



DOWNWIND CHASE

Official Newsletter of the Pacific Coast Aeronauts

◆ MARCH 2025 ◆

View from the Board

April Turner

Early spring is Safety Seminar season!

In the world of hot air ballooning, safety is paramount. Safety seminars offer an invaluable platform for pilots and crew members to deepen their knowledge, stay updated on the latest safety protocols, and learn from industry experts. These sessions are not only about adhering to regulations but also about fostering a culture of safety and responsibility. They provide an opportunity to share experiences, gain insights from past incidents, and develop skills that can prevent future accidents. By attending these seminars, pilots and crews are better equipped to ensure safe and enjoyable flights, making every journey in the sky as secure as it is exhilarating. Here are some reasons to consider attending a seminar:

Enhanced Safety Knowledge: Seminars provide up-to-date information on safety protocols, accident prevention, and emergency procedures, helping pilots stay informed about the latest best practices.

Regulatory Compliance: Understanding and adhering to aviation regulations is crucial. Seminars often cover regulatory changes and ensure pilots are compliant with current FARs.

Accident Investigation and Analysis: Learning about past accidents and how they were investigated can provide valuable insights into avoiding similar incidents in the future.

Weather and Flight Operations: Seminars often include sessions on interpreting weather charts, making informed decisions during flights, and understanding aeromedical factors that can affect pilot performance.

Crew and Ground Safety: Training on crew resource management and ground safety ensures that everyone involved in a balloon flight is aware of their responsibilities and how to work together effectively.

Maintenance and Repair

Knowledge: Understanding how to properly maintain and repair balloon systems can prevent mechanical failures and extend the life of the equipment.

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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. March 5

@ 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!*

Continued from previous next page

Insurance Benefits: Some insurance companies offer discounts to pilots who attend safety seminars, recognizing the reduced risk associated with well-trained pilots.

Networking Opportunities: These events offer a chance to connect with fellow pilots, industry experts, and safety officials, fostering a sense of community and shared learning.

Attending these seminars can be a great way to challenge yourself, learn new skills, and stay passionate about ballooning. While there has been a waning interest in having the PCA sponsor our own Safety Seminar, there are many available to choose from on our website. Some are even virtual. I encourage both pilots and crew to take a weekend to brush up on topics and get prepared for the flying season once Mother Nature has had her fill of rain.

We would love to hear from members about a seminar you attended!

2025 Iowa Balloonist Association Continuing Education Safety Seminar

by Jeanne Anson

This past weekend Tom and I traveled to Indianola Iowa for the IBA Seminar, a lovely 5 hour jaunt each way.

The Topics covered were:

(105 Attendees! See photo page 6)

FAR and Topics of interest, presented by the local FSDO team who are very familiar with balloons as they work with the Indianola IA Balloon Classic event organizers to keep everyone safe. This last year they had 117 balloons. FARs can be one of the most boring topics in any seminar, but not with this group! They discussed Drones which can be rather dangerous to balloons because they have gotten so big and they are some interesting hybrids out there. Take a moment to look up the Flaming Turkey Cooking drones...literally flamethrowers on the drone. Totally Wild. At the moment all drones must be flown under 400' unless granted special permission and must fly within line of sight, but that may change when delivery drones begin being used. They explained ramp checks and NTSB responsibilities.

Weather with Aaron Foelske. Because NOAA has discontinued some charts and data from the forecasts The first question he asked: How far away do T-Storms need to be before you'll fly? It is best to error on the side a caution. Then Aaron discussed his favorite websites:

- ♦ Leidos Flight Service (1800-WX-BRIEF) also available on line www.1800WXBRIEF.COM
- ♦ www.Weather.gov
- ♦ www.aviationweather.gov
- ♦ Rucsoundsings.noaa.gov
- ♦ College of DuPage (COD) weather.cod.edu
- ♦ Windy @ www.windy.com
- ♦ www.blastvalve.com/weather
- ♦ WWW.LTAWEATHER.COM
- ♦ Ryan Carlton page is not functional at the moment. Hopefully it will be back up soon.

