

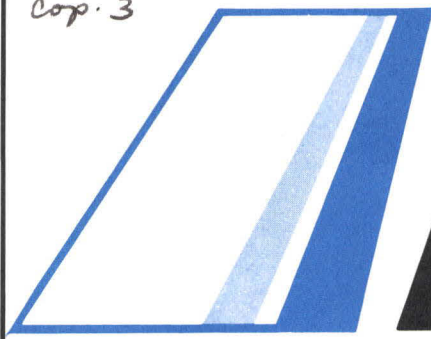
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Palmetto AVIATION

VOLUME 36, NUMBER 2

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February, 1985

Eight general aviation airports in South Carolina have been allocated \$2.3 million in federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants for the 1985 fiscal year.

As is customary, the money will pay for 90 percent of the estimated cost of the various projects. The remaining cost will be funded with local funds or a combination of state and local funds.

The projects approved are:

Anderson County Airport — \$90,000 to install a medium intensity runway lighting system.

Marlboro County Airport — \$171,512 to reconstruct a portion of runway 6/24 with drainage improvements; rehabilitate the rotating beacon tower and install a lighted wind cone.

Woodward Field (Camden) — \$85,129 to repair a portion of the airport drainage system which has deteriorated.

Eight GA airports get \$2.3 million

Federal airport improvement program grant funds

Florence City County Airport — \$364,913 to rehabilitate the airport drainage system; to reseal joints on the general aviation apron; rehabilitate medium intensity taxiway lights (MITL) on taxiways E and B; relocate and rehabilitate the MITL on taxiway D; rehabilitate the high intensity runway lights on runway 9/27; and rehabilitate the paving on taxiway E.

Greenville Downtown Airport — \$277,228 to extend a 100 foot by 500 foot safety area at the end of runway 36 and to install taxiway guidance signs.

Hartsville Municipal Airport — \$142,237 to overlay and apply a seal

coat to the airport's 3,300 foot runway and stub taxiway and parking apron.

Bryant Field (Rock Hill) — \$501,000 to clear land and install drainage for a safety area at the end of runway 19; and to expand the parking apron to 19,500 square yards.

Dorchester County Airport (Summerville) — \$738,292 to pave the runway and taxiway at a new airport near Summerville. The runway will be 3,700 x 75 feet with a full length 35-foot wide taxiway. Also included is a 19,800 square yard apron and a 440 foot connecting taxiway. ✈

New system will eliminate misfueling

If you've ever gotten a load of jet fuel in your reciprocating engine you know your airplane doesn't like it too much. In fact, it will just flat refuse to run and that can ruin your whole day.

Concerned over the rising number of misfueling accidents, a government and industry task force is seeking acceptance of a new system of fuel spouts and openings designed to eliminate such mistakes.

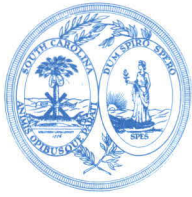
The new system seeks to narrow avgas fuel ports in some 100,000 piston powered aircraft to 3.26 inches while encouraging aircraft fuelers to install wider 2.6 inch nozzles. The combination

will lock out jet fuel in planes requiring aviation gasoline, the most dangerous type of misfueling which can cause engine stoppage in a few seconds.

Restrictor kits, to reduce the fuel port opening will be marketed by individual aircraft manufacturers and will be available from the aircraft dealers or distributors. The standard kit, which consists of a restrictor ring, a tool to install the ring and a new fuel cap, costs \$35 per fuel port.

Susan Gordon of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) said all GAMA members have the kits available now or will have them available





PALMETTO AVIATION is an official publication of the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission. It is designed to inform members of the aviation community, and others interested in aviation, of local developments in aviation and aviation facilities and to keep readers abreast of national and international trends in aviation.

The Aeronautics Commission is a state agency created in 1935 by the S.C. General Assembly to foster and promote air commerce within the state.

