

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

On May 5, 2015 at approximately 0900 EDT this inspector met with Mr. Allen Staff at the Finger Lakes Regional Airport (0G7) in Seneca Falls, New York. Mr. Staff is the Airport Manager at Finger Lakes Regional Airport as well as an Airframe & Powerplant Mechanic with Inspection Authorization working for Finger Lakes Flying Service.

This inspector asked Mr. Staff to detail his history with aircraft N3969L, a Cessna Aircraft model 172G, that was involved in a fatal accident on Sunday, May 3, 2015. Mr. Staff stated that he maintained the aircraft for the previous owner and continued maintaining it for Mr. Seely performing annual inspections and unscheduled maintenance.

Mr. Staff's first encounter with the aircraft was in December of 2010 while ferrying the aircraft from Canandaigua Airport (D38) to Finger Lakes regional Airport (0G7) for an annual inspection. During the flight, the engine quit and he had to make an unpowered landing at 0G7. Mr. Staff contributed the engine quitting to water in the fuel.

Mr. Staff completed the last annual inspection on August 17, 2014, and last flew the aircraft shortly after Mr. Seely purchased it in May of 2014. That flight consisted of Mr. Staff flying from the left front seat as pilot-in-command and Mr. Seely seated in the right front seat. They departed from 0G7 and flew to Penn Yan Airport (PEO) where they landed and picked up Mr. Seely's wife for a local flight.

The day of the accident, Mr. Staff stated that Mr. Seely showed up at 0G7 for a social visit flying N3969L. Mr. Staff asked Mr. Seely if he was still finding water in the fuel, which seemed to be a constant issue. Both men decided to drain the fuel strainer to make sure it was clear of any water. They drained approximately 1 quart of fuel before it was clear of water.

During the time that Mr. Seely was there, Mr. Staff stated that a man named Nate showed up. Mr. Staff said Nate was a friend of Mr. Seely's. Nate told Mr. Staff he was concerned that there was something wrong with the aircraft because it would jolt and hop to the right on landing. Mr. Staff stated that Mr. Seely had never mentioned that to him. At Mr. Seely's request, Mr. Staff pulled the right main wheel and tire off, inspected the brakes, re-lubricated the wheel bearings and re-installed the wheel and tire. Mr. Staff stated that he found nothing wrong.

Mr. Staff stated that Mr. Seely departed 0G7 at approximately 1100, planning to go back to PEO. At approximately 1230, Mr. Staff stated that Mr. Seely's flight instructor, Matt Stevens, called him to tell him that the aircraft had crashed.

During this inspector's conversation, Mr. Staff stated that he felt N3969L was a great flying aircraft and never experienced the jolting or hopping that Nate described.

That was the end of the conversation.

William J. Abbott, ASI
Rochester FSDO
[REDACTED]