

OWNER & PILOT Advantage

A Magazine for Owners and Pilots from *Skytech, inc.* Publications

THE VALUE OF
A SECOND SET
OF EYES **A tool not to
be overlooked.**

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Hobby Loss Rule Update ■ 3
- Paperwork and Your Airplane ■ 6
- Aircraft Leather ■ 8
- Flying with the Family Pet ■ 10

Everyone needs a little help

Even the most conscientious pilot has the ability to miss things when the workload gets high. It's really easy to fixate on one instrument or gauge and lose track of the "big picture." A second set of eyes can make the difference between a routine flight and one that turns into a "learning experience."

Buying or selling an airplane takes a lot of the same skills required in the cockpit. You need to do a lot of planning, scan the market properly, interrupt what you are looking at, and make an informed decision.

Missing something on a pre-purchase inspection, misinterpreting the marketplace pricing or selecting the wrong model are easy mistakes to make. Skytech can be your second set of eyes when it comes to buying or selling an airplane. Our "eyes" have over 100 years of combined aircraft sales experience. We maintain hundreds of airplanes every year, allowing us to know what to look for. Our affiliation with Cessna, Piper and Pilatus give us an inside track to manufacturer data and information.

If you're thinking about buying or selling your airplane and want a second set of eyes on the whole experience, give us a call.

Skytech, Inc., publisher of this magazine is an aircraft sales and service company with FBOs in Westminster, MD (DMW), Rock Hill, SC (UZA - Charlotte Metro Area) and Administrative Headquarters in Baltimore, MD (MTN).

Your thoughts, suggestions, comments and criticism are important to us and we will always welcome reader feedback.

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Vref

THE MARKET SNAPSHOT

Recent economic headlines have been... well, not that bad. Just a positive blip, or is it the real recovery? In an election year it is almost impossible to tell. One side claims we are nearing Armageddon and the other, Shangri-La.

Regardless of your politics, activity continues to gradually improve. But why? Forecasts of a normal, healthy economy keep being moved into 2013 - some say 2014 or beyond. It's all about adapt or perish. We will delve into this a little bit later and promise not to use the phrase new normal - or Charles Darwin.

PISTON SINGLES AND TWINS - Some still call this market stagnant. We call it stable. Light and Complex Singles have had at least seven quarters of little or no change in average price. Pressurized Twins have enjoyed five quarters of relative stability, while Light Twins have changed very little in eight quarters.

A WORD ABOUT MODS AND OTHER ADD-ONS - Amazingly we still get calls from agitated owners saying they paid good money for that KX155 or ADF or autopilot a few years ago - why is it not an add-on now? Simply put, the smarter-than-ever-before buyer will not pay extra for something that he or she thinks the airplane ought to have. A Beechcraft Bonanza is expected to have a good, working two-axis autopilot. Now, install a new Garmin touch screen navcom or an Aspen glass panel and you've got real added value for any airplane.

TURBOPROPS - Even better than the piston market, turboprops have enjoyed

at least ten quarters of relative stability. Flat might be boring, but we'll take that over a downtrend any day. There are numerous factors to help this segment. One is a very wide price range that fits almost any budget. Some older Beech King Air 90s and Piper Cheyennes can be bought for less than a piston twin. However, that is not where most of the activity is centered. It seems there is a 'shift to quality'. If it is late model, low time and priced right there is interest. As we've said before, there seems to be a place for a turboprop in nearly every flight department - turbine safety, efficiency, and it doesn't look like a corporate jet.

RETAIL V. WHOLESALE - After such a lengthy period of market turmoil it is time to revisit this subject. In 2008 and 2009, prices were falling so rapidly that today's wholesale quickly became tomorrow's retail - and it was happening just that quickly. Now, with widespread stability, it is erroneous for buyers to assume the current market is a wholesale market. In most cases, a good airplane will bring retail. A great airplane can bring more than retail.

