40 FORTY YEARS OF AOPA

HOW AOPA WORKS FOR AVIATION

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AOPA 124393

AOPA was created in 1939 to be the knowledgeable, articulate, unified "Voice of Private Aviation," which would contribute input to the then-new Civil Aeronautics Authority, which was engaged in the process of drafting the Civil Air Regulations. In modern terminology, AOPA's primary function was government relations; programs for special membership services were subsequently developed by the then executive secretary, Joseph B. Hartranft, Jr., to motivate more of the 12,000 private pilots of the era to join the small, 3,000-member association. Forty years later, these remain the dual purposes of AOPA, now an association with more than a quarter of a million members.

Because it operates in an environment of politics as a matter of course, it may be said that all segments of AOPA are concerned with government in one way or another. But the brunt of day-to-day government relations falls on a group that is relatively unknown outside of Washington circles, where it is highly respected—the Policy and Technical Planning Division.

This division, headed by Senior Vice President Victor J. Kayne, performs several services. It deals with the FAA on nuts-and-bolts issues involving air traffic control, airports, airspace and research and development (R&D), and with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on frequency allocations and technical requirements affecting general aviation. It is involved in improving aviation weather services for general aviation and working with various government agencies for improved aviation charts. It also deals with the U.S. Congress and with many departments of the Executive Branch—the White House, the Office of Management and Budget, the State Department, Interior Department, Commerce Department, Transportation Department, Energy Department, Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The list goes on and on; it astonishes outsiders to learn how many government departments, agencies, administrations, commissions, authorities and offices can take shots at aviation, particularly at private flying. This is the gauntlet that the Policy and

Technical Planning Division runs every day of the week.

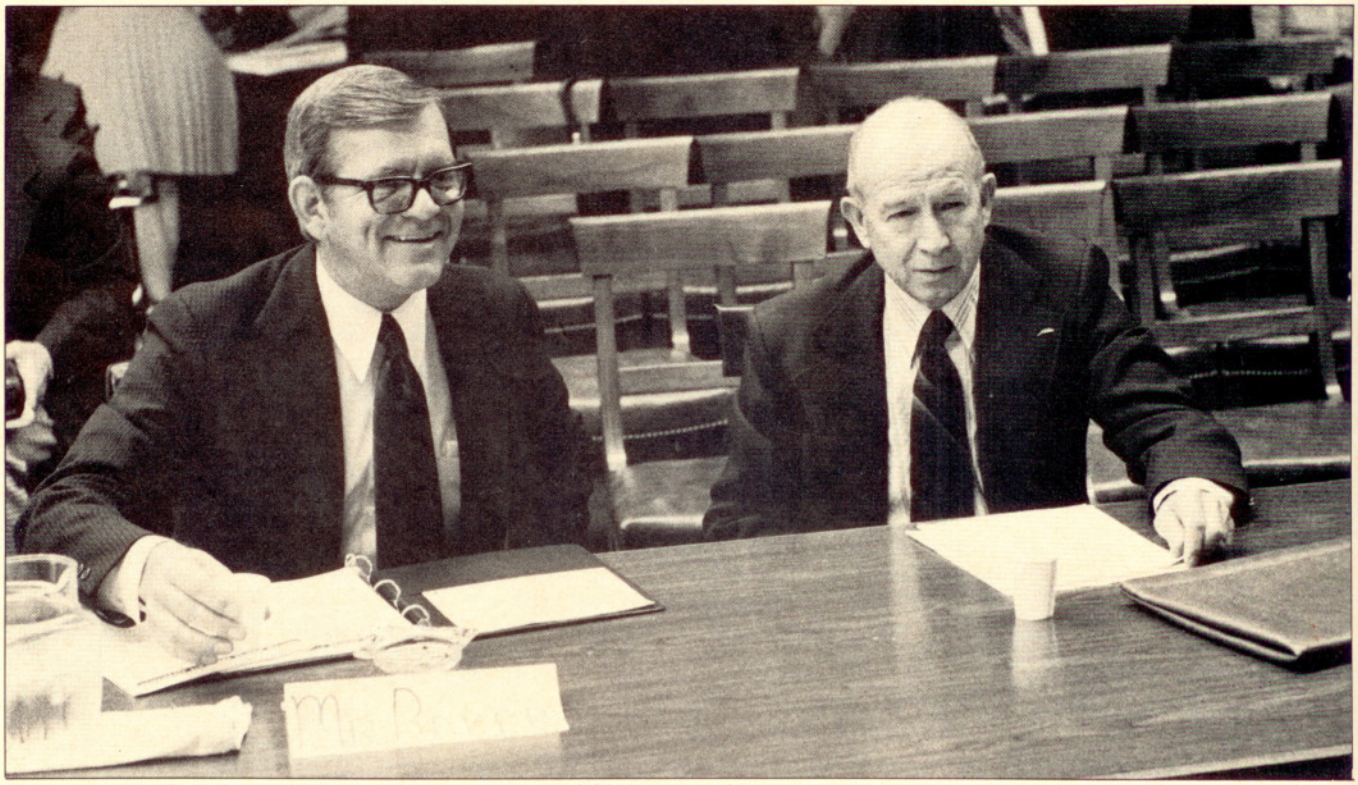
From its well-informed vantage point, the division is particularly well situated to alert AOPA management to the need for action, to recommend what form this should take and to implement responses on behalf of the association. Policy decisions are made by the president with input from appropriate staff members and departments.

