

GOPA Scholarship Fund

by: David Barrett, GOPA Scholarship Committee

This is a plea!!! But before we get to that I hope all of you in these very, very difficult times are keeping fit and well and still managing to stay current and connected to aviation whilst maintaining separation/isolation/hand washing/sleeve sneezing/face covering and social distancing, etc. to defeat the Covid-19 virus.

In the UK keeping current and licensed is at the moment a bit of a drag and worldwide it seems that things are not improving at any great rate. Experience tells us that things will improve but flying and learning to fly does not today register high with people who exercise power over our lives and living. Young people embarking on the journey to a PPL are looking at an immense challenge both practically and financially ignoring the hurdle for professional flying that lies ahead for them if that be their chosen path. All have the hope but some need help. This is where you all come in.

I have served on the Scholarship Fund with others for some years and have had the pleasure and duty, with my Committee colleagues, of arranging on your behalves for placement of the funds you have all contributed to assist selecting budding young pilots to achieve their PPL. The contributions from individual members has never been less than very generous and particularly so at the GOPA annual conventions which lately have produced some wonderful gifts/donations/contributions. It is a pleasure for me to be a part of the process and have the chance to see and hear about the young people who are, even in these straightened times, intent on getting to a PPL, something which has never been easy or inexpensive.

The biggest part of the Scholarship funding comes from the Annual Convention. Last year we raised in total the sum of \$7000 plus additional donations throughout the preceding year. This sum, along with some small surplus in the fund, has been awarded in the last few months to five deserving candidates (out of 19 excellent applications) after quite a rigorous selection process. You will have read about this elsewhere in *The International Grumman Star*. The UK applicant recently successfully flew solo and in the middle of all our misery managed also to get a new job. An example of the quality and determination of the successful applicants.

The sums raised each year are largely "invested" with awards being given more or less within a few months of the year's accumulated funds being donated. There is no reason for a funds reserve of any sort within the Scholarship Fund. Your money is best placed with the worthy recipients, of which there is an increasing number, as soon as possible and this we try to do. This means we don't plan to keep any "reserve" and this year it is probable that without a bit more of an effort from all of us, there will be very limited funds to maintain the Scholarship. Following recent appeals and the awareness of the Scholarship difficulty we have received a total of approximately \$1800 since January. We truly appreciate this support from the members who have made those donations. A good start but!!!!

Raising funds to enable the Scholarship to continue got tougher for this year because of the postponement of the Fredericksburg convention to 2021 so I am asking all of you to consider helping to keep the fund going this year by making a special donation to the fund. You might be able to empty the pockets of your friends at the rare gatherings on various ramps once you are all released from your house arrest or you might individually donate something. We (mainly poor Pat Metz) try to reach a target total of \$10,000 each year because this gives us the opportunity, in your name, to award a small number of individual applicants life changing sums to facilitate qualifying as pilots.

So I am asking each of you to consider donating what you can. The upside is that you are spared (this year!!) from the serious moment at the Convention when Pat Metz and other volunteers eyeball you all and defy you to walk past handmade cards and well organized auction sponsors gifts and Calcuttas, if you dare. An intimidating moment even for tough attendees. You have all probably saved the costs of attending the convention so might feel able to release some of the saving. You can make donations online here- <https://www.grummanpilots.org/Scholarship>, or send a check/cheque payable to The GOPA Scholarship Fund to the Secretary/Treasurer to the following address GOPA, PO Box 1531, Cameron Park, CA 95682, or call Karen and Stew +1 (530) 295-7158 with your credit card information.

Thanks again