



# FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Quarterly newsletter for Angel Flight West's members and friends

## A New AFW Pilot Status - "Command Pilot Retired"



AFW has a new designation for those Command Pilots who've hung up their "wings," but not their desire to continue the organization's mission. No. CA Wing "Command Pilot Retired" Grant

Smith (pictured) is one such pilot given this status. Grant has been a member since 1995 before there were "Wings." In fact, it was Grant who, as a Board member for six years, introduced the idea of Hamlet Hopping—a term he coined for his and his wife's outreach efforts traveling by car to many small towns and hospitals in No. CA to introduce AFW. He says that "when I first started with AFW all the missions were coming out of So. CA

and we wanted to expand, so Mary and I would travel two to three days at a time to small towns, what I called hamlets, and make presentations to different hospitals. I really enjoyed that." Fast-forward to 2013 and we can see that the expansion to AFW's 13 western regional states originated through Grant's and his wife's early efforts.

When Grant first joined AFW he said, "I couldn't wait to get a mission and get to the airport. In fact, I probably shouldn't say this, but I used to flirt with Kathy and Susan [early mission coordinators] to get more missions." Grant was flying missions before AFW was set up to count them, but he's sure that he's flown over 300 and Cheri confirms this. Actually, Grant was the Command Pilot who flew both of AFW's milestones 1,000th and 40,000th missions. He recalls that on his way to pick up the passengers for the 1,000th mission from Redding to

*New Pilot Status continued on page 3...*

## Summer Camp Missions

Every summer AFW has the privilege of flying kids with specific health challenges to special summer camps for kids with similar challenges. There they can forget about their struggles and just be kids.



L to R: Passenger Edgar G., No. CA Wing Command Pilot Skip Armstrong, passenger Ronald C., and mission assistant Mike Fortune on their way from Las Vegas, NV to Fresno, CA to Champ Camp, a camp for young burn survivors.



L to R: Mission assistant, Dylan and Brianna L. and So. CA Wing Command Pilot Rock Swanson flying from Riverside, CA to Camp Pacifica, a camp for deaf or hearing-impaired children.

*More camp photos page 5...*



## Flight Plan

**Alan M. Dias, Executive Director**

### *Managing Change*

Having been involved with AFW since 1995, both as a volunteer and as Executive Director, I have witnessed how the

organization has always dealt with change; some changes more challenging than others.

In 2013 we're seeing declines in requested missions, pilot flown missions, and volunteer pilots. Our sister organizations are seeing similar statistics, and we are looking at each of these data points more closely to understand why.

For example, a decline in requests doesn't necessarily mean that there are fewer people in need of our service. We are identifying more communities who are in need, but do not know about our services. In addition, our field research reveals that many passengers are not aware that they are allowed to request multiple trips to treatments. People are thinking (mistakenly) that flights are 'one-to-a-customer!'

So, we are in the process of improving operational procedures, e.g., how we identify passengers and communicate with health care providers scheduling missions for their patients.

We are also seeing a decline in pilots. Commercial and general aviation are now experiencing a similar declining pilot population. However, AFW has barely tapped the existing supply of general aviation pilots. According to our research, we've reached only about five per cent!

AFW's plan going forward has been to enhance pilot outreach initiatives emphasizing recruitment, recognition, and retention. It's working. We recently dropped in to a meeting in No. California and discovered a flying club with hundreds of members potentially interested in AFW. Our 'fly-in' pilot seminar/mixers are producing positive, measurable results.

With AFIDS 2.0, we now deploy an advanced mission coordination system with the capability to retrieve and analyze a wider range of data. This in turn supports decision-making based on statistical facts. We can now take a more focused approach to budgeting based on supply (pilots and planes) and demand (passengers) in support of the Wings.

Keys to AFW's continued success include our highly motivated staff working with active, engaged Board members and Wing volunteers, both pilots and non-pilots. We've upgraded our income development and marketing capabilities including initiatives such as the Endeavor Awards, a gala fundraising event scheduled for May 2014. For more information about this event go to [www.endeavorawards.org](http://www.endeavorawards.org)

As we enter our fourth decade, accomplishing our mission and achieving measurable, sustainable results means being accountable by managing changes that are linked with our specific efforts.

