



DOWNWIND CHASE

Official Newsletter of the Pacific Coast Aeronauts

◆ FEBRUARY 2026 ◆

Registration for two camps scheduled this summer opens on March 1st.

[Has Your Teen Registered?](#)

View from the Board

Patrick Moore, Chairman of Board

Greetings Members,

I hope this finds you all well and planning your year ahead. Let's see, it's supposed to be winter although given the temperatures I'm not sure we could quite call it that. The nights have been cool and the morning's mostly clear here on the coast, but the afternoon's warm at least by winter's standards. It's been fooling my fruit trees, as they are already starting to push buds.

Might actually be able to squeeze in a few morning flights. This time of the year on the coast the morning's are cool but calm, well into late morning. Dawn is still late enough that jumping out of bed early isn't quite necessary.

What are the things you should be doing in this down and slow time? I'm sure you all have lists of preventative maintenance for your equipment.

Cleaning your basket by vacuuming the floors and carpets, cleaning and treating the scuff leathers, oil and lubrication of your fans, checking your fans fuel system and lines making sure there are no leaks or cracked hoses, trailer maintenance; hitch cleaning and lubrication, wheel bearing maintenance, getting your annuals done on your systems, the lists go on. Don't be a procrastinator! Before you know it spring will be here, flying season starts, rallies...

As your board, we are getting some things accomplished in the winter months: We have passed the Club's budget. We are documenting our processes and procedure for future reference for new Board members and officers. We are pulling together a list of resources for education and training. We are continually making changes to the website to make information more readily accessible.

The newsletter is out on a regular basis with as much pertinent member information as we can muster. Our Membership calendar contains all the Board and General Membership meeting dates and links.

As a Board and as club members ourselves, we want your participation in the committees and our meetings. We have taken the steps to get them on the calendar for the upcoming year in hopes you'll put one, two, or more on yours. We can't make it any easier for you to participate. If there is something we could change to make it better, please drop us a line or call a board member and share your thoughts.

"Click" to email PCA: pca@pcaballoons.org

Safe flying and gentle breezes. Pat Moore

IMPORTANT INFO!

CLUB MEETINGS

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

2ND MEETING

OF 2026

Wed. March 7

@ 7PM PDT

ZOOM BOARD (BOD) MEETINGS

FIRST MEETING OF 2026

Thurs April 9 @ 7PM

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 20th of each month

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!

IN THIS ISSUE...

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| From the Board Pat Moore | 1 |
| Passages Orval Choat | 2 |
| Havasu Balloon Festival | 3 |
| 1st Flight in America 1793 | 3 |
| Minutes to December Board Meeting | 4 |
| Minutes to January General Mtg | 5 |
| Club Officers & Committees | 6 |
| Balloon & Equipment for Sale | 6 |

Passages

Orval Choate



My dad [Orval Choate](#) passed away this morning (Jan 4) at the age of 83. I will always remember his quick sense of humor, readiness to have an adventure or play a game, and of course his love for family and the many many friends he made through the years. He was passionate about hot air ballooning, hiking and otherwise enjoying the outdoors, and listening to the Blues.

A memorial service will be scheduled and announced soon.

(Photo taken in Feb 2024 with his cat Luke Skywhiskers) Meredith Cherry

A colorful, hand-drawn poster for Orval's Memorial Service. The background is blue with white clouds, yellow stars, and two hot air balloons (one pink and yellow, one red and pink). Below the sky are brown mountains with white snow caps and a green tree. The text is in bold, colorful letters: "ORVAL'S MEMORIAL SERVICE". Below that, it says "APRIL 11, 2026 AT 11 AM" and "GRASS VALLEY CA & LIVESTREAM". At the bottom, it says "SCAN FOR DETAILS" next to a QR code. There are also small drawings of flowers and birds.

Havasu Balloon Festival

Flying, enjoying evenings by the fire and early mornings and a Glow. Photos gleaned from Sheldon Grauberger and Debbie Young's FB pages.



233 years ago was the 1st balloon flight in the USA. 9th January 1793

Jean Pierre Blanchard decided to set out for America to conduct his 45th balloon flight in America. He arrived in Philadelphia on December 9. He was received by President George Washington and Pennsylvania Governor General Thomas Mifflin.

