



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Aviation Safety

Flight Standards Service
General Aviation Safety Assurance
General Aviation A (AFG-100)

Greater Chicago Flight Standards District
Office
2300 E. Devon Ave. Ste. 261
Des Plaines, IL 60018

██████████ (FAX)

<u>Pilot #1</u>	<u>Pilot #2 (if applicable)</u>	<u>Aircraft</u>
Name: <u>Arnold Quast</u>	Name: _____	N#: <u>N8286C</u>
Phone: <u>██████████</u>	Phone: _____	Make: <u>Piper</u>
Email: <u>██████████</u>	Email: _____	Model: <u>Archer II</u>
		Series: <u>PA-28-181</u>

Please provide your description of the event

At 3:37 pm on the afternoon of Friday November 25, 2022 I departed Galt Airport (10C) on a local VFR flight. I flew around the local area, then made a return to the 10C area around 4:10 pm. Per the 10C CTAF, runway 27 was the active runway. I entered the pattern to runway 27 from approximately 3 nm southwest of 10C on a 45 degree entry at 1700 feet MSL. I made a blind radio announcement advising of my maneuvering on the the 45 degree entry. I subsequently turned downwind to runway 27, making another blind announcement on CTAF that I was transitioning from the 45 to the downwind leg of the traffic pattern. As I was doing this, another aircraft, N361LX announced a crosswind entry to runway 27. I looked over my shoulder to the left, and noted this aircraft making the crosswind entry and converging to the pattern behind me. He appeared to be approaching at a much higher speed than I was flying. I made a radio call to the other aircraft advising him that I was on downwind ahead of him, and asked if he had me in sight. He replied back asking me if I was ahead of him. I replied that I was, and I believe he acknowledged that he had me in sight. I continued to fly the pattern uneventfully. My intention was to remain in the pattern to practice landings. While I was established on final, I heard N361LX calling base to final behind me. I announced my intention to do a touch and go landing versus a full stop landing to allow N361LX to land instead of potentially making a go around due to me occupying the runway. I commenced the touch and go and circled around the pattern for a full stop landing. I made the full stop landing then taxied back to runway 27 for another circuit around the pattern. I subsequently did that circuit, landed, and taxied to the ramp to refuel. While I was fueling, local pilot Gerry Molidor drove up in his vehicle. He had a concerned look on his face, and asked if I had seen Claude (pilot of N361LX). I told him that I last heard him behind me on final approach during my first landing. Gerry commented that N361LX was not in its hangar, and was concerned of the pilots well being. He asked me if I would take off again to circle the airport looking for a possible missing airplane. Gerry drove to the end of the runway in his vehicle and hiked on foot into the extended threshold of runway 27. I circled above until it got dark and could no longer see. Upon landing, Gerry phoned me saying he found N361LX crashed in the wooded area on final to runway 27. I called 911, and helped guide first responders to the vicinity of the accident site. At the site the pilot was unresponsive in the wreckage.

DIGEST (CONT)

Mr. Quast is a United CA on 787 and has ~1,700 hours of ASEL time. He is also a volunteer FAAS team representative. During our phone interview Mr. Quast reiterated the information provided in his statement with the following additions:

Mr. Quast believes Mr. Sondag's accident occurred during or shortly after Mr. Quast's first landing at Galt. Mr. Quast stated he remembers being slightly disoriented by the sun when he turned onto final. As a result, he was lower than normal and had trouble with depth perception. Mr. Quast programmed his GPS for a 3:1 glide slope on final for subsequent turns in the pattern.

Mr. Quast's impression of Mr. Sondag was that Mr. Sondag was a proficient pilot, with no ego, and was not careless/reckless.

DIGEST (CONT)

Mr. Molidor was interviewed on November 26, 2022 at approximately 0930. He was asked to describe the sequence of events on November 25th. Mr. Molidor stated he saw and interacted with Claude Sondag at approximately 1545 on November 25th. Mr. Sondag had just finished fueling his aircraft and Mr. Molidor asked if Mr. Sondag planned to fly. When Mr. Sondag said yes, Mr. Molidor said "see you after" and proceeded with his own preflight. Mr. Molidor heard Mr. Sondag take off approximately 10 minutes later and assumed he went to the aerobatic practice area. Mr. Molidor took off shortly after Mr. Sondag (~15 minutes later). Mr. Molidor monitored 122.8 during his flight to listen to traffic in the pattern and immediate area. He was aware of a Cessna and an Archer in the pattern. Mr. Molidor heard Mr. Sondag announce making a "left crosswind 27 Galt" pattern entry. He also heard Mr. Sondag announce left downwind. Mr. Molidor then heard the Archer announce they were established in the downwind ahead of Mr. Sondag and ask if Mr. Sondag had them in sight. Mr. Molidor does not recall the next transmission but assumes this is when Mr. Sondag completed a left 360 degree turn in the downwind (he learned of the left 360 degree turn from Flightaware data after the fact). Mr. Molidor does not recall hearing anything abnormal in the radio transmissions.

