



FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Quarterly newsletter for Angel Flight West's members and friends

From the Passenger's Seat

AFW Passenger, Lee C.

This is about my journey with AFW and as a liver transplant recipient.

*AFW passenger Lee C.
November 16th*

Saturday morning I had just finished breakfast when the phone rang. It was Stanford telling me I was in first back-up position for a liver and not to eat or drink anything until I heard back from them between 12:00 & 1:00.

After many phone calls figuring out ETA's from my house to Stanford, I got a call from Stanford that I was a direct admission and a bed was ready. Meanwhile, we were scrambling making sure our home front was fine tuned, plans in order, etc.

In the end around 4:00, Stanford called and said the liver

fit the person that I was behind. It turned out to be a size issue and they had skipped down the list to find the right size match. So, there are people ahead of me, and a lot of variables!

It was sort of good so to speak, so that next time they call there will not be much to do.

January 22nd

This past Wednesday afternoon I was at work typing away, when the phone rang and it was Stanford telling me to come down right away. They had a donor liver for me. So, I passed off my work to one of my back-up agents in the office, and sent a quick e-mail to my family and

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L to R: No. CA Wing Command Pilot Timothy Ronan, passenger's husband Bill, and AFW passenger Lee C. traveling frequently between Palo Alto, CA and Chico, CA. Lee has flown 25 missions since Sept. 2013 for a liver transplant following her diagnosis of liver cancer on Valentine's Day 2012.

First Angel Flight West Mission

So. CA Wing Command Pilot Chip Yates



So. CA Wing Command Pilot Chip Yates with passenger Denise C. who travels back and forth to UCLA from Las Vegas, NV for cancer treatments.

At 8,500 feet I had found refuge from the desert heat and a stunning view of the 11,500 foot summit of Mt. San Gorgonio out my right window. To my left, Mt. San Jacinto's 10,800 foot peak beckoned—a place I had visited numerous times on day hikes, but not a single time since getting my pilot's license. I had just finished my first ever AFW Mission and I was flying high and heading home from Parker, Arizona to John

Wayne Airport—with a stop at Chino for some cheap gas to set me up for my next mission!

The thrill of getting my beautiful Piper Cherokee PA-28-235 Charger back from a four-month complete restoration, combined with the feeling of immense satisfaction of having just completed my first Angel Flight West mission, told me that I wouldn't be hitting those Palm Springs trails anytime soon either.

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Story from a Volunteer

This is the first in a series of articles written by an AFW office volunteer. Member Irv Moskowitz offers a unique historical perspective not only as a volunteer Command Pilot, but also as a regular and valued AFW office volunteer for the last 24 years.

Some time during the end of the summer of 1990, I wandered into a 2 ½-room hothouse at 3237 Donald Douglas Loop South on the eastern corner of the Santa Monica Airport in California.

There, sweating inside were several people fumbling with papers and a telephone that kept ringing non-stop. On the left side of the room was a small single seat schoolhouse desk. Behind it was a large blackboard with some hand scrawled notes. This was the entire flight schedule of Angel Flight West.

In a back room (which was even hotter than the front) was a stack of boxes, some opened, some not; piles of Xeroxed paper (which I later came to find out were pilot application forms), pilot handbooks and a host of other documents needed to keep this fledgling operation afloat.

From the third room, about the size of a large closet, the boss appeared; a goateed man, standing erect, looking taller than he actually was, with a pleasant voice and a welcoming smile.

"I'm Jim Weaver," he explained. "Can I help you?"

I replied, "I retired a couple of months ago, and I'm bored out of my mind. I have an airplane, a Cessna 172, and I need some productive activity. Do you use volunteers?"

Jim's smile stretched from ear to ear. He turned to a tall, lanky, sexy-looking woman, Mission Coordinator at the time Susan Connor, and said, "Could you give this guy something to do?"

"Are you kidding?" she squealed. And that was how it started.