Accidents and First Aid Henry Rosenbaum. It's been a while since we've had a 1st Aid class. Think it's time for a refresher! Note, there's a golden hour to get injured person to a care facility.

Henry covered:

- ♦ Personal Safety—Wear gloves if you can, If you get blood on you, clean ASAP. Tell EMT/Health Provider that you have blood on you and follow their directions
- ♦ ABC— Alert 911, Bleeding, Compress. He covered all forms of care for bleeding. Find source. Look for: Continuous, Large Volume or pooling blood. Each has different care options
- ♦ First aid kit with Nitrile gloves, 4X4 gauze Pads, Z fold badge, self adhering bandage wrap, Mylar blanket, Trauma Shears, Triangle bandages, Tourniquet with marker
- ♦ Wound care, packing deep cuts, if bleeding does not stop, apply Tourniquet. & common mistakes: Not using it, waiting too long to apply it, not making it tight enough, not using a second Tourniquet if needed. Once it is on, do not remove it. Wait for medical help or paramedic.
- ♦ Internal bleeding CANNOT be stopped without surgery. Rapid transport to trauma center. Identify this patient first.

- ♦ Bleeding control in Children. The same except in very young children.
- ♦ Heart Attack: Chest Compression only CPR. Save your breath, save a life
- ♦ Can happen any age and to anybody. Discussed difference between Heart Attack and Cardiac Arrest. Frequently Cardiac arrest occurs due to a heart attack.
3-Cs 1. **Check:** Shake & Shout, 2. **Call** 911 3. **Compress** chest at 100-120 per minute.
- ♦ **Science Behind Pilot & Passenger Ejections** by Sam Parks
 - ♦ Ejection Accident Stats: NTSB Reports 1974—2021, 88 Accidents involved ejections. Average 1.8 per year over 47 yrs. 121 passengers, 40 Pilots.
 - ♦ Experience from 7 hrs to 6,500 hr. Ranges between just 2 in basket to 14. Average is 4.3 most baskets not partitioned. The wind speed between 3 and 30.
 - ♦ Causes: Weather, Pilot Decision making, Landing site, Landing Techniques, Passenger Briefing, Passenger Eligibility (Age), Balloon Equipment.
 - ♦ Mass, Velocity, Force, Kinetic Energy, Inertia
 - ♦ Steeper approach will cause bounce and more optimum for ejection of pilot or pax.
 - ♦ Prepare pax for second ground contact. Have pax face away from front, less likely to be ejected.
 - ♦ PAX briefings: Number of briefings. Position of pax. Lower COG (center of gravity), Hold points, lower extremities, stow gear, cameras, etc.
 - ♦ Beware for Wind Shears
 - ♦ **Reduce Vertical Speed—Flare and control decent. Avoid “Drill it” Landings**
- ♦ **Ground Crew and Safety** by Katie Cloyd
 - ♦ Assign Crew Chief, define and assign stations, Appropriate Clothing & shoes, gloves, warn about hair and ties near fan, Lift with your legs, don't wrap any rope around your body or arms. Instruct location of 1st aid kit,
 - ♦ Launch: follow all instructions. Weight on, radios, water, suckers (Diabetic).
 - ♦ Landing: Permission from landowner, never stand in front of the balloon. Weight ON
- ♦ **Pilot Decision Making** by Jason Jones (His presentation stick disappeared...the FAA guys accidentally took it with them.)
 - ♦ Pilot—physically, mentally prepared for flight
 - ♦ Aircraft— All paperwork, annual, fueled, fuel temp correct, do a walk around look for holes, top lines, attachment to basket all correct
 - ♦ PAX: age youngest and upper age within your parameters, have they eaten and are hydrated? Appropriate clothing and shoes
 - ♦ Weather, parameters for winds aloft? Wind sheers? Inversions? Fog?
 - ♦ Landowner issues? Do you familiar with the area. Know area red zones. Landing zones? Do you plan your flight to land in good area for landing sights?
- ♦ **Ejection Accident Investigation** by Sam Parks
 - ♦ Weather— Source—Flight Service Station date of flight. 1/23/2021
Temp 34 Dew point 30 Altimeter 20.88 Clear of clouds, no ceiling Visibility 16 miles, Wind at launch 3knots, no gusts. Wind direction: 180. No NOTAMS or any notices
 - ♦ System 2006 Lindstrand , 327.1 hrs. Annual 5/12/2020 Max Gross weight 1251, at launch 978.
 - ♦ Pilot: From ALBQ. Private cert. Age 82. Flight review 7/20/19 Time in aircraft 329 In all 334. hours in last 90 days—0 Hours in last 30 days 0. Crew Chief 79, 3 more crew.
 - ♦ Met crew 7AM, sunrise 7:11AM, launch at 7:55AM, Solo. Flew 15 minutes did 3 Touch and gos.
 - ♦ Crew chief joined pilot in basket. Winds still 3 knots. Flew 45 minutes. Wind now 7-10 knots
 - ♦ Prepared for landing, hit a bush, bounced, hit ground and basket turned and Pax slid out. Balloon landed on other side of ravine. Pax walked to balloon. Both walked up hill to meet with crew around 9:30. 911 called at 10. Pax talking and seemed ok. Had a cut on his arm. Helicopter arrived and transported Pax. Pax died enroute. Pelvic blunt trauma cause of death.
 - ♦ **NTSB advised to wear restraints for Pilot and Passenger.**
- ♦ **PROPANE** by Henry Rosenbaum. Nothing I hadn't heard before, and I just ran out of space to write.

