President’s Message

Vista Field . . . is Rising from the Ashes!

John Dobson, WPA President

Two years ago we knew that we were in trouble at Blaine. There were problems with the ILS at Hoquiam, encroachment issues at Mt. Vernon, restrictions at Pearson, developers at Cle Elum, landing fees at Boeing Field and the list goes on. Looking back we were so naive. We just assumed that everyone understood the value of airports. Along came the City of Kennewick asking to close Vista Field (owned by The Port of Kennewick). So, we asked a lot of questions and made a lot of speeches. We got a lot of platitudes from the politicians . . . but we never got any satisfaction . . . until now!

The world of aviation in this State will never be the same . . . thanks to our success in the November elections. If you have not heard: 5 airport friendly candidates were elected to 7 positions in Kennewick (2 Port Commissioners and 3 City Council Members). The future of Vista Field has never looked brighter. Wake up people . . . Vista is back. For the details read Marjy Leggett’s story in this issue. THIS IS HUGE!

AOPA . . . I can’t thank them enough. The Kennewick elections were expensive. I think I saw from an early newspaper account that over $90,000 had been spent by all candidates in the Kennewick election. Although the Washington Pilots Association was credited with being the third largest contributor the bulk of our PAC (Political Action Committee) money came from AOPA . . . we are talking over $10,000 dollars. In past articles I opined that AOPA contributes greatly to the national debate and the WPA is “boots on the ground” for state and local issues. When AOPA recognized that we had the infrastructure in place (PAC and people) they opened up the flood gates with advice and money! It was truly amazing to watch. Again, I can’t thank AOPA enough . . . such a fantastic partner.

Vista Field has taught us so much. We learned how to engage with respect. We learned volumes about Washington Law . . . the Growth Management Act and airports as “essential public facilities”. We stretched ourselves to understand the political process. We formed a Political Action Committee. We studied how to run an election campaign. We learned how to select candidates and how to educate them on the issues. To suggest the WPA single-handedly won this election is over the top. The professional pollsters will determine why candidates won and lost. But it is fair to say that we played a major role in this incredible success story.

To every pilot in Washington . . . you can change your future. You can stop the loss of airports. You can protect your right to fly. It is not easy and you will expend a lot of personal energy. I love Frank Sinatra’s song My Way; the lyrics say it all, “Some people get their kicks stomping on a dream”. We sent a message in November and we now have a roadmap for our future.

On a personal note . . . most of you know my new daytime job . . . Executive Director for the Port of Shelton (SHN). When I first accepted the position I received calls from several well placed aviation luminaries. They wished me well and shared their concerns about potential political conflicts. Last month I received a call from someone I truly respect who suggested that I consider resigning from the WPA.

Everyone should know that if I touch something while on the job at SHN (email, phone, etc) it becomes a public record. Taxpayers are not paying me to do WPA work. As such I need to be most conscious about my actions. There are times when I must stand on the sidelines such as the recent Port of Shelton elections.

That said I am even more committed to the protection of our airports! After the LATS commission completed its work, there came to be a sense of energy and knowledge that something needs to change to protect our aviation future. The true value of airports became clear to some very important people . . . aside from the elections in Kennewick. So to all who know me and those who do not . . . when I see or hear of any governing body threatening the long term viability of our airports for short term gain, I will speak up. If you ask me to choose . . . I’d give up my phone, etc) it becomes a public record. Taxpayers are not paying me to do WPA work. As such I need to be most conscious about my actions. There are times when I must stand on the sidelines such as the recent Port of Shelton elections.

To every pilot in Washington . . . you can change your future. You can stop the loss of airports. You can protect your right to fly. It is not easy and you will expend a lot of personal energy. I love Frank Sinatra’s song My Way; the lyrics say it all, “Some people get their kicks stomping on a dream”. We sent a message in November and now we have a roadmap for our future.

WASHINGTON PILOTS ASSOCIATION

WPA BOARD MEETING

November 14, 2009 – Harvey Field

President John Dobson called the meeting to order at 11:29 a.m.

