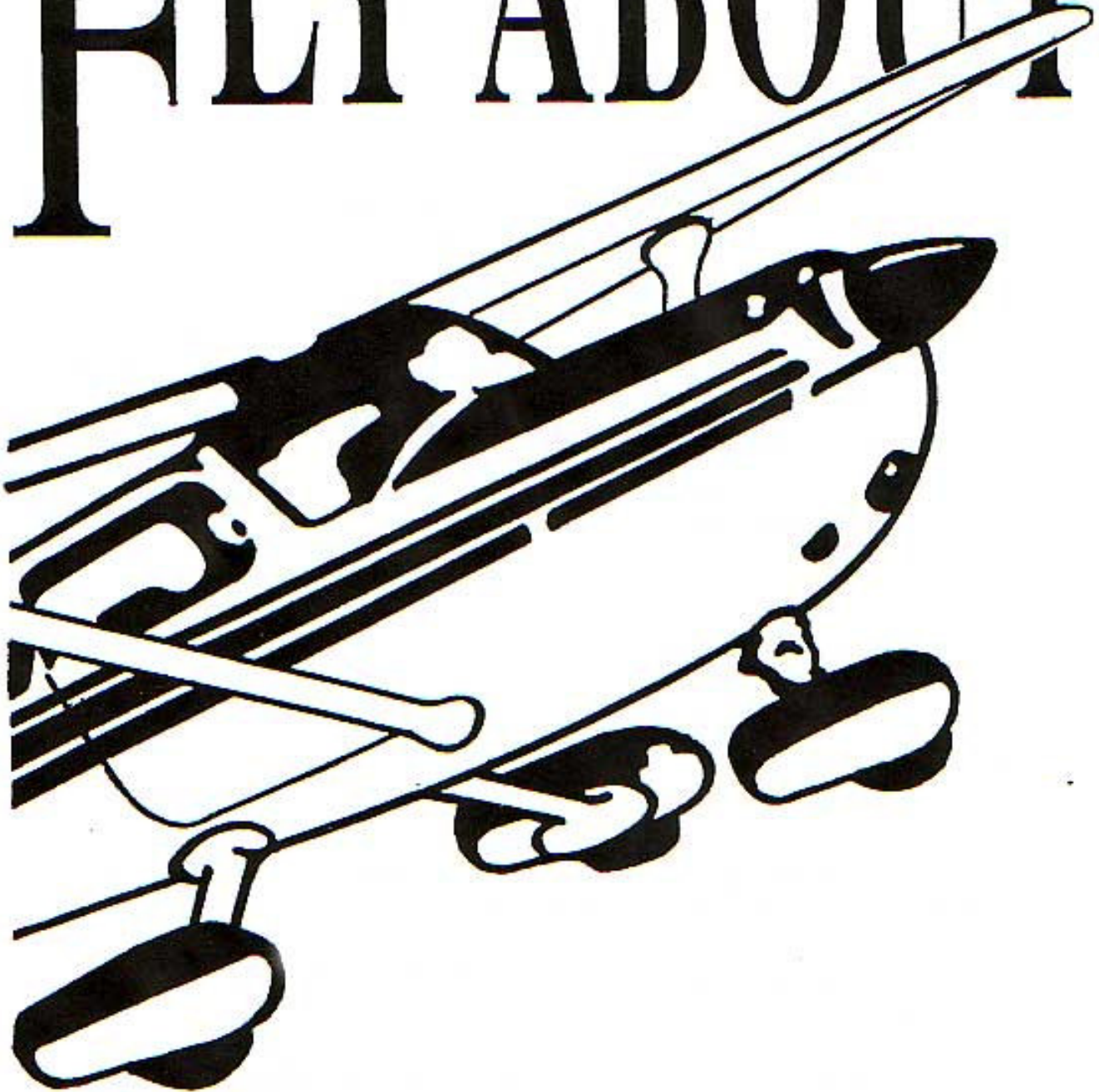


FLY ABOUT



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OSHKOSH – IT REALLY IS THE BEST

I've just had a fantastic first visit to the greatest air show in the world: the EAA convention at Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

I was lucky enough to score a ride in the right-hand seat of a Mooney and flew into Oshkosh in formation with 37 other Mooneys and about 10,000 – yes, 10,000 – aeroplanes of all shapes, sizes, ages and hues. I'd arranged the flight in the Mooney Caravan some months before the event and was met in Chicago by Dave Klain, who has an M20K (the same model as Phil Pusey's).

