

Essential Factors to SUCCESS In Modern Barnstorming

By HOWARD MAISH

Transport Pilot No. 68, Member P. P. A.

JUST as the personnel and business methods of the modern barnstormer differ from those of yesteryear, so do the equipment and maintenance practices.

One of the most important considerations for the modern barnstorming organization is a suitable uniform. A neat and distinctive uniform will prove a very profitable investment. On two different occasions, during our recent tour, this fact was emphatically proven.

While working off the same field in competition with superior equipment (a Wasp Fokker on one occasion and a new Wasp Ford on another), we secured an easy seventy-five per cent of the business with our J5 Ford. This was directly due to the neat appearance of our crew.

The uniform which we chose was very similar to the Navy's petty officer's uniform. We purchased double

breasted blue serge suits and added two goldstripes on the sleeve— $4\frac{1}{2}$ " above the edge of the cuff, spaced $1\frac{1}{4}$ " apart. Black shoes, plain white shirts with black four-in-hand ties, silver Army regulation wings on the breast, and regulation Chief Petty Officer caps with gold chin straps and gold wings replacing the navy insignia, completed the uniform. The caps

A neat and distinctive uniform, and a scrupulously clean ship are two important factors in creating confidence of the public.

have removable white covers and are very easily washed and kept pure white.

ALL members of the crew were dressed alike, including the pilot. This made it possible for prospective customers to distinguish members of

our crew from others on the field. The uniforms also tended to create a more business-like and efficient atmosphere which could not help but inspire confidence in persons contemplating flight.

Much thought was devoted to selection of spare parts to be carried. This is likewise an important consideration for one who starts out on an extended barnstorming tour. Naturally, it is not desirable to carry any more extra equipment than is absolutely necessary. Experienced pilots will have little difficulty in making selection of such equipment when familiar with the ship and motors which they are to use.

For our year and a half tour, we took two cylinder assemblies complete with rocker boxes, valves, springs, etc., ready to install on the motors. Two extra piston assemblies with wrist pins and rings complete, and a set of extra compression and oil rings for one motor; six rocker arms and valves for both intake and exhaust;

two push rods and two rocker box covers; three breaker assemblies for the magnetos, as well as two spare magneto coils and one magneto coupling; one spare tail wheel tire and tube and one spare inner tube for the front wheels completed our list of spares. This proved sufficient for the entire trip.

Only the magneto coupling and the two sets of breakers remained unused at the completion of our trip. No other spare parts were purchased on the trip excepting one set of control cables, one link rod and two complete sets of tires.

Appearance of the ship is just as important as the appearance of the crew. A neat appearing ship inspires confidence whereas a dirty ship bespeaks carelessness—and few people desire to fly in a ship maintained by a careless crew.

OUR ship was always kept scrupulously clean. All three motors were wiped each morning. All splattered oil was removed from the ship and nacelles. Servicing of motors and necessary repair was done either early in the morning or on completion of a scheduled stop. No work, either on the motors or the ship, was ever done in the presence of spectators except in case of emergency. The paint trimming, which was a vermillion red, was repainted at frequent intervals and not allowed to become sun-bleached or dull. Even the lettering on the tires received frequent coats of gold paint.

All this, while seemingly unimportant, adds greatly to the confidence of the public. The barnstormer, to be successful, must command the highest confidence of the public and even the most trivial detail is worthy of attention to this end.

In my previous article, I told about the most important member of a barnstorming crew—the advance, or advertising, man. Mention was made of the duties of this man and some of the methods used to promote blainess. If plans are properly made, the mod-

"HIS MISTAKE"

The Pilot flew along the course,
Contented with his lot,
Then he had an anxious moment,
When the motor missed a shot.

He called it names, affectionate,
Endearing terms, he tried,
But still it popped and sputtered,
So he put her in a glide.

He pulled the altitude control,
From lean to rich and back,
The booster mag. he wound up tight,
But something yet he lacked.

He nosed her over in a dive,
A thousand feet or more,
And when that motor didn't take,
Right heartily, he swore.