When Mr. Molidor returned from his flight, he saw the Archer, and thought it was odd he didn't see Mr. Sondag. According to Mr. Molidor's later Flightaware query, he landed 5 minutes after Mr. Sondag's last ADS-B location data point. Mr. Molidor knew the fuel limits of Mr. Sondag's aircraft and knew Mr. Sondag did not have enough fuel to fly past the time of Mr. Molidor's landing. Mr. Molidor checked the fuel pumps and asked the pilot in the Archer, Mr. Quast, if he'd seen Mr. Sondag anywhere. Mr. Quast responded in the negative, so Mr. Molidor drove the perimeter roads to look around and saw nothing abnormal. Mr. Molidor found an airport employee, Parker (last name unknown), and said "this is not right" and began a search by walking Mr. Sondag's estimate final approach path (approximately 110-115 degrees from the end of runway 27). When nothing was found, someone checked Flightaware and saw the track was slightly north of their search path. Mr. Molidor walked northeast and saw the wreckage. Based on phone records, Mr. Molidor estimates he found the wreckage at 1710. Mr. Molidor stated the light was fading but he saw Mr. Sondag and felt for a pulse on his neck and chest. When he felt none, he turned off the battery, magnetos, and ELT. Mr. Molidor did not secure fuel flow because he didn't want to reach across Mr. Sondag and did not smell fuel.

Mr. Molidor made a series of phone calls while on site. He first called Mr. Sondag's brother then tried to contact Parker and was unable to make contact. He did eventually reach airport management to report the accident. Mr. Molidor asked Mr. Quast to call 911. At that point Mr. Molidor looked over the aircraft and scene. He specifically looked for bird remains and saw none. He noted the prop blades had sheared and so believed the engine was running at the time of impact. He saw broken branches in the flight path and believes the angle of entry to have been 20-30 degrees nose down.

Mr. Molidor knew Mr. Sondag personally and was not aware of significant health issues. He stated Mr. Sondag was an excellent pilot and knew his limitations. Mr. Molidor believed Mr. Sondag to have 400-500 hours in this type of aircraft and had owned N362LX for approximately one year. Mr. Molidor reiterated that Mr. Sondag was a knowledgeable pilot, had flown several types of airplanes and limited his aerobatics to basic maneuvers like loops, rolls, and spins.

Mr. Molidor raised concerns about Mr. Sondag having a possible medical event, spatial disorientation, and wildlife collision in flight.

DIGEST (CONT)

Mr. Rice is a fire battalion chief in the neighboring town and lives east of Galt Airport. Mr. Rice stated at approximately 4:15 on 11/25/2022, he was standing on his deck and heard what sounded like an aircraft in a dive, followed by a wood chipper noise, two seconds of silence, then another wood chipper noise. He stated there was no change in engine noise during the time he observed and he did not see the aircraft. Mr. Rice stated he immediately drove to the airport because he assumed a plane had crashed. When he arrived at the airport office, there was no one in the office, and he could not see anything amiss at the end of the runway (approach end of runway 27). He saw a gentleman walking normally on the ramp and assumed that he had been incorrect about a crash since there was no emergency response in progress and no obvious crash/fire. Mr. Rice then drove on the road east of the creek and tree nursery (Wonder Lake Road) to see if there was any wreckage, but saw nothing, and returned home. Approximately 30-45 minutes later, Mr. Rice heard the request for emergency services response on his work radio.

Mr. Rice's residence is 1.2 miles east of the first point of foliage scarring (evidenced by debris and broken limbs).

Mrs. Krause was asked to describe what she saw. She stated they were at Galt on 11/25/2022 to watch her daughter fly. It was their first time watching and first time at Galt Airport. While they were waiting for daughter/sister to RTB, they were waiting at a hangar next to Mr. Sondag's and interacted with him prior to his departure. Mrs. Krause saw two red and white planes take off, spaced a few minutes apart. When Mrs. Krause heard her daughter's radio call for pattern entry, she and Kayleigh repositioned to the grass strip north of the row of hangars to watch her daughter land. At approximately 4-4:15, Mrs. Krause saw a red and white plane approach the runway and stated it appeared to be lined up with the runway. Kayleigh stated she saw the plane shake then make a diagonal turn into the trees. Mrs. Krause did not see the plane shake but stated she saw the plane dip down behind the trees heading north and did not see the plane again. Mrs. Krause approximated the angle of descent to be 30-45 degrees. She assumed the plane had flown behind a hill and/or turned away from the airport. Approximately 10 minutes after losing sight of the red and white plane, Mrs. Krause stated her daughter landed and taxied back to the hangar.