Dave picked me up at O'Hare – most impressive in his US Navy Commander's uniform – and took me to his home 50 km north of the city. His wife and young family were marvellous and very hospitable.

The next morning we were off early to pick up Dave's Mooney, which is equipped with a Garmin 530 GPS as well as a stormscope. The general standard of avionics in US general aviation aircraft makes Australian look steam-age. Ditto the standard of private pilot flying: most of them have instrument ratings and fly IFR as a matter of course.

We flew from Dave's home base, Waukegan, to Madison, in Wisconsin, to meet up with the other Mooneys flying in the Caravan. It was great to mix with all these Mooney owners, and listen to their concerns about FAA plans to increase fees for GA fliers. I hope I was able to strengthen their resolve to fight these imposts by telling them about the Australian experience: it would cost me nearly \$400 to fly my Mooney IFR from west coast to east. This, of course, is a huge safety disincentive, because ordinary people just don't fly IFR now. The US has a fantastic system, but the FAA seems intent on a user-pays regime that will, from a GA point of view, destroy it.

We joined 37 other Mooneys for the 20-minute flight to Oshkosh. We were in six "flights", separated from each other aircraft by four seconds and from the next flight by eight. Taking off was an absolute buzz, with 38 aircraft on the runway taking off in quick succession. It was a great day, with no cloud and little turbulence, but some of the pilots drifted around a bit, making it difficult for those further back. Nothing major, though.

Dave is a very good pilot and handled the spacing very well. Going into Oshkosh was surreal. I couldn't believe so many aeroplanes could be in one place at one time. Rows and rows and rows of them. We landed, in formation, on parallel runways, touching down half way along, then taxiing at 50 knots to the exit point. The only radio communication was from the flight leader to ATC. We just listened and followed.

All the Mooneys were marshalled – brilliant ground organisation by the EAA – to their allotted lines and tied down before owners pitched tents and had the first of several beers. They were a great lot – very polite, knowledgeable, articulate. And friendly! In the Mid-West, manners are right up there. You're always “welcome” and the enjoiner to “have a nice day” is sincere.

We had a great opportunity to have a look around before the official opening on Monday and could wander unchecked around every aeroplane there, including military. It was a marvellous atmosphere – I'm so used to petty officialdom trying to spoil everyone's fun that the experience of thousands of volunteers, officials and cops actually working to ensure everyone enjoyed themselves was refreshing beyond belief.

There were free buses and tractor-drawn “trams” to take you anywhere you wanted to go, clean and plentiful portaloos, drinking water fountains . . . plus so many seminars, workshops, films and talks by people up to the fame level of Chuck Yeager that the mind reeled. And a brilliant museum. You couldn't possibly take it all in.

The scale of the thing keeps whacking you on the head. I'm used to seeing one of this rare aircraft or a couple of that. At Oshkosh they come by the dozen, and just keep coming. There's something happening overhead for most of the day, with the main air show in the afternoon. There were 28 Harvards in one close formation fly-by, with nearly the same number of Trojans in another. Four Harvards backed by Aeroshell did some of the best formation aerobatics I've seen outside military displays. There were more Mustangs than I could count (two of which crashed on short final, killing one pilot), and so many heavy-metal radial fighters that I gave up trying to identify them.

A B17 and a Liberator led the big stuff, with the British side being held up by a couple of Spitfires and a Sea Fury (re-engined with a Wright radial because the Yanks couldn't fix the original Bristol Centaurus. I was able to tell the owner that a firm in Darwin could machine the sleeve valves for him. The colonies still come up trumps occasionally.). The P38 was impressive, as were the Corsairs.

We in Australia have a rather Anglo-centric view of World War Two and I was surprised to see how well most of the US stuff performed. I had always heard that the Yanks made big, loud aeroplanes that didn't do very much (rather as their troops were portrayed). I suspect that may be an exaggerated and partisan bit of reasoning.