Obviously, there are still a few airplanes with 'issues' or a distressed seller that can be bought at a less than retail. However, these are the exceptions not the rule. ■

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HOBBY LOSS RULE UPDATE

As a follow up to last year's article on this topic, we will discuss a court case where the court reinforces the concept of grouping, or the concept of "unified business enterprise", where a taxpayer is allowed to deduct the expenses of a business aircraft operating in a stand alone corporation.

In the case *Morton v. United States*, No.08-804C (Fed. Cl. 2011), taxpayer Peter Morton is an entrepreneur, who is one of the co-founders of the Hard Rock Café restaurant chain, and the creator and developer of the Hard Rock brand. He has worked in the restaurant, hotel, and gaming businesses since 1971.

Over the years, he has set up numerous C and S corporations and limited liability companies to operate his hotels, casinos, and real estate investments. The taxpayer contends that these corporations "facilitated Morton's overall business: the maintenance, exploitation and expansion of the Hard Rock trademark and Peter Morton brand through cafes, hotel-casinos, and casinos." These entities are interrelated, and he would make personal loans to these entities to facilitate its growth.

The taxpayer has purchased a business aircraft in a corporation and made over 300 flights during the years being audited. Business trips were taken between his numerous hotel and restaurant locations, and to potential expansion sites for the Hard Rock chain. A "supervisory fee" was charged by the aircraft corporation to the other business entities for his management services.

The taxpayer argues that he is permitted to apply the expenses of an asset (business aircraft) owned by one entity towards other entities because the taxpayer and the entities all worked towards a common business purpose, and therefore were all engaged in a common activity for profit. He sets forth a theory that he and his entities operated as a "unified business enterprise."

The court reaffirms previous case laws that support the concept of unified business enter-

prise and allowed the tax deductions (subject to substantiation requirements) of the aircraft in a stand-alone corporation, even though this corporation does not have a profit motive as an aircraft holding company.

In this current environment of increased scrutiny of business aircraft by the IRS, it is paramount that taxpayers are prepared to support the deductibility of their business aircraft. Documenting and illustrating that a business aircraft is an integral component of an overall business enterprise will be the key defense to hobby loss challenge by the Service. Contemporaneous documentation of each business trip is required for a business aircraft. Affirmatively making a grouping election to establish a "unified business enterprise" should be considered. ■

Whether or not an activity is presumed to be operated for profit requires an analysis of the facts and circumstances of each case. Deciding whether a taxpayer operates an activity with an actual and honest profit motive typically involves applying the nine non-exclusive factors contained in Treas. Reg. § 1.183-2(b). Those factors are:

1. Manner in which the taxpayer carries on the activity
2. The expertise of the taxpayer or his advisors
3. The time and effort expended by the taxpayer in carrying on the activity
4. Expectation that assets used in activity may appreciate in value
5. The success of the taxpayer in carrying on other similar or dissimilar activities
6. The taxpayer's history of income or losses with respect to the activity
7. The amount of occasional profits, if any, which are earned
8. The financial status of the taxpayer
9. Elements of personal pleasure or recreation

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Daniel Cheung
CPA, Member

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continued from page 1

>>>> One of the most concrete aspects of aviation is that we as pilots have the utmost impact on the success of a flight. It's this attribute that fills pilots with a sense of pride and accomplishment after a job well done. It also speaks to the responsibility laid upon our shoulders - not only for our well being but also that of our passengers who have placed their trust in our abilities. Aviation is full of proof to back-up such famous statements as "experience is the greatest teacher" and "in life there is no do-over". From day one as an aviation neophyte we are coached on our way towards the first milestone of solo flight. The instructor keeps a watchful eye to ensure a proper level of safety is maintained and only when the student has gained the needed experience does the instructor step aside. That level of oversight shouldn't be reserved for just the training environment. It doesn't always have to involve an instructor but the value of a second set of eyes in the cockpit during certain situations shouldn't be ignored.