One thing that has not and will not change is our commitment to our mission. It's a privilege being your Executive Director.

Blue skies and tailwinds,

Alan M. Dias

**Angel Flight West Thanks Our  
Major Contributors**

*Alaska Airlines*

**The Elaine W. and Kevin P. Kauffman  
Family Foundation**

**and**

**The Tom and Mary Kay Gallagher  
Foundation**

### **TURNING POINT**

#### **The Angel Flight West Story**

Watch the Angel Flight West story on TURNING POINT. Visit our web site [www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org) and click on link "Watch AFW Videos" on bottom of the home page, or go to <http://tinyurl.com/7opye7c>.



## In the Hangar Carolyn Jackson

In our usual article spotlighting one of our staff members, AFW would like to welcome aboard Carolyn Jackson as Development Associate. Carolyn's responsibilities include

processing, tracking and acknowledging all donations, and entering into Donorperfect, a fundraising software; proofing and assembling proposals; generating donor lists for mailings and publications; generating financial reports related to donations and reconciling with accounting. Whew! That's a lot of responsibilities, but she is up to the task after working in the nonprofit sector for over 15 years.

Carolyn found AFW when she "was looking for a change and saw the ad for this position, checked out the website, and after reading about the mission and the stories of those that had been helped by AFW I wanted to be a part of it." Since coming on board April 1st, Carolyn says she feels "in awe of the free services provided by AFW; its mission, the commitment and hard work of the staff; especially the Mission Coordinators and the dedication of the pilots and other volunteers." Welcome aboard, Carolyn!

## Oregon Wing Honored by Oregon State Legislature

A joint resolution has been adopted by the Oregon State Legislature honoring the pilots and volunteers of the OR Wing of AFW for service to the people of Oregon. The Resolution was initiated by Senator Steiner Hayward after learning about the OR Wing from Raoul Van Landuyt at the OR Academy of Family Physicians (OAFP). Senator Steiner Hayward is a physician, Director of the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Breast Health Education Program, President of the OAFP, and an OR State Senator. Congratulations to the pilots and volunteers of the OR Wing! The text of the Resolution may be viewed here:

<http://tinyurl.com/mqz949o>



L to R: OR Wing Hospital & Agency Outreach Coordinator Raoul Van Landuyt, OR Wing Leader Rosemary Pelissier, Senator Steiner Hayward, OR Wing Command Pilot and Chief Orientation Pilot Joe Pelissier after completing testimony in support of the joint resolution honoring the pilots and volunteers of the OR Wing of AFW.

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## New Pilot Status *...continued from page 1*

Palo Alto, CA, the weather "had closed in big time. I knew this was an important mission and that the press was waiting for me. It was very windy and a bit bumpy, however I landed the plane safely, albeit with a bit of touch and go! I'll never forget that mission. It was very exciting." Executive Director at that time, Jim Weaver, who was there said, "we were thankful to Grant for getting his plane in safely and for completing the mission the next day."

As a Command Pilot Retired, Grant is still

a viable part of the organization and is happy to continue spreading the word about AFW if asked. He adds, "I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in this way. It is amazing what AFW can and does accomplish through dedicated pilots and aircraft. May the spirit continue!" Grant will be forever remembered in that class of AFW pilots whose enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to the values of the organization remain a testament to the foundation of what AFW was built on.



Wife Barbara W. and passenger Stephen W. flying from Bandon, OR to Portland, OR where he will be treated at Providence Hospital for end-stage neuroendocrine carcinoma—a cancer that has grown throughout his spine causing severe pain. Stephen is on disability and although Barbara is working full-time, they are barely able to take care of their basic bills. This does not include their medical bills, which are formidable.

