

The Mooney Flyer

The Official Online Magazine for the Mooney Community

www.TheMooneyFlyer.com

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Editors

Phil Corman | Jim Price

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Jerry Proctor | Tom Rouch | Richard Brown | Parvez Dara
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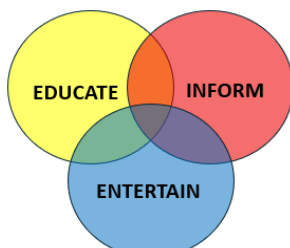
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and we will email you
when we publish a new
issue.



Find all the back issues from when
we started in 2012.



The views expressed in each author's article are their own.
The Mooney Flyer's goal is to educate, inform, and entertain Mooniacs.



Aeronautical Distractions

My good friend Richard Simile is giving a presentation on **Aeronautical Distractions** at the Mooney Summit. This is an important subject because flying an airplane demands continuous attention, yet pilots are surrounded by distractions. Here are my thoughts on the same subject:

Some distractions are obvious — a ringing phone, an unexpected radio call, or a passenger asking a question. Others are more subtle: a malfunctioning instrument, an unusual engine indication, a busy airport environment, or simply the pilot's own thoughts.

The danger is not necessarily the distraction itself. It is what happens to the pilot's attention afterward. Aviation accidents have repeatedly demonstrated how easily a pilot can become fixated on a problem and lose awareness of more important matters. A pilot troubleshooting an abnormal indication may overlook altitude, heading, airspeed, or traffic. During an approach, a seemingly minor cockpit task can interrupt the mental sequence needed to fly a stable approach.

Distractions are particularly dangerous because they often occur when workload is already high. A pilot who is relaxed and cruising at altitude may have plenty of attention available. The same distraction during an instrument approach, takeoff, or emergency can have very different consequences.

One of the best defenses against distractions is remembering a fundamental rule: **Fly the Airplane First**. When something suddenly demands attention, consciously ask, *What is most important right now?* Maintain aircraft control, preserve situational awareness, and only then deal with the distraction.

Another useful technique is to deliberately pause before acting. When something unexpected occurs, resist the temptation to immediately start pushing buttons or troubleshooting. Fly the airplane, stabilize the situation, and think. Modern cockpits have introduced another category of distraction: information overload. Moving maps, engine monitors, traffic displays, weather information, tablets, and cockpit alerts can improve safety—but only if the pilot knows when to look at them and when to ignore them.

Perhaps the most dangerous distraction is the one that seems important but isn't. Aviation rewards discipline. The ability to recognize a distraction, postpone it when necessary, and return attention to the fundamentals is an important part of being a safe pilot.

In the cockpit, attention is a limited resource. Good pilots don't eliminate distractions, they manage them, keeping their focus on what matters most: **Flying the Airplane**.

Have You Had Corrosion on your Mooney

Yes, in the fuselage	38%
Yes, in the wing	33%
Yes, elsewhere	19%
No	10%

[back](#) Voters: 226

Next month's poll: "My Biggest Beef with Mooneys"

[CLICK HERE](#) to vote



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Mooney vs Other General Aviation Companies

 Cessna

 By Phil Corman, Co-Editor 

 Piper

 Beechcraft
Bonanza

 Cessna



Cessna and Piper had enormous advantages in manufacturing, distribution, dealer networks, financing, training fleets, parts availability, and brand recognition. More importantly, their products covered a broad range of buyers.

A pilot could start with a Cessna 152 or 172, move into a 182, and eventually buy a higher-performance Cessna. Piper offered a similar progression.

Mooney's product line was much narrower. The company was essentially asking pilots to choose a high-performance retractable airplane relatively early in their flying careers, which limited the potential customer base.

Mooney's Greatest Strength Became a Weakness

Mooney's aerodynamic philosophy was extraordinarily successful, but general aviation does not necessarily reward maximum efficiency.

Many buyers value:

- Ease of entry and exit
- Cabin width
- Visibility
- Simple systems
- Low insurance costs
- Easy maintenance



- Familiar handling
- Good short-field manners
- A large support network
- Resale value

Mooney emphasized speed and efficiency. For the pilot who regularly flew long distances, that made tremendous sense. For someone flying 100 miles for lunch or taking a family on a weekend trip, the difference between 145 knots and 160 knots might not have been important enough to justify the compromises.

This is one of the great ironies of Mooney: The company often built airplanes for the mission that pilots dreamed about rather than the missions they actually flew most often.

The High Cost of General Aviation

Mooney also suffered from a fundamental problem affecting the entire general-aviation industry: A new piston airplane became extraordinarily expensive and as prices rose, the potential market shrank.

A pilot who once might have been able to buy a new airplane, increasingly had to choose between purchasing a new aircraft and buying a used airplane that cost a fraction as much. That was especially damaging to a manufacturer such as Mooney.

Mooney did not have the huge production volume of the major manufacturers. Lower production volume meant higher manufacturing costs, which contributed to higher aircraft prices.

- Higher prices reduced demand.
- Lower demand reduced production.
- Lower production increased costs.

It was a vicious cycle.

The 1980s Were Devastating

One of the most important events in Mooney's history was the collapse of the general-aviation market during the early 1980s. The combination of high interest rates, economic problems, product-liability concerns, and rising aircraft prices devastated the market for new piston airplanes. Manufacturers that had previously produced thousands of aircraft, suddenly faced a dramatically smaller market and Mooney was particularly vulnerable. The company had already invested heavily in producing sophisticated, high-performance aircraft. When demand collapsed, there was not enough volume to spread those costs across a large number of airplanes. The industry survived, but it was never the same.

Liability Changed the Economics

Product liability was another enormous problem for American general aviation. Aircraft manufacturers faced potentially massive liability exposure from accidents involving older aircraft, sometimes decades after the aircraft had been manufactured. That made producing

new airplanes increasingly risky and expensive. For a company as relatively small as Mooney, those costs were particularly painful. The result was a strange situation: Millions of older airplanes remained in service, while manufacturers had difficulty producing new airplanes at prices ordinary pilots could afford. Mooney was caught directly in that gap.

Mooney Also Had a Branding Problem

Mooney developed a reputation for being a pilot's airplane. That sounds like a compliment—and it is—but it also created a limitation.

- Cessna became associated with the idea of the universal airplane.
- Piper became associated with practical transportation and training.
- Mooney became associated with speed.

That was powerful branding, but it narrowed the market.

- A buyer who wanted a comfortable family airplane might look at a Bonanza.
- A buyer who wanted a simple airplane might look at a Cessna.
- A buyer who wanted a practical hauler might look at a Piper.
- A buyer who wanted to get somewhere quickly might look at a Mooney.

The problem was that there simply were not enough buyers in the last category to support a large manufacturer indefinitely.

The Bonanza Was a Particularly Difficult Competitor

Beechcraft's Bonanza occupied an important position in the market. It offered high performance but also emphasized comfort, cabin space, refinement, and prestige.

Mooney's aircraft could often compete impressively on speed and efficiency, but the Bonanza appealed to a different emotional side of the buyer.

The Bonanza said, in effect, "This is a sophisticated personal airplane."

Mooney often said, "This is an exceptionally efficient flying machine."

Both messages were attractive, but the first appealed to a broader luxury-oriented market.

Mooney Did Not Have Enough Room to Make Mistakes

Large manufacturers can afford a bad product year. A small manufacturer cannot.

Mooney went through numerous ownership changes, financial difficulties, production interruptions, and changes in management over the decades. Every disruption damaged the company's momentum.

- Dealers became uncertain.
- Customers became uncertain.
- Suppliers became uncertain.

Potential buyers naturally asked an uncomfortable question: Will the company still be here when I need parts for my airplane?

That question matters enormously when purchasing an aircraft that may be owned for decades.

The Parts and Support Problem

For an airplane manufacturer, selling the airplane is only the beginning. The company must support that airplane for decades.

Owners need:

- Parts
- Service information
- Technical support
- Factory knowledge
- Structural components
- Landing-gear components
- Windshields and windows
- Interior parts
- Engine and propeller support
- Avionics integration

As Mooney's corporate fortunes declined, confidence in long-term factory support naturally became more difficult to maintain. Ironically, Mooney airplanes themselves were often capable of lasting for many decades. The problem was not necessarily the airframe. The problem was the company supporting it.

Mooney Was Too Specialized

Perhaps the simplest explanation is that Mooney occupied an uncomfortable position in the market.

- It was not inexpensive enough to compete with basic aircraft.
- It was not large enough to compete with the major premium manufacturers.
- It was not roomy enough to dominate the family-airplane market.
- It was not simple enough to dominate the trainer market.

Instead, Mooney occupied a relatively narrow niche wherein pilots who valued speed, efficiency, range, and flying quality more than cabin size or simplicity. Those pilots absolutely existed—and many became lifelong Mooney owners, but there were never enough of them to guarantee a large, stable manufacturing business.

The Great Irony of Mooney

Perhaps the greatest irony is that Mooney's failure was not primarily a failure of engineering. It was a failure of economics.

The M20 series evolved into an extraordinarily capable family of airplanes. Later models demonstrated that a piston single could provide remarkable speed and range while using

relatively modest amounts of fuel. Mooney essentially proved its engineering concept, but what it could not prove was that enough people would pay the price required to manufacture that concept profitably. That distinction explains much of the company's history.

Could Mooney Have Succeeded?

Possibly—but it would have required a different strategy. Mooney might have benefited from a broader product line, greater emphasis on cabin comfort, stronger manufacturing economics, and a more stable corporate structure. A modernized Mooney with a wider cabin, modern avionics, excellent ergonomics, efficient manufacturing, and strong factory support could still have been an attractive product, but it would have faced the same fundamental problem confronting the entire piston-aircraft industry, that is there simply are not enough customers for expensive new personal airplanes.

The modern aircraft buyer can also choose from an enormous used-aircraft fleet. A 20- or 30-year-old high-performance airplane can provide much of the capability of a new aircraft at a fraction of the price. That makes it extremely difficult for a small manufacturer to justify the enormous investment required to develop, certify, manufacture, and support a new piston airplane.

Mooney's Legacy

Mooney may ultimately be remembered less as a failed airplane company than as one of general aviation's great engineering experiments. The company demonstrated that careful aerodynamic design could produce remarkable performance from relatively modest engines. It created airplanes that remain highly regarded decades after they were built, and it created something even more difficult to manufacture than an airplane: **a loyal following.**

That is why Mooney's story is so interesting. The company did not disappear because its airplanes were bad. In many respects, it disappeared because the airplanes were **too specialized for the size of the market and the economics of American general aviation.**

Mooney built airplanes for pilots who cared deeply about flying efficiently and quickly. Unfortunately, there were never enough of those pilots buying new airplanes to make the business model consistently work.

Mooney's tragedy was not that it failed to build great airplanes. It was that building great airplanes was not enough.