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New law revokes registration, license for drug trafficking

by H.M. Burwell*

On October 19, 1984 the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 was amended to provide for the suspension or revocation of the owner's certificate of aircraft registration where it is shown to have been used in the violation of controlled substances laws. The threshold determination for the FAA Administrator to revoke registration requires a finding that the aircraft was used to carry out activity violating a controlled substance law (other than simple possession) which is punishable by imprisonment over one year and that the owner permitted use of the aircraft with knowledge of the illegal purpose. The period of revocation shall be for 5 years (49 U.S. Code § 1401).

The new law also authorizes the Administrator to revoke the certificate of an

airman who has been convicted of a controlled substance crime punishable by imprisonment of more than one year (excluding simple possession offenses). The Administrator shall revoke the certificate if it is determined that an aircraft was used in the commission of the offense and the person was on board the aircraft or served as an airman in connection with the commission of the offense. (49 U.S. Code § 1429)

Additional criminal penalties for acting as an airman without a certificate in connection with drug violation can result in a fine of up to \$25,000 and imprisonment. ✈

*Mr. Burwell is the resident partner for the Greenville office of Barringer, Allen, Pinnix & Burwell law firm.

Calendar of Events

We'd like to include a Calendar of Events in the newsletter as a regular item. If you know of any sort of aviation activity — fly-ins, air shows, balloon rallies, etc. — tell us about it and we'll list it in the calendar. Our address and phone number are in the box to the left. Please let us know as early as you can so we can list it at least a month in advance. —Ed.

New fuel system endorsed

continued from p. 1

shortly. GAMA members are Cessna, Beech, Piper, Mooney, Gulfstream and Fairchild.

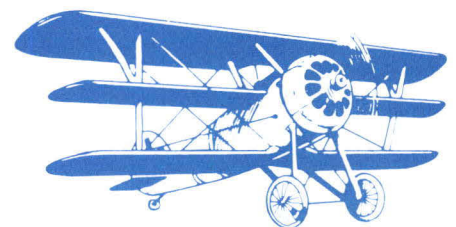
Because of different fuel tank designs, the standard kit won't work on all types of aircraft and a few special or complicated designs will be more expensive, she said.

If you are a Cessna owner and planning to make the retrofit, check with your dealer. Cessna is recommending that some single engine models entire fuel port assembly be replaced because of water problems.

Aircraft fueling organizations may acquire the wider jet fuel spout from their fueling equipment dealers. The spout,

with strainer, has an announced price of \$63.50.

The South Carolina Aeronautics Commission endorses this system and encourages aircraft owners to make the modification as soon as possible. ✈



Laurens newspaper calls for action on airport

The Laurens County Advertiser has called for action to unite the county in the cause for a better airport.

"Specifically," "we'd like to see a meeting of all persons interested in improving the airport, whether they represent only themselves, their business or government," the paper said in an editorial last month.

The paper said the airport has been lacking "for far too long" and there has been no public clamor to do anything

about it.

"Now, we think, is the time for such a clamor."

Let's see who's ready to get to work to make the airport useful and how can be done. And let's see it soon, before the job gets any more difficult than it is already."

The Aeronautics Commission heartily concurs for only through impetus at the local level can the process of change be initiated. ✈

Breakfast club members plan Paris Air show trip

Members of the South Carolina Breakfast Club are planning a four-day trip to the Paris Air Show May 30.

According to tentative plans the price will be about \$1,400 per person and will include air fare, tickets to the show, ground transportation, hotel accommodations and continental breakfast

plus dinner and dancing one night at the Lido night club.

The trip is being arranged by PAL Tours in Columbia. Special arrangements may be made for persons wishing to stay longer than four days.

Interested persons should contact Diana Ballard at (404) 592-4963 ✈

Lake City FBO offers fuel, flight training

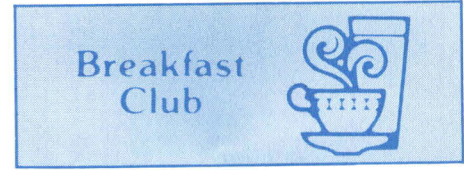
Aero Tech, Inc. is the new FBO at Lake City — C.J. Evans Airport.

Barend de Vlaming offers flight training, charter service aircraft rental. He also has 100 LL available for \$1.75 per gallon. Unicom is 122.8.

De Vlaming has operated a flight

school at Florence by the same name for a number of years and says the Lake City operation is his first expansion.

