

# The WFC Flyer – June 2012



**Mooney Aircraft Pilots Association Safety Foundation  
Pilot Proficiency Program for the owners of Mooney aircraft**  
3-day course at Niagara Falls (KAIG) airport.

## Important Dates

**General Meeting**  
June 14, 2012  
7:00 PM Clubhouse

**Board Meeting**  
July 5, 2012  
7:00 PM Clubhouse

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## From the President

Last month, I shared with the members that the FAA might set a threshold for qualifying for FAA AIP or ACIP funding at 100 based airplanes.

The FAA has released its report, [\*General Aviation Airports: A National Asset\*](#). This report is the culmination of an 18-month study that classifies General Aviation airports into four categories, National, Regional, Local and Basic. I did not include the descriptions for National and Regional as we do not fit those categories - just think "JFK" and "Rochester International". The FAA's description of Local and Basic are as follows:

**Local:** Serves local/regional markets. Moderate levels of activity with some multiengine propeller aircraft. Averaging about 33 based propeller-driven aircraft and no jets.

**Basic:** Often serving critical aeronautical functions within local and regional markets. Moderate - low levels of activity. Averaging about 10 propeller-driven aircraft and no jets.

According to the study, 2437 airports were classified into the four categories. A quick read suggests we would fall neatly into the "Local" category. With about 65 based aircraft (nearly twice the national average), over 25,000 operations a year and room for growth, it seems like a good category for us to be in. However, such is not the case.

If one reads the list of criteria the FAA determined for existing "reliever" airports, we now need to have 90 based aircraft to be in the Basic category. That's ten fewer airplanes than we thought we needed, but it leaves us, along with 496 other airports and landing facilities, in what the FAA calls the "Unclassified" category.

"Unclassified" includes airports *"that did not fit into one of the new categories"*. The study further states, *"Most of these airports have been in the NPIAS for decades and may have seen an erosion of based aircraft and activity (because of population and economic shifts or recession) or may have no based aircraft. Twenty-two of these airports are privately owned and were originally included in the national system as relievers for commercial service airports, but no longer meet the entry criteria."*

**GLAUCOMA**

This is a disease that causes a progressive and insidious loss of the peripheral vision due to damage to the optic nerve; if untreated it will cause, as well, loss of the central vision and irreversible blindness.

In the US approximately two million people are affected and about half of these do not know that they have the disease as it is so slow and often goes unnoticed in its progression. It is the leading cause of blindness in the world.

Most cases are associated with increased intraocular pressure, but about 20% have normal pressures. Other risk factors include the male sex, family history, Afro-American race, thin central cornea and being elderly.

There are essentially 2 types of glaucoma:

1. Open angle (75% of cases): there is a defect in the trabecular mesh work (drainage system) causing an accumulation of aqueous fluid resulting in an increased intraocular pressure.
2. Acute closed angle: the angle between the iris (colored part of eye) and the cornea is narrowed; this causes a lack of re-absorption of the aqueous fluid. Those who are farsighted are at increased risk as the anterior chamber is shallow and with narrow angles.

Unlike open angle, acute closed angle is not insidious and like the name implies it is a sudden loss of vision accompanied by pain in reddened eye, nausea and vomiting, abundant tearing and headaches. This is a true medical emergency as the pressure must be lowered quickly to prevent permanent damage to the optic nerve.

The FAA takes a particular interest in glaucoma for 3 reasons:

1. Acute closed angle glaucoma can cause sudden incapacitation of the aviator.

Twenty six airports (not including heliports) in New York State are now in the "Unclassified" category. Those airports range from a low of "Unknown" for number of based aircraft all the way up to 65, (Williamson-Sodus). Some have runways in disrepair, host only ultralight aircraft or have annual operations as low as 10 per year. All but two of New York's "unclassified" airports are privately owned. Williamson-Sodus is the largest airport on the list (by number of based aircraft), and the only airport with AWOS. State.

The FAA has left the door open to further study, and we will be discussing this with them. Fortunately, this is not a surprise, and we have put in motion some plans to move on without future FAA assistance, and efforts to meet the 90-plane threshold. I'll discuss those plans in more detail next month.