ATTENDANCE:

President, John Dobson; Vice President West, Charles Hower; Secretary, Marjy Leggett; Treasurer, Tom Fox; Membership Chairman, John Smutny; Director of Communications & Newsletter Editor, Colleen Turner

Tom Jensen; 1-800 Number Monitor, Nancy Jensen; Director of Communications & Newsletter Editor, Colleen Turner

Other WPA members: Paine Field President, Les Smith; from Harvey Field Chapter, Ken Sullivan, John Haug, Frank Bisson, George Levin, and Sandy Burn. From Green River Chapter, Bob Darnbrugh and Pat Darnbrugh

MINUTES:

John Smutny moved to approve the minutes, second by Les Smith.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Tom Fox reported that as of October 31, there was $29,000 in the general fund and $13,324 has been collected from membership fees, Wings, and PAC compared with $13,318 last year. Expenses are comparable to last year’s expenses. Tom requested help with the PAC fund reporting. The rules for PAC reporting are fairly strict, so someone is needed to contest the legal requirements of reporting. Tom will write up a request for help to be inserted in WINGS.

VISTA FIELD:

Marjy Leggett gave a briefing on Vista Field leading up to the election of the Port of Kennewick commissioners and new Kennewick City Council members. Of the seven positions available, five were filled with people who support the airport.

AOPA was recognized for their support and contributions in helping with Vista Field. John Dobson reported that Tom Wallitner beat the incumbent Rick Byrd for the Port of Shelton. Tom is a former airline pilot.

John Smutny asked if the FBO’s were receiving WINGS and suggested that they should be included on the mailing list as some of this information about airports would be of interest to them. Mr. Dobson asked John to derive a list of FBO’s and give it to newsletter editor Colleen Turner.

VICE PRESIDENT WEST REPORT:

Charles Hower reported on the repairs and testing that are taking place on the Boeing 787 in order to get certification. Hopes are to have a formal flight before the end of the year.

(Continued on page 2)
Craig Johnson about Jack Dugan

November 9, 2009

Jack was the first pilot I met as a new faculty at CWU in 1996. We had lunch every day at the 18th Street Deli where you can still get a ‘Dugan burger’. His pride was wrapped up in his ‘super-cub’, a plans-built aircraft project. And he encouraged others to follow creating their own planes. He was instrumental in my choice to purchase a Sonex kit.

His generosity allowed me to do a major modification to my current AVID aircraft (a wing extension) using his hangar... for months. His hangar is the social locale for our community. He never missed an EAA Oshkosh AirVenture and this last summer was no exception. He could walk the shoes off me.

Jack served on our CWU grievance committee for ‘ever’, and as a union representative he helped me deal with a ‘career threatening’ scenario. He encouraged me to apply for a sabbatical, especially since the administration actively resisted it, in order to raise the level of discussion and force us to reflect on our mission and policies.

The last public testimony he gave was at a county planner hearing this fall where he defended my local airport (Cn Elum Municipal) against ‘development encroachment’. He was an original ‘Airport Support Network’ volunteer (ELN, through AOPA).

And we spent many hours on the road to meetings reflecting his passion and support for general aviation.

Like Jack, I’m always wearing ‘Carhartts’ because our engineering technology programs are quite ‘hands-on’ and the faculty members are responsible. I think of Jack often and use him as a ‘touchstone’ when presented with a scenario needing a thoughtful social angle.

With somber reflection, Craig

OBITUARY

John ‘Jack’ Richard Dugan, Ph.D.

Jack died of cancer Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at home in Ellensburg. He was born June 2, 1941, in Chesapeake, Virginia, to Col. Richard J. Dugan, USAF, and Martha Marie Clifton Dugan. The family’s life in the military meant that Jack’s growing up years were spent living in a variety of places, including Germany and Guam. When in the States, however, the family would often spend summers in Whitefish, MT where Jack and his father built a cabin together on the shores of Flathead Lake.

Jack was a Professor Emeritus at Central Washington University after having taught there for 39 years. He earned his B.S. in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Illinois at Urbana in 1964, his M.A. in Sociology from Washington State University in 1969, and his Ph.D. in Sociology from Washington State University in 1970. He was a National Institute of Mental Health scholar while at WSU and earned the Bobbs-Merrill Award in Sociology. Before entering graduate school, Jack served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia. He cared deeply about student learning and was actively engaged in research, community support, and university service. For his mentoring service and support to junior faculty and students, Jack received the Women’s Achievement Award from the Center for Student Empowerment in 2008.

