

# On-the-Step

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Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Gatherings and Good Times

It has been wonderful to see events being held and planned which offer opportunities for seaplane pilots to meet, fly to exotic destinations, discuss all sorts of issues of interest to seaplane flyers, and generally have a great social interaction.

In this issue you will read about travels to the beautiful Great Barrier Reef by a group of intrepid pilots to help celebrate Air Whitsunday's 40th birthday. It can't have been easy!!

We are also very excited to announce the Inaugural SPAA "Splash-Down" Conference which will be held in the lead-up to the Rathmines Catalina Festival. Set the 7th and 8th of November aside and go to the SPAA website to register. Important topics that will be addressed will include seaplane operations safety, national parks and waterways access, aircraft maintenance, as well as hearing from one of Australia's most skilled and exciting pilots.

Then stay on for the Rathmines Catalina festival with all its flying and static displays the following day.

If you register before 30th June, you can save yourself \$50.

- \$ -

For those of us that get to fly the many waterways on the south and central east coast there is one set of wind conditions that are the most unpleasant. That is the stiff South Westerly. Fly up Sydney harbour and over the bridge at 500 feet and you get tossed around by all the turbulence coming off Sydney's skyscrapers just to your south. Then fly up or down the coast and you get all the turbulence coming off the cliffs and hilly coastline. If you are going North you can then get bounced around by the offshore wind as you fly at 500 ft for 60 km through the Williamstown control zone.

When the frustration of being land bound got too much and I managed to escape for a fly up to my favorite lake on the mid-north coast, I was presented with a 25-30 kn SW wind. It was a quick but bumpy trip up, but when I arrived at my lake the powers entrusted with maintaining the health of the lake had opened it to the ocean and the tide was out. After a



touchdown on a choppy windswept lake that I would have been proud to have done in front of my peers, I attempted to taxi up onto the shore at my usual spot only to end up with one wheel completely buried in mud just a few metres short of firm ground. A bit of figuring, a bit of maneuvering, a lot of plodding through the mud, a rushed refueling while the beached plane bobbed and swung in the wind, and it was time to launch back into the air. The pre-takeoff checks included raising and lowering the undercarriage several times while plow-taxiing to remove most of the mud. Then the slow flight home with ground speed frequently dropping below 50kt and a surprisingly good 12kn crosswind landing.

It mightn't have been the best conditions, but looking back on it, it was still a fabulous day. We seaplane pilots are a lucky mob!

- \$ -

*Fly Safe & Wheels Up for Water*



**Hey - Let's fly under the bridge.  
No one will notice.**

## **Immunity from the seaplane pilot's whim**

**By Dale DeRemer**

Whim: "I don't need to do a weight and balance. This airplane has flown loads like this before...let's just go, it's getting late"

Whim: "I don't need to pick up that piece of FOD on the ramp, it's not my responsibility"

### **a WHIM:**

**A passing impulse, sudden thought, idea, or desire, especially one based on impulse rather than reason or necessity.**

A seaplane pilot-friend and I were hunkered down by the fire in a little cabin way up north in the Canadian bush. The wind was threatening to peel shingles off the roof and the rain came down in bucket loads. It was so nasty outside we only went out for firewood and to answer nature's call.

On the same day, there were three fatal seaplane accidents within 100 miles of us. Later, when I asked the Canadian inspector investigating those accidents what had caused them, I was blasted with a resounding, frustrated answer: "STUPIDITY!"

My dictionary defines stupidity as: extremely rash or thoughtless behaviour. According to the inspector, stupidity caused those accidents. Seaplane pilot stupidity. We are all susceptible. How can we protect ourselves from it?