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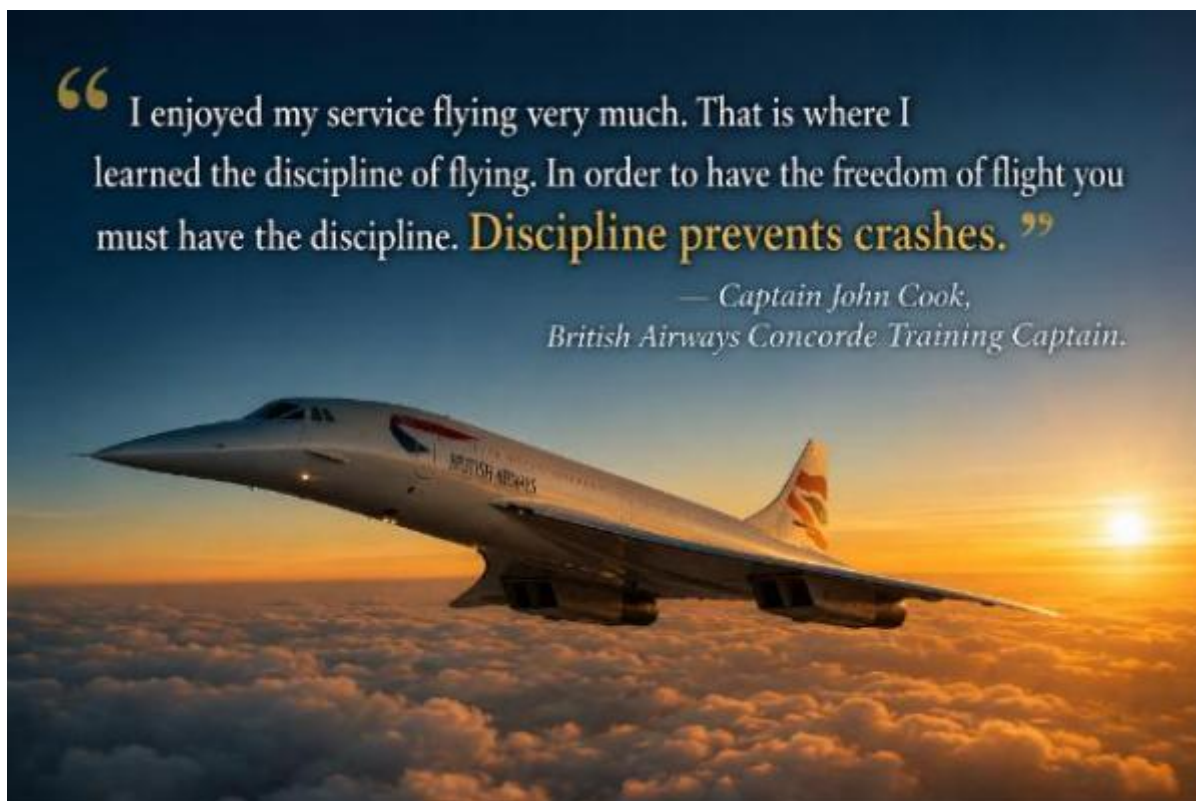
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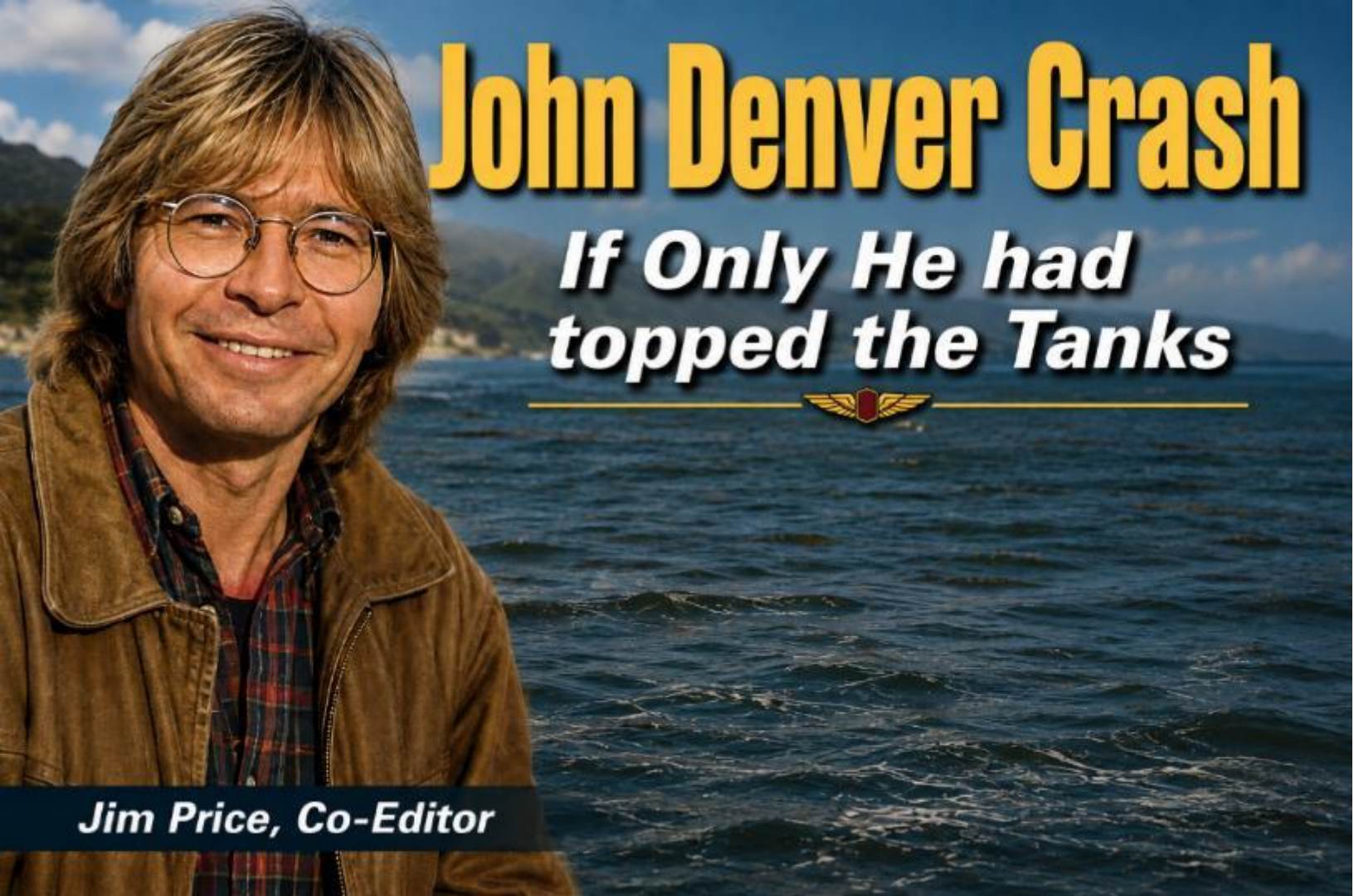
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“ I enjoyed my service flying very much. That is where I learned the discipline of flying. In order to have the freedom of flight you must have the discipline. **Discipline prevents crashes.** ”

— Captain John Cook,
British Airways Concorde Training Captain.



John Denver Crash

If Only He had topped the Tanks



Jim Price, Co-Editor

Henry John Deutschendorf Jr., known professionally as John Denver, was an American country and folk singer, songwriter, and actor. He was one of the most popular acoustic artists of the 1970s and one of the best-selling artists overall in that decade.



John was born on December 31, 1943 in Roswell, New Mexico to Emma Louise and Henry John “Dutch” Deutschendorf Sr. Captain John Deutschendorf was serving as a pilot in the [United States Army Air Forces](#), and was stationed at [Roswell Army Air Field](#). (The Army Air Forces was not changed to the United States Air Force until 1947). “Dutch” was a decorated pilot who, in 1961, set a number of air speed records in a [Convair B-58 Hustler](#).

The **Deutschendorf** family moved often. After Roswell AAF, “Dutch” was stationed at [Davis–Monthan Air Force Base](#) (Tucson, Arizona), [Maxwell Air Force Base](#) (Montgomery, Alabama), [Carswell Air Force Base](#) (Fort Worth, Texas).



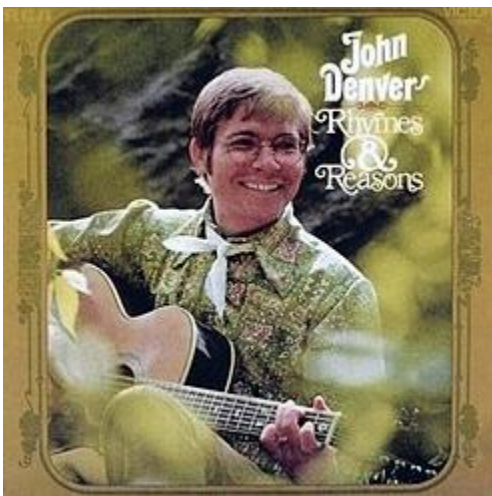
When John Junior was in 11th grade, he drove his father's car to California to visit family friends. There, he decided to begin his music career. His father flew to California in a friend's jet to retrieve him, and John reluctantly returned to Texas to complete his schooling.

The Guitar – Early Career and Name Change

When John was 11, his grandmother gave him an acoustic guitar and by the time he was in college, he had learned to play well enough to perform at local clubs.

[Randy Sparks](#), founder of [the New Christy Minstrels](#), suggested that "Deutschendorf" would not fit comfortably on a marquee. So, John Deutschendorf became John Denver.

In 1961, he attended [Texas Tech University](#) in Lubbock. There, he sang in a folk-music group, while studying architecture. In 1963, Denver dropped out of Texas Tech and moved to Los Angeles to pursue his musical career, singing in folk clubs.



In 1969, Denver abandoned band life to pursue a solo career and released his first album for RCA Records, [Rhymes & Reasons](#). Denver wrote "Babe, I Hate to Go", which was later renamed "[Leaving on a Jet Plane](#)". Peter, Paul and Mary's rendition was number one on the *Billboard* Charts.

Career Peak

Denver's album, [Poems, Prayers & Promises](#) (1971), was a breakthrough for him in the United States, thanks in part to the single "[Take Me Home, Country Roads](#)", which went to number 2 on the *Billboard* charts.

Denver's career flourished thereafter, and over the next four years, he had a series of hits. In 1972, Denver had his first Top Ten album with [Rocky Mountain High](#). In 1974 and 1975, Denver had a string of number 1 songs: "[Sunshine on My Shoulders](#)", "[Annie's Song](#)", "[Thank God I'm a Country Boy](#)", and "[I'm Sorry](#)". He also had three number 1 albums: [John Denver's Greatest Hits](#), [Back Home Again](#), and [Windsong](#).

In 1975, John Denver was awarded the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year award



Early 1970s – Learning to Fly

John Denver's father, a retired USAF Test Pilot, taught him to fly and by 1974, Denver was type rated in the Learjet. He bought one so he could fly himself to concerts. He also owned a Christen Eagle aerobatic bi-plane, and two Cessna 210 Centurion airplanes.



By 1997, Denver had 2,700 hours. In addition to his Learjet type rating, he held ratings in single-engine land and sea, multi-engine land, glider and instrument.

1993 – Driving under the influence charges

Denver pleaded guilty to a drunken driving charge and was placed on probation.

In October 1995, following Denver's drunk-driving conviction, the FAA directed Denver to abstain from alcohol if he wished to continue flying airplanes. In 1996, the FAA determined that Denver was medically disqualified from operating an aircraft due to his failure to abstain from [alcohol](#) and revoked his medical certification.



1997 – Denver's Rutan Long-EZ



Although John Denver did not have a current Medical, he purchased a 150 Horsepower Rutan Long-EZ, which was designed for speed and efficiency. Builders install engines ranging from 115 to 150 horsepower, and the Long-EZ's true airspeed can be 145 to 224 knots (167 to 258 MPH).



