

NORTH DAKOTA

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dan Vigesaas, Chairman, NDAC

It is already almost thirty years ago. Life was young and my career was still in diapers. I flew a multi-engine charter flight to a posh Wisconsin resort to pick up a very old, very wealthy couple and bring them home.

I remember it vividly. It was hotter than a corker. The interior of the cabin was sweltering throughout the low altitude non-air conditioned trip. We experienced bone jarring turbulence for the entire duration of the flight. The companion IO-540's each seemed louder than the other. Back then airplanes were supposed to be loud. Pilots liked it that way. I agonized for one hour and twenty-five minutes. Two hundred fifty nautical miles at one hundred seventy-five knots. When you are young and flying is still a thrill, a ninety-five degree cabin for ninety minutes is nothing. Turbulence that shakes the fillings out of your teeth just makes the story better.

When you are very, very old and very, very rich, you move within a climate that is meticulously controlled. This couple left a cool and quiet resort in a cool and quiet automobile to a cool and quiet lounge at a very expensive FBO to get on an airplane that was determined to give them a savage ride to the next cool and quiet place.

"Why do they do it?" I kept asking myself. "It's not a very pleasant flight," I told them. Such a comedian. Such brilliant small talk. I should have pursued a career in show business.

"Oh no, this is just fine. We are enjoying every minute of it." They lie through their teeth.

The image of that flight haunts me still. The answer to the question "Why?" has evaded me to this very day. The only answer that I can think of is that they did it because they liked airplanes.

Fifteen years later I met a man who was to become a very good friend. He had been pro-

(Continued on back page)



The North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame's logo plaque graces the center of the Hall of Fame's new site at the Bismarck Municipal Airport.

Aviation Hall of Fame Unveils New Bismarck Location

The North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame dedicated its new Bismarck facility in ceremonies October 2, 1997 at the Bismarck Municipal Airport's main passenger terminal. The afternoon's festivities were highlighted by the presence of all five living members of the Hall of Fame who helped unveil the Hall of Fame plaques commemorating the ten charter members of the Hall. Inductees present were Duane "Pappy" Larson, Fargo; Leland Brand, Taylor; Oscar Ness, Lisbon; Jack Daniels, Williston and Tom Nord, Pembina. Along with a number of guests, media and Hall of Fame supporters, they heard Lieutenant Governor Rosemary Myrdal make the keynote address dedicating the Hall of Fame, which is located along the western wall immediately North of the main terminal's airline ticket counter area. She was preceded by Major General Keith Bjerke, Adjutant General of the North Dakota National Guard, Bismarck Mayor Bill Sorensen and Aviation Commission Director and Hall of Fame Chairman Gary R. Ness. The wall of fame is highlighted by a large brass wall plaque featuring the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame's logo and by ten individual brass plaques highlighting each Hall of Fame inductee. The Hall of Fame Committee was able to secure the services of a number of area firms in the development of the site, including Mr. Steve McCormick of Northern Improvement; Dakota Awards, Edling Electric and the Bismarck Municipal Airport.

From the Editor:

Andrew S. Niemyer, Editor-in-Chief

As a quick scan of this issue reveals, it's been a very busy fall here on the high plains. The Hall of Fame has been dedicated, members of the Council have been busy planning a superb Aviation Symposium and the weather for flying has been great. Nationally, many issues regarding GPS, LORAN, airspace control and the new FAA Administrator's position on any number of vital issues are perking or are winding a convoluted path towards resolution.

Your Council members have been hard at work coming up with some terrific speakers for this year's Symposium. AOPA President Phil Boyer will return, celebrated MiG-25 pilot and defector from the 1970's, Viktor Belenko is also slated. Ag Applicator recertification, UND's own former MiG-29 pilot, as well as a "real" Navy Topgun Instructor pilot will help keep attendee's interest at a high pitch from Sunday afternoon to Wednesday's conclusion. Our January Symposium issue will have all the terrific details.

