

General Aviation

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Articles, photographs and news items from AOPA members and other readers are welcome. Ideally they should be on a disk, or they can be emailed to pat@richmondaviation.co.uk. Photographs may also be emailed to this address. They should be high-resolution (300DPI). Alternatively, hard copy and photographic prints or slides can be posted to Richmond Aviation at the address above. While every care is taken with submitted material, we cannot make absolute guarantees that material will be returned in perfect condition.

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Chairman's message

The money-go-round

Imagine the brief announcement "Brussels lobbyists appointed" in the June 2010 *General Aviation* probably did not set members' pulses racing. But lobbying, or seeking to influence politicians on issues, is one of AOPA's most important current functions because of the dominant influence of European authorities on our activities. That is not to say that lobbying was not important in previous years, it was, but our relationships with MPs and those who set policy were a lot 'cosier'. We, and our colleague associations had, and still have, many friends, some of whom are pilots and owners, with influence in important places who were and still are accessible to debate. However, as the European authorities have gained in maturity and confidence it has become necessary to raise our game and match the higher level at which real influence occurs. This is how it is in the USA, with professional lobbyists situated close to the seat of government in Washington DC.



The firm of professional lobbyists selected to operate in Brussels is Hogan Lovells LLP. Half the financial support comes from IAOPA, with further contributions from AOPA US and IAOPA (Europe). AOPA UK provides funds to IAOPA and IAOPA (Europe), so, whilst the bulk of your annual subscription provides staff salaries, a small proportion goes towards this lobbying activity. It would have been much harder to get this going without the huge support and vision from Craig Fuller, President of IAOPA and of AOPA US. It is anticipated that these arrangements will help to set the agenda for the GA debate well into the future decade and beyond.

The lobbyists have already been busy, and organised three meetings that recently took place with important functionaries on the European scene. Apart from the lobbyists, one of whom very usefully is ex-high level FAA, there were two representatives from IAOPA, namely, Craig Spence, also AOPA US, and our own CEO Martin Robinson, Senior Vice President IAOPA Europe. The first such meeting was with Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director for Air Transport, Directorate General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), European Commission. The second was with Brian Simpson, Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), European Parliament, and the third with David Macmillan, Director General of the European Organisation for the safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL). Comprehensive notes of each meeting were taken, but without attempting to select and describe the most important points of detail, one can fairly conclude that these meetings represented the initiation of ongoing dialogues at the highest level in each case, with further channels opened up to a wider sphere of influence.

Another contribution from your annual subscription to AOPA comes under the heading in the financial accounts of 'donations to good causes'. Some donations are of a purely altruistic nature, namely those for the GAPAN-sponsored Flying for the Disabled Scholarships and also the Light Aircraft Association's Educational Trust. The other donations are to the General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC), on whom we partly rely to fight for the preservation of flying sites, and to the General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo), on whom we, and other council member organisations, again rely in part to promote flight safety in GA across the UK. Also, the award of one hour's flying with an AOPA Corporate Member Flying Club to the winning university or college team of students entered in the Merlin Flight Simulation Group's Annual Aircraft Design and Handling Competition, and finally a contribution towards the organisation of the Royal Institute of Navigation's TopNav competition. Our donations on your behalf, together with those from our colleague associations, preserve the viability of these organisations and events. They represent in total about a pound of your annual sub, but I believe members are happy to support such worthy causes.

The above couple of examples illustrate the broad scope of support that AOPA provides in promoting and improving many aspects of GA in the UK and Europe. Yet further benefit would result from an increased AOPA membership, so please do all you can to encourage more pilots and owners to join up - the future AOPA Bonus Day at Duxford in September, described within, should provide a wonderful opportunity!

George Done