The City of Philadelphia allowed him to use the yard of the Walnut Street Prison, on the southeast corner of 6th and Walnut Streets. President Washington handed him a "passport" that contained the request that anyone reading the document "oppose no hindrance or molestation to the said Mr. Blanchard". The only passenger he took on the flight a small black dog given to him by a friend. He launched at 10:09AM.

He heard their cheers as he passed overhead and headed in a generally southerly direction. He conducted 4 scientific experiments while aloft.

"I strengthened my stomach with a morsel of biscuit and a glass of wine", as Blanchard later wrote then decided to land on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River. Opening the valve, he began his descent. At first the balloon was headed toward a densely wooded area, so Blanchard released some ballast to regain altitude. On the third attempt, he finally found a suitable landing spot in Deptford Township, New Jersey, at 10:56 AM. He'd travelled about fifteen miles. Info taken from <https://www.bbml.org.uk> and "The Romance of Ballooning" by Edita Lausanne 1971 page 74. (Edits to correct the years since originally published)



Pacific Coast Aeronauts Board Meeting Minutes

Dec 18, 2025 by April Turner.

2026 Board Members: ☒ Pat Moore (PM) ☒ [April Turner \(AT\)](#) ☒ [Tom Sharpee \(TS\)](#) ☒ Linda Walton (LW) ☒ Jeanne Anson (JA)

Chair of Board: Pat Moore (PM)

Club President: April Turner (AT)

Club Vice President: Dave Wakefield (DW)

Club Treasurer: Linda Walton (LW)

BoD Mtg Secretary: April Turner (AT)

General Membership Mtg Secretary: Jeanne Anson (JA)

Guests: None **called to order:** 7:02M

1. PCA Budget Discussion – LW
Proposed 2026 budget versus 2025 actual
[2026 PCA Budget](#) [PCA 2025 Actuals](#) Tom motioned to accept, April seconded – passed
April to ask Dave to post links to BOD page
2. Treasurer Report - LW
10-year overview discussion – LW (discussed this in January, but can't find any decision on doing/requiring this in January of each new year)
Updated yearly in January and contains review of past 10 years
There was a review at one point, however the need for this is dubious. No further need.
Quarterly summary report: See above – quarterly details contained in spreadsheet(s)
3. New Business:
Board positions to be retained from last year. Unanimous vote to keep everyone in their previous roles.
Email – Status of fix/functionality – TS / LW / DW
Dave (Communication Committee Chair) and Linda (Secretary) to document the process of using the Gmail and Go-Daddy email accounts by the January Board meeting.
Need to get with Dave as soon as he is well. **Target completion of February 15.**
Proposed 2026 PCA BoD meeting dates: January 15, April 9th, July 16th, October 15th, December 17th. Add to BoD and Membership calendars by Dec 31st. Completed – thanks Pat!
Procedural practices (proposals/storage) – Pat will send in a separate email for approval. Will wait until we have email process.
What is our plan for dropbox? What file types? Currently used to archive the Newsletters in .pub and .pdf files. Dave is moving to MSFT 365 for operational needs. Can this be our new archive? AT to discuss with DW. We also have requirements to archive meeting minutes. We need to identify the process and what position/function does this. Include explanation of free version use and why.
To be completed with email status by February 15, 2026
4. Continuing Education/ Action Items:
Newsletter and website click rate – Dave

| Web Page | 12/2025 Page Views | 12/2026 Sessions |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 Pacific Coast Aeronauts (pcaballoons.org/) | 126 | 67 |
| 2 PCA Newsletters (pcaballoons.org/newsletters.htm) | 53 | 43 |
| 3 PCA Safety Seminar (pcaballoons.org/safety.htm) | 35 | 28 |
| 4 PCA Pictures (pcaballoons.org/pictures.htm) | 26 | 17 |
| 5 PCA Events (pcaballoons.org/events.htm) | 28 | 15 |
| 6 WHAMOBASS (pcaballoons.org/whamobass.htm) | 24 | 12 |
| 7 For Sale (pcaballoons.org/forsale.htm) | 13 | 12 |
| 8 PCA Contact Info (pcaballoons.org/contact.htm) | 15 | 10 |
| 9 PCA Membership (pcaballoons.org/join.htm) | 16 | 8 |