The military really turned it on in the jet department. We saw a B2 (amazing scalloped flying wing), a U2, the new F22 Raptor (which Australia is going to bankrupt itself by buying at \$270 million a pop) and a flurry of F15s, 16s and 18s. There was also a privately-owned F4 Phantom that did a spectacular, almost-vertical take-off. Lots of noise, lots of spectacle. There must be a hell of a lot of money in them thar hills. The Yanks do it well.

The variety and quantity of aircraft on the ground defied belief. The warbirds, obviously mostly American, amazed above all. Row upon row of Mitchells, Mustangs, Tomahawks, Hellcats, Harvards, Texans . . . all brilliantly presented, many in polished aluminium. Breathtaking. The vintage section was salivatingly good. Dozens and dozens of aeroplanes such as the Beech Staggerwing, Cessna 195 (postwar radial), Stinsons, Ryans, Lockheeds, Wacos, Boeings, DC3s and a DC4 . . . just like a movie. Walking past them all, just sitting there in the sunshine, was awesome. As if it were the most natural thing in the world.

The amateurbuilt section, on which the EAA is based, threw up some of the most amazing designs. The usual crop of Rutan craft, and acres of Vans (the RV series – most popular amateurbuilt in the world), plus literally hundreds of designs from wacky to wonderful. Bloody amazing, and all painstakingly built in people's garages and front rooms. The effort they put into these things makes under-achievers like me wonder which gene I missed out on.

New aircraft on display were an eye-opener. All the plastic fantastics were there, plus the new generation of single jets. Wow, are they something! Mach .8 for a couple of million dollars. I drooled over Columbia, Glasair, Lancair, Cirrus, Epic, Eclipse, Grob and God knows what else. My favourite was a thing called the Velocity. Have a look on the web. It's a Rutan-inspired pusher that does 270 knots! Fantastic-looking aircraft. I could probably finish one for about \$A300,000 with a lot of professional help. I'm looking at a mortgage . . . just kidding, unfortunately.



Velocity XL RG

There is so much gear on display and for sale that it's impossible to know where to start and stop. I reckon everything you can put in or on an aeroplane was there. Shopping heaven. I bought a new ICOM VHF set for MIP, plus a portable oxygen supply (I'm keen on cruising between 12-15000 ft to pick up tailwinds), a JPI EDM 700 engine analyser (gives very accurate EGT and CHT readings plus fuel flow and, coupled to the GPS, time/distance to run before the engine stops), and a VHF hand-held transceiver. All were amazingly cheap in comparison with local charges, which just goes to show how much the parts industry pirates put in their pockets. The Fly Mart is something else – bits and pieces from screws, tools, second-hand junk to large sections of aircraft.

I reckon eight days of aviation overload for a bit over 100 bucks was brilliant – particularly as there was a free Beach Boys concert on opening night. What a buzz that was – and what a throwback to younger days. They sounded exactly the same. All very nostalgic.

My elder son, Wynn, who lives in London, flew over to join me for the last three days. I had booked a room in a private house despite some less-than-pleasant B&B experiences in other countries in the past. It turned out that our landlady, in contrast to the hatchet-faced harridans of memory, was a stunning blonde who had weathered her fifty summers better than most and who couldn't do enough for us. We had a good room with air conditioning and its own bathroom, plus the run of the house. Jan was a treasure.

We took her out to dinner one night and had a great time, though I must say the food in Wisconsin says a lot about the size of many of its citizens. It's very fatty, stodgy, rich and sweet . . . and would you like fries with that? Huge servings, too, and everything doused in ketchup or some other calorific condiment. At the air show there were lots of outlets serving much the same thing: bratwurst rolls with sauerkraut and . . . would you like fries with that?

After Oshkosh we flew to Washington DC to visit the Smithsonian Institution's air museums. What a beautiful and powerful city. Somehow it projects the country's sense of itself, both in its architecture and its unmistakable message that this is the New World. I must have talked to hundreds of Americans during the trip and I was struck by their pride in what they've achieved as a nation. The hand-on-heart stuff, flags aloft, is a bit foreign to the way things are done in Australia, but there's no doubting their sincerity. The city just blew me away.

