



# CHAPTER 42 NEWSLETTER

September, 2007

Anchorage, Alaska

*Monthly newsletter from Chapter 42 of the Experimental Aircraft Association*

## FROM THE LEFT SEAT

To all of our members that care about the future of aviation, please stand up and be counted. Please send one letter to Senator Ted Stevens and one letter to Rep. Don Young. Here are their two addresses and the information that I would like to see enclosed in each of the two letters. Both houses reconvened on September 4th, so I hope now is not too late to make a difference.

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-0201

The Honorable Don Young  
United States House of Representatives  
2111 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0201

I am writing to express my concerns with attempts by the major airlines and the Administration to levy user fees against owners and operators of general aviation aircraft such as myself. Accordingly, I request that you strongly support H.R. 2881 "FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007" and oppose any efforts to add the user fees on general aviation as provided in the Senate companion bill, S. 1300. I believe that H.R. 2881, as passed out of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, is the most workable solution to the ongoing FAA funding debate.

Congress is fully aware that private citizens and small businesses operate general aviation aircraft for personal, recreational, and business use. Often these small general aviation aircraft operations represent the most efficient, if not the only, means of access to air transportation in small and rural communities in our state. Such general aviation access is critical for our national commerce, emergency services, and the ability of businesses in our area to compete on an even playing field with companies in larger metropolitan centers, the only markets served by the major airlines.

Protect the national economy, don't punish general aviation operators and thousands of small rural communities by imposing user fees as a means to reward the business failings of commercial airline companies.

The present funding system for the world's largest and safest air traffic system is NOT broken. The Office of Management and Budget and the General Accounting Office agree that the existing system of fuel taxes and passenger facility charges will

produce sufficient revenue to continue to fund the FAA and pay for modernization of the system, provided that the system remains intact and the airlines are not afforded a massive tax cut.

The Airports and Airways Trust Fund revenues are at a record level and are projected to increase at a rate of approximately 6 percent annually for the next five years. User fees are bad public policy and are not the way to fund a new system. Additionally, user fees have proven time and again to be expensive, inefficient, and damaging to general aviation.

Sincerely,  
Mike Luther

E.A.A. (Experimental Aircraft Association) Chapter 42  
President, Anchorage, Alaska; [Pietenpolpapa@yahoo.com](mailto:Pietenpolpapa@yahoo.com)

**Mike Luther**

## NEXT MEETING

The September meeting will be Tuesday, September 25th at 7pm at Northern Lights Avionics. One of the main topics will be hand-held radios and, most likely, GPSs. Of course there will be plenty of opportunity for other equipment and maintenance questions. Northern Lights Avionics is located at 940 Merrill Field Dr. at Merrill Field, just south of the old tower location.

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That might be a good topic for a winter “show and tell” meeting. Meanwhile, listed here are a few events our chapter was involved in this summer.

June 16th– “Ten Years to Taxi” celebration. My (Tim Rittal) GlaStar N 55XP was finally given her airworthiness certificate in May after 10 years of building. My lovely wife (Ann) arranged a catered BBQ held at Matt Freeman’s hangar to celebrate the event. The weather was perfect, the food was great and about 100 people, many from Chapter 42, showed up to help us acknowledge the event. It was wonderful. Thanks to all who drove out, flew out, and enjoyed the day with us.

July 14th & 15th– The (almost) annual event providing maintenance at Wrangell-St Elias remote airstrips. Will Tipton, park superintendent, arranged for chapter members to fly into May Creek and Peavine and Jake’s Bar for brush cutting and rock picking on these precious backcountry strips (see photo below). Matt Freeman, Gene Bjornstad and Gale Partch, with friends and spouses, flew into May Creek which has a 2700’ turf strip. Will ferried folks out to the Peavine and Jake’s Bar. Unfortunately, N55XP was still tethered to the Birchwood flying area flying off her required 40 hours before she was free to go elsewhere. Maybe next year! I sure hope this becomes a bigger and better event every year because it is such a wonderful treasure to have these remote strips.



Gale Partch, Bill Brown, Janelle Eklund, Cathy Hanrahan, Matt Freeman, Barb Tipton, Larry LaGrone, Gail Nebrugge, Steve Brown and Will Tipton. Not pictured: Gene & Louise Bjornstad help clear the runways in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

For those interested, there are 13 public use cabins in the Wrangell-St Elias National Park & Preserve. At least 10 of them can be accessed by wheel plane although some of the strips are strictly for experienced pilots with sturdy STOL aircraft. You can find lots more information at the Wrangell-St. Elias website at [www.nps.gov/wrst](http://www.nps.gov/wrst).

July 20th–John Davis and Sue hosted another back yard BBQ at their Sand Lake area home. Lots of good laughs and airplane talk to go with the burgers and beverages. Our thanks to John and Sue for another great event.

Aug 11th & 12th–Bob Nuckolls “AeroElectronics” seminar. Chapter 42 sponsored a great, informative weekend with nationally known avionics/electronics guru Bob Nuckolls. Bob lives and breathes electronics and served up a full plate of information on just about everything you wanted to know



Bob Nuckolls speaks about electronics

about electronics and your airplane. His class included a great reference binder full of pertinent background information, systems design and super wiring diagrams. He also has a website chock full of reference materials and a world wide following of forum participants at [aeroelectric.com](http://aeroelectric.com). The Moose’s Tooth pizza and beer after the session was easy to tolerate as well.

