



DOWNWIND CHASE

Official Newsletter of the Pacific Coast Aeronauts

◆ APRIL 2025 ◆

View from the Board

Tom Sharpee

Welcome to April! Time will tell what kind of spring we will have. We have had a very mild winter in South Dakota. We did have a few days of well below zero, like minus 25 one day and 30 the next, mother nature has lost her mind. We have not had much snow, but the wind has been in the teens and twenties most of the winter. Not much flying.

Jeanne and I attended a safety seminar in Indianola Iowa, and one of the topics was ejection accident investigation. I am sure that most pilots were taught and tell their passengers when coming in for a landing to face forward and bend your knees. There is a new idea going around to change that. You now want them to face backward and bend your knees and lower the center of gravity. By doing this if there is a hard landing the forward motion will have them with their back to the basket and the center of gravity is below the top of the basket and it will be much harder to be ejected.



There was also some discussion about using restraints. Some of the balloon manufacturers are looking into requiring pilots to have restraints in the next 10 years. There is a variety of methods to attach the restraint to the basket. It was also discussed that large balloon rides might be required to have restraints for everyone.

Spring will start to bring on more ballooning events that we will be attending. If you attend an event and have a great time, take some pictures and write an article and send it to the newsletter editor Jeanne Anson, JATS@LTA2SUM.COM

Stay safe this spring and summer, have fun and enjoy ballooning. Try and attend the next PCA Club meeting May 7 via zoom. We are always looking for stories from members.

Soft landings, Tom

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IMPORTANT INFO!

CLUB MEETINGS

HELD ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF ODD-NUMBERED MONTHS PLUS DECEMBER.

NEXT CLUB MEETING:

2ND MEETING

OF 2025

Wed. May 7

@ 7PM PDT



BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD) MEETINGS

HELD QUARTERLY, 3RD THURSDAY

@ 7:00PM (AND AS NEEDED)

NEXT ONE IS APRIL 17, 2025

ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND ALL VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Current club members receive an email with a link to attend meetings for free. Dates are subject to change; in such rare cases, members are notified via email.

CONTACT US

Please see last page for officers, committee chairs, contacts and additional club information.

Email newsletter contributions to:

PCA: pca@pcaballoons.org

PCA Mailing Address:

14938 Camden Ave., Suite 76
San Jose, CA 95124



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 20th of each month

Spring will come soon!

Safe Flights and Softest of Landings!

PCA BOARD MEETING – FEBRUARY 6, 2025

TOPICS: EMAIL ISSUES WITH GMAIL, BUDGET, NEW BUSINESS

1. DISCUSSION OF PCA EMAIL ACCESS AND HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

- ◆ Dave received a recovery message for the PCA email at recovery attempt. Linda tried again and the recovery message sent her to Dave's cell ending in 61. Still need to follow up with Ramin to get this fixed.
- ◆ Ramin was able to access the account and update from Linda's contact info. The MFA still requires Dave to authenticate. Need to schedule time with Dave for all to get credentialed with MS Authenticator.
- ◆ Dave nominated and approved as administrator for the email account

2. DISCUSSION OF BUDGET AND BALANCING APPROVAL

- ◆ Tom moved, Linda seconded, passed to approve the budget as suggested by Pat.
- ◆ Linda will clean up the budget and send to Board.
- ◆ Jeanne will publish budget

3. NEW BUSINESS

- ◆ Need to start WHAMO planning.
- ◆ Pat will reach out to Alta to understand if last year's location/timing will work for 2025.
- ◆ Pat will share a WHAMO checklist with the board.
- ◆ Meeting ended



**Wooden Shoe
Tulip Farm
In Oregon**

***Do you have any great
Photos you would like to
see in the newsletter?
Please send them to Me!***

Passages

Timothy Darrin Obituary *(From Napa Valley Register)*

Timothy Darrin, 70, of Sonoma passed away on Oct 10, 2024 doing what he loved most, riding the roads on his motorcycle.

He was born to David & Margaret Darrin in Glen Ridge, NJ, the middle of three sons. In his youth he summured with his family in Hague, NY on Lake George where his love for lake life & boating evolved.

He had a love for motorcycles which he had been riding since he was age 8. When he went to Franklin College in Switzerland the first thing he did was purchase a motorcycle and his lifelong journey of exploring the world on two wheels took off. He has travelled the world on his adventure bike, with his last big adventure being a year-long solo journey to the tip of South America. This trip completed his dream of riding a motorcycle from the most northern to southern points of the Americas.

As a young adult Tim was a lift mechanic and ski instructor in Colorado. One fortuitous day he went on a hot air balloon ride and was immediately hooked. He floated into the hot air balloon world, landing in Napa Valley & starting the first hot air balloon company, Adventures Aloft, with 3 friends. This led to him joining the world of hot air balloon competition, winning many awards along the way including the prestigious Montgolfier Trophy in France.



EDITORS NOTE: *Not sure what year I met Tim, but my connection to him began in 1980. I bought a used balloon from Napa, which I had rebuilt. Tim originally owned it.*

He spoke at one of the PCAs Montgolfier Dinners regaling us his adventures in Europe ballooning (he spent the summer there) when he brought home the FAI Montgolfier Trophy. I've forgotten too many of the details, but it was one heck of a solo flight landing at sunset on the edge of a cliff.

