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**Letter to AOPA members from chairman of the board:** As the AOPA Board of Trustees begins the search for the association's fifth president, board Chairman Bill Trimble lays out AOPA's commitment to advocacy efforts that protect our freedom to fly, the association's economic state, and its plans for the future to "focus on our core member, the pilot who enjoys flying his owned or rented piston single as many hours as he or she can afford." [Read more >>](#)

## FEATURED

**Curiosity captures Collier: Possible life on Mars?**

Sometimes the planets line up just right. March 12 was such a day, as NASA revealed that data gathered by the Mars rover *Curiosity* had given a "yes" answer to whether the planet might have once supported a habitable environment, based on analysis of a rock found near an ancient stream bed. On the same day, the NASA/JPL Mars Science Laboratory/*Curiosity* Project Team learned that another pending question had been answered in the positive: The National Aeronautic Association announced that the team had won the 2012 Robert J. Collier



Trophy "in recognition of the extraordinary achievements of successfully landing *Curiosity* on Mars, advancing the nation's technological and engineering capabilities, and significantly improving humanity's understanding of ancient Martian habitable environments." [Find out what's keeping the earthbound spellbound.](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## GA NEWS

**NTSB, 'frustrated' and 'disheartened,' tries new tactic**

The National Transportation Safety Board hopes a new set of safety alerts and videos will leverage limited resources to stem the persistent toll of common mistakes that lead to general aviation accidents. At a March 12 meeting, board members and staff shared personal accounts of their own aviation experience, speaking pilot-to-pilots about risk management, aircraft control, planning, and breaking the accident chain. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

**Bank of America newest AOPA Strategic Partner**

AOPA announced March 8 a new Strategic Partnership with Bank of America that will further boost support for general aviation while offering AOPA members generous cash-back rewards. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

**Beechcraft once again protests Air Force contract**

Beechcraft lost the \$427.5 million Air Force contract for the light air support ground attack aircraft, and like the previous time it lost, the company will protest the contract. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

**Cessna 162 slows to nearly a halt, prompting questions**

Cessna's two-seat 162 has been among the best-selling light sport

Cessna's two-seat 162 has been among the best-selling light sport aircraft, but shipments have slowed to a trickle and the company is not explaining why—yet. Available data suggest there are airframes, if not completed aircraft, piling up in Kansas and/or China: A third of the Skycatchers in the FAA registration database are still owned by Cessna, which is not ready, a spokesman said, to respond to detailed questions. The company announced last year it would certify the Cessna 162 under the little-used primary aircraft category, though it would remain flyable as a light sport. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)



### MedXPress to be unavailable March 14 to 17

The FAA online medical application, MedXPress, will be unavailable from 5 p.m. Eastern on March 14 through 8 p.m. Eastern on March 17 while work is done to convert the current server-based medical records system to a Web-based product. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Lainey's first flight

When Bobby Woodson took his 6-year-old daughter Lainey for her first airplane ride last fall, he had no idea that their sunset trip around a grass strip in South Carolina would become an Internet sensation. Lainey's unbridled expressions of joy, concern, discovery, and excitement convey the very best of what flying has to offer. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Cirrus announces leadership shift, Vision on track

Cirrus Aircraft co-founder and CEO Dale Klapmeier remains chief executive after conferring the title of president upon long-serving Chief Operating Officer Patrick Waddick, a 25-year veteran of the company now tasked with executing a plan that includes bringing the single-engine V-tail Vision jet to market in the near future. As the economy continues to recover, Cirrus has "turned the corner," Klapmeier said in an exclusive interview with AOPA, adding that growth (and investment capital from China) is allowing Cirrus to turn more attention "back to development." [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)



### Go behind the scenes

California's West Valley Flying Club has been in operation for more than 40 years, helping 10,000 members stay involved with aviation. Find out about the day-to-day operations of the club, which includes a diverse fleet of 40-plus airplanes and instructors, during a webinar at 8 p.m. Eastern on March 20. [Register now >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Apps to help prepare for private pilot exam, flight review