Aug 19th– Once again, Matt Freeman graciously offered up his Birchwood hangar for the annual summer picnic. Several aircraft flew in for the event and Mike Luther cooked up loads of burgers and hot dogs. What a pleasure to catch up with folks and talk airplanes and flying and Alaska life in general. And thanks once again to Matt for the use of his hangar.

So...that is what I know. What flying/building activities did you do this summer? Send pictures and stories to News Editor Tim Rittal at [tim@timrittal.com](mailto:tim@timrittal.com) and we will share with the other members in an upcoming newsletter.

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## FLIGHT PLANS IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

by Tim Rittal

Now that I making the transition from airplane builder to airplane pilot I am learning about some new tools not available back in the old days. A GPS in the cockpit is absolutely the greatest thing since sliced bread. Of course everybody knows that so I am not going to talk about GPS.

But how many of you are familiar with the AOPA flight planning software free to all AOPA members? It is called "AOPA Real-Time Flight Planner." I have found it to be a very helpful program. I like to go places, cross-country and far away. With this program I can choose a departure point and destination and with a couple clicks I have an enroute map, another click a detailed Navigation log with distances, time enroute, fuel burn and headings. A few more clicks and my flight plan is done. Click on weather and there is a report and, theoretically, click "file flight plan" and my flight plan is in the FAA computer waiting for me to activate it. I say theoretically because when I tried this the FAA could not find my flight plan in the system 2 out of 3 times. Not sure if the problem is on their end or mine. Nonetheless, the rest is really slick.

The program requires you to set up a master profile of you and your airplane with all the pertinent information like registration number, type, speed, fuel burn and so on. Once set up, it uses that information to instantly compute your nav logs and flight plans. Like all programs there is some initial learning and limitations and tricks but it is relatively easy to use. Once you create a trip you can save it to be called up and used again another day. The enroute map is no substitute for an up-to-date section in the cockpit because it lacks the detail you want if you are out there and your GPS or VOR craps out. I usually print the enroute map and leave it at home for the folks there to know what my plan is and I print the Nav log to take on the flight. I am still new at all this and I learn something new each flight. I suggest you give this a try.

To get the program (I think) you need to be a member of AOPA. Go to their website at [www.aopa.org/members/](http://www.aopa.org/members/). Look for "Flight Planning" in the menu along the left side of the page and click. On the next page under Step 3 find "AOPA Real-Time Flight Planner" and click it and it should take you to the download instructions. Have fun.

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<b>MONTHLY MEETINGS</b>	4th Tuesday of most months

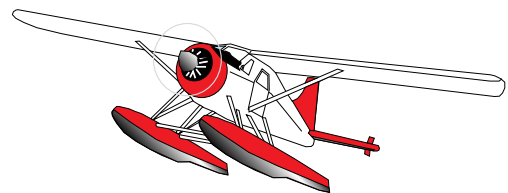
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## THINKING OF BUYING AN ELT? an FAA Safety Bulletin

### Termination of 121.5 MHz Beacons for Satellite Alerting is Coming Soon. Notice Number: NOTC0981

On 1 February 2009, the International Cospas-Sarsat [1] Organization (U.S. included) will terminate processing of distress signals emitted by 121.5 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs). This means that pilots flying aircraft equipped with 121.5 MHz ELTs after that date will have to depend on pilots of overflying aircraft and or ground stations monitoring 121.5 to hear and report distress alert signals transmitted from a possible crash site.

**Why is this happening?** Although lives have been saved by 121.5 MHz ELTs, the downside has been their propensity to generate false alerts (approximately 98 percent of all 121.5 MHz alerts are false), and their failure to provide rescue forces with timely and accurate crash location data, both of which actually delay rescue efforts and have a direct effect on an individual's chance for survival. Rescue forces have to respond to all 121.5 MHz alerts to determine if they are real distress alerts or if they are being generated by an interferer, an inadvertent activation (by the owner) or equipment failure.

**Is there an alternative?** Yes, the Cospas-Sarsat System (U.S. included) has been and will continue processing emergency signals transmitted by 406 MHz ELTs. These 5 Watt digital beacons transmit a much stronger signal, are more accurate, verifiable and traceable to the registered beacon owner (406 MHz ELTs must be registered by the owner in accordance with Federal Communications Commission regulation). Reg-

istration allows the search and rescue authorities to contact the beacon owner, or his or her designated alternate by telephone to determine if a real emergency exists. Therefore, a simple telephone call often solves a 406 MHz alert without launching costly and limited search and rescue resources, which would have to be done for a 121.5 MHz alert.

For these reasons, the search and rescue community is encouraging aircraft owners to consider retrofit of 406 MHz ELTs or at a minimum, consider the purchase of a handheld 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) which can be carried in the cockpit while continuing to maintain a fixed 121.5 MHz ELT mounted in the aircraft's tail. Remember, after February 1, 2009, the world-wide Cospas-Sarsat satellite system will no longer process 121.5 MHz alert signals. Pilots involved in aircraft accidents in remote areas will have to depend on pilots of overflying aircraft and or ground stations to hear emergency ELT distress signals. For further information concerning the termination of 121.5 MHz data processing visit [www.sarsat.noaa.gov](http://www.sarsat.noaa.gov)

[1] The Cospas-Sarsat Organization provides a satellite-based world-wide monitoring system that detects and locates distress signals transmitted by Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs), Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs). The system includes space and ground segments which process the signals received from the beacon source and forwards the distress alert data to the appropriate Rescue Coordination Center for action.



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