This year marked our 30th trip to Gallup New Mexico for the Red Rock Balloon Rally (RRBR). Gallup is a unique town with a diverse Native American population and rich in history and culture.

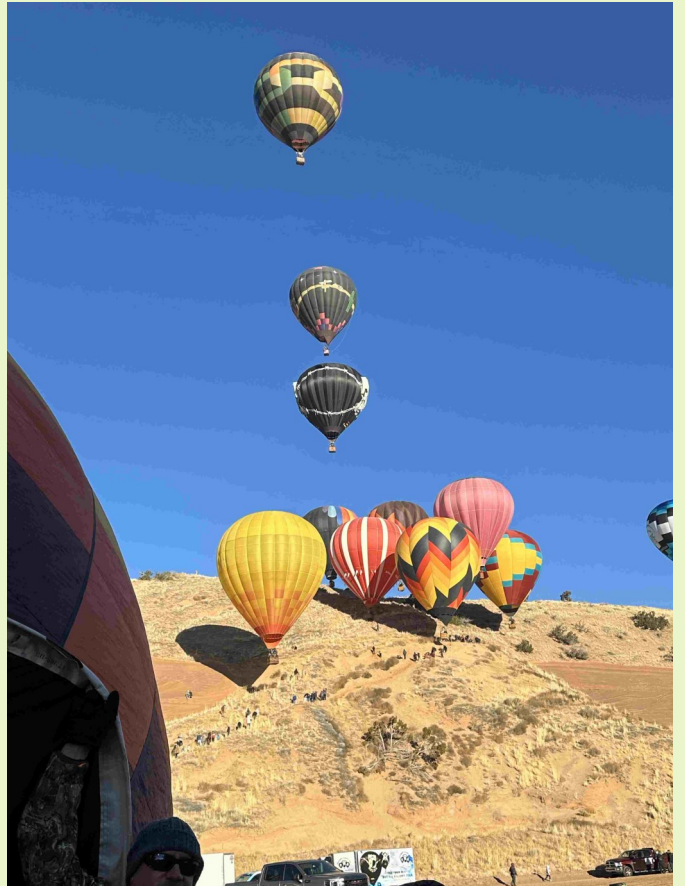
Red Rock Balloon Rally is an invitation only event and some 30 years ago after exchanging emails on the balloon reflector we got invited to attend the rally, but on a proviso that I passed the organizer's requirements. Being from California, no one was familiar with me or my level of flying skills. So, at the behest of my new Texas acquaintance we set off for Gallup. It's a 3-day event on the first full weekend in December. We took our balloon and after a 16-hour trip over two days, ended up in Gallup.

The first day (Friday) my flying skills were evaluated and I passed with flying colors and that was reported back to the organizers. That Saturday and Sunday I got to fly my first flights in Gallup, and have been flying ever since.