Recently AOPA has begun the fight for reform of medical certificates. One of the most cumbersome issues facing our more mature pilots is the fact that many have benign medical conditions that the FAA Medical branch requires them to "prove" harmless at incredibly high costs on an annual basis. Not content to accept the opinion of their own designated Aviation Medical Examiners, Oklahoma City demands that individuals, at significant costs to themselves, take repetitive and often duplicative tests to prove that their harmless conditions are still indeed harmless. The annual costs are often more than that of an annual on a complex single-engine prop. This annual expense is forcing at least one member of the Council to put his airplane up for sale and consider to not renew his medical. It was not that he has any "downing" condition, it was that he has a hard time justifying spending large sums of money proving to a faceless individual in Oklahoma City what his specialists and AME all had long agreed to: he was fine to go and fly. Let us help that in this case AOPA and other organizations can convince the FAA that the time has come for common sense to prevail over the rule of "but that's the way we've always done it."

The last few days have seen what many had hoped was a breath of fresh air at the top of FAA give way to a perception of "business as usual." Administrator Garvey's October speech at the AOPA EXPO in Orlando was greeted with disappointment by the general aviation press who heard her prepared re-

NDAAA News:

NDAAA's Schreiber-Beck Named to Aeronautics Commission

North Dakota Agricultural Aviation Association Executive Director and former Chairman of the North Dakota Aviation Council Cynthia Schreiber-Beck of Wahpeton has been named by Governor Edward Schafer to a seat on the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission. The nationally-known North Dakota agricultural applicator was appointed by the Governor to fill the seat recently vacated by Jack Daniels, Williston. Schreiber-Beck has long been a highly active participant in the state and national aviation scene. Besides working at Tri-State Aviation, Inc., she has been involved in such organizations as the National Agricultural Aviation Association Board of Directors, many local committees and organizations and served as the Chairman for the NDAC from 1991 to 1993. In 1991 she received the National Agricultural Aviation Association's Allied Industry Individual Award. Schreiber-Beck resides in Wahpeton with her spouse, Gerald Beck and their daughter, Whitney Beck.

marks. Some opined that she hadn't even bothered to rewrite her remarks to address the fact that she was speaking to a general aviation audience, not a group of major airline executives. Many have expressed their feeling that GA will once again be forced to fight tooth and nail to keep what small gains they have and to hold off what some feel is the ultimate goal of the airlines "big 7": to freeze GA out of a large block of United States' airspace and airports. After a summer of hope, the fall and Administrator Garvey's public comments have put a definite chill in the general aviation breeze.

The Department of Transportation has been forced by Congress to go back and take a fresh look at the seemingly inevitable decommissioning of LORAN C early in the next century. So far, they've been "surprised" to learn that there is an enormous number of users throughout the transportation and communications industries that rely very heavily upon LORAN C. In fact, reports reaching the Quarterly indicate that the FAA is rapidly becoming "The Lone Ranger" in their push to do away with LORAN C and all other ground-based navigational aids. Look elsewhere in this issue for the ways in which you can make your voice heard in this not yet settled decision.

Be sure to mark your calendars for March 1-4, 1998 for the Symposium and mark up all those great aviation catalogues for what you want Santa to bring you for the holidays this year. In the meantime, enjoy this issue and make plans now to attend next year's Symposium.

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COPY DEADLINES
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From the Director's Chair:

This summer and fall has come and gone as fast as a storm front in July, but with less noise and fuss. Many things have happened to make this summer memorable.

First, the Aeronautics Commission celebrated its 50th birthday in style thanks to the aviation community. Walhalla, Northwood, Hettinger, Linton and Wishek all have the pleasure of enjoying new airport facilities. These facilities will help each community network itself into a faster paced, more elusive economy of the 21st century. The Aeronautics Commission received a federal grant to help three North Dakota airports with flood related problems. This \$600,000 grant is the first for the Commission who will act as an administrative agent for the local airports. We have used planning grant monies to save local communities dollars in the past but this flood related grant is our first outside of the planning scenario. The Commission updated the Weathermation system throughout the state. The new Pan Am System Four has more bells, buzzers, pictures, graphics and programs than one officially dizzy Naval Aviator can deal with. But, it sure is fun to play with!

