

Plane crash

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"A lot of times I'm lying here in bed, and big ones (planes) come over and jar the whole house," she said. "And I'm thinking, 'Oh God, thank goodness this one passed.' You be so thankful because sometimes you think they're about to come down."

Mrs. Fuller said she plans to move before Christmas. But her reasons for moving have little to do with airplanes. "I'm just moving to something better," she said.

Another resident, who asked not to be named, said he was watching television when the plane crashed. "When it (the plane) came down, I heard the explosion and saw this big ball of fire," he said.

The crash was a little too close for comfort, he said. "If one of the big ones (planes) had hit, then the ballgame would be over with," he said.

Hector Stanback, of 109 Kellum Place, said he has always been concerned about planes flying over his house, and this crash was no exception. "I'm always concerned every time I see a plane coming," he said. "I say, 'I hope it doesn't fall on my house.'"

"I'm not afraid of planes," he said. "I fly all over the country. But I still don't want one coming at me."

Residents Carolyn Taylor, of 304 State St., and Shirley Washington, of 268 Harrington Circle, say that, while they initially were unnerved by the plane crash being so near, they don't constantly worry.

Miss Washington said she was sitting home with friends when the accident occurred. "I don't think we really heard the noise,"

she said. "Some friends came by and said that a plane had crashed. We went down there."

Miss Taylor said that she has gotten used to planes flying over her head.

Marc Turkaly, tower manager at Smith Reynolds Airport, said that there have been few crashes at the airport and even fewer complaints from the community.

"This was the first fatal crash that anybody around here can remember," said Turkaly, who added that no one called following the crash to express concern. "There has been nothing in any residential areas, either."

Turkaly said he has worked at the airport for almost 10 years and has been tower manager for nearly two of those years.

Figures from the Bureau of Safety Programs division of the National Transportation Safety Board indicate that, since 1981, there have been five crashes at Smith Reynolds Airport, four at Greensboro's Regional Airport.

"It's just a fact that we have not had any major accidents at this airport," Turkaly said. "I don't know what I could attribute that to."

Turkaly said that the type of planes that use Smith Reynolds are mostly single-, twin-engine and private aircraft. He said that the airport also gets occasional jet traffic.

The kinds of accidents that have occurred at the airport have included a single-engine plane making a landing wheels-up on the runway, an aircraft landing in the trees off the runway and a plane whose wheel came off while it taxied on the runway.

The crash two weeks ago in-

involved a single-engine Beechcraft Bonanza and took the lives of Robert and Susan Gross and their two sons, David and Michael.

The Grosses had left the LeRoy Airport in LeRoy, N.Y., that afternoon. They were trying to land at Smith Reynolds when they crashed at around 5:15 p.m., said Phillip Powell, an air safety investigator with the Transportation Safety Board. The plane went down about three-fourths of a mile from the airport in a wooded area near Winston Lake Golf Course.

When rescuers arrived at the scene, the plane had burst into flames, and the four bodies were severely burned.

Powell said it is believed that Gross was piloting the plane when the crash occurred.

He said the investigation of the crash is continuing. It will probably be several months before the final report is complete, he said.

Several more items need to be looked into, Powell said, including a study of the weather and the mobility of the plane's landing system. More information also is needed from the medical examiner, Powell said.

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