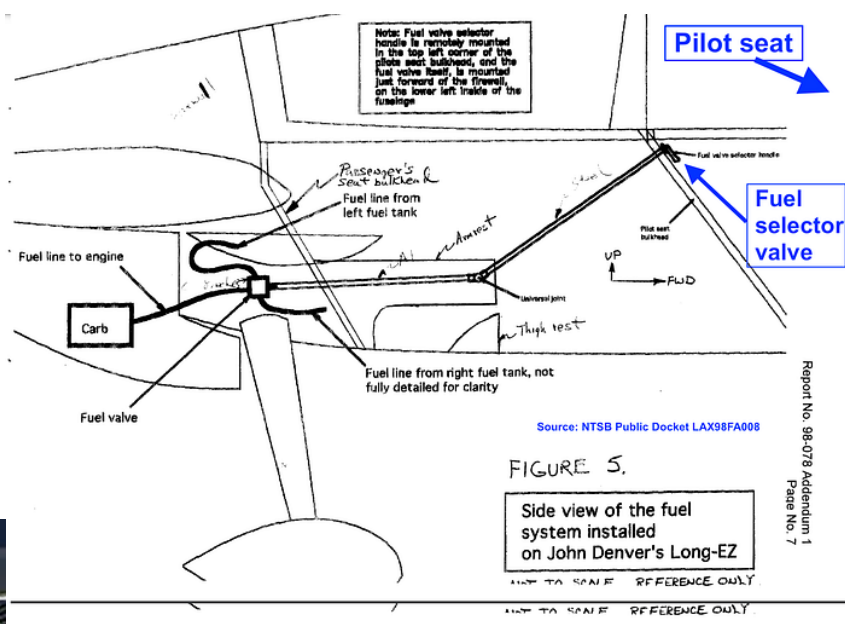
The Fuel Selector Handle Location Modification

Rutan's standard position for the fuel selector was the cockpit floor between the pilot's legs. The aircraft builder feared that if the fuel selector ruptured, fuel would flow into the cockpit. Therefore, he modified the fuel-selector location and installed it behind the pilot's left shoulder, just aft of the cockpit.

This unconventional placement made the fuel selector difficult for the pilot to see and reach while seated and strapped in the aircraft.

The Fuel Gauges Location Modification

Generally, Long-EZ fuel gauges are located on the side where pilots can view them. However, the builder installed the gauges behind the pilot where the rear passenger could see them.



October 12, 1997 – The Preflight and Last Flight

The aircraft mechanic servicing Denver's plane said that he and Denver had discussed the inaccessibility of the cockpit fuel selector valve handle and its resistance to being turned.

Denver and the mechanic attempted to extend the reach of the handle using a pair of Vise-Grip pliers, to no avail. Denver strapped himself into the seat and found that he could not reach the fuel selector.

The fuel selector valve was not only in a non-standard location, but it was also situated so that if the pilot turned the valve to the right, the left fuel tank was turned on. A pilot who was unfamiliar with the aircraft, while looking in the mirror and seeing that the left fuel tank was empty, would attempt to rotate the fuel valve to the right, away from the full tank.



Let's Spin – OK, Full Right Rudder

The NTSB's post-crash investigation showed that because of the fuel selector valve's positioning, switching fuel tanks required the pilot to turn his body 90 degrees to reach the valve. This created a natural tendency to extend one's right foot against the right rudder pedal to support oneself while turning in the seat. This would cause the aircraft to yaw nose right and pitch up.

Plenty of Fuel

During the preflight, Denver asked the mechanic how much fuel was shown on the gauges. The mechanic responded that there was "less than half in the right tank and less than a quarter in the left tank." A visual check was not made.

Denver decided he did not need to refuel the aircraft, because he would only be flying for about an hour.



To allow John to look over his shoulder and read the fuel gauges in the rear cockpit, the mechanic gave Denver an inspection mirror. If John needed to turn the fuel selector valve in flight, Denver's plan was to use the autopilot to hold the airplane level and then turn the fuel selector valve.

John Denver didn't like the fuel selector valve location and planned to relocate it where it belonged – on the floor.



After the preflight, Denver took off to make a series of touch-and-go landings at [Monterey Regional Airport](#) (KMRY). After a touch-and-go, his Rutan Long-EZ experienced fuel starvation, and crashed into [Monterey Bay](#) near [Pacific Grove, California](#).

The NTSB interviewed 20 witnesses about Denver's last flight. Six of them had seen the plane crash into the bay near Point Pinos. Four said the aircraft was originally heading west. Five said that they saw the plane in a steep bank, with four saying that the bank was to the right (north). Twelve described seeing the aircraft in a steep nose-down descent.

The NTSB's post-crash investigation revealed that the leading cause of the crash was Denver's inability to switch fuel tanks during flight. The quantity of fuel had been depleted during the plane's flight to Monterey, and in several brief practice takeoffs and landings Denver performed at the airport immediately before the final flight.

In addition to Denver's failing to refuel and his subsequent loss of control while attempting to switch fuel tanks, the NTSB highlighted Denver's inadequate transition training in the Long-EZ. (Denver only had a 30-minute orientation flight the day before the accident). Another key factor was the builder's decision to put the fuel selector handle in a hard-to-reach place.

Did John Denver Have a Valid Medical?

Denver was not legally permitted to fly at the time of the crash because of his previous arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol. An autopsy found no signs of alcohol or other drugs in Denver's body.

WHAT CAN A MOONEY PILOT LEARN FROM THIS ACCIDENT?
Small details. Simple systems. Big consequences.

- 1. KNOW YOUR AIRPLANE—THOROUGHLY**
Familiarize yourself with your aircraft's systems, including fuel system configuration and component locations. Assumptions can be dangerous.
- 2. FOLLOW STANDARD DESIGN—FOR A REASON**
The fuel selector was moved from the between-the-legs position to behind the pilot. This non-standard placement contributed directly to the pilot's inability to switch tanks. Standard locations exist to reduce workload and increase safety.
- 3. MAINTAIN SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**
Monitor your fuel state, tank balance, and engine performance. Don't let distractions or task saturation delay critical actions.
- 4. MANAGE FUEL PROACTIVELY**
Know your fuel burn, endurance, and switching intervals. Don't wait for low fuel warnings—plan ahead and switch tanks early.
- 5. DESIGN MATTERS IN EXPERIMENTAL & MODIFIED AIRCRAFT**
Custom or experimental builds require extra diligence. Any deviation from proven design should be evaluated for human factors and safety impact.
- 6. BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED**
Even experienced pilots can be surprised by small design changes. Build habits, use checklists, and stay ahead of the airplane.

THE ACCIDENT IN SUMMARY
John Denver ran out of fuel and crashed into Monterey Bay. The fuel selector had been relocated behind the pilot's left shoulder—making it difficult to reach in flight. He was unable to switch tanks in time.

A SAFE FLIGHT BEGINS WITH KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS, AND GOOD HABITS.
Fly your Mooney smart. Stay ahead. Make every detail count.

Don't trust the fuel gauges! They can be deceiving and to ensure the presence of adequate fuel, it is wise to top off both tanks prior to any flight.

If you don't feel comfortable with anything in your Mooney, get it fixed BEFORE you fly. It could be something like a boost pump that's not working correctly. That may seem like something that isn't needed for your flight. However, you never know when you might desperately need that pump.



FAILURE IS AN OPTION.



By Jerry Proctor

First and foremost, failure is seldom thought of as a good thing. This certainly applies to things in aviation. When considering a pilot failing a check ride with Designated Pilot Examiner (DPE), this is not a cause to celebrate. However, could it be a really good thing? Let me relay a story. The names are changed so I don't get beat up.

Billy came from Colorado to my Civil Air Patrol (CAP) unit in Tucson. He is a fairly experienced CFII. In the past he was a weekend flight instructor at the Air Force Academy, plus he was active in the CAP in Colorado.



By Jerry Proctor

Now in CAP, unlike the FAA, you are required to take an annual check ride, called a Form 5. You can't 'flunk' an FAA Flight Review, but in CAP, you can get an UNSAT and thus, essentially flunk. Then, you are removed from flight status, and the unit commander and flight instructors go to work. With Billy, he was bummed out. That said, he clearly wasn't up to standards. He wanted to continue in CAP, so I laid out a plan where he was to do two weeks of self-study on CAP regulations, C182 POH, ACS standards and other documents relevant to the Form 5.

I assigned him to our youngest CFII, (thus most current). Then, after two weeks of training, she gave him an oral. (Earlier with me, he did not excel in the Oral). So good news, he was spot on, having been asked a boat load of questions. This is called progress.



Then, this young CFII took him for several Form 5 type flights. These flights included the usual suspects of clearing turns, steep turns, slow flight, stall series, pattern work, etc. According to the young CFII, Billy improved greatly and she announced that Billy was ready. He just sailed through the F5 check ride.

Now how did this happen? It was because of Failure. Failure almost always energizes one to improve and never fail again. Much like my last article where I said mistakes are good, if you take the time to examine and learn from them, failure is also one of mankind's greatest teachers.

“

"Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit."

Napoleon Hill



Now, I am not saying go out and purposely hose your Flight Review. However, if it does not go well, and you would know that yourself, take the golden opportunity to grow and benefit from failure.

ELKO COPS



Higher gross weight and a bad starter.



By Don Peterson

Maria and I made plans to sell out and relocate to Colombia, a civilized country. We, (meaning “she”), were busy packing and preparing for the Big Departure.

Latinas are a social breed, with strong family and Amiga bonds. Maria asked if we could invite her bestie to fly up from Bogota. She asked if I would then fly us all to Yellowstone and Yosemite for a quick look at each?

I asked, “*How long will she be here?*”

“About 10 days.”

“HMMMMM. Maybe.”

Rambo had just returned from a painful annual and was whispering hints that he had not been handled with care. I’d mostly given up using anyone but myself for inspections, as it seemed to create more work for me. Disappointment is often a pilot’s natural state.

I then said, “*OK, we can try.*”

Clarita arrived, we spent the night and headed to Yosemite, which is slightly less than a Mooney-hour from our home in Carson City. The weather was good and flying down the Sierra Nevada in good weather is not challenging. We spent a night in the lodge and another at a hotel nearby. I wasn’t happy with the takeoff and climb, but it was warm and Clarita was ... chunky.



By Don Peterson

After a night back in Carson, we reloaded and headed for Jackson Hole. Rambo climbed slowly, as it was still warm. We made it to Jackson Hole and had a three-night visit to Yellowstone. Within minutes of walking out of the front door of the lodge, the ladies had a face-to-face grizzly encounter.

About two and a half hours along our flight back to Carson, I asked the ladies if they needed a restroom stop. The answer was unanimous. I'd been to Elko before on business, and it was in the middle of our route. It was a Sunday and nobody was offering radio assistance. There was a natural-looking parking spot next to what looked like a medium-sized FBO. I stood guard on the inside of the auto-lock gate to let them back in. Hopefully, we had shed some weight, and after a few minutes, we were reloaded, and I cranked the fuel injected 360.

"Whirrrrrrr." There was no Bendix engagement. After several tries, it was a no go.

Years earlier, I had installed the nose air inlet mask, which I subsequently realized delivered zero in terms of speed or lower temps, but definitely made it difficult to fish out dropped screws and washers or poke a screwdriver down to the starter, to toss its gears forward.

I decided it was time for a manual start with a hot IO360. This was about a year or so after installing my Surefly, so why not? I chocked the plane and instructed Maria on her job. We had shared a fair amount of time in the cockpit, so I wasn't worried. After about six blades, I got a light. I had many previous efforts at hand propping a hot IO360, so this was a glorious moment.

We all climbed back in, buckled up, and watched a police cruiser, a white van, and big Chevy pull onto the ramp in front of us. There were two teenage-looking officers, one young man with a clipboard, and a nervous looking lady whose job I never figured out.

