

IAOPA eNews February 2009

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AOPA-South Africa Elects Officers

In January 2009 elections, AOPA-South Africa elected Dirk Uys President, Koos Marais Secretary, and Willie Bezuidenhout, Kobus Conradie, Meent Borchers, Jan Boezaart and Johan Booysen Board members.

President Uys noted, "We at AOPA have defined our role as being supportive to aviation where the objective is to be part of a process where general aviation reaches a consistent stage, compared to international standards, to be user friendly, to grow and at the same time have a safety history to be proud of."

"Coming from a generation who are in the habit of romanticizing the past believing that what we had in the past was better than what we now have, I am willing to make the statement that aviation in South Africa is the best that it ever was where the regulatory control of aviation under the South African Civil Aviation Authority has a communication and consultative process including such a variety of aviation related organizations, including AOPA-SA, that there is virtually no way that the end result will not conform to the future that we all aspire to."

"AOPA-SA is a committee member of the Civil Aviation Regulation Committee where all aviation regulations are made and amended before publication and over the last decade we are consistently in the process of conforming to ICAO standards."

See www.aopa.co.za

Satellite ELT Monitoring Shifts Frequencies

On 1 February 2009, international Cospas-Sarsat satellites will cease processing distress signals emitted by 121.5 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs). Pilots flying aircraft equipped with 121.5 MHz ELTs after that date will have to depend on pilots of over flying aircraft and or ground stations monitoring 121.5 to hear and report distress alert signals, transmitted from a possible crash site.

Currently only an unknown but presumably small number of general aviation aircraft are equipped with the new 406 MHz ELTs, which are still monitored by Cospas-Sarsat. This means that a 121.5 MHz ELT equipped aircraft may have a reduced chance of detection in an emergency situation. Therefore, when you fly, look out for your fellow pilots and when possible monitor 121.5 MHz. If a 121.5 MHz ELT signal is heard, report to the nearest air traffic or flight information facility, with the time and location of when you first detect the ELT, when it is the loudest and when it drops off your radio. Listening and reporting may well be the difference that saves a life.

See www.cospas-sarsat.org

AOPA-Kenya Officers Elected

On 22 November 2008, in an Annual General Meeting of only 25 minutes, the Management Committee of the AOPA-Kenya/Aero Club of East Africa was unanimously elected for another term. Harro Trempenau remains Chairman, vowing (again) to retire at the end of the year. Adrian Luckhurst is again the Treasurer and Vice-Chairman. Kim McKenzie was also re-elected a Vice-Chairman. Captain Hirani of Boskovic Air Charters is the only new face on the Committee, replacing Jeni Stowe who is unfortunately leaving Kenya. Other perennial Committee members for 2009 are: Julie Gill, Chris Hardisty, Col. E.K. Waithaka, Cor Roest, Eric Boullay, Greg Love, and Ashif Lalani.

Chairman Trempenau reported that the Club was in good health although the economic effects of the post-election trauma and the credit crunch also hit the Aero Club as income was down and costs were up. He promised that the policies of fiscal discipline, innovation and physical improvements, as well as aviation advocacy, would be continued throughout 2009. In particular, the new "Branch Club House" at Orly Airpark is under construction and will be ready by mid-2009. Members present at the AGM unanimously approved an increase in club joining fees and subscriptions, in line with inflation. A new audit firm was also approved, after the previous one had increased its fees beyond what was acceptable to the Committee.

UK Radio Spectrum Charges Suspended

The UK Office of Communications, Ofcom, has been forced to go back to the drawing board over its plans to charge for radio spectrum following a furious reaction from the aviation industry and a warning that the regulator's plans run counter to international law. In a major victory for common sense, the government's communications regulator has abandoned plans to start charging for aviation radios in 2009 and is reconsidering the whole issue. The decision will save millions of pounds. It was proposed to charge £126,000 a year for every DME and £115,000 for every ILS and VOR, and even .25 MHz radios at rural airfields would have attracted a charge of £4,950.

AOPA-UK's CEO Martin Robinson says: "Although this proposal may come back in some form, it's difficult to see how Ofcom can overcome the obstacles it faces, particularly with regard to international law."

Ofcom had said the charges were designed to improve efficiency in spectrum use, but aviation frequencies are ring-fenced by ICAO mandate and cannot be sold to commercial users. "This was a tax-raising plan and nothing else," says Robinson, "and they shot themselves in the foot by trying to dress it up as an efficiency measure. They have retired hurt, but they will certainly be trying to find ways around the problem and I'm sure the proposal will come back in some form."

Ofcom says it will now come forward with new proposals which will not be implemented in 2009, and there will be a full round of consultation before decisions are made.

COPA Uses Special Action Fund

The Canadian Owners and Pilots Association established its Special Action Fund (SAF) in 1978 to help finance a campaign to convince the government to stop a 10 percent excise tax on private aircraft purchases. Members quickly responded with donations to the fund permitting COPA to successfully eliminate the tax via legal means. In 1984, facing a number of challenges to Canadians freedom to fly, the SAF was incorporated and expenditure approval procedures formalized by the COPA Board of Directors. This "war chest" has been used to good advantage over the years in fighting court cases involving general aviation issues within Canada.

COPA ceased soliciting funds for the SAF in 1996 when a substantial reserve had been developed and attractive interest rates kept the fund at adequate levels. Unfortunately this is no longer the case. Despite prudent spending, the combination of low interest rates and increasing expenditures for legal action has resulted in a depleted fund.

The most recent challenge is in Quebec, where precedents were set many years ago against the federal jurisdiction concept. An appeal by the Province of Quebec challenges two decisions in Quebec that upheld exclusive federal jurisdiction over aeronautics, regarding control of airport activities. The Canadian Supreme Court will hear both cases in the near future, necessitating the rebuilding of the fund.

The stated objectives of the Special Action Fund Inc. were and still are:

- 1) to support the aims, objectives and activities of the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association; and
- 2) to solicit monies by way of donations or otherwise and to hold and expend the same in the furtherance of the objectives stated above.

Since COPA has a good record regarding the use of the fund over time members are expected to rebuild it for use in these landmark cases.

From the Secretary

Difficult economic times prevail in every corner of the globe. Not a day goes by without grim financial news at all levels of commercial enterprise and government; worse, there seems to be no quick fix to these problems. Unfortunately, aviation is not immune to these factors and since our segment depends heavily on discretionary spending, dark clouds and turbulence cover our horizon.

Yet, our community has weathered recessionary storms in each decade in the recent past. The passion for flight is fortunately the glue that binds our community, regardless of the trials encountered. Therefore, we must appeal to our members' love of flying and the hope for better times to smooth out the inevitable bumps we experience along the way.

Our members need a vision for the future that includes a return to the good times they have recently experienced. But, they must be reassured of this possibility through concrete actions taken by their AOPA. Efforts to reduce cost of flying, lift regulatory restrictions, keep airports open and work with other segments of the aviation community will provide the promise of return to the halcyon days we have all enjoyed in the past. These actions must be transmitted to the membership to have the desired effect—regular newsletters and periodicals are an important marketing tool.

I encourage our affiliates to share their methods of obtaining and retaining members during trying times with me so that I may pass them on to all AOPAs.

Let me hear from you,

John Sheehan

The International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations represents the interests of more than 470,000 pilots and aircraft owners in 66 countries. Formed in 1962, IAOPA is dedicated to promoting the peaceful uses of general aviation and aerial work worldwide.

IAOPA eNews is published monthly by the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations for the use of its affiliate members in representing and advocating general aviation and aerial work interests worldwide.