Aero Tech will offer a two-day private ground school Feb. 9th and 10th for \$175. ✈



The Breakfast Club meeting dates are now filled through the end of June. Please take note of the special times for the Lake City meeting Feb. 24.

- Feb. 10** Grand Strand Airport, North Myrtle Beach (Don's Pancake House is host)
- *Feb. 24** Lake City Municipal — C.J. Evans Airport, Lake City
- Mar. 10** Walterboro Municipal Airport, Walterboro
- Mar. 24** Aiken Municipal Airport, Aiken (City of Aiken is host)
- Apr. 7** J.E. Locklair Memorial Airport, Summerville (EAA Chap. 787 is host)
- Apr. 21** Shaw Air Force Base, Sumter
- May 5** Bryant Field, Rock Hill
- May 19** Eastwinds Airport
- June 2** Berkeley County Airport, Moncks Corner
- June 16** Clemson-Oconee County Airport, Clemson
- June 30** Woodward Field, Camden

* The Lake City breakfast meeting will begin about a half hour earlier than usual. Persons should arrive at the airport between 9 and 9:30 a.m. Breakfast will be at Prosser's Restaurant in Lake City and the restaurant has asked that club members finish by 10:30 a.m. Transportation to the restaurant will be available at the airport. ✈

Pickens seeking new FBO

The Pickens County Aeronautics Commission is accepting applications for the position of FBO

at the Pickens County Airport. Resumes and written proposals of what applicants can offer Pickens County must be received at the following address by April 30, 1985:

Pickens County Aeronautics Commission

Dr. Jimmy D. Sheriff, Chairman

Rt. 4, Box 232

Central, SC 29630

What you should know about 'absolute liability' for aircraft accidents

Whether or not you are negligent, you may be held liable for an accident involving one of your aircraft. South Carolina is one of four states in the nation where the aircraft owner bears absolute liability for personal injury and property damage.

By Ira E. Weiner

Most businessmen realize that they may be legally liable for mistakes that they or their employees make in the course of business. Not many fixed-base operators would be surprised if they heard from a lawyer a few days after one of their linemen loaded jet fuel into a Skyhawk.

On the other hand, businessmen are often surprised to learn that there are occasions when they and their employees can do absolutely everything right and still be stuck on the losing end of a lawsuit. Consider the following scenario, which is just as applicable to a fleet owner as to the owner of a single airplane.

You own a small airplane and keep it at the local airfield. You take every reasonable precaution to prevent theft, including the installation of an alarm system, and you even remove the propeller whenever the airplane is unattended. Without your knowledge, a drug dealer has decided that your airplane would be perfect for a smuggling operation.

One moonless night, he sneaks onto the field, disables your alarm, replaces your propeller, hot-wires your engine and takes off. Being a better mechanic than a pilot, he crashes a few miles away, injuring the occupants of one house and causing property damage to an adjacent house.

While you are distraught over the destruction of your pride and joy, you also sympathize for the crash victims. Nevertheless, since you made every reasonable effort to prevent theft, you know you can't be held morally or legally responsible for the crash, right?

Wrong. In the states of New Jersey,

Hawaii, Delaware and South Carolina (and possibly a few others, as will be discussed), due to an archaic statute dating back to 1922, an airplane owner is absolutely liable for personal injuries and property damage caused by the crash of his airplane. It is, furthermore, no defense that the owner had nothing to do with the crash and in fact didn't do anything wrong.

For example, in the 1984 New Jersey Supreme Court case of *Torchia vs. Fisher*, a student pilot reportedly took a Piper Aztec without permission from his FBO and crashed it into a house owned by the parents of a woman he had known socially. Bound by the statute, which had been enacted in New Jersey in 1929, the court affirmed the judgement of liability against the FBO based solely on its ownership of the misappropriated Aztec.

The FBO in the *Torchia* case was, of course, entitled to shift the liability to the student pilot (or rather his estate, since he died in the crash), because the student pilot was the active wrongdoer. Unfortunately, in the typical case, the wrongdoer doesn't have the assets to pay off more than a fraction of the judgement, leaving the owner liable for the balance.