Formulating policy that may affect not only its members, but all who fly, is a serious matter and not lightly undertaken. Normally, an AOPA position evolves from a staff analysis of existing situations and government proposals against a background of knowledge of general aviation's needs and how it operates. Draft policy statements are circulated to all concerned headquarters operating personnel for critical review in light of their own contacts with AOPA members. Surveys are used on occasion. In turn, these drafts are refined for final use. Comments from members are evoked by publication of timely issues in The Pilot magazine and in the *AOPA Newsletter*. Responses from members contribute greatly to the final policy. (Comments from members on the FAA's Positive Control Proposal ran into the tens of thousands.)

Criticisms have been made that AOPA reacts—or *over*acts—to developments, rather than anticipating situations and trying to mold government policy, the critical implication being that AOPA flails around behind the power curve. The fact is the AOPA positions on all key issues are established only after careful and sometimes lengthy delilberation, study and research. The association's positions on such sensitive issues as "positive control," "user taxes" and increasingly costly requirements of esoteric avionics gear as "the price of admission" to use the airspace have been thrashed out inside AOPA for many years, as have the positions AOPA takes on flight service station closings, the use of microwave landing systems, control tower installations and FAA budget requests.

From the very beginning, AOPA's founders envisioned that, as aviation grew, the airlines would have powerful representation in assuring that they would have adequate facilities and that there would be a need for professional representation to look out for the interests of general aviation. This need became self-evident after World War II. In the 1950's, as ground-based and airborne navigation equipment made cross-country flying simpler and the new generation of light airplanes made it reliable, the real crunch began. Airline representatives began to complain that the skies were becoming dangerously crowded and a more sophisticated system of air traffic control was needed.

Recognizing that the battle would be engaged first on the issue of the "crowded air," then on the joint use of "airline" airports, AOPA President Hartranft engaged the service of a highly experienced air traffic controller



John L. Baker and Victor J. Kayne represent AOPA at one of the numerous hearings of vital concern to general aviation.

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to be his consultant and advisor.

The man's credentials were exceptional: He had been a career air traffic controller with the CAA and the first tower chief at Washington National Airport. He knew the specialty as well as anyone else in the country, having risen to second in command of the nation's ATC service before leaving government service. His name—Victor J. Kayne. His speciality within AOPA was to be air traffic control techniques, but as other specialists were brought on board to develop AOPA positions on airport use and airspace, Kayne became the group's full-time leader. A few years later, as the CAA and its successor, the FAA, became more and more involved in research and development programs, that specialty moved into Kayne's orbit, too.

