

# The WFC Flyer – July 2012



The July/August 2012 issue of [FAA Safety Briefing](#) explores the fun side of personal flying. Articles focus on many of the interesting activities and opportunities pilots have to keep the spirit of fun and adventure in aviation alive and well.

## Important Dates

**General Meeting**  
July 12, 2012  
7:00 PM Clubhouse

**Board Meeting**  
August 2, 2012  
7:00 PM Clubhouse

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## From the President

Last month I described in detail the new FAA classifications for airports and that we have fallen into the “unclassified” category. The end result is that FAA funding for future projects is at best a case-by-case situation. At the same time, the New York Department of Transportation has ended its program of funding things like hangars, or providing the local share for FAA grants.

I think we can all understand that budgets have driven this decision and while it’s not specifically spelled out in the new FAA Airport Study, the reality is that many privately-owned airports, even large ones like ours, have been placed into that “unclassified” category even though they are public-use facilities.

Last month, I also wrote that none of this was a surprise and that I’d inform you this month about some of the things we’re doing to adjust. I won’t go into detail on each of these items, but offer them as food for thought for any member who would be interested in helping out. Efforts have been underway in the following areas:

1. Community Outreach – increasing awareness of and interest in the airport and the Club
2. Marketing available hangars and tie-downs to aircraft owners around the region
3. Compatible land use – finding ways to generate revenue using our property along Route 104
4. Private hangars – encouraging construction of privately-owned hangars on airport property by individuals and companies
5. Local Government contact – keeping our airport at the “top of minds” with town and county leaders and county agencies

All of these items have forward movement, some of them for almost a year. So we have put into motion efforts to forge on without funding from the State or the FAA.

If we were to “take a snapshot” right now, the airport (and the club) is in good shape. We don’t rely on any funding from outside sources to operate the airport, so that’s a non-issue. Routine maintenance on buildings and our infrastructure has always come out of our own pockets. On occasion, we have asked members to help financially with larger projects and there are always ways a private investor can see a return on his or her investment in the club.

In early 2013, our note on the hangars will be paid off. The forecast is good, the conditions are favorable and we simply need to define and meet objectives without the FAA or NYS DOT.

The future is as bright as we can make it.

## FAA Medical Certification

**THE APPLICATION** - When you arrive for your FAA medical examination, you will be asked to fill out an FAA form 8500\_8. It is interesting to note that all of medicine is reduced to 23 "yes" or "no" questions covering less than 1/3 of this one page application. The FAA is asking you to indicate every medical issue, including alcohol and recreational drug use, which has occurred in your life. Any administrative actions or convictions related to alcohol must also be reported to the security Division of the FAA within 60 days. It is in your best interest to tell the truth. The FAA checks your driving record each time you apply for a medical and publishes a toll-free hotline number so that anyone can anonymously report you. Falsifying this form may invalidate your insurance policy. Also, it can cost you up to \$250,000, five years in prison and the loss of all airman certificates. The AME faces similar penalties. Remember that the standards are liberal. Don't risk it! The first time you are to answer "yes" to any of the 23 questions you should have a copy of all medical records related to the issue in-hand. These records should be legible, typewritten and should detail the issue and the chronology. Your airman identification number (Social Security or FAA assigned number) and date of birth should be on each page. If the FAA has previously assigned you a Pathological Index (PI) for this or another condition, this number should also be on each page. Make three copies of all records and at least one of all FAA correspondence, one for the FAA, one for the AME and one for your file. If your application is deferred to the FAA in Oklahoma, you may want to keep the following number handy. The phone number for the FAA Medical Certification Division is (405) 954-4821. Noting the time, date and person that you spoke with is also a good idea.

**MEDICATIONS** - You will be asked to list all prescription and over-the-counter medications that you currently use. The condition which the medication is treating is the main issue with the FAA. The list of medications that will keep you on the ground includes, but is not limited to: anti-depressants, stimulants, and any other drugs (or combination of drugs) that produce adverse side effects or treats a grounding medical condition. Medications or medical conditions that present no problem on the runway may have significant adverse effects at 10,000 feet. A good example is Benadryl, an over-the-counter cold medication, which is the most common drug found in the bodies of dead pilots. This drug (diphenhydramine) is in several other cold, cough and sleep preparations.

The FAA does not publish an official list of approved drugs. Pilots should read all prescription labels carefully, ask your physician or pharmacist about adverse effects and consult your AME to find out if a drug or the condition itself is acceptable to the FAA.

**HEART** - Cardiovascular conditions are the most common issue which disqualifies pilots. Blood pressure is a simple heart issue which sidelines many pilots. The FAA's absolute max BP is 155 / 95 (systolic & diastolic must be below these numbers), yet many physicians will prescribe medication for numbers greater than 130/85. Pilots with the diagnosis of hypertension or those simply using medications to control blood pressure must provide blood/lab work, a resting EKG and a typewritten letter from the treating physician to gain approval. Irregular heart beats (arrhythmia), murmurs, and many other cardiovascular conditions also can stop the show unnecessarily. Remember that it is very important to have all essential medical records at the time of an FAA medical exam. The FAA will assume your condition is the worst possible case until they have documentation to show otherwise. If your condition is extraordinary or you don't provide adequate documentation, the AME may defer the decision to the Regional Flight Surgeon or Oklahoma City which can delay issuance by several months.

**VISION** - First and Second class certification requires distance vision be corrected to 20/20 and near vision corrected to 20/40. Third class certification requires that your near and distant vision be corrected to 20/40. Near or distant vision is not usually a permanent disqualifying issue since lenses or surgery corrects most pilots to the FAA standards and waivers may be obtained even if one has only one good eye. It is important to note that surgery will not give you better vision than contact lenses or glasses and while these procedures are commonly performed with success, there is a chance that you may permanently degrade your vision beyond FAA standards. In some cases distant vision is obtained but near vision is lost. Be certain you are a good candidate for this procedure.