## A Letter of Gratitude from Barbara W.

*To Whom it May Concern:*

*My husband, Stephen W., and I were the lucky AFW passengers of Dr. Geoffrey McCarthy. We were picked up at a private airstrip in Bandon, OR by Dr. McCarthy and his wife, and flown to Portland, OR. We had a beautiful flight—one of the smoothest rides I have ever had I am sure, in no small part, due to Dr. McCarthy's 50 years of flight experience. This also turned what would have been a six-hour ride into a one-and-a-half-hour ride. After we landed, Mrs. McCarthy was kind enough to personally deliver us to Providence Hospital.*

*Thank you so very much for coordinating this transportation. We are profoundly grateful to this organization for assisting us in this most difficult time.*

*Kindest regards,  
Barbara W.*

## Air to Air Communication

- Condolences to the family of AFW passenger Jason M.
- You can Donate Miles to AFW via Alaska Airlines at <http://tinyurl.com/993tk7s>
- Learn about the AFW Foundation on our website and find out how you can help support the AFW mission with Planned Giving.
- If you would prefer to continue to receive the newsletter by snail mail and haven't done so, please send an e-mail to [newsletter@angelflightwest.org](mailto:newsletter@angelflightwest.org) or call us at (310) 390-2958.
- AFW thanks our new partners at Penair for their support of AFW passengers in Alaska.
- It is with a great deal of pleasure that we announce the opening of the AFW merchandise page. In conjunction with Land's End, AFW is offering a variety of men's and women's clothing and other merchandise for purchase. To use the service, click on the "Shop" tab on the AFW Home Page at [www.angelflightwest.org](http://www.angelflightwest.org) then click on the link that will take you directly to the Land's End/Angel Flight West site.



• You can find us on Facebook.  
<http://on.fb.me/N1r92o>



• You can also find us on Twitter.  
<http://bit.ly/PpNNkM>



• And we are also on YouTube.  
<http://tinyurl.com/c3vwf48>

## More Summer Camp Missions!



No.CA Wing Command Pilot Michael Venturino flew campers Reza and Tavey M. to Camp Pacifica, a camp for deaf and hearing impaired children. You can tell by their faces what a wonderful gift these flights are!



AZ Wing Command Pilot Dennis Phelan flew Gloria and Corina G. and Amanda M. to Camp Kindle, a camp for children and family members affected by a life-threatening illness.



[WWW.ANGELFLIGHTWEST.ORG](http://WWW.ANGELFLIGHTWEST.ORG)



WA Wing Command Pilot Gabhan Berry flying his very excited passengers Kilee F. and Jacquelyn B. to Camp Korey, a camp for children and families with serious and life-altering medical conditions.



L to R: So. CA Command Pilot Joe Goebel, with campers Gael and Hanniah B., and our own Mission Coordinator Jill Dannis, flying along as mission assistant for the day! Thanks to Joe and Jill for getting these children from their home in Perris, CA to Camp Pacifica, a special camp for children and siblings with hearing impairment.

Left Photo: L to R - Mission assistant Cheryl Hall, passengers Nicholas V. and Dylan O., camp counselor Maria Melendrez, and So. CA Wing Command Pilot Stephen Danz on their way to camp for burn survivors.



**L photo above:** Far left is Cyrus Sigari and far right is Ben Marcus. Cyrus and Ben were the youngest members to join AFW in 1995 at thirteen-years-old. **R photo above:** Ben today at 31-years-old is now an AFW Command Pilot and member of the Board of Directors. He and Cyrus are owners of Jet Aviva; a jet sales, training and delivery company.



L to R above is So. CA Command Pilot Benjamin Marcus with passenger Elizabeth A. on a mission from Bozeman, MT to Odgen, UT—the first leg of her 3-leg mission—so she could receive a life-saving kidney transplant at UC Irvine Medical Center. Without the generosity of AFW volunteer pilots like Ben, Elizabeth would not have been able to afford to travel from her home in Three Forks, MT all the way to Irvine, CA for her surgery.



No. CA Wing Command Pilot Michael McDonald carrying passenger one-and-a-half-year-old Margo J. and her mom Maggie. Margo's low-income family had difficulty meeting travel expenses for a six-month follow-up appointment from her home in Eureka, CA to Oakland Children's Hospital for treatment of neutropenia.