The dedication of the wall for the Hall of Fame at the Bismarck Municipal Airport terminal was historic in nature. It is the first official remembrance of those who served North Dakota aviation so very well. It is the formalization of the aviation communities honoring its leaders of the past. Special recognition goes to Steve McCormick of Northern Improvement for their special gift to the Hall. More on the Hall of Fame can be found in another space in this issue.

A special event took place on July 19, 1997. The FAA published new navigational charts showing a new name on the capitol city's initial fix, JADAN. It is fitting that the initial fix to the capitol city be named for Jack Daniels because it was in Bismarck that for 36 years

Jack made his mark not only on aviation in North Dakota but on the national scene as well. On July 26th, the Commission and the aviation community said "farewell" to a great leader. On the official farewell plaque was engraved; "Leaders are like Eagles, they don't flock; you find them one at a time".

With the retirement of Jack, the Commission welcomes another historic first, Cindy Schreiber-Beck, the first female to be appointed to the board. Cindy and her husband, Jerry, run TriState Aviation along with several other enterprises at Wahpeton. Cindy has been very active at the state level and national scene with

aviation issues and brings a lot to the Commission in the way of experience and outlook to the future.

The current Aeronautics Commission members are: Robert J. Miller, Chairman, Jay B. Lindquist, Vice Chairman, Erling O. Rollson, Jr., Secretary, Cindy Schreiber-Beck, Member and John D. Odegard, Member.

For the staff and myself, the coming years are going to be enjoyable and rewarding. Thanks to the aviation community for making 1997 a special year for the Commission staff and board members. Take care now.



NDAC Secretary and Aeronautics Commission Assistant Director, Roger Pfeiffer (R) received the 1997 state Aviation Distinguished Service award.

ROGER L. PFEIFFER RECEIVES NASAO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The National Association of State Aviation officials (NASAO) presented its 1997 State Aviation Distinguished Service Award to Roger L. Pfeiffer, Aviation Council Secretary and Assistant Director for the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission. The award was presented during NASAO's 66th Annual Meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Pfeiffer earned his commercial pilots license and instructors rating in Oklahoma in 1961. He then taught flying in Montana and North Dakota. His aviation experience is diverse; he has inspected airports for conditions and services, carried passengers as an air taxi pilot, performed low-level flying for county mapping, worked as an FAA Flight Service Station specialist, and even did four seasons of crop spraying prior to becoming Assistant Director of the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission in 1980.

His many accomplishments include 16,000 hours of safe flight as chief pilot. He has also co-developed the State Aviation Rescue and Disaster Plan, created the Aerial Applicator Fire Suppression Agreement among six agencies, has performed approximately 1200 annual airport inspections in the last 17 years, serves as North Dakota's aviation education and art contest coordinator, reviews all grant payments for airports for over \$500, and coordinates the North Dakota Aeronautics Chart and Director. To determine the winner of the Distinguished Service Award, NASAO sought input from a distinguished panel of judges.

AIRPORT ASSOCIATION OF NORTH DAKOTA

By Tim Thorsen, Bismarck Municipal Airport

Just a short note to update AAND Members. In our last meeting of the executive committee we discussed several items:

- A draft of the aviation symposium schedule was drawn up. The schedule resulted from a discussion of possible speakers and topics.
- A scholarship check was sent from AAND to University of North Dakota. AAND Member Steve Johnson, Grand Forks, presented the award, on November 8, 1997.
- Auto racing on airports was discussed at length. The consensus was that members were against it. Major concerns were: failing to meet FAA Regulatory Requirements; and a belief that auto racing encourages non-compatible use of the airport. At a minimum, members felt that if auto racing is done, a fee or share of gross receipts should be paid to the airport so the airport benefits from the use. The committee is looking for input from members who have hosted auto racing or desire to express their opinion on the subject.
- Consideration for selection of Airport of the Year is ongoing, results will be announced soon.
- A resolution was passed asking that the North Dakota Aviation Council (NDAC) limit the length of the banquet to 2 hours. That resolution was delivered to NDAC at the October 10, 1997 meeting.
- The next AAND executive committee meeting will be held in mid November, 1997.