Jack was an experienced pilot, experimental aircraft builder, and avid supporter of the aviation community, including serving on the Kittitas County airport advisory board since its inception. He was also an accomplished wood craftsman, building furniture and a Pelican sailboat.

Jack requested that his deepest gratitude be extended to all who walked through his life and he asked all thank him for his generosity of spirit, technical expertise, clear thinking, challenging questions, and sharing his enthusiasm for anything flying or floating.

Jack is survived by his wife Andrea L. S. Dugan of Ellensburg and his sister-in-law Becky Dugan of Denver and Mike Dugan of Little Rock, AR. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother Jim Dugan.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Jack Dugan Society Fund. Donation may be made online at http://www.wpaflys.org. In memory of Jack Dugan (PAC) Obituary (CWU Foundation). World".

WPA PAC Needs Treasurer!

The WPA Political Action Committee needs a committed volunteer to track and remind PAC members of their pending contributions to the PAC.

If you are interested please contact:
Tom Fox, WPA State Treasurer
(206) 719-1300
tom@milmarintheroys.com

Your help is very much appreciated. Thank you!

WPA BOARD MEETING

By-LAWS — LES SMITH:

Les Smith announced that the By-Laws Committee is underway. He proceeded in comparing by-laws of other similar organizations to see how they deal with membership. He proposed continuing the by-law study into next year and recommended that a by-law committee put together a recommendation to be presented to the Board of Directors before going to the main meeting in June.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

John Dobson and Les Smith worked on the website management system and put together a list of points they will present to John Dowland who will update the WPA website. John will type up the list and send it to the membership.

TOYS FOR TOTS — JOHN SMUTNY

A long-time tradition of providing Toys for Tots under scrutiny by the chapters due to problems with an insurance risk, making contact with the Marines, Marines not showing up to collect the toys, getting the toys to the right people, not knowing where the toys are going, and no credit or recognition for the contribution made by the WPA.

It was suggested that chapters who want to collect Toys for Tots should do it on their own and do it locally.

INSURANCE:

Concern regarding insurance risk to WPA members was brought up. Because we have no assets, liability risk is minimal. Insurance is needed to protect Directors and Officers (D & O coverage) especially as the organization becomes more politically active.

John Dobson will look into insurance policies and contact Tom Jensen about the WASAR policy and John Townsley who also is researching policies.

SAFETY:

Tom Jensen relayed an incident involving Search and Rescue and a missing plane. Les Smith suggested that incidents, such as these can serve as lessons for members who may not have had the background experience. It was agreed that, as pilots, we must police ourselves in making wise judgments in flying. Tom lauded the FAA Wings Safety Program as a tool for becoming a safer pilot and demonstrating one’s interest in safety education, which might help, should one find him or herself involved in a mishap.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Leggett
WPA Secretary

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MEMBERSHIP: Please send articles via email to: info@wpaflys.org.
Send bowenman or handwritten articles to: Washington Pilots Association, 21308 SE 215th St., Maple Valley, WA 98038.

MEMBERSHIP: This newsletter manages the Wings and the information, advertising, and opinions presented in the Wings are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the WPA.

This newsletter is published monthly for information and education purposes only. The writer must not rely on the information contained herein. Pilots are advised that they are solely responsible to comply with Federal Aviation Regulations and Standards. The writer is solely responsible for the content of the work published in the Wings. The Washington Pilots Association will not be held responsible for any claims, losses, or injuries resulting from the information contained herein.

Be smart, and please fly safely.

WPA Website:
http://www.wpaflys.org

December 2009/January 2010

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The Harvey Chapter membership is the highest it has ever been at 45 members.

MEMBERSHIP — JOHN SMUTNY:

Membership chairman John Smuty reported that the newly formed Arlington location has over 36 members and is very close to becoming an official chapter.

It has been a challenge finding businesses to participate in membership discounts. John Dobson pointed out that it really is a chapter issue because the chapters are more local of business leaders and FBOs that are willing to participate.

A new dues payment invoice, developed by Richard Hansen, was presented around the inspection.

Due postcard reminder used in the past was often viewed as junk mail and thrown out by members it was decided to mail out an invoice-type notice this year.