The young man made a couple of swipes across his throat. I shook my head, "no, thank you." He came up on the wing, and I explained I had just performed a miracle by hand-starting a hot IO360 and didn't want to have to try that again. He climbed down for a confab with the two pink-cheeked officers, who were trying to communicate their displeasure with me via ugly facial expressions. The committee held about a 15-minute chat, while I watched my cylinder head temps make a slow ascent. After a couple more exchanges, I surrendered and shut down. An officer climbed up on the wing and asked for everyone's ID.

We showed him my "born in Texas" and the ladies, who spoke little English, showed him their Colombian Passports. After a lengthy degree of frantic three-way banter, the officer returned our papers and said we could go. I should read the manuals, study the charts, and salute the flag, and park facing north to do my business like a good dog will do.

About 10 minutes of yanking and cursing left us still stranded. A nice young man from the FBO, where I *SHOULD* have gone, came down and towed us up to their ramp. The FBO offered a lounge, water, and baños for those in need.

He and I took turns yanking and cursing, and the engine finally woke up, letting us get home before daylight departed.

I was still unable to satisfactorily climb above 11,000 feet. The problem was later traced to the #2 intake pipe, which was dangling loose and swinging freely. I also learned the meaning of "Gross Weight."

Just Another Mooney Day

The Mooney Time Machine



Author Richard Brown

The Mooney really is a Time Machine. I have written before that we all have 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, and 52 weeks in a year. However, if you own a Mooney, it sure feels like there's more than 24 hours in a day; almost as if you are cheating time itself.

So, what can you do with a Mooney?

I needed to be at Vivian Park in Provo Canyon at 3:45 PM local time for a river float on Saturday. The challenge was that I was starting in California and, before leaving, I wanted to do a 50-mile bike ride. Then, on the way, I would be stopping in St. George to pick up my father-in-law and fly him to Provo.



By Richard Brown

When planning, I start with the final destination and work backwards. Here's how the plan was established.

- Vivian Park – 3:45 PM MDT
- Make a 30-minute drive from KPVU to Vivian Park. I need to land by 2:30 PM MDT to allow time to taxi, park, check-in at FBO, unload the plane, and get in the car. (15-minute buffer built in)
- Flight time from KSGU to KPVU – About 1:30. I need to take off by 1:00 PM MDT (KSGU also has a PPR currently where you reserve a time for landing and departing).



- Time on ground in KSGU to refuel and pick up father-in-law. A fast turn is about 30 minutes, but to add in a buffer, I figured it would take 45 minutes. I need to land at KSGU by 12:15 PM MDT.
- Flight time from KFUL to KSGU – About 2:15. I need to take off by 9:00 AM PDT, (I'm losing an hour with the change in time zones.)
- Pre-flight at KFUL – About 30 minutes from arrival at the hangar to taking off. I need to be at the airport by 8:30 AM PDT.
- Drive time from home to KFUL – About 25-minutes but I'm adding in an extra 5 minutes to stop by the Golden Ox and pick up a breakfast burrito. I need to leave home by 8:00 AM PDT.
- 50-mile road bike ride – About 2 hours and 40 minutes if I take the river trail to the Huntington Beach Pier and back. (That's if I'm pushing most of the

ride). I need to be back from the ride by about 7:20 AM to put the bike away, feed the dogs, jump in the shower, get my weather briefings, load up the truck, and get on my way. It takes about 30 minutes from the alarm going off to being on the bike, so the alarm needs to go off at 4:20 AM PDT.

How did the plan work out?

The alarm went off at 4:20 AM PDT and I rolled out of bed. I've found there's no point in hesitating when getting up for an early morning workout, or you just might talk yourself out of it. I went downstairs and woke up the dogs to send them outside for a few minutes. They came back in and laid down, knowing it was way too early for their breakfast. At 4:47 AM I was on the bike heading towards the river trail.

It was a good ride, coming in at 2 hours and 37 minutes with an average speed of 19.0 mph and average power of 206W. Once I got the bike put away and fed the dogs, I was a little behind schedule. Fortunately, I had packed the night before and had everything by the front door. After getting ready, including my weather briefings, I was walking out the door at 8:14 AM PDT.

When I got my briefing, the winds were better than expected the night before, showing a flight time of 2 hours and 7 minutes, so I would pick up 8 minutes over my plan. I was feeling pretty good about things until I got stuck in the drive-through at the Golden Ox. It's a roll of the dice there; sometimes quick, and sometimes like this morning, the opposite of quick. This added 13 minutes to the trip, but as I pulled through the gate of the airport, I had a hot sausage and egg burrito waiting for me on the passenger seat.

I had fueled the plane earlier in the week, so I didn't have to wait on the fuel truck, and I was wheels up at 9:19 AM PDT, almost 20 minutes behind my plan. However, I would be picking up about 8 minutes with the favorable winds, so things were looking good, given the buffers built into the schedule.

Leveling off at 9,500 feet, I leaned it out, settled in, and let the autopilot do the work, while I grabbed the still-warm breakfast burrito off the right seat and enjoyed my breakfast. It was delicious as always and worth the delay en route to the airport. I was starving.



At KSGU, there is a 5-minute window for your PPR, and I was going to miss mine. I don't think they really care if you miss by a little more than that. They're just trying to control the flow of planes while work is being done at the airport. I decided to see if a slightly later time was available. I'm always amazed when I can get better cell reception at 9,500 feet

over the desert than at some places on the ground in Orange County. There was a slot available for my anticipated arrival, so I booked it and canceled my earlier one so someone else could have it, if needed.

The flight was great, I listened to more of my current audiobook, and at 12:26 MDT, I was on the runway at KSGU taxiing to Million Air. The line guy pulled up, and I asked him to top both sides. I needed to buy 10 gallons at Signature in KPVU, but I would be burning about 15 gallons to get there, so why not get as much as possible at KSGU, where it was \$1.07 cheaper? He asked if I was just there for a quick turn. I told him yes and he said he would get it fueled right away. Thanking him, I headed inside.

My father-in-law was there with his grandson who had given him a ride to the airport. Hello hugs were given all around as we waited for them to finish fueling the plane. There was another round of goodbye hugs after I settled the fuel bill, and then we walked back out into the 102° heat. We didn't make the planned 1:00 PM MDT departure, but we were airborne by 1:07 PM MDT, just 7 minutes behind my planned schedule. I've only taken my father-in-law flying once before, for a little sightseeing flight around St. George, but he has been in small planes and,

despite some bumps, he enjoyed the flight. It was beautiful climbing out next to the red rocks of Kolob Canyon. Due to a building thunderstorm to the west, we stayed a little east of the intended route until we were past Cedar City. Once we were at 9,500 feet, the outside temperature was a comfortable 58°F.

The beauty soon gave way to smoky skies from the fires burning near Beaver, Utah, and visibility went from the typical 50+ miles to about 6-7 miles. However, the best thing about the flight was I had a camera running. I now had an hour and a half to visit and hear Kathy's dad's stories. A lot of times, if you try to record your parents, they are uncomfortable and it's awkward, but this was completely relaxed and natural. It was another priceless memory from our Mooney.

KPVU tower put us on a right downwind for runway 13, and at 2:41 PM MDT, we landed and taxied to Signature where Kathy met us at the plane. When we got in the car and put our destination in Google, it gave us an arrival time of 3:41 PM MDT, which was 4 minutes ahead of the plan. Our actual arrival was 3:42 PM MDT.

A 50-mile bike ride in California, 601 miles flown with a total flight time of 3 hours and 39 minutes, (including a fuel stop and passenger pickup), and arriving at our destination within 3



minutes of the original plan? I'm going to call that a win, or just another day when you own a Mooney.

Oh, if you're wondering about the river float? It was amazing! If you ever get a chance, I highly recommend it.



As always, thank you for taking the time to read. If there are things you would like me to write about (or not write about), or if you just want to say hello, drop me an email at richard@intotosky.com. If you're ever in Southern California and want to meet up, let me know.

Still Flying at 80

*A reflection on
discipline, freedom,
and the privilege of
piloting a classic
airplane later in life.*

*My Mooney M20C and
the Joy of Staying Current.*



Lloyd Stearns

At 80 years of age, I still climb into the cockpit of my 1968 Mooney M20C with the same mixture of respect and anticipation I felt as a younger pilot. This is my fourth airplane and my second Mooney. During my lifetime, I have flown [Stinson 180's](#), Piper's, Cessna's, [T-38 Talon's](#), [Convair 240's](#), [Saberliner 60's](#), and [C-5A's](#) as Pilot In Command. I've been an instructor pilot on most of these airplanes, both military and civilian. I have flown around the world and visited exotic places. This airplane does not know my age, and it does not give discounts for experience. It asks the same things it has always asked of me:

- Preparation
- Judgment
- Coordination
- Attention

In return, it gives me something rare—a sense of freedom that is joined to responsibility.



Age and Desire to Fly

To be frank, I quit flying around 2010 when my wife became ill and we were no longer traveling much. I sold my first Mooney and, at the time, didn't look back. Family priorities took center stage, and flying simply became secondary.

Thankfully, we were blessed. My wife recovered and as the years passed, our responsibilities as caregivers began to ease. Eventually we found ourselves enjoying the bliss of retirement and new-found freedom.

One day I began thinking whether I was still a pilot and could get back in the cockpit. Once my wife agreed to my flying desires, I started formulating a plan:

First item, can I still see well enough to fly? I went to the ophthalmologist to get evaluated and get the now required glasses. I passed.

Next, can I pass a physical? Because my medical expired over 10 years ago, I could not contemplate Basic Med until I had a new and valid medical first. So, I found an AME a couple of towns away and went through the entire process. After a lot of questions and some tests, I passed and this time I received a Class III versus a Class 1.

Next, could I still fly? I remembered a local school I was familiar with and went in to ask what it would take to get my Biannual Flight Review. I was quickly corrected and learned that it is now simply called a "Flight Review." They said it would normally take 10-12 hours to get me signed off again. I spent the next month studying 4-5 hours a day, every day, until I could answer every question that might be thrown at me. I got paired with a very nice ex-military guy, now instructor, who was working to get into the airlines. He pushed me hard and we spent lots of time regurgitating all I had learned. I Passed. (I know, I know, it's called an *endorsement*). He signed my logbook after 11 hours of flying, but renting was not my cup of tea. Next, if I were to fly cross-country, I wanted to be able to safely fly IFR when necessary. I searched for a CFII who would be honest about my capabilities and found a great guy who came from Germany. He was straightforward and a stickler for procedures, which was just right for me. Again, it was back to the books for hard study sessions to refresh my knowledge and learn about all the changes

since I stopped flying. We flew for five hours before he signed me off, but I did not accept that. I hired him for an additional 3 hours to perform every type of approach we could think of. Again, I passed (endorsement).

People sometimes ask whether an 80-year-old should still be flying. My answer is that the better question is whether the pilot is still current, careful, medically fit, and honest with himself. Age alone is not a disqualifier. The cockpit rewards ability, preparation, and judgment—not birthdays.



I do not take that lightly. I now pay closer attention to fatigue, weather, medications, hydration, eyesight, and reaction time. I try to avoid proving anything. If the weather is poor, if I am tired, or if something simply does not feel right, I stay on the ground. One of the strengths of experience is learning that there is no shame in canceling a flight.