Then headed for the nearest field,
To sit her down at last—
The mechanic checked her over,
She was simply, OUT OF GAS.

By J. C. Cretzler

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Success In Modern Barnstorming

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ern barnstormer can secure plenty of the most desirable advertising without actual cash outlay for advertising space.

Before starting on our trip, we had planned a cooperative deal to be worked with Ford automobile dealers in the towns we were to work. Our plan was to offer the Ford dealer free passes for airplane rides which he could give to purchasers of new or used cars. The Ford dealer would advertise the free rides in his regular newspaper ads. In this way we would get all the desirable information before the public—such as when we would arrive in town and where we would operate from. This advertising, together with the newspaper publicity with pictures which we were able to get through the Ford dealers influence, assured us of plenty of prospects to work for cash business. Our experience showed that the actual number of complimentary rides given through Ford dealers were inconsequential.

WHILE on the subject of complimentary tickets, however, I would issue a word of warning. Any person contemplating a barnstorming tour should take special precaution that the man who carries the complimentary tickets leaves the pasteboards locked up when he goes out to see the town. One of our busiest days of ticket taking followed the night when one of our party was an uninvited guest at an exclusive athletic club, two country clubs, a private dance and a society wedding. Where he got the "spirits" and how he managed to break into all of the various affairs has never been learned. We do know, however, that an entire wedding party and half the society folks of the town rode in our ship the next day—and learned, at the evening accounting,

that they all rode on complimentary tickets.

When we started on our tour in 1930, we only endeavored to sell \$3.00 trips. Early in 1931, however, we found it desirable to also sell short \$1.00 flights. Our experience proved that there was more profit in the dollar flights than in the \$3.00 trips. When making dollar flights, we averaged as high as \$145.00 per hour; whereas on \$3.00 trips our highest average was from \$90.00 to \$105.00 per hour. This is partly accounted for by the number of passengers carried. On the dollar flights, we averaged ten to twelve passengers a trip; but only six or seven passengers was the average on the \$3.00 trips.

One policy which we maintained was to guarantee satisfaction or refund the passengers money. This guarantee was verbally made to any skeptic. In our eighteen months tour, we had but three requests for refund of fares. These were cheerfully given and inspired others to take rides.

We found that souvenir coupon tickets are a profitable investment. In many cases, it was learned that passengers had come out for a ride because they had seen one of our souvenir coupons stuck up in the barber shop or some restaurant. These small town folk are just as proud of the fact that they have had an airplane ride as the big city folks, and are much better braggers about their doings.

THOSE interested in the subject of costs will be surprised to learn that our gasoline never cost over 25¢ a gallon and that oil prices ranged from \$0.87 to \$1.02 a gallon. We had arranged contracts with two major companies before starting on our trip. However, it was impossible to use

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these contracts at many fields which we visited and in some towns we had to transport fuel to our field.

We learned one lesson at considerable expense. That was, it is quite dangerous to buy bulk oil. The only two major failures we experienced were due entirely to bad oil. It is well worth the few cents extra to get oil in sealed 5 gallon containers, which prohibit mixing or substituting inferior oils for the product you wish to purchase. We used Stanavo oil whenever obtainable and found it most satisfactory.

Cost of hangar space varied considerable at the five airports where we stopped and found such facilities available. The rates charged were as follows: Iowa City, \$5.00; Terre Haute, no charge; Clarksville, Tenn., \$2.50; St. Jo, Mo., \$3.50; Baton Rouge and Denver, both \$5.00. Charges for use of field at established airports were universally 10% of gross receipts. Rental for fields where there was no established airports ranged from \$2.00 to \$5.00 a day. We always tried to rent the fields on a percentage basis and did so in many places. When operating on a percentage basis, you get the cooperation of the lessee whose acquaintance in his community can be invariably counted on for a substantial volume of business when interested in a percent of receipts.

We were particularly impressed by

the number of people who came a long distance to get a ride in a big ship as a means of trying out this mode of travel for contemplated long trips. One elderly lady who was apparently possessed of much wealth chartered our ship and took her retinue of servants along. We learned that this lady made an annual trip to California from her Mid-Western home and that she wanted to feel out air travel as a possible means of eliminating the usual tiresome train ride to the Coast.