Field member Frank Bisono suggested sending electronic invoices via e-mail. John Smuty said the problem is having current e-mails. Frank also suggested reaching the younger crowd by posting a Facebook page and reaching out to the colleges and aviation training schools.

WINGS:

There was a short discussion about the website, which needs upgrading. Concerns expressed were regarding keeping it current, a new look, ease of navigation, a blog mode, and which tools are needed to make an effective website.

AIRPORTS — TOM JENSEN:

Director of Airport Services Tom Jensen reported that the cabin at Stuart Island has been in high demand. Usage is up 75% in 2009 compared to 2008.

21 different people using the cabin this year.

The Vancouver Olympics will have an impact Stuart Island as well as other airports in the area. Tom advises pilots to be careful and follow the Security Rules. Each airport has been assigned a specific squawk code, which must be used when landing at any of the airports within the designated security zone. Workshops are being held around the state educating pilots of the new stringent rules.

The Squawks will be in effect for at least two months.

Contrary to information printed in the airport directories, Spanaway Airport is still open. Fuel is relatively inexpensive there, but it is likely the airport will close for good within a year.

Idaho Aviation and the Recreational Aircraft Foundation are putting together a program looking for former backcountry pilots to spend a few days next summer flying as special ops to contact Tom Jensen for more information.

COMMUNICATIONS — COLLEEN TURNER:

Colleen thanked everyone for sending in articles to WINGS.

http://www.wpaflys.org

http://www.wpaflys.org
A Little Different BFR

By Dave Lacke, WPA Eastside VP

In June I had scheduled a visit to Herndon, Virginia to visit my sister and family. The visit was planned for 5 Nov 2009. Dennis Gibbs is my brother-in-law and he was working for the EDS division of HP at the time. One of his associates by the name of Mike Gilbert is an instrument and multi-engine flight instructor for Aviation Adventures in Leesburg, VA.

Aviation Adventures has fairly new equipment. The oldest airplane is a 2005 model. There are 172’s, 182’s, Columbu’s, and a couple of Diamond Twin Stars just to mention a few of the aircraft based at Leesburg and Manassas, Virginia.

So I decided to schedule my BFR with Mike Gilbert in a 2005 Skyhawk SP (180 HP) with a Garmin 1000 glass cockpit. The Skyvanes were already scheduled.

Leesburg airport (KJYO), is very close to Dulles International, (KIA), and under the Bravo airspace vein of IAD.

The review started with a familiarization of the IFR and VFR charts around Leesburg. It’s overwhelming as there is a lot going on in this airspace. We then went over to the Garmin 1000 “big screen TV” where Mike showed me the most important features of the system. It is a very “feature rich” system but designed to be fairly intuitive. It is good to learn these things on the ground and not in the airplane with the instrument hood on.

Next, we went out to the airplane. It’s pretty much like the 172 I flew years now. There is a lot of proven technology. During the preflight I noticed there were a total of 13 fuel sump drains. Mike mentioned that there were probably 13 defense lawyers in the most recent fuel contamination lawsuit.

We departed Leesburg to the west, veered the cleared the Bravo airspace and flew to Winchester, (KOKV).

I had my foggles on so missed out on the clear day with lots of flat clouds. Dennis was in the back seat taking pictures. The 172 has a King two axis autopilot that couples to the GPS or ILS and is VASA certified. We did a few approaches and a couple of touch and goes then returned to Leesburg. I hand flew the airplane most of the time but Mike wanted to show me how to use the autopilot which worked flawlessly.

I flew the RNAV approach back into Leesburg and we survived another landing.

We had a short critique of the flight and Mike signed my logbook.

The Depressed economy does not seem to have affected business at Aviation Adventures. As mentioned earlier my preference to fly was a Skylane, but they were both signed out for the day, Nov 7, when Mike tried to reserve them in June. Mike said that Aviation Adventures is by far the most professional and best run FBO / flight school he has ever been associated with.

The Leesburg airport is about the same size and home for about the same number of aircraft as Felts Field in Spokane which is where I keep my 182, 260BG. Felts has a control tower. Leesburg does not have a control tower. The Leesburg airport supports Aviation Adventures, one other flight school and another full service FBO.

As I walked out to the parking lot I had to ask myself why this airport is a hub of activity and Felts Field can’t even support an FBO? What is wrong with the picture at KSJT?