MARGIN FOR ERROR

Once established as a properly certified pilot it can seem like an admission of doubt in your ability to seek a second set of eyes in the cockpit of a single-pilot airplane. Rather, adding another pilot isn't necessarily a statement of your ability, but an attempt at increasing the acceptable margin for error of a given flight. In fact all matters of flying revolve around evaluating the margin for error and whether it meets your standards for a go/no-go decision. The FAA and NTSB's drawers are full of reports that make you question the decisions made. Statements such as "a coating of ice

twin-engine turboprop aircraft have proven that it isn't the second engine that makes you safer but rather the second set of eyes. Ask yourself several questions and see how the response would vary depending on the addition of crew.



Is this flight something I can easily delay or cancel or is there an important meeting or event at the other end I must attend? If so, where will my mind be during the flight? How recent is my experience? Are the conditions for this flight something I'm comfortable with? Have I been here before?

The second pilot can handle many of the ancillary tasks that usually would be considered routine but split the PIC's

“Having a second pilot on board is about adding a measure of safety to complete missions that otherwise would be taxing or dangerous in the single-pilot environment.”

was observed on the airplane at the accident scene" or "the aircraft was noted to exceed maximum take-off weight by 800 pounds" paint pictures of flights that had little chance for success. In most instances the margin for error decision is one made well before the engine is turning.

Having a second pilot on board is about adding a measure of safety to complete missions that otherwise would be taxing or dangerous in the single-pilot environment. That's not to say you can't be safe with a crew of one, but certain scenarios are just better with two. Studies to compare the accident rates of single versus

attention away from flying the airplane. This may include setting up radios, answering ATC, locating charts and approach plates and/or loading procedures into the GPS, etc... In other times the second crew member is in place simply as a back stop to ensure nothing was completed in error or missed all together.

TRANSITIONING AND THE MENTOR PILOT

One of the most common applications for non-professional, General Aviation pilots to utilize the services of a second

pilot is when climbing the aircraft ladder into a new model. Even after your initial training was completed on a new aircraft, there are many times when one may need or want additional support. It's possible there is an insurance requirement above and beyond initial training that is based largely on your total experience level. Mentoring programs are an attempt to pair an experienced pilot (usually an instructor) with a newly trained one, and allow the exposure of real-world flying to happen under the guidance of a

set of eyes can be critical to correcting or noticing an unsafe or irregular condition.

THE RIGHT STUFF

It's imperative that the person chosen to act as your second set of eyes meets the needs of your specific situation. In the case of a mentor pilot you need to consider that the purpose isn't just to make sure you stay out of trouble but also to

“A good mentor pilot is one who knows the ins and outs of instructing and has a level of familiarity with your airplane required to comfortably impart the tricks of the trade.”

watchful eye. It's not uncommon to see requirements of 25 hours for a pilot making the leap from a 4-place non-pressurized aircraft to a 6-place pressurized and possibly turbine model. When the aircraft requires a type-rating such as any of the light jets, the requirements go beyond simply the insurance company. FAR 61.64 (Use of a Flight Simulator and Flight Training Device) states that if the applicant uses a flight simulator for the practical test for an airplane category, class, or type rating and they don't meet certain prior experience requirements then the applicant is subject to additional pilot in command limitations and is restricted from serving as pilot in command in that airplane. The limitation can be removed according to 61.64 (a)(4)(iii) if the applicant “Performs 25 hours of flight time under the direct observation of the pilot in command who holds the appropriate airplane category, class, and type rating, without limitations...”. Some pilots may need more time but the intent is to expose scenarios that training can't adequately cover with the help of a seasoned hand.