Need to study the federal aviation regulations and *Aeronautical Information Manual*? Have a checkride or flight review coming up? This week, AOPA members share apps that can help you study and prepare for everything from the knowledge test or practical private pilot exam to the flight review. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Detroit Tuskegee Airmen Glider Club on a mission

Giving youths free flights, offering flying scholarships, and participating in airshows are among the missions undertaken by the Detroit Tuskegee Airmen Glider Club. The club, which operates under the auspices of the Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum, flies three donated Schweizer SGM 2-37 motorgliders. "Have you ever walked shoulder-to-shoulder with your buddies into an airport terminal full of inner-city kids, knowing that nobody's going home until every one of those kids has had time at the controls of an Air Force Academy trainer? Yeah, we do that," said club member Steve Tupper.



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### French jet maker reports good news

Dassault Aviation in France had flat news for the past, good news for the future, and less than enthusiastic comments for the American market. Dassault Falcon Jet deliveries were at the same level as 2011: 66 Falcon Jets and 11 Rafale fighters, compared to 63 Falcon Jets and 11 Rafale fighters in 2011. However, orders were up significantly: 58 Falcon Jets compared to 36 in 2011. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Master metal artist dies at 67

Bill Yoak of Lewisburg, W.Va., was an artist who made metal works of fantasy, mystery, and beauty—and all of them flew.

He provided fantasy aircraft to Hollywood, mysterious aircraft for the Lockheed Skunk Works, and beautiful ones for himself and warbird owners. Yoak died in mid-March at age 67. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Cockpit smoke solution (still) costly, rarely used

The Emergency Vision Assurance System is more than 20 years old, the current version more than a decade old, and while it can save lives, price keeps it out of most cockpits to the dismay of many pilots. Invented by Bertil Werjefelt to help commercial pilots maintain a view of the panel and outside world, even in the midst of the thickest possible smoke condition, EVAS has been deployed almost exclusively in corporate jets, and remains priced out of reach for many, if not most general aviation operators. That could change—comparatively soon. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)



### Vote for favorite 'AOPA Pilot' cover

Another year has passed with another year of great *AOPA Pilot* magazine covers. See a list of the covers and vote for your favorite of 2012. Results will be published in the May issue of *AOPA Pilot*. [Vote >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Special Sun 'n Fun admission discounts for AOPA members

AOPA members can enjoy a \$5 discount off daily admission to the thirty-ninth annual Sun 'n Fun Fly-In every day of the show from April 9 through 14 in Lakeland, Fla. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### ForeFlight crosses a frontier

When Frontier Airlines announced that it had begun an FAA-approved program to evaluate Apple iPads as electronic flight bags in its cockpits, the news marked a new frontier for a maker of intelligent apps for general aviation pilots. As part of its EFB program, Denver, Colo.-based Frontier said it has entered a partnership with ForeFlight. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Strange but true: Mountain lion versus helicopter

David Nash was hiking on California's Stevens Trail when he found himself being stalked by a mountain lion. Nash called 911 and the California Highway Patrol dispatched a helicopter crew, who scared the mountain lion away with a high intensity spotlight. Read more "[Strange but true general aviation news.](#)" [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Hover Power: Power-off Vne

Helicopters have a power-on never exceed airspeed ( $V_{NE}$ ) that can be an aerodynamic limitation, a structural issue, or based on the onset of retreating-blade stall. Some also have a power-off airspeed limitation which will be shown on the airspeed indicator as a red/white hatched line or sometimes a blue line. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### More news

[Competition offers students chance to build kitplane](#)

[Ditching and survival course to start at Embry-Riddle](#)

[2013 General Aviation Award recipients named](#)

[A text from your turboshaft](#)

[Aviation's good-news story: Able Flight plans party](#)

[Nominations open for Crossfield Aerospace Education award](#)

## AOPA LIVE®

### 'AOPA Live This Week': Helo rescue training in 40-knot winds

Twenty-foot waves, 40-knot winds, poor visibility, frigid temperatures. It sounds like a great day for flying just above the Pacific Ocean—if you are a Coast Guard helicopter rescue crew. Fly along with elite helicopter pilots as they learn advanced rescue techniques. Plus, sequestration is causing more problems. Find out the effects to international general aviation flights. And AOPA has a new strategic partner. Find out who it is and how you benefit. As of publication time, AOPA Live® producers were finalizing this week's episode. Check back on the *AOPA Live This Week* page for the [latest edition that will be available March 15.](#)