He and Debbie arrived at GRBR Pilot Reception Dinner in their matching leathers, helmets and haircuts. He knew how to make an entrance.

He was a man larger than life, with an easy smile and always full of tales of escapades on the road motorcycling & ballooning. The balloon to the right was a 90K, and he had a smaller aerostat (54?) he used for competition also. The truck = Team Win. He was intensely competitive. May he rest in peace and inspire others to follow their dreams! Jeanne

A Lifetime of Flight

Jeanne Anson's roots run deep in the ballooning community with nearly 50 years of flying to her credit.

Jeanne has almost 1700 hours of time in the air and with awards, trophies etc. . . . Let's just say, are numerous. She has flown in all Western and most Midwest states except Alaska and Hawaii, with Switzerland and France icing on the cake. It's a challenge to distill down and encapsulate all these years of experience.

Jeanne, a PCA member since its inception, remembers the days when pilots gathered for monthly meetings with between 35 and 50 people attending. She was a charter member serving as President, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. She took over spearheading the Montgolfier Dinner after Deke Sonnichsen and did that for 20 years. She has served as a BFA Western Regional Director, President of the Sioux Falls Ballooning Association, Balloon Meister for the Siskiyou Country Balloon Faire and a counselor for BFA Youth camps.

She was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. Then a round of Boeing layoffs uprooted their family, and they settled in the Bay Area. Jeanne always had an interest in flight. She remembers being captivated by the movie *Around the World in 80 Days* and she would attend airshows at every opportunity. She remembers fondly watching the biplanes take off and land on the runway at Half Moon Bay airport when they lived across the street. It just captured my imagination, and I said to myself "One day I want to do that".

The opportunity came in 1978 when Jeanne was a single mom with two daughters. She belonged to a social club where they were offering 1/2-hour balloon rides for \$50. And so, she went. The first early morning, they were weathered out but ended up having breakfast and this is where she met Ron Thornton, Larry Houska and Mick Farnham. "They recruited me to come out the following weekend to crew. That happened a few times before I finally got my ride." By 1979 she was crewing almost every weekend in Morgan Hill with the Thornton brothers and Ken O'Connor. Living in Castro Valley, getting up every single Saturday and Sunday at Oh Dark Thirty to make the drive to South County, crewing became a little much. "On July 4th, I was invited to fly in Yolo County and there is where I got my first lesson and where I became more than hooked on flying balloons."

Jeanne earned her Commercial Certificate in 1982. At the time you could go straight to your commercial if you had over 35 hours; no private was required. Ken O'Connor, Larry Houska and Ron Thornton were her instructors and Deke her designated examiner. It was on that freezing January morning with Deke, she realized she was truly a real pilot; "it wasn't an aerobatic bi-wing plane, but I was a pilot!"

"I began flying commercial rides and it was only a hobby that paid for balloon annuals and insurance. I didn't want the weather to dictate if I had enough money to pay my rent." She moved to South County in 1980 where she flew most weekends in Morgan Hill. "It wasn't unusual to have a lot of 180's there, taking off and landing back at the same spot. It was very magical and the views lovely. . . They were often predictable easy flights, when you knew where the winds would take you and where you could land. You can go up to 3,000 ft to see Monterey Bay and on a clear day could see SF at 500'. And up at 3,000' to see the Sierras."

Over the course of her years flying, Jeanne has developed life-long relationships across the US and Europe. She tells me, "That's the thing about ballooning, it is so much more than just flying. It is the camaraderie and shared experiences with other pilots and crew. I mean it's where I met several of my boyfriends during that time between 1980 and 1994 when I was single, it was like having a second family."

To be continued. We're on the road at the moment and I don't have access to photos from the early years (not digital) so I'll space it out a bit. Gentle winds and soft landings, Jeanne

Member Corner

Jeanne Anson

Interview by Jana Couch





PACIFIC COAST AERONAUTS CLUB CONTACTS

2025 PCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CLUB OFFICERS

2025 PCA COMMITTEES

Names & Email Addresses	Board Term Expires at End of Year	2025 Officers
Patrick Moore pcamoore587@gmail.com	2026	Chair of BOD
April Turner pca.april@gmail.com	2026	President & Co-Secretary
Linda Walton pca.lindaw@gmail.com	2026	Treasurer
Jeanne Anson ansonlta2@gmail.com	2025	Co-Secretary
Tom Sharpee tomsharpee@gmail.com	2025	

Committee	Chairperson	Members
Newsletter	Jeanne Anson	<i>And All Members!</i>
Membership Dev. Outreach	TBD	TBD
Membership Dev. Communications	Dave Wakefield	TBD
Education & Training	Pat Moore April Turner	Jeanne Anson Tom Sharpee
Calendar Based Events	Not Committees	Start Dates
BFA Youth Program	Melanee Scarborough	On Going
Awards	Linda W & April	Later in the year
WHAMOBASS	?	Planning starts 3/25
Christmas Party	Jana Couch	Oct 2025 planning starts



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Balloon Aircraft and Equipment

Right-click on picture captions for more details





Raven S-55A



2001 Cameron 'Shoe 90



TBW AX-8B—Racer



TBW FF7 & Trailer