The Policy and Technical Planning Division still covers those vital areas of FAA regulation, plus the FCC and its regulatory effect on aviation radio frequency allocations and assignments. But that's not all.

Most AOPAers readily understand the need for covering the FAA and the FCC, but too few know about many other government authorities, not only regulatory, but legislative, that have power to issue edicts affecting private flying, even though the draftsmen may not mean to do so. Therefore, it is necessary for the association's Washington crew to keep track of all sorts of government thinking trends on aviation and other matters that may touch on aviation, including the positions taken in private and in public by the 100 Senators and 435 Members of the House, plus their administrative assistants, legislative assistants, special counsel and the staff members of their committees and subcommittees.

AOPA has to know what is going on in the Senate Commerce Committee, the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, and their aviation-oriented subcomittees, of course. but it is also necessary to watch the House Ways and Means committee, where all tax laws—including aviation "user taxes"—must originate, and the Senate Finance Committee, which molds and amends the House's tax gambits. And the Rules Committee must be watched, to see which of the 50,000 or so legislative bills that are dropped into the congressional hoppers will ever be assigned to a committee for hearings and action. This is not place for novices in the art of government. Dilettantes simply cannot do the job of representing constituents in legislative proceedings that may affect their future. Three-dimensional chess is an easier game to learn.

Even the White House affects aviation, both directly and through its arm known as the Office of Managment and Budget, which prepares the Administration's own recommendations to the Congress and is usually the source of user tax recommendations. The White House also works with another Executive department, the Department of State, on aviation matters, particularly through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Since ICAO initially was oriented toward the interests of the international air carriers, you may wonder why AOPA has detailed Vic Kayne to monitor and participate in meetings of that group at its Montreal headquarters or in other parts of the world.

ICAO was created in 1944 by a multinational treaty, for the purpose of establishing a pattern of uniform aviation rules and regulations among the participating nations. At the time, all thinking was about international *airline* flying. No one considered in 1944 that private flying would ever amount to much.

In every country except the United States international air transportation by "flag carriers" was dominated by the governments that owned and operated the airlines—Lufthansa, Air France, Alitalia, British Airways, Royal Dutch Air Lines, for instance. Hence, if top airline officials of the government owned-and-operated airlines demand that the airspace around cities and on airways be restricted for their use only, such international standards issued forthwith. Anyone who has flown in Europe will tell you how private aviation, especially "fun flying," has been largely squelched there. As this had happened in other parts of the world, it became evident that the political pressures of European nations for "uniform" regulations could result in the United States being saddled with restrictions adverse to general aviation.

To provide an effective voice for general aviation in ICAO councils, AOPA took the initiative in establishing a world-wide council of general aviation groups—the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA). IAOPA is recognized by ICAO and regularly participates in its proceedings.

Other Executive departments can muddy up aviation regulations, too. The Department of Interior can issue arbitrary regulations against flying over or landing in vast areas that someone feels should not be sullied by the sounds or sight of aircraft; the Department of Energy can come up with unwarranted and unreasonable, discriminatory regulations affecting private flying, and the Department of Transportation, which dominates the FAA, every once in a while directs the FAA to act on a matter that no one in DOT understands. The protectors of the environment and of workers' health and safety have to be watched closely because in the bowels of any bureaucracy there lurk some underlings who want to make names for themselves. In the association business, you never know for sure where the next shot is coming from.

After enacting the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938, Congress more or less turned its back on aviation, but as the industry grew to the point where it was becoming apparent that it would soon supplant the railroads as America's prime mover of people over long distances, Congress got back into the act with both feet. After the passage of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, it was clear that Congress intended to stay involved and AOPA's Office of Congressional Liaison was created. In 1961 AOPA hired Robert E. Monroe to head the effort.

Monroe is now Kayne's deputy and a vice president of AOPA. with more than 25 years' experience on the Washington political scene and a depth of understanding of the way the marbles go through the congressional tubes that is unsurpassed even by congressional aides, Bob Monroe is recognized as an authority on Capitol Hill matters. His

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monthly column in this journal, "Congressional Thrust and Drag," is a penetrating analysis of issues that bears close reading by everyone. Becoming a Washington "Hill" man is not something that can be learned overnight. It takes years of long days and long hours.

