

WORKING LIFE

You Talkin' to Me?

Well, are ya or
aren't ya?

By Haidee E. Allerton

There you were, standing right next to me in Staples and talking. No one else was around so I assumed you were speaking to me, and I responded. But you kept on talking and didn't even look my way. Puzzlement.

There you were, walking along the sidewalk alone and talking animatedly. To whom, I wondered. Certainly not to me. I stepped aside cautiously.

There you were, leaning against the wall alone outside of Fresh Fields, laughing, head thrown back. Laughing at what?

Then the light dawned. Cell phone in pocket, headset in ear. *Whew.* I was beginning to suspect some airborne craziness or that perhaps I'd wandered into the sequel to *Vanilla Sky*.

The cell phone has gone underground. Slip your Nokia or Motorola or whatever into your tote or pants or coat pocket, plug in your headset, and chatter away.

And we used to think that people who appeared to be talking to themselves were a little "touched."

Reality Check

Percent of mobile-phone minutes used while driving: **60**

Percent of accidents caused by driver distractions, including talking on a mobile phone: **20-30**

States that prohibit handheld mobile-phone use while driving: **1**
(New York)

States that are considering legislation to ban handheld mobile-phone use while driving: **30**

Percent by which drivers' response times improved when using a headset versus a handheld mobile phone: **0**

Ergo, Flying Is Safer

Here's a sampling of actual log items on problems reported by pilots and solutions taken by (humorous) maintenance engineers at Qantas, the only major airline that has never had a Class A accident (a mishap that involves loss of life or at least US\$1 million in damage).

Problem: Left inside tire almost needs replacement.
Solution: Almost replaced left inside tire.

Problem: Test flight OK, except autoland very rough.
Solution: Autoland not installed on this aircraft.

Problem: Something loose in cockpit.
Solution: Something tightened in cockpit.

Problem: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
Solution: Evidence removed.

Problem: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
Solution: That's what they're there for.

Problem: DME volume unbelievably loud.
Solution: DME volume set to more believable level.

Problem: No. 2 propeller seeping prop fluid.
Solution: No. 2 propeller seepage normal. Nos. 1, 3, 4 propellers lack normal seepage.

Problem: Mouse in cockpit.
Solution: Cat installed.

Source/Health

Contributed by Simon Carr.