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Aviation Human Factors Industry News

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Airline employee dies in accident at Mississippi Tunica Airport

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are looking into the death of a worker at the Tunica Airport.

Alan Simpson, a flight mechanic for California-based Sky King Incorporated, died in an accident at the airport on July 10.

According to a preliminary NTSB report, Simpson was attempting to close the main cabin door on a flight that was preparing to take off from Tunica when he lost his grip and fell ten feet to the ground.

Simpson suffered a skull fracture and broken ribs, and died the next day at The MED.

The NTSB report says it was very windy and raining in Tunica that afternoon, but does not say if weather was a factor in Simpson's fall

Closing the main cabin door was not part of Simpson's duties. According to a Sky King official, he was doing a favor for a flight attendant.

Sky King's president, Greg Lukenbill, called Simpson's death a tragic accident, saying, "he was a highly skilled flight mechanic who dedicated his work to the

safety of our aircraft. Al's large personality integrity and big smile will be greatly missed by everyone here at Sky King."

The Tunica County Airport Commission's executive director, Cliff Nash, said the airport's insurance company had advised him not to comment on the matter.

NTSB Hearing on Flight 5191

For loved ones, 'it is profoundly sad'

During a break in the National Transportation Safety Board hearing in Washington, Kevin Fahey reflected on his son's life. Thomas Fahey was one of the 49 people who died when Flight 5191 crashed next to Lexington's Blue Grass Airport 11 months ago. Photo by Chuck Kennedy | McClatchy-Tribune.

The grief came in spurts.

For Kevin Fahey, the pain worked its way through the silence of the near-empty National Transportation Safety Board meeting room and hit him hard.

He stood there for a moment during a brief break contemplating the eagle and shield crest at the front of the room. Then he stared at his empty hands, draped across the waist-high glass partition designed to separate the families of the victims of Comair Flight 5191 crash from the people who were there to confirm the accident's cause.

His son, Thomas Fahey, wasn't there, would never be there.

And it hurt like hell.

"It is profoundly sad. It is for everyone. We always underestimate the degree of difficulty of these kinds of things," he said, then cleared his throat. "If you'd have asked me at 5 o'clock yesterday morning, I would have said I don't need to be there to hear it. Now ... "

Long after the media frenzy has subsided, after the National Transportation Safety Board's findings of fault have been properly filed away, the Fahey family and all those who cared about the 49 people who died in a fiery crash last August will be left with their grief and their memories.

Both came flooding back as roughly 20 families listened to the safety board members and staff review the facts. For most of the day agency officials read from jargon-filled reports, using terms such as "sterile cockpit" and "Notices to Airmen," and showed photos of the intersecting runways where the crash occurred.

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Eyes glazed over, faces grew blank.

But every once in a while, sadness and even anger broke through that glass wall.

"It makes you want to speak out loud," Connie Fahey said during a break in the day's proceedings. She, like all of her family members, wore a pin with a black and white photo of Thomas on a horse. It read "Thomas Fahey, keep me in your heart for a while."

Thomas Fahey, a riding trainer, had traveled to Lexington to help a student pick out a horse. He had been on the Comair plane on his way home to Kansas.

Connie Fahey came to the meeting armed with photos of her son and a solid understanding of such matters as runway incursions, and the difference between an agency, such as the Federal Aviation Administration, issuing non-mandatory advisories versus actually creating rules.

"In our grief, we've turned to knowledge," she said.

She tries not to think about the pilots, tries not to place blame.

But it's hard -- for everyone.

Amy Clay, the widow of pilot Jeff Clay, sat nearly motionless in the audience, away from the other families. She listened carefully as time and again the safety board staffers placed most of the blame with her husband and his co-pilot, James Polehinke. Polehinke has no memory of the crash, of which he is the lone survivor.

It was a hard thing to hear, and Clay isn't sure she wants to talk about it.

In a phone interview, Polehinke's lawyer declined to comment on the NTSB's findings.

Connie Fahey's heart goes out to Amy Clay and Polehinke.

Still, she'd love a chance, just one chance, to ask the pilot and co-pilot some questions.

"I don't hold any anger or malice toward him," she said. "I understand that he has a serious brain injury. ... I'm a nurse and I understand that. ... But I'd still like to ask him if he remembers anything. Anything?"

