



the Christian Aviator

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Beware the Silly Season...

As Christians we need to keep up with the trend-setters. But, it's not always cool to be the "nice guy" when everyone else gets grumpier by the day and others simply muscle their way through during the 'Silly Season'.

Security officials are sometimes like loaded guns, ready to go off to make an example of any customer not towing the line. As passenger load factors and flight frequencies increase, tempers readily flare.

The past decade has seen its share of passengers interfering with flight operations during festive seasons, when radicals wish to make a point. In all cases vigilant crews subdued them. Therefore, be patient with a thorough security official. He might be saving your life.

In trying to cope with added demands and difficult colleagues and passengers try to bear in mind that this season originally came about for the likes of them, in terms of John 3:16, to "...where possible... live at peace with everyone," (Rom. 13: 18) and that we are ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). The very birth of Jesus was an act of humility.

Flight crews need to be mindful of potentially harmful effects on their performance as schedules increase and commercial pressures mount. Be especially mindful that certain stimulants such as caffeine and nicotinamide in multi-vitamin complexes may be addictive and induce artificial highs and lows. These may disrupt sleeping patterns and even lead to depression in the long run.

Scripture for 2014

Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed.

Proverbs 16: 3 – Amplified Bible

Hearts go out to disaster victims and families

OUR hearts go out to the families of the LAM air disaster victims who perished in the afternoon of Friday, November 29, 2013. All 27 passengers and six crew members were killed in reportedly intense weather conditions. LAM in Maputo was and probably remains one of the jewel start-up airlines in Africa, reputedly running a tight ship. The mysterious demise of the 93-seat Brazilian Embraer twin passenger Jet is currently being investigated by Namibian authorities. Prudence necessitates that we refrain from speculation without sufficient data.

The aircraft was observed on radar plummeting at a rate of 6000 feet per minute from its cruising altitude of 38000 feet. Flight 497 was bound for Luanda in Angola, having taken off from Maputo around 12: 36. The aircraft came out of maintenance the day before. The 2012 model was virtually brand new with a mere 2905 hours and 1877 cycles. (Next page)

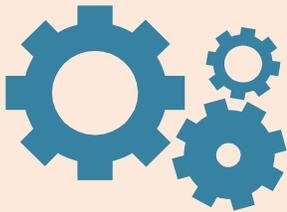
LAM disaster - Continued

The RJ descended steeply for almost six minutes before disappearing from the screen at 3000 feet, the elevation of the crash site in the Caprivi Strip, 20 km north-northwest of the "Pan Handle" of the Okavango Delta.

The LAM disaster is the second biggest for Mozambique, 27 years after the former president Samora Machel and 33 others were killed at Mbuzini in the Lebombo Mountains between South Africa and Mozambique, 33 nm from destination Maputo. The Russian Tupolev TU-134 en-route from Mbala in the north of Zambia flew into terrain at night.

- In Africa air disasters this time of year seem to resort under Approach and Landing Accidents or 'ALA' as well as Take-off Accidents in terms of International Flight Safety Foundation or 'FSF' classification criteria.
- In the tropical and subtropical climatic zones the weather is highly precipitous with intense vertical development and extremely low cloud ceilings. Wet runways, wind shear and high load factors tend to present ideal conditions for 'Runway Overrun' accidents, which tend to be fatal.
- In the northern hemisphere the combination of icy surfaces, high loads and hence high approach speeds in heavy precipitation also tend to culminate in overruns.

Wet runways, high loads make for overruns



CT disc on right



PT disc on left

Tips on engine care

YOUR turboprop is loaded... You go through the pre-start flows and checklist. The battery condition is fine, just fine. You engage the starter-generator waiting for the N1 gauge, expressing the Compressor Turbine r.p.m. as a percentage on the dial, to spool up. But, it fails to show any acceleration.

You try again, mindful of the starter engaging limits. The same thing happens. After the second unsuccessful attempt you utter stuff like "gee whizz" as you're a Christian, not so? During the 30 minutes starter cooling period you phone the engineer who comes strolling along. He reckons the problem is due to sulfidation, because the aircraft has lived by the seaside with its salty air.

You might have guessed this was going to happen as you have been perturbed by inter-stage turbine temperatures [ITT] becoming slightly, though gradually hotter during starts. [The ITT probes can be seen in the picture left, near the right at the bottom.]

The engineer arranges a borescope inspection of the Compressor Turbine [CT] to check for "rub". The guy from "Pratt" arrives. His verdict is insufficient tip clearance and deterioration of the CT blades. You are lucky, he says. You only need to replace the blades. But, it still costs an arm and a leg. You are actually very fortunate, because a blade could have detached in flight.

In advanced stages of sulfidation the expanding CT blades may "rub" against the casing, causing damage to the outer shroud, consisting of separate segments. The low N1 r.p.m. indication was as a result of friction between the blade tips and the shroud.

Operating the engine at lower ITT limits would not solve the problem, but in time transfer sulfidation hot spots towards the CT vane ring. Conversely, increasing ITT limits would transfer sulfidation spots to the blade tips.

