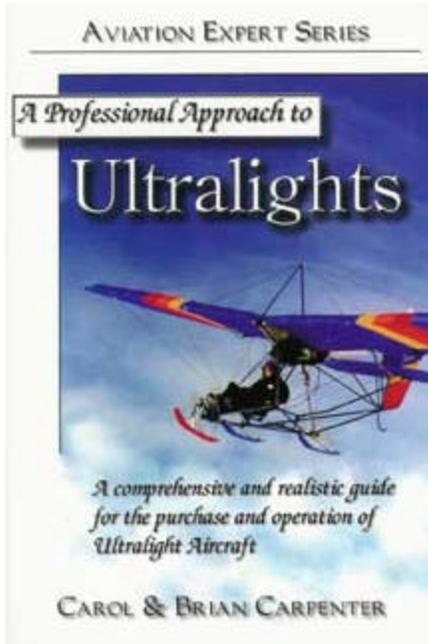


## Husband and Wife Team - Write an Ultralight Book



Cover of A Professional Approach to Ultralights.



Authors Brian and Carol Carpenter fly an ultralight together over their airfield in Corning, California.



Brian and Carol talk to an ultralight enthusiast at Sun 'n Fun 2004.

According to FAA statistics, only six percent of licensed pilots in the United States are women. In the ultralight community, less than one percent are women. So it's very unusual to come across a woman who not only is an ultralight pilot but is also an ultralight instructor. Not only does Carol Carpenter fly ultralights, but she has also co-authored an ultralight book with her husband, Brian.

It is quite unique for a husband and wife to write a book together. Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, wrote *Everything to Gain: Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life*. During an interview promoting the book, Jimmy Carter revealed that writing the book with his wife was the most difficult task he had ever faced. He said if it were not for their strong Baptist faith and commitment to each other, the stress of writing the book together could have led to divorce.

With Carter's experience in mind, I was eager to find out what triumphs and tribulations the Carpenters experienced while writing their book together. "*A Professional Approach to Ultralights*," was published in August 2003. It is available through the Carpenters' web site, although Carol said they're negotiating with Amazon.com to market the book.

I met Carol and Brian at the 2004 Sun 'n Fun airshow in Lakeland, Florida. They shared space in the ultralight area of Sun 'n Fun with Quicksilver aircraft manufacturer. Their beautifully-designed book cover features a single-seat Quicksilver Sport on snow skis. With their easygoing personalities and colorful book cover, their display table attracted many enthusiasts every day.

The 254-page book contains ten chapters and a thorough appendix. The material in the book is comprehensive, well-illustrated, and easy to read. The chapters cover such subjects as, Choosing an Ultralight, Training and Instruction, Maintenance, Meteorology, Ultralight Aerodynamics, and Frequently Asked Questions. The material is valuable for both newcomers to ultralight flying and veterans. The book is certain to become a must-have addition to every ultralight pilot's library.

The Carpenters are uniquely qualified to write *A Professional Approach to Ultralights*. Brian is an ultralight instructor and examiner, an EAA Technical Counselor and Flight Advisor, an FAA Certified Flight Instructor, and an A&P aircraft mechanic with an Inspection Authorization rating (IA). He has constructed several ultralight and experimental aircraft and is the designer and builder of the "Ranger" airplane, featured in several aviation publications. Carol is an ultralight instructor, an FAA private pilot, an FAA certified ground instructor, and she holds a California teaching credential.

Although Carol was formerly a junior high school math and English teacher, she and Brian now operate a full-time flight school in Corning, California. The school features instruction in both ultralights and general aviation trainers. Brian does all the maintenance on the aircraft. Their web site, [www.RainbowAviation.com](http://www.RainbowAviation.com), delineates the many services available at their flight school, including training, builder's assistance, aircraft sales, maintenance, and books for sale.

Corning is 120 miles north of Sacramento. Their facility has a 2700-foot runway, classrooms, an office, a large hangar, an EAA club, and 15 small hangars for private airplanes. It also has showers and other facilities for campers and RVs. Their goal is to eventually have live-in units for visiting students who are on vacation or retired.

So what's it like to co-author an aviation book with your husband? "It's both a challenge and very rewarding," Carol said as she kindly took time off from manning her booth to give me an exclusive interview.