It was a great day. Next time you need a BFR or Instrument Competency Check, take the opportunity to do something new and challenging.

A Quick Dip in the Lake

By Jack Krause, WPA Shenandoah Chapter

It was a beautiful sunny day in the Puget Sound, and as the company pilot, I had been invited by my employers to fly a group of their friends to Campbell River, British Columbia in the company's Beaver floatplane. The flight would take us to Campbell River to clear customs, and then the passengers would board the company's luxury yacht on a trip to a beautiful hideaway in Big Bay.

I arrived at Kenmore Air Harbor at the end of the day in Lake Washington where the floatplane, a De Havilland Beaver, was stored. An earlier phone call had the airfield staff clearing the dock.

So I took to the air in the 180 HP - 1150 - an engine that is more at home on the water than on the tarmac. My trousers were soaked, but what the heck, I was an agile 60 years old, and I was not going the necessary distance to damage the airplane.

My profession agily (it was less than estimated, and with a big "kerplunk") joined the bird in the water.

As I stated, I performed this maneuver in front of maybe fifty or sixty people waiting on the dock for their ride to wherever. They all thought it was a good show, and I just know some of them would probably follow me away from the dock to watch the show. I guess that was the effort they had to make the appropriate placards.

As I came gulping to the surface I started swimming to the dock with the rope in my teeth (not really). I was helped out by several willing rescuers – who had one hell of a time hiding their snickering. And there I stood in my poplin trousers and poplin shirt soaked to my socks awaiting passengers who had me never met before.

Woo, I thought, won’t they be impressed. Maybe I could tell them it was really hot and just went for a swim to cool off while waiting but dismissed that idea right away.

The Kenmore folks offered me a pair of dry overalls, which I declined figuring my passengers would be just as concerned if they thought the mechanic was taking them to Canada. Oh yeah, I lost my glasses in the plunge, but I always carried an emergency pair in my flight bag.

Wear a drysuit! An ideal! It is a common practice before flight to start the airplane engine while it is moored to the dock and walk away to allow the five plus gallons of oil in the Pratt Whitney radial engine sump to warm up prior to takeoff. This eliminates a considerable amount of taxing on the water to accomplish the same thing. I figured I was saved! I cranked the engine and stood on the float in the prop blast and let the propeller airflow “blow dry” me. Damn I was clever. The combination of warm sunny weather, the poplin clothing, and the airflow did the trick perfectly, and by the time my passengers showed up I was neat, tidy and ready to roll.

I loaded the six passengers and bags and was soon enroute for the hour and a half flight to Campbell River, BC to clear customs and meet the company yacht. However, about a half hour out of Campbell River I happened to look down at my lap to find a horrifying discovery. My underwear had not dried out when behind the prop, and it was bleeding through the light tan colored trousers. I looked as though I was wearing a pair of dark colored trousers over my trousers. I looked at the passenger in the right hand seat of the cockpit who was watching with giddy bewilderment. I apparently thought I couldn’t hold it until landing and wet my pants. Smart punk.

This particular airplane had no intercommunication system that allowed the passengers to talk to each other, so I pulled out a piece of paper and wrote, “I fell in the lake.” That sure got a lot of laughs as it was passed around. Ha, ha. And my predicament did not enhance my clearing customs in anyway either. He cleared me with only a minimum of snickering.

Oh well. It was a long flight home steamed in humiliation. At least my undies had dried by the time I returned to Kenmore, but my shoes made a very audible squish, squish sound as I departed the dock.
ANACORTES - The Anacortes chapter generally meets on the third Monday of every third month (February, May, August and November) at 6:30 pm. Meetings are held at the Seafarer's Hall and the Port of Anacortes, located near the north end of the airport. A potluck dinner begins at 6:30 pm, with an educational program and meeting to follow. For more information, contact Ken Davis, kdavis@comcast.net, 360-675-7526.

CLALLAM COUNTY - The Clallam County chapter is on the second Monday of the month at Rite Bros (FBO) at Port Angeles Fairchild International Airport (CEA). Meetings begin at 7:00 pm and are welcome. For more info on the Clallam County chapter, contact Jerry Nicholls at 800-292-2978.

