

The logo features the text "AOPA PILOT" in white on an orange trapezoidal background, followed by "50 years" in large black font. The background of the entire page is a collage of vintage aviation-related items, including old magazine covers, a map, and various documents.

AOPA PILOT

50
years

First 50

Ready for 50 more

For 50 years—or 600 issues if you measure time as magazine publishers do—this publication has chronicled general aviation—the industry, the events, the people, the airplanes. An outgrowth of an older aviation magazine, this one now dominates GA, thanks to the success of AOPA.

We have a few copies of the March 1958 issue here at the office. We treat them with reverence, carrying them carefully with two hands—often in plastic sleeves. Many of us on staff weren't even born when Vol. 1, No. 1 hit the mailboxes of America's GA pilots, so that first issue and the times that it represents are a real curiosity to us. More, um, senior members of the staff, get a nostalgic gleam in their eyes when they thumb through the pages. To a person, we're all a bit mesmerized by that now-yellowed magazine with the grainy picture of the Cessna 182 on the cover. A print of the cover is framed in our office lobby—a favorite stopping point for the many pilots who tour the AOPA headquarters every year.

There are many ways to celebrate such an anniversary. It's a time to examine our heritage and to understand how far GA has come. In the following pages, we explore what happened to some of the folks who were a part of that first issue. Did

Phil Calder get the flying job he sought in the first issue's "Classified" section? See "Pilots," on page 162. How many more fly-out lunches did those Abilene, Texas, lady pilots manage to pull off? See page 106. Whatever happened to Nancy Narco and the Hertz rent-a-plane concept? See page 121. Who's this Krick character and how could he forecast IFR weather months in advance? See page 98.

Learn about the airplanes of the time and how the fleet was different than today—including the Skylane that graced our cover. It's still flying in Idaho. See page 96. "Never Again" is still the most popular page in the magazine. Read the harrowing tale that launched the series. See page 152.

Really want to compare the past to the present? Go to AOPA Online (www.aopa.org/pilot/digitalissue) where we have posted both the original March 1958 issue and this one—in a digital format that allows you to turn the pages and thumb through the issue just as you might have back in 1958 in front of the Philco while watching *The Milton Berle Show*.

Most important, join us again next month as we launch into our second half century with an all-new issue.

—Thomas B. Haines
Editor in Chief

THE AOPA
Pilot
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

November 4, 1956

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Mr. President
Assistant

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AOPA's big idea

How the number one aviation magazine was born

BY THOMAS A. HORNE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS ROSE

Although *AOPA Pilot's* first issue may have come out in March 1958, it's informative and entertaining to look at the history behind the decision to make the magazine a standalone, independent publication. That decision, made in the closing months of 1956, was a long time coming.

Early days

Ever since its founding days in 1939, AOPA had a monthly publication. But back then the association was small, underfunded, and competing with a number of other pilot associations. It couldn't finance a magazine startup on its own; it needed to strike up an agreement with a large-circulation publisher. So a deal was struck in March 1939 between AOPA's founders—Laurence P. and Philip T. Sharples, C. Townsend Ludington, Alfred L. Wolf, and J. Story Smith—and The Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. At the time, Ziff-Davis published *Popular Aviation*—the most successful of the many aviation publications of the day. Ziff-Davis loaned AOPA \$500, then \$1,000 in monthly cash payments for the purpose of building AOPA's membership base. It also gave AOPA a few pages of free editorial space in each issue of *Popular Aviation*, a page of free advertising per month, and even threw in editorial assistance and office space at Ziff's Chicago headquarters. Once AOPA got on a better financial footing, it would pay a minimal

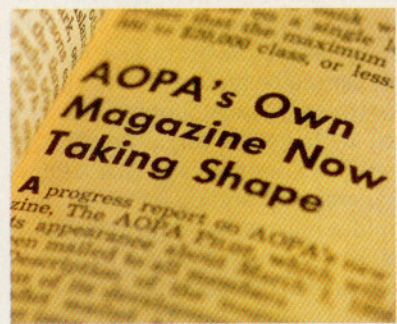
fee to continue publishing in the magazine. What a deal!

In return, AOPA made *Popular Aviation* its official publication, and agreed to repay the loans. Oh, and the association had to obtain 2,500 members by the end of 1939. Which it did.

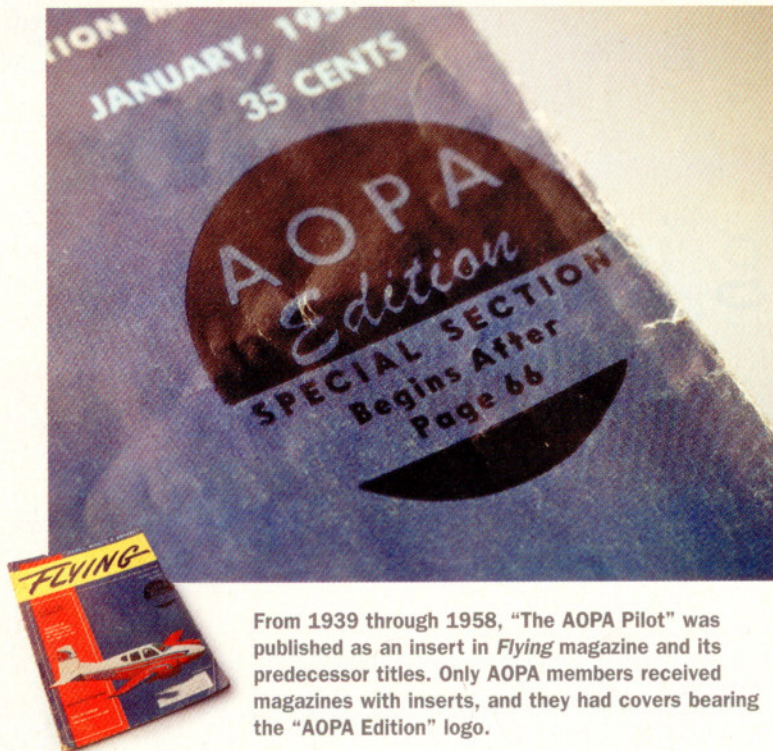
Thus was born AOPA's first efforts at magazine work. "AOPA News" first appeared in the September 1939 issue of *Popular Aviation*, and then was expanded to a four-page insert called the "AOPA Section" in November 1939. By March 1940 this grew to nine pages, and included full-page photographs by renowned aviation photographer Hans Groenhoff. Gill Robb Wilson—AOPA's first member—who was then the director of New Jersey's state aeronautics commission wrote "AOPA News." AOPA's first employee, Joseph B. "Doc" Hartranft, wrote the "AOPA Section," with Wilson serving as editorial director.