Guest Opinion FROM NATA: Weight and Balance in Washington

by James Coyne, NATA President

The tragic Fine Air accident in Miami reminded pilots how unforgiving a plane can be when the load is unbalanced. From the earliest days of powered flight, we've known that too much weight in the wrong place usually means disaster, and in many ways the same laws of weight and balance apply to the "forces" in Washington that attempt to "control" our industry. When regulators exceed their authority or forget their proper position within the policy and regulatory framework, we end up paying the price—burdened with wrongheaded proposals that just won't fly.

Careful and effective air safety regulation requires a realistic and deliberate weighing of many factors. Over the past forty years,

we've evolved a system that tries to balance diverse and often contradictory safety objectives with a wide range of operational, economic, and environmental constraints, many of which are as unforgiving as the laws that define an airplane's center of gravity. But now the delicate balance that has made this system workable is threatened by a new generation of political loadmasters who have exploited the FAA's lapsed leadership and claimed a bold new authority to define unilaterally our national aviation agenda.

Examples of this regulatory disequilibrium appear almost every day, as the lure of fleeting media stardom seduces the latest aviation-expert-wannabe before the cameras to assert without qualification that there is a simple, long-ignored solution to some exaggerated, but visually compelling, aviation hazard. He or she has long championed immediate action to eliminate this hazard, but a conspiracy of some sort always stood in the way, and now, thanks to his or her persistence and the cooperation of some fearless, hard-hitting investigative reporter, the public can be saved—and the regulation can be jammed down the throat of an uncaring, profit-driven industry that can, in any case, pass on the costs for only a few pennies per flight or per passenger.

Of course, regulatory dilettantes like these have been around for years, but only lately have they gained a new stature, both in and

outside of government. Last month, a top official at the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) lectured America from the bully pulpit of Sixty Minutes about the quick fixes that would prevent another 747 midair explosion, even before the official NTSB report on TWA Flight 800 had been released. The airline industry went ballistic and, in a rare example of corporate unity, condemned the official and his recommendations. Just last week, another top NTSB official spent an hour on C-Span castigating the FAA and Congress for not blindly following their recommendations. The job, he proclaimed, was to "lobby" for aviation safety, as though no one else cared.

In fact, the aviation safety lobby is the most crowded room in Washington. In addition to former officials like Mary Schiavo (for whom it's a lifelong gravy plane), shills for the trial lawyers like Ralph Nader and his various "probono" ambulance chasers, and grieving relatives of crash victims, the politics of aviation safety has attracted otherwise circum-spect politicians into a bidding frenzy of empathy. Vice President Gore led the way last year with his billion-dollar pledge to combat aviation terrorism. Since then, millions more have been thrown at the perennial phantom issues of suspected unapproved parts, contract maintenance, pilot fatigue, drug and alcohol testing, airport access, and employee background checks.

(Continued on page 7)



All five living members of the Aviation Hall of Fame were present October 2 at the Bismarck Municipal Airport dedication ceremonies for the Hall. (Left to Right) Duane Larson, Fargo; Leland Brand, Taylor; Oscar Ness, Lisbon; Jack Daniels, Williston; Tom Nord, Pembina.

AOPA LAUNCHES MAJOR INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE PILOT MEDICAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

NEW ORLEANS, LA - The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association has launched a major new initiative to improve the pilot medical certification process and to make it easier for pilots to continue flying.