In the meantime, for the next few days at least, Connie and Kevin Fahey plan on losing themselves among the stone and marble monuments that line Washington's core.

And as they walk, the couple will think about their youngest son -- a young man with curly blond hair and blue eyes who not only knew how to make horses jump when he rode, he could make them soar.

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NASA: Sabotaged Wires Won't Delay Space Shuttle Launch

Sabotaged wires inside a computer box bound for the International Space Station (ISS) won't delay the planned Aug. 7 launch of NASA's shuttle Endeavour, the agency said Thursday.

NASA's Inspector General Office has launched an investigation into intentionally cut wires in a data relay box slated to launch aboard Endeavour next month and be installed inside the space station's U.S.-built Destiny laboratory, NASA's associate administrator Bill Gerstenmaier told reporters Thursday.

"It will be repaired and it will fly on this flight," Gerstenmaier said of the damaged ISS hardware, which if flown as-is would have prevented the collection of structural performance data on the space station's backbone-like main truss. If left in place, the damage would have posed no risk to astronauts aboard the space station, he added.

The subcontractor responsible for building the damaged computer box reported the apparent wire sabotage about a week ago, said Gerstenmaier, though he would not disclose the name of the subcontractor while an investigation is underway. The damage found on the ISS box was apparently caused during its preparations at the subcontractor's premises, which are not located in Florida, he added.

Work put before Blackhawk safety – inquiry

Senior army flying officers are putting mission accomplishment ahead of safety, an inquiry into a Black Hawk helicopter crash has been told.
A military board is examining the crash on deck of the HMAS *Kanimbla* in waters off Fiji in November last year.

The pilot captain Mark Bingley and Special Air Service Trooper Joshua Porter lost their lives in the accident.

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The commanding officer of 171 Aviation Squadron, to which the Black Hawk crew was attached, today conceded there was no formalized mechanism for reporting minor incidents of rotor droop.

Rotor droop, where the main rotor loses power, has been identified as one of the possible causes of last year's crash.

Lieutenant Colonel 1 said rotor droop was so common it would be difficult to find a Black Hawk pilot who hadn't experienced it more than once.

Since December 2005 Colonel 1 said there had been no major flight incidents reported for 171 Squadron.

Council assisting the inquiry Commander Jack Rush QC said the board would next week hear expert evidence that the lack of reported incidents was evidence of a culture that put mission before safety.

"It is (the expert's) opinion that the hazard awareness threshold shift does happen, especially when mission accomplishment becomes unit focus," Commander Rush said.

"I would agree that the unit is mission focus," Lieutenant 1 replied.

"But ... it's consideration of safety maintains primary."

The hearing is continuing.

NTSB: NASCAR plane that crashed and killed 5 had broken control cables

ORLANDO, Fla. - A twin-engine NASCAR plane had broken control cables and its crew reported smoke in the cockpit before crashing into a suburban neighborhood and killing five people.

However, it was unknown whether the cables broke in flight or after impact, and the cause of the July 10 crash in Sanford remained unclear, according to a preliminary report from the National Transportation Safety Board released Tuesday.

Numerous separations in the cables in the right wing and forward fuselage of the Cessna 310 showed signs of tension overload, according to the report.

Air traffic controllers gave the plane clearance to land on any runway after it reported smoke in the cockpit, according to the report. The crew's last radio transmission about a half-minute later was cut off mid-sentence.

The plane's landing gear and flaps were not deployed, suggesting the pilot was not prepared to land, federal officials have said.

Witnesses reported seeing smoke trailing from the plane as it sped low over the neighborhood, according to the NTSB report. They also saw its wings "rocking" before it sharply banked and crashed into two homes.

It was still not known who was piloting the plane: Dr. Bruce Kennedy, the husband of a prominent NASCAR official, or Michael Klemm, a NASCAR pilot.
NASCAR has said Kennedy was at the controls. Both men died when the plane crashed into two houses in Sanford.

Blast at desert spaceport kills 2, injures 4

Explosion happened during a test of a new rocket motor for a spaceship

LOS ANGELES, California -- An explosion at an airport home to Scaled Composites -- the builder of the first private manned rocket to reach space -- killed two people and left four seriously hurt last Thursday, a Kern County Fire Department official says.

