

Fuel Leaks Made Willmar Easy

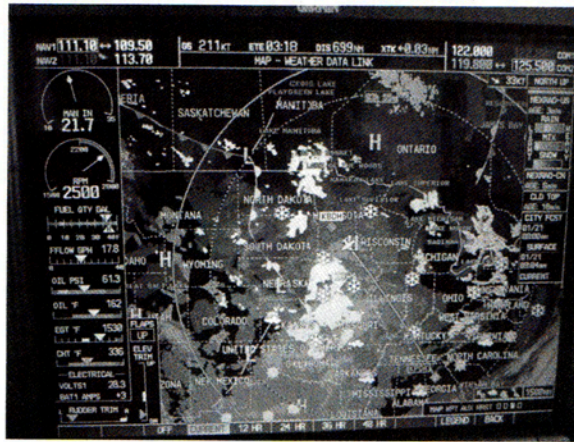
By Joe Howard
MAPA member

It all started with a solo fuel stop for some cheap fuel. I rarely fill up due to the limited useful load of my 2007 Ovation 3. But since most of my holiday trips were over and it was a nice day I decided to take the opportunity to fill up at a local airport not far from my home base. A couple of days later I noticed the dreaded blue stain on the bottom of the left wing. The weep hole closest to the stall vane had a quarter size blue stain. After removing the adjacent access covers and using combination of a flexible bore scope, digital camera and video inspection camera I determined that my plane had a pinhole seep at the front outboard corner of the left tank.

I immediately knew who to call since I had met Bruce Jaeger at a recent MPPP. Bruce is the humble yet most knowledgeable former owner of the Mooney shop in Willmar where he pioneered finding and repairing Mooney fuel tank leaks. I called Bruce recounted my findings and he mentioned that although he had recently transferred his business to a former coworker Paul Beck, that he was sure Paul's company Weep-no-More www.weepnomorellc.com could fix my leak. I had several reservations about traveling to MN since it was very cold (-29 f) and Willmar was almost 1000 miles north of Atlanta.

Although I have over 20 years of flying experience, none of my hours have been in the extremely cold MN winter. I posted a thread on the MAPA email and immediately received many great suggestions. I had also spoken with Bruce and found his website <http://www.jaegeraviation.com> had some winter flying tips as well. Armed with my newfound cold weather knowledge and after learning to decipher the icing charts found on NOAA ADDS I was confident I could make the flight to the

great white north safely. Weep No More also offers a professional pilot for pick up and delivery for those that choose not to fly their plane themselves.

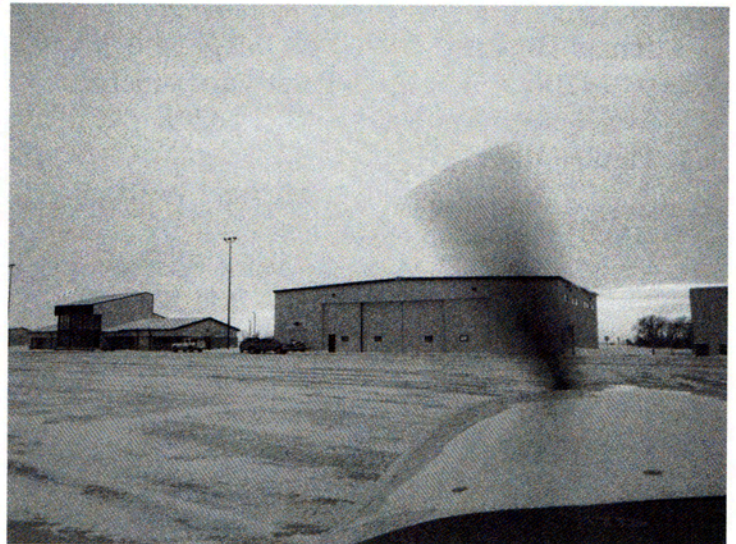


With a cruise of 185 kts the distance was not a problem at Mooney speed. I could make the flight in less than 5 hours including a fuel stop. So I made plans to have Paul repair my plane. He offered to make the repairs while I waited which would only require a 2 night stay or I could leave the plane and allow him to monitor the repairs for several days afterwards. I elected the former just to be really sure the leak was completely gone.

I watched the Weather channel for several days to choose a time that fit Paul's schedule as well as the weather and made round trip airline tickets from MSP to ATL and back. I planned to give

myself several days to choose from on both sides of the trip. When the departure day came my home airport was closed and had been closed for several days due to a week long Ice storm that completely shut down all of Atlanta. Delta had to cancel thousands of flights and so did I. On the last available day before my return airline flight was scheduled, PDK finally had a runway open. The taxiways were still icy so I had to be towed to the runway. I made the flight up to Willmar with out any problems. Paul had been watching my progress on Flightaware and immediately opened the hangar to pull my plane inside within minutes of my arrival. Since my shuttle to MSP was departing soon Paul and I discussed the repairs over a nice dinner at the Willmar Holiday Inn.

Executive Express offers convenient shuttle service between Willmar and MSP for airline service. After spending the night at the MSP airport Hyatt I took the morning flight back home. Paul had the leak isolated and repaired the next day and sent me several pictures of his progress. The big difference with Paul's





it was actually too cold for clouds or snow. I also had 30-40 knot tail winds to allow me to fly home the 1025 miles averaging about 250 mph crossing 6 states in 4 hours landing with 1 1/2 hours reserves.

Overall I am very happy with the services of Weep No More and I would highly recommend Paul to any Mooney pilot. As we have all heard there are those that have and those that will need him. It is inevitable.



Weep no More fuel tank repair is his 12 years of experience working with Bruce and his ability to find and repair tough leaks. The leak is not always where you see it. As fuel can flow or seep far from the source sometimes uphill. You must find source of the leak on the inside of the tank for a correct repair. Paul uses some proprietary equipment to isolate and clean the damaged area and then reseal with the same polysulfide material that is used by the factory. Mooney changed the fuel tank assembly process from the dry build to a wet build several years ago. My plane was the first that Paul had seen that had a leak that was built using the new process. It was likely my leak had been there from day one but took 3 years to grow large enough to notice. Unfortunately, my warranty had just expired 6 months earlier. Since I rarely fill up completely and since the leak was in an area that could not be seen thru the removable access panels, the leak went unnoticed through 4 annuals.

Paul asked for permission to open the adjacent riveted access panel to clean the fuel staining inside the leading edge of the blind bay. Since I had provided him with my touch up paint Paul was able to make the repairs as good as new.

The return trip was much easier since I did not have an airline schedule to meet. I flew commercial back to MSP on a Thursday afternoon and again used Executive express for the ride back to Willmar. *Only today was to be the*

coldest day in MN in 2 years. It was (-29 below zero) the news showed hardy Minnesotians tossing boiling water into the air and watching it instantly freezing before it could hit the ground! Now that is cold! One nice part about the cold high pressure system was that

Do your fuel stains give you the BLUES?



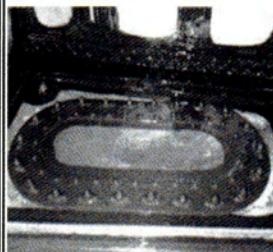
Willmar Municipal Airport Willmar, MN



~I am certain our product will produce better results than the original!

~With more than 10 years' experience on Mooney fuel tanks, we have the expertise and the knowledge to fix any fuel tank problem.

~The removal of deteriorated sealer is reduced to a chemical process.



~In addition to the total strip and reseal service, I am prepared to educate clients on how to evaluate and care for their tanks.

**To learn more, check out
our Website at
www.weepnomorellc.com
Or call Paul at 320-295-1671**