"Almost every pilot will eventually face a 'special issuance' medical certificate if they wish to continue flying," said AOPA president Phil Boyer in a speech to the Civil Aviation Medical Association (CAMA) in New Orleans on September 4.

"But the medical certification process is broken. Today, I sent FAA administrator Jane Garvey a series of easy-to-implement proposals that she can act on right now to fix many of the problems, excessive costs, frustrations and delays of the special issuance process."

FAA policy requires that an Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) automatically deny a medical certificate to pilots with certain medical conditions. But with additional tests, documentation and approval by FAA Aeromedical Division in Oklahoma City, "special issuances" good for 12 months can authorize pilots to fly despite common problems such as a heart murmur or arrhythmia, or previous angioplasty or bypass surgery.

But there is a significant processing backlog in Oklahoma City, as long as four months. And the one-year duration of the resulting medical certificate is based on the date of application (required two months in advance), not the date of issuance.

"When you add it all up, it's not uncommon for a pilot to spend six months out of every 12 engaged in the FAA renewal process, and grounded up to three months a year awaiting action from Oklahoma City," Boyer told CAMA.

Some pilots spend \$1,000 to \$3,000 or more each year to obtain such special issuance medicals. "What could, and should, be a relatively simple and painless process has become so expensive and cumbersome that many pilots have just given up and stopped flying," said Boyer. "But relief is available."

AOPA proposed four specific actions to reduce the burden of the special issuance process on both the pilot community and the FAA.

- **Automatic Renewal:** FAA should allow automatic extension or renewal of a special issuance authorization provided the pilot has submitted required documentation showing no adverse change in pathology.

- **Certificate Duration:** The duration of a special issuance certificate should start from

the date of issuance, rather than application date, to ensure a full 12-month renewal.

- **AME Privileges:** AMEs should be granted more authority to renew special issuance authorizations or to certify pilots who provide complete reports showing no adverse change in medical status.

- **Limited Medical Certification:** FAA should expand use of the "valid only when accompanied by another qualified pilot" medical certification to allow Part 91 pilots to fly with another pilot aboard. This option is currently available only on Second Class medicals (required for Commercial pilots flying for hire) for those flying as part of a two-pilot crew.

"These relatively minor policy changes would greatly reduce the burden on both FAA and the pilot community," said Boyer. "While special issuance certificates today make up only a small percentage of all medicals issued, the burden on individual pilots and FAA workload is astounding. These changes will provide immediate relief."

Boyer also told the CAMA convention that AOPA wants a long-term, comprehensive restructuring of the entire medical certification process. "The process today is too hands-on, too labor intensive, and too slow," Boyer said. "In no other area does FAA review and

approve every single line on every single application. It's time to give AMEs the kind of responsibility, authority, and trust FAA grants to other designees such as Designated Pilot Examiners and Designated Engineering Representatives."

Boyer said FAA establishes standards, training, oversight and enforcement in these other areas, but unlike AMEs, does not review the decisions of these designees on a case-by-case basis. "AMEs, not the FAA, should be responsible for medical certification casework," said Boyer. "FAA's function should be standard-setting, oversight and training of AMEs, advice and counsel when asked, and enforcement action when required." AOPA's proposed changes would cut FAA's casework backlog, recently as high as 65,000 applications, and reduce delays and lengthy exchanges of correspondence with the Aeromedical Certification Division in Oklahoma City.

"All of our proposals are within the purview of Jane Garvey and the Federal Air Surgeon," said Boyer. "FAA can make these changes tomorrow, without requiring rulemaking or Congressional action. "We ask Mrs. Garvey to act quickly. In one bold stroke, she could knock out one of the greatest barriers preventing people from entering or continuing in general aviation."



Members of the North Dakota Chapter of the 99's pose in front of a 1946 Piper Cub at Turtle Lake's Pancake Breakfast September 21st. Left to right: Diane Herr, Turtle Lake; Beth Lucy, Jamestown; Andrey Baird, Dickinson; Lorraine Boehler, Bismarck, and Gruen Vasender, Fertile, MN, pilot of the cub.

