

Text of an address delivered by Rusty Sachs to the US Sport Pilot Expo, Orlando, FL

FLYING IS FLYING

Whether it's a 152 or an F-18, flying is flying. Whether you're grasping the stick and collective in a Bell 47 or the yoke and throttles in a King Air, flying is flying. But we sometimes tend to lose sight of all that is common to every type aircraft; all too often, the discrepancies between flying machines create unnecessary barriers.

An incident a few days ago brought this unfortunate tendency to mind. A member wrote in to express his frustration at an inability to locate an instructor willing to train him for a Sport Pilot Certificate. This fellow had begun training in light planes after logging nearly a thousand hours in an ultralights, then lost his medical. Unable to solo any longer, he returned to ULs. But with Sport Pilot /Light Sport Aircraft regulations now a reality, he'd like to register his UL as an amateur-built aircraft. Once it's registered, he needs an FAA pilot certificate to fly it.

Although this airman intends only to fly VFR in daylight, and only in a very light aircraft that meets the SP/LSA definition, every instructor in his part of the country has refused to provide

him the training he requests, claiming that they train only those pilots seeking private pilot or higher qualifications.

Snobbism has no place in General Aviation. If your idea of heaven is flying a BeechJet, you can't conclude that everyone else aspires to something less, only to something different. Years ago a TWA captain friend and I considered buying a plane together; we decided against it when we realized he wanted something you could fly upside down, and I wanted a good instrument airplane that would carry two shotguns and a cooler full of pheasants. We all have our own desires, and we all share the same sky. It's time we started helping each other, rather than competing for prestige. We're all just one medical exam away from being sport pilots.

The exhilaration of flying has coursed through the veins of us all, and we each harbor a yen to share it. Some simply want to show off our talent, some yearn to meditate while soaring through the firmament. Flight instructors share another burden – to introduce others to this glorious skill. With countless underemployed instructors across the nation, the least one can do when faced with a person seeking the sort of training we don't personally provide is refer the hopeful to someone who offers what he wants. Come to think of it, a great way to get more flight time – and, dare I say it? more money -- is to expand the bandwidth of the training you offer. Learn about ultralights. Learn about weight-shift control. Learn about powered para-

chutes. The cost is low, and each new student is a new member of the club, another person who may someday want to expand his own abilities to embrace instrument flight. Or soaring. Or helicopters.

This new set of regulations stands to increase the demand for flight instructors in new and challenging ways, all of which confront our notion of what constitutes flying. But when you get right down to the core of the onion, any time you're supported by the air – be it in a Breezy or a Boeing – you're flying.

And you're part of the club.