The Smithsonian didn't disappoint. Wynn and I scoured the city museum first, staring in wonder at the history of it all in the country that invented it. Looking at the Wright Flyer, for instance, or the Spirit of St Louis, leaves you with goosebumps. The Udvar-Hazy branch of the Smithsonian, at Dulles Airport, is even bigger and has some unbelievable aircraft on display.

It's amazing to see you can see pretty well everything between the first flight and space in a couple of museums. I really enjoyed my first US visit. We have, in my lifetime, often been regarded as a Pacific satellite of the US and that rankles from time to time, as does the insufferable foreign policy of the present administration. However, in my view there is much more to admire about America than to criticise.

Claude also made the pilgrimage, for the umpteenth time, and we caught up most days in the International tent and afterwards for the odd beer. He'd seen it all before – but for me everything was new, and I'm still coming down to earth after a most wonderful experience. Make the trip if you get the chance – it's the best aviation event you'll ever see.

– Tony Rees

The Bush Aviator

The NAC monthly competitions are a chance for those of us who don't fly on a daily basis to keep our short/soft field techniques somewhere near reasonable.

Over 40 years ago, I learnt from other pilots in Norwest Air Taxis & Murchison Air Services how important performance flying was. As a young station pilot flying up to 300 hours per year, my skills were required to be at a very high level as I was often flying in very trying conditions whilst mustering and flying in and out of mill strips.

One needs to develop the skill to know by outside Q's what the airspeed is within 2 knots and altitude by 2 dots.

The simple rules that were given to me then still apply to this day, as follows:

1. 10% increase in touch down speed increases landing distance by 20%. A mere 5 knot over TTS (threshold target speed) is a one fifth increase in distance required.
2. Another common mistake is elevator control. If the elevator isn't trimmed properly to correct approach airspeed the slightest distraction will lead to wandering airspeed. On base final I always take my hands and feet off the controls to check that it is right.
3. Always try to fly correct glide path for most aircraft. A power off full flap configuration, if high on approach, a bit of side slip will bring the situation back on target. Avoid really steep turns close to the ground. Never push nose down as this increases airspeed.
4. Know your best flap setting for take off. Once, in taking off from Langley Park, a young RPPL didn't know that 20 deg on a C172 was acceptable, which was also stated in the owner's manual. His instructor had told him never use more than 10 degrees.
5. Try to get a rolling start. Avoid standing on brakes and bringing up to full power on dirt.
6. Know the feel of the aircraft. These days, due to computer games, stick and rudder skills are disappearing.
7. Remember – at some stage in your flying career, you are going to have an engine failure, a ground loop, or forget to put the gear down. Think about this every time you fly.

SAFE, HAPPY FLYING

This article kindly contributed by regular club competition winner Ian Berry.

(Ed's note – always check the Pilot's Operating Handbook for correct speeds and operations ; -)

Oshkosh By Gosh

Just back from Oshkosh, the ultimate airshow. Being American, it can only be described with superlatives. It is indeed the largest, the biggest, the whatever-est in the World. It is difficult to think of more aircraft than the total number of flying machines registered in Australia could land at the same airport in just two days, landing sometimes three at a time, one long, one centre and one short.... Hard to conceive that half of their crew could camp under the wings of their aircraft, something our leaders in Canberra would consider here as just impossible. Mind you, RAA participants at Natfly could do this with their RAA registered machines but GA pilots cannot camp close to VH aircraft...Makes sense, does it?

That was my fifth trip to Oshkosh. The first time I was in the Oshkosh Express, a 747 chartered by the SAAA, a unique flight with some 450 pilots on board, landing right there on the holy ground. After that, I used to go with Bob and Marya Phillips of Sydney. They specialise in this type of aviation oriented tour. We camped in the dormitory of the University of Wisconsin, frugal but cheap and close to the grounds with a bus every 3 minutes.

Despite what Tom Poberesny, the EAA President, said, most of us think this year was not as good as the previous years, with less activities and higher prices. But still a very full show, so big it is impossible in a full week to see it all. There were some 20 forums or conferences everyday, airshows and aerobatics every afternoon. I was impressed by the number of "glass cockpits". A few years ago, none were there, then the numbers increased with each year. This time there were more than 30 different models ranging from simple ones to the very sophisticated and complex ones suitable not only for experimental home built but for high performance aircraft. The trend toward light jet aircraft could also be seen with a variety of models, real dream machines...And the Fly-Market where one could buy the rear part of a Cessna, an old radial engine or some old radios that probably don't work...

