

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE VOL À VOILE

est une organisation à but non lucratif formée d'enthousiastes et vouée à l'essor de cette activité sous toutes ses formes, sur le plan national et international. L'association est membre de l'Aéro-Club du Canada (ACC), qui représente le Canada au sein de la Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), laquelle est responsable des sports aériens à l'échelle mondiale et formée des aéroclubs nationaux. L'ACC a confié à l'ACVV la supervision des activités vélivoles aux normes de la FAI, telles les tentatives de record, la sanction des compétitions, la délivrance des insignes, et la sélection des membres de l'équipe nationale aux compétitions mondiales.

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vol libre sert aussi de forum et on y publiera les lettres des lecteurs selon l'espace disponible. Leur contenu ne saurait engager la responsabilité du magazine, ni celle de l'association. Toute personne qui désire faire des représentations sur un sujet précis auprès de l'ACVV devra s'adresser au directeur régional.

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Aging pilots – recognizing the problem

The aging pilot is one who is experiencing the effects of aging. Effects aren't necessarily related to a set age and can be physical or mental. The physical problems are usually not difficult to suspect, then assess and quantify with tests, but the mental effects of aging are much more subtle as their onset is insidious and the manifestations quite innocuous. Since the physical effects of aging are more obvious, I won't dwell on them but, by doing so, I do not wish to diminish their importance.

The mental effects of aging eventually become obvious to those around us — some family members approach the family doctor reporting that dad's driving is becoming poor, if not risky, and ask for his licence to be suspended. For a pilot this is too late, but early recognition is very difficult, as it is difficult to come up with hard facts to confront the pilot with, and quite likely he will defend his position passionately. However, he will have no trouble identifying other pilots whose capabilities he thinks are suspect.

The earliest we may suspect there are age-related mental changes is if a family member expresses concerns, or if fellow pilots notice atypical changes in his situational awareness when flying, or in ground operations. Although psychologists have a variety of tests to assess a variety of mental deficiencies, it will be highly unlikely that the pilot will submit to them in the early stages.

So, how do we recognize early onset changes in mental function? I discussed this with Dr. J. Pfaff, the RAMO in Toronto, who recognizes that this is a problem as there are no set criteria for decreased mental acuity.

Some of the functions that become impaired in the aging process, and which we therefore need to watch for are: perception, attention, reaction, orientation, cognition, personality, learning, decision making and others. First, we must be aware of the problem. We must be aware of the need to observe ourselves and our peers in this respect, and we must heed the reports that are made to us in the same way that our club Safety Officer does.

It's important to recognize early onset problems in the aging pilot, because on their own they may be innocuous, but they may be compounded by fatigue, dehydration, and flight stresses in difficult situations, thus putting the pilot and possibly others at risk.

In summary then, early onset decreased mental acuity in the aging pilot will be an increasing problem as our aging pilot popu-

lation increases. We must be aware of it, look for it, have a small group consensus, and be prudent but firm in our management, always hoping to deal with it by cooperation rather than confrontation.

Dr. Peter Perry

Miscellany on landing in the farmer's field

... I've soared cross-country since the 1950's and because of my low skill level have landed in many fields. I only had serious trouble once; it was with a horse farm manager. The problem was solved when Nancy arrived carrying our 1-1/2 year old daughter with a dripping diaper. "Oh, what the hell, get out of here!" Be very nice. Say sir a lot. If offered a drink of water, accept and say how great it tastes. It helps to comment how much you appreciate the food or fibre that the 2% who work the land provide to the rest of us. Do everything possible to reduce damage to crops ...

... I think it's the Cambridge GC in England that instituted a fantastic landout diplomatic policy. Pilots, landing out, issue an invitation to the farmer and his wife to the club's annual dinner dance. Not only does this do wonders for public relations, I think they even manage to snag a few new flying members. I heard a wonderful tale of a local farmer telephoning the club rather concerned that he was going to miss the annual dinner dance. He added that he had kept the field mown and had erected a wind sock but that nobody had landed in his field that year!

What is soaring?

I like to think of soaring as the purest form of sport aviation — it has absolutely no utility. I find this its greatest attribute and charm. Sailplane pilots fly for the love of flight. It has no guarantees and no practical rewards save intangibles. Its practitioners have interest in every type of weather where updrafts may be found, and the sport produces aircraft sturdy enough to remain controllable and intact in most of them. Our ability to stay aloft is predicated entirely on pilot skill, and while some may compare it to sailing, at least a sailboat stays afloat if the wind quits!

I think we have a greater emotional investment than any other distinct group in aviation — comparable to sailors, but even more to solo climbers, who thrive on the necessity of blending superlative technique with unflinching concentration. We are comparable to any sport whose greatest rewards come with reflection, the act itself requiring too much attention to be thoroughly enjoyed in the moment.

John Shelton

Notice! – Puchacz owners

We have had another loss of a Puchacz canopy in flight. It is possible in vigorous sideslips to produce a large lift force on the canopy. This, aided by shaking from the turbulence generated by open dive brakes can be sufficient that it could conceivably shake the latching mechanisms loose, and suck the canopy open (on left sideslips). Any sideslips with full spoilers are therefore not recommended. However it should be noted that, from speaking to one of the Puchacz test pilots, full sideslips to both sides were fully explored in the flight testing of this aircraft and no problems were encountered.

