

FURTHER NOTES: CONCERN ABOUT API OPERATIONS.

1. I suspect that most members are doing less and less proficiency flying. Longpre's data collected for the insurance co. negotiations may help show this. In my own case (and in several others) I know that the airplanes are not being flown much except on actual trips for some non-flying ultimate purpose, where the object is simply to get there.

To be sure, trips require go/no-go decision making, navigating, and airplane management skills, but the hours accumulated this way are pretty much empty of actual flying practice unless a deliberate effort is made to work some into the trip.

I am concerned that member currency will drift down to the minimum level needed to fly the machine onto a one-mile runway in one piece, and that our pilots will be rusty or not-thinking when a serious airwork problem suddenly presents itself. I am reminded of an ex-member's incidents at MVY, Princeton, and DCA. More recently, I have heard comments from others on how they have had problems in getting the Mooney down smoothly and stopped in time. The 172, too, has great potential for t.o. and landing accidents.

Then, of course, there are those people who become overly dependent on radios and autopilots to do their job for them. I am concerned that the IFR people will get rusty on complex holding procedures, no-radar-service, radio-out, partial-panel, and similar procedures for conditions now quite unusual, though definitely still possible, or that the VFR people will be up a creek if something quits in marginal weather.

In allowing people who have perhaps been neglecting airwork and pilotage or other back-up procedures to fly, we are definitely setting ourselves up for more tire-slides, overshoot or bounce accidents, and perhaps unnecessary airspace violations or emergencies, the sort of things that can happen when the actual flying problems suddenly balloon in an emergency.

2. In recent years, I have become aware of another set of problems arising from members' forgetting important details, while at the same time, allowing bad habits to creep in. Evidence of this is particularly distressing in some of our high-time pilots, who sometimes give the impression of being no longer "with-it" or ahead of the airplane. I hardly think they're getting senile (although that, too, is an issue we might have to face some day). Some examples, not all of them recent:

What is one to make of the person who approaches Hanscom VFR at 2000' pattern altitude, thinking he is at 1000' ? Does he think he's flying a KC-135? Even if he did misread the altimeter, doesn't he look out the window?

How about someone who habitually forgets to lean? Maybe it doesn't make much difference in fuel consumption on a trip to Jaffrey, but how about the 100LL issue, and similar?

The fellow who persists in using wrong or obsolete radio technique (reads back everything to Tower like "Cleared for takeoff," when a simple

number-acknowledgement would suffice,

Or the high-time member who bombed out on a simple VFR airport-finding problem in central Massachusetts, got thoroughly confused, and after 20 minutes at this, had to get Approach to vector him? Do we want him flying in complicated metro airspace?

Or the people who are just forgetful or sloppy, who leave wheels or flaps down, ignore cowl-flap or ram-air settings, set prop and throttle incorrectly, etc.

It's important to realize that we have such people in our midst. They might very well pass check rides, since they do know better. I think they display these failings only erratically, or feel that they don't have to be sharp in their day-to-day flying.

3. The third kind of problem has to do with low-time guys and their ambitions. For example: we've had several cases in recent years of people who just couldn't wait to fly the Mooney, and who, once they were allowed in it, thought that they had arrived, somehow.

potential is still there.

Nothing bad has happened so far, but the

I am concerned that despite the fact that they're smooth and seem to have learned everything necessary about the airplane, the new people just don't have the background of experience, or the wariness which comes of knowing what can go wrong with even the simplest operation. And specifically, neither they nor we have lived long enough with the Mooney.

Several of us (all of whom have flown the Mooney sufficiently to have some feel for it) think there are several things about that airplane which makes it more dangerous in the hands of the low time pilot than, say, the 182 or 210. As Longpre says, it doesn't have the "margins". When I see a low-time guy taxiing out in it and waving to me, I view him with a twinge of that same apprehension I have had at seeing someone let his kid hand a cookie to a nice cute bear in Yellowstone Park.

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What to do about these problems isn't immediately apparent. Tightening up the check-ride skill requirements or frequency doesn't really answer most of them. Jawboning via memorandums and safety seminars can't do much either, though we could do a lot more here.

As I mentioned at the meeting, ferry-piloting was an ideal way for members to learn from each other. We need some sort of equivalent in which everyone could be involved -- yet we don't want to promote a bunch of pious mickey-mouse rules and requirements, or further convolute the treasurer's job.

What's needed is the equivalent of an airline's line-check now and then, but at the moment, I don't know how to engineer it. *Perhaps a charge for minimum hours per month would encourage the necessary proficiency flying.*