Post-war expansion

By the end of World War II, AOPA's success was evident. In 1946 membership was 20,000 and climbing—this was twice the pre-war level. Ziff-Davis' fortunes were also looking good, as its page count climbed on the popularity of stories featuring military aircraft. In August 1940, *Popular Aviation* was changed to *Flying*



Photos of Joseph B. "Doc" Hartranft (left) and Max Karant (right) in 1948 rest atop archival memos and conceptual notes from 1956. By late 1956, AOPA was in the final stages of deciding to publish *The AOPA Pilot* as a standalone magazine.



From 1939 through 1958, "The AOPA Pilot" was published as an insert in *Flying* magazine and its predecessor titles. Only AOPA members received magazines with inserts, and they had covers bearing the "AOPA Edition" logo.

and *Popular Aviation*; in January 1943 its name was changed to *Flying*, the name it retains to this day.

AOPA's editorial representation in *Flying* grew as well. In April 1943 the last "AOPA Section" was run, and was replaced in May with "The AOPA Pilot." This was the first use of the title.

"The AOPA Pilot" featured a number of safety campaigns in its editorial content. One of the most extensive was a 1946 series on low-altitude stalls and spins caused by buzzing (sound familiar?), which included entire pages devoted to photos of crashed airplanes. In the 1947 editions of "The AOPA Pilot" the association argued for mandatory shoulder harnesses—a rarity in those days. There were also articles that could be considered the forerunners of today's Malfunction and Defect Reports. After AOPA formed a marketing agreement with Safe Flight Instrument Corp., "The AOPA Pilot" promoted the installation of Safe Flight's new stall warning indicator—and sold it to members at a discounted price of \$37.50.

A sea change

By 1948, it was clear that AOPA was on a roll. Membership hit the 50,000 mark and kept rising, which meant that more and more issues of *Flying* had to carry "The AOPA Pilot," that each of those issues had to bear the special AOPA cover

stamp, and that those issues had to be mailed to a separate list consisting only of AOPA members. And all the while, the size of "The AOPA Pilot" in *Flying* kept increasing. To Ziff-Davis, this additional overhead must have been burdensome.

Meanwhile, to keep up with the extra editorial duties, Hartranft hired the colorful and outspoken Max Karant to be both editorial director of "The AOPA Pilot" and AOPA's assistant general manager. Previously, Karant was *Flying's* managing editor. In a musical chairs move, Wilson then left AOPA to become *Flying's* new editor in chief. By all these developments described so far, it's easy to see how *Flying*, AOPA, and "The AOPA Pilot" were intertwined in both business and interpersonal relationships.

According to what little remains of AOPA's historical records, these relationships were to become tense. An encapsulated summary of the issues leading to AOPA's decision to self-publish *The AOPA Pilot* appears in an August 28, 1956, memorandum of a meeting between Ziff-Davis' Benjamin G. Davis and AOPA's Charles P. Miller (who would soon serve as *The AOPA Pilot's* managing editor.) At this time discussion centered on the 10-year publishing contract between Ziff-Davis and "The AOPA Pilot," which was up for renewal in October 1957. Both parties said they want-

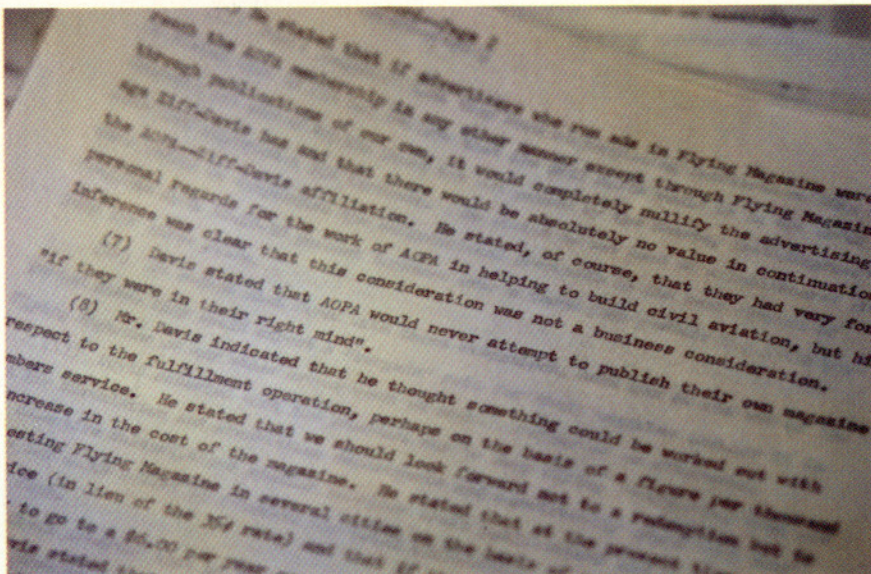
ed to continue the business arrangement, but the memo makes it clear that their interests were diverging.

Miller recounts Davis as saying that *Flying* was facing a postal rate increase, and that increases in the cost of producing the magazine meant that any increase in the size of "The AOPA Pilot" was "definitely out unless we [AOPA] would bear the cost." Moreover, Davis said that AOPA was "at the end of the period where they could expect a 'bargain' rate for their magazine." Rather, Davis argued, AOPA should pay more for Ziff-Davis to publish "The AOPA Pilot." To keep up with costs, Davis said that AOPA should increase the cost of membership, establish new, non-pilot classes of membership, and end AOPA's free services to members.

