



July 2026

# The Plane Scoop

A publication of the Central Valley Aviation Association

Recognize this landmark? The first person to send the correct response to [CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org](mailto:CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org) gets a prize!



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## Central Valley Aviation Association

CVAA was formed by Central California pilots in 1968 to support aviators who utilize Fresno Chandler Executive Airport. Join us monthly for an educational guest speaker, and make lifelong friendships with fellow local pilots and aviation enthusiasts.

## Upcoming General Meeting

No July CVAA General Meeting. See the notice on page 3 for a very important update regarding future CVAA meetings at the Fresno County Sheriff's Air Squadron Hangar at FCH.

# In Remembrance

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It's with sad hearts we are informing all CVAA friends of the passing of our dear long-time member, Rita Fairbourn, on Friday, June 19 just a few weeks after her 77th birthday on May 21st. She and her husband, Bob, just celebrated their 55th year anniversary on January 15th.

She raised a family and worked in the workman's compensation insurance field for over 30 years.

Her friends in CVAA remember the numerous fly-outs that she and Bob participated in that was an activity of CVAA for many years. She was always smiling, positive, upbeat, and willing to help in any way. She served as secretary for CVAA multiple times and most recently as secretary in 2024. And, we could always count on her and Bob bringing donuts to our Saturday morning meetings.

**Our heartfelt condolences to Bob and their family. She made a memorable and beneficial impact on many lives and will be greatly missed. Her celebration of life will be held on Saturday, August 1st, at the Verde Club, 2532 N. Marks Ave, Fresno, CA 93722, beginning at 11:00am until about 1:30pm. Light lunch will be provided at noon.**

# Notice to Members

## Change of day & time for General Meetings

Dear Central Valley Aviation Association members,

You may recall participating in the online member survey last fall, which has been vital to our efforts in making CVAA membership a more valuable and meaningful experience for all. While your new Board of Directors has been working hard towards that goal, we have yet to address the most common feedback from that survey: that, for many valid and understandable reasons, Saturday morning meetings simply don't work for most of you.

Our General Meetings are the cornerstone of our organization. It's when we get to see each other, catch up, share news, tell stories, and in a more formal capacity, make announcements and conduct official business. They're also one of the primary benefits of membership, since each month's guest speaker invests substantial time and effort to prepare a presentation that is informative, relevant, and unique. As such, we want as many of our members as possible to attend each and every general meeting. We want you to get the most out of your membership and have the opportunity to participate in our activities and official business. We also want to provide our guest speakers with a broad, attentive audience – their only “payment” for their time, as volunteers. A strong turnout encourages them to return, inspires new guest speakers, and helps us to provide fresh and engaging topics, worthy of your time, month after month.

Therefore, in response to overwhelming survey feedback, **we will be moving our General Meetings to the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM, starting on Wednesday, August 5, 2026** (we do not hold a General Meeting in July each year). Make sure to see the “Upcoming Events” page in this and every edition of the Plane Scoop for full details.



I am hopeful and excited that this change will mean seeing many more of you at our General Meetings. Just as exciting is the opportunity this move creates for organized flying events on Saturdays, when many of us would rather be flying anyways, and which many of you also asked for in the member survey. Stay tuned for announcements on that soon.

Whether you're Oshkosh-bound or adventuring elsewhere this July, I wish you safe skies and low density altitude as you enjoy the best freedom known to man. See you in August!

Sincerely,  
Isaiah Kaninya  
President, Central Valley Aviation Association

# Upcoming Events

## Upcoming CVAA General Meetings

- Wednesday, August 5 - CVAA General Meeting
- Saturday, September 12 - CVAA Annual BBQ & Fly-In
- Wednesday, October 7 - CVAA General Meeting
- Wednesday, November 4 - CVAA Fall Pilot's Clinic
- Saturday, December 5 - EAA Christmas Party in lieu of General Mtg

## California Fly-In Opportunities

- July 4 - Planes of Fame Air Museum "Hangar Talk", Chino
- July 11 - West Coast Cub and Antique Aircraft Fly-In, Lompoc
- July 12 - Fullerton Airport Days, Fullerton

## Not in California, but of course we can't leave out:

- July 20-26 - EAA AirVenture Oshkosh



# Thank you to our June Speaker

Jack Wiegand



Local pilot Jack Wiegand set the Guinness World Record as the youngest person to fly solo around the world at just 21 years old. We learned all about this incredible round-the-world flight at our June CVAA General Meeting from Jack and his coach Harold Gallagher. Jack's advice for anyone planning such an ambitious flight: "be prepared!"