And of course there is also the personal side, meeting old friends that one only meets here year after year and the new friends made on the day. I had the pleasure of meeting young Barrington Irving, a 23 year old African-American who had just completed a flight around the World, the youngest solo pilot and the first African-American to do so. And a few other Earthrounders and Earthrounders to-be, some of them still building their aircraft with the hope of flying around the World.

After the show, I flew to Washington DC. I wanted to visit the Udvar-Haly Museum at Dulles Airport. Among the treasures there were Air France Concorde, the Enola Gay, the Winnie May, Geraldine Mock's Cessna 180 (*Geraldine (Jerrie) Mock, pioneer aviatrix, with her C180 'Spirit of Columbus' pictured right*) and many others. As I still had time, I made another visit to the Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian where the Spirit of Saint Louis is, together with Steve Fossett's gondola. And so many other things.



I then flew to Los Angeles where a couple of Earthrounders, the Shapiros and the Lutin offered hospitality in grand style on Malibu Beach. From Van Nuys Airport they flew me in their Conquest II to Monterey to have a seafood lunch and to visit the aquarium. I discovered that Monterey had had a very important sardine canning industries in the '60. That closed when, perhaps due to climate changes, the sardines disappeared and the town almost died. There is now a very large and beautiful aquarium and they try to attract tourists. We were at these two very busy airports among RPT, private jets and light aircraft, driving on the tarmac as we wanted. No ASIC cards, no CASA watch dogs. That's quite amazing in a country that has been targeted by terrorists. Obviously those poor people do not have the luxury of our bureaucracy....

And I came back to the cold of our winter, tired of the long flying legs and of the jet lag but very happy of the time spent overseas.

CM



Claude and Tony at OSHKOSH

THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBLE, TOO

Don't think that just because you've got an instructor in the right-hand seat you can leave it all to him/her,

Flight instruction is considered to be one of the safest categories of general aviation, accounting for just 13.2 percent of all [US National Transportation and Safety Board-reported] accidents and only 6.5 percent of fatal accidents. AOPA attributes this to “the high level of supervision and structure in the training environment”.

Yet a surprising number of aircraft mishaps happen with an instructor on board the aircraft. This includes gear-up landings and fuel-related or other engine failures that result in a glide to a runway or a successful off-airport touchdown. The “unofficial” record also includes instructional loss-of-directional-control mishaps on takeoff or landing, in-flight airframe overstresses and any number of other events that for one reason or another are not reported to the Federal government.

With two pilots aboard (the student in mishap accidents is not always a “student pilot”) and in such a controlled environment, why are so many accidents occurring? Instructional aviation seems particularly immune to weather-related mishaps, a leading factor in aviation mishaps overall. This is probably because it's so easy to agree to cancel an instructional flight when the weather is bad. With adverse weather all but eliminated from the record, then, what might be the reason so many instructional mishaps take place? I think it's related to two human factors: what I call “instructor-induced stupidity” and flight-instructor complacency.

I must credit a student of mine with coining the phrase “instructor-induced stupidity”, or IIS, to describe the tendency of a flight student to defer decision-making or responding to aircraft indications when there's an instructor on board. From the student's standpoint it's easy to think, “My instructor will take care of me,” or that the CFI has somehow manipulated aircraft indications or manoeuvred the student into a decision-making position (such as the need for a go-around) as part of the instructional process. As my student noted, it's easy for the student in such cases to mentally sit back to see what might happen next. The potential is even more pronounced if the CFI has a lot more experience than the student (an airline captain, for instance) or if the instructor is considered an “expert” in the type.

In fact, the student must be aware that he/she has definite responsibilities for the safe outcome of the flight, just as does the CFI. No one is perfect, so abdicating responsibility to the person in the right seat can't always be the right thing to do. The pilot receiving instruction should act as if he/she is alone in the cockpit and respond to situations and indications just in case the instructor is distracted at exactly the wrong moment.