Sessions measure overall visits and engagement, showing how many times users return or explore deeper, whereas pageviews show content popularity, indicating which pages attract attention
Monthly summary? PDF from Dave – Board to review and submit any questions to Dave.
5. Committees:
 - A. Newsletter – Jeanne sent board letter assignments:

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| January: Jeanne A | May: Linda W | September: Tom S |
| February: Pat M | June: Pat M | October: April T |
| March: April T | July: April T | November: Linda W |
| April: Tom S | August: Jeanne A | December: Pat M |
 - B. Membership Development
 - i. Outreach – Vacant.
Linda will review roster and solicit dues.
If we have not received communication from folks on roster for 2 years, we will remove them from roster and newsletter delivery.
 - ii. Communications – Dave W. n/a
 - C. Education and Training – April T./Pat M. To be kicked off in January 2026. Pat and April to meet on 10:30 AM Monday January 19th to kick off. Pat to send Zoom.
 - D. Calendar based Events (not a committee)
 - BFA Youth Program Jeanne will reach out to Karalyn Mumm
 - Deadline is March 1st. We do not know of anyone needing a scholarship at this time.
 - Awards April needs to get a final quote for appreciation glasses. April to get final quote ASAP
 - WHAMOBASS: Calendared start date for planning To be kicked off in April
 - PCA Christmas Party To be kicked off in October
6. For the good of the order:
Round Robin is limited to eagles hawks and owls today.

PCA Meeting called to order at 7:04

By President April Turner 1/7/26

Attendees: Jeanne, Tom, Pat, April, David W. Linda

- ♦ Request for info on Safety Seminars:
 - ♦ Send April the NL for Cheyene and Colorado Balloon Club
 - ♦ Send Dave the Indianola Safety Seminar
- ♦ Dave has been putting a list of Safety Seminars on the PCA Webpage.
- ♦ Memories: Dave flew with John Terry at Safety Seminar in Castle.
 - ♦ Tim Brady used to give pilots tasks at his Safety Seminars in Coalinga. It was always an enlightening experience.
 - ♦ April flew with Dana And Ron once for a lesson
 - ♦ April flew with Kelly Couch for her flight review.
 - ♦ Deke and check rides... stand in front instruments
- ♦ Mike Valiz said he is getting a 240CF balloon to tether.
 - ♦ News worthy tethers last a long time(usually ends up on the internet)
 - ♦ Discussed flying big balloons
- ♦ WAS changed name American Balloon Community, is a 501.3c. has a training balloon available for pilots to train students.
- ♦ Talked about the stats for Website clicks
 - ♦ How many hits Website has ... double, triple hits?
- ♦ Linda notifies local Police to let them know a balloon is in the air and all is ok.
- ♦ Crew at rallies, sometimes you get the best from by standers.
- ♦ Plans for later this year:
 - ♦ Once the rain stops take a landowner with cattle and take him a ride. Harrold/Galt area.
- ♦ Discussion re: Door on balloon basket makes it so much easier getting in and out for Pax and pilot, especially since many baskets have gotten taller.
- ♦ Old photo discussion at Jennifer's house 86

8:10 PM adjourn



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 |

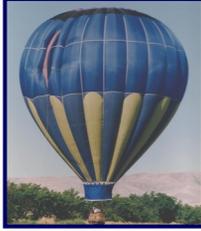


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FOR SALE

Balloon and Equipment

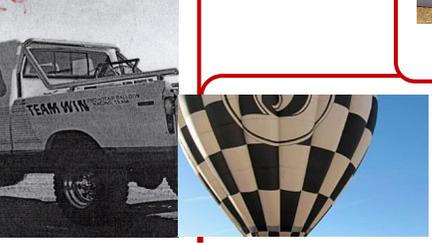
Right-click on picture captions for more details



Raven S-55A



2001 Cameron 'Shoe 90



TBW AX-8B—Racer



TBW FF7 & Trailer



Aerostar S49A