The office work was rewarding, connecting people who needed a flight with a pilot that was looking for rewarding work flying his aircraft. And if

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The Endeavor Awards

Save the Date! - May 30, 2015
The 2nd Annual Endeavor Awards
Gala presented by Angel Flight West.

The Endeavor Awards gala is a red carpet black-tie event honoring charitable aviation and the good that flying does. Entertainment and dinner fill out an evening highlighted by three awards, all recognizing individuals and organizations that have committed resources to provide free flights flown for humanitarian reasons.

For a recap of the 2014 awards go to: <http://www.endeavorawards.org/>



Passenger Maria R. with No. CA Wing Command Pilot Bill Vierra on a mission from Mendota, CA to Palo Alto, CA where Maria is being treated for cholangitis, an infection of the bile duct, at Stanford Children's Hospital. Maria's father is a fieldworker and is the only working member of the family. They cannot afford an alternate means of transportation.

Quick Links

Our Website
Our Blog
FAQs
Wings
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Upcoming Wing Events

- 9-20-2014 AFW Idaho Wing Meeting
- 10-1-2014 Seattle Cocktail Party & Fundraiser
- 10-8-2014 San Carlos Pilot Seminar
- 10-9-2014 Seattle Pilot Seminar - Aeronautical Decision Making

Please click on <http://afids.angelflightwest.org/calendar> for details and to sign up for each event.

Want to Get (More) Involved?



#GivingTuesday

AFW is participating in #GivingTuesday this December 2, 2014. #GivingTuesday will harness the power of social media to create a national movement around the holidays dedicated to giving. If you are interested in joining AFW's #GivingTuesday movement, please email jilld@angelflightwest.org for more info.

Help Angel Flight West Spread the Word

Each year, the Lightspeed Aviation Foundation is proud to recognize a select group of deserving aviation non-profit organizations nominated by members of the aviation community. Help AFW spread the word about our mission and the opportunity to be awarded up to \$10,000 by clicking on the following link and vote for us: <http://tinyurl.com/mag7fue>

The Kickstarter Program

AFW helps provide flights to and from health care, but patients often can't afford the ground transportation to finish their journey to treatment and home from the airport. We'd like to expand our Earth Angels program, but we need features in AFIDS to help with the coordination of these trips. To raise funds to develop these features in an innovative way, we tried crowdfunding on the popular Kickstarter platform. Working in cooperation with other charitable flying organizations across the country, we successfully funded the project in June. Thanks to all who supported us. We look forward to rolling out more Earth Angel hubs early next year.

Story from a Volunteer *...continued from page 2*

none could be found, and it fit in with my schedule, I took it. I racked up lots of pilot hours that way.

And then there was the assembling of handbooks, the stuffing envelopes, the talking to passengers and arranging their flights, the meeting of new pilots and making them feel welcome and ready to spend some money flying patients—so many things to do and too few people to do it. And that back room where so many of these activities took place remained a sweltering sweat box.

But for all the physical problems with the office, AFW was growing and so was its community of volunteers and pilots. Friendships were born and made fast. And through those friendships, more pilots were recruited.

And, we had office parties. The most memorable were the Christmas parties, sometimes in restaurants, but mostly in homes. There was nutsiness without limit; singing, dancing, karaoke, and lots and lots of jokes. We also occasionally got together at the old Spitfire Grill at the Santa Monica airport near the office.

And, we had fly-ins...to Concord, Oceana

(an airport that no longer exists), San Luis Obispo, and Harris Ranch. At one particular fly-in at Oceana a young man about 16 asked if he could come along with me as a passenger. Young Ben Marcus was full of questions and eagerness. The Oceana fly-in was special. We had a gigantic barbeque, awards, home grown entertainment, and contests. But most of all, we were together having a good time. Incidentally, Ben Marcus and his friend Cyrus now own Jet Aviva, a jet service, aircraft sales and rental operation. Ben is also now an AFW board member. Good for you, Ben!

And of course, time moves along. AFW grew and moved into its present and larger air-conditioned office in the same Santa Monica airport complex, and staffed by a well-run team.