Much of the decision-making that produces stupid decisions results from whims. We all have them. They are "pop-ups." Advertisers and merchants work hard at helping our 'pop-ups.' They call it "impulse buying" and we all do it. Impulse-driven decision making (making a decision to act

**"The weather is crappy but I can handle it so let's just get**

on an impulse or whim) generally produces poor decisions because it is based on shallow-intuitive decision making, rather than logical decision making. Shallow-intuitive decisions are

largely based on whether we think it will make us feel good and often are followed by remorse. (Example: It felt really good when I made it through that sucker-hole five years ago, but since then, my conscience has scolded me for trying it every time I think of it.)

The complexities of impulsive decision-making are not fully studied, but we do know some things. A study by the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business concluded:

**1** Impulsivity can wreak havoc on a person's life. In recent years, binge drinking, binge eating and impulsive shopping have helped both our waistlines and our credit-card debts reach epidemic proportions — indicating that despite the hangover of remorse which often accompanies such whims, many of us continue to indulge the same action over and over again.

Impulsivity is addictive!

**2** We are more susceptible to suggestion if we have recently completed a decision which resulted in good feelings (I can have a cake because I only had a salad with no dressing on it for lunch, or... I can fly under that bridge because I have done everything else perfectly on this flight, and it's a beautiful day, etc.)

It gets easier after the first time!

**3** The study found that choices made in the recent past may influence how we respond to the next whim. Susceptibility to making poor choices in response to whims may vary. We may be more susceptible if we have recently made some good choices

**"I don't need to preflight, the airplane was perfect when I flew it this**



that rewarded us with positive feelings.

It gets easier, and easier!

How can we protect ourselves from whim-induced seaplane pilot stupidity? A huge percentage (75-95% of all general aviation accidents, depending on who you ask) result from poor decision making by the pilot.

We have met the enemy, and he is us!

So, the next step in improving aviation safety, and improving the chances that we, as pilots, will live a long and satisfying life, is to immunize ourselves against the "stupidity factor."

#### Stupidity factor immunity

**We  
have met  
the enemy,  
and he is  
us!**

We can arm ourselves against this endemic plague fairly easily. Start by creating your own personal set of standards of conduct and responsibility, write it out, review it often and then live by it.

This is nothing new. Many recognized organizations, whether airline, manufacturer, professional or governmental

entity have created a code of conduct for their employees or members to live by and aspire to. In the absence of such a code, both the individuals and the entity will not be as good as they could be. The code makes it clear what is proper & safe behaviour and attitudes.

General aviation, including seaplane aviation in particular has no imposed code of conduct, no standard of behaviour or responsibility (and I am not proposing such). Nonetheless I am sure that we can all be better, safer pilots who are less susceptible to poor decision-making and who are better stewards of the future reputation of seaplane pilots, if we each construct and adhere to our own personal statement of appropriate behaviour and responsibility (- a code of conduct).

By doing so, we will be far more immune to the temptations of the moment (whims) that arise before and during flight. And, we will quickly discover that much of aeronautical decision-making becomes quicker, easier, and better because, in the decision-making process, answers to the 'right' questions are more quickly and easily made. We

will talk about "the right and wrong questions" in future SPAA Newsletters.

Where do you start to compose your own personal code of conduct? I'd recommend the Aviators Model Code of Conduct, available in several versions (airplane, seaplane, light sport, glider and student pilot at [www.secureav.com](http://www.secureav.com). This document was developed by an editorial board of qualified pilots with input from more than two hundred and fifty experienced pilots and other experts. It's a good place to start building your own personal set of aspirations to help you become the highly respected and highly qualified pilot you want to be. I commend it to you. Have a look at the Seaplane Pilots Model Code of Conduct and start becoming immune, as a pilot, to impulse decision making.

© 2009 Dale DeRemer

Note - The SPAA Code of Conduct is on the SPAA web site (ed)

**Stupidity:  
Extremely rash  
or thoughtless  
behaviour.**



Dale DeRemer beside his Cessna

SEAPLANE PILOTS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA'S  
INAUGURAL **"SPLASH-DOWN"** CONFERENCE  
Rathmines 7th - 8th November 2013

Don't miss this unique opportunity to meet with fellow seaplane pilots, discuss issues concerning flight safety, waterways access, aircraft maintenance, latest technologies and more.