KEEP LORAN-C ON THE AIR, AOPA TELLS DOT USERS' CONFERENCE

FREDERICK, MD - Loran-C must remain operating at least until GPS is fully functional and reliable as the sole means of aviation radio navigation, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association told the Department of Transportation's "user conference" Sept. 8-9 in McLean, Virginia.

"Maintaining Loran is a safety issue," said Marty Shuey, AOPA vice-president, air traffic control. "Users clearly want Loran as a back-up to GPS, but FAA and DOT officials seem willing to ignore safety and the strong backing of virtually every segment of the user community."

The Department of Transportation, under orders from Congress, is reviewing the decision to decommission the Loran-C navigation system in the year 2000. DOT hired the technical consulting firm Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc. to study the technical merits and costs/benefits of extending the life of Loran-C. Booz-Allen conducted the users' conference and will be taking written comments from users until Dec. 15.

FAA has argued that GPS/WAAS will be fully operational by the year 2001 and will provide precision approach instrument guidance "at up to 8,400 runways." AOPA said there should be no fixed decommissioning date for Loran-C.

"We all know how successful FAA is at sticking to schedule," said Shuey. "Until FAA actually demonstrates that GPS and related ground-based systems are providing full service and reliability, it would be foolish to turn off existing navigation systems." With some 80,000 Loran receivers currently installed in general aviation aircraft, Loran-C remains the logical choice for a simple, relatively inexpensive, back-up navigation system.

Other conference participants alerted DOT officials to Loran uses that the agency apparently hadn't considered. Maritime users said international regulations require commercial ships to have two independent means of navigation. Smaller ships can't afford inertial navigation systems (INS), leaving Loran and GPS as the only two available navigation options.

Both the military and National weather Service rely on balloon-carried, Loran-equipped radiosondes to track upper atmosphere winds. The loss of Loran would increase the cost of radiosondes more than tenfold. Most of the nations telephone companies use Loran for timing signals. Without these, both conventional telephone and cellular phone systems would become unreliable. Power companies use Loran to locate faults in electrical transmission lines. Even NASA has used Loran to land the space shuttle when GPS was unreliable. "Loran remains a cost-effective complement to GPS," said Shuey. "FAA and DOT should listen to the users and keep it on the air."

The DOT has hired Booz-Allen Hamilton Inc. to conduct a Congressionally mandated review of the decision to decommission LORAN C in year 2000. If you are a Loran user/owner it would be wise to comment as to the technical, operational, and economic issues here. Also safety, reliability, back up for GPS. Include your name, info for return contact, ident as aviation or marine user, specific use such as type of AC, where used, what other type of nav systems used, & typical nav activity. Here is a chance to help determine whether there will be future funding of LORAN-C. Comments accepted until Dec 15-19, 1997. Fax to 703-917-3023 or mail to : DOT Loran-C Study Comments, c/o Joseph R. Davis, Booz-Allen Hamilton, Inc., 8251 Greensboro Drive, McLean, VA. 22102 or email loranc@bah.com

UND Aerospace Announces Additions to Training Fleet 11 Aircraft to be Added at GFK

UND Aerospace has announced plans to add eleven aircraft to its Grand Forks based training fleet. UND Aerospace dean John Odegard said the new Piper and Diamond aircraft will augment the university's fleet of over 70 training aircraft.

"This is the beginning of a planned complete upgrade of our collegiate and contract training fleet," said Odegard. "Over the next few years we will phase in a new fleet of aircraft that will guarantee our students fly in modern, state-of-the-art equipped aircraft that provide the most value for their training dollar." The first additions to the fleet this fall are four new Diamond DA-20 Katanas that have already been delivered. The composite construction, two-seaters are equipped with King moving map GPSs.