The Airplane

Renting means many restrictions, a different airplane with different equipment each time. Well, renting for a cross-country is not for me. I started looking at airplanes on Controller and Airplane Auction. I made a few bids – no dice. I even queried the guy that sold me my first Mooney over 25 years ago to see what he had. Again – no dice or out of my budget. I looked at partnerships, but my age proved to be an issue with insurance. Then, out of the blue, I got a note from the guy that sold me my first Mooney. He was bringing a Mooney from Georgia which had been sitting a lot and had been repaired after a gear up. I looked at the logs. The engine was rebuilt with a lot of new stuff, such as cylinders, prop, pistons, and a lot more. It did have 1,300 hours on the engine, but my thought was that it would take me a long time to put another 700 hours on the engine. The price was right and it had the right avionics and an autopilot. It looked quite awful, so right away, I had the airplane repainted. The problem was insurance at my age. Thanks to AOPA, I was able to get liability insurance but not hull insurance. Since I bought the airplane outright, I could get away with liability only. Because I did not have a loan, insurance on the hull was not required.

The Mooney M20C is a four-seat, low-wing, single-engine airplane with retractable landing gear, (bullet-proof manual), and a reputation for speed and efficiency. Powered by a 180-horsepower Lycoming O-360 engine, the M20C has long appealed to pilots who appreciate getting real cross-country performance from a modest amount of fuel. My wife prefers flying with me, rather than with the airlines, even after 55 years. It is not a large airplane, and it is not a casual airplane. It rewards planning, precise flying, and respect for energy management.

That is part of why I enjoy it. The Mooney is honest. It reminds me that flying well is not about brute force or shortcuts. It is about smooth control inputs, staying ahead of the airplane, and making decisions early. At any age, those habits matter. At 80, they matter even more.

Staying Safe and Staying Sharp

My approach to flying now is simple: remove as much uncertainty as possible before the wheels leave the runway. I love Foreflight and the new graphic Aviation weather from NOAA, and I study the weather carefully. I review the aircraft logbooks because I am meticulous about the

aircraft being safe. I know the maintenance status because I keep a substantial spreadsheet to keep track of everything. I plan fuel with conservative margins. Yes, the airplane can fly longer than my bladder will allow. I keep my personal minimums more restrictive than the regulations require. I also value recurrent training, flight reviews, and the occasional right-seat companion who is willing to speak up if something does not look right. Criticism from self and others is golden to me.

Programs such as FAA BasicMed have helped many private pilots continue flying legally and responsibly when they meet the required conditions. This includes physician examination, medical education, and operating limitations. However, paperwork is only part of the matter. The real responsibility rests with the pilot. Before every flight, I ask the same question: Am I truly fit to fly today?

My wife and I are enjoying touring the US again; visiting friends and seeing new things. We fly to visit family or just to have lunch with them when they can take time from their busy schedules.

Why I Keep Flying

I keep flying because it keeps me engaged with the world in a way few other activities can. A flight begins long before engine start, with charts, forecasts, performance calculations, and route decisions. It continues with taxi, run-up, takeoff, climb, cruise, descent, and landing. Each phase requires thought and attention. I don't fly to bore holes in the sky. Flying asks me to remain a student, and I seek to learn every time I go up. The goal is to practice something, regardless of how mundane.

There is also the simple beauty of it. The sound of the engine settling into cruise, the sweep of the wing over the Texas landscape, the discipline of holding altitude and heading, the satisfaction of a well-planned arrival, and the precision of a well-executed IFR approach still mean something to me. Flying a Mooney brings all of those things together—the sights, sounds, discipline, and skill—in a way that never seems to grow old. They remind me that life does not have to narrow simply because the years have added up.

A Privilege, Not a Right

Flying at 80 is not about defying age. It is about respecting it. I know I am not the same pilot I was decades ago, but I also know that experience has value. I am more patient, more cautious, and more willing to say no. Those qualities may be just as important as quick hands.

Every flight in my Mooney M20C is a privilege. It is a chance to practice an art that combines machine, weather, judgment, and humility. As long as I can meet the standards — legal, medical, and personal — I hope to keep flying.

I'm not trying to prove that 80 is young, but to show that discipline, curiosity, and joy do not have to retire. I ask others to evaluate my performance because I know one day I will have to hang up the spurs once again, and I will listen. But for now — I love my Mooney and my wife who supports and encourages me to fly again and again.



Verify Fuel Type



A few seconds of confirmation can prevent a lifetime of consequences.



MOONEY
SAFETY FOUNDATION

By Geoff Reid,
Director Mooney Safety Foundation

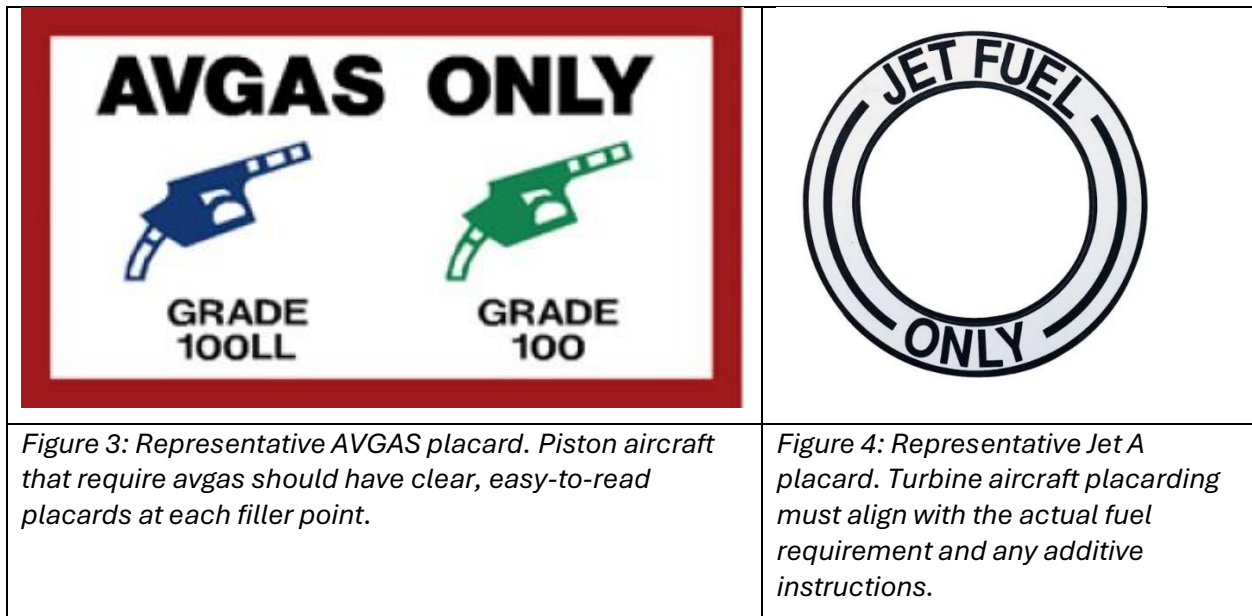
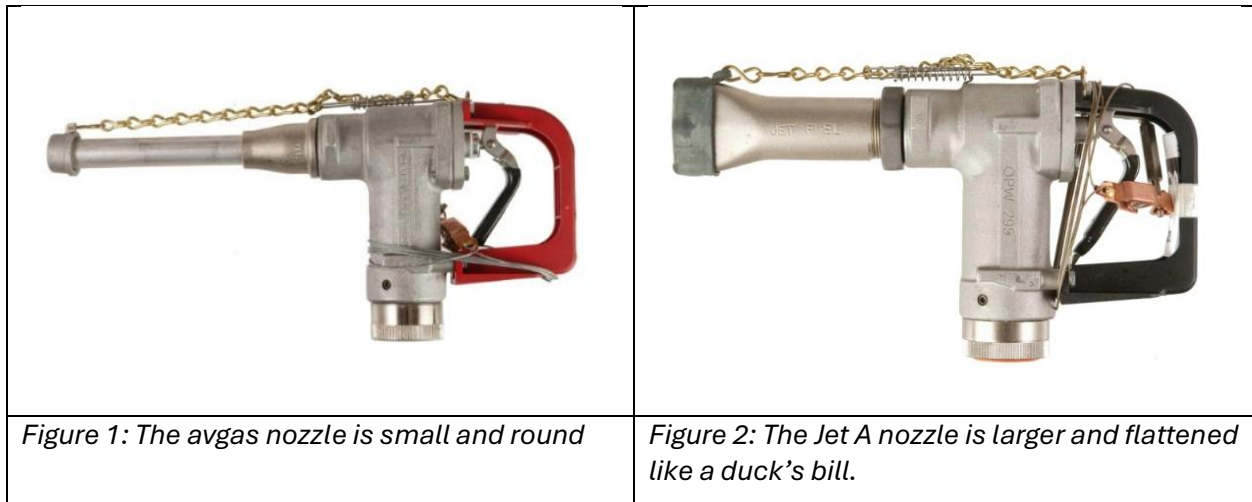
Why Misfueling still traps experienced pilots, and what the aviation industry wants every cockpit and fuel island to do differently

Fuel producers, aviation safety organizations, and pilot-education groups have spent decades trying to reduce one of general aviation's most preventable killers: Putting the wrong fuel into the airplane. The warning has stayed consistent because the threat has stayed stubborn. Misfueling still causes complete power loss, often during the climb. It still succeeds by slipping past assumptions that feel reasonable in the moment, such as the nozzle should not fit, the placard should be obvious, the fuel sample should look wrong, and somebody else probably double-checked it.

That is exactly why misfueling remains such an effective trap. The safeguards are real, but they are not self-executing. They work only when pilots, line personnel, fuel suppliers, and operators all stay engaged in the same short chain of verification.



Figure 1 below shows the small, round avgas nozzle. Figure 2 shows the larger, flattened Jet A nozzle, which is intended to prevent jet fuel equipment from fitting avgas aircraft. Figures 3 and 4 show representative aircraft fuel placards. Safety organizations specifically warn pilots to make sure placards are correct, legible, and in the proper location because they degrade over time and are still missed on the ramp.



The accident everyone still remembers

One of the best-known examples of misfueling is Bob Hoover's accident in his Shrike Commander. The airplane was serviced with jet fuel instead of avgas. Hoover took off normally and then lost power after departure. This proves a point that safety investigators and pilot educators still emphasize today: a misfueled piston airplane may start, taxi, run up, and even get airborne before the wrong fuel reaches the engine in enough concentration to destroy power. Hoover's accident mattered, not just because of who he was, but because it helped drive the wider industry push for anti-misfueling hardware, clearer filler-port protections, and more

disciplined fueling procedures. The lesson was simple and enduring: experience does not protect a pilot from a fueling error that enters the airplane on the ground.

Why Misfueling keeps fooling people

The most unnerving detail in many misfueling events is that the airplane often gives the pilot false reassurance. The NTSB warns that once the wrong fuel is in the tanks, identifying it can be difficult or even impossible to detect by a quick visual check alone.

Mike Busch makes the same point in practical pilot language. A mixture of 100LL and Jet A can still look blue, and the fuels do not separate, eliminating a routine glance at the sump as a dependable defense. In other words, “looks like avgas” is not the same thing as “is avgas.”

That is why some misfueled airplanes seem normal at first. Depending on the mixture ratio, a piston engine may run through startup and run-up, then begin detonating under high power during the takeoff roll or initial climb, when the pilot has the fewest options and the least time.

Hardware helped, but hardware did not solve it

The industry response has come in layers. Earlier efforts focused on nozzle shape, filler-port size, restrictor rings, placarding, and FAA guidance intended to keep Jet A nozzles out of avgas aircraft. Later efforts expanded into training for pilots, line personnel, FBO managers, and customer service teams, after investigators kept finding workarounds, non-standard nozzles, and assumption-driven errors on mixed-use ramps.