To register visit the SPAA website at <http://www.seaplanes.org.au>  
Register before 30th June and save!



## Day 1

Depart Wednesday the 25th of April with Vaun and his Super Petrel in tow weather is perfect for touch & go's in the Bribie passage. Continuing on to our fuel stop at Hervey Bay we could not resist a few more touch & go's and some synchronised water operations. After refuelling at Hervey Bay we decide to stop in to see the Wilger on floats that Shaun Kelly operates of the beach at Hervey Bay a great looking piece of machinery. This World War II aircraft was built as a reconnaissance plane and now on floats makes a great seaplane for running short joy flights. Taxing up the beach I managed to break a part on the undercarriage. We eventually found an engineering shop to fabricate replacement part putting us about an hour and a half behind schedule. So we straight lined for Great Keppel just getting in before last light, and I mean just.

Keppel seems to be the meeting point for our North bound trips. With Ben and Vicki, Delay and Kerry, Kevin and Sue, in the three Buccaneers, Vaun in his Super Petrel and Max and myself in the SeaRey the flying mob is now altogether.

After settling into our tents we head over to the kitchen where Ben Hutchinson is cooking up Lulu. Ben has some cattle on his property near Caloundra and Lulu's use by date was up. Poor Lulu... However she sure tasted good!

## Someone had to do it.

*Our thoughts are with that gallant group of seaplane pilots that suffered the hardships of Queensland's Whitsunday Islands in order to celebrate Air Whitsunday's 40th birthday. As you can see from the title photo, they did it tough. Here is a brief report from one member of that group, David Geers to whet your appetite. David is producing a series of videos and I am sure this adventure will be the subject of one. We will let you know how to find these videos soon.*

A few drinks a lovely meal good company finishes of a near perfect day.

## Day 2

Needing fuel Vaun and myself head over to Rockhampton, with fuel on board we head for Shute Harbour via our soon to be favourite place Marble Island. Peter the caretaker is there to welcome us at the runway, Peter takes us for a tour over the island what a beautiful place. Peter is a sole caretaker of the island and character to boot. Peter has a girlfriend that comes over to the island on a regular basis. I guess paradise gets lonely from time to time.

Time to push on as we don't want to get into Shute Harbour at last light. We're off to our overnight accommodation at Whitsunday Vista.

## Day 3

Ben Hutchinson has been having some trouble with his hydraulic system that operates the gear on his Lake Buccaneer so Ben decides to spend the day getting it right.

A quick repair to Vaun's plan and we're off to Happy Bay for lunch to celebrate Air Whitsunday's 40th anniversary. Kevin Bowe has put on a great spread of food for past and present employees. After a couple of mock tales and the lunchtime feast it's time to head back to Shute harbour





the local scenery. Back to Shute harbour for one more party at the pub another good night. Vaun certainly knows how to attract the women.

### Day 5

Delay, Kerry and Cheryl, in the buccaneer, Vaun in his Super Petrel, Max and myself head off to Marble Island to overnight at their recently renovated cottage. Words cannot describe how beautiful this island is. Caretaker Peter cooks up a roast venison leg for us, Peter's secret recipe has us eating the best venison meal I have ever had. With over 200 deer on the island, and the waters teeming with fish that Peter has perfected catching. Going hungry is not an option.

### Day 6

and for myself to head over to Prosserpine to pick up Cheryl who has flown up commercially, then back to Shute Harbour for another party at the Air Whitsunday office at Shute Harbour airport. They certainly know how to party up here! Fantastic night of food drink and speeches.

