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TBM

OWNERS & PILOTS MAGAZINE

SPRING 2013

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Decisions



The world of aviation is full of decisions. We make both good and hopefully not too many bad decisions. The first good decision I made 30 years ago was to pursue getting my ticket. That is when real aviation decisions started for me. I quickly determined that flying without an instrument rating was asking for trouble. The temptation to push from VFR to MVFR to IFR was always there. How many pilots have each of us known that made the wrong decision regarding training, piloting skills, ratings and proficiency all under the umbrella of "get-there-it is"? John F. Kennedy Jr. may have been one of the more famous pilots guilty of this.

I made a few great aviation decisions. I bought serial number 9, my first TBM700 in 1994, and then a few years ago I made another brilliant decision. I bought a new TBM850 Legacy, serial number 423. I hope to make another great decision and move up to a new 850 glass in the near future. These decisions have caused me to make others that helped form a daisy chain of decisions that all relate to safe flying.

With my 4,000 hours or so of TBM time, I started becoming a bit lazy and prone to habits that could lead to less-than-stellar flying techniques. Perhaps some of us have fallen into this trap. I knew my preflight checklist by heart (or so I thought) and since I am usually in a hurry when I get to the airport, the memory game really helped speed things up. Over time, my walk around and preflight, startup and taxi took less and less time, and I was doing a poorer and poorer job. Bad decision.

I just completed my annual recurrent training, and the focus was on all those preflight checklists that I knew by heart (but not really). By refocusing on each and every step in the preflight process, I started learning all over again. I made a really good decision to take my time and perform by-the-book preflights and startups. This good decision has given me a renewed sense of confidence in my skills and what our TBMs are capable of doing as flying machines.

I was embarrassed and rather flabbergasted at what I had forgotten over the years and the bad habits I had fallen into. I asked my instructor and was informed that a reasonably high percentage of TBM pilots fly and think the way I did. However, he also said many pilots fly superbly, know the procedures and checklists thoroughly and, if they were lucky, at the end of the recurrent training would get one or two nuggets of information from three days of training that would improve their skills as pilots. I have decided to be one of those pilots. You too should strive to be.

My cockpit is now a sterile environment except for my POH, checklists and my trusty iPad. Is yours the same? Have you ever been at an airport when a pilot leaves his plane carrying armloads of newspapers or magazines? I have, but I decided that wouldn't be me. Good decisions are what keep us flying safely.

The board of TBMOPA, its volunteers, the dealers, Daher-Socata, the insurance companies, the trainers, and our families all need us to make good decisions with a narrow focus, as we fly, and a broader focus toward aviation. Visit our website to see information on a multitude of TBM issues, some technical and some just entertaining and informative. Please join in and give us some of your knowledge and experience.

Safe flying involves work, focus, repetition and training. Do you really know the PIC, POH, emergency checklists, systems, all the key numbers front to back, top to bottom, inside out? I was in a business meeting recently, a bit bored and my mind starting wandering. Someone asked the size of a particular space. (I am a real estate developer.) The answer was 7,432 square feet, and I said to myself, why would that guy want to know the maximum ramp weight of my plane? I think I may be getting somewhere.

If you've got something to say about a good or bad decision, a great experience, a particular expertise, a special technique, a great trip or anything other TBM drivers might like to know, then post it, email it, blog it, write it or call it in, but contribute it to the members and help make TBMOPA as relevant as possible.

Safe flying — and I hope to see many of you at Sun 'n' Fun April 9-14 in Lakeland, Fla., or at Oshkosh July 29-Aug. 4. By the way, Daher-Socata is planning lots of new things to make our experience at Oshkosh better than ever this year.

Larry Glazer
TBMOPA Chairman

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