NOT JUST FOR THE OWNER PILOT

Don't think that the concept of two eyes in the cockpit at times as an added measure of safety is just for owner pilots. Corporate operators with professional crews operating single-pilot aircraft can benefit from the second set of eyes as well. Many airplanes require only one crew member and are flown safely day in and day out with one pilot. However, the added margin of a co-pilot on certain missions is worth considering. Questions to ask when determining the need include: What type of day is my pilot being subjected to? Is it an early departure, a late return and a long waiting period in between? Is this an airport we frequent often or an environment out of the ordinary? What are the flying conditions: day, night, VFR, IFR? There are many more but the point is that just as in the owner flown world, a second

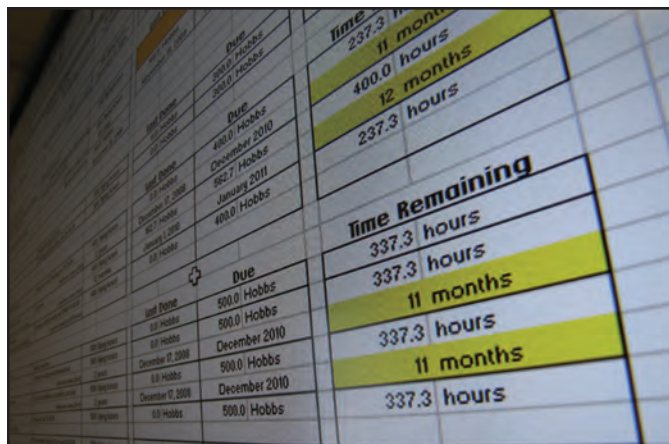
help you gain the experience needed in your aircraft to safely fly solo. That means just asking your high-time airline buddy with tons of Boeing 757 flight time won't necessarily ensure a successful outcome. Intimate knowledge with your type of aircraft is key and the two person crew and company procedures of an airliner don't always translate well to General Aviation. A good mentor pilot is one who knows the ins and outs of instructing and has a level of familiarity with your airplane required to comfortably impart the tricks of the trade.

If your mission is simply to add a backstop for flights that would benefit from the extra margin for error, your options may increase. Still, you want to ensure the second pilot is up to each task you are asking them to undertake and understands your airplane well enough to be a help instead of a hindrance. Consider taking a prospective pilot along on a flight where they aren't needed to allow them to gain exposure. A missed approach at night isn't the time to realize they don't how to load your GPS for the next procedure if that's something you are considering their duty. Establish a list of duties you would like help with ahead of time, confirm they know how to perform those duties and discuss the method you want used in the cockpit to initiate and confirm those duties are finished. The co-pilot should also be comfortable pointing out when something looks out of place. It's better to have something pointed out and only hurt egos than to sit on it and risk hurting much more.

As with most aspects of successful flying, the goal is to provide the highest level of safety while also the best chance of completing a desired mission. Throughout your flying career consider the second set of eyes of a mentor or co-pilot a useful tool in your flight bag. Its value shouldn't be overlooked. ■

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS: PAPERWORK AND YOUR AIRPLANE

When you think about it, an aircraft is a gigantic piece of both moving and stationary parts with currents of electricity and fuel flowing through it. It's no wonder the emphasis on having an up-to-date and properly maintained airplane lies in the required physical inspections ensuring no bolt is loose or wire is frayed. These are the items that when left unattended have the most undesirable consequences. That said - there is a whole other level beneath the surface that comprises the total picture of an airworthy aircraft. These items can be referred to as the "non-greasy" side of airplane maintenance and although the lack of adherence may not have the same dramatic affect on the outcome of a flight, their omission can and does lead to downed airplanes by different means and/or unwanted expenses. These items apply to every aircraft - turbine or piston - but Turbines inherently have special categories not to be forgotten. In the course of doing business we occasionally run across reminders of these "gotchas" and have a couple worth reviewing.



"HONEY - THE COAST GUARD IS ON THE PHONE..." - The 406 MHz beacon's digitally transmitted signal can be encoded with the owner's contact information and aircraft data making it easier for search and rescue personnel to determine whether the signal is a real emergency - and if so better direct their efforts. For those reasons, 406 MHz ELT's are required to be registered with NOAA. Re-registration of your beacon is mandatory and is required every two years. In an all too common occurrence, the original registered owner - or owner when an ELT was first installed - remains as the point of contact after the

aircraft is subsequently sold. Sometimes this error is easily remedied when for example an alarm is accidentally tripped while in maintenance and the party listed in error answers their phone and knows the current owners. Other times that phone may not be answered leading to increased search efforts and possible cost, or in the worst case scenario the aircraft is actually transmitting for its intended purpose and not having the proper contact information hampers efforts. Simply checking your NOAA records can save a great deal of effort, expense and most of all time when it matters most.