# THE SOLO CORNER

CELEBRATING STUDENT MILESTONES &  
THE NEXT GENERATION OF PILOTS  
AT HISTORIC FRESNO CHANDLER AIRPORT



**NESTOR NUÑEZ**  
FIRST SOLO FLIGHT

Going into the lesson, I honestly thought it was going to be a “reps day.” I had been away from flying for a little while, didn’t sleep particularly well the night before, and felt a little groggy. My goal was simply to get back in the airplane, knock the rust off, and get some landings in. After a few trips around the pattern, Kayden asked, “Do you want to solo?” I was surprised, but I felt ready and trusted the training that had gotten me to that point.

Once I taxied back out, everything felt familiar. The checklists, radio calls, and traffic pattern routines felt like things I had done many times before. Even adding “student solo” to my radio calls felt surprisingly normal. Throughout training, Kayden had done a great job of getting me to talk through my decision-making by asking questions instead of simply giving answers. By the time I soloed, I found myself doing the same thing while flying alone talking through corrections, airspeed, altitude, and approach planning so I could hear my own thought process and stay ahead of the plane.

The moment it really hit me that I was solo came on final approach. I felt like I was a little high and instinctively turned to ask Kayden what he thought. When I looked over, the seat was empty. For a split second, I realized I was the only one in the airplane. Then I answered my own question: “Yeah, I’m a little high.” I made the adjustment, continued the approach, and landed.

Another moment I was proud of was calling my own go-around. On one approach, I felt like I had floated too far down the runway and didn’t like the amount of runway remaining. Rather than force the landing, I made the decision to go around, set up again, and come back for another approach. It reinforced a lesson my instructors had emphasized throughout training: good judgment is just as important as good landings.

Looking back, what made the experience so satisfying was knowing how much work had gone into getting there. There were plenty of days spent struggling with landings, learning the sight picture, figuring out crosswind corrections, and learning to trust my decision-making. Being alone in the airplane and realizing that every control input was either me or the wind felt both surreal and incredibly rewarding.

Walking away from the airplane, I couldn’t stop smiling. I’m grateful to Kayden, the instructors, and everyone at Adventures in the Sky who helped me reach this milestone. It was an unforgettable experience and one that reminded me why I started flying in the first place.

# Ask a CFI

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*This new segment aims to connect more with our members and create a productive environment to any questions that pilots might have. The safest pilots are those who never stop asking questions. Often, students focus so much on passing a checkride that they miss the chance to understand the "why" behind the rules. Whether you are struggling with complex instrument procedures, curious about how aerodynamics affect your landing, or wondering about the best ways to study for your next rating, I want to hear from you. My goal is to provide clear, professional, and practical answers that help you become a more confident and informed pilot.*



**Q:** As summer approaches, how can I prepare for my lessons?

**A:** To get ready for summer flight lessons, I would try to schedule flights early in the morning or late in the day to avoid heat and busy airfields. If you need to fly in the afternoon, staying hydrated and eating a snack or light meal before your flight is crucial. Review how high temperatures affect aircraft performance, like longer takeoff rolls and reduced climb rates. Be prepared for bumpy/turbulent conditions. As the ground heats up and the thermals push the airplane up, it can be uncomfortable for newer pilots.



Shawn McMinn is a Gold Seal CFI, CFII, MEI, Vice President of CVAA, and flight instructor at Reedley College with 6 students ranging from PPL to Commercial. He plans to join the airlines and is thrilled with where he's at in his career. Shawn looks forward to answering your questions!