Also, if the airport administration had obliged itself to provide security and failed to meet the terms of its obligation, the FBO's liability might be shifted successfully to the airport. Obviously, the FBO first would look to its liability insurer for coverage, but the availability of coverage and the responsibility of the insurer to pay the entire judgement would depend on the terms of the particular policy in effect. Since none of these attempts to shift liability would necessarily be successful, the FBO could be subject

to a potentially devastating judgement, through no fault of its own.

The rationale behind this incongruous situation primarily traces back to barnstorming days; but in a different sense, it predates the airplane itself by more than half a century. Early in the industrial revolution, it was discovered that certain activities were inherently unsafe, but were so important that they could not be abandoned.

One example would be the transportation of explosives. Knowing that the technology did not then exist to prevent all accidental explosions, the courts and state legislatures had to decide who would be responsible for the accidental explosions, and they decided that the businessmen who were transporting the explosives could factor the cost of accidents into their prices or insure them-

In the barnstorming era, aeronautics was classified as an 'ultrahazardous activity' requiring special liability laws still in effect in some states.

selves better than the innocent bystanders who were injured by the explosions. They consequently developed the concept of "absolute liability," in which the person engaged in a valuable but unavoidably dangerous activity (called an "ultrahazardous activity" by the courts) would be responsible for accidental damage even though the person had done everything possible to prevent the accident.

In the barnstorming days following World War I, it made sense to classify aeronautics as an "ultrahazardous activity." The airplane was immensely

valuable, but its technology was still crude. Consequently, some 23 state legislatures adopted the Model Uniform Aeronautics Act, which provided that the owner of an airplane would be "absolutely liable" for damages to people or property on the ground "caused by ascent, descent or flight of the aircraft, or the dropping or falling of any object" from the aircraft, without regard for whether the owner was negligent or not. With advancing technology, only the states of New Jersey, Hawaii, Delaware and South Carolina have retained the act in its original form, although other states still have modified versions of the act.