A bird's eye view of the scene in in Mojave, California, shows charred wreckage and large pieces of debris.

It happened at the Mojave Air and Space Port during a test of a new rocket motor for SpaceShipTwo -- a spaceship being built for Virgin Galactic, Richard Branson's space tourism company, a source said. The motor uses nitrous oxide, the source said.

A spokeswoman for the spaceport, about 80 miles north of Los Angeles, said the blast was on a remote pad.

Aerial video of the blast aftermath showed a charred and twisted flatbed trailer attached to a truck cab with a large silver tank next to it. Large pieces of debris appeared to be strewn for hundreds of yards from the center.

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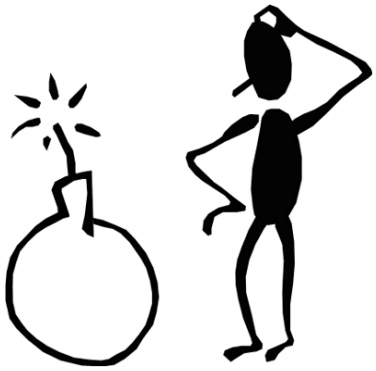
About 200 yards away was a bunker with a truck owned by Scaled Composites, the aerospace development company founded 25 years ago by Burt Rutan, the aerospace engineer who designed the first plane to fly nonstop around the world without refueling.

Jury awards $54 million to 2 injured in plane crash

DAYTONA BEACH -- It was eight years ago this week a student pilot and his instructor took off from the Ormond Beach Municipal Airport in darkness, then trouble struck beyond their control.



As the plane climbed July 24, 1999, the carburetor failed because of a mechanical defect, and the four-cylinder engine in the Cessna 150L died. Mark Godfrey, a 23-year-old learning to fly, and instructor Nicholas Grace fell to earth. Both men suffered debilitating head, face and brain injuries when the plane slammed into a tree.

"The engine quit cold, forcing them to make an emergency landing," said Arthur Alan Wolk, a Philadelphia attorney who represented Grace and Godfrey. "Horrible injuries were suffered . . . brain injuries resulting in depression, anxiety, inability to remember, inability to concentrate."

On Thursday, a jury found the manufacturers of the plane's engine, Teledyne, and carburetor, Precision Airmotive, should pay the men a combined $54.5 million, making the verdict the second highest in Volusia County history. The carburetor maker knew of problems with its screws and needle valves, attorneys for the men said.

The jury considered evidence showing similar problems with the Precision Airmotive carburetor had been reported for 40 years, said Terence R. Perkins, a Daytona Beach lawyer who worked on the case for the plaintiffs.

"Nonetheless, they didn't take the right steps," he said of the companies. The companies never warned the Federal Aviation Administration or pilots that carburetor failures were causing planes to crash, according to court records.

Attorneys for one manufacturer pointed to Ormond Beach Aviation, saying the company didn't change the plane's oil enough, Wolk said. But no damage to the engine was found relating to oil.

The plaintiffs determined two screws holding the carburetor together came loose, causing it to fail and the plane to crash.

"The Precision and Teledyne defendants were also aware of numerous conditions . . .," the lawsuit complaint said, "that resulted in carburetor failure, and resultant engine malfunction."

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At the end of a weeklong trial, the jury found that Washington state-based Precision Airmotive was 70 percent responsible for the $53 million it awarded in compensatory damages for the men's losses. Such damages include payment for lost wages and medical expenses.

The jury also awarded $1.5 million in punitive damages against the company.

"They found that Precision Airmotive was so wanton and devoid of care that they should be liable for punitive damages," Wolk said. "It was a very significant verdict."

Teledyne was found to be liable for 30 percent of the compensatory damages. Ormond Beach Aviation, Grace's employer at the time, was found not responsible for the accident.

Grace, now a postal worker from Palm Coast, was working as an instructor when the crash happened, on his 33rd birthday. Now 41, he declined to comment Thursday.

"It's been a hard eight years," his wife said.

Godfrey is from Leicester, England. His injuries included fractured bones in his face.

Wolk said the jury's verdict on punitive damages sends a message to aircraft component manufacturers to fix problems they know are likely to cause serious injury or death. "This isn't a car," he said. "It's an airplane. If you don't fix an airplane, somebody is going to get killed."