**Have a Question for Shawn?**

Email [CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org](mailto:CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org) and Shawn will answer in an upcoming newsletter!

# How it Works: Pilot Performed Maintenance

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Do you have some basic mechanical skill and an interest in doing some of the work on your airplane yourself? Have you ever wondered what you can and cannot do legally? You may be surprised by the number of tasks you can do as a pilot. But there are caveats. According to FAR Part 43.3 (g) you need to have at least a private certificate and you need to be the “owner or operator” of the aircraft. Owner is straightforward but operator is not. Operator is described in the regs as the person or organization that has responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the aircraft. For example, if a flying club owns the plane and you are a member you could be the operator. If you lease the airplane you could be the operator but if you rent from an FBO you cannot. By the way, a pilot can only work on aircraft used for Part 91 operations. Another caveat is that the maintenance performed must be preventive in nature. FAR 1.1 describes preventive maintenance as “simple or minor preservation operations and replacements of small standard parts not involving complex assembly operations”. There are specifics in Part 43 Appendix A where maintenance is categorized as “Major Alterations”, “Major Repairs” and “Preventive Maintenance”. As pilots, we have to stick to the preventive category. Subparagraph (c) of that section gives a helpful list of things the FAA considers preventive. There are some 31 items including things we can all agree are preventive and some that are head scratchers. The list includes routine things like oil changes, tire changes, cleaning and greasing wheel bearings, spark plug service and replacing batteries. Check out the list yourself. There have been legal interpretations concluding that this list is exemplary and not restrictive. This probably means that if you want to do something that is not on the list but which meets the definition in FAR 1.1 you are OK. A final caveat: You are accepting risk and have a duty to perform the work using “the methods, techniques and practices prescribed in the maintenance manual or in accordance with industry standards”. Industry standards for most things are described in AC 43.13-1B. In practice you should have supervision the first time you do something you have not done before, helpful You Tube videos notwithstanding. Finally, don’t forget a logbook entry that includes date, description of work performed, a signature and your pilot certificate number.



Bob Crooks  
Director, CVAA

# Aileron & Jim's Safety Corner

## *Are we training pilots to pass tests or to think?*

Many instructors have seen it: a student who passes the written, performs well on expected check ride questions, yet struggles when the same concept is presented differently in flight or in class during discussion.

In today's training environment, student pilots have access to more information than ever before. In a split second they can find videos, summaries, question banks, AI-generated explanations and quick answers,



which look like progress. It allows students to move faster, review quickly, and prepare more efficiently for their exams. But there is a downside that is becoming harder to ignore; more content does not always lead to better understanding.

Many students can recognize the correct answer to a question after watching a short explanation or by using a test prep tool. They have seen the concept, remember the wording, and feel comfortable with it. But when they are asked to explain it, apply it in a different context, or connect it to another topic, that understanding often falls short ... or may not really be there at all. That gap matters in aviation.

Aeronautical knowledge is not a checklist of isolated facts. It is a system where all the elements are working together, in conjunction. Weather affects performance. Performance affects planning. Regulations affect decision-making. Human factors are influenced by all of them. The value of that knowledge comes from how well those pieces connect. And that is where many modern study habits start to show their limits.

Short-form content is effective for exposure. It helps students see a concept quickly and can be useful for review. But when learning becomes primarily a series of short, disconnected explanations, it becomes harder to build a reasoning and a coherent mental framework.

Students may end up knowing pieces of information without fully understanding how those pieces work together. In the cockpit, that distinction becomes clear.

# Aileron & Jim's Safety Corner

## *Are we training pilots to pass tests or to think?*

Recognizing a correct answer is one thing. Explaining why it is correct, adapting it to a new situation, and using it to make a structured, thoughtful decision are something completely different. This is where more traditional study methods still play an important role.

Reading, in particular, forces a different kind of engagement. It slows the process just enough for the student to follow the logic, process the details, and connect ideas. It requires more effort, but that effort leads to stronger retention and a deeper level of understanding.

That does not mean modern tools should be set aside. Video and visual explanations can be extremely effective, especially for introducing or reinforcing concepts. But they work best when they are part of a structured learning process, not a replacement for it.