For its part, AOPA wanted to sell its own advertising, something that Ziff-Davis definitely didn't favor one bit. In the memo, Miller recalls Davis saying, "The only commercial value to the Ziff-Davis organization, which our relationship held, was that of advertising." Then Miller quotes Davis as making a comment suggesting that the idea of AOPA's breaking away had already come up in earlier conversations. "If advertisers who run ads in *Flying* magazine were able to reach the AOPA membership in any other manner except through *Flying*, i.e., through publications of our [AOPA's] own, it would completely nullify the advertising advantage that Ziff-Davis has," Davis reportedly said. "And there would be absolutely no value in continuation of the AOPA-Ziff-Davis affiliation." Davis went on to say that he wouldn't have "any great trouble in maintaining subscriptions among pilots by going directly to AOPA members and getting the full subscription rate."

Davis also reportedly said that, "AOPA would never attempt to publish their own magazine if they were in their right mind."

After this meeting, AOPA leaders made up their minds. There would be no more arrangement with Ziff-Davis. The 17-year relationship that helped found and fund AOPA, solicit its first members, and give voice to the association, was over. AOPA would publish its own version of *The AOPA Pilot*, and do it with production values, a format, and an editorial style that would put it in direct competition with its former business partner—which stood to suddenly lose 63,000 AOPA subscriber-members.



This August 28, 1956 memo describes a meeting between AOPA's Charles P. Miller and Ziff-Davis' Benjamin G. Davis. See item (7) for Miller's recollection of Davis' saying that AOPA would never publish its own magazine, "if they were in their right mind."

The new AOPA Pilot

Now the ball was in AOPA's court, and decisions had to be made—quickly. Hartranft (by then AOPA's first president), Karant, and Miller planned to put out the first issue of *The AOPA Pilot* (the magazine used the title *The AOPA Pilot* until 1979) in November 1957. A printer had to be selected, staff hired, story lineups decided, advertising representatives commissioned, advertising rates set, and production values determined.

Initially, the idea was to put out a 48-page, standard-size, glossy magazine with black-and-white contents (with some spot color here and there), and color front and back covers. A September 28, 1956, internal memo argued against going with a pocket-sized format, which some favored. This smaller format was envisioned as having 96 pages. But Miller felt that a small-format magazine would seem too much like an imitation of *Air Facts* magazine, another very popular monthly general aviation magazine published by Leighton Collins. Moreover, Miller said that after members had been receiving a full-size *Flying* for so many years, they might feel cheated if they received a smaller magazine in its place. Eventually, the full-size magazine argument won out.

The advertising rates of the day seem laughable now. You could buy a full-page, one-time advertisement in the first issue of *The AOPA Pilot* for \$425 (it's \$22,305 today), or buy the back

cover for \$850 (it now goes for \$27,370). But then again, everything cost less 50 years ago. For example, AOPA membership was \$10 per year, and the first staff writer for *The AOPA Pilot* earned \$6,000 a year.

Speaking of staff, a crew of a mere four editorial workers put out the first issues of *The AOPA Pilot*. The editor was Max Karant, the editorial assistant was Helen Haslam, Miller was the managing editor, and Hyman Spiegel was the art director. Arthur H. Frisch and Fred A. Hamlin served as advertising directors, coordinating the sales brought in by advertising representatives John Ring (based in New York City), Ren Averill (Pasadena, California), and Fred Gettys (New Cumberland, Pennsylvania).

The editorial staff had offices at AOPA headquarters, then at 4644 East-West Highway in Bethesda, Maryland. But freelance writers—or AOPA members—wrote most of the 1958 magazine content. Some of the stories were unsolicited, came in "over the transom," and needed a lot of editorial help before publication.

The rewriting and other tasks took the staff by surprise. Unaccustomed to the heavy demands of starting up a brand-new magazine, it took several months for the team to get its act together. Karant and Miller did most of the editorial work, and they were swamped. Bottom line: that first issue's publication date kept being pushed back.

That's why *The AOPA Pilot* debuted with a cover date of March 1958—four months later than its target date. It mailed one month later than that.

"Additional editorial help is a must if we wish to continue publishing the sort of magazine we're trying to put out," said a March 27, 1958, memo from Miller to Karant. "We cannot operate as we have during the past three months. It has been a hand-to-mouth proposition during the past two months. This method of operation has resulted in expensive alterations, missed deadlines, and a book that doesn't quite meet our desires or capabilities. Of course, I am not including an important personal item—an exhausted staff. We have a total of two people to do the work being done by six persons, plus clerical assistance, on *Flying* magazine. I have had a total of five free days since January 1." Hartranft balked at hiring another editor, but finally relented just days before the magazine went to press. Sue Timberlake was hired as the magazine's first associate editor, and soon began generating articles for upcoming issues.

Once the staff got its sea legs, the production of subsequent magazines went much smoother. Editorial content improved steadily and, as expected, the magazine's advertising revenue grew with each issue and contributed substantially to AOPA's income. *The AOPA Pilot* also served as a great vehicle for recruiting new members. By the end of 1958, AOPA rose to 80,000 members—a 17,000-member increase over the previous two years. AOPA and *The AOPA Pilot* were off and running, and there was no turning back.

Was the decision to start our own magazine a good one? The numbers speak for themselves. Today, *AOPA Pilot* has a circulation made up of 414,000 AOPA members, plus a few thousand other copies sent to libraries and educational institutions. It is, by far, the world's largest-circulation general aviation magazine, staffed by award-winning writers, contributors, graphic artists, and photographers, and consistently bearing the best design and photography in the business. It may have gotten off to a shaky start in 1956, but those days are long gone. And *AOPA Pilot*'s brightest days lie ahead. **AOPA**

E-mail the author at tom.horne@aopa.org.