There's another side to the “instructional hazards” coin – instructor complacency. Consider this typical CFI duty day:

Get to the airport at 7:30 a.m. Brief and fly one hour of touch-and-goes in a fixed-gear single with a pre-solo student. Fly with a second student, working on her instrument rating, for a two-hour mission. Perform stalls, ground reference manoeuvres and pattern work with two pre-solo students, and then an hour of takeoffs and landings with a student checking out in a retractable-gear aircraft. Break for a couple hours and come back to the airport for another instrument dual session. Cap it off with half an hour of night takeoffs and landings with a student preparing for her private checkride. Get up the next day and do it all over again.

It's easy after the third or fourth student of the day, or the fifth or sixth trip round the traffic pattern, or with a student you've flown with several times, to become complacent. It's a nasty wake-up call for a CFI for the student to do something unexpected, or to find yourself thinking about something besides what you're doing at the moment.

A measure of a good instructor is the ability to remain focused on the task under way, as well as see-and-avoid and other aspects of being the flight's designated safety officer. The instructor who detects him/herself daydreaming or missing radio calls and checklist steps should immediately terminate the instructional flight unless concentration and discipline can be regained. I've learned that focusing on standard operating procedures and remembering I'm ultimately responsible for the safe outcome of the flight is the best defence against instructor complacency.

Might instructor-induced lapse of judgment and instructor complacency have played a part in the New York City crash that killed Yankees pitcher Cory Lidle and his flight instructor, Tyler Stanger? Significant post-crash analysis indicates that Lidle's Cirrus may have been unable to complete a 180° turn to avoid Class B airspace at the north end of New York's East River, after flying up near the river's centerline and then turning left with a significant wind from the right. Without placing blame on either party, it's possible to envision a scenario where Lidle chose to fly up the center of the river and Stanger did not correct him, or that Stanger chose the ground track and Lidle acquiesced given his relationship with the CFI. In either event, my opinion is the student/instructor relationship, left uncorrected, may have played a part in the decisions that ultimately led to their impact with a high-rise Manhattan building.

As a CFI, I include the following briefing items on my checklist to review with students before we start:

You will be acting as pilot-in-command of the flight (assuming the student is qualified and current). Fly as if you are alone in the airplane. Don't depend on me to tell you what to do.

If you see anything abnormal, or feel the need to go around, miss an instrument approach or accomplish an emergency procedure, go ahead and do so – you won't be wrong. We may later discuss the indications and options you faced, but always act in the direction of safety.

Tell me anything you think should be brought to my attention. This improves safety and also helps me gauge how well I'm getting across the point of the lesson.

I also consider the following for myself as an instructor:

I am ultimately responsible for the safe outcome of the flight, regardless of the student's experience, his/her professional credentials or the force of his/her personality.

Safety is my first responsibility, with instructional goals important but a second priority.

My student may point out indications, traffic or other things that I'm not aware of. If that happens, I need to concentrate more on the safety aspect of my job.

Diligent adherence to checklists and standard operating procedures will help prevent instructor complacency.

If I find myself going off-task in the airplane, it's time to terminate the lesson.

**This article, by Thomas P. Turner, originally appeared in Leading Edge. Northam Aero Club gratefully acknowledges Avweb, from whose archive this edited text was sourced. – Editor.*

CIRCUITS AND BUMPS

...not to be taken too seriously...

August 2007

Our two larrikins back from Oshkosh...

Congrats to Father Simon...

Where is our new taxi-way...?

New management ... or more dinosaurs...

Still for sale: concrete slabs, a bain-marie, what else...an old Auster...

Jaz still working on his hangar, or is he...?



Northam Aero Club would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to Damien Hayes (Windward Balloon Adventures) for his assistance and support throughout the year.

Club Calendar

Committee Meeting - 9'th September @ 1400

Bar Roster

Opening hours
Saturday 5pm –7pm
Sunday 5pm—7pm

AUGUST

25'th & 26'th Matt

SEPTEMBER

1'st & 2'nd Joy
8'th & 9'th Claude
15'th & 16'th Steve
22'nd & 23'rd Sven
29'th & 30'th Les

Please make arrangements to swap with someone if you are not available on your rostered day(s).

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