



Whirlwind



*** *Special Emergency Edition* ***

April 17, 2018

COCKPIT CORNER – by Brian Sherman, did4ways@aol.com

Special Rule for Model Aircraft aka Section 336 Renewal @ Risk

For those that were unable to attend Saturday's meeting at the field (and it was beautiful weather) Larry Smith and John Carrigan provided an important update on the upcoming FAA Reauthorization Bill.

Larry just received an email from the AMA advising that there is growing pressure from certain members of Congress, states and private parties to eliminate Section 336 from the reauthorization bill.

John attended the Toledo Expo where several seminars he attended talked about the lobbying of some of the major on-line merchants such as Amazon, Google, Best Buy etc. to extend the FAA's testing and certification requirement for commercial drone operators to non-commercial drone operators. That would include everyone flying any type of RC aircraft in the recreational and hobbyist community. And the training is not cheap, cannot be taken on-line and requires in-person visits to an FAA facility to take the test.

The adverse impact such a requirement would have on the recreational and hobbyist community would be devastating. Just think how many young adults would be able to afford the time and \$100's of expense? Even in the adult community the costs and time involved would severely discourage participation. At a time when the industry is already experiencing a wave of consolidation of suppliers due to bankruptcy (i.e. Tower Hobbies being acquired by Horizon Hobby after filing for bankruptcy) and smaller hobby shops unable to attract enough customers to remain profitable implementing such a licensing requirement could well spell the death knell for our hobby as we know it.

So what is driving these efforts? Many would have you believe it is all about safety. But though safety is a major concern, the model aircraft hobby has had a tremendous safety record for decades operating under the safety guidelines of national community based organizations such as the AMA. The growth in drone usage has presented new challenges but the AMA and other organizations are meeting these through cooperative efforts with manufacturers, local/state/federal legislators and AMA clubs to provide the necessary educational programs and training venues to help new drone operators learn how to fly safely.

After much discussion the members feel that the real impetus for these efforts is the desire by companies like Google and Amazon to effectively monopolize the national air space for use of commercial drones to deliver packages and other services. These companies have deep pockets and can afford to fund lobbyists with access to all levels of federal, state and local governments to promote their interests over those of the of the recreational and hobbyist community.

You can help prevent this from happening. Collectively our voices matter. The AMA has provided a prepared letter you can access at the link below setting forth why 336 should be part of the FAA reauthorization bill. All you need to do is fill in your name, address and email. The site automatically ID's your representatives and emails a copy of the letter to them. You can also edit the letter to add your personal comments or modify the prepared content.

It only takes a few minutes. I have already done it. Your club officers are asking your help to do the same.
<http://www.modelaircraft.org/aboutama/protect336.aspx>

Thank you! And until next time, "Keep the Cockpit Side Up"

Links to more information on Section 336, FAA regs Part 101 and a practice exam for Part 107. How many of us would be able to correctly answer 70% or more of the questions? More importantly, however, how many of the questions are actually relevant to the use of aircraft for recreational and hobbyist purposes?

<https://www.faa.gov/uas/faqs/#ffr>

<http://archaeology.sites.unc.edu/files/2017/01/Practice-Exam-Part-107-2017-CAS.pdf>