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## Air Safety Institute recognizes controllers for service

Five air traffic controllers have been awarded "Flight Assist Commendations" by the Air Safety Institute of the AOPA Foundation for service they rendered to pilots who were facing troubles while aloft during 2012. The controllers were recognized for guiding pilots to safety who were struggling with airborne situations that included an on-board fire, a loss of instruments, hypoxia, and the danger of high terrain. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## IFR Fix: Next time, write it down

Inbound from BONSS through 2,500 feet, the pilot tweaks the throttle to ensure a level-off at 1,500 feet before reaching the missed approach point on the VOR/DME RWY 15 approach to Griffiss International Airport in New York. The check pilot has not offered any hint as to how the approach will terminate. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## The big chill

Even aircraft approved for flight into known icing require constant vigilance for accumulations more severe than their de-icing systems can manage, an ironclad escape plan, and no hesitation in executing it when circumstances require. On Nov. 18, 2011, a turbocharged Cessna T337G Skymaster on an instrument flight plan attempted the approach to Casper, Wyo., in moderate snow and freezing fog, with airmets for IFR conditions, moderate turbulence, and moderate icing. The controller issued a low-altitude alert but got no reply. The wreckage was found about two hours later in an open field eight miles northeast of the airport. Read more in this special report from the Air Safety Institute. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## Tips for certification after surgery

Following any medical treatment, especially involving hospitalization and surgery, the FAA will require certain medical records. Find out what records you'll need, and how best to prepare them, in AOPA's subject report. [Read more >>](#)



## Elevate your flying passion

Maybe you've toyed with the idea of becoming a volunteer pilot. But what's involved? Learn more with the Air Safety Institute's *Public Benefit Flying: Balancing Safety and Compassion* online course. Produced with the generous support of Welles Murphey Jr., the Air Care Alliance and affiliated volunteer pilot groups, and the AOPA Foundation, the course prepares you for the incredibly rewarding experience of using your flying skills to help others. [Take the course](#)



## Keeping your aircraft 'neat'

An alarming statistic of the past decade has been the number of aircraft accidents on takeoff as a result of wing contamination by snow, frost, and ice. A few simple steps during preflight could have easily prevented these accidents. Learn more about what you can do to prevent this by reading the Air Safety Institute's "[Cold Facts: Wing Contamination](#)" Safety Brief. [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## Leading Edge: Choir preaching and who's responsible?

AOPA Foundation President Bruce Landsberg made a bet that it would be tough—maybe impossible—to crash without having broken at least one rule and possibly more. Was that the case in a recent accident involving a Mooney M20E that crashed shortly after takeoff? [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## Reporting Points: Update on safety pledge

AOPA member Shannon Osborne recently followed through on a pledge to donate \$5 to the AOPA Foundation's Air Safety Institute for every course the members of her The Ninety-Nines chapter took in the month of February. She flew to Frederick, Md., to present the check. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Flight Instructor Refresher Clinics

March 23 and 24  
San Mateo, Calif.

Apr. 13 and 14  
Atlanta, Ga.  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Apr. 6 and 7  
Denver, Colo.  
Tampa, Fla.  
Waltham, Mass.

Apr. 20 and 21  
San Diego, Calif.  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
Auburn, Va.

### Air Safety Institute Safety Seminars

March 18  
Northbrook, Ill.

March 20  
Decatur, Ga.  
Marietta, Ga.  
East Rutherford, N.J.

March 19  
Birmingham, Ala.  
Bolingbrook, Ill.  
Greenville, S.C.

March 21  
Huntsville, Ala.  
Pensacola, Fla.  
Rockford, Ill.

Salt Lake City, Utah  
For a complete schedule, see [AOPA Online](#).  
Can't make it in person? [Sign up for the CFI Refresher Online](#).