### Day 4

Local flying around the Whitsundays... With perfect weather we drop over to Whitehaven for lunch and enjoy

We don't want or leave... and some of us don't. Delay, Kerry, Vaun and Ben stay an extra night, while Kevin and Sue give Cheryl a lift down Old Station Max and myself arrive late afternoon. Old station has become quite a tourist attraction with tour buses stopping in a regular basis to experience a taste of country life. Our hosts Ron and Helen certainly know how to put on a good show, our arrival coincided with a contiki busload of partygoers which kept us entertained all night with karaoke and some whip cracking. Old station is very accommodating to visiting aircraft, it has the longest grass strip I have ever seen 2,000 metres, it looks long enough to land a 747. Ron, Helen and Leone Creed sure made us feel welcome at there 26,000 acres.



*Marble Island*



# When Can I Buy One

Looking for a new amphibian? Maybe you've ordered an Icon A5 but are getting worried about when it will arrive, well here are a few alternatives.

The Lisa Okoya sounds Japanese but is being developed by a French company. The Icon looks pretty sexy, but I have to say the Okoya leaves it in the shade. And look at those "foils" to get up and plane on, don't know how relevant the term On-the-Step is for this one. It has a

really neat retractable undercarriage and folding wings, but I suspect many will have concerns over the canopy.

We see exotic looking craft like this in the news from time to time but then you hear no more as they run into development and approval problems. I haven't seen any recent news on the Lisa Okoya and wonder if it is another project that has run into difficulties.

If anyone has any news of its development, let the editor know via [editor@seaplanes.org.au](mailto:editor@seaplanes.org.au).

If you think the Okoya is nice but think it wouldn't accommodate your second passion, fishing, then maybe the craft photoed below is more your style. I suspect you could build it at home, save by using an old tiny and plastic garden chair.

The worrying thing is, I think this might be a serious attempt at a flyable amphibian. Might have some difficulty getting a Certificate of Airworthiness but it adds a new dimension to the concept of "Experimental"



And while we're on the subject, what is happening with the Icon A5?

Flying Magazine reports that the Icon A5 program is facing further delays after the FAA sent a letter requesting more information as it considers a request for a weight exemption. Icon is asking for an additional 250 pounds of gross weight beyond the LSA category's amphibious limit, a change the company said is needed to make the Icon A5 spin resistant.



Icon are quoted as stating that an aircraft like the A5 could bring seaplane flying to a far broader clientele and consequently rigorous pilot training may not be assured. Therefore Icon claims it wants to make the A5 as safe to fly as possible.

The FAA in the US have said that "the complexity, extent, and precedent-setting aspects" of the petition required additional time for the FAA's Aircraft Certification Service to develop a response. They have requested additional details about the design and flight

test results of the Icon A5, signed statements of how the manufacturer determined that the LSA meets the requirements of Part 23 certification with respect to its stall characteristics and explanations of why mechanics and operators of the A5 would be required to receive Icon-specific training.

Should the FAA approve the request, the A5's gross weight would be 1,680 pounds.



# Catalina Bought for Rathmines Museum



Reproduced  
from an article in the  
Lakes Mail 1st May 2013 by  
David Quick

**L**IKE a wartime fighter plane coming out of the sun, the news that a historic Catalina aircraft had been bought in Puerto Rico specifically for display in Rathmines came out of the blue.

Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Trust registrar Penny Furner delivered the news on Anzac Day.

"We are just a small group and nobody else knew we were buying a disused Catalina though we had been looking for seven years," Ms Furner said.

"We always wanted a static display Catalina but until about a month ago it was just a wish. It has happened very fast."

Several groups, including Lake Macquarie City Council, the Catalina Flying Memorial, Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club and Ms Furner's Rathmines group are signatories to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to create a Catalina museum, including a hangar and an operational aircraft, on the famous wartime airbase at Rathmines.

"I was an RAAF brat and my father was a CO at the base and that's basically the reason for my interest in the project," Ms Furner said.

Funds generated by the annual Catalina Festival have already helped the Richmond-based Catalina Flying Memorial acquire a Catalina in Portugal and fly it to Australia.

But the new Catalina, a rare PBY-5A and a model that operated from Rathmines, will not displace the operational aircraft.