Magazine milestones

Stories you won't soon forget

BY THOMAS A. HORNE

Throughout its long history, *AOPILOT's* editorial focus has been to communicate issues of political importance, educate members about new developments, urge them to action when necessary, and inspire its readers through uplifting and entertaining stories. For its first few years, the magazine's tagline—"The Voice of General Aviation"—said it all. And this motto is still in effect. If there's any single thread that runs through each and every issue, it's the

constant reporting on AOPA's many political initiatives at the congressional, federal, state and local government levels. But there's another constant thread. That's *AOPILOT's* tradition of groundbreaking special reporting. Over the years, *AOPILOT* has consistently published seminal articles and special inserts that have distinguished it from other general aviation magazines. Whenever a restrictive government initiative cropped up, whenever a new trend was identified, and whenever *AOPILOT's* editors saw fit to emphasize a subject with extra articles or pho-



The AOPA **Pilot**
... voice of general aviation

APRIL 1961

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AOPA

SUMMER

tography, the magazine never hesitated. It's this unique combination of attributes that has made *AOPA Pilot* what it is: A magazine that's politically responsible to its constituency—member and non-member alike, it must be emphasized—as well as aviation's most commercially, editorially, and artistically successful publication.

A review of *AOPA Pilot's* best articles over 50 years is a daunting task. For this researcher, it was extremely difficult to make the selections—because there was always the temptation to get sidetracked by so many other interesting and valuable articles. But what follows is a fair sampling of editorial content that “hit it out of the park.”

1960s

“AOPA Winds Up Inspection Tour” was an April 1961 article that aimed to grade the quality and honesty of repair work. The author, Don Downie, visited 70 repair shops around the nation. At each stop he complained of engine or other mechanical problems, just to see how honest the shops were. The author would loosen a spark plug, or disconnect a wire, to see if mechanics would make a fair assessment of the situation. By and large, the article reported, the treatment was fair.

In October 1961, “DME: A Boon to Navigation” was published. It gave a summary of this new technology, and how Narco's DME could help pilots of the future. The November 1961 issue contained an insert of the AOPA Foundation's (the AOPA Air Safety Foundation's predecessor) “AOPA 360-degree Rating” course. The course was de-

signed to help non-instrument rated pilots understand basic attitude instrument flying techniques. Others—the Instrument Nav/Com, Pinch-Hitter, Instrument En route, and Instrument Approach Procedure courses—were published over the following five years. Today, the AOPA Air Safety Foundation routinely releases new interactive online courses on AOPA Online.

An April 1962 *Pilot* special feature titled “AOPA Gives FAA its Views on Beacon Report” addressed the proposed new transponder and airspace requirements advanced by the FAA. One comment, which the FAA acted on, was AOPA's insistence that all high performance aircraft should be segregated from other aircraft in the terminal area.

A March 1964 article, “Cut in FSS Program Draws Protest,” objected to the proposed cutting of 42 flight service stations; subsequently, the stations were kept open. In September, an editorial argued against a plan to keep general aviation airplanes out of the La Guardia and John F. Kennedy International airports in New York. Again, AOPA prevailed.

By 1965 AOPA membership topped 111,000, and more articles addressed an ongoing effort to cut the National Weather Service's aviation weather budget. A February article, “User Charge Pressure Stepped Up,” by Robert Monroe, presaged the future. The FAA wanted to charge fees for pilot certificates, aircraft registrations, and airway use, and AOPA led the charge to repeal the initiative.

An August 1966 article is representative of *AOPA Pilot's* increased coverage of advances in cockpit instrumentation. “Analyzing Your Engine's Health,” by Alcor Aviation's Al Hundere, held forth on a radically new way of monitoring engine performance and condition—by using Alcor's newly introduced exhaust gas temperature gauge.

The late 1960s and the 1970s can be called the years of the midair, because several disastrous midairs between general aviation airplanes and airliners took place in that time frame. Each time, the general aviation airplanes were held to blame. And each time, AOPA was there to point out just the opposite. A DC-9 ran down a Baron in a 1967 Urbana, Ohio, midair; “AOPA Holds Baron Pilot Blameless in Urbana Midair Collision” read a December 1967 article. AOPA es-

1964



The FAA wanted to charge fees for pilot certificates, aircraft registrations, and airway use, and AOPA led the charge to repeal the initiative.

tablished the DC-9's pilots were going faster than the 250-knot speed limit below 10,000 feet, and were not maintaining an adequate visual lookout. Similar articles would take the same tone with regard to the September 1978 midair collision near San Diego, California, between a Pacific Southwest Boeing 727 and a Cessna 172.

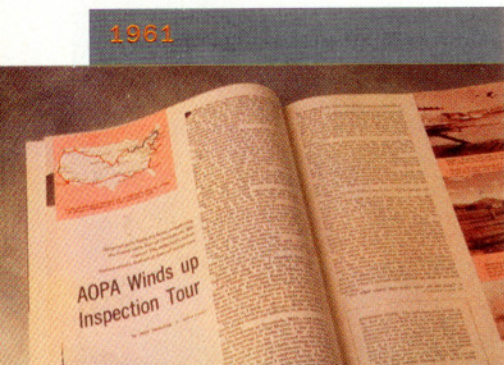
A March 1968 issue's major policy statement, “The Truth About General Aviation,” was an unprecedented, wide-ranging document that gave a complete factual rundown of what the public should know about general aviation pilots, airports, safety, and economics. It was a turning point in the education of not just the public, but also Congress and other governmental agencies. It gave ammunition to other aviation organizations with an interest in general aviation, and pointed out discriminatory provisions in airspace and air traffic control rules.

By May 1969, AOPA membership reached the 150,000 mark, and an article in that month's *AOPA Pilot*, “AOPA Files Suit to Block High Density Traffic Airports Rule,” argued against yet another discriminatory government initiative to deny general aviation aircraft the right to “first-come, first-served” priority for landing clearances at towered airports.