"WELL THERE'S NOTHING IN THE POH ABOUT THAT!" - We all know that the POH is a required item to deem an aircraft airworthy. To take that a step further, the POH must also be a current version. If revisions have been issued for your aircraft model's POH (as determined by serial number range), you are required to update your current edition to the latest and greatest. This can become more than just a nuisance if your revisions are so far out that a completely new POH is required. The process for doing so can be time consuming and costly. Having this hiccup at a time of sale can cause a lot of heartburn.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN EXPIRED!" - Expired or missing aircraft registrations not only can ground an airplane but also create a logistical nightmare. Remember, the FAA re-registration process was launched on October 1, 2010 and requires all aircraft owners to re-register their aircraft over a 3 year period determined by when your original certificate was issued. Once re-registered the new aircraft registration will expire every 3 years. It's important to have a valid physical mailing address on file with the FAA as a P.O. Box will not be mailed to and second attempts don't exist. If an aircraft is not re-registered the FAA registration on the aircraft will expire and the aircraft is grounded.

"THAT'S NOT MY N NUMBER." - When the tail number of an aircraft is changed more than just the paint needs to be updated. Registrations are re-issued with the current tail number but you must also update the Airworthiness Certificate to match the Registration. Not doing so can ground your airplane and delay a future sale when the error is discovered. In addition to the paperwork, the Mode

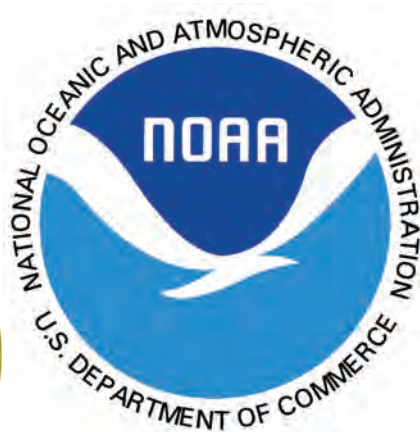
S signal of transponders needs to be updated to display the new tail number to controllers. This is a commonly overlooked item.

“WAIT - I’VE GOT TO DO WHAT TO PROVE WHAT?”

– Not just any fabric will do for the interior of an airplane if you are considering an overhaul or upgrade. Every model chosen must pass FAA guidelines established to verify the burn rate. Some fabrics purchased from aviation suppliers will come with the burn certification papers – other purchased from stock fabric stores can obtain their certification through a testing center. Either way, these papers are required paperwork to prove FAA acceptance. Not having these papers may not ground you initially but it could prove to be a massive inconvenience at a future date if they stand in the way of a sale with a discerning buyer – especially if you can’t produce samples to send to the testing agency. Additionally, the standards set in place are there for a reason and you want to ensure your fabric is up to speed.

Some service centers will alert their customers but once again there is no standard. It’s the owner’s responsibility to ensure they are receiving the proper notices. In the recent example of the PA-46 landing gear pump Service Bulletin there were examples of owners surprised when they were told of the issue by outside sources. It’s worth noting that sometimes manufacturers pay for SB or AD’s, but only if they are accomplished within a certain period of time. Make sure you know where your information stream is set to flow from so you don’t miss an important notice.

“I DON’T KNOW, SAY AROUND 800ISH ...” – There are usually more life-limited components requiring ongoing maintenance or inspections on turbine aircraft compared to piston powered airplanes. Depending on the airplane, the list can be long and tracking it requires a detailed approach. It is very important to keep a log of the cycles on your aircraft as this is the key number used in determining whether certain items are in need of overhaul/replacement



“DOES MUNICIPAL HAVE A TOWER NOW?” – A record of compliance with subscription/database updates is required. Updating these subscriptions/databases can be done through a shop or by the owner. In either case a log of the updates must be kept per FAR 91.417 Maintenance Records.