2. Open angle glaucoma, if untreated can cause progressive damage to the optic nerve. As initially this causes a loss of peripheral vision, one might not notice this until such time as part of the central vision is lost and by this time there is permanent damage to the optic nerve.
3. Possible side effects from the medications. Some of the older agents (carbonic anhydrase inhibitors) can cause drowsiness, dilated pupils, nausea, diarrhea, blood problems and kidney stones. Cholinergic agonists can cause headache and decreased night vision. Beta blockers can very rarely cause cardiac side effects.

There is a new agent called latanoprost that is very well tolerated whose major side effect is lengthening and darkening of the eyelashes ( may not be so bad).

The AME must deny or defer to the FAA any applicant with a loss of visual fields, diagnosis of glaucoma or new intraocular hypertension. The aviator may be granted a Special Issuance by the FAA if certain conditions are met.

**Our New York to Florida Cross Country flight**  
**Part 2 - THE FLIGHT HOME**  
by Randy Christian

Our vacation was great, everything we could have imagined. My brother-in-law and I even loaded up the golf clubs in the plane one day and flew over to another airport to play golf for the day.

Our trip on the way back was again, great, but dealt us quite a hand of unexpected tricks and surprises.

Our plans were to start our trip back on Saturday with potentially needing to finish up on Sunday. However, in watching the weather reports, it kept indicating that Rochester was calling for thunderstorms on Sunday. By Friday morning, we made the decision that we needed to depart a day earlier than planned in order to get the first leg of our trip out of the way so we could get safely home Saturday afternoon. We mapped it out and decided Beaufort, SC (KARW) was a good stopping point. It was just north of Hilton Head, which we knew had golf tournaments going on. Estimated flight time was 2 ½ hours.

They issued a TFR as Obama was visiting Tampa on Friday. We couldn't fly from 11:45 til 3:15pm. OK, no problem. I took my sister-in-law up for a flight in the morning so she could get some pictures of The Pier and her work in the background. The tower definitely made sure that I was aware of the impending TFR and they watched me carefully. We were safely on the ground before the TFR went into effect.



We enjoyed our day and got back to the airport about 3:45 ready to take off. I, again, took my sister-in-law for another quick flight for some more pictures as the weather had been cloudy in the morning. Once done, we were wheels up at about 4:30pm. It was hot, hazy, very bumpy and now we had a good headwind. We decided it was just Florida not wanting us to leave. It felt like it took forever to get to Daytona Beach area and our estimated time of arrival was now at 2 hours 45 minutes. We were definitely not making good time. Once we were offshore a bit, things calmed down quite a bit and we were able to really start enjoying the views from above. Flying up the shoreline was gorgeous. We

flew right over Hilton Head and realized the entire place is one gigantic golf course !!! The sun was going down and our airport was in sight. Wheels down at about 7:30 pm. Called a taxi and off to our next hotel for the night.



In the morning, we reviewed our continued flight plan. We really enjoyed flying up the coast and with a quick view of the weather - we knew we had the day to get home. We mapped it out and decided the extra hour of flight time to continue up the coastline with a planned stop to visit ex-Williamson Flying club members, Archie & Louise Woodworth in Elizabeth City, NC (KECG) would be very rewarding. Archie gave us a heads up that there were regularly blimps at the airport we would be landing and tethered at 3,000ft. SAY WHAT ?!?!?! Yep, a quick glance at the chart and it warns you of blimps. Oh goodie, this could be fun !!!

Off we went, coastline just to our west. Myrtle Beach was super cool to fly over, we could see the banner planes below us pulling their signs, para-sailing people down there, and all the hotels and the amusement park. It just got prettier.

As we came into the Elizabeth City area, all we could think about is that there should be blimps floating around in the air somewhere. Pattern altitude was 1,012 ft, so technically if the blimps were around; they would be above us with some tether line we couldn't see. Wonderful!! We quickly spotted the blimp hangar and saw that it was off to the side of the airport. We scanned all around us to make sure one of these beauties wasn't awaiting us and all was clear. Funny thing was, now we were kind of bummed that we didn't get to see one up there. We landed and Archie and Louise were standing there waiting for us !!!



We had a great lunch and got a quick tour of the area. Rumor has it that we got our picture taken in front of the exact airplane that Williamson Flying Club member, Billy Bach, flew back in the day. What a small world and how honored we were to be able to see such a beautiful plane !!! Wow Billy, impressive !!!