1970s

A special tribute to Piper Aircraft Corporation's William T. Piper was featured in the February 1970 magazine, along with a portrait on the cover. The same issue had an article “AOPA Seeks Uniform Traffic Patterns” that argued for

1961



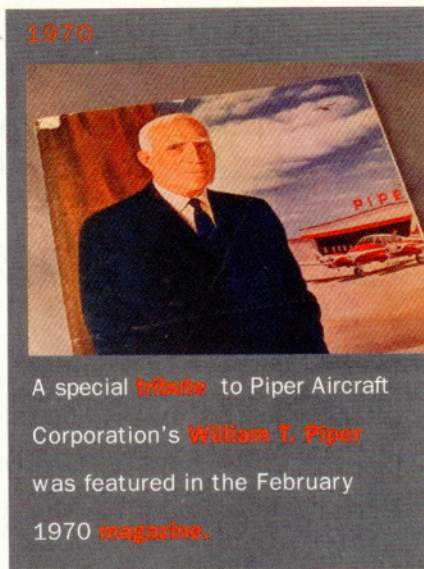
At each stop he complained of engine or other mechanical problems just to see how honest the shops were.

all airports to adhere to an 800-foot agl pattern altitude for low performance airplanes, and a 1,500-foot agl pattern for high performance airplanes. The May 1970 issue featured “IFR’s Biggest Bonus”—a primer on the newest navigation technology of the day—area navigation, or RNAV.

Another hint of the future was an April 1972 article on the emerging collision avoidance technology. “First Public CAS Trial Conducted” discussed a McDonnell-Douglas device called the EROS II. It gave commands to dive, climb, or hold altitude when other aircraft ventured dangerously near.

As if to prove that no bad idea ever dies, an April 1975 article titled “Pay as You Go: Not the Way to Fly,” outlined AOPA’s arguments against yet another round of FAA proposals to levy general aviation pilots landing and departure fees at towered airports. Once again, the proposal died thanks to AOPA’s efforts.

“Single-Lever Power Control for Bonanzas,” was a February 1977 article that also presaged the future. Although short-lived, the Bonanza tests captured the imagination of a future generation of engineers who would finally intro-



duce the concept—albeit significantly altered—as full authority digital engine control (FADEC)—in the early 2000s.

In the May 1977 issue, *AOPA Pilot* readers were treated to two articles written by Charles A. Lindbergh. Both involved Lindbergh bailing out of his mail plane at night, over an undercast of fog. “Leap Fog at Night” was the first article; “He Does It Again” was the second.

With 1977 bringing in John L. Baker

as AOPA’s new president, the magazine ushered in a new era for *AOPA Pilot* in the 1980s. With a new look and feel, more special features became the rule. But the same recurring issues still guided the magazine’s core content. The May and June issues of the magazine featured stories proposing airspace redesigns for San Diego and Phoenix terminal airspace. This, in the face of the FAA’s restrictive proposals after the San Diego midair mentioned earlier.

1980s

“Bonanza Besieged,” by long-time contributor Barry Schiff, was a February 1981 feature. At the time, Beech Aircraft Corp. had ceased production of its V-tail Bonanza after a spate of inflight breakups. Schiff’s article debunked the notion that V-tailed airplanes were inherently unsafe. July 1981’s “How to Avoid Thunderstorms Although Radar Equipped,” by AOPA Air Safety Foundation president (and radar expert) Archie Trammell kicked off a three-part series on radar technology and in-flight use.

“Satellites Instead,” a July 1982 article by Dr. Gerard K. O’Neill advanced a GPS-based method of collision avoidance and navigation. It was a prescient

article that envisioned today's GPS system. Similarly, January 1983's "Turbine Singles" feature anticipated the turbine single market by several years.

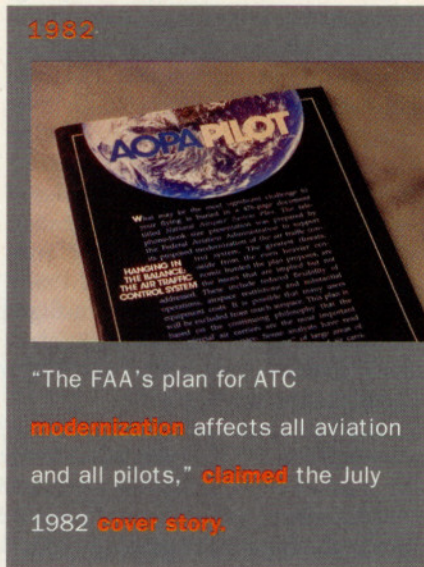
As product liability concerns helped precipitate a radical industry slowdown in the mid-1980s, July 1984's "Caseload," by J. Jefferson Miller outlined the dimensions of the problem, and included a "Cases and Principles" sidebar of infamous product liability cases and their rulings. Another major feature by Miller, "General Aviation and Congress," addressed this central aspect of AOPA activism in the April 1986 issue.

Of course, one of the top favorite issues was the July 1986 issue of *AOPA Pilot*. This was the issue devoted entirely to the Piper Cub, and even featured the Cub logo on the front cover.

Barry Schiff's "Leading the Way" article of December 1986 was a significant milestone in that it proposed a series of VFR arrival and departure corridors for the Los Angeles airspace. The idea was to separate VFR traffic from known inbound and outbound airline routes, and thus help avoid midair collisions. By the following year, Schiff's proposals were adopted by the FAA,

and published on terminal area charts for Los Angeles and other high-density terminal areas.

October 1989's special issue celebrated the association's fiftieth anniversary with a mixture of historical articles arranged by decade, and the matching popular airplanes of the day. It was a mix of history and nostalgia, all graced by high-concept art and photography.



"The FAA's plan for ATC

modernization affects all aviation and all pilots," **claimed** the July 1982 **cover story**.

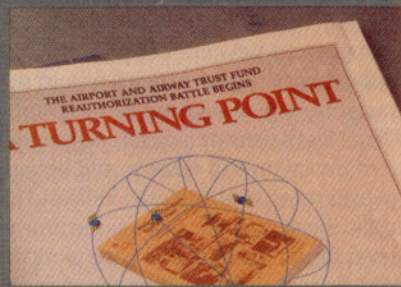
1990s

The 1990s continued the expansion of *AOPA Pilot's* content material, and brought in a new era of upscale design and artwork. Many articles would now have renowned aviation photographer Mike Fizer's work as central components of many layouts in what would become an ever more sophisticated look and feel to the magazine. But at the same time we never forgot the nuts and bolts work that was, is, and always will be the mandate of the entire AOPA team.

A March 1990 article, "A Turning Point: The Airport and Airway Trust Fund Reauthorization Battle Begins," brought this point home. AOPA's argument in this piece was to make full use of all trust fund monies, and not shuffle aviation funds elsewhere in the federal budget. The article also contained an argument for the use of space-based navigation methods, versus the FAA's ideas to expand the existing ground-based network of nav aids.