I could go on, but even I am growing older and all this reminiscing is getting to weigh heavy on me. I believe in Angel Flight West. Of all the charitable organizations, I love being part—a real part—of the work. It has sustained me all these years and will continue to until...



Ask Josh

Josh Olson, Executive Director

The following will be a regular Q & A column of the newsletter in lieu of the traditional E.D. article. We welcome any questions you may have for Josh and can send them to josho@angelflightwest.org

What's with the fees and dues decision?

I'd like to introduce a new column in our newsletter. Instead of giving

organizational updates, we want to hear from you on how we can better advance our cause. If you have a question or comment, please email me any time at josho@angelflightwest.org. Our first question comes from a long-time member in Yelm, WA:

"Why did AFW decide to eliminate member dues and fees? I disagreed with the change in policy as I felt anyone worth their salt would be happy to pay to join or remain with the organization." - Tim Weston

Thank you, Tim! We get this question quite frequently and pilots have strong opinions on both sides of the issue. Then again, pilots are never short

on opinions! Policy changes at AFW require board approval and come about for a variety of reasons. The decision to eliminate member dues and fees, passed earlier this year, resulted from several key factors.

The primary reason was to create a culture here at AFW that people want to be a part of and making it as easy as possible to get involved. We want our members to want to invest in our cause instead of feeling obligated to invest. This subtle shift in philosophy was in direct response to a declining membership. Over the past seven years, our volunteer population has steadily decreased approximately 10 percent every year. During that time, our staff regularly received vocal pushback on our policy to charge nominal sign-up fees when we were already asking them to donate flights. Additionally, we were learning that upon on-line membership sign-

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First Angel Flight West Mission

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My inaugural July 26th Angel Flight from San Bernadino Airport to Parker, Arizona carrying a mom and her two precious sons had gone perfectly to plan and now I was hooked. In the next thirty days I would go on to fly 11 AFW missions to a myriad of airports including Merced's Castle Airport, Santa Barbara, North Las Vegas, Santa Maria, Montgomery Field, Carlsbad, Long Beach, Parker and, of course, many to the Angel Flight West home base at Santa Monica Airport.

I have had the honor of flying kids to camp, adults to cancer treatments, orthopedic surgery, programs for the deaf and other such treatments that every day remind me how lucky I am not only to be a pilot but to have my health. It's a combination of fortune that inspires me to give something back.

On one long flight from Merced to San Bernadino, I had a brother and sister in the back seats who were both deaf, and thankfully an adult sign language translator in the front seat with me—what a lifesaver! It was amazing watching her turn to the kids in the back and 'sign' them the details of our flight, the

safety briefing, and how many minutes remained as we descended into the Los Angeles basin to reunite them with a bathroom and of course with their excited parents.

After one mission to Santa Monica, I decided to relax and enjoy a nice dinner at Typhoon Restaurant on the field while I Tweeted out a photo from the flight. To my surprise and delight, Angel Flight Executive Director Josh Olson saw my Tweet and walked over from the office to join me for a quick bite and chat about his vision for the future!

The Earth Angel ground network is also impressive, and proves you don't need to own an airplane to make a big difference. I have worked numerous missions with these kind folks and even though we are all volunteers, I like to think we are putting on a professional and well-coordinated service for our patients that rivals a paid service in every way.

I strongly encourage anyone with an interest in helping others to get involved. It has been an exciting and humbling experience that not only gives me satisfaction, but also a great deal of perspective in life.

Our Deepest Gratitude to our Command Pilots

AFW wishes to thank each and every pilot who generously donates their time, plane and resources in support of our mission. View AFW Command Pilots' missions flown this year by clicking on <http://www.angelflightwest.org/regional-wings/member-recognition>



L to R: OR Wing Command Pilot Art Schwalge with mom Bethany, daughter and passenger one-year-old Zohie, and dad Jonathan M. flying from Ronan, MT to Seattle, WA. Zohie needs specialty medical care and surgical intervention for synostosis, which is a fusion of the bones.



