



DTH/Scott Sharpe

Robert Mann, a senior. "If the engine cuts out all I'd do is find a field and land. The last place I'd try to land is on a building, like a school."

"I think it's much safer than people think it is," said Andersen. "How many people get killed in car accidents? The dangerous part is running into weather you're not prepared for."

Others, like Fred Smith, disagree. "It's potentially more dangerous. An airplane crash is more likely to be fatal."

Besides weather, most pilots say that carelessness is dangerous.

"It all depends on how you do it," said Carol Haynes. "If you have safety on your mind, it's not dangerous."

**P**RACTICING safety is the key to reduce the dangers of flying.

Clark said, "You can't be overconfident. Some pilots take things for granted. They don't check out plane procedures and check to see if things are changing, like the weather."

Haynes agreed. "You have to make a conscious effort for safety, by looking out for other people."

Jeff Hughes said "By the time you get a license, you've been through so much that has to do with safety rules, that you should be mature enough to handle it."

*You're on your way back from practicing maneuvers. You call in to the airport so you can begin your approach to land. The sun is beginning to set, and you can see a melange of purple and fire on the horizon.*

Although flying itself is on a small decline, Horace Williams faces a bigger problem. With the crash of a Cessna 340 two weeks ago, the neighborhoods surrounding the airport want to close down the airport. This problem has yet to be solved.

*You begin the final glide to the runway, making sure you keep the proper glide speed. Your flaps down, your power greatly diminished, you hover gently over the runway, until, descending, your wheels touch down and taxi to your tie down spot, pleased with your day.* 

Leila Dunbar is a staff writer for The Daily Tar Heel.

# Flying expenses hinder progress for student pilots

By LEILA DUNBAR

**S**INCE Orville and Wilbur Wright's first 50 foot jaunt over Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, flying has come a long way. It has grown from World War I biplanes and fighters to airline services, B-52 bombers, missiles, and rockets to the moon.

However, right now flying is suffering a small decline. With the rising costs of fuel, flying is turning into a hobby that only the wealthy can afford.

"Flying is a barometer of the economy," said Dr. Thomas Wagner, president of the Chapel Hill Flying Club. "If things are going well and money's not tight, there are a lot of people out here flying. But as soon as the costs rise, people begin to drop off."

To rent a plane from the CHFC, it costs between \$21 and \$29 for an hour. The instructor's fee is \$11 for private training and \$13 for an hour of instrument training. The rental prices will rise \$2 in March due to the recent 20 cent increase to \$1.80 for aviation fuel.

"We have to raise our rental prices \$1.00 for every 10 cent gas increase, Wagner said. "A plane usually burns 10 gallons of gas in an hour."

Carolina Flying Services, which also offers rentals and flight training, charges between \$27 and \$40 for rentals for comparable airplanes to CHFC. The instructor rates are \$11 for private and \$14 for instrument training.

The increases have caused the CHFC's membership to decline in the past 1 1/2 years. "We had 110 members in the past year and a half, but since fuels' rising so much our membership has dropped to about 60 or 70," Wagner said. "We've had to sell off one of our training planes, and we might have to sell off another."

Another indication of rising prices has been the composition of members.

"About twice as many members now are licensed pilots rather than students," Wagner said. "A couple of years ago it was the opposite. Obtaining licenses are so expensive."

A pilot's license costs anywhere between \$1500-\$2000, depending on how long it takes to qualify.

Although flying is expensive, the students who have stayed have managed to hang on.

Carol Haynes, a graduate student in biological medical engineering, said, "The expense doesn't bother me when we go for trips. But for practicing, it's very expensive. I'm lucky my husband is paying for it."

Robert Mann, a senior, said, "It hurts every time I write a check. I'm financing myself and I fly as much as I can. I want my license before I graduate. But I can feel the effect every time I put gas in the car or go out."

"It's an expensive hobby," Ken Anderson said. "I can only afford to fly once a week. And the prices keep going up."

Jeff Hughes, who received his license in only four months, said, "Lately I've had no money. I can only fly about twice a month."

Jerry Andersen, a graduate student, said, "Expense is a problem, but not now. I'm 35 and I've waited so long to start this. If I were younger I couldn't afford it."

Some people who are so hooked on flying and have run out of money, have taken other jobs to try to build up their funds.

"I flew for a year and a half," said Sue Grill, who now is working in cancer research in Chapel Hill. "But I ran out of money and I'm working two jobs to try to go back and get my license."

## Tips for beginners

By LEILA DUNBAR

**T**HESE are the steps you need to take if you're interested in getting a pilot's license.

**GROUND SCHOOL** — Ground school, or classes taught by licensed instructors, is the textbook preparation for flying. The plane's anatomy, basic principles of flying and navigation are taught. It usually cost between \$80-\$150, plus books. This prepares you for the written Federal Aviation Association exam that you must pass to get your license.

**INSTRUCTION** — You need at least twenty hours of instruction, including basic maneuvers such as turns, stalls, descents, climbs, take-offs, landings, plus navigation. You also go on three dual cross country trips.

**SOLO AND CROSS COUNTRY TIME** — To be able to fly alone, you need to solo three times with an instructor present. Then you may fly in the pattern around the airport alone. When your instructor feels you are ready, he can sign you off to fly around locally.

In addition to your three cross countries with an instructor, you must make three cross country trips on your own, the last, a 300 mile trip consisting of three 100-mile legs.

**CHECK RIDE** — Finally, you have to be flight tested by an FAA licensed examiner, who will then give you your license if you pass.

### Some tips:

- If you can, try to fly two to three times a week, or even more, if possible. You'll get your license quicker, and you'll save money because you won't have to keep backtracking after long periods of inactivity.

Dick Crum, head football coach at UNC, said that it took him from March to July last year to get his license. He flew nearly every other day.

For others, who can fly only once a week, it takes longer and is ultimately more expensive.

- Keep up with the bookwork. The more you know the better you can handle unexpected situations.

- Make sure you can afford it. You don't want to start and have to stop again. 

## Editor's note

Leila Dunbar is a student pilot who began her training a year and a half ago in her hometown of Millford, Mass. Now she is taking lessons at Horace Williams Airport and is hoping to receive her license by May.