The early 1990s also marked a time when AOPA began outreach programs to draw in more student and re-entering pilots, as well as the growing number of pilots flying turbine-powered airplanes. Thus the debut of the quar-

1990



AOPA's **argument** was to make full use of all **trust fund monies**, and not shuffle aviation funds elsewhere in the **federal budget**.

terly "Turbine Pilot" and "New Pilot" sections of the magazine in March and August 1992, respectively.

More special features—all of them rich in Fizer's studio and air-to-air photography—were to follow. May 1993's "Engenuity: Today's Powerplants" was a review of current engine technology, and a look at what the future might hold.

Beginning in April 1994, with the advent of AOPA's Project Pilot program, the magazine featured an "AOPA Project Pilot" section, complete with cover photo, to promote the new program. Project Pilot's goal is to increase the number of pilots by appealing to prospective student pilots, or lapsed certificated pilots, through a network of pilot mentors supported by AOPA. Part of this support is the AOPA Project Pilot page in each magazine. For more information, visit the Web site (www.AOPAProjectPilot.org).

As GPS became more mainstream in the mid-1990s, *AOPA Pilot* was there to drive home the basics of GPS procedures. June 1994's "Flying GPS Approaches," by Editor in Chief Thomas B. Haines was one of the first-ever articles to detail the operation of the first IFR-certified GPS receiver, Garmin's GPS 155.

Haines went on to feature a "Pilot to Pilot" interview with The New Piper Aircraft Corp.'s Chuck Suma in the February 1996 issue in which Suma discussed how he led the "old" Piper out of bankruptcy. Then in March 1996 Haines headed up yet another ambitious package of articles dealing with every aspect of buying an aircraft: the "Buying In" special feature.

A July 1996 special feature, "GPS Handheld Moving Maps," took an in-depth look at this fastest-growing segment of the avionics market, and included all the players at the time, along with frank evaluations of each.

By 1997, the Internet was quickly coming into its own, and AOPA was at the head of the pack with its new Web site (www.aopa.org). April 1997's "AOPA On The 'Net'" delved into the many segments and services available on the AOPA Web site, and included expanded information on each under separate subheadings.

2000s

"Measure of Skill," the first of a series of yearlong installments on pilot education and technique also began in 1997. Subsequent annual series' included 1998's "Instrument Insights," 1999's "In-flight Emergencies," 2000's "Future Flight," 2001's "Ounce of Prevention," and 2002's "Out of the Pattern."

Another huge special feature appeared in the March 1999 issue: "The Sweet Smell of New." It was all about every aspect of buying a new aircraft, from financing to insurance to type of aircraft, plus much more. And while new airplanes are alluring, it's important to remember that *AOPA Pilot* has never forgotten more affordable aircraft. That's why we continue our "Budget Buys" series, which began in July 2001 by featuring the Piper Tomahawk.

September 2000's *AOPA Pilot* featured the first in the "Landmark Accidents" series written by the AOPA Air Safety Foundation's executive director, Bruce Landsberg. This particular installment covered

the fatal accident involving John F. Kennedy Jr.'s flight to Martha's Vineyard.

"California Flying," an ongoing series of articles on flying in that state—delivered to California members—also began in 2000.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and their implications for GA, were the subjects of November 2001's "America Under Siege" grouping of articles. This somber section also included *AOPA Pilot* staffers' experiences on the day of the attacks. Some were in the air at the time, and had to land immediately.

High-quality, in-depth special features continued their annual tradition through the rest of the decade. In 2004, it was March's "Datalink Roundup," covering Avidyne's EX500, Honeywell Bendix-King's Airman weather services, WSI's In-flight weather, ADS-B and Traffic Information Service technologies, and XMWX datalink weather. The popular "Build Me An Airplane" series debuted in 2004, beginning with a look at how Cessna builds airplanes in the August 2004 issue.

"On Autopilot" in February 2005 gave an in-depth look at the ins and outs of autopilots and flight control systems, but another special feature in June 2005, "The State of General Aviation," was even more all encompassing. Everything from piston to turbine-powered aircraft, avionics, engines, the Sport Pilot movement, airports, infrastructure issues, and much more was included. In an interview, then-FAA Administrator Marion Blakey told Editor in Chief Haines that there was a "gap between the FAA's costs and trust fund revenue."

December 2005 featured a large section devoted to the seventieth anniversary of the Douglas DC-3. "Together We Fly" and "A New Life," by Julie K. Boatman described the history of this classic airplane, how the author earned her DC-3 type rating, and a recent turbo-prop modification to the airplane.

AOPA's Project Pilot program received more special coverage in July 2006 with "Ten Steps to Making a Pilot" and "AOPA Project Pilot: Giving Back" features, reminding us all that mentors can be a big help in motivating prospective pilots to take up flying.

The August 2006 issue brought perhaps the most far-reaching and ambitious of all the special features yet published. In "40 Top Technologies: The Future You Fly Today," the staff tackled 40 technologies that were identified as strong contenders for mainstream status in the near future. Topics included

2001



This somber **section** also included *AOPA Pilot* staffers' **experiences** on the day of the attacks.

everything from touchscreen displays to FADEC to enhanced vision systems. The report was accompanied by an online component, which *AOPA Pilot* uses to refer readers to AOPA's increasing number of online resources and for more in-depth looks at the subject matter.

The year 2007 was dominated by AOPA's battle against the Bush administration's proposal to raise revenue by imposing user fees and higher fuel taxes on general aviation operations. A yearlong series of articles on the user-fees issue ensued, which detailed the workings of Congress, the European example of a fee-based aviation system, congressional hearings, and member feedback on

the issue. Like many other articles, the user-fee series also had links to AOPA online for videos and late-breaking information.

An inspirational masterpiece came in the August 2007 issue when *AOPA Pilot* published a staff report called "A Day In The Life of America's Airports." Staffers at 11 different airports around the United States reported on just what happened on May 19, 2007. And once again, online videos accompanied the magazine stories.