The Katana's excellent visibility, economical 80 horsepower engine and constant speed prop makes it an outstanding primary training aircraft. UND Aerospace already operates five Katanas at its satellite training operations in Crookston, Minnesota; Huntsville, Alabama; and Mesa, Arizona.

UND Aerospace and New Piper Aircraft, Inc., have announced that UND will purchase five IFR-equipped Piper Warriors that are scheduled to join the fleet in January. These aircraft will be used in the commercial-instrument sequence of courses for UND Aerospace students. These aircraft will feature the IFR-certified King KLN89B GPS. UND has operated a primarily Piper fleet of Cadets, Arrows, and Seminoles since 1990. The four-seat aircraft are sturdy, reliable and well-suited to UND's crew-orientated training program.

Also scheduled to join the UND fleet in early 1998 are two all-weather, twin-engine training aircraft. These all-weather twins will be used in the UND Aerospace Spectrum® ab initio airline pilot training curriculum for both collegiate and contract students. The all-weather capability will provide better dispatch reliability in the winter months and allow students to train in and experience flight conditions that will better prepare them for airline careers. The Spectrum® ab initio airline program features LOFT (line oriented flight training) and crew-training concepts that have student pilots fly airline style-missions. All-weather dispatch capability enhances the value of this type of training.



A 1990 Soviet YAK-52 taxis at the September 21st Turtle Lake Fly-in. It is owned by Jessie and Aimee Hamel of Lansford, ND.

NDPA NEWS

Harvey Hirning, Pres.

It seems like there was no summer this year. By the time we finished fighting the floods, and repairing the damage and trying to prevent future damage, it was already fall. Now as we head into the winter months it is easy to forget about all of those interesting aviation things we had planned to do this summer.

By the time you get to read this, two major activities of the Pilots Association are winding down. The joint effort with the Aeronautics Commission and AOPA Air Safety Foundation seminars "NEVER AGAIN" are completed and we hope they met your needs. The second activity is more ongoing. The "Wanna Be" program has been held at several airports (see Dan Vigesaa's report) and hopefully more can be scheduled early next year.

The major future event is the annual meeting to be held in Bismarck on March 1-4, 1998. Don't forget to put these important dates onto your calendar and plan to attend. We think we have some very important speakers to talk about the things that affect our flying as well as a chance to reminisce about the good ole days. Sched-

uled speakers include Victor Belenko, Vadim Kulikov (both former Soviet Union Pilots), a speaker from the Navy's "Top Gun" School, Leon Osborne from the UND regional weather center and Hans Ahlness from Weather Modification (talking about flying thunderstorms) as well as your fellow ND pilots to share their flying experiences. If you have a hot topic or speaker, there is still a chance to get them on the program.

As we wind down another year of flying, it is time to think about officers for the next year. If you would be interested in being an officer of the ND Pilots Association, it helps if you let one of the present officers know so that they can put together a list of potential officers prior to the meeting or if you want to wait until the last minute, just get yourself nominated at the annual meeting. The only requirement is that you have been a member for at least one year prior to holding an office.

Every organization is always on the lookout for things that will help increase membership and the joy of being in the organization. If you have any ideas of things

we can do to make flying more fun (unfortunately the cost is not one of the things we control) share it with all of us anytime two or more pilots get together and bring it to the annual meeting. One of the things that I have found is more common than we might think is a weekly or more frequent gathering of pilots at some famous eating establishment. All it takes is a few people who enjoy being together agreeing to meet for lunch. Total time commitment is as little as one hour per week and during that time you get to eat and share flying stories. Another activity is for a group of pilots to take off a few days and fly someplace to follow some famous explorer's tracks.

A few pilots have found that they can get more flying and fun by volunteering to haul blood for United Blood Services. Others serve by taking Christmas gifts to children in local hospitals. These are tremendously rewarding experiences and I am sure there are others. What is on your list?

As we head into the winter months, keep the shiny side up and have lots of happy flying hours.