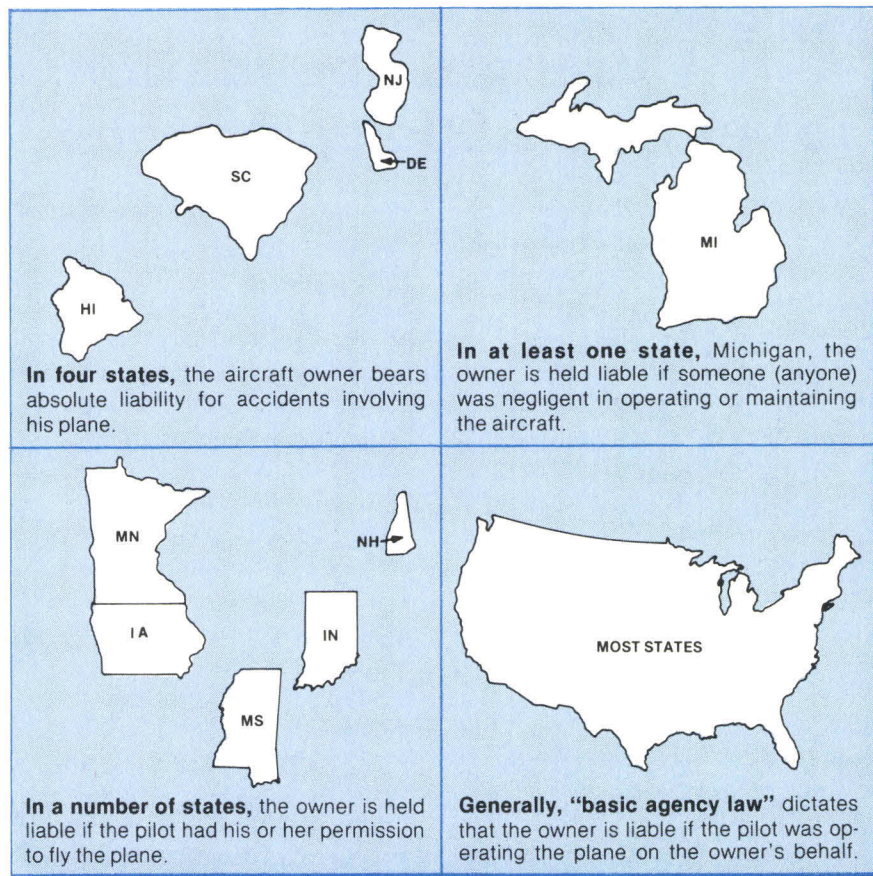
State statutes

Today, there are four main groups of states. The four states previously named impose liability on the owner regardless of whether anybody was at fault in causing the accident. Other states, such as Michigan, hold the owner liable only if *somebody* (not necessarily the owner) was negligent in the operation or maintenance of the aircraft. A third group of states, such as Minnesota and Nebraska, hold the owner liable for negligent operation of the aircraft, but only if the pilot had the owner's permission to use it.

Finally, there are those states which will impose liability on the owner for the negligence of the pilot only if the pilot was operating the aircraft on behalf of or for the benefit of the owner. Furthermore, all states exempt certain groups of owners, such as those who only own security interests in the aircraft, from the operation of the statutes. Federal law also provides exemption for lessees and holders of some security interests.

Thus, for most owners in most states, the risk of absolute liability for the actions of an unauthorized pilot is relatively small. One hidden risk, however, is that the imposition of liability is typically controlled by the law of the state in which the crash occurred. A New York FBO could therefore be found absolutely liable under New Jersey law for an airplane that was stolen in New York

Because the laws of the state where the crash occurs apply, no FBO is totally without risk.



and crashed in New Jersey. No aircraft owner is totally isolated from this risk.

Another hidden risk is particularly important to owners of aircraft used in crop dusting. Interpreting one of the four "absolute liability" statutes, the Supreme Court of South Carolina has held that the owner of a crop-dusting aircraft would be liable for personal or property damage caused by any substance dropped or sprayed by the aircraft.

It was no defense that the spraying was properly done, that the exposure on the ground was completely unpredictable, or even that the chemical being sprayed was thought at the time to be completely safe and only later shown to be harmful. Under the statute, the only defense would be for the owner to demonstrate that the person harmed had known of the danger and negligently or intentionally failed to get out of harm's way — a proposition not likely to be capable of proof.

Since the four "absolute liability" states all have extensive involvement in agriculture, this ruling eventually could have a large impact, although relatively few cases have been brought to date. In

the South Carolina case, the aircraft owner was required to pay damages for a neighboring fishpond that had been polluted by drifting spray from a crop duster. The next case may involve genetic damage to the neighbor's family, with commensurate liability in the eight-figure range.

When the law calls for liability with no defense, the only protection against financial disaster is adequate insurance. Because statutory absolute liability is rarely encountered, it is entirely possible that a liability insurance policy could fail to make provision for it. The prudent airplane owner would be well-advised, therefore, to review his coverage with an eye toward whether this contingency is adequately addressed. ✈

Ira E. Weiner, a private pilot with a degree in aerospace engineering, is an attorney based in East Orange, N.J.

Reprinted with permission from the January issue of Airport Services Management, Lakewood Publications, 50 South 9th St., Minneapolis, MN 55402.

U.S. Ultralight Foundation takes over AOPA programs

The AOPA Air Safety Foundation, officially transferred its ultralight programs to the newly-formed United States Ultralight Foundation, Inc. Jan. 1, 1985. Included in the transfer was AOPA ASF's pilot competency and vehicle registration programs as well as its ultralight examiner program and rights to AOPA ASF's data base on ultralight pilots, vehicles and accidents. Additionally, all AOPA ASF records regarding its two-place program also was transferred to U.S. Ultralight.

"This is another major step forward for the entire ultralight movement," said AOPA ASF President John L. Baker. "With the anticipated cooperation from the Federal Aviation Administration, this should ensure that those programs, developed by the AOPA Air Safety Foundation for the ultralight community and approved by the FAA, can move forward with continuity and an equivalent degree of dedication."

The new United States Ultralight Foundation, Inc., was formed by longtime ultralight enthusiast and expert, John Ballantyne, formerly the director of the AOPA Air Safety Foundation's ultralight programs, who will serve as the organization's president. "U.S. Ultralight plans to carry forward all of the excellent ultralight programs

originally designed and implemented by the AOPA Air Safety Foundation," said Ballantyne. "Not only is this an exciting personal challenge for me, but it also represents an exciting challenge for ultralight enthusiasts nationwide."