The NTSB’s pilot alert is a clear warning to pilots on this point. Some FBOs have modified Jet A nozzles with smaller avgas-style or round nozzles to service smaller turbine helicopters, and some engine-conversion STCs have created look-alike aircraft with different fuel requirements. Those two facts together make visual assumptions on the ramp particularly dangerous.

Aviation safety organizations have responded by broadening the message beyond hardware. Today, the emphasis is on a fuller system of defenses: correct placards, standardized nozzles, visible cross-checks, receipt verification, pilot presence during fueling, and recurrent training delivered through groups such as NATA, AOPA Air Safety Institute, GAMA, and the Energy Institute.

What pilots can do differently

The best modern guidance treats fueling as an active pilot task, not a handoff.

- Tell line personnel the aircraft registration number, the exact fuel type, and which tanks to fuel. Then, watch the fueling and verify that the correct fuel is being delivered.
- Check the truck and the nozzle before fuel enters the airplane. The NTSB has documented cases where Jet A trucks carried smaller or modified nozzles that defeated the protection pilots assumed they had.
- Make fuel placards part of the preflight, not just part of the paint scheme. If they are faded, missing, or unclear, that is a safety item, not a cosmetic one.



- Read the receipt before you leave. Investigators repeatedly note cases in which the receipt itself showed the wrong fuel, and the pilot signed it anyway.
- Do not trust color alone. A mixed sample can still appear blue, and the fuel will not separate, eliminating a visual sump check as conclusive.
- Use smell and evaporation as secondary checks when something feels off. Jet A has a distinctive kerosene odor, and contamination can leave an oily ring on white paper or a paper towel after evaporation.
- Never let shorthand replace clarity. “Top it off” is not a fuel order. The safe version is specific: tail number, fuel grade, tanks, and quantity.

What CFIs can do differently

CFIs are in a uniquely strong training position because they can turn misfueling prevention into habit rather than trivia.

- Build a fueling brief into training and recurrent instruction: fuel grade, truck/nozzle check, placard check, receipt check, and post-fueling verification.
- Teach students that mixed fleets create risk. A line technician may service piston singles, turbine helicopters, turboprops, and converted aircraft on the same shift, which means the pilot cannot assume the fueler automatically knows what this airplane takes.
- Use misfueling case studies to show that power loss can happen after a normal-looking start and run-up, and that the dangerous part of the accident chain often begins before the engine is even started.
- Demonstrate practical detection methods. A student should know what a correct receipt looks like, what a suspicious odor smells like, and why a paper-towel test can reveal what a visual check may miss.

What Mooney pilots should watch especially closely

For pilots of Mooney aircraft, three unique risk factors are that on the older airframes: (1) The fuel tank ports are large and can accommodate the Jet A nozzle. (2) “Turbo” or “turbocharged” marketing labels can confuse inexperienced line personnel, and (3) The airplane can still be misidentified on an active mixed fuel ramp if the fueling exchange becomes casual.

A Mooney pilot should be especially watchful for four things.



- First, make sure both filler-point placards are present, readable, and unmistakable. The NTSB specifically warns that placards degrade over time and that clear placarding is one of the pilot’s own defenses.
- Second, treat any Jet A truck, any modified or unusually small Jet A nozzle, or any confusion about fuel type as a stop sign. The NTSB has documented exactly those nozzle modifications and exactly that kind of confusion in real accidents.





- Third, a receipt showing Jet A or turbine-fuel additive notation is a hard mismatch that should stop the flight until the fueling is fully resolved. Receipt review is not paperwork; it is part of the safety barrier.
- Fourth, never rely on fuel sample appearance, or familiar ramp personnel. If a Mooney shares a ramp with turbine aircraft, or if the line crew services helicopters or converted airplanes, the chance of assumption-driven error goes up. The pilot needs to close that gap with explicit verbal confirmation.



In practical terms, the safest Mooney fueling script is short and unambiguous: state the tail number, say “100LL avgas,” identify the tanks, watch the nozzle, read the receipt, and if anything looks or smells wrong, stop there and investigate before the airplane moves.

Resources for pilots and CFIs

The safety community now offers a strong set of pilot-facing and fueller-facing materials. The most useful starting points are:

- [NTSB Safety Alert SA-050, Pilots: Fueling Mistakes](#)
- [NTSB Safety Alert SA-051, Line Personnel: Fueling Matters](#)
- [NATA Safety 1st General Aviation Misfueling Prevention Program](#)
- [AOPA Air Safety Institute Fuel Management Safety Spotlight](#)
- [FAA Advisory Circular 20-122A, Anti-Misfueling Devices: Their Availability and Use](#)
- [Energy Institute EI 1597, Procedures for Overwing Fueling to Ensure Delivery of the Correct Fuel Grade to an Aircraft](#)
- [Mike Busch, “Misfueled!”](#)

The enduring lesson

The reason the “verify fuel type” message has lasted is that it does not depend on one perfect device or one perfect person. It depends on a short series of ordinary actions performed without complacency: say it clearly, watch it happen, read the receipt, and mistrust anything that feels inconsistent. Fuel producers and aviation safety organizations have spent years repeating that message because misfueling remains a ground mistake with airborne consequences.

Sources

- [New training aims to prevent misfueling — General Aviation News](#)
- [Save a Life, Verify Fuel Type: Why You Should Never Say ‘Top it ...](#)

The *Garmin Axis*

A First Look



Author: **Terry Carraway**

Garmin released the long-awaited replacement for the G3X Touch just before Oshkosh. Before the release, it was expected that the new version would be called the G4X or G3Xi, but Garmin changed things up. Like Intel in the 90s, when they replaced the 486 processor, they named it the Pentium instead of the expected 586.

I know many got to see and play the AXIS at Oshkosh, but some of us could not attend. However, all is not lost. Garmin dealers can request a demo console and Garmin will send one on loan. My avionics shop (Smart Avionics at N71) did this, so I popped up to take a look. The console is configured with an 11.6" AXIS panel and an 8" AXIX panel, along with a G-5 and a GFC-500 autopilot. The console is not fully functional at this time, with the 8" display not doing much.

I am writing this from the perspective of someone flying a G3X Touch with a GTN-750Xi panel. I chronicled my panel upgrade here on Mooney Flyer in 2024. If you are looking at going from a 6-pack, the AXIS is cheaper to install versus a G3X Touch based panel, as much of the wiring is internal to the units. On the other hand, there will be a number of used G3X and GTN units on the market as people upgrade to AXIS. For those of us with G3X Touch systems, the great news is, the AXIS panels use the same cutout and mounting holes as the G3X touch, so no changes must be made to the panel, making it an easy upgrade.

My Current Panel



Sitting in front of the AXIS panel at the shop, we powered it up. WOW. The screen looks bigger (it is, 11.6" versus 10.6"), and nicer. It has better resolution and better contrast. Garmin has not published resolution specs for the AXIS at this time, but visually it has a higher resolution. The synthetic vision looks crisper and more detailed.

AXIS has several versions from a VFR panel like the G3X Touch that requires an external GPS navigator and NAV/COM, up to a full IFR GPS, NAV/COM and intercom in the AXIS panel unit. The AXIS supports High Speed Data Bus (HSDB), so you can cross fill database updates between AXIS panels and with GTN-x50Xi units. Also, it has built in Wi-Fi and Blue Tooth. Due to the integration with everything in one unit, the installation is faster and cheaper.

Overall, AXIS is more customizable than the G3X Touch. One complaint I have in my 252 is that I cannot display the TIT on the EIS strip on the G3X Touch, but this is possible on the AXIS. The widgets are nice, in that they are large enough to be usable without expanding them, but when you expand them, they expand to less than one half the screen space, so the Primary Flight Display (PFD) portion remains larger. It just looks more functional.

One other thing they fixed is that the COM radio color codes match the GTN units. Green is active and White is standby versus the G3X, where White is active and blue is standby. Also, with the GTN-x50Xi units, if you load an ILS approach, it loads the LOC frequency into the NAV standby, and you have to remember to swap it to be the active frequency. The AXIS loads it as active. AXIS also allows you to modify the flight plan on the main screen or the GTN, if installed, where the G3X displays the flight plan, but entering and changing must be done on the GTN.

Also nice is the EMER button. This is a physical button that brings up a page in case of an emergency. You can tell the autopilot to Level or do a 180-degree turn or to engage Smart Glide from this screen. In one touch, you can also set COM1 to 121.5 or nearest tower. Also, there is one touch to set 7700.

This is not a comprehensive look at everything about AXIS, just general impressions. There are a number of Garmin videos on YouTube about AXIS. There is also an AXIS trainer available for iPad in the App Store.

Overall, I think Garmin has done a great job with the new system. Now, the big question is, What to do? Or more practically, what can one afford?

Option 1 – Just do nothing. The G3X Touch/GTN combo works well and does most everything else with just a few warts. I love my current panel.

Option 2 – Just replace the G3X displays with AXIS panels. This gives you a lot of the AXIS upgrades with the least cost, both hardware and installation costs. You would use the lowest price VFR AXIS panel(s). Installation should be 1 – 2 shop days. They only have to add 8 wires to support the HSDB. No panel mods are required. If you have an FS-510 or FS-210, they can go away as well as the GAD29 interface between the GTN and G3X.

Option 3 – Go all in and configure a new panel with AXIS and no GTN. Since the radio stack goes away, two 11.6" displays easily fit, and with a little time on the panel CADD program at my avionics shop, it looks like 2x 11.6" and 1x 8" will fit. In a Mooney, I would put the 8" at the far right to be a PFD for the person in the right seat. My non-pilot SO uses my current 7" to keep track of our flight, checking traffic, and keeping a watch on fuel. When I fly with a pilot in the right seat, they love having a PFB and MFD (Multi-Function Display) of their own.

So, what am I going to do? I don't know right now, but I will let you know when I figure it out. However, I am pretty sure I am going with Option 3. Smart Avionics had a Comanche done and set for delivery the next day when AXIS was announced. They are ripping out the G3X Touch setup for a full AXIS setup. And they are already booked out to summer with at least 6 AXIS installs. Yes, one of the shop slots has my tail number attached, even if it is just for Option 2.

Another teaser, one of the extra wires will be back to the battery for an upcoming enhancement. This will be an auto update of databases with Wi-Fi. So, similar to the GDL-60, the system will power up, connect via Wi-Fi and update the databases then go back to sleep. Unlike the GDL-60, it will not do so using cellular. So now I have to figure out the best (cheapest) way to put Wi-Fi in my hangar.

Anybody in the market for a couple of G3X touch screens and two GTN navigators?



Thunderbird Aircraft Sales

Specializing in pre-owned
Mooney Sales and Brokerage

Hello my fellow Mooniacs,

My name is Richard Simile, and I am the President of Thunderbird Aircraft Sales. Thunderbird Aircraft Sales Specializes in the Sale and Brokerage of late Model Mooney Aircraft. If you are considering the purchase of a newer Mooney, or thinking about selling your current Mooney, we hope you will consider using Thunderbird Aircraft Sales. Our objective is always to provide a very pleasant transactional experience for all parties involved and that is a formula that works well. We have three offices, Auburn, AL, Chandler AZ, and Pensacola FL. Please give Thunderbird Aircraft Sales a call **602-884-2111**, or email richard@thunderbirdaircraft.com. We look forward to being of service to you.