Monroe's associate on Capitol Hill matters, David Salmon, spends most of his time walking the halls of the congressional office buildings, conferring with congressmen and their staff assistants, keeping abreast of developments in committee business that might affect aviation, and counseling those involved in key legislation. Working with either the regulatory agencies or the Congress requires one-on-one relationships with respect and trust on both sides, for neither regulations nor laws burst into existence full-blown. Some individual has to conceive the thought, believing that a condition exists that requires correction for the benefit of the public.

If the information on which the original decision is made is bad or erroneous, a harmful conclusion—and law (or regulation)—may be the result. Keeping in touch with government personnel on the working level, therefore, is important. More can be done with an off-beat idea if it is caught in the formative stages, before it is endorsed by a line of superiors, for all practical purposes "signed-off," and becomes irreversible. Salmon's job is tedious, unglamorous and foot-wearying, for "Hill" work is like drilling for oil—many days may go by with nothing but dry holes to show for all the time and effort. But once in a while a gusher will come in, such as learning that the Department of Energy is working up a plan to cut off all general aviation fuel to conserve energy. AOPA's reaction to such a finding is not knee-jerk frenzy. Strategic and tactical positions have been plotted to meet such challenges since 1971, when Bob Monroe put together his first estimate of the situation because he had heard that the White House was concerned about the vulnerability of the United States as its economy became dependent upon imported oil.

Keeping on top of everything is a job for many people. Policy and Technical Planning staffers constantly comb through stacks of printed material, including Notices of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM's), government releases and publicity blurbs, speeches made in both the Senate and the House, including revisions and extensions subsequently printed in the *Congressional Record*, and newspaper clippings of remarks made by public officials—both elected and appointed—at public gatherings and in interviews around the country.

To give you an idea of the magnitude of this effort, the *Federal Register*—a government document published every day and about the size of the Peoria telephone directory—must be read word for word because the law requires that all NPRM's must be publicly advertised in it, so that the public has a chance to respond. Frequently, AOPA troops working with FAA counterparts will be given Advance Notices of Proposed Rule Making, sometimes *drafts* of such notices, but every once in a while someone tries to sneak one through without prior communication. Worse, sometimes regulatory agencies that have nothing to do with aviation issue NPRM's that directly affect the safety of flight; the Federal Power Commission may approve a high-tension line that will be strung from mountain to mountain across a valley or a river, or the FCC may indicate a pending application for a 2,000-foot-tall TV tower on a busy visual flyway or near an airport that has an approved instrument approach procedure.

Talk about eyestrain! Last year the *Federal Register* totalled 60,221 pages and took up 10 feet of shelf space. The *Congressional Record* took up three times that much.

Whether the information comes from reading official publications of government, newspaper clippings or from personal contacts, it is analyzed, then written up and routed to AOPA President John L. Baker and appropriate vice presidents for their consideration. If it is considered important enough for possible AOPA action, it is placed on the agenda of the weekly meeting of the operating executives for thorough discussion. This arrangement spreads the information to everyone at decision levels so that all hands know what is going on and the association's policy or position on any particular matter is understood. No one in AOPA can pop off with his personal feelings to give the impression that he is expressing the association's position, either in public statements or during meetings with

government personnel.

In addition to being the association's top man for congressional liaison, Monroe is Kayne's deputy and acts as the director of the division in his absence, as when Kayne is attending meetings at the DOT, FAA, FCC or ICAO, where he spends many days in the interest of AOPA and general aviation. Many of the AOPA team can double or triple their coverage, filling in for others on the staff, and frequently manpower is stretched to its limits when a heavy schedule of government meetings develops.

The technical planning group, which grew out of those first efforts in the late 1950's, still performs the same functions, but in a greatly expanded and technically advanced state. There are still four major areas of interest—air traffic control, airports, airspace and R&D.