The compensatory damages were "recognition of how horribly these young men were injured."

Thursday's verdict is the second highest in the county; the largest jury award here was granted in a sex-abuse case.

Bird Strike Costs Brazilian Pilot His Eye

Animal Breaks Through Windshield

A 22 year-old pilot has lost an eye to a bird strike. Carlos Willian Pereira Fraga was flying an unknown-type twin engine aircraft for an air ambulance company, and had just dropped off a patient in Campo de Marte in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and was headed to Jau, also in the state of Sao Paulo, with a doctor and a nurse on board.

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The aircraft struck a large flock of ravens Sunday while over Jundiai, about 38 miles from Sao Paulo, according to Deutsche Presse-Agentur. One of the birds broke through the windshield and hit Fraga in the face, knocking him unconscious. The aircraft was reportedly on autopilot.

After several seconds, Fraga regained consciousness and was able to land safely at Jundiai airport. He was transported to a local hospital where doctors said two separate surgeries were performed but they were unable to save the pilot's left eye. The medical crew was not injured.

N.Y. glue maker denies role in tunnel collapse

Suddenly in the glare of public scrutiny, an obscure New York supplier of industrial glues, Powers Fasteners Inc., yesterday vigorously denied federal investigators' assertions that the firm squandered the best opportunity to fix the epoxy error behind last year's fatal Big Dig ceiling collapse.

Powers officials knew or should have known that the bolts supporting the massive concrete ceiling panels might have been secured with the wrong glue, a Powers-brand epoxy that weakens over time, according to the National Transportation Safety Board, because it had supplied this type to the Big Dig. But Powers failed to alert Big Dig officials about this possibilty when bolts holding up the ceiling of the Interstate 90 connector tunnel began slipping during construction, a top federal investigator said in an interview yesterday.

As a result, the glue failed, the panels fell, and a Jamaica Plain woman, Milena Del Valle, perished. It remains unclear who used the wrong glue in the first place. But safety board officials said there was ample opportunity to detect that error.

"Why didn't Powers ask, 'What kind of glue is being used here?' " Bruce Magladry , the agency's lead investigator, said in an interview yesterday. "It was such a simple thing to ask. And Powers never asked it."

The NTSB summary report, released Tuesday in Washington, faulted Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff, the consultant hired to manage the $15 billion project, and Modern Continental Co., the builder of the ceiling, for not monitoring the slipped bolts after first identifying the problem in 1999.

Compounding federal investigators' frustration, Powers officials declined to cooperate with investigators during the yearlong probe, and one employee refused to answer questions in a deposition, invoking his Fifth Amendment right

against self-incrimination, according to documents released by the federal agency.

Powers -- a privately-held, 200-employee firm with estimated revenues of $40 million -- has emerged as a major target of the investigations stemming from the tunnel tragedy, joining the more familiar names of Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff; Modern Continental; and Gannett Fleming, the connector ceiling designer.

"Powers was in the best position to ask the right questions when problems first became apparent in 1999," Magladry said.

In October 1999, some epoxy-secured ceiling bolts in the connector tunnel began to "creep," or slip out of the concrete roof. The construction and design firms convened seeking the cause. Powers joined in, aware at least at the corporate level that it had shipped Big Dig workers two types of epoxy: quick drying fast-set epoxy, which weakened with time, and standard-set, which did not.

Powers representatives said yesterday that the firm never considered the possibility that the wrong epoxy had been used, for two reasons. First, the Powers representatives sent to Boston from corporate headquarters in Brewster, N.Y., in 1999 agreed with assessments by Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff and Modern Continental that the ceiling bolt slippage had been caused by installation problems.

And second, they say, Powers shipped the standard-set epoxy earmarked specifically for use in the ceiling, leaving its representatives with no reason to believe the kind of degradation that occurs in fast-set epoxy was the cause.

"The suggestion from the NTSB is that Powers just sent out fast-set epoxy willy-nilly, and that just isn't so," said Karen Schwartzman, a consultant hired as Powers's spokeswoman.

She said documents show that Powers sent about 1,000 tubes of fast-set epoxy to Modern Continental, then another 120 tubes of standard-set. The dates on the records suggest that the standard-set was intended for the ceiling, as opposed to the walls, where the fast-set epoxy could have been used safely. The standard-set was shipped Aug. 3, 1999, shortly after ceiling construction began.