Thank you.

richard@thunderbirdaircraft.com or **602-884-2111**

<https://thunderbirdaircraft.com/>

334-332-2100 Auburn, AL Office | 602-884-2111 Chandler, AZ Office | 850-723-3644 Pensacola, FL Office

AIRCRAFT TRANSACTION TAXATION CONSIDERATIONS

by Richard Simile, Thunderbird Aircraft Sales

Every year, Thunderbird sees a surge in aircraft transactions as Buyers and Sellers work toward year-end closings for tax purposes. What many don't realize is that some of the most important tax planning decisions happen months before the aircraft changes hands. If you wait until November, (or worse, after closing), you may have fewer opportunities to structure your transaction in a way that supports a sales and or use tax benefit.

Three Things to Do Before Year-End:

1. Start the conversation early.

If you're considering a purchase this year, now is the time to discuss your plans with your tax advisor.

2. Build your documentation as the transaction unfolds.

Independent, third-party records created during the normal course of the purchase can be valuable if your exemption is ever reviewed.

3. Don't assume every transaction qualifies.

Each purchase is different. The right strategy depends on your intended use, timing, and supporting facts.

The final months of the year are often the busiest for Mooney Sales and Purchases. Starting Tax Planning now gives you more time to evaluate your options and avoid unnecessary surprises as closing approaches. If an aircraft purchase is on your calendar before the end of the year, you should consider discussing your transaction with your tax advisor before key decisions are made.

Please be advised that I AM NOT a tax advisor, but I did stay in a Holiday Inn Express last night:)





Mooney Maintenance



The Mooney Flyer
The Official Online Magazine for the Mooney Community
www.TheMooneyFlyer.com
March 2023

CLICK HERE

for the **FAA's Airworthiness Directives (ADs)** for all Mooneys.



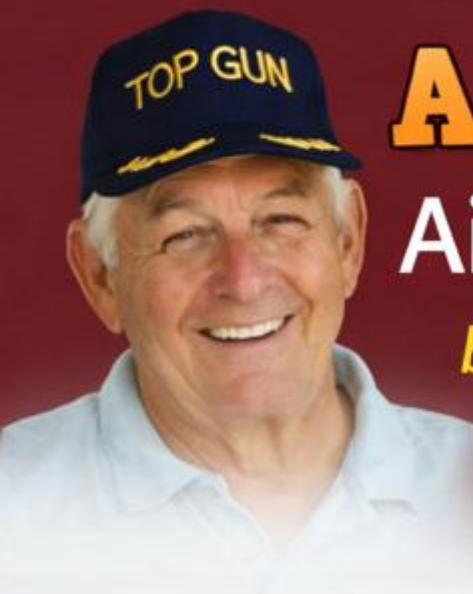
Click Here
to find **Mooney Parts and Maintenance Support**



Click Here to download
Mooney's 100 Hour Inspection Guide

A man is using a towbar to move a Mooney aircraft out of a hangar. The aircraft is white with red stripes. The background shows a hangar and a clear sky.

Tired of struggling to move your Mooney on the ground?
Our powered towbar is the solution.
<https://mooneymover.com>



Ask the Top Gun

Aircraft Maintenance Tips

by **Tom Rouch**

Founder of Top Gun Aviation, Stockton, CA



Send your questions for Tom to TheMooneyFlyer@gmail.com



How do you know if your Mooney is rigged properly?



Your plane should fly easily, straight and narrow, with little effort. If it wants to roll either direction, then the ailerons are out of rig. If it wants to turn, then the rudder needs attention. If it wants to climb or dive, then the elevator needs adjustment. First, on flying level, the Mooney is very different from most small

aircraft because the entire empennage is adjustable. Another rare fact is both the Lockheed Jetstar and the Mooney use a jackscrew assembly to move the empennage up and down. There are many planes, especially large jet aircraft, that use a jackscrew for just the horizontal empennage to move. One of which is my favorite plane, the B-52. The rudder is pretty much self-centering if it was installed correctly, and the same applies for the ailerons. In both cases, when these controls are installed, there are limits of movement that are adjusted. I want to point out that what is unusual for the Mooney, is that there are no trim tabs on any controls. Almost all small aircraft have adjustable trim tabs for small adjustments on these controls. You actually bend the trailing edge for a "minute" of trimming, which can only be determined by flying the plane. You only need to do this on one aileron, as by design, they operate as one unit. Since there are many Mooney models, you need to have Mooney experience and always refer to the manual for the model you are working on. Once adjusted properly, the Mooney usually holds those adjustments. There is continuous wear in the jackscrew, and it requires maintenance as it ages. Also, the flight controls have quite a few rod ends that wear constantly. All of these problems are usually found during an annual inspection and rarely cause a problem during normal operation. The Mooney is one of the most solid airframes built and that is why we are still working on 50 plus year old aircraft, which are just as good as my other

favorite aircraft, the B-52.



Top Gun Aviation



Specializing in Mooney and Cirrus

(209) 983-8082

For Service and Maintenance, ask for Mark or Tom

FAX: (209) 983-8084

6100 S. Lindbergh St., Stockton, CA 95206

or visit our website at www.topgunaviation.net



***Avionics Repair and Installation Services now available on site thru
J&R Electronics***



again for '60 Mooney sets the pace

... luxurious comfort... unmatched economy... over-riding? Never has an airplane dollar bought so much speed, safety and comfort as in the 1960 Mooney. Continuing its leadership in the high-performance and economy concepts of aircraft, Mooney's Mark 20A for '60 offers new advancements and greater opportunities for both business and pleasure use.

Trained with Mooney's unmatched economy is the luxurious comfort of quality-tailored interiors and all new seat units.

No airplane is easier to fly than the Mooney. Both beginners and experienced fliers call the Mark 20A "a pilot's dream airplane."

The Mooney standard of excellence for 1960 includes:

- Speeds up to 190 m.p.h. and dependable 100 h.p. Lycoming engine.
- Easy-maintenance retractable landing gear with new downlock system, including position lights.
- Noise-free cabin with added soundproofing, thicker windows and new noise-reducing exhaust system.
- Airline-type sanitation system.
- Retractable landing for easy entrance and exit.
- Wide tri-cycle landing gear for accurate control on the ground.
- New and improved braking system.
- Lowest full-coverage insurance rate.

- Fully checkmated instrument panel, designed for easy, accurate reading and utility.
- New and original Mooney maintenance warranty.

See and fly the 1960 Mooney at your dealer's... enjoy the feeling of quality and a sense of craftsmanship which are "state-of-the-art" engineered in every detail.



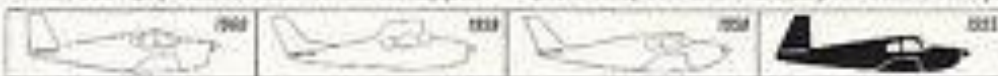
Plus, new interior featuring rich new fabrics and completely redesigned seats provide a new era of elegance for the Mooney. Personalized comfort is added in soft, cushioned seats, individually controlled with reclining seatback and adjustable headrests.

MOONEY AIRCRAFT, INC.

Kerrville, Texas

Since 1931 Mooney has manufactured its range of aircraft with executive strength with close aerodynamic design combining economy with high performance and retractable landing gear.

Its proven success has gained acceptance and millions of flight miles has proved these when leading aircraft manufacturers to follow along with models embracing the Mooney concept.



Mooney Flyer February 1960

47



ForeFlight Introduces ClearNOTAMs: Plain-English, AI-Powered NOTAMs

August 18, 2026, Sporty's iPad PILOT NEWS

If you have spent any time staring at screen full of ALL-CAPS, heavily abbreviated text trying to figure out if a runway is closed or if a crane is erected 2 miles off the departure end, you know the frustration. The traditional NOTAM format is an archaic leftover requiring pilots to spend far too much mental bandwidth deciphering information that should be instantly understandable.

Announced ahead of AirVenture 2026, ForeFlight is directly tackling this long-standing general aviation headache with ClearNOTAMs—a new feature leveraging AI to translate complex NOTAM coding into concise, plain-language summaries directly inside the app.

How ClearNOTAMs Works

Rather than replacing the official NOTAM text, ClearNOTAMs sits alongside it as a primary plain-English translation. ForeFlight trained specialized AI models on aviation terminology and built in automated cross-checks to ensure translations remain accurate without altering operational intent.

- Instant Translation: The default text shown across ForeFlight is rewritten in plain language focused on the actual operational impact.

- Tap for Raw Text: Tapping the summary instantly reveals the official, raw coded version so you can verify the details or check the authoritative source at any time.
- Deep Integration: ClearNOTAMs summaries appear everywhere you review NOTAMs—including Airport Info pages, Graphical NOTAM map layers, flight plan views, and the Graphical Preflight Briefing.

ClearNOTAMs in Action

- Let's take a look at ClearNOTAMs on a flight from Austin-Bergstrom (KAUS) to Dallas Love (KDAL) in our Cessna Skylane.
- Here's the ForeFlight Route Map showing AUS-DAL with Graphical NOTAMs layer active and the plain English NOTAM for UAS activity displayed.

The screenshot shows the ForeFlight app interface. At the top, there's a search bar and a 'Search' button. Below that, the flight plan is displayed with 'KAUS' and 'KDAL' as the origin and destination. The flight plan includes details like 'N253WP', '2400 RPM', 'Max MP', and '7,000''. The route is shown on a map with various NOTAMs overlaid. A specific NOTAM is highlighted on the right side of the screen.

NOTAM

Unmanned Aircraft Scheduled
May 3, 4:00 AM - Nov 6, 10:00 PM MST
Active, Surface - 400FT AGL
UAS operations in a defined area near DFW from SFC to 400FT AGL.