“NO ONE TOLD ME ANYTHING ABOUT AN AD!” –

There’s no standard for manufacturer’s to send notices of Service Bulletins and Airworthiness Directives. In some instances the first owner will receive this service without asking for a period of time and then the service is either not available or only through a paid subscription service. It is highly unlikely that the second owner will receive any factory support without setting up the service themselves.

or have useful time remaining. For example, when no cycle information is known, engine shops tend to lean on the conservative side and overhaul or replace items that may not need work. This can represent a major expense to the owner and could have been avoided by simply keeping a cycle log.

By no means is this a complete list of the “non-greasy” paperwork items required in maintaining your aircraft but rather a snapshot of some common offenders. As FAR 91.403 (a) states “The owner or operator of an aircraft is primarily responsible for maintaining that aircraft in an airworthy condition...”. Make sure you’re doing what has to be done so you aren’t grounded, delayed in a future transaction, charged unnecessarily or worst of all miss an important physical inspection that can compromise safety. ■

AIRCRAFT LEATHER

MAINTAINING YOUR INVESTMENT

More than anything else, the condition of your aircraft's seats set the tone for the quality of your interior. Worn, cracked or stained leather not only devalues your asset but can become a red flag in an otherwise well kept aircraft. Maintaining that new look and feel for years to come isn't impossible, but you need to follow certain guidelines.

Most upholstery leathers are cowhides, but leather can come from any animal hide and like our skin it is susceptible to drying out and other problems if not properly cared for. The hides are transformed into leather through a procedure called tanning. Aniline leathers don't have a film coating on the surface meaning the passenger is in direct contact with the leather. This also means the leather is porous and will absorb spills and stains. Most aviation leathers are of the semi-aniline variety meaning they are lightly finished and dyed for an even color throughout. Semi-aniline leather is non-porous. These materials are excellent for their appearance but like all leather are subject to wear and tear that can harm or pre-maturely age the product.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

By far, the greatest impact you can have on the appearance and longevity of your leather is to implement a proper cleaning plan. Some of the Dos and Don'ts of this plan are as follows:

- Use an approved cleaner, conditioner and stain remover. Nothing wears out leather faster than using cleaners which are not ph-balanced specifically for leather.
- Use an eraser to remove ink stains. This must be done immediately.
- Spot clean after each flight before stains have a chance to set in. Use a wiping motion – do not scrub.
- A water spot can be removed by wiping the entire area (seam to seam) with a damp cloth.
- Do not use oils, soaps or detergents on leather as they are alkaline and will cause pre-mature aging.
- Do not keep your leather in direct sunlight. The sun speeds up the oxidation process of colored pigments and dyes.
- Do not rub spills into the leather – instead blot with a paper towel.
- Do not use nail polish remover on stains.

Ensure your maintenance department and any cleaning service you employ is familiar on what to use and what to stay away from when addressing your interior. Establish a cleaning schedule that matches your usage, but remember that even if your airplane isn't flown often your leather still requires conditioning.



Before and after restoration services

PROFESSIONAL RESTORATION SERVICES

In some instances either a stain is too embedded or the leather has aged to the point where simple cleaning and conditioning won't restore its original luster. The solution to this problem doesn't always end with re-covered or new seats. Rather there are companies that specialize in the restoration of leather and can do wonders revitalizing your interior. These repairs work to refinish the top coat of the leather by spraying color applications to remove blemishes and rebuild highly worn areas. A top coat is then applied to provide durability and long lasting color. Depending on the scope of the job, plan on one day to several to accomplish these tasks. A proper working area outside of your aircraft is essential. As most times your interior will need to be removed, coordinating such work with your maintenance facility is usually the preferred method. The cost of such services will range depending on the scope of the work. A simple repair can be done for as little as a couple hundred dollars and an entire interior will typically cost in the thousands (depending on the aircraft). However, the cost to restore your leather is certainly less than replacing it. Not every situation is the same but this is an option worth exploring if you find your interior starting to show some age. In many instances, maintenance shops develop relationships with companies or individuals and can speak to their craftsmanship.