"Powers was operating under the assumption standard-set was used," said Schwartzman. "There was no reason to question that. Everything pointed to installation problems."

But the NTSB disagrees. Magladry does not dispute that Powers sent standard-set epoxy. Though there is no documentation that it was intended specifically for the ceiling, Magladry said the NTSB accepts Powers's assertion on that point. The trouble, he said, is that Powers officials at the time failed to even raise the obvious possibility that a mix-up might have occurred.

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Magladry said the NTSB still has not figured out how the fast-set came to be used in the ceiling. He said it was possible a construction worker simply picked up the fast-set, already on site for use in the walls, when beginning the ceiling work. He said there was no reason for workers or their Modern Continental supervisors to be aware of any difference between the two types of epoxy.

Powers, however, was intimately familiar with the differences in their two products: In 1995 it conducted tests that revealed the fast-set epoxy lacked long-term strength necessary for use in the ceiling, Magladry noted.

"It's possible Powers sent the wrong representatives to Boston because those representatives were not aware of creep," he said, referring to the October 1999 meeting

OFF MY BUS

Transit officials are defending a German bus driver who threatened to throw a female passenger from his bus for being "too sexy." The woman identified only as Debora C., says the driver said nothing when she boarded the bus in a dress with a plunging neckline, but shortly afterward hit the brakes, opened the door, and angrily demanded that she either change seats or get off. Seeing her cleavage in this mirror, the driver said, was distracting him. The bus driver "did the right thing" said the bus company spokesman. Any distraction is 'a danger to the safety of all the passangers."

The Right And Responsibility To Work Safely

You have a right and a responsibility to have any conditions hazardous to yourself or to others corrected. This includes any defects or malfunctions that could make equipment unsafe to use. Unguarded machinery, wiring problems, hydraulic leaks and other equipment defects have killed many workers - often when someone knew about the problem but failed to report or correct it.

That's one of the reasons you need to carry out pre-operation and post-operation checks of equipment you use. For complex equipment or hazardous work, use checklists.

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You must ensure any equipment you use is ready to operate safely. Whether it's a computer with a touchy power cord, a hand saw missing the guard over the blade or a pit mine haul truck with bad brakes - insist on repairs or replacement before you use it. These are some other ways to carry out your safety responsibilities:

Wear the personal protective equipment prescribed for your job. Use and maintain it correctly. Get the instruction you need to choose the right safety boot or hardhat, how to inspect your fall arrest gear and how to clean your respirator.

When you don't understand something, ask. If you do not understand why a chemical is hazardous, or you don't know the meaning of some of the words on the material safety data sheet, ask for explanations. Chances are you are not the only person confused and you will help your fellow workers by posing these questions.

When you see something unsafe, do something about it. Alert your fellow workers to danger. Report the problem to your supervisor. Keep after the issue until it is resolved and the situation is made safe. For example, if you observe someone working aloft without the required guardrail for fall protection, point out the hazard to the worker. Tell someone in charge and continue to deliver reminders until the guardrail is in place and all fall protection measures have been taken.

Report all injuries and close call incidents. You need first aid for even minor injuries and your company needs a record of all injuries. By reporting close calls, you can help prevent an injury incident from occurring later.

Go the extra distance for safety by volunteering for an appointment to your company's joint health and safety committee. This worker-management committee provides leadership in eliminating unsafe conditions and practices and making the work environment safer.

Continually upgrade your safety training. Take advantage of company programs and resources, as well as the advice of experienced and knowledgeable workers. Printed publications and Internet sources can keep you on top of current safety issues and developments.

Stay alert. Focus on your work while remaining aware of your surroundings. Know what your fellow workers are doing.

Your observations count. Never simply rely on your boss or the safety officer to determine if your job is safe. Use your own eyes, ears and mind. Promptly report any unusual noises, conditions or actions of equipment. Doing so could prevent a fatal incident.