In addition, there have been cases of problems with the locking hardware/rollers being loose/or the locking mechanisms not being latched over center. It is also possible for accidental openings from attempts to open side windows or passengers pulling the wrong knobs to release. Care should be taken with all double canopy aircraft to watch for these problems. The CALL check is to be performed before all height loss maneuvers as a check that the latches are fully closed and locked.

Our committee has contacted the manufacturer and the OSTIV Training and Safety Panel members to ask for data on similar problems. In the absence of a mechanical remedy, the near solution is education, proper checks and avoidance of the situation.

FT&S committee

Changes to the Flight Training & Safety committee

It is with great pleasure that I announce that Bryan Florence and Gabriel Duford are joining the committee. Both pilots have a wealth of experience and come to the committee with enthusiasm and lots to offer. Bryan for a long time flew in Regina and now flies both out of Black Diamond, near Calgary, and Invermere in the Columbia Valley in BC. Gabriel is the CFI of the Champlain club in Québec where he has flown for a number of years and from where he has contributed much in the past, particularly in the French translations of the various manuals. I and the other members welcome them to the committee.

Marc Lussier and Fred Kissil are stepping down from many years as committee members. I wish to thank them for their contributions in particular for the work on standards and running courses in Québec. Marc will continue to assist us with advice as time permits from his busy schedule in his club, MSC. For their time and work on behalf of all pilots, a big many thanks!

Ian Oldaker

When is the time to quit?

One instructor decided that 70 was about the right age to give up instructing. He was flying at a rate of 150 hours per year with a total experience, in gliders and power, of 2000 hours in just thirteen years. Despite this decision, he continued to spend a month skiing every year, another month walking, and swam a kilometre every morning.

Another older pilot packed up his gliding at the age of 74, and had this to say:

"We were three veterans of about equal age, pushing 75. After last season's soaring we looked at each other and, almost spontaneously, asked — 'is it time to quit?' But why — when you feel confident and happy about it? Not even an incident between us to worry about; but that is not the whole answer, and certainly not the correct rationale."

"The message came first to me with skiing. I claim that I can keep up very well on cross-country, uphill, in heavy going, over distance and even speed, but I have become a 'sissy' downhill, particularly in the mountains if the light is poor or vision obscured."

"Translated to flying, I might be slower than the youngsters to tackle awkward situations, but then I console myself that, by experience, I might be more clever at not letting myself get into critical situations."

"But, here is the point — not all situations are predictable."

"Is it fair to strain the system to please your own ambition — among people you like and in a sport you have cherished for so long? And for how long anyway?"

"So, we three called it a day. We shall miss it but, in fact, we are quite pleased about the decision too."

What is your situation if you've become another one of the growing number of seniors in this fine sport?

- How repetitive is your flying; are the flights all much of the same?
- Is your solo flying an hour on the ridge, or thermalling locally — and how much solo flying do you do anyway?
- What is your total experience in hours and launches?
- Are you in a position of responsibility to others, your club and your spouse — is it fair to go on instructing or towing?

Unless we are prepared to give up solo flying at a given age, we should all accept the responsibility to decide for ourselves when enough is enough — before an accident removes our choice.

For more on the subject, re-read the article in the 2/2003 free flight, "Hanging up one's Wings"

On getting home

I heard myself say something on the radio last week that I thought I'd share. Regardless of whether I quickly corrected myself or not, I think it warrants mentioning.

I had agreed to crew for Dave on his Drumheller and return task. It was getting late in the day and I must admit I wanted to get home. He was sporadically in contact with Black Diamond ground, although transmissions were somewhat garbled. I heard Dave call in his position as Okotoks or something like that. The conditions seemed to be falling apart (at least that was the view from the ground) and the next thing I know I'm telling him on the radio he better make it back to the field or else.

Dave and I discussed this a lot and we agree that this is about the most stupid thing I could say. Although I quickly corrected myself and told him it didn't matter where he landed as long as he did it safely, I am still a bit embarrassed by my initial transmission.

I've heard comment that the Jantar with its superior glide performance might make it back from the other side of Millarville. I think this is the kind of misinformation that leads people to try to make it back to field when there are better options available. True enough, the Jantar might make it back, however it might also arrive low and slow because the pilot's focus was to make it back to the airfield [rather than to a safer one under the wing] ... kudos to one of our newly-licensed pilots for not falling in to this trap last year.

I hope that when my time comes to land out somewhere other than High River airport, those little voices don't talk me into trying to make it home when the proper decision is to introduce myself to a farmer or his daughter.

Peter Neary, Cu Nim

Having fun with stalls and spins

When was the last time you did a deliberate spin or two? Turning slowly and low onto final, trying to thermal at too low a height and speed, flying slowly after a launch interruption, trying to get back to the field when too low are situations from which an inadvertent spin can start. A stall precedes a spin! So it is vital to remain stall and spin competent and to practise them every year. Did you do some spins and spin avoidance practice on your spring checks? It's fun, while giving you much more confidence that you know what to do and that you can throw the glider around a bit and have a ball doing it!

Remember — if your controls are in extreme positions and the aircraft is not behaving normally, it is likely because you are stalled and about to spin. Release the back pressure on the stick, "Lower the nose," and centralize the other controls! ❖