DOWNWIND CHASE

Official Newsletter of the Pacific Coast Aeronauts
NOVEMBER 2026 ·

View from the Board

Treasurer Linda Walton

Someone asked me if I got paid when I crew for the hot air balloons.

They seemed surprised when I said, NO, I spend my own money for gas and hotels. But sometimes we get brunch. Sometimes I get a flight to 8400' and get to see Monterey Bay while flying over Morgan Hill. But most of the time when I attend a rally or event, I get to spend time with good friends.

Yesterday was the 62nd WHAMOBASS, celebrating the birth of hot air ballooning. We met at a private airstrip in Turlock, launching from a field of mowed, green grass. 6 balloons flew over the fields and orchards of Turlock, on a day of clear skies and light winds. To celebrate the memory of Deke Sonnichsen, our founder, and the firing of the anvils, we shouted "AEROSTATION" at pilot's briefing. If you want to experience the firing of the anvils, check out the video link on the PCA website.

Many thanks to Alta and Donnie Fredrichsen who coordinated with the property owner and the folks who brought in yummy tacos to the field. Maybe next year we can have breakfast burritos, in memory of Pixie.

Looking at the calendar, I see the events in Leon and Gallup happening before the holidays. Maybe I'll pack the suitcase someday and will make the treks to see new scenery surrounded by balloons in flight. Too many times this year our events have been interrupted by weather issues.
Reno, Lincoln CA, and Sonoma in Santa Rosa are just the ones I was on the ground for.

Maybe we'll see you in December for the PCA holiday party. You won't receive a PCA ballot this year. The PCA is transforming into more of a social club.

But as the year approaches the end, I'd like to raise a glass (your choice) to our student in aircraft maintenance school, our first grade school Teacher and anyone fighting illnesses and cancer, AEROSTATION!

Thanks for reading. Linda Walton

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CLUB MEETINGS

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

LAST MEETING OF 2026

Wed. Nov 4

@ 7PM PDT

ZOOM BOARD MEETING

NEXT ONE IS:

Thurs DEC 17

WHAMOBASS LXII



BOB Locklin “I had a great flight today in Mr. Blue Sky thanks to Michael Vargas for letting me be the pilot-in-command during the 62nd annual WHAMOBASS balloon rally.”





The pilots who attending were Alta, April Turner, Dana Thornton, Dave Wakefield, Michael Vargas(Magic flew with him) and Kelly Couch.

After brunch, Dana spent time getting the pallet ready for Leon.

About 20 people attended the dinner Friday night. Sorry, No photos.

Thanks go to Alta and Donnie for arranging for tacos to be made on the field after flights to feed the hungry pilots and crew.



Pacific Coast Aeronauts Holiday Party

Save the Date



2026 Annual Christmas Gathering

Saturday 12.12.2026 at 1:00 PM
Kelly and Jana's Place

PCA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 15 2026 (Thursday 1900 hours PDST) BY APRIL TURNER

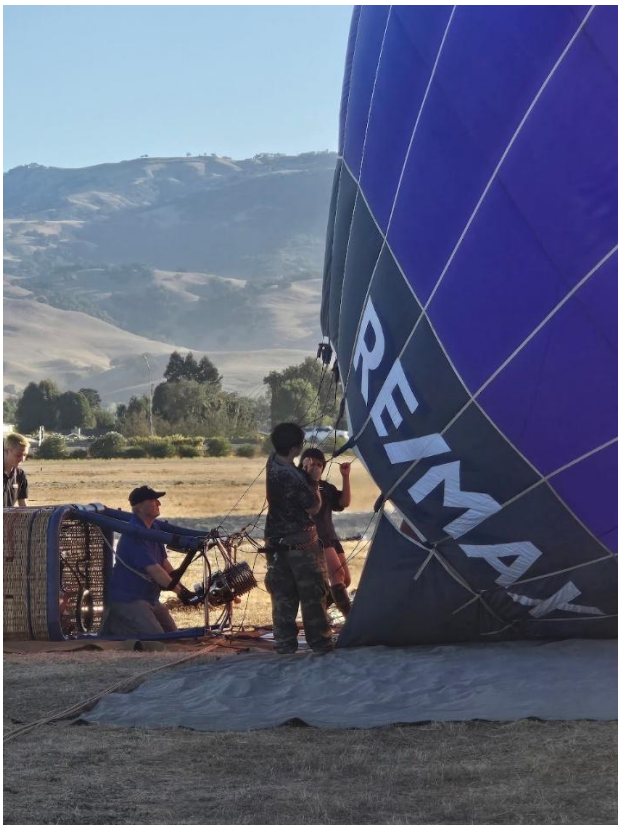
2026 Board Members: ☒ Pat Moore (PM) ☒ April Turner (AT) ☐ Tom Sharpee (TS) ☒ Linda Walton (LW) ☒ Jeanne Anson (JA)