Like most aspects of aircraft ownership, ensuring the longevity of your leather is a steady (and planned) offshoot of routine maintenance – not just reacting once a major problem exists. By following some simple guidelines you can ensure your interior looks just as good as the day it left the factory for many years to come. ■

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FLYING WITH THE FAMILY PET

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR SAFE AND ENJOYABLE AIR TRAVEL

Among the many advantages travelling in private aircraft affords, the ability for pet owners to bring along their companion ranks near the top. Including your pet into travel plans can be very rewarding. Although typically viewed as a relatively simple matter, there are some aspects of private air travel that should be considered for the health and safety concerns of both your pet and all others on board.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Just as with pilots and other human passengers, the health of your pet must be considered prior to flight. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that all pets be at least 8 weeks old and weaned at least 5 days before air travel. Prior to embarking on your voyage, you should ensure your veterinarian is aware of any travel plans and confirms that no health concerns are present. Animals with cardiovascular and/or respiratory disease may not be able to tolerate the stresses imposed by flight. Brachycephalic breeds (those with short faces such as Pugs, Bull Dogs, Boston Terriers, Persians, etc.) have anatomical airway obstructions that may make breathing at high altitudes more difficult. A pressurized aircraft, just as with human passengers, may alleviate a lot of the stresses that a non-pressurized airplane imposes. As a general rule of thumb, for the healthiest of animals you should adhere to the same oxygen requirements set forth by the FAA for human passengers. As with humans, health conditions may dictate further restrictions.

Your pet's temperament is another worthy consideration. A method of restraint for energetic animals, whether it's through a crate/travel carrier or even a pet harness that can be secured to seat belts or attachment points, would eliminate the distraction of potential cabin or cockpit chaos. Bringing along favorite toys and a comfortable bed will go a long way towards making your pet feel at home in a strange environment.

If at all possible, limiting food and water intake for a few hours prior to departure will help to minimize any in flight "situations". Allow for ample time prior to departure for your pet to relieve itself.

SEDATION?

Often thought of as the ticket for uneventful

air travel, the general consensus among the veterinary profession is to avoid sedation. Many sedatives may cause cardiovascular and respiratory depression; the effects of which at high altitudes could be unpredictable. In addition, sedation may compromise equilibrium thus leaving your pet ill-equipped to brace themselves during turbulence or other flight maneuvers. Allow time to acquaint your pet to the airplane prior to actual travel. A familiarization with the surroundings may alleviate some of the fears surrounding them.

