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Managing Illness Aloft

by Paul Engstrom, Aviation Writer and IFA Member

Bob Meyers, a retired United Airlines captain, tells a harrowing story about the time he became ill while piloting a small airplane alone in California's Central Valley many years ago.

At first, he dismissed the cramps, nausea, and weakness as a minor inconvenience. But as the symptoms got worse, Meyers began to doubt he could continue flying.

He did manage to land safely at his destination - fortunately, it wasn't far away. When the plane came to a stop, though, he literally tumbled out of the cockpit in agony. Medical help was summoned.

The culprit, Meyers later discovered: a black widow spider bite.

Illness comes in all shapes and sizes - from relatively minor ailments (motion sickness, headache, gastrointestinal discomfort) to life-threatening conditions (stroke, heart attack, hypoxia). What to do when you, the pilot, or one of your passengers gets sick in-flight?

It's something that receives little if any attention during flight training for private pilots.

You can't anticipate every possible kind of medical emergency, of course. And even if you're a doctor who's piloting an aircraft, there's still that primary responsibility when an emergency, medical or otherwise, arises: flying the airplane.

But Joel Stoller, a DC-9 captain and part-time flight instructor, and other experts cite these important considerations when "humanware", rather than hardware, fails aloft:

- Quickly acknowledge there's a medical problem, as that will give you more time to take appropriate action.
- Remain calm.
- Locate the nearest airport and land immediately.
- Declare an emergency - air traffic controllers can direct you to the closest airport and arrange for medical assistance to meet you on the ground.
- Enlist the help of passengers - to administer supplemental oxygen or other first aid, or to comfort or restrain the one who's ill - so you can focus on landing the aircraft safely.

Remember, prevention is still your best friend. You can avoid some en-route medical emergencies by adhering to the **PM SAFE** rule - no **I**llness, **M**edication, **S**tress, **A**lcohol, **F**atigue, or **E**motion.

In other words, before the flight even begins, doubly ensure that everyone on board is fit to fly. ■

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TUNICA - A DELTA DELIGHT

by Charlie Spence, Aviation Writer and IFA Member

When you set out to visit Tunica, you are actually going to two destinations: an historic community with southern charm and the South's casino capital, the largest casino resort between Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

This destination in the northwest

section of Mississippi has become the new hot spot for golf, tennis, history, heritage, entertainment and the plea for "luck be a lady tonight." On the Mississippi Delta, Tunica is in the heart of where "The Blues" was born. It's just south of Memphis, Tennessee - less than 20 miles - and now attracts more than 10 million visitors a year. A quick look at the new developments shows why.

In 1990, the Mississippi state legislature legalized gambling and Tunica took advantage of the opportunities this offered to revitalize the downtown area and develop attractions for visitors.

A \$26 million RiverPark and Museum attraction was opened in 2004. Overlooking the Mississippi River, RiverPark has exhibits focusing on history of the river, early explorers, and the levee system. Many of the exhibits are interactive. Or, if you want to have a lazy rest, just sit in one of the rocking chairs on the covered porch and look out over the Mississippi and imagine you see Mark Twain captaining an old paddlewheel boat. (Maybe you just did that yourself in the park's pilothouse simulator.) Of course, all this is just to get you ready for a river excursion on the 300-passenger *Tunica Queen*. The open-air top deck lets you have a great panoramic view of the Mississippi. For a delightful evening take one of the *Queen's* dinner cruises and enjoy an array of Southern-style cuisine.

At about the same time the RiverPark opened, so did the Tunica Golf and Tennis Club, presenting a golf-training academy, a par-72 championship course designed by Mark McCumber, and the South's only Hydro-Grid Har-Tru clay tennis courts. Let the Golf Training Academy diagnose your swing and then help you through a specific training program to improve your game. Each of the hitting bays is equipped with three cameras that can record practice sessions and provide detailed analysis of your swing.

The area offers two other championship courses. The Cottonwoods course at Grand Casino, designed by Hale Erwin, offers gentle rolling fairways, three lakes, and landscaped cart paths. The River Bend Links at Grand Casino curves around strategic knolls and bunkers giving even strategic golfers a true test.