Another thing that impressed us was the number of former California pilots we met on our trip. At practically every airport we met one or more pilots from our home state. It was also remarkable to find that the people in the South would think nothing of turning out on rainy days for rides. On such days, we would pull up with the wing tip under the hangar and thus use the hangar as a canopy. Rain did not seem to interfere with our business in the Southern states, whereas it was useless to attempt to do business on rainy days in other parts of the country.

We had many interesting and some very amusing experiences on our trip. In a future issue of THE PILOT, I will tell some facts about some of the boys you may know or have at least heard about. In the meanwhile, if any of you boys have been convinced that Modern Barnstorming can be made a profitable business and have any questions to ask concerning our method of operation, or other subjects, I will be glad to be of any assistance that I can. Just address your inquiry to the writer, care of THE PILOT.

Of all new planes being built, approximately one-half are monoplanes and one-half are biplanes.

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Counting buffaloes from the air is the latest use the Canadian government has made of the airplane. Black masses moving against a white background of snow formed an excellent picture for the aerial cameraman flying at 1200 feet.

BARNSTORMER DE LUXE

HOWARD F. (Horse Face) Maish has accumulated over 5000 hours flying time, including some 1100 hours of multi-motored time and 126 hours of night flying, without a single accident or damage to any aircraft, students or other personnel.

Maish was born at Rossville, Indiana, and took sufficient time off from his farming duties to get through the Rossville High School. At the outbreak of the World War, he deserted the cows and hogs and enlisted as a mechanic in the 8th Aero Squadron at Kelly Field. He was transferred to Selfridge Field for its opening on July 4th, 1917, and was sent overseas as a member of the 8th detached service at Thetford, England. He was later transferred to France as a member of the 104th Observation Squadron. As Sergeant 1st Class, Howard was discharged after the war with three service stripes, a citation by Major General Summerhill, and enough flying time to wobble about by himself.

Howard barnstormed in the East, after the war, and landed on the Pacific Coast in 1924. During 1924 and 25, he was associated with Eddie Martin at the latter's field at Santa Ana, California. He opened California Airways field, Los Angeles, and served as chief pilot in 1926. In 1927, he formed a company, with himself as chief pilot in charge of operations, which conducted school and manufacturing operations under the name of Grey's Harbour Airways. In October 1928, he again became instructor for Eddie Martin at Santa Ana.

A six months stretch as test pilot and three months as chief pilot with an Air Livery found him possessed of the barnstormers itch, with which disease he has been afflicted ever since. The past year and a half, "Horse



Face" has been establishing some new business principles in the barnstorming profession. Applying modern business methods to the profession, he has used a tri-motor Ford and a uniformed crew.

Howard, in addition to putting barnstorming back on a paying basis, has a previous record for solving the unemployment problem. While delivering some Dempsey-Tunney fight films to a town in Washington, he cut loose some 5000 circulars at a low altitude in front of the local theatre. He was rewarded for this act with an appointment to the city's street cleaning department—board and lodging free—which caused charitable inclinations among many friends to such an extent that he cleared \$86.52 from donations sent in sympathetic letters.

Maish is a member of the Professional Pilots' Association.

THE DOPE MAN

TOM COLBY, the man who gets the 'dope' on a large proportion of the nation's aircraft—and lacquer too—is now flying his sixth ship. This dope business must be good to provide six ships in half that many years of flying.

Tom is manager of the aviation department of Berry Brothers. Although a native of Detroit, Michigan (born May 15, 1900), he obtained his flight training in California. He soloed with Bob Blair and Bob King at Culver City Airport in October 1928. He has averaged over 200 hours a year flying time, having logged over 650 hours to date.

His present ship is a Laird-300 Wright, which not only serves to convey him expeditiously for contacting his various sales representatives, but is a silent sales messenger for his company's products.

Tom is a member of the "Q. B.'s"; N. A. P. A.; and the Detroit Flying Club.