The goal of ground training is not simply to get students through a written test or prepare them for a specific checkride script. In many cases, students train toward what they believe a particular DPE will ask, focusing on expected questions rather than building a deeper understanding of the material.

That approach can work in the short term but it often creates knowledge that is insufficient and difficult to adapt when the question is asked differently, when the scenario changes, or when the student later has to apply that knowledge as a pilot in a real-world situation. Therefore, pilot training should not be about memorizing. It should be about understanding.

As training and technology continue to evolve, the challenge is not choosing between traditional study and modern tools. It is learning how to use both in a way that builds depth, not just speed. It's important to remember that in aviation, knowledge is only valuable if it is there when it is needed.

Fly safe and fly often,

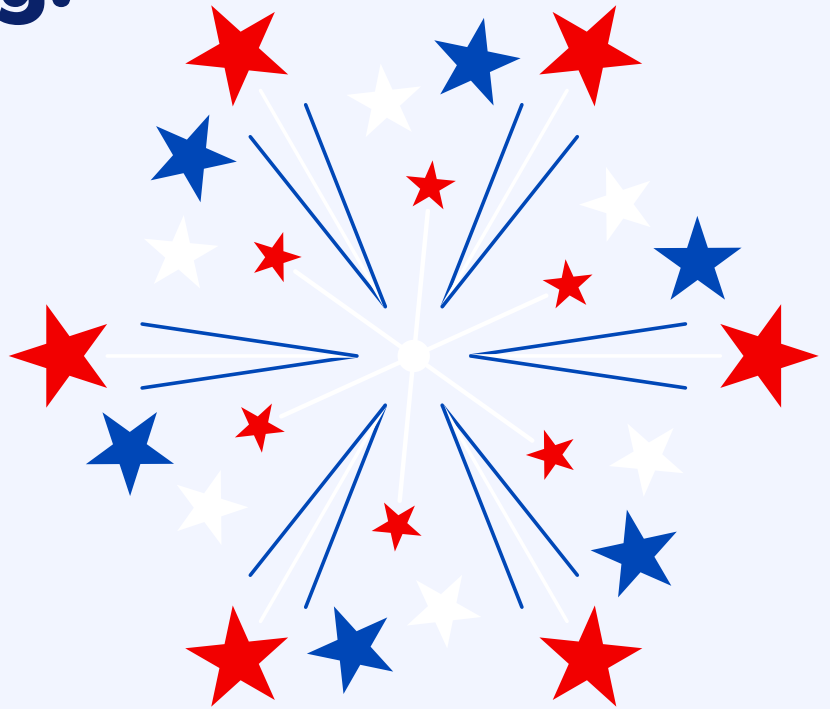
*Aileron and Jim*

## **Have a Question for Jim?**

Email [CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org](mailto:CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org) and Jim will answer in an upcoming newsletter!

