benchmark," she says, adding, "We help them implement the program."

A preferred provider for IBAC, her company evaluates the operator and makes recommendations according to where it is on its safety journey—Stage 1, 2, or 3.

"Stage 3 operators are the best of the best in our industry. They adhere to the highest safety standards and have matured into a very progressive safety culture," Amanda says.

Three years ago Bennet Walsh, then director at IBAC, approached Amanda about developing a standardization training program. She and her team have since created a course, coming out soon through IS-BAO, to help operators understand the standards.

Admittedly, Amanda struggled with the standards 15 years ago when she was a pilot for John Deere and was asked to put together an IS-BAO program for the company. She took the IS-BAO course, but it bewildered her. "I felt more confused leaving the course than I had been going in," she says. "We needed better training to understand staging, SMS, and IS-BAO."

The course she has developed for IS-BAO is a product of that struggle.

"I sat on the operator side for years. I not only helped John Deere but subsequently went on to American Family Insurance and helped them gain their Stage 3 status," she says. "I have the perspective of an operator and an auditor and consultant."

An auditor for the IS-BAO program needs to have significant operations experience, Amanda says. "You are evaluating the operator based on maintenance, leadership, how they are flying the plane, international trip checklists, and flight planning," she says. "Auditors are seen as authoritative figures. Without experience, you won't get the respect that is required."



▶ Amanda brings her clients the perspective of an operator and an auditor and consultant.

Growing up, Amanda lived near a Northwest Airlines captain who took her flying when she was 12 years old. He later introduced her to the Civil Air Patrol and took her to fly-ins.

Three weeks before high school commencement, she fell 30 feet doing an obstacle course with the Civil Air Patrol as a cadet for the National Guard on a weekend exercise at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

"I didn't have a harness, and I fell upside down from a rope," she said. "One of the National Guards saved my life, pushing me as I fell past him. Instead of hitting head first, my arms took the brunt of the fall."

Amanda underwent six surgeries at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and wore an apparatus that moved her arm 23 hours a day. Given a pre-crafted donor bone elbow, the 17-year-old relearned how to use her arm and how to write.

She walked across the stage for her diploma, both wrists in casts. Fort McCoy changed its policies on harnesses shortly thereafter.

"My accident was preventable. Most of our aviation accidents are also preventable," Amanda shares. "When you live through a traumatic incident, you come out with a different perspective on safety."

While Amanda hasn't flown since the pandemic, she likes being on the ground, servicing the industry and her clients, and mentoring her team. She aims to help her clients transform their safety programs from reactive to proactive to predictive.

"I need my boots on the ground for safety," she says.

When Kristina Tervo was 6 years old, she dreamed of becoming a flamenco dancer. Next, she saw herself as a flight attendant and then as an Egyptologist. She ultimately found her passion in aviation.

Kristina develops online courses for her two businesses – Wolston Sky and KT Consultancy. Both offer consulting, IS-BAO auditing, training, and safety instruction and include communication, management, teamwork, decision-making, situation awareness, and leadership. Wolston Sky caters to corporate clients in the United Arab Emirates and KT Consultancy works with European businesses; she plans to merge the two.

Kristina grew up traveling, as she was born in Finland, but moved to Spain and the United States. "At that time, you could enter the flight deck where the pilots were. I was fascinated by all those switches and the gorgeous flight attendants!" she says. She had no idea that girls could fly planes.

Later, while studying history in pursuit of that Egyptology career, she met a woman in San Diego who had a pilot certificate and took her up in her Cessna 152. That flight settled any career concerns. She enrolled at the North American Institute of Aviation in South Carolina, then worked as a flight instructor in Los Angeles, California.

"When I went back to Europe, I was offered a Falcon 20 and a first officer position, which was not bad for a little girl," she says.

A jet captain at age 29, she flew the DA20, HS125, and BE10 out of Helsinki for VIPs, air cargo, air ambulance, and charter flights before signing on as charter captain for the Falcon 50 in Denmark. Her passengers included celebrities such as Tina Turner, Steve Martin, Marc Anthony, and the Danish royal family.

"Then I decided I'd had enough of airplanes; I never wanted to see another aircraft in my life. I wanted a business degree," says Kristi-



ALVIN PRESCOD

► Kristina is passionate about sharing her interest in aviation safety with the next generation at Girls in Aviation Day St. Martin.

na, who soon discovered she couldn't get aviation out of her system.

She earned her business degree in Helsinki and, having kept her certificates current, returned to aviation. FlightSafety International in Paris invited her to instruct in their simulator. "And that's how I started in aviation safety instruction," she adds.

As with Amanda, Katherine, and Yvonne, Kristina's career continued to evolve. She worked as a synthetic flight instructor for the Falcon 50/900 in Paris and taught the French Marines and the French and Italian Air Forces. She also instructed military and corporate crews in the Falcon 7X in Burgess Hill, England.

Kristina moved with FlightSafety International and CAE to the United Arab Emirates and trained Emirates and Air Arabia pilots in the simulator for the Boeing 777 initial type ratings and recurring training, incorporating human factors and crew resource management into her instruction. She added cabin crews to her training.

"It's essential: pilots and cabin crew. We need to expand to dispatch, maintenance, and stakeholders and train them together in human factors and crew resource management," she says.

In 2013, Kristina launched the Women in Aviation International Middle East Chapter at the Dubai Airport Show, starting with 30 attendees and counting to over 500 at the last general assembly.

Back "home" in France now, Kristina recommends safety as a good avenue for pilots who want to broaden their horizons. She enjoys the variety and loves safety, auditing, and flying.

For all four dedicated women, their calling is consistent—to make business aviation industry safety a priority and a part of each company's corporate culture. ➔

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