Carol got the idea for writing a book about ultralights from hearing Brian answer the same questions over and over again to aviation newcomers. Carol said neither she nor Brian could have written the book alone. Brian has the expertise in aviation, and Carol has organizational and writing skills.

The first step in writing the book was to do research. They studied other manuals, handouts, internet articles, manufacturer's literature, FAA advisories, and anything else that was pertinent. They compiled and organized the information on index cards. In addition to the research of written material, Brian talked to Carol in narrative form, as she typed on a laptop computer. Brian would sometimes skip from one idea to another, so she had to synthesize the material into a coherent whole. Due to their busy schedule, they worked on the document at night, often from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am.

As each chapter developed, Carol and Brian exchanged floppy discs. Brian would proofread the material and make his corrections in blue. Carol countered with corrections or changes in red. Eventually, they came to agreement on how the material should be presented for each subject. The book took two years of effort.

The writing style reflects Carol's input, and the technical material reflects Brian's input. Due to Brian's extensive knowledge and attention to detail, the information he gave Carol was very technical. Carol wanted to make the book more readable for new aviation enthusiasts, so she often had to persuade Brian to rephrase his thoughts in terms more understandable to the layman. As a result of their synergy, the book reflects a balance between Brian's technical explanations and Carol's down-to-earth writing style.

In addition to drafting the manuscript, they prepared it for publication. They added photographs and drawings to the text, selected the font for the captions and chapter headings, and even designed the cover. They used Adobe Pagemaker 7.0 to format the chapter headings, and they used Corel Draw, Photoshop, and Adobe Illustrator for drawing the pictures. They even did their own copyright research and obtained the ISBN bar code.

The only non-self aspect of their self-publishing endeavor was the actual printing of the books. They did learn that various printer's bids varied by as much as 400 percent. Selecting a printer, they sent him a computer CD that allowed him to electronically print every page from cover to cover.

After a short well-deserved rest, the Carpenters plan to continue writing. They want to write about ultralight maintenance, and write a training manual. After the FAA promulgates the long-awaited Sport Pilot regulations, Carol and Brian plan to write a book on the training procedures and opportunities available under the Sport Pilot initiative.

In the meantime, the multi-talented Brian is constructing a 2000 square-foot house for their personal residence. He is designing the house and hammering each nail himself. The floor plan includes three bedrooms, two baths, and a unique octagon-shaped dining room.

Although it seems impossible that the Carpenters have time for any recreation, they have two horses for riding, and they enjoy gardening. They also have an RV and touring kayaks.

How did Brian and Carol meet each other? Through aviation, of course. Brian was Carol's instructor while she was taking flying lessons in a Cessna 172 for her private pilot certificate. After she obtained her pilot license, she started flying ultralights and fell in love with the smaller flying machines.

The very next day after she passed her private pilot practical test, Carol entered the "Palms to Pines" air race sponsored by the woman's aviation organization called the "Ninety-Nines." Although she was a brand new pilot, Brian's instruction was so thorough she was able to compete in the cross-country race from Santa Monica, California to Bend, Oregon. Her co-pilot was another woman who assisted with the navigation and weather analysis.

Carol stressed that Brian was thoroughly professional while she was a student, and they didn't start dating until three months after she received her pilot's license in October 2001. They got married five months later in March 2002. Being so wrapped up in aviation, I presumed they were married in a balloon or while skydiving. But Carol said, with a wry smile, "No, we had a very traditional wedding and a honeymoon in Cancun."

I guess some things just have to be done the old-fashioned way.

*A Professional Approach to Ultralights* is available at [www.RainbowAviation.com](http://www.RainbowAviation.com) or by calling 530-824-0644 between the hours of 9 to 5 (Pacific Time) Tuesday through Saturday. Email: [sales@rainbowaviation.com](mailto:sales@rainbowaviation.com). The book is \$18.95, plus shipping of \$4.00. On orders of two or more, shipping is free.

*About the author: Jon Thornburgh is an ultralight and FAA flight instructor. He is a periodic contributor to UltraFlight magazine and other publications. UltraFlight has archived his previous articles at [www.UltraFlight.com/JonThornburghFrame.htm](http://www.UltraFlight.com/JonThornburghFrame.htm).*