History buffs will want to spend time in downtown Tunica. Quietly walk around the Veterans' Memorial Park, which honors the persons of all branches of military service who lost their lives in wars plus those lost in the 9-11 terrorist attack. Then drop over to the Tate Log House Museum, the oldest existing structure in Tunica County. You will also find numerous antique shops for browsing and shopping.

Just ten miles north of this charming southern community is the exciting casino center with nine world-class casinos offering more than 400 gaming tables, 14,000 slots, star entertainment, and excellent dining. The fun goes on 24/7 with non-stop action, spas, indoor pools, and appearances by top name entertainers. There are live productions in each casino every night. Among the casinos you have a choice of 40 restaurants serving a variety of foods.

In this heart of the blues country you would expect to find a place to honor the greats of this style of music. Sure enough, one casino has the "Blues and Legends Hall of Fame." Listen to the music as you browse the guitar and harmonic collections and watch the videos of the Delta's famous blues entertainers.



Take a ride aboard the paddlewheeler Tunica Queen for a feeling of a bygone era.

Photo courtesy of Tunica Convention and Visitors Bureau

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Is LASIK surgery a good idea for me as a pilot? I've developed hypertension - what's going to be the impact on keeping my medical? My medical exam is coming up - just what do I need to be prepared for? All of these questions and many more are asked and answered in IFA's Medical Information section at www.iflyamerica.org/medical.asp.

Maintaining your medical certificate is key to keeping you flying, and so staying healthy is a priority for pilots. Health issues do arise, though, and you need to be aware of if and how they can impact your flying. Access a variety of resources in IFA's Medical Information section today at www.iflyamerica.org/medical.asp. ■

Accident Report

Fatal Accident Follows Failure to Maintain Flying Speed

Safe flying is the aim of all pilots and comes from training and experience. This accident report, provided by the National Transportation Safety Board, is presented in the interest of safety by helping pilots learn from the experience of others.

Aircraft: Breezy

Where: Pell City, AL

Injuries: 1 fatal

Phase of Flight: Low passes

A Moore Sammie, M-Breezy, experimental airplane, registered to a

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TUNICA DETAILS

How to Get There:

Tunica has an excellent airport that welcomes visitors. It has a 7,000 foot x 175 foot asphalt runway 17-35. There are ILS and GPS approaches. The FBO has a flight planning room, lounge, private showers, free wireless Internet, Shell fuel, and Unicom on 123.0. There is an overnight parking fee. Limo service and rental cars are available on site.

Where to Stay:

The area has more than 6,300 hotel rooms in the casino resort area. Motels such as Best Western, Key West Inn, and Casino Inn and Suites provide lower cost housing. Three bed & breakfast places are available.

You can check rates and book your room and rental car at IFA's Online Travel Booking Service, www.iflyamerica.org/travelservices/travelservices.htm. Significant hotel and car rental discounts may apply.

Where to Dine:

Each casino has a selection of restaurants and there are the usual fast food places in the area. Try the Blue & White in downtown for a real taste of southern fare. This is reportedly one of the best of its kind along the Mississippi delta. Try its noon buffet.

Tunica

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As if all this is not enough to entice you, just a few miles in either direction from Tunica are other places of interest to add to your pleasure if you have the time and inclination to move on. A few miles north is Graceland, the home and resting place of Elvis. Only a short drive south of Tunica is Clarksdale, the home of many blues legends such as W.C. Handy and Muddy Waters.

Whatever your preference in seeking new and different places, when you head for Tunica, you're on a winning streak. ■

ON THE HORIZON

Air Shows

Representative air shows are listed below. We recommend that you contact the show to confirm the information as dates can change without prior notice. For a full air show listing and to link to air show websites, please visit

www.iflyamerica.org.