"The new static aircraft will complement it," Ms Furner said.

"Our MoU was to provide a hanger at Rathmines so the Flying Memorial's operational aircraft could be based here but clearly it would not be practical to have the public tramping through it every day whereas our static display aircraft will be perfect for just that, though it will mean we will need a slightly bigger hangar."

Ms Furner said it will cost about \$40,000 to ship the aircraft.

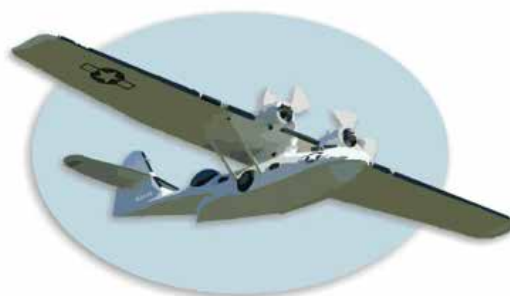
"We have the aircraft and we have the funding to bring it home which we expect to achieve later in the year," she said.

"But now we need to really get cracking on funding and completing the hangar."

Tourism Bowen in conjunction with Bowen RSL are holding a Fly-In at the Bowen Airport and the old Sea-Plane base at Bowen front beach foreshore on the weekend of 17th August 2013 as part of commemorating the loss of RAAF's Catalina A24-24 and 14 of the 16 onboard, 9nm offshore from Bowen.

Flying boats, float planes, warbirds, GA and recreational aircraft are ALL WELCOME.

The event will include a memorial service, music, food stalls, kids rides etc.



70th Anniversary

**CATALINA  
MEMORIAL  
BOWEN**

17 August 2013

Bowen has award winning beaches and a vibrant community. Make sure you take a swim at one of our award winning beaches or go for a snorkel at Horseshoe Bay.

For more information and to register your attendance please visit [www.bowencatalinamemorial.com.au](http://www.bowencatalinamemorial.com.au) or contact the Bowen Visitor Information Centre on 0747 864 222 - email: [info@tourismbowen.com.au](mailto:info@tourismbowen.com.au)

# PLANNING FOR TROUBLE

Several months ago on a trip to the NSW Central Coast to have a coffee meeting with our SPAA treasurer, we had the chance to practice what we are preaching in a recent draft of our SPAA Policy document. The policy is; *"FLIGHT REVIEWS Seaplane Pilots to promote the idea of taking check rides with each other and also to have an annual review flight with an experienced seaplane pilot."*

As we're flying with one of our most experienced seaplane pilots and instructor (for Seareys) in the right seat, Rob Loneragan, it was suggested that he might check/review our operations.

Rob was my passenger on the return trip and just as I had reached a safe altitude after takeoff, I experienced a sudden loss of power. After an almost instinctive stick forward response (at least that's the way I saw it) I grabbed at the throttle only to find that it seemed pinned to the idle position, then I noticed a hairy arm firmly planted against it. Only then did I realize I was being tested.

The outcome of the "test" was fine and I'd like to think that I responded appropriately; stick forward, maintain 60kn, achieve best glide angle, look for suitable landing site taking into account, altitude, wind direction and strength, and surrounding geography, fuel pump on,

attempt restart, radio call and transponder setting.

But it was our debrief afterwards that reminded me of a practice always drummed into me by my original instructor, but possibly not given the conscious consideration that it should when conducting those many takeoffs, particularly from water.

My simulated engine failure happened at a safe altitude giving me plenty of time to think of what direction I should bank and where I might put down but, if I had

experienced loss of power closer to the water I might not have had the luxury of that time.

Before each takeoff, land or water, go through what you would do if you lost power, on the roll, before 200ft, before 500ft. This is specially important to seaplane flying as we so often are surrounded by difficult terrain which could restrict our ability to turn as well as create unpredictable wind conditions. So make it part of your pre-takeoff checks to verbally go through your plans to handle emergency situations during takeoff.





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