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FAA warns of Embraer jet transponder issue

The FAA issued a Safety Alert for Operators calling attention to the possibility that a pilot of an Embraer Legacy, EMB-135 or -145 might inadvertently change VHF radio frequencies or place the ATC transponder into standby mode during flight. During an investigation the FAA discovered that crewmembers who had the simple habit of placing their shoe on the footrest just below the instrument panel could inadvertently put the ATC transponder into standby mode, or change radio frequencies without the crew's awareness. Further, they found that pilots might not notice the corresponding indication on the Pilot Flight Display due to the white colored letters, which are not as noticeable as differently colored caution or warning indications. (FAA) SAFO 07005

Poorest performers can improve

Recent history shows that states which, like Indonesia, have had a consistently bad safety record compared with the world average can turn their safety around radically in a short time, providing their government is prepared to commit the necessary resources to safety oversight. This includes ensuring the national aviation authority is autonomous and has statutory powers to suspend airlines' air operators' certificates.

Nigeria has just completed such a change, but it will take a while for the results of it to show. The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, meanwhile, says it has suspended or cancelled more than 20 operators' certificates, signalling that the whole way of operating in Nigeria has to improve.

Taiwan, which had a very poor accident record during the 1990s with more than 10 fatal accidents - many to small domestic operators but five involving flag-carrier China Airlines - has worked with ICAO and the Flight Safety Foundation.

The last Taiwan passenger fatal accident, in 2002, involved the high-altitude, fatigue-related structural failure of a 747-200 that was just about to be retired. The last turboprop fatal crash took place in December of the same year. The latter involved a Transasia Airlines ATR-72 freighter that went out of control in icing conditions.

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The four years since 2002 may not seem a long time, but it is the longest recorded period without fatal accidents Taiwan has seen.
Korean Air - and other South Korean carriers - had a similar experience to that of Taiwan during the 1990s and also sought remedies with international help. The last fatal accident to a Korean Air aircraft took place in 1999, when a 747-200 freighter suffered artificial horizon failure on the captain's side during a night climbing turn after take-off, and the aircraft followed a descending turn to impact.

Being Alert Will Save Your Life

If you're not alert on the derrick, the rig floor or anywhere else in the oil and gas industry, consider yourself an accident waiting to happen.

While sleeping on the job can get you fired or even killed, studies show that taking short breaks or naps is effective for employees who need to maintain a high degree of alertness.

If you operate heavy equipment or drive a company vehicle, pay close attention to the first sign of sleepiness. Ignoring your yawns and forcing your tired eyes to stay open is putting you and co-workers at risk.

Stop work as soon as possible if you feel drowsy, and ask your supervisor if you can have a break.

Factors controlling alertness:

- **Interest or sense of danger: Nothing pulls us faster from a drowsy state than surviving a near miss. A stimulating job also boosts alertness.**
- **Muscular activity: Walking or stretching triggers the nervous system and helps keep you alert.**
- **The circadian clock: Because of circadian rhythms, we generally experience peak levels of alertness in the morning and early evening. Times of low alertness include the overnight hours and early afternoon.**
- **Sleep debt: When you are sleep-deprived for several days, you build up a "sleep debt" that leads to reduced alertness. A long spell of adequate sleep acts as a "deposit" that lessens your debt.**
- **Ingested nutrients and chemicals: Certain foods and substances - caffeine, nicotine and amphetamines - temporarily increase alertness. Others, such as turkey, warm milk and bananas, induce sleep.**
- **Environmental light: Bright light tends to increase alertness, while dim light leads to drowsiness.**
- **Temperature: Cool, dry air helps keep you alert, while heat and humidity make you drowsy.**

- **Sound: The sound of rolling waves on the beach or the hum of white noise from machines can lull you to sleep. Irregular or variable sounds, such as a radio, conversation or a honking horn, stimulate alertness.**
- **Aroma: Studies have found the smell of peppermint makes people more alert. Lavender, meanwhile, has a sedative effect.**

Try these tips to stay alert on the job:

- **Work with a buddy.**
- **Take short breaks.**
- **Take a walk or climb stairs.**
- **Eat healthy snacks and regular meals daily.**
- **Perform the most boring tasks at the start of your shift.**

Staying alert on the job is not only for your own safety, but the safety of others. If you don't owe it to yourself, you owe it to your co-workers.