L to R: Passenger James O., OR Wing Command Pilot Glen Showalter, and Anita G., girlfriend to James on a mission from Weed, OR to Portland. James has been battling a rare blood cancer diagnosed in 2004 and receiving chemotherapy in Portland, OR. This mission is bringing him to his doctors for evaluation to determine the progress of his recent treatments.

## Write a Review for AFW

*Great NonProfits* is an online site that allows people to find, review, and share information about great nonprofits. AFW is constantly striving to get the word out about who we are and what we do. This website offers an easy way—one that takes only minutes—for those who have experienced the organization to help spread our mission. Click on the site below, read what others have said, and add your own review. To date, we only have 19 reviews and they are mostly older posts. We'd greatly appreciate it! Go to: <http://greatnonprofits.org/organizations/view/angel-flight-west-inc>



No. CA Wing Command Pilot Tom Tessier with Jodie E. on their way from Oakland, CA to Arcada, CA. Jodie has been flying with AFW since 2005 for various medical conditions. This mission was for corrective facial surgery and eye examination.



L to R: So. CA Wing Command Pilot Frank Singer, parents Maria, Jose, and passenger Rosa L. on their way back home to Firebaugh, CA after her ongoing post-cochlear implant care/treatment at UCLA in Santa Monica. Rosa's family income is low and there are no treatments for her hearing loss available closer to their home.



UT Wing Command Pilot John Trentman explains the particulars of flying in a small airplane to Tosha S. before she and her 4 1/2 year old daughter Taleah fly from Salt Lake City to St. George, UT for treatment of Taleah's leukemia. Taleah's illness makes Tosha's time away from work and family both a financial and physical burden that is relieved by AFW. Photo taken by Scott Winterton of the Deseret News.



Passenger Fausta J. and her grandson Guillermo on her way to the University of Arizona Cancer Center to undergo chemotherapy for non Hodgkin's lymphoma. She has no means of transportation, and no one to drive her to treatment. AZ Wing Command Pilot Dennis Phelan flew her from Tucson, AZ home to Yuma, AZ.



Two-year-old passenger Jade M. and mom Nicole on their way home to Kalispell, MT for a much needed respite in Jade's cancer treatment and to see her family. She was then flown back on a 2-leg relay flight to her specialty treatment at Seattle Children's Hospital for Stage 4 neuroblastoma. Mom is out of work in order to stay with and care for Jade during her treatment.



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#### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The mission of Angel Flight West is to arrange free air transportation in response to health care and other compelling human needs.

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Toll Free	(888) 4-AN-ANGEL
Fax	(310) 397-9636
Questions?	<a href="mailto:info@angelflightwest.org">info@angelflightwest.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.angelflightwest.org">www.angelflightwest.org</a>

## AFW Board Director and Command Pilot, Charlie Finkel Swaps Engine Power for Pedal Power to Help Raise Money for AFW



**L: At the start of Charlie Finkel's cross country bicycle adventure in Manhattan Beach, CA, to raise money for AFW.**



**L: At the finish line in Boston, MA with Executive Director, Alan Dias who surprised Charlie.**

On May 12, 2013, AFW Board Director, Charlie Finkel dipped the back wheel of his bicycle in the Pacific ocean at Manhattan Beach, CA and rode 3,415 miles across the country where he dipped the front wheel of his bicycle in the Atlantic ocean at Revere Beach, MA on June 28, 2013. This was Charlie's personal challenge to raise money and awareness for AFW. "I am big on adventure and challenges. This has been a dream of mine as long as I can remember. Now, with the assistance of CrossRoads Cycling Adventures, the dream has come true.

"Just as cycling has been my hobby and passion since childhood, so has flying, and I have been very fortunate to have been able to engage in both. As a pilot, I have been able to pay back some of my blessings by twenty years of membership in AFW. The story of AFW is a fantastic one, and my hope was that my pedal power and enthusiasm would get our message out to the public every stop along the way."

For all those who supported Charlie's ride helping to raise \$22,000 for AFW, we express our deepest gratitude. And of course, to Charlie, for his incredible accomplishment.