The Air Traffic Control Department is headed by Robert T. Warner, an active lightplane pilot like all of the people in the division. Because Warner is on temporary assignment to the president's office as part of a program to broaden the exposure and experience of senior staffers with matters outside of their own specialities, the department is presently under the charge of an acting director, Edward J. Malo, who has 33 years of experience in aviation.

A former U.S. Army Air Force fighter pilot, Malo became a CAA (later FAA) air traffic controller in air route traffic control centers, control towers and combined station/towers. He was later deputy division chief in Air Traffic Service in FAA's Washington headquarters and a technical adviser to the U.S. delegation at ICAO. His department is involved with ATC matters, the expansion of area navigation (RNAV) procedures by FAA, instrument approach procedures and equipment requirements and reorganization of the flight service station system. He is heavily involved with the current FAA proposals for more TCA's, TRSA's and positive control.

The Airports Department is under the direction of Jeffrey H. Gilley, a former Navy pilot who has specialized in airport problems for upwards of 10 years. It is concerned with a variety of problems concerning airport planning, establishment, retention and promotion. Reflecting AOPA's concern about the loss of general aviation airports across the country at the rate of almost one per day, Gilley is now a prime source for public relations material promoting the advantages of general aviation community airports, embodied in his Airport Development and Promotion kits. Capacity, congestion, acceptance rate and access problems involving airports come to his department.

The Airspace Department's chief, Wallace C. "Jake" Goodrich, deals with airspace obstruction problems, such as tall towers and other obstructions to the flow of air traffic. Whenever you see a strobelighted TV tower blinking away in the haze, tip your hat to Goodrich, for he devotes a large slice of his time to obtaining high-intensity strobe lights for those almost-invisible structures. Goodrich has also been successful in many cases in having television towers placed in one location, rather than scattered around the perimeter of a city. AOPA was the first organization to push for such "antenna farms." The problems of tall towers are not restricted to visual flying; such airspace obstructions within a few miles of an airport that has an instrument approach can make the approach minimums so high that the approach is useless.

The Airspace Department also works with government chart draftsmen and cartographers to ensure that all obstructions are clearly and accurately charted on current sectional and termi-

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nal control area charts and that these charts meet general aviation's needs. Another function of this department is to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the Department of Commerce on the problem of disseminating real-time, accurate aviation weather information to general aviation pilots. Goodrich deals not only with Washington officials, but with the FAA regions, state and local authorities and zoning boards.

The fourth department of Policy and Technical Planning is called, simply, "Technical Planning." It is under the direction of Dennis Wright, another former naval aviator and, like Bob Warner, a graduate of Auburn University's aviation school. Wright devotes his time to research and development problems that few members are aware of. One of his projects involves working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on search-and-rescue technology using emergency locator transmitters in conjunction with satellites to pinpoint downed aircraft. Another project is the metrication problem of aviation, not only as to quarts vs. liters and Celsius vs. Fahrenheit, but the air traffic control problems of using meters instead of feet for altitude separation. Any new developments in electronic systems come to this department: microwave landing systems, navigation system planning, aviation radio and frequency utilization—even aircraft noise and emissions. As government R&D moves ahead, AOPA keeps right with it, trying to keep it on the track of practicality, and away from technologically possible but highly expensive, theoretical equipment.

We have barely touched on the scope of the work done by the Division of Policy and Technical Planning, for in addition to the departments whose specialities have been discussed, each day the division receives hundreds of letters and telephone requests for information, or complaints about operational problems, such as denials to fly through terminal control areas or excessive vectoring by air traffic control. All requests must be processed promptly and accurately and complaints followed up. Scarcely a day goes by that some of the division personnel are not in attendance at meetings with the FAA or FCC or with officials of other Washington-based associations. One calendar day recently showed no less than seven simultaneous meetings in different locations scheduled for division specialists, all bits and pieces of the unending battle to hold the line against unnecessary, discriminatory, restrictive regulation of general aviation and private flying.

Which was why AOPA was founded forty years ago. □