Midnight Shift Nugget

Central Sleep Apnea and Heart Failure: A Deadly Combination

Numerous studies reveal that people with heart failure and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) face an increased likelihood of early death compared to heart failure patients without OSA. Now a new study finds that heart failure patients who also have central sleep apnea (CSA) face a similar risk and may live only half as long as heart failure patients who do not have CSA.

The study followed 88 heart failure patients, 56 of whom had CSA and 32 of whom did not, for 51 months. The researchers found that median survival of patients with CSA was 45 months compared with 90 months for those without CSA. The authors note that future research should focus on whether treating CSA - either with nocturnal supplemental oxygen or continuous positive airway pressure - would improve survival in heart failure patients. To learn more on sleep apnea consult this website:
http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.huIXKjM0IxF/b.2464479/apps/nl/content3.asp?content_id={8075528C-88C1-4A26-A944-CA88EB298E2B}&notoc=1

Human Interest Story

Kennedy Man Remembers Final Flight Of Liberty Belle

KENNEDY — Anyone interested in flying on a World War II-era B-17 flying fortress can visit Prior Aviation in Cheektowaga for a trip back in time.

While the restored plane was named the Liberty Belle in honor of the tail gunner on the original bomber, a Kennedy man remembers the Liberty Belle's final flight.

Leland Story was on that flight, part of the last crew to fly the plane during active duty before it was shot down on the return leg of Story's final mission.

A Trip Back In Time

The crew of the Liberty Belle before the plane was shot down over the Zuider Zee on Feb. 21, 1944. Staff Sgt. Leland Story, upper left, and the radio gunner, Staff Sgt. Jack Harris, third from right in the back row, bailed out together, as did the co-pilot, Lt. Dick Carey, front row left, and Lt. James Walters, the navigator, front row right. The others went down with the plane.

''I bailed out of that thing at 30,000 feet,'' Story said. ''I survived three B-17 smackups over there. Three is enough.''

After bailing out of the bomber, Story was a prisoner of war, spending 15 months in German captivity. He was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries sustained on active duty.

Two bombers named the Liberty Belle flew combat missions during World War II. Story said he didn't know there was a third Liberty Belle until he picked up his morning newspaper. His plane, shot down over Holland in 1944, is still submerged in the North Sea.

Story likely won't make the trip to Cheektowaga this weekend to see the restored Liberty Belle, even though he's always been interested in aviation.

''I'm not (surprised at the interest in World War II planes),'' Story said. ''There's such a huge amount of them. I've always been interested in aircraft. I just don't want to fly in them anymore.''

In the time since, Story has been asked to read his memories of that final Liberty Belle mission into the official record at the Library of Congress. While his thoughts on the flight fill several pages — as well as a full page story in a July 19, 1998, story in The Post-Journal — Story isn't sure if it will become part of the official record.

"It brings back too many memories I find hard to put up with," he said.

RV Safety Tips

If your camping trip plans involve driving a new RV with which you're not entirely familiar, here are a few safety precautions to take. Of course, you can and should follow the same advice before hitting the open road in a new RV even if the final destination of your road trip is not camp grounds:

Their safety features are no substitute for safe driving

• Check the RV's height and post it on the dash. Remember to watch for low overpasses and service station canopies.

• Practice stopping. Find a low-traffic area and start with low speeds, working up.

• Use a quiet country road to practice pulling safely out of a rut.

• RVs have larger blind spots than smaller vehicles do; so learn to use the mirrors and signals properly.

• When loading the RV, place heavy items as close to the ground as possible, distribute them evenly on both sides and secure them. Don't overload.

• Think ahead. Allow time to make changes slowly and brake gradually.

• Turn wider at intersections and take curves at slower speeds to prevent swaying.

• Drive slower against strong winds or pull over.

• Try to avoid city roads during rush hour traffic.

• Take a stretch break every two hours and walk around to check tire inflation.

One final piece of advice to keep in mind: Don't believe everything you hear about RVs in the commercials. RVs are not indestructible. The protections and safety features they include are not a substitute for safe driving practices.

Picture This!

No, this isn't what they mean when they tell ladder users to have someone supporting the ladder. It almost makes you want to see what that person in the short shorts would do if the daredevil at the stop began a nose dive to the roof below.

And this isn't even mentioning their orange booster seat and the manifold hazards that presents.

As always, you can't solve the problem of a ladder that is too short by doing something dumb.

END