We planned out our next part of the flight. We would be around Washington DC and lots of military space. We mapped out a waypoint to navigate us through the MOA's and our next stop would be in Pottstown, PA (N47). We took a quick glance at weather and we could see some stuff off to the west

of Rochester, but didn't worry too much at this point. Off we went.

We weren't right over the coastline anymore, but we could still see it. We saw Virginia Beach off to our east and then we became more focused on venturing northward as that was where the MOA's got heavy. ATC again was great and pretty much left us alone. They did tell us the MOA's were hot, so we were careful to stay in the narrow corridor of non-MOA space. Before we knew it, we were landing in Pottstown, PA and fueling up. YEAH - our last fuel stop and we'll be home in a couple hours !!! ...or so we thought !

While they were fueling the plane, we took a quick look at weather and uh oh, things had deteriorated drastically since our last stop. Just north of us all the way up home there was all kind of ugliness going on... and when we looked to the west, hoping that it was clear behind it, more red ugliness to follow. We decided that all of the sudden, Pottstown looked to be a good place to spend the night and we'd evaluate again in the morning. Everybody was great there. One of the airport patrons, Bob, ended up being our personal chauffeur as we could not get a hold of a taxi or a car rental place. He took us to our hotel.

Another good night of sleep and food in our belly's and Bob's smiling face waiting for us as he returned to take us back to the airport. What a great guy !!! Here it was early Sunday morning and he was up and running us all over the place. He said he'd be visiting WFC in the future, so if Bob from N47 shows up, take good care of him !!!!!

Looking at weather, things were not great. I called for another weather briefing and they were saying ceilings were low, but expected to lift by 11 and just continue to improve. We hung out at the airport and continued to make calls. They continued to indicate all was good and improving. Called a couple airports ahead and they were reporting ceilings at 5,000 and visibility 10 miles. Sweet !!! We had less than 2 hours to go and we'd be home. We took off and away we went.

Once we were up in the air we noticed right away it was very hazy, we had quite a headwind and visibility was ok, but I would have preferred better. We continued on, watching carefully to make sure our visibility didn't diminish any further. However, about 40 minutes into the flight, visibility did start to drop to minimums. We knew we had just flown over an airport a few minutes prior, so made the decision to turn back to land and re-evaluate. This ended up being Hazleton, PA (KHZL). Once again, people were super nice offering up pretty much whatever we needed.

I called for another weather briefing, they were saying the same thing, ceilings lifting, conditions continuing to improve. Very frustrating to say the least. We decided to walk into town to grab a bite to eat and a cup of coffee and allow an hour or so to pass to allow these 'improved' conditions to show up.

Once back at the airport, we checked weather on the iPad and we could see between us and home was all green. With what we'd been seeing, we had to assume potentially low visibility as well. We noticed to the west, there appeared to be a clear path, but more green slowly coming behind that path. We decided to check every airport along that path. All reporting VFR !!! We took back off with Hornell, NY (KHTF) in our sights for a waypoint to turn.

When we took off, the iPad was calculating our trip to be a 2 hour flight home. It was definitely clearer, but ceilings were still keeping us from getting above all the turbulence, so we were getting bumped around pretty good, we had a huge headwind and we were sure that cars were going faster than we were !!! As we approached Hornell, the iPad was now saying we have over 2 hours to go to get home. Hmmm, what is wrong with this picture? Yep, we had a horrible headwind. Between the unplanned landing in Hazleton and our extreme headwind, we decided to land in Hornell and fuel up to

be on the safe side.

Checking weather again, now there was a great red big blob right over Williamson and a couple in between us. We sat for a few, and then planned a route straight towards Rochester, in case we needed to land again. Right before take off, the weather in between us calmed and the red stuff over Williamson was moving off to the east. We took off, flew over Dansville and saw one of the finger lakes. Visibility was much better and now that we were out of the PA mountains, we weren't being thrown around anymore. We bounced over each of the finger lakes and saw Canandaigua's airport and headed straight for home. Our airport has never looked so inviting and the flight from Hornell home was the best one of the day. Our trip had come to an end and we made it home safe. It was calming to say the least.

As we sat at the airport reflecting on our overall trip, we couldn't have been happier. We stuck to our guns about flexibility and had a safe trip. We now have stories that we can tell (as long as people will listen). We have experiences to grow upon. And we can't wait to plan the next one !!! Oh yeah - and I have a whole new respect for an IFR rating !!!