L to R: WA Wing Command Pilot Robert Brahm with passenger's wife Peggy and passenger Theodore D. on the last of a 2-leg mission from Spokane, WA to Seattle, WA. The first leg from Great Falls, MT to Spokane was flown by MT Wing Command Pilot Reginald Goodwin. Theodore is being treated for squamous cell carcinoma. The couple is on a fixed income and could not afford the cost of multiple trips for his treatments.

Ask Josh

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up, many interested volunteers were abandoning the application once they were asked for payment. And we learned from an AFW member survey last year that the majority of our volunteers were not thrilled with mandatory dues upon renewal. In fact, we were the only Angel Flight organization charging dues. When we added these factors up, it seemed the right thing to do to eliminate the dues and fees structure.

The decision was not without debate. Tim brings up an important point: there is a level of commitment required when you pay for something. Also, there are a lot of costs associated with member services—the badge, the hat, shipping, Ivan's staff time, etc. Member dues and fees annually generate approximately \$45,000 per year, which helps offset some of our coordination costs. While that makes up about five percent of our hard costs, it was not

insignificant. Time will tell if eliminating dues and fees will decrease members' level of commitment.

AFW is an awesome organization because of all of the volunteers and people involved. The opportunity is to find more people just like you! Half of our members sign up based on word-of-mouth recommendations. This community is filled with really cool, dynamic individuals who are passionate about doing what they love to give back and serve those with transportation needs. So, we are pleased to announce that this decision resulted in an 18 percent growth in our membership in just five months. Half of those new members are qualified command pilots, many of whom are already flying missions. In fact, this decision is news to them. Our challenge now is getting all of these new members engaged and activated and to keep growing.

From the Passenger's Seat ...continued from page 1

support people.

I went home to change clothes, and by that time my family met me at Enloe where I boarded the Enloe Flight Care helicopter to Stanford for the transplant. After I arrived at Stanford, the surgeon was prepping me when her phone rang. It was the procurement team in Texas and they had discovered that the liver had been compromised being on life support too long. My transplant was canceled.

Lee's assistant Kim Finlan:

June 17th

Hello to all of Lee's friends and family. This is Kim Finlan, Lee's assistant at Baywood Real Estate. Tonight I received a call from Lee telling me she is finally getting her liver transplant! Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers. I will keep posting updates for her as they come in. Lee is a fighter and losing has never been an option for her.

AFW passenger Lee C.

I would like to take this opportunity before I have the transplant and still feel well enough to write a thank you letter to AFW and every pilot—of which there have been many—who have donated their time and expenses to fly my husband and I back and forth to Stanford Hospital so many times for my medical appointments and treatments.

You have all been so gracious, good to us, seeing that we were well taken care of, and that we reached all of our medical appointments on time.

Without you we would have been very stressed driving three to four hours each way, putting many miles on our vehicles; not to mention the financial

burden we had already experienced driving to Palo Alto, eating meals out, and paying medical bills during the first year of this situation. Our outlook would have been substantially different than it is.

Thanks to you, we are both able to remain positive, continue working our jobs and taking care of our family, which helps me stay healthier and feel good. We are so thankful for you and your help during this difficult time in our lives. Sincerely, Lee C.

Lee's assistant Kim Finlan:

June 24th

Hello, all. This is Kim Finlan...Just sending out an update on Lee's liver transplant. Lee is alert and recovering. She is still in ICU at Stanford and will be for a little while longer. She had some fluid in her lungs and had to have dialysis, but according to Bill that was pretty common for a surgery like this one...

July 2nd

Hello everyone! This is Kim...Just wanted to let you know Lee is out of ICU and moved to a regular room at Stanford. She is doing very well.

July 16th

Lee is out of the hospital now and she is staying in her long-term location for a couple months. She is doing well and recovering more and more each day.

August 19th

I have great news!! Lee is coming home this week or next week!

August 22nd

This is Kim. Lee is home!