September 9-10

- Wings of the North, MN
- NAS Oceana Air Show, VA
- Air Expo, MD

September 13-17

- Reno Nat'l. Championship Air Races, NV

September 16-17

- KC Aviation Expo, MO
- Blue Ash Airport Days, OH

- Oneida County Regional Air Show, NY

September 22-24

- Rockford Air Show, IL

September 29-October 1

- Redding Air Show, CA
- September 30-October 1 Fort Worth Alliance Air Show, TX

- Nantucket Air Show, MA

- Oklahoma Festival of Flight, OK

October 6-8

- Southeast Regional Fly-In, AL

October 7-8

- FINA-CAF Air Show, TX
- Amigo Air Show, TX
- San Francisco Fleet Week, CA

October 13-15

- Miramar Air Show, CA

October 14-15

- Great Georgia Air Show, GA

- Rotofest, PA

October 15

- Wings Over Wayne, NC

October 20-21

- Moonlight Fund Air Show, TX

October 20-22

- Thunderbird Balloon & Air Classic, AZ

October 21-22

- Wings Over Houston, TX
- Tampa Bay Airfest, FL

Accident Report

continued from page 2

private owner/operator, collided with the ground after takeoff at Pell City Airport, AL. The personal flight was operated by the pilot under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91 with

no flight plan filed. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The airplane sustained substantial damage, and the private pilot received fatal head trauma injuries.

According to witnesses, the airplane made several low altitude passes with steep turn maneuvers to reverse the direction. During the last steep turn maneuver, the airplane began a downward spin. The airplane continued this spiral until it hit the ground. The spiral began approximately 300 feet above the ground.

A Lycoming 0-320, 180 horsepower engine, powered the experimental airplane. Airplane logbooks were not recovered for examination.

Continued on page 4

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PILOT'S QUIZ

Safety

Every FAA Administrator proudly declares that safety is the primary concern of the administration. (It's often quipped that if a new mop was needed in the FAA building it would be reported as a safety purchase.) But, safety is a serious subject. Let's test some safety questions.

1. The aviation safety and reporting system (ASRS) was developed and is operated by the:
 - a. Federal Aviation Administration
 - b. National Transportation Board
 - c. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
2. If an emergency landing must be made in trees, it is best to:
 - a. Land gear up
 - b. Land gear down
 - c. Depends on circumstances and aircraft type
3. When landing on featureless terrain (dark areas, water, etc.), illusions can indicate:
 - a. Pilot is higher than actual
 - b. Pilot is lower than actual
 - c. No difference
4. The first fatality in powered flight took the life of:
 - a. Samuel Langley
 - b. Lt. Thomas Selfridge
 - c. Alberto Santos-Dumont
5. Between 1994 and 2003, what percentage of U.S. aviation accidents had weather as a contributing or causal factor?
 - a. 5.3 percent
 - b. 21.3 percent
 - c. 46.1 percent
6. NOTAMS now warn about UAVs that might be at any altitude in or out of special use airspace. What are UAVs?
 - a. Ultrasonic Attack Vehicles
 - b. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
 - c. U.S. Advanced Vigilance
7. When approaching a mountain ridge from the downwind side, it is recommended that the ridge be approached at approximately what angle?
 - a. Straight on
 - b. 10 degrees
 - c. 45 degrees
8. Ejector seats are used in some military aircraft for safety in emergencies. When was the first ejector seat tested?
 - a. 1939
 - b. 1912
 - c. 1963
9. What percentage of aviation accidents is due to mechanical problems?
 - a. 7 percent
 - b. 15 percent
 - c. 26 percent
10. Night vision deterioration can occur at a cabin pressure as low as:
 - a. 5,000 feet
 - b. 12,000 feet
 - c. 18,000 feet

Key to Answers: 1-c, 2-c, 3-a, 4-b, 5-b, 6-b, 7-c, 8-b, 9-b, 10-a

Accident Report continued from page 3

The pilot held a private pilot certificate with an ASEL rating. The pilot's total flight time was approximately 1250 hours. The pilot held a third class medical certificate with no waivers or limitations.

The Anniston Metropolitan Airport 1753 weather observation reported winds 160 at 9 knots with gusts up to 15 knots, visibility 10 statute miles, temperature 23 degrees Celsius, and a dew point of 8 degrees Celsius. There were few clouds at 6500 feet above ground level with no ceiling. The altimeter was 30.19. Visual

Continued in next column

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Accident Report continued from prev column

conditions prevailed at the time of accident; conditions of light were dusk.

Examination of the wreckage site revealed the airplane came to rest at the north end of runway 20. The airplane showed signs of crush damage. All flight controls and flight surfaces were present at the site. The pilot did not report any mechanical or flight control malfunction prior to the accident.

The NTSB determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows: The pilot's failure to maintain flying speed, followed by an inadvertent stall spin, and subsequent collision with terrain. ■