COVILLE VALLEY - For current meeting schedules, please contact Dave Garringer, covilleairport@yahoo.com, 509-794-3444.

DEER PARK - Deer Park chapter meets at the Deer Park Airport (KDEW) Administration Building on the last Thursday of the month, except in February, November and December. The Administration Building is located near the south end of the airport. A potluck dinner begins at 6:30 pm, with an educational program and meeting to follow. Guests are always welcome. For more information on the Deer Park chapter and its activities, please contact Ray Likes of 509-276-5733 or email clpinfo@comcast.net.

GREEN RIVER - The Green River chapter meets for dinner and program at 7:00 pm on the third Friday of each month, from October through June. At the Auburn Station of the Boeing-Southwest Flight Academy, 2700 East Street N.E. in Auburn. For more information on the Green River chapter, email greenriver@wpafl ies.org, 360-294-1481.

HARVEY FIELD/NOHOMISH - The Harvey Field chapter meets on the second Saturday of each month, year round, at 10:30 am at Harvey Field. For more information on activities, please visit the Harvey Field web site. For more information contact Charles Hover at 425-367-8755.

NORTH SOUND/BELLINGHAM - The North Sound chapter meets on the second Thursday of the month (except during June, July and August), at 7:00 pm on the second floor of the old Port of Bellingham administration building, at Bellingham International Airport (BLI). For more information on the North Sound chapter, contact Charlie and Karen Cooper, 360-920-4181.

OKANOGAN & FERRY COUNTY - The Okanogan & Ferry County chapter holds its monthly meeting on the second Saturday of each month alternating between Okanogan and Tonasket. We go for the summer for the air in a twist in the Twisp Airport in May around the 4th Saturday. We start up again in September. To confirm meeting details, contact Monica Oakes at 509-826-1834.

OLYMPIA SOUTH SOUND - The Olympia chapter meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Pearson Air on the Olympia Airport at 7:40 pm. In addition to monthly meetings free ground school instruction for both new and licensed pilots every Tuesday evening at 6:00 pm. For more information contact Tom Morris, tcmor rific@comcast.net, 360-924-5344.

PAINES FIELD - The Paine Field chapter meets the first Friday of most months for dinner and an aviation related program. For detailed information on the monthly meeting and other chapter activities please call group president Mark Metzger. For more information contact Mark Metzger, 425-453-7690 or email cmetzger@cox.net.

GREATER SEATTLE - The Greater Seattle chapter is looking for a fresh infusion of energy. If you’re interested in serving on the Board, please call Colleen Turner at 425-453-7690 or email czturner@crusholddaysbeaverton.com.

SHELTON-SANDERSON - Brandon Harndt, President, 360-432-2605.

SOUTHWEST VANCOUVER - The Southwest Vancouver chapter generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, starting at 7:00 pm, at the Pearson Airfield (PV) Uplands of Vancouver. For more information on the Southwest Vancouver chapter, please contact Brown Brown at 475-2076.

SPokane - Meetings of the Spokane chapter are usually held on the third Wednesday of each month over dinner at Marcie Callander’s Restaurant, beginning at 6:00 pm. (Meeting details are subject to change - please call in advance to check). The chapter also conducts a monthly fly-out on the Saturday morning following the chapter meeting. For more information, contact Tom Morris, tcmor rific@comcast.net, 360-924-5344.

TRI-CITIES - The Tri-Cities chapter meets at 6:30 pm at Boeing’s FBO, Tri-Cities Airport (KPSO), Pasco on the fourth Thursday of each month. For information contact Marjy Leggett 509-547-5457 or email MarjyLeggett charts@netzero.com.

TWIN HARBORS - The Twin Harbors chapter meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm in Ocean Shores, location TBD. For meeting details and more info, contact Fred Winge at (360) 589-4189, email lupingraf@comcast.net.


YAKIMA VALLEY - The Yakima Valley chapter meets for dinner on the first Thursday of the month. For meeting location and other details, contact Les Flu at 509-952-2376 or email les.fl u@comcast.net.

WPA Chapters Around the State (Continued on page 8)
Home again!  