(Guest Opinion, from page 4)

Standing above the raucous politicking, fear-mongering, and breast-beating of this horde of aviation safety lobbyists, there once stood an unbiased, unemotional, and nonpolitical federal agency called the NTSB that over many decades meticulously earned a reputation of technical excellence and objectivity. Is it now shifting its weight and changing the balance of aviation regulation? Has the NTSB really become a lobbyist, like all the rest, advancing its own agenda behind the self-righteous facade of safety at any price?

Or did the NTSB merely fill the vacuum resulting from leaderless FAA whose best employees in recent years were muzzled and demoralized by an inept DOT Secretary? If so, it's time to remind the NTSB (and everyone in Washington) that aviation regulation requires a balanced structure where no one entity throws its weight around. Each part of our regulatory system has its proper role to play, but only within a framework of checks and balances, and each ele-

ment should recast itself to strengthen and restore its respective authority and credibility.

First, we need a responsible and respected FAA, willing to lead the public debate on the pros and cons of various safety proposals, with the courage to defend decisions that reflect the economic and operational realities of aviation businesses. Second, we need an NTSB that's less reactionary, less political, and more interested in facts than fame. And third, we need the Congress and the DOT to put aside their own internal turf battles long enough to create an independent FAA, with a dedicated aviation trust fund, that can work with all its public and private partners to foster and promote a regulatory environment that will improve aviation safety and produce a healthy civil aviation industry at the same time. In the meantime, our industry's future and the viability of the world's finest transportation system hangs in the balance.

**COPY
DEADLINE
FOR
JANUARY
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IS
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15!**

(Chairman continued from page 1)

moted to a very prominent position. He very much deserved this promotion and he was very happy to get it. The new job had only one serious draw-back. The position required him to travel a lot and he hated airplanes.

My friend began to take flying lessons just so he could overcome his fear of flying. He flew for years as a private pilot with an instrument rating. His fear was diminished somewhat but he still didn't like it.

He began to fly co-pilot with me in the company airplane. Mostly he watched. He began to see how all the factors that make up any flight are managed. He watched me cope with severe weather, strong cross winds, ATC on a bad day, and even cranky passengers. He began to get it. Several years and several hundred hours later he loved it.

My friend has moved away from this area. I have not seen him for years. When I knew him last, he used every trip as an excuse to fly and became an enthusiastic supporter of general aviation.

Aviation depends on people that love flying. Happy bean counters and slick salesmen will not persuade a reluctant CEO to use a small airplane. He may listen to the speal, but

in the end he will sell the company airplane and ride airlines or drive automobiles.

All the hype and hot air you can muster will not persuade a stubborn community to support or even keep the local airport. If all they see is a rich man converting jet fuel to noise, the airport will go. The community that offers unflagging support to its airport is the one that sees its airport as a community focal point.

General aviation cultivates its clients in a unique way. Bankers, lawyers, doctors, accountants, insurance agents, stock brokers; all cultivate a sense of mystery. We depend on them because they are on the inside and understand that mystery.

General aviation can't afford this approach. Flight is a sufficient mystery by itself. We cultivate our clients by taking the mystery out of flying. The more our customers understand the uniqueness of our world, the more they appreciate what it can do for them.

If we ever do bring general aviation back

from its near death experience, it will be because we brought the public back to the airport and taught them to fly. If we ever do sell new airplanes again, it will be because new pilots are excited about aviation. All of us old bucks are scandalized because a used Cessna 172 costs \$45,000. Thirty years ago, a used four-place, fixed-gear airplane cost as much as a brand new luxury car. A brand new airplane cost about three times as much. Duh!

If we ever bring excitement back to aviation, it will be because all of us old bucks finally get over our grief and rediscover the joy of flying. Excitement breeds excitement. If we bring excitement into the member organizations of the Aviation Council, we will watch those organizations become breeding grounds for excitement.

Aviation has a great future. We can all be a part of that future if we work together. Aviation depends on aviators. If we want to make aviation a strong industry we need to get together and make it happen.

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