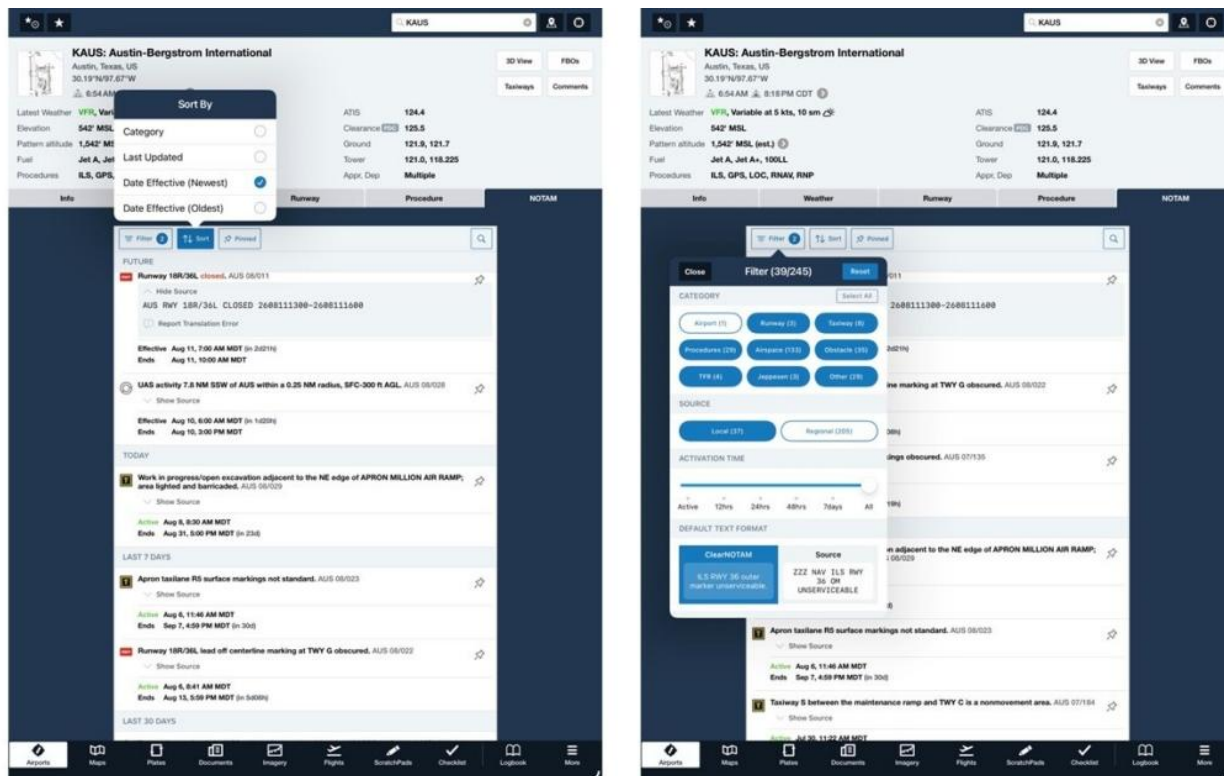
Hide Source

FUZ AIRSPACE UAS WI AN AREA DEFINED AS
325429.20N0970726.80W (4.4NM W DFW) TO
325348.90N0970840W (5.4NM W DFW) TO
325248.40N0970928.60W (6.2NM WSW DFW) TO
325134N0970937.50W (6.6NM WSW DFW) TO
325016.50N0970908.70W (6.8NM SW DFW) TO
324918.20N0970740.50W (6.4NM SW DFW) TO
324903N0970543.90W (5.6NM SSW DFW) TO
324950.30N0970403.50W (4.3NM SSW DFW) TO
325058.80N0970312.70W (3.0NM SSW DFW) TO
325200.30N0970359.10W (2.3NM SW DFW) TO
325359.70N0970459.70W (2.3NM W DFW) TO
325434.20N0970600.50W (3.2NM W DFW) TO POINT OF ORIGIN SFC-400FT AGL
DLY 1000-0500
2605031000-2611070500

Report Translation Error

NOTAM ID: 05/052 (KZFW)

Here's the side-by-side comparison of a raw NOTAM vs. the ClearNOTAMs summary at KAUS.



Major User Interface Upgrades to NOTAMs

Beyond the AI translations, ForeFlight upgraded the core NOTAM interface across all subscription tiers, making it significantly easier to manage long lists of notices:

- **Customizable Filtering:** Filter notices by category (Runway, Airport, Airspace, Obstacle), issuing authority, or active time window.
- **Sorting Options:** Sort by category, last updated time, or effective time (ascending or descending).
- **Pinning:** Pin essential NOTAMs to the top of your list with a single tap so high-priority items never get buried.
- **Collapsing:** Double-tap minor or irrelevant NOTAMs to collapse them down to a single line without hiding them completely.

Pricing & Availability

ClearNOTAMs has launched as a complimentary three-month trial for all individual ForeFlight subscribers on mobile and web.

Following the trial period, ClearNOTAMs will require a Premium individual subscription (or Business Performance / MFB Performance plans).

Aging GA Fleet Faces Parts Challenge

AVweb, Aug 27, 2027



A new Airworthy.com survey finds that GA maintenance professionals are facing rising parts costs, longer lead times and growing supply challenges.

Keeping older general aviation aircraft flying is becoming an increasingly difficult and expensive job as many professionals

expect aircraft parts availability to get worse.

A [new survey](#) from TBX found that 66% of maintenance professionals expect the general aviation parts supply situation to deteriorate in the near future. The 2026 General Aviation Parts Survey collected responses from mechanics, shop owners, directors of maintenance and other aviation maintenance professionals.

The challenge is closely tied to the age of the GA fleet. The average certified piston aircraft is now 53 years old, meaning many shops are maintaining airplanes designed decades before today's parts and supply-chain systems existed. As manufacturers discontinue products and suppliers consolidate or leave the market, finding replacement aircraft parts and the documentation needed to install them can become increasingly difficult.

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	Contact Mike Weir at (239) 572-3418, before coming to the restaurant, so they can have an accurate count. Events begin at 11:30
	Sep 11 – 13, Manchester, NH Oct 2 – 4, San Antonio, TX Jan 29 – 31, Lakeland, FL CLICK HERE to Register
	Learn More at https://www.mooney.org.au/
	Learn more at https://www.empoa.eu/index.php/en/
	
Other	



1959 Mooney 20A - Seeking Mooney Purist * \$17,000

Hangar stored for years, now ready for overhaul(s) and refurbish. * Airframe and engine 1439.1 TT. McAuley prop. O360 engine. Wood-wing.

* Would consider selling only the engine and prop. However, sentimentally prefer to find a Mooney Lover seeking a great project. * Telephone: 419 591 6477 for further information.

This Cowling was removed from a M20E and replaced with a M20J (201) cowling. The cowling is located at Fullerton Airport (KFUL) and is in excellent condition. Offers accepted.

Contact: Bernard Lee – leebern@msn.com (562-865-2547)

P/N 310309-501

P/N 310309-502

These fairings are new and priced @ \$280.00 each or \$525.00 for both. Priced elsewhere @ \$362.69 each.

Contact: Bernard Lee – leebern@msn.com (562-865-2547)

Bushing P/N 914007-003 - 2- Bushings in the original package @ \$35.00 each. Priced elsewhere @ \$45.00 each.

Bushing P/N 914007-005

1-Bushing in the original package @ \$59.00

1-Bushing loose @ \$50.00

Priced elsewhere @ \$69.00 each

Contact: Bernard Lee – leebern@msn.com (562-865-2547)

Access Covers P/N 3000-901 (2-available) - 1-without nuts attached.

Make offer. Contact: Bernard Lee – leebern@msn.com (562-865-2547)

For Sale: Part #75730 LYCOMING TUBE ASSEMBLY PROP GOV LINE: \$450.00

This Part #75730, when installed on Lycoming IP360-A3B6 provides clearance between the prop governor oil line and the Mooney M20J engine mount. This part is factory new and includes FAA Form 8130. The current online price for this part from Aircraft Spruce is \$767.00. Contact Robert Elliott at rce.elliott@gmail.com or 512-947-4037. (Prefer text messages vs. voice calls).



FOR SALE

NEW Slick Mag for Shower of Sparks. \$1,200

Rebuilt original starter for IO360A1A. About 30 hours since purchase from Spruce. **\$300**

Email Autotech@Flash.net

McCauley Propeller

McCauley 2-blade constant speed propeller. It was recently removed from service to be replaced with an upgraded prop.

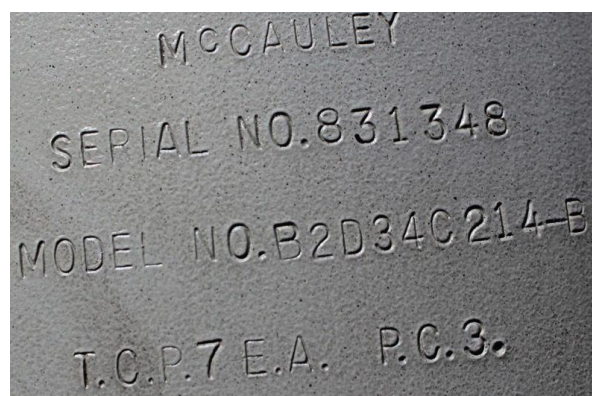
The propeller has no visible physical damage. It was functional and airworthy when removed. Logbook and other paperwork are available.

Total time: 3,533.6 Hours. Time since complete overhaul: 955.3 hours.

Serial number: 893134 Part number: B2D34C214-B

Price: \$3,750.00. Shipping in continental USA: \$50.

Damon Trimble, (707) 263-4599, damon@pacific.net



MOONEY RELATED ITEMS FOR SALE

Books / DVD's: Books like new – only read once, on shelf since.

Those Remarkable Mooneys (signed by author):

The Al Mooney Story – regular edition:

The Al Mooney Story - leather bound, new condition, signed by authors (only opened to confirm authors'[Al Mooney, Gordon Baxter] signatures / Copy #33):

Parts & Service Manuals – thru M20J (with 'notes of enhancements'):

Maintenance Course Manual thru M20J – by Jerry Manthey (including reprints of "Lycoming Flyer"):

The Complete Guide to Single Engine Mooneys – 1980:

Upon Silver Wings (I, II, III – w/DVD), about M20J round the world trips, all signed by author CarolAnn Garratt:

Mooney Landing Techniques DVD by Don Kaye:

MAPA Directory 1985-1986:

Interior Sun Screens for M20J: Seldom used, in original bag:

Magnetic Compass – windscreen center post mount, M20J &???. Like new.

Dwight Wilcox at dw_1@verizon.net

**FOR
SALE**

1966 MOONEY SUPER 21

- TT 6023 hours
- SMOH - 532 hours, LyCon of AZ
- STOH - 280 hours, Western Skyways
- Avionics: ADSB in/out Stratus ESGi
- KX155 Nav/com with glide slope
- TKM MX12 with VOR
- Texas II speed mod conversion
- Gap seals/wing tips/belly conv.
- Union Industries Elec. Ignition
- ECI engine monitor
- 2-blade Scimeter Prop
- PT/Interior - 7.5

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

(480) 802-8520 | tarundus@juno.com

FOR SALE - \$115,000

Mooney M20E 1964 SN 347

Contact Don Peterson at
autotech@flash.net

One owner since 1979
Factory Rebuilt IO360A1A
"Zero time", *NOT* overhauled
300 hrs on 2,200 hr TBO
Roller-tappet engine
6,850 Total hours AF
Surefly
Scimitar prop new 2007, no ADs
90-Gallon Fuel Tanks
PC wing leveler
New cabin cover

GTN650 GI275 GTX345 GMA340
MK12D w/GS, EDM730
WX500 Remote Stormscope
JPI Fuel Totalizer
Spare MK12D, VOR only
Plus tools, 4-person raft, manuals and
much more



Use QR code to access photos,
more details, and contact

1997 MOONEY BRAVO FOR SALE \$298,000

This 1997 Mooney Bravo offers a rare combination of performance, reliability, and modern avionics. With a low total time and an upgraded avionics suite, it's ready to meet the needs of both experienced pilots and first-time owners. Equipped with FIKI certification and precise speed brakes, this aircraft is ideal for cross-country and all-weather flying.



Contact Information:

- Email: aeroncadoc@comcast.net
- Phone: 425 780 9483

Key Features

Engine and Airframe Time:

- Total Time: 1860 Hours
- Engine Hours: 1100 Hours (Since New)

Avionics:

- Garmin GTN 750: Primary Navigation/Communication System
- Garmin 430: Secondary Communication System (Comm2)
- Garmin 500 GFC Autopilot: Advanced Flight Control
- Dual Garmin G5s: Attitude Indicator (AI) and Horizontal Situation Indicator (HSI)
- Garmin GTX 345: ADS-B In/Out with Bluetooth Connectivity
- JPI 730: Advanced Engine Monitoring System

Additional Equipment:

- FIKI Certified: (Flight Into Known Icing)
- Precise Flight Speed Brakes: For Enhanced Control
- LED Lights: Modern, Efficient Lighting
- Shadin Fuel Flow Monitor: Secondary Fuel Monitoring
- Built-In Oxygen System: For High-Altitude Flights

Recent Updates:

- New Paint: Completed in 2023—Immaculate Condition
- New Front Seats – Interior is in great condition

Aircraft Location:

- Based at KPAE (Paine Field)

Rusty Pilot or Old Pro

INSTRUMENT PROFICIENCY CHECK
Study Guide
J D Price, CFII, MEI, ATP

FLIGHT REVIEW
Study Guide
J D Price, CFII, MEI, ATP

Prepare **FREE** online

JDPriceCFI.com