Which brings us more or less to the present, inasmuch as it's March 2008—and the magazine's fiftieth anniversary. It's been a long and glorious history, with

a proud record of achievement. We're looking forward to adding more examples of writing excellence, online features, and service to members in the years to come.

AOPA

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AOPA PILOT ONLINE
View this magazine and the 1958 issue in a digital format on *AOPA Pilot* Online.
(www.aopa.org/pilot/digitalissue)



Designs through the years **BY THOMAS A. HORNE**

Over the years *AOPA Pilot* has undergone significant design changes, and its publications staff has launched many associated publications. Here's a brief review of these milestones.

In 1962, AOPA began publishing the *AOPA Airport Directory*. It included information on runways, approaches, FBOs, and much more. The directory was renamed *AOPA's Airports USA* in 1975, *AOPA's Aviation USA* in 1990, and *AOPA's Airport Directory* in 1996. This popular, large-format book, available free to members, was added to AOPA Online as a searchable database, and remained in print every year until 2001 when the edition began to be published biennially. Now, by visiting the Web site (www.aopa.org/members/airports) you can obtain airport information and fuel prices, call up instrument approach and departure charts, examine taxi diagrams and a thumbnail sectional chart of the immediate area, or look at the AOPA Air Safety Foundation accident database for accidents that have occurred at or nearby the selected airport.

From 1968 to 1989, AOPA also published *AOPA's Handbook for Pilots*. This was a pocket-sized compendium that included essential material from the *Aeronautical Information Manual*, Federal Aviation Regulations, a listing of weather information resources, and more. In 1990, information from the handbook, plus the aircraft and avionics directories that until that time appeared in *AOPA Pilot* in the March and June issues, respectively, were included in *AOPA's Aviation USA*.

When ultralight flying rose in popularity in the early 1980s, AOPA created an Ultralight Division and published a bi-monthly magazine devoted to ultralight aviation: *Ultralight Pilot*. It was published from 1982 through 1984. By 1984, the ultralight craze had waned, setting the stage for the beginnings of today's Light Sport Aircraft initiatives.

AOPA purchased *Flight Training* magazine from Specialized Publications of Parkview, Missouri, in December 1998. AOPA renamed the monthly magazine *AOPA Flight Training*, and is in publication—and extremely popular—to this day. It's aimed at student pilots and flight instructors, along with those interested in taking up flying.

Another special-interest magazine—*AOPA Pilot: Turbine Edition*—was produced as a one-off magazine in October 2007. A supplement to the "Turbine Pilot" sections in today's *AOPA Pilot*, this issue was tailored as a means of further serving the

needs of those growing numbers of AOPA members with an interest in turbine flying.

But let's return to our flagship publication, *AOPA Pilot*. When it first came out, its cover logo was smallish and, while it may have served well in its day, it was badly dated by the late 1970s. In January 1979, art director Arthur L. Davis redesigned the cover logo for a more modern look, using flush-left, bold avant garde type. By the July 1979 issue the cover logo was centered, and the book's inside pages got a redesign as well.

In 1988, *AOPA Pilot* became to an all-four color magazine. Up to this time, many of the pages were black-and-white, and color was used sparingly. Sometimes, there would be a mere eight color photos in the issues of the 1970s and early 1980s.

By the 1990s and early 2000s, *AOPA Pilot* was growing ever stronger—both in circulation, editorial content, advertisements and sheer page count. Some issues topped 200 pages. Until the November 2003 issue, the magazine was bound using a method called saddle-stitching. In other words, three staples driven through the spine. But that method wasn't an elegant solution to binding magazines with routine page counts nearing the 200 mark. Thus the decision was made to transition to perfect binding with the November 2003 issue. This method essentially glues the magazine's page elements to a squared-off spine. The result is a more finished look, and one that lets us print descriptions of the main articles on the spine.

AOPA Pilot's last redesign came with the April 2001 issue, when creative director Mike Kline went to a cleaner page look and a heavier emphasis on original, commissioned artwork and bigger photo features using senior photographer Mike Fizer's imagery.

The most recent aspect of AOPA's member communications is embodied in our ever-growing electronic publishing efforts. Current and archived *AOPA Pilot* issues, including multimedia components, can be found online (www.aopa.org/pilot). And *AOPA ePilot* and *ePilot Flight Training* are weekly newsletters e-mailed to members who have registered for this information resource. These come out every Friday and provide late-breaking news, educational items, and links to additional sources of information and services. Regionalized weekend weather forecasts are also included. To subscribe, visit the Web site (www.aopa.org/apps/epilot/).

