



DOWNWIND CHASE

Official Newsletter of the Pacific Coast Aeronauts

◆ APRIL 2026 ◆

View from the Board

Tom Sharpee

It is almost that time of the year we all get excited about.

Ballooning Season!

It is time to figure out what balloon rallies to attend. Do I need a flight review, am I current? Do I need a couple of local flights to get my flying skills back up to speed before I go someplace, I have never flown or it's been a year since I was there and what has changed?

Is my equipment ready for another year of flying? Is the balloon in need of an annual? Could you do some work on the basket, get some of that dirt out of bottom, brush up the leather? Are the batteries in the instruments fresh? When is the last time I tuned up the fan, was that last year or the year before?

Let's talk about one of the most important pieces of equipment, the chase vehicle. Are the tires in good shape? How much tread is left? Does it need a tune up and oil changed? How old is that battery? Nothing like coming out to fly some calm morning and you go to start the truck, and nothing happens.

When traveling, do you take your crew chief with you or are you depending on the event to give you crew? If you have a trailer does the crew know how to drive with a trailer or how to back it. Jeanne and I were at a rally a LONG time ago and we were both going to fly. The crew said they were good at driving with a trailer. We took off and they popped their first beer. When they decided to leave the back door of the trailer was open and backed into a dirt pile and sprang the door to where it just barely closed. That was the last time they crewed for us. It was a sad lesson to learn.

Is your crew ready for another year of chasing you or do you need to take a morning and go through of all the do's and don'ts of crewing? What clothing do they need to

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IMPORTANT INFO!

CLUB MEETINGS

VIA ZOOM, HELD ON THE **FIRST WEDNESDAY OF ODD-NUMBERED MONTHS PLUS DECEMBER**

2ND MEETING

OF 2026

Wed. May 6

@ 7PM PDT

ZOOM BOARD MEETING

NEXT ONE IS:

Thurs April 23 @ 7PM

Registration for the two BFA Youth camps scheduled this summer opened on March 1st.

Has Your Teen or a friends Teen Registered?

High Sierra Camp has 21 campers registered, only 4 spaces left! If you want to go, better get your

registration in NOW!

It's Time to pay your dues! You may pay on-line or mail in your dues.

\$25 for individual, \$35 for family!

Do it Now!

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
20th of each month**

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wear? No open toe shoes or have gloves? Do they know how to run the fan? What should they do when you start to inflate the balloon? Do they know how to launch you? Do they know how to chase you, what to do when you come in for a landing? What to do during a windy landing.

Heaven Forbid, but it does happen. You have an emergency in the basket or a passenger gets ill. Do you have a code word for crew chief to know there is a problem and are landing as soon as possible. Or you are having a great day flying and suddenly on approach to the landing you discover a power line you did not see. You land close to it but the balloon drapes over the line. I know what you are thinking, IT WONT HAPPEN TO ME. But it does. Do you and the crew know what to do? We have all been at safety seminars and discussed this

but has your current crew been told?

Does your crew know what to do if you do have an accident and the police and fire department are called? Who talks to the authorities and the news media? You know they are going to show up. You do not want anyone making statements that could cause you problems later.


OK I think I have asked enough questions. I just want to make sure you and your crew are ready for a safe and successful ballooning season. Just remember it is always better to be on the ground wishing you were flying, than being flying wishing you were on the ground. Don't let peer pressure make you do something you should not do. Soft landings, Tom



Passages

Russ Reichert passed away March 26, 2026 at the age of 85..

He was born March 18 1941 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Major FAA Enforcement

Update Reprinted from "Hot Air Flyer," Colorado Balloon Club Newsletter, March 2026

A critical policy change (Order 2150.3C, CHG 13) that just went into effect on January 21, 2026. The FAA is shifting from "educational compliance" to hard legal enforcement for specific types of flights.

No More "Slaps on the Wrist"

For violations involving public endangerment (like BVLOS - Beyond Visual Line of Site - or flying over people), airspace breaches (including CLT controlled airspace), or criminal activity, investigators are now required to bypass counseling and go straight to legal action.

Double the Penalties:

The FAA will now routinely pursue BOTH the revocation of your pilot certificate AND significant civil fines for the same incident to serve as a deterrent.

Your Other Licenses are at Risk: If you hold a Private or Commercial Pilot license (Part 61), a drone violation demonstrating a "lack of care or judgment" can—and likely will—result in the revocation of ALL your airman certificates.