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 Member Mtg Secretary: Jeanne Anson (JA)
No Guests:
called to order: by Pat at 7PM

1. Treasurer Report – LW
    a. Current Balance in bank: $10,817.87
    b. Current status on CD and anticipated closure:
    $8181.89 + 121.63 anticipated interest ($8303.52)
2. Review of Action items from on dissolution plan/spreadsheet – All
    a. Are we on track for year's end?
    Linda to change PCA address to Pat's address for starters.
    b. Between now and December 17th, have completed list of inventory and determine what to do with the funds.
    c. Pat will bring WHAMOBASS inventory to Food Truck Fly In to give to Linda to bring to Turlock.
    d. Pat will bring the Aerostation finger at a later date, along with some poem/tasks from Deke.
    e. Jeanne to contact Melanee to see if she has the PCA banners.
    f. Linda to create new master list of prospective members for Pat to create the meeting invites.
    g. In the final communication to "members" include advisory to sign up for PCA Chat.
    h. We know that we can give $$ to BFA and target to the Jr. Balloonists camp, but can we earmark them specifically to the High Sierra Balloon camp. Jeanne to reach out to Larry Simburger to ensure the total amount of funds received from the PCA will be allocated to the High Sierra Balloon Camp.
    i. Linda has a collection of Deke's WHAMOBASS T-shirts including the one from the first one.
3. For the good of the order:
    PCA task list spreadsheet:
    https://1drv.ms/x/c/c72735bc7975dbd2/IQDySsLkaYGgTZSrUUFLJujjAT55clccH-xkflLBYtvdybE?e=ZjsqY5
4. Motion to close:
    a. Moved: Pat
    a. Seconded: April
    b. Closed at: 1947 zulu / 7:47PM Pacific

WINGS OF HISTORY
FOOD TRUCK FLY-IN
SAN MARTIN AIRPORT

By Dave Wakefield



6th Annual Food Truck Fly-In at San Martin Airport
This year, we ran into conflict with the Food Truck event interfering with WHAMOBASS, so I didn't think I'd be able to attend (Food Trucks). Dana Thornton was planning to tether the MOHI balloon at the event, then travel to Turlock for WHAMOBASS. Great idea, so I planned the same.

Even though the event didn't "officially" start until 10:00, the tether crowds started lining up at 7:30. The weather was perfect, so I knew this would be a long one, and we got the balloons all set up and started giving rides a little after 8:00. I was able to continue until 10:50 before the temp got to be a bit much for the 90k RE/MAX balloon. With the larger 105k MOHI balloon, Dana was able to continue until 12:30.

This event continues to grow, with this year's event increasing attendance by nearly 50%. The event had plenty of choices at the food trucks, including ice cream (woohoo!) The aircraft and cars on display were awesome and the nearly continuous airshow flight activities; I highly recommend this event. Between our two balloons, Dana and I managed to give tethered rides to 286 people. It was a great day!



1st 4 photos are from Charles Kuo
The rest are by Trevor Rodriguez
trevrodriguez.com | Instagram: @trevrodriguez



Food Truck Fly-in Continued



Following Photos below and right are from Dave Wakefield. Thanks So much! Looks like a great time was had by all!











As the year and era of the PCA come to an end, I think of the energy and excitement of the first meeting 41 years ago. What hope we had and what great flights and friendships were realized.

Soft landings, Jeanne the Editor