—TAH



Location, location

The story behind AOPA headquarters relocations

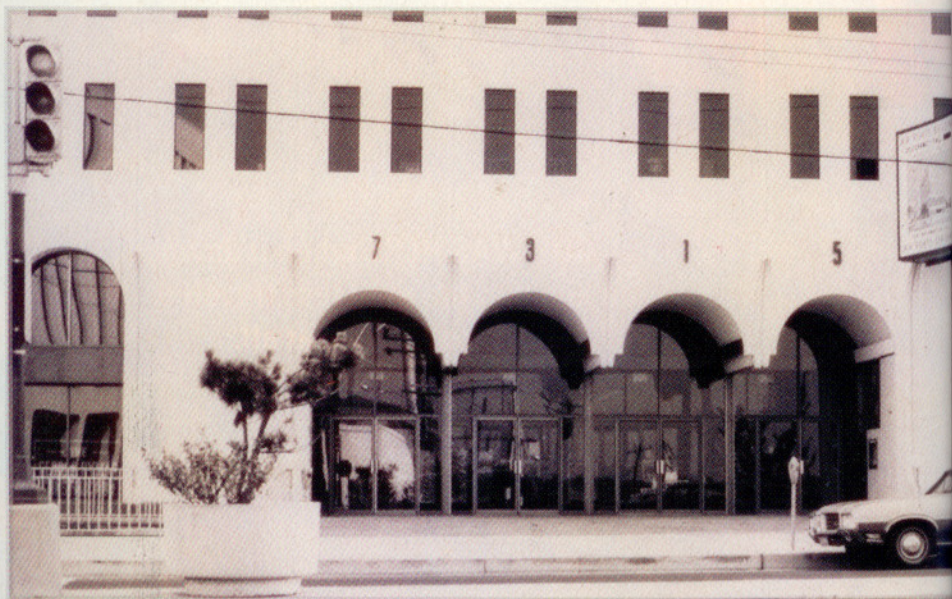
BY THOMAS A. HORNE

When AOPA was formed in 1939, its headquarters was located at 1425 Walnut Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. That's where one of AOPA's founders, C. Townsend Ludington, had his law offices. The fourth floor was where AOPA's first employee—and future president—Joseph B. “Doc” Hartranft toiled away at efforts designed to attract new AOPA members. AOPA had yet to publish a newsletter or magazine, so Hartranft built his mailing lists surrounded by film cans and boxes of potatoes. Why film and potatoes? Ludington produced a film titled *Crime Does Not Pay*, so the film reels were stored there. As for the potato storage, Ludington was working on a method of vacuum-packing them.

From November 1939 through September 1942, the “AOPA News,” “AOPA Section,” and “AOPA Pilot” inserts in Ziff’s *Flying and Popular Aviation* then simply *Flying* (the magazine changed its name three times during the 1940s) were written out of the Chicago office. Once a deal with The Ziff-Davis Publishing Company was signed (see “AOPA’s Big Idea,” page 72), AOPA moved its offices to Chicago, where it was set up at The Transportation Build-



AOPA’s very modern building was constructed adjacent to the Frederick Municipal Airport in Frederick, Maryland in 1983 (top). The Keiser Building in Bethesda, Maryland (above).



The Air Rights Building at 7315 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland, was home to the association in the 1970s and 1980s.

ing, located at 608 South Dearborn Street—right down the hall from Ziff-Davis' editorial offices.

When World War II broke out, Hartranft was called up for duty in the U.S. Army Air Corps. His assignment was in Washington, D.C., where he served on what was called the Interagency Air Traffic Control Board, a panel of representatives who ruled on operational disputes between military and civil aviation. Hartranft still had his job at AOPA, so he relocated the organization to Washington.

AOPA's first office in D.C. was in The Carpenters Building at 1003 K Street, N.W. (from September 1942 to November 1945). Then it was moved to the International Building at 1319 F Street, N.W. (from November 1945 to September 1947), and to The Washington Building at 15th and New York Avenue, N.W. (from September 1947 to June 1951). Hartranft submitted his articles for the AOPA inserts to Ziff-Davis' Chicago offices during this period. There, Ziff-Davis staffers edited the copy, laid out the pages, and prepared the inserts for publication. As the AOPA inserts grew in size, it became clear that they required an editor dedicated solely to the task.

In 1948, Hartranft hired Max Karant—who previously worked for *Flying*—to be the first editor of "The AOPA Pilot," as the section was now called.

In June 1951, Hartranft moved AOPA's offices once again, and this time relocated Karant and "The AOPA Pilot" to the Keiser Building at 4644 East-West Highway in Bethesda, Maryland—a Wash-

ington suburb. In some ways, the section had become more independent of Ziff-Davis now that it had a small staff of its own. But "The AOPA Pilot" was still an insert in *Flying* and would be until March 1958.

As AOPA grew during the 1950s and 1960s, so did its staff—and the magazine staff, too. By 1972, the Keiser Building was too small for AOPA and its now-independent magazine, *The AOPA Pilot*. It was a smallish, two-story building that looked much like the squat structures you see in many of today's office parks.

So AOPA moved once again. This time, it was a short move—just a block away, to the Air Rights Building at 7315 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda. AOPA rented the entire tenth floor of this high-rise office building, and the spacious new digs gave staffers all the room they needed. *The AOPA Pilot's* offices looked out over the west side of Bethesda—a tiny town back then. Today, it's a modernistic concrete jungle, chock a block with high-rises.

The Air Rights Building was a prominent landmark in the 1970s and 1980s. A big part of that prominence was the signage on the building's rooftop. One huge sign said "Air Rights." And above it was another sign, this one in red neon lights. It said "AOPA." So when you went down Wisconsin Avenue, especially at night, you couldn't help but see "AOPA" in lights. Many people thought that the "Air Rights" part of the signage had to do with AOPA's advocacy of general aviation's rights to equal airspace access. But the

real answer is more prosaic. The fact is that a railroad ran beneath the building. When the builders told the railroad company they wanted to build on the site, the company sold the rights to build above the rail bed—the "air rights" they needed to erect the building into the airspace above the railroad.

It was Hartranft who succeeded in getting the lighted "AOPA" sign in such a strategic location. To passers-by, or visitors from the Washington bureaucracy, the sight of what seemed to say "AOPA—Air Rights" in huge letters was an impressive display of AOPA's rising political power. Some thought we owned the entire building!

But even the rented space in the Air Rights Building became too small for what was quickly becoming a 200-employee staff. In the late 1970s, an AOPA committee began a search for a site to build a new, purpose-built office building—one that we'd construct ourselves and own outright. One non-negotiable mandate was to secure a location on an airport. After years of searching, AOPA finally decided on a building site at the Frederick Municipal Airport in Frederick, Maryland. Loans were secured, the city of Frederick pitched in by floating a bond, and construction of a two-story, modern office building began in 1982.

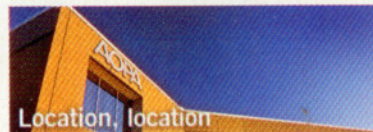
By May 1983 the building was completed and AOPA moved into its state-of-the-art new headquarters at 421 Aviation Way, Frederick, Maryland, bearing the bold aluminum letters "AOPA" on the second floor. Perhaps the best feature of our new building is its adjoining ramp space. Visitors can taxi their airplanes right onto AOPA's ramp, then go inside for a tour. If you come by, stop in at *AOPA Pilot's* current offices. Just go in the front door and check in with the receptionist. We're on the second floor. See the wall filled with magazine covers in our lobby. Welcome!

AOPA

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AOPA PILOT ONLINE



Take a tour of AOPA headquarters in an online video on *AOPA Pilot* Online. (www.aopa.org/pilot/headquarters)