According to AOPA ASF's President Baker, the decision to transfer its ultralight programs to U.S. Ultralight was based on two key factors. "First, it is our belief that at some point in the not-too-distant future, FAA probably will step up its regulation of ultralights," he said. "Testimony at this past summer's congressional hearing, along with comments received at four subsequent public hearings, all point in that direction. Second, because of relatively low participation in the programs, it simply was not cost-effective for AOPA ASF to continue to administer the programs. However, two years ago, when representatives of the ultralight community came to us for help, we made a significant commitment to them and did not want to just abandon such a worthwhile effort," he added.

U.S. Ultralight President John Ballantyne praised the AOPA Air Safety Foundation and Baker for their "foresight, courage and loyalty" to the ultralight community. ✈

FAA clarifies TBO confusion

A number of members have reported to AOPA that they have been advised by IAs (mechanics with Inspection Authorization) that there is a problem in returning an FAR Part 91 airplane to service after an annual inspection if its engine has exceeded the manufacturer's recommended time between overhauls (TBO). Some IAs reportedly were told during 24-month mechanic refresher courses that an IA is open to additional liability if he returns to service an airworthy engine that has exceeded its recommended TBO.

The FAA has since informed its field personnel that the issue of liability regarding engine TBOs is not a regulatory matter and is not to be addressed at future mechanic refresher sessions.

John J. Sheehan, vice president of AOPA's Office of Aviation Policy, advises, "Pilots or mechanics who have questions on this can contact the principal maintenance inspector at their nearest General Aviation District Office (GADO) or Flight Standards District Office (FSDO)." ✈



Aircraft thefts down, but burglaries up

General aviation aircraft thefts dropped last year in both the number of reported incidents and dollar value. This is the fifth straight year that aircraft thefts have declined over the previous year. However, thefts of avionics and equipment increased 39% over the number reported in 1983.

This data is contained in the year-end report of the International Aviation Theft Bureau, a joint activity of the AOPA Air Safety Foundation and major aviation insurance companies.

1984 produced reports of 112 stolen aircraft worth \$14.7 million on the retail market. This represents 69 fewer thefts than occurred in 1983 and 82

fewer than in 1982. According to Robert J. Collins, the Bureau's Executive Director, "the decrease is due to many factors, the most important being increased awareness of the aircraft theft problem by the flying public; a new aggressive attitude toward stolen planes by law enforcement and a serious commitment to reducing aviation crime by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). We are also seeing an increased involvement by the U.S. military in reducing air smuggling."

Aircraft break-ins, however, have increased alarmingly in the past year. Said Collins, "We have been working closely with the FBI and other law en-

forcement agencies. Available evidence indicates that theft ring activity is on the increase. The thieves are becoming more sophisticated, producing counterfeit serial number plates to use on stolen equipment. We have indications that there are many different rings operating and no one geographic area is exempt. IATB is working closely with the aviation insurance companies and law enforcement agencies to execute aggressive steps aimed at stopping this activity." ✈

I learned about flying from that

Although there were errors in judgment, the rotating beacon at the Marion County Airport showed the doctor the way to safety and stopped him from ditching his 182 in the Pee Dee one cold February night.

Routines often minimize vigilance. I had been flying the 87-nm route from Holly Hill, to Dillon and back at least twice a week for six months while working as an emergency physician at the Dillon hospital. Flying 40 minutes was much easier than driving 2.5 hours, especially at the end of my 24-hour work shift.

I usually stopped off at the Dillon airport or nearby Summerville because we had no fuel at our strip. But I had not done so before this flight, even though the fuel gauges in my Cessna 182 were nudging the empty marks. That was one of several mistakes that made the evening unforgettable and delayed my arrival at the hospital.

Because I was running late I did not inspect the fuel tanks visually, even after seeing the gauges. The short February day was dimming rapidly as I ran through a brief pre-flight and run-up. I decided to make a fuel stop at Clarendon County Airport, 20 nm away and directly in my flight path.