L to R: WA Wing Command Pilot Barrie Wilcox, husband and his wife passenger Carolyn R., and WA Wing Command Pilot Tim Weston flying Carolyn from Portland, OR to Seattle, WA where she receives monthly treatments after neck and spinal surgery. Carolyn cannot tolerate a long car ride due to pain and fatigue.

On arrival in Seattle, both Lions Club members, Tim Weston and Barrie Wilcox, were surprised to be met by 12 to 14 Lions Club members. The WA Lions Club hosts AFW Earth Angels, and this was their first Earth Angel mission having one of their volunteers drive Carolyn and her husband to the hospital close by.



So. CA Wing Command Pilot Steve Danz flew passenger Richard P. and his wife from San Luis Obispo, CA to Santa Monica, CA where Richard is traveling to UCLA Medical Center for a surgery consultation for oral cancer. The couple can't afford travel, and Richard can't be in the sun or heat for an extended period of time.

Angel Flight West Thanks Our Top Donors

Alaska Airlines

Tom and Mary Kay Gallagher
Foundation

Elaine W. and Kevin P. Kauffman
Family Foundation

James and Jane Slattery

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University of California LA Medical Center

Air To Air Communication

- ➔ AFW sends our deepest condolences to the families of Michael Bond, Mary "May" Locke, Rob Pehkonen, Dick Tuefel, Trina Coy, and member Victor Ninov on the passing of his wife Caroline.
- ➔ Please click on <http://www.angelflightwest.org/tributes/> to see donations given in honor of and in memory of those who have passed.
- ➔ AFW welcomes aboard new ID Wing Leader Steve Laflin and wishes to thank out-going Johnny Stewart for his years leading the ID Wing in our mission.
- ➔ AFW wishes to thank our out-going board members Bill Ayer, John Ferrell, Charlie Finkel, and Hal Morley for their many years of service making AFW the strong and life-changing organization that it is today. We welcome our new board members Rich Conti, Georgia Griffiths, and Geoff Wood who will be helping to fly at the helm.
- ➔ On page 4 of our last newsletter the photo caption of Patty and Phoenix S. from Sheridan, WY misstated that Patty was a "single mom supporting her two children" when in fact, she is married to John S., and they have four children. Our apologies to the family. It was brought to our attention by Command Pilot John Larsen who said "they are a joy to fly, and they can't say enough positive about AFW."
- ➔ You can donate miles to AFW via Alaska Airlines at <http://tinyurl.com/993tk7s>
- ➔ AFW Store! In conjunction with Land's End, AFW is offering a variety of men's and women's clothing and other merchandise for purchase. Get great gifts for the upcoming holidays! To use this service, click on <http://tinyurl.com/lq27xg2>
- ➔ **Amazon Shoppers!** AFW will receive a portion of your purchase if you click here www.angelflightwest.org, which will take you to the Amazon page for AFW.
- ➔ HELP US GO GREEN and Save \$ – If you are not receiving the newsletter by email, please send your name, address and email information to newsletter@angelflightwest.org or call us at 310/390.2958.



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AFW Flies Kids to Special Summer Camps



Traveling to camp for burn survivors. Kayla and Karla C. with So. CA Command Pilot Suzanne Chesire and Mission Assistant Elena Monroe (both employed by Desert Jet) from Fullerton, CA to So. Lake Tahoe, CA. "A big thank you, to your organization for making these flights possible. It was an honor for Elena and myself to make this happen, along with the help of Desert Jet as well."

No. CA Command Pilot Amber Whitmill flew Landen G. (older boy pictured in the middle) home from Camp Pacifica, a camp for deaf and hard of hearing children. Landen was welcomed home (pictured above) by dad Len, mom Stafanie, and Landen's little brother.

So. CA Wing Command Pilot Daniel Greer with camper Bianey A. ready to fly home to San Diego, CA from Santa Monica, CA after Bianey enjoyed her time at One Heartland summer camp for children and families with life-threatening illness.

For a recent story of AFW's camp flights click on

<http://tinyurl.com/oejhous>

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