Color vision testing can present an obstacle to many pilot applicants. Provided you can tell the difference between red, green and white, it is usually possible to obtain approval or a permanent waiver for FAA medical certification even with a mild color deficiency.

One problem is that the colors on the sheets which most AME's use can fade and in some cases are not illuminated properly. The FAA does have several other tests which can be substituted to demonstrate sufficient color vision. If you have recently lost the use of an eye or had eye surgery, the FAA requires that your eyes and brain to stabilize prior to re-certification. If you have had surgery or know your vision does not meet the FAA's standards, you should have your eye doctor fill out an FAA Eye Evaluation Form 8500-7 prior to your FAA examination. Those with Glaucoma must have FAA form 8500-14 filled out. These forms are available from your AME and may also be downloaded at: [www.leftseat.com](http://www.leftseat.com).

Even if you can't meet the standards, a medical flight test may be arranged to demonstrate flight fitness.

#### **DISQUALIFYING CONDITIONS AND WAIVERS -**

The Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) specify several "disqualifying" conditions. These include: heart conditions, diabetes, psychiatric issues, substance dependence or abuse, significant neurological disorders. The list in the FAR's is somewhat misleading since the FAA routinely allows Special Issuance waivers under FAR 67.401. This regulation permits discretionary issuance to those the FAA considers at low risk for incapacitation. Almost all of the above conditions are waiverable under the Special Issuance regulation provided detailed medical documentation demonstrates flight fitness.

The FAA currently considers some issues absolutely disqualifying. These include: major psychosis or personality disorder, double heart valve, complete heart replacement, implanted cardiac defibrillator and current seizures disorders. While your AME may be able to expedite certification by phoning the FAA, initial Special Issuance waivers are typically issued by the FAA's regional flight surgeon or the Federal Air Surgeon via Oklahoma. If your medical records do not adequately detail your medical history, you will be dealing with the FAA in Oklahoma, not your local AME.

## Our New York to Florida Cross Country flight Part 3 – Aeronautical Decision Making by Randy Christian

As a pilot, you are trained that there are constant decisions that need to be made, to expect the unexpected and to be willing to be flexible. Reflecting back on our trip to Florida, I realized how true this was. We were faced with many decisions. The thing we had said from the beginning was FLEXIBILITY, FLEXIBILITY FLEXIBILITY.

In Part 1, you read that our trip down was pretty much uneventful. But even with that, we were faced with some decisions that needed to be made.



Weather was great when we took off to our first stop. But our 2<sup>nd</sup> planned stop was not going to be attainable without waiting potentially several hours for weather to clear out. We made the decision that if there was a safe route, we'd like to continue pressing southward. Luckily the system was just south of us and we could get around it by flying further west.

When we took off from our 2<sup>nd</sup> stop, we were aware that we'd be pushing our comfort level landing after sunset at our final destination. We had an alternate airport in mind that was ½ hour closer, just in case. As we crossed into Florida, it became more apparent that I needed to make a decision to push forward to getting to our final destination right as it got dark (sun was quickly setting now), or deciding to stop ½ hour earlier and finish up in the morning. After considering that I'm not familiar with the area, I'm flying over the Gulf of Mexico and the time it could take to familiarize myself with the area and getting into the pattern to land at an unfamiliar airport, I decided it would be best to land at our alternate airport. We landed and enjoyed the night - to finish up our flight in the morning.

In Part II, you read how our trip back was full of obstacles and challenges we were faced with.

Our plans to fly back on Saturday with flexibility into Sunday quickly changed Friday morning as we watched the weather for Rochester indicating thunderstorms for Sunday. A decision was made to leave a day early to get us home on Saturday afternoon.

At our stop in Pottstown, PA, the weather ahead was showing bad weather between us with worse weather following behind. A decision was made to stay overnight in Pottstown and re-evaluate the weather Sunday morning.



Sunday morning the weather was ok where we were, and weather briefings were indicating low ceilings that would improve as the day went along, especially after 11am. We took off and immediately noticed the visibility wasn't great. Once faced with the diminishing visibility, we opted to turn around and land in order to re-evaluate and check weather again rather than pressing forward 'HOPING' visibility would improve. Once we landed and saw the weather ahead, I was pretty certain that if we would have continued on, we would have flown into much worse conditions.

Then a decision was made to fly northwest rather than just north in order to hopefully get around the weather that had just grounded us. We mapped out each and every airport from that point forward and truly flew from one to another (not necessarily landing at each - but available if landing needed and ready to turn back to the most recent airport in the event that the weather decided to challenge us again).

With the unexpected landing due to weather and the strong headwinds we were encountering flying over the mountains in PA, we decided to land at our waypoint in Hornell in order to fuel up just one more time to be safe. We should have been fine with fuel to make it home, however with the continued battle with headwinds and our estimated time home not changing from the moment we took off, I was more comfortable stopping and fueling up rather than pushing it and having one more thing to concern myself with.

I will say, once again, that I would do this trip again in a heartbeat. Would I have done things differently knowing what I know now? Probably so. But with not knowing how the weather was going to sneak in Saturday much earlier than predicted, I feel really good about the decisions that were made. While we've flown cross country trips to Connecticut, Vermont and Michigan, I consider this trip my 1<sup>st</sup> official 'TRUE' Cross-Country trip and I'll never forget it. We are looking forward to adding weather to the iPad with the new Stratus product that Foreflight has just released and planning out our next safe trip !!!