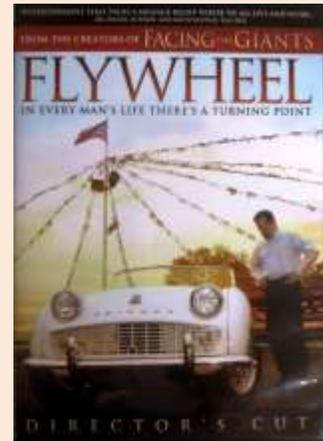
Sulfidation can only be partly avoided through regular compressor washes, at least after each flight. Unfortunately, this is no guarantee. The best is to detect earliest signs through trend monitoring of engine parameters. A split in ITT (which may indicate other problems) between engines may be the first sign of trouble. Watch out for inexplicable ITT increases at same Torque settings in similar conditions over time.

Flywheel makes you think

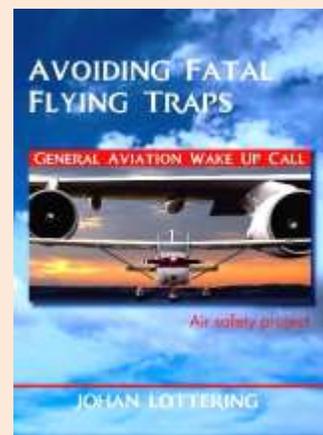
THE price of an aircraft or aviation service is what someone is prepared to pay for it, not so? The answer seems simple, until confronted with the same issues pulling top used car salesman Jay Austin's life apart in the Sherwood Pictures DVD called Flywheel. All goes well, then a minister thinking he's got an exceedingly good deal, prays that the Lord would treat Jay in the same way... The movie raises fundamental questions whether or not we are truly on a faith-dependant journey with God, honoring Him in all we do through our obedience and lifestyles. Many of us may be making up the rules as we go along. Ultimately, we need to ask if He is really our provider, or merely helping us have things our way.

Perhaps local aviation protagonists have been trying to find secular solutions for spiritual problems, such as greed, for far too long? At certain airports rates, tariffs and prices have reached crisis proportions. The moral of the story, portrayed by Alex Kendrick in the lead role, could make all the difference. Are we really honoring the Lord with our capital and sufficiency from honest labors and the first-fruits of all our income, according to Proverbs 3: 9? Or, have we forgotten the Lord hates dishonest scales?

Check out: Lev. 19: 35, Prov. 11: 1 and 16: 11 [www.flyweelthemovie.com]



DVD at Cum Books



Air safety book at Pilot Shops – R180

Helicopter Halloween

The SACAA accident data base perhaps inadvertently emphasizes the need for prudence this festive season and not to be taken in by a "happy Halloween" way of flying. Many horrors are concealed by "trick or treat" masquerades. Unsuspecting passengers, hoodwinked to come along for the ride, are often killed by such acts of "kindness". Closer scrutiny of accident reports reveals that farms and mountain tops in many cases become "killing fields".

- How else do we explain a helicopter pilot flying under low clouds into a ravine, to the demise of him and two grandchildren?
- How else do we fathom why a chopper pilot would fly into high tension wires in a gorge, killing him and two passengers? He was a highly qualified instructor who chucked caution overboard and took the jolly festive spirit along for the ride.

We do not wish to point fingers or apportion blame, but cultivate a heightened sense of air safety awareness.

The Robinson helicopter is among the safest, but has its limitations... It is not immune to pilot error. The past six years have seen 83 helicopter accidents in SA, of which no fewer than 62 involved Robinsons – three out of every four!

It may be time to sit up and take note that nobody is bigger than the game. Let us not forget "the basics" before flying out for that early morning picnic atop a mountain... only to discover to our horror that old enemy "Density Altitude" had caught up with us for the return flight.

[Note: Halloween is not Christian in character.]

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Coping with alienation _____ a Social perspective

It seems easier to get lost in a crowd in the aviation industry than in most other professions. Services are rendered at irregular hours. Those working shifts have time off when their loved ones are involved in their 'normal' routines. Technology has done much to stay connected, but although 'virtually real' such forms of contact are at best substitutes for 'touching and hugging'. Guilt about being unable to maintain meaningful relationships piles up. What we cannot derive from primary groups in terms of emotional support and affection, we try to spread among other groups. These temporary groups invariably let us down and fail to supply in our needs.

Due to our regular absence from home, those we love get accustomed to both parties being unable to reciprocate in terms of affection and emotional support. To be more acceptable and not burden others with problems, those in the aviation industry tend to put on brave and happy faces. We use phrases which do not allow others to get close or "impose" on our lives. We simply cannot bear to thwart the expectations of "others", or to disappoint them. In turn, "others" refrain from sharing their inner feelings, fears and emotions with us. We therefore inadvertently limit meaningful communication, while putting our emotions on hold. We use text-book deterrents like "got to run", "it's a madhouse out there" and "expect me when you see me". Trying not to be "fakes" and being too exhausted to "be real" and try harder we rather withdraw into our "safe zones", simplifying our little worlds and routines... That can be downright dangerous.

People who are not part of groups sharing frames of reference, norms and values may feel left out in the cold. It is easy to experience feelings of not belonging, as well as detachment from society – like being in a crowd, but not part of it. Sociologists call this condition "alienation". A closely related condition is "anomy", a prolonged sense of not being unique; feeling like just "a number" and that neither your name nor identity matters. Awareness and recognition of such influences may make it easier to deal with. Jesus is neither a crutch, nor a pleasant figment of the imagination. He does not always change our circumstances, but helps us cope. Be encouraged that He really cares more about you than anyone else. Life is a gift from Him. He paid a terrible price for you on the Cross of Calvary, out of love for you. Hold on to Him.

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