Sky King’s Songbird III

WPA Wings - Page 5

December 2009/January 2010

Many thanks to our friends Mike and Jeanne, for all their help.
By Dr. Kristen Allott
dynamicpaths.com

Pilots require the abilities to quickly synthesize information, make decisions and execute them. In Jonathan Lehrer’s new book How We Decide, he explains what we know about how the mind makes decisions and how we can make better decisions by appreciating what the emotional brain is most useful and when the thinking brain is most useful.

In Lehrer’s story, a lieutenant commander fired a missile because his instincts (emotional brain) told him that the radar trace was an enemy, even though he had no confirmation whether the trace was an enemy missile or a Navy US fighter plane returning to its carrier. When asked why he fired the lieutenant commander could provide no information from his thinking brain; he just knew he should fire.

He had to wait four hours before he knew if he had made the right decision. Lehrer’s book is filled with interesting examples of pilots making ill-fated decisions as well as heroic life-saving ones. This book helps us understand when to do a thoughtful analysis and when to make a gut-level decision. His basic insights apply to landing a plane, making a purchase or deciding what to eat.

A pilot friend of mine asked me how pilots could optimize their decision-making capabilities through eating food before taking off and landing. I suggested that a pilot make sure the brain has plenty of blood sugar (glucose) in order to keep the thinking brain in charge. When the plane go an extended period time without eating their blood sugar is maintained through hormones. One of the hormones that can be released is adrenalin. Adrenalin switches brain dominance to the emotional brain, making it in charge. This is great when you get irritate and/or anxious when we have not eaten in a long time. The emotional brain is very good at following routines, but it does not problem solve as well as the thinking brain. Whenever possible and especially when a critical decision has to be made we want to have the thinking part of the brain in charge. By regularly fueling the brain, we assure that the thinking part of the brain can problem-solve novel or unexpected information.

For example, let’s say a pilot had breakfast and went for a three-hour flight. On return to the airport, the same pilot encounters a strong, unexpected crosswind. I suggest prior to initiating the descent pattern the pilot drinks a kid’s serving size of boxed, fruit juice. This will support both the use of the pilot’s extensive training and his thinking brain. Practically, he will have enough ‘juice’ to make accurate decisions for the complex landing.

If you have any question on how food affects mental clarity, energy or health, please email me at allbert@dynamicpaths.com.

Serving Washington Pilots Since 1960

JOIN WPA

WPA is working on behalf of general aviation in the state of Washington. Please Join us!

BENEFITS OF WPA MEMBERSHIP:

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• FREE USE OF RUSTIC, FLY-IN CABIN IN THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS
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Washington Pilots Association
Serving Washington Pilots Since 1960

Have Gadget, Will Travel

By John Townsley, WPA Legislative Director

Got a new auto pilot, GPS, or MFD/PFD? NASA’s Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) has some tidbits from pilots who launched with the intent of learning new instruments and flight management systems in the air.

Situational awareness is a great term. For a pilot it means knowing where we are, understanding what our plane is doing, being aware of what’s going on around us that might affect our flight, and anticipating changes or conditions that might soon become our new reality. ASRS reports from numerous pilots suggest it’s pretty easy to get sucked into our gadgets and punch buttons, consume complicated sequences, or try to figure out why Harvey (the coupled autopilot) did X when we thought it would do Y.

Check out NASA’s ASRS Callback chat to fix the essence from recent reports. The most recent issue, #356, discusses several gadget related gotcha’s that pilots experienced this spring.

In a nutshell, ASRS reports indicate we need to do a better job of maintaining our situational awareness. For those of us with a bit of high tech in the cockpit ASRS Callback #356 offers the following suggestions:

Understand how advanced systems execute commands before using these systems in flight.

Monitor the airplane’s flight path when ATC issues clearance changes that require re-programming.

Resist the urge to extensively troubleshoot automation that is not working as expected.

Fueled for Critical Decisions

By Dr. Kristen Allott
dynamicpaths.com

Arrival and departure procedures pre-programmed into our gadgets may not be what ATC asks us to execute. This gotcha caught GA pilots as well as several drivers of the ‘big iron’. In serious cases pilots detected the deviation from ATC instructions, but reacted by pushing more buttons instead of relieving Harvey of his duties and hand flying the approach or departure. The potential for an accident definitely increases with gadget induced pilot deviations.