I passed over Lake Marion at 1,000 feet, not wanting to waste fuel climbing. The runway lights at Clarendon guided my fuel-conserving, straight-in approach, and I shut down the engine while rolling up to the unlit pumps.

I waited a few minutes but saw no one rushing to come to my aid, so I climbed out and walked toward a trailer on the far edge of the airport, the only lighted

structure other than the runway. A bored but affable fellow informed me that the two sets of pump keys were with two gentlemen who were gone for the night. He said he was sorry and wished me luck.

I decided to press on rather than returning home and driving to work. I omitted the run-up, tuned in Florence VOR and monitored Florence Approach. I don't usually check in with them — tonight was no different — but I always listen for traffic reports to aid my VFR observations. I considered landing at Florence but decided it would take too much time.

Passing Florence VOR at 1,500 feet, I turned eastward and tuned in the NDB on the Dillon airport. I could just see Dillon's rotating beacon when the engine sputtered. I froze, unable to believe this was happening to me. Then I started remembering the emergency procedures I had learned. I scanned the terrain below while rocking the wings to drain every available ounce of fuel. The engine smoothed out and I started an immediate climb. I knew the engine would not run much longer.

While climbing I had noticed I was over densely wooded land broken only by the narrow Pee Dee River. I turned farther east to line up with it, preferring a water landing on a clearly visible river to a crash landing in a dark forest.

The engine stopped again, and I

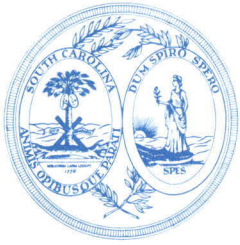
reached over to grab the microphone to tell Florence Approach that I was going down. I was so intent on watching the river that I had failed to notice anything else until, looking up to find the mike to talk to approach, I saw a rotating beacon off the nose at about 10 o'clock. It was unbelievably close; I thought I could reach it so I set up a standard glide and gently banked toward the light. My gut tightened as I left the ribbon of water for an airport I was not sure I could make.

I turned on the landing light and quickly flipped to the unicom frequency, hoping there was no other traffic. I did not want to tell anyone what was happening; I neither heard nor saw anyone. I came in a little high, afraid to lose altitude. I had one approach only.

The landing was almost anticlimactic, not my best, but safe enough. I braked hard to make the turnoff so I would not have to tow the airplane to the ramp. There was no one at the little airport office. I looked for a sign to find out where I was: Marion County Airport. I knew that Marion was a town about 18 miles from Dillon, but I had not known it had an airport.

I found a pay phone and called the hospital collect — I didn't even have change for a long distance call. By then I was two hours late and the people there were frantic. I explained what happened, and they sent a hospital security guard to pick me up.

After I hung up, my knees weakened and my hands shook. I was still shaking when I arrived at the hospital. The multiple errors I had made were avoidable if only I had used basic common sense. ✈



**SOUTH CAROLINA
AERONAUTICS COMMISSION**
P.O. Drawer 1987
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

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Don't try to do the job alone

Some of us have been guilty of trying to do the job alone while performing aircraft maintenance. This has resulted in dinged wing tips and tail fairings while moving aircraft and strained backs and mashed fingers while replacing components. Although costly, painful, and embarrassing, they are minor when compared to the following. May your consequences never be as severe as this person experienced.

Dear Sirs:

I am writing in response to your request for additional information. In block number three of the accident reporting form, I put "trying to do the job alone" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully, and I trust that the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I discovered that I had about 500 pounds of brick left over. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which fortunately was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out, and loaded the brick into it. Then I went back to the ground floor and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 500 pounds of brick. You will note in block number 11 of the accident reporting form that I weigh 145 pounds.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground, and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approx-

imately 50 pounds.

I refer you again to my weight in block number 11. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and lower body.

The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks and, fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks, in pain unable to stand, and watching the empty barrel six stories above me, I again lost my presence of mind — and I let go of the rope. The empty barrel weighed more than the rope so it came back down on me and broke both my legs.

I hope I have furnished the information you require as to how the accident occurred.

Although amusing, this article makes painfully clear the seriousness of trying to do the job alone. ➔