



Chapter 736 Newsletter for April 2014

At our last chapter meeting we were joined by Annie Beaulieu and Jim Platz from PALS (Patient AirLift Services). They gave a very informative discussion about the PALS program. Patient AirLift Services arranges volunteer medical flights and free air transportation for needy individuals throughout the greater Northeast region, from Virginia to Maine, Ohio to Massachusetts.

The need is great for patients in remote areas to be able to get to the medical facilities they need in the bigger cities and that is what the program provides. Pilots and other volunteers donate their time to fly these patients to their treatments. For many of these patients, if it were not for this program, they would not be able to get to their appointments. It was a great presentation and we hope we can spread the word about their organization.

Check out their website: <http://www.palservices.org/> or their Facebook page (search on Patient AirLift Services)



Four-year-old Elliana is a PALS frequent flier. Every week she flies from northern Maine to Boston for five days of proton beam radiation therapy for an extremely rare tumor on her eye. She poses here with pilot Mike Barnard, while she shows off her new mittens, one of the many pairs knit for PALS children by Annie and her mom, Polly Hathaway. Thank you Mike, Polly and Annie for your compassion and generosity!

LSA Safety Conference "A Good First Step"

Representatives from the FAA met with industry advocates at Sun 'n Fun on Wednesday to discuss a variety of issues that have arisen regarding light-sport aircraft since the category was created 10 years ago. "We had a very productive three-hour meeting, and

the FAA was very responsive," Dan Johnson, president of the Light Aircraft Manufacturers Association, told *AVweb*. "We had 23 people there, including four from the FAA, and representatives from LAMA, U.S. Ultralight Association, the Aircraft Kit Industry Association, EAA, and AOPA." Johnson said the main topics of discussion were commercial use of LSA, clarification of some confusing regulations regarding flight instruction, and a recent policy draft that seemingly could prohibit carrying passengers in electric-powered aircraft and aircraft converted from S-LSA to E-LSA.

In some cases, Johnson said, the FAA representatives said the way the rules are written don't accurately reflect their policy stand. For example, one regulation has caused confusion about whether the time logged with a sport pilot instructor can later be applied to a private pilot rating. "They said they never meant to imply that it couldn't be," Johnson said, "but the way the regulation is written, it's unclear." Johnson also said the industry would like to expand the commercial use of LSA. Overseas, LSA are often used for purposes such as crop dusting and glider towing, he said, and they are used in the U.S. by government agencies that aren't subject to the FAA rules, for border patrol and law enforcement. "An LSA is much more economical and quieter than a helicopter," Johnson said. The industry also would like to be able to certify gyrocopters and electric-powered aircraft under the LSA rules, and to simplify the process to permit instruction in ultralights. "So we got these things on the table," Johnson said. "It was just a start, but it was a pretty big first step." Johnson said everyone at the meeting agreed to continue the discussion and meet again at a later date, but no time or place has yet been set.

FAA announces rulemaking on third class medical

The FAA on April 2 announced plans to go through a rulemaking process that could result in expanding the number of pilots eligible to fly without the need for a third class medical certificate. The announcement comes two years after AOPA and the Experimental Aircraft Association jointly petitioned the FAA to expand the third class medical exemption to cover more pilots and aircraft.

The rulemaking effort, which the FAA is calling the "Private Pilot Privileges without a Medical Certificate" project, will consider whether to allow private pilots to fly without a third class medical certificate in certain circumstances. Instead, pilots will be able to use other criteria, including a valid driver's license, to demonstrate their fitness to fly. The agency offered no other details of the planned rulemaking.

As part of the announcement, the FAA said it will consider whether it can safely provide any relief to the medical requirement before the rulemaking process is complete. The agency also said it is still considering the AOPA-EAA petition, which received 16,000 overwhelmingly positive comments.

The rulemaking announcement comes as the FAA has been under increasing pressure to allow more pilots to fly a wider range of aircraft without a third class medical, a privilege already enjoyed by sport pilots.

Legislation to expand the medical exemption has been gaining momentum in both the House and Senate. That legislation, known as the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act,

would go a step further than the AOPA-EAA petition. Under the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act, pilots who make noncommercial VFR flights in aircraft weighing up to 6,000 pounds with no more than six seats would be exempt from the third class medical certification process. Pilots would be allowed to carry up to five passengers, fly at altitudes below 14,000 feet msl, and fly no faster than 250 knots. The FAA would be required to report on the safety consequences of the new rule after five years.

AOPA members Rep. Todd Rokita (R-Ind.), a member of the House General Aviation Caucus, and GA Caucus Co-Chair Sam Graves (R-Mo.) introduced the General Aviation Pilot Protection Act in December, and the bill now has 86 bipartisan cosponsors. Sens. John Boozman (R-Ark.), Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), all members of the General Aviation Caucus, on March 11 introduced an identical measure in the Senate which now has eight cosponsors.

For their part, congressional leaders expressed hope that the FAA's rulemaking would deliver relief for pilots and promised to continue to focus on the issue.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at the Weathervane Restaurant in Waterville on Monday, April 21st. Please arrive around 6:00 pm if you plan to have dinner so that the meeting can begin at its normal time of 7:30 pm.