At the core of situational awareness is knowing where we are and what the hardware (airplane) is doing. One pilot shooting a practice approach thought he was at airport A, when in fact he was over airport B. His button pushing sequence didn’t elicit the course and track he expected so he focused on figuring out ‘how come’. Unfortunately, Airport B had sky diving ops in progress. It wasn’t his time, though he stumbled to within ½ mile or so of the drop. He wasn’t under the hood (technically) so no safety pilot was aboard. Obviously his head wasn’t out of the cockpit.

Sometimes we fall into the gadget trap because we have a newly installed box. Sometimes it’s because we’re flying a plane with unfamiliar instruments. What’s it take to become comfortable with new stuff? It depends. Sometimes it’s just a matter of reading the manual. Sometimes (maybe often?) concentrated study, a conversation with a CFI knowledgeable about the gadgets, and some on-the-ground practice is necessary.

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Long Road Home
(Continued from page 3)
It is a true one traffic light town. I continued through the town and turned left towards a another field from Townsend. I returned for some lunch, packed up my stuff and got a weather briefing at Kellogg. When I went to the South Sound winds out of the south. That did not sound like much fun, so Mike and Jeanette bribed me on some passes to the south that would allow me to stay relatively low, which was desirable to keep manifold pressure as high as possible. I did a developed a sectional hours in break in.

I launched in early afternoon, and headed south to the city of Moscow where I picked up Interstate 15. It heads south stays in the valleys (and were narrow cuts) until it breaks out of Montana and turns into the flat lands of Idaho. Most of this route out of Montana allowed me to stay below 6,000 feet. I was 500 feet off the deck much of the time, since it was all sparsely populated. It was an easy one I-15 I watched first cylinder #1, then #4, then #2, then #3 drop roughly 35 degrees in GCI, all within a 20 minute period. This was a sign of the rings seating with the cylinder walls, indicating my engine’s break in was progressing. From Monida Pass, I turned east, skirting the end of the peaks and valleys of the Idaho mountains. I watched the sun set in front of me, and with a little help from Boise Approach through BOI air space, found my way to Nampa for the night.

When the winds were 18g24, they were well aligned with the runway. I refueled and tied down then, found a hotel for the night. I’m disappointed not to have seen the Warbird Museum at Nampa, so I had a good reason to return.

The next morning was cool and clear. None of the mountain obscuration in the forecast was visible to the northwest. After takeoff, I again followed interstate, this time I-84, northwest through Baker City Oregon, then north to La Grande. At La Grande, I turned west for The Dalles. Winds were calm at DLS as I landed on R18 following an aircraft arriving from the east. Was this a good sign, indicating the Gorge to be open? As I refueled, the attendant told me that they had just returned after attempting the Gorge. I dilly-dallied, checking the weather, which indicated Troutdale as VFR, but windy, but Chelalis and Olympia were both IFR. This was still a new engine, and though my confidence was growing, I had no desire for anything but VFR. After an hour’s wait, I launched. If the Gorge was to be closed off, it would be at Cascade Locks. I flew the Gorge at 800, the ceilings were 2100 or so.

But I had 6+ miles of visibility the entire way, and in no time I had Troutdale in sight. Everywhere east of the Cascades had been calm and sunny, the story was quite different on the west side. Winds at 3000 were out of the south-southwest at 35 to 40 knots. I wanted another weather picture, and took one. Again I was below 6,000 feet. I was at 500 feet overhead.

I have never been through the Gorge. The ADIS weather site now indicated consistent ceilings of roughly 3,000 the rest of the way home, but the TAF was indicating 1000 foot ceiling arrival of higher gusty winds. The window was narrowing. I launched immediately. From Troutdale, I had to make my way to Kelso before turning more northerly, in order to stay clear of those secured ridges. Ceiling’s were as forecast. Groundspeed was 158 knots, indicating a tail wind of nearly 30 knots. It was bumpy. The kind of day where you’re flying along wings level, then suddenly find yourself in a 25 degree bank. You fly through it and straighten her up and the ride. ETA 35 minutes on the GPS.

Winds at Paine were gusty but again, were relatively aligned with R16. A few minutes of taxi and N54612 was tucked away in her hangar. We were home. Over the next few hours the wind started rippling through with gusts in the 50’s. But I was safe, on the ground, and home again.

Now about that laundry...