Remote ID is Non-Negotiable: Operating without Remote ID is specifically listed as a high-priority airspace violation that triggers these new mandatory legal actions.

The actual policy change comes from a new Compliance and Enforcement Bulletin No. 2026 1 (issued recently, likely in early 2026). This bulletin is "additive" to Order 2150.3C and outlines a tougher stance on UAS enforcement. The post likely misattributes or confuses the bulletin with a

change to the main order.

What the New Policy Actually Says

The bulletin shifts the FAA's default approach for certain high-risk UAS violations from "compliance philosophy" (education, counseling, administrative fixes) to mandatory legal enforcement actions. This applies nationwide. Qualifying violations that now route directly to legal action (with limited exceptions requiring high level approval) include:

- Public endangerment: BVLOS without authorization (§107.31), operations over people without compliance (§107.39), creating hazards (§107.19/107.23), weaponized drones.
- Airspace violations: No Remote ID (§89.105), controlled airspace without authorization (§107.41), interfering with airport operations (§107.43), prohibited/restricted areas or TFRs (§107.45/47).
- Operations in furtherance of another crime. For these, the FAA will typically pursue:
- Certificate revocation — For remote pilots showing "lack of care, judgment, or responsibility," this includes the Remote Pilot Certificate and any other airman certificates (e.g., Private/Commercial Pilot under Part 61). Medical certificates are excluded.
- Civil penalties — Fines up to \$75,000 per violation (for individuals; higher for companies), often pursued alongside revocation as a deterrent. Remote ID violations are explicitly prioritized as airspace breaches.

The bulletin treats recreational and Part 107 operations similarly, and it applies even if the drone is operated under other rules (e.g., Part 91). Context and Why This Mat-

ters • The FAA has long had a "compliance first" philosophy for minor issues, but this bulletin creates a "special emphasis" category for serious/recurring risks—similar to past bulletins (e.g., 2018-1 for endangering UAS ops).

- Recent reports (including FAA statements and industry analyses from early February 2026) confirm the agency is stepping up enforcement due to rising incidents near airports, events, and first responders.
- In the Charlotte (CLT) area specifically: Class B airspace around the airport makes unauthorized flights a high-priority violation. The post's local focus is reasonable—breaches here could easily trigger the new mandatory actions.

Bottom Line The margin for error on serious violations has tightened significantly. The post overstates the change as eliminating all "slaps on the wrist" and gets the document wrong, but the warnings about penalties, certificate risks, and Remote ID are spot-on. If you're flying drones in controlled airspace, near people/crowds, or without full compliance (including Remote ID), the risk of severe consequences is now much higher. Recommendation: Stick to 100% compliance with Part 107 (commercial) or recreational rules. Use apps like B4UFLY for airspace, ensure Remote ID broadcasting, and get authorizations when needed (e.g., LAANC for controlled airspace). This is good advice year round, but especially now.



PACIFIC COAST AERONAUTS CLUB CONTACTS

2026 PCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CLUB OFFICERS

Names & Email Addresses	Board Term Expires at End of Year	2026 Officers
Patrick Moore pcamoore587@gmail.com	2026	Chair of BOD
April Turner pca.april@gmail.com	2026	President & Co-Secretary
Dave Wakefield pca.dwake@gmail.com	Volunteer	Vice President
Linda Walton pca.lindaw@gmail.com	2026	Treasurer
Jeanne Anson ansonlta2@gmail.com	2027	Co-Secretary
Tom Sharpee tomsharpee@gmail.com	2027	

2026 PCA COMMITTEES

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	Jeanne Anson	On Going
Awards	Linda W & April	Later in the year
WHAMOBASS	Board	Planning starts 3/26
Christmas Party	Jana Couch	Oct 2026 planning starts



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FOR SALE

Balloon and Equipment

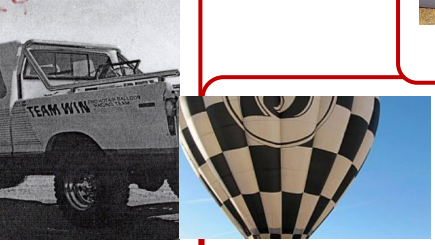
Right-click on picture captions for more details




Raven S-55A




2001 Cameron 'Shoe 90



TBW AX-8B—Racer



TBW FF7 & Trailer



Aerostar S49A