Last Feoria, Ill.  
Topics vary—for details and a complete schedule, see [AOPA Online](#).

## ADVOCACY

### AOPA to FAA: Halt sequestration cuts targeting GA

AOPA is urging FAA Administrator Michael Huerta to halt cuts that will disproportionately affect the safety and integrity of general aviation operations. "The recommended cuts will have unacceptable consequences for the nation and the flying community," AOPA President Craig Fuller said in a March 12 letter to Huerta. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Customs, control tower cuts hitting GA airports

Federal budget cuts mandated by sequestration have begun to make their presence felt in reduced Customs and Border Protection and FAA control tower schedules at general aviation airports including some of the most heavily used facilities for international flights in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### AOPA rallies Congress on tower sequestration cuts

An effort is under way in Congress to find ways to protect the FAA's Contract Tower Program, which is among the programs under threat from looming automatic sequestration cuts. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Don't ban 121.5 MHz ELTs, AOPA says

The Federal Communication Commission's plan to prohibit the certification, manufacture, importation, sale, or use of 121.5 MHz ELTs—effectively forcing pilots to switch to 406 MHz ELTs—would hinder, not improve, aviation safety and conflicts with existing laws, AOPA says. That's a high cost to impose on the industry for a switch when there has been no study or analysis provided showing increased safety benefits. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Dallas airspace redesign a chance to improve GA access

The redesign of Class B airspace at Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, could be an opportunity for the FAA to offer general aviation more options for transiting and navigating the airspace, AOPA said. Members are encouraged to study and comment by March 25 on the Class B redesign proposal, which would greatly expand and lower the Class B airspace. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

### Join the Airport Support Network today

Ensuring the health and vitality of your airport is up to you—incompatible development and economic and political pressures can restrict your flying. Every day, close to 2,500 Airport Support Network (ASN) volunteers work with AOPA headquarters to help save their airports, but we need more. Below is a link to a list of the airports where an ASN volunteer could make a difference. To nominate yourself or an associate to be a volunteer, visit [AOPA Online](#). To learn more about the Airport Support Network, visit [ASN Online](#). [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)



## MEMBER BENEFITS

### Logging time: What do I have to record?

You can't judge a logbook by its cover. The most important part of the logbook is the inside, and your ability to log the information required by the regulations and capture any original signatures that may be necessary. [Read more >>](#) [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## AOPA CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Ever dream of turning your passion for aviation into a career? We're looking for a [director, financial planning and analysis](#); [office services supervisor](#); [major gifts officer](#), and [director of outreach and events](#). To learn more about other AOPA career opportunities, [visit AOPA Online](#). [f](#) [in](#) [t](#)

## COMMUNITY

### Picture Perfect

AOPA's online photo gallery allows you to upload your own aviation photography as well as view, rate, and comment on others' photos.

**M** Forums: What type of college degree do you need to become a professional pilot?  
[Read more >>](#)

Your favorite aviation images from AOPA Pilot are still available online through this new gallery. [Take a look, and submit your own photos!!](#)



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## Engage in Aviation

Check out user-submitted events from your region. To [include an event](#) or to [search all events in the calendar](#), visit AOPA Online. AOPA does not endorse the events listed below, nor have *ePilot* editors edited the submissions. AOPA assumes no responsibility for events listed.

## M MY MEMBERSHIP

### QUIZ ME!

Here's an edited question asked by an AOPA member who contacted our aviation services staff through the AOPA Pilot Information Center. Test your knowledge.

**Question:** What is pilotage?

**Answer:** Pilotage means navigation by visual reference to landmarks. It is a method of navigation that can be used on any course that has adequate checkpoints, but it is more commonly used in conjunction with dead reckoning and VFR radio communication. With the popularity of GPS, pilotage has largely been replaced with "direct to" navigation, but it is important to keep the skill sharp for both a backup and an emergency means of navigation. Read more in this article from [Flight Training](#) magazine.

Got a question for our aviation services staff? The AOPA Pilot Information Center is a service available to all members as part of the annual dues. Call 800/USA-AOPA (800/872-2672), or email to [pilotassist@aopa.org](mailto:pilotassist@aopa.org).



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