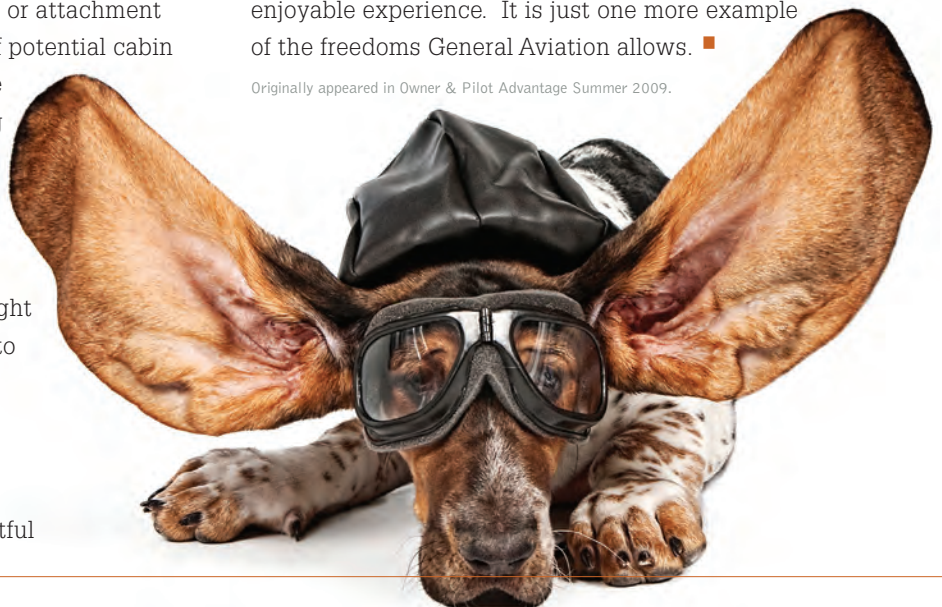
HEARING CONCERNS

The first and obvious concern is whether hearing protection is required for animals. Depending on the noise level of your cabin, you may consider using pet-approved ear plugs or other devices such as animal designed headsets. One popular version, called Mutt Muffs, can be found at numerous online stores.

The second and not-so-obvious concern regards the effect of climbs and descents on inner ear pressures. Animals with Otitis (ear disease/infection) may experience marked discomfort, especially in unpressurized aircraft. Much like humans, animals suffer the same potential discomforts these transitions present in unpressurized aircraft. Unlike humans, your pet will not know to swallow or yawn to relieve the pressure. Bring some treats or peanut butter to help smooth these changes in altitude.

When planning for a trip with your pet, involve your veterinarian to ensure all aspects of the safety and health of your animal are considered. Proper planning and some common sense can make travelling with your pet a very enjoyable experience. It is just one more example of the freedoms General Aviation allows. ■

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a word to the wise

BY DAVE CONOVER

THERE I WAS....

It's happened to every pilot at one time or another: a slight distraction, a missed radio call, or some seemingly small occurrence in the cockpit leads to a slight deviation in either course or altitude. Or, how about a slight course deviation on a published SID or STAR and ATC doesn't mention anything to us; or stretching a weather deviation a bit further than authorized? Usually, we catch or limit the deviation and promptly correct it and we may or may not get a curious call from ATC. But, are we safe from a possible violation?

A recent report indicates that in an effort to increase flight safety and place emphasis on voluntary safety programs; the FAA has made some changes to their internal processes with respect to errors and pilot deviations. In short, controllers are required to report all deviations and their supervisors must file a report pushing the "occurrence" up the ladder to a regional manager for an ultimate decision. Additionally, a test period for a Terminal Analysis and Review Program (TARP) was completed and the system is scheduled to become operational during the second quarter of 2012. The TARP system will automatically trigger an alert if a required separation between aircraft is compromised. This alert is forwarded to the same regional authority and can occur without a controller ever communicating an issue to a pilot. Fortunately, a majority of these pilot deviations or in-flight occurrences will never lead to an FAA action. However, with

increasing FAA oversight and automation there is a risk that an impending violation could be in process for some time without the pilot ever being advised. Since we know that if you fly long enough you will likely be involved in some type of out of the ordinary situation; the FAA (with the help of NASA) provides us with a tool to work with. The NASA / FAA Aviation Safety Reporting System has been operating since 1976 (under guidance from FAA Advisory Circular 00-46E) to give pilots as well as other aviation professionals a vehicle to promptly (within 10 days) report any event or deviation that may occur during flight operations. The NASA ASRS website contains the submission form which can be printed and mailed, or an on-line report with full details of the program.

<http://asrs.arc.nasa.gov>

In short, if a report is filed in accordance with the program guidelines, the submitter's identity is confidential and in most cases, the FAA will not issue any civil penalty or certificate suspension. Additionally, the ASRS program allows you to submit a report whenever you have a question about a specific event with no limit. However, if one of your submissions is used for a specific violation, you need to wait for 5 years before filing future reports.

The ASRS program is there to help promote and enhance flight safety by having aviation professionals report occurrences without trepidation of triggering a watchful eye from the FAA. The valuable information submitted provides a database for evaluating specific situations that involve both equipment and human factors to develop policies and or programs to make flying safer for all of us. This program is one of the few that is truly a "win-win" for everyone. ■