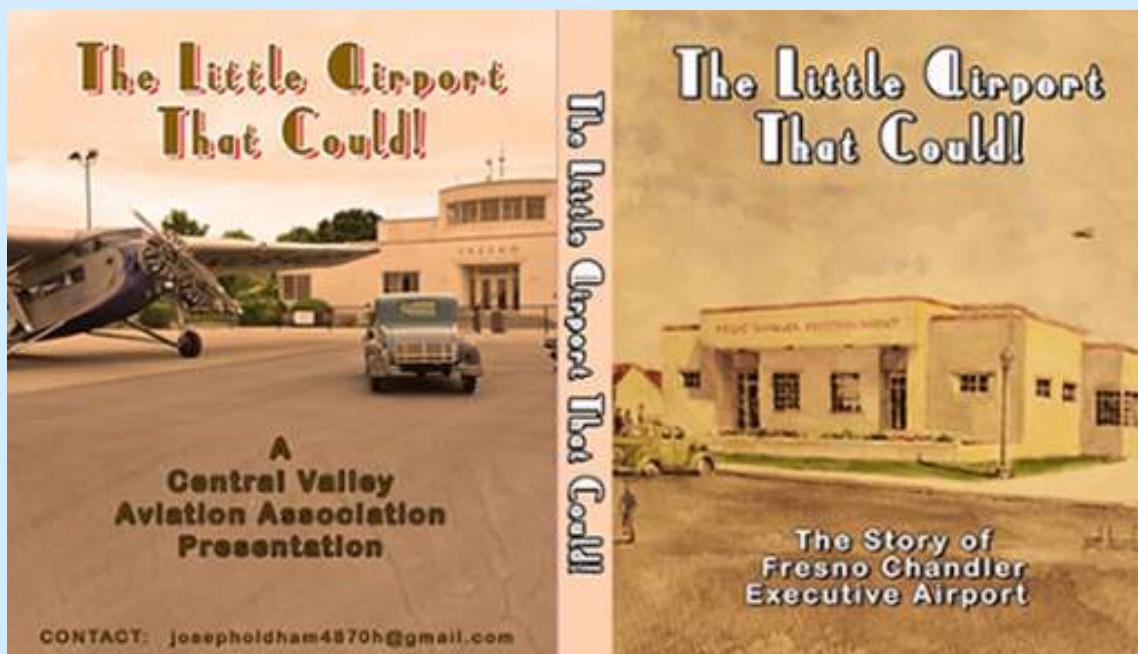
# Happy Birthday!

7/02 - Rick Emerian  
7/04 - Karl Beutner  
7/07 - Todd Braner  
7/07 - Mel Council  
7/10 - VJ Mirzayan  
7/16 - Frank Wenzel  
7/17 - Melanie Blythe  
7/19 - Emanuel Gonzalez  
7/22 - Richard White  
7/29 - Valli Hansen



## The Little Airport That Could

For a donation of \$15, you can take home this great DVD at the next CVAA General Meeting!



# Fresno Chandler Executive Airport

510 West Kearney Blvd, Fresno, CA 93706

Following World War I, there were no real facilities for aviation in the Fresno area. As a result, husband and wife Wilber F. Chandler and Edna Maria Goble allowed pilots to take off and land in their fields once the crops were harvested. Chandler Field was officially dedicated for public use as an air field in November 1929, on a one hundred-acre site donated by the Chandlers.



## Notable Events

In 1923, local fliers organized the "World's Greatest Aerial Circus" to raise funds for a new aviation field. The event included races, parachute jumps and dual wing walking, and was held at "Chandler Field" in the afternoon on Thanksgiving Day.

On March 23, 1930, Charles A. Lindbergh and his wife landed briefly at the airport and were greeted by a crowd of 20,000.

In 1938, the runway was expanded 4,000 feet as part of a WPA project. However, in 1947, commercial airlines announced the new airfield was too small for the new commercial aircraft. Therefore, Fresno Air Terminal east of the city became the new municipal airport.

## Services

Engine/airframe repair, avionics repair, helicopter instruction, charter services, hangar rentals.

### American Helicopters:

612 W. Kearney Blvd, Fresno, CA 93706

[\(559\) 233-4411](tel:5592334411)

Helicopter flight school, Helicopter Rentals, charter services

[American Helicopter Website](#)

### Flight Line Cafe:

510 West Kearney Blvd. Fresno, CA

Open Daily 6:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

### D & D Aircraft Service:

918 West Chandler Avenue Fresno, CA 93706

[\(559\) 268-8516](tel:5592688516)

### Pacific Coast Avionics

668 W Kearney Blvd, Fresno, CA 93706

[\(559\) 497-0957](tel:5594970957)

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r-Rentals, charter

, CA 93706

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# Learn more about **CVAA**

## **Central Valley Aviation Association (CVAA)**

CVAA was formed by Central California pilots in 1968 to support aviators who utilize Fresno Chandler Executive Airport.

### **Advocacy**

CVAA is an official chapter of CalPilots; a community of pilots, airport supporters, and aviation enthusiasts working to protect and promote general aviation across California. Learn more at [calpilots.org](http://calpilots.org).