A few interesting things about flying at RRBR. The launch site is in Red Rock State Park, a 1 square mile patch of real estate on the Navajo Reservation. It's a unique Park known for its geological uniqueness of the finger canyons that were created eons ago. It's also at 7,000 feet elevation. To the east it borders what is lovingly called the wilderness (bad lands) that have no road access (not a place you would want to fly let alone land in). To the South is Interstate 40 and an old Military munitions storage area (newly re-purposed and still a red zone) with its telltale rounded munitions bunkers. To the west is the town of Gallup. To the North, Navajo lands and Superman Canyon. A lot of early westerns and Superman movies were filmed there. The roads into Superman Canyon start as pavement, turn to gravel, turn to dirt (well rutted by the people that drive to and from their properties). The gravel and pavement are very short lengths of roadway, it's mostly dirt roads. Road maps, not so much. There can be washed-out bridges and washes that are not easily traversed. With all that said, it is a kick to fly! But it tests your flying skills.

Remember that bell curve we were all taught to fly. You burn, level out and float level for a while, and then start descending. Not at this altitude. You burn and there is little to no float at the top of that curve. The altitude makes for challenging flying, particularly when you are trying to fly precisely for landings on the tops of the ridgelines of the canyons.

Red Rock Balloon Rally December 2024 By Pat Moore



In December the window between the ground (at 7,000 feet) and the bottom of the lower winter jet stream (around 10,000 feet) is small. Fly too high and get caught in those lower-level winds and you are balloon-drag racing to the east (the wilderness). Search and rescue always told us to leave your "Gold Card" for the helicopter, they would have to use to pluck you out of the wilderness.

The weather over the 30 years we have been going to Gallup is very unpredictable. Our first year was low of 28 and high of 75°. The worst year (that we could fly) was a low of -15 and a high of 28° (but some of the best flying ever, 3 hours on 4 tanks). The colder the better made for some great days of flying.

This year (2024) was one of those warmer years, temps in the 60s during the day and upper 20s in the morning. We flew for 2 or 3 days, winded out on Sunday (wrong direction, to the east, and too fast).

Funny thing as we balloon pilots and crew get older, it's tougher on the body and particularly the back. It got so we were having trouble with all the lifting, and crew is harder to come by. Hence, we sold the balloon to Brent Rolland. But we then moved to the next chapter in ballooning. We became proud owners of a remote-controlled balloon. It looks just like it's Momma! The remote-controlled balloons are great for schools and educating kids and the public about ballooning, its history, etc. Small enough, 2,800 cf compared to our 90,000 cf original, to launch and fly from just about anywhere.

So, this year I got to fly my former ballon (Rainbow Dream, now re-named Iridis), fly our remote-controlled ballon and have a great time with the people of Gallup and enjoy the surrounding area and culture.



IOWA SAFETY SEMINAR



HUDSON HOT AIR AFFAIR



Photos by Teresa M. Thompson-
from Taylor Houser's FB Page



Pacific Coast Aeronauts Budget Worksheet 2024-2025

Board Meeting, January 16 , 2025

January to December 2024 Actual Income/Expenses and 2025 Proposed Income/Expenses

Beginning Balance January 1, 2024 = \$10,956.26

Ending Balance Dec. 31, 2024 = \$10,657.88

	2024 Actual	2025 Proposed
Club Income		
Club Dues	\$728.41	\$800.00
Donations	\$0.00	\$0.00
WHAMOBASS	\$0.00	\$200.00
Total Income	\$728.41	\$1,000.00

	2024 Actual	2025 Proposed
Club Expenses		
Awards	\$0.00	\$50.00
Club BFA Memberships	\$0.00	\$55.00
Flowers for Members	\$0.00	\$50.00
FTB and CA State	\$0.00	\$20.00
Zoom Subscription	\$159.90	\$160.00
PCA Mail Box	\$167.88	\$175.00
Website Hosting & Email	\$36.16	\$40.00
Committees		
Jr. Balloonist Grants	\$600.00	\$450.00
WHAMOBASS Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00
Expense Total	\$963.94	\$1,000.00



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