### **Networking**

Join us monthly for an educational guest speaker and network with local pilots. CVAA also hosts two educational Pilot's Clinics per year, plans group fly-outs, and organizes an annual fly-in BBQ.

### **Membership**

Proceeds go towards two \$500 John Pugliese & Morris Garcia Memorial Scholarships, benefiting Reedley College Flight Science & AMT students. This would not be possible without your support! Become a member today for only \$25 per year and encourage others to join. Benefits include educational events, advocacy, networking and more.

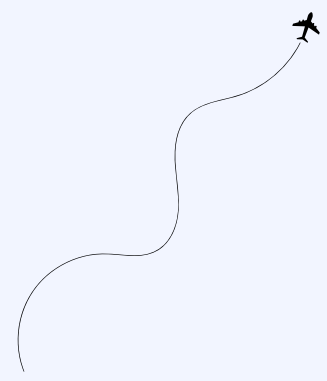
### **2026-2027 Board of Directors**

President Isaiah Kaninya; Vice President Shawn McMinn;  
Treasurer Nichole Kaninya; Secretary Leticia Council.  
Directors Bob Crooks, Rubi Garrison, Carl Garrison

### **CVAA Newsletter - The Plane Scoop**

Editor: Nichole Kaninya, [CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org](mailto:CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org)

Contributors: Mary King, In Remembrance; Carl & Rubi Garrison, The Solo Corner; Shawn McMinn, Ask a CFI; Bob Crooks, How it Works; Jim Shamp, Safety Corner.





## Chandler Airport Access - PIN Code

Attend at least three CVAA General Meetings per calendar year to qualify for a PIN code.

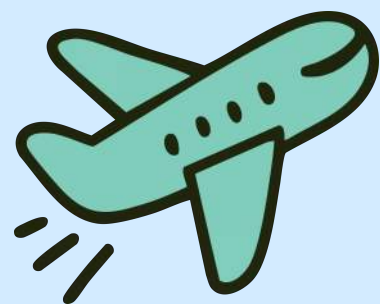
If you are unable to attend at least three CVAA General Meetings per year, you will be considered an inactive member and your PIN code will be discontinued.

You can still attend the General Meetings without a PIN code, but you will need to contact a Board Member to escort you onto the field.

### How can CVAA members get a PIN Code?

Complete an in-person application at the City of Fresno Airports Department at 4995 E. Clinton Way, Fresno, CA 93727. Your PIN code will expire on your driver's license expiration date.

**When entering FCH  
please make sure the  
gate closes behind you.  
Every vehicle must enter  
their own PIN code.**





**Central Valley Aviation Association  
Membership Application or Update**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership: Single \_\_\_\_\_ Family \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name (If family membership): \_\_\_\_\_ (we encourage family membership)

**Address:**

Street \_\_\_\_\_, City \_\_\_\_\_, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:**

Home: \_\_\_\_\_, Work: \_\_\_\_\_, Cellular: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Print carefully)

I would like to receive the Plane Scoop via e-mail: Yes \_\_\_\_\_, No \_\_\_\_\_

**Airplane** (you usually fly):

Type: \_\_\_\_\_, N number: \_\_\_\_\_, Colors): \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of birth** (just the month and day—not the year):

Primary member: \_\_\_\_\_, Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_.

How many years have you been a member of CVAA? \_\_\_\_\_ (estimates are OK)

**CVAA Service:**

Please list any offices or committee positions in which you are interested in serving:

Please list any talent or skills you have that you would be willing to use to serve CVAA:

This information will be printed in our Club roster and distributed to members only. Please omit any information you do not want to appear in the Club roster.

Please email your completed membership form to [CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org](mailto:CVAA@centralvalleyaviation.org) or hand it in at an upcoming General Meeting. Dues are \$25 per adult member (free for anyone 18 years or younger), payable by cash or check at any General Meeting. A schedule of upcoming meetings can be found in our monthly newsletter, The Plane Scoop, available at [centralvalleyaviation.org](http://centralvalleyaviation.org).

**Thank you for your interest in the Central Valley Aviation Association!**

Comments or suggestions: