



SUMMER 2026

AERO CLUB OF PENNSYLVANIA

PENNSYLVANIA PILOT

www.aeroclubpa.org



Planes at Heritage Field

President's Message

Transportation has evolved from rafts to sailing ships, railroads and airplanes over several thousand years. Today we think of "modern transportation" as jet planes crossing continents in hours. Think back to 1901, before the Wright brothers had yet to fly, and the best and fastest travel was by steamship across oceans. My wife and I were reminded of those times as we took the new Queen Elizabeth for 14 days from Los Angeles through the Panama Canal into the Caribbean. Before the canal was built, it took an additional 56 days to sail around South America.

The canal is an incredible feat of engineering 50 miles long with locks that lift your ship 82' to the Culebra Cut (originally dug through the mountains using steam powered shovels), through an enormous lake and then three more locks to lower you to sea level and the Atlantic side. The canal is a wonder of the modern world that everyone should strive to see and appreciate. It represents the world before airplanes.

Michael Dunleavy

Early summer events getting under way

Scholarship Dinner

The Aero Club of Pennsylvania, along with the Eastern Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, will hold their annual scholarship dinner on June 18 at Wings Field. Last year, \$65,000 was awarded to 17 recipients. See page 2 for invitation.

Seaplane "Splash-in" at Essington

A seaplane fly-in is planned on July 11 at the Essington (Philadelphia) Seaplane Base. The last event was held in 2022. Since then, significant waterfront improvements have been made by Tinicum Township. See page 2 for info.

Fifth Annual Fly-in at Pottstown

During the first weekend in May, Heritage Field Airport in Pottstown held a fly-in that attracts vintage, antique and modern aircraft. The weather was cold, but sunny and turnout was quite good. Bucktown Grill provided lunch with their food truck. Many local aviation organizations were in attendance, providing information about their groups, including the Aero Club of Pennsylvania. The local EAA chapter displayed an airplane rebuild project.

Chester County Balloon Festival

The annual Chester County Hot Air Balloon Festival will take place June 19-21 at Willowdale Steeplechase near Kennet Square. Our club will man a display at the event.

New Garden Air & Car Show

The 2026 Festival of Flight Air, Car, & Tractor Show is scheduled for August 8th and 9th at New Garden Flying Field (N57) in Toughkenamon, PA. The weekend event features day and night aerobatics, military/antique aircraft, car displays, and family activities.

Fly out to Cape May

The Aero Club will once again coordinate a fly-out to the annual NAS Wildwood Museum "AirFest" at Cape May on the Saturday, Sept 5 during Labor Day weekend. Participating pilots will display their aircraft on the museum ramp for public viewing. This is the 5th year that the Club will coordinate this event. The event features tours of the Naval Air Station Aviation Museum, live music, food trucks, exhibitors, and historic aircraft. See USNASW.org.



Page 4: Dynamic Prop Balance



Page 5: Blimp Flight



Page 6: Albuquerque Balloons

2026 Scholarship Awards Dinner

Aero Club of Pennsylvania & Eastern PA Chapter of the Ninety-Nines

On, **Thursday, June 18**, the Aero Club of Pennsylvania Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the Ninety Nines will hold our annual scholarship awards dinner at the Philadelphia Aviation Country Club at Wings Field. Approximately 15 awards will be given to young men and women seeking careers in aviation.

Philadelphia Aviation Country Club
1399 Narcissa Rd, Blue Bell, PA 19422

Reserve online at aeroclubpa.org. \$50/Person
 Cash Bar: 6PM. Dinner: 6:30PM. Awards: 7:30PM

Checks payable to Aero Club Meml Scholarship Fund

NEW WINGS CLEARANCE | JAMES KILDUFF

Ben Persofsky is a private pilot flying out of Wings Field. Wings' instrument-rated pilots owe Ben a thank you.

For years, the clearance delivery frequency for IFR departures at Wings Field has been unreliable. The workaround? Pilots calling a landline on their cellphones to pick up a clearance. Picture three pilots trying to get their clearance at the same time; each dialing in—busy signal and repeated redials and mounting frustration.

Ben ran into this firsthand. Instead of accepting the nuisance, he started on a mission—and he didn't stop. Ben reached out to Dave Urban at Philadelphia ATC whose role includes regional airport coordination. Then, he kept going—connecting with congressional offices, building relationships, and rallying support. Along the way, he found additional allies within the FAA, including Allan Laird in Allentown.

After years of persistence, momentum built. The FAA sourced radio equipment, conducted signal testing, and identified secure space to house the system. A dedicated trunk line to PHL clearance was approved.

When the new frequency goes live in May, Wings Field pilots can obtain clearances just as if they were at a towered airport—over the radio, simply and reliably. A long-overdue fix, driven by one pilot who refused to let the issue go. Thanks, Ben.



Essington Seaplane Base Splash In

To celebrate the restoration of the historic Lazaretto and improvements to the grounds, a seaplane splash-in is planned at the Essington Seaplane Base (9N2) on Saturday, July 11 (rain date July 12). More details here:

www.phillyseaplanebase.com/splash-in-2026/



**Promoting aviation in the
greater Delaware Valley**

**1399 Narcissa Ave
Blue Bell, PA 19422**

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AIRPORT REPORT

Elaine Farashian



PHILADELPHIA INTL [PHL]

The airport recently completed Phase 1 of its taxiway S Reconstruction Project. Taxiway S serves as a parallel taxiway to the airport's busiest runway, 9R-27L. Phase 2, currently in pre-construction, will proceed soon. This project represents a major step in modernizing one of the airfield's critical corridors. In addition to replacing asphalt of taxiway S between taxiways N and U, two new intersecting taxiways, T and P6, were added to improve circulation across the airfield. Phase 2 of this project replaces the east end of taxiway S between taxiway D and runway 27R end.

PHL welcomed more than 30 million passengers in 2025. Over 4.1 million of them traveled to and from international destinations, an increase of 7.5 % over 2024. Cargo operations also grew for the first time since 2021, 7.4% over 2024. For the 250th anniversary, the \$500 million investment includes landscaping, new paint, tiles and carpeting in terminals. Eight new restrooms are planned for May. New terminal exit lanes with modern glass corridors and doors will be installed. Nonstop service to Prague and Budapest is planned for Spring. CEO Atif Saeed took a position at San Diego Regional Airport and Tracy Borda, who was CFO, is the CEO interim replacement.

NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA [PNE]

For the 3rd consecutive year, the airport was the busiest general aviation airport and 3rd busiest airport in Pennsylvania. It had 123,380 plane movements, a 1% increase over 2024. PNE has major tenants engaged in private transport, business and corporate flying, the manufacturing or building process of aircraft and provides flight and aviation mechanical training. In March, with support from Congressman Brendan Boyle, the airport received \$1 million for critical infrastructure improvements and \$400,000 for perimeter fencing upgrades. Boyle and Philadelphia Dept of Aviation Interim CEO and CFO, Tracy Borda, visited PNE to announce the funding.

BRANDYWINE [OQN]

The runway widening project start date is being negotiated with the FAA as engineering considerations are worked out. The hope is for widening in 2026, followed by a complete resurfacing in 2027. D-row hangar rehabilitation is complete. New F-row corporate hangars are starting to be occupied. A pilot controlled lighting circuit will be installed this year.

CHESTER COUNTY [MQS]

Valley Township has granted to the airport preliminary land development approval on a 15-year, 5-phase development plan that will expand airport operations. This plan includes new hangars and new aviation-use space as well as a non-aviation section to support local community with new jobs and opportunities. Separately, funds have been granted to renovate terminal building bathrooms. State and local community leaders have visited to be shown the airport plans.

DOYLESTOWN [DYL]

Taxiway light replacement project with all new taxiway lights installed should be complete at this time. PAPIs and REILS are

slated for replacement pending approval of the project. Extensive pavement repair and repaving are delayed until spring. Installation of a water line from the street to replace well water to the terminal area will begin soon. Funding has been received for further hangar rehab and work should begin soon.

HERITAGE FIELD [PTW]

Corporate hangar site work and the main apron mill and overlay are expected to begin in spring. Bids on corporate hangar construction are due in spring. The Pitcairn Flight Academy fleet is growing rapidly to meet demand. The 5th Annual Antique Fly-in or Drive-in was held May 1 to May 3 with the main day on Saturday, May 2.

FLYING W [N14]

D.R. Horton Builders has purchased the airport. This is the last year for the pool and tiki bar. It is uncertain how much longer the airport will stay open, but will remain so while they are awaiting approvals needed by Lumberton Township to begin building housing, including affordable family apartments, age-restricted single-family homes, and townhomes.

NEW GARDEN [N57]

A new fence installation project outside the FBO is currently underway. Grant applications are being prepared for a new row of 10 individual T-hangars, PAPI/VASI and south apron renovation. April 25th is the date for "Cars, Coffee & Airplanes." Future Aviators Camps are almost at capacity for both July and August. Tickets will soon be available for the August 8-9 Air Show.

QUAKERTOWN [UKT]

Money has been allocated and orders placed for eight new T-hangars and three new larger "unit" hangars. Construction will start in Spring with completion expected in late Summer or early Fall. Contracts were awarded, but due to delayed funding, pavement repairs and repaving of taxiway and ramp areas will wait until spring. A large obstruction removal project (trimming/removing trees from approach paths) will begin but not completed before the end of winter.

SOUTH JERSEY REGIONAL [VAY]

The state is finishing up a project for AC/Heat in the FBO. Completion is expected by May 1st. Phase 2 of the new taxiway will be starting soon. Test pits will begin soon. A new beacon is to be installed in the near future.

VAN SANT [9N1]

A long-awaited hangar roof and door repairs are expected to begin soon, pending material and contractor availability.

WINGS [LOM]

The FAA has installed equipment at Wings for a new Clearance Delivery frequency expected to be operational in the next several weeks after final checks are completed. The WFAA board has just approved plans for a new 12,000 sq. ft. hangar to be built in the grass area opposite the terminal building and just north of the existing hangar 4. Construction could start by late Summer/early Fall with a 6-month timeline for occupancy.

Dynamic Propellor Balancing by NANCY R. KYLE

I got hooked on flying small airplanes in 1990. When it became clear to me that I could not cure myself of the addiction, I purchased a used Cessna 172, and spent the next 11 years in the skies. I logged my fair share of hours, and I paid my fair share of maintenance bills. Never did I hear about Dynamic Prop Balancing. Was it available then? I don't have a clue, but I do know that my precious plane's engine and prop experienced plenty of vibration. If I had known such a test existed, I likely would have tried it. Even in today's dollars, it is a very reasonably priced procedure.

When most pilots think about maintenance, they focus on engines, avionics, and annual inspections. But one critical factor often overlooked is dynamic propeller balancing. While your propeller may look perfect to the naked eye, even small imbalances can cause vibration that impacts performance, safety, and comfort. This service should be on every owner's radar.



What is Dynamic Prop Balancing?

Dynamic propeller balancing measures vibration while your engine and propeller are running at operating RPM. Using specialized sensors, our technicians detect vibration patterns and add precise weights to the spinner or bulkhead to correct the imbalance. Unlike static balancing, which happens before installation, dynamic balancing fine-tunes performance under real operating conditions.

Why it's important

Unbalanced propellers cause vibration:

- **Engine & Airframe Stress** – Excessive vibration accelerates wear on engine mounts, bearings, and exhaust systems.
- **Component Life** – Avionics, instruments, and even lighting systems last longer when vibration is reduced.
- **Pilot & Passenger Comfort** – A smoother ride lowers fatigue, especially on cross-country flights.
- **Cost Savings** – Prevention avoids unnecessary repairs, saving money over the life of your aircraft.

Locally, there are numerous FBOs and roaming mechanics that offer the service, including Penn Air Repair, LLC at Heritage Field Airport (KPTW) where I handle back office admin. If you were to schedule a dynamic balance the process typically includes: Baseline Measurement, Analysis, Adjustment and Verification.

Balancing jobs are typically completed in less than a day, making it an easy trip to stay and watch the job being done while you wait. It can take up to 3 hours, with the only additional charge being a small shop fee, which covers any weights that might be required. Regardless of this gentle suggestion to schedule a test, it's valuable to know such a service will minimize uncomfortable vibration and keep your aircraft healthy. Happy flying!



Penn Air Repair (PTW)

- Competitive Pricing with no hidden surprises
- Quick Turnaround so you can get back in the air fast
- Experienced Technicians with decades of propeller and maintenance experience
- Friendly Service and clear communication
- Convenience with a courtesy vehicle available; Costco and the Premium Outlet Mall are 5 minutes away
- And you can always add an oil change while you're here!

My Goodyear Blimp Adventure by MARY WUNDER



I hadn't been to a Wright Brothers Dinner in ages, but this year I finally made it back—and it was wonderful seeing old friends. I walked past the silent auction table. I didn't need another thing, but a once-in-a-lifetime experience? I'd much rather spend money on memories than dust collectors.

Two gentlemen kept bidding against me, both of them unaware that I'd arrived with a mission and a checkbook ready for takeoff. Had they known I was prepared to outbid them into next week, they might have backed away. But bless their hearts, they tried.

Of course, I won—and that's how my Goodyear Blimp adventure began.

The Blimp operates out of three locations—California, Ohio, and Florida (N1A, N2A, and N3A). My plan was to fly my little Mooney to Florida, assuming the weather would cooperate. Naturally, it didn't: icy runway, icing aloft, and 35-knot winds kept testing my commitment. But on December 31st, I made it.

Our ride was scheduled January 3rd, but Rachelle, the coordinator, asked to move it to the 4th so the crew could rest. Of course we agreed—well-rested pilots are always better. We stayed nearby the night before; I wasn't taking chances after working that hard to get there.

Rachelle shared a fun fact: less than .0006% of the population has ever ridden in the Goodyear Blimp. Suddenly, I felt like aviation royalty.

Flight day brought blue skies, great visibility, and calm winds. The only suspense came from my husband, who walks with a cane; the pilots needed to evaluate whether he could safely board. I held my breath. He passed. THANK YOU, JESUS!!

Because we were first up, we watched the crew bring the Blimp out of the hangar. Calling it "a project" doesn't do it justice—this thing is massive. Seeing it pulled by a truck felt like a cross between ballet and construction.

There were only four of us on the first ride, which made it feel even more special. One of my favorite surprises: our pilot was a woman—the cherry on top of an already incredible experience.

We never climbed above 500 feet. Instead, we floated from Pompano Beach Airport to Fort Lauderdale and back along the shoreline. The ride was unbelievably smooth—more like drifting than flying.

[Continued Page 7]

Arnie and Mary Wunder

Each year, the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company offers rides to worthy organizations for their fundraising. The Aero Club was fortunate to be offered this ride that raised \$5000 for scholarships. We are grateful to Goodyear.



ALBUQUERQUE

Hot Air Balloon Mecca

by Robert Morrow



Rob & Mimi Morrow

TIPS:

- 1) Watch for PHL/ABQ direct flights.
- 2) Use Enterprise.
- 3) Try Hotel Albuquerque.
- 4) Get the Fiesta App.
- 5) Arrive early morning to beat traffic.
- 6) Breakfast is available at 4:30AM.
- 7) Dress in layers
- 8) Plan for three days
- 9) Drive & park for \$20.
- 10) Don't fall for secondary market tickets (show tickets are \$15)

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Mimi and I have had the Hot Air Balloon Fiesta on our bucket list for several years but other plans got in the way. I crafted a tour that included three days at Albuquerque, two days in Durango Colorado (Steam Railroading on the Durango and Silverton) and two days in Santa Fe (golf and sight seeing).

Albuquerque became a center for ballooning because of the special air currents. Early in the morning the winds below 800 feet drift south. Above 800 feet, we begin to drift north. Balloonists discovered they could ride the low currents south, then ascend and catch the currents going north. The fun is in going around and around in what is known as the Albuquerque Box.

TIPS FOR GOING

Plan as early as possible, maybe 10 months prior. There's a high demand for plane tickets, hotel rooms, cars, and of course balloon rides. During balloon week, American runs special direct flights from Philly to Albuquerque. For rental cars, we like Enterprise. We stayed in two hotels and can recommend the Hotel Albuquerque. It is in Old Town Albuquerque and walking distance to restaurants, museums and cultural centers. Hospitality and rooms were top-notch and the hotel has an old world feeling. It was just a 15-minute drive to the balloon field.

GETTING THE FESTIVAL WIRED

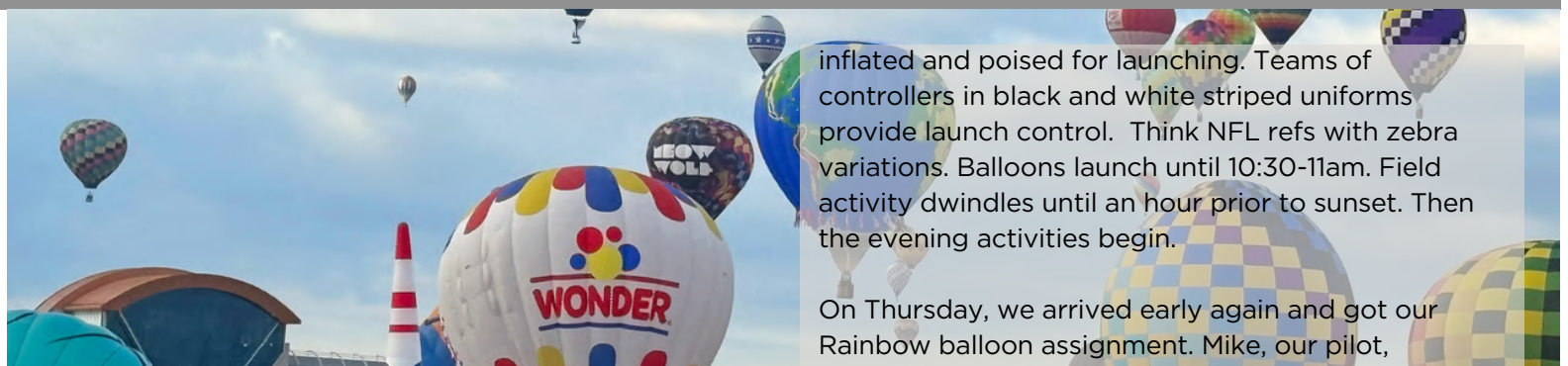
We flew out on Tuesday to spend a full day Wednesday at the balloon festival before our Thursday flight. We heard from multiple sources that the traffic is really rough getting in with two-hour delays. So the first day we got up at 3:00 AM to depart for the festival at 3:50 arriving at 4:10 AM.

We drove right into the main parking lot. Parking is \$20 per car. Entrance tickets are \$15/pp. Only buy tickets directly online from the festival. Resellers pop up on the Internet and claim tickets are going fast. Their tickets are triple the price - No day is ever sold out. At 4:10 AM the line had 500 people waiting for the gates to open at 4:30. There were lots of young families with children in wagons waiting to get in - it was fun to see children very well behaved. After security, they scan your mobile or printed tickets.

AT THE SHOW

We walked past Rainbow Rider Balloon Excursions who have the largest concession for arranging all the balloon rides. It takes about 25 minutes to get through the line to register at Rainbow. We walked past the line directly to the vendors that line one side of the field from one end to the other. Vendors range from clothing and apparel to jewelry to artwork to trinkets; and southwestern & Native American breakfast burritos to smoked turkey legs. At 4:30, breakfast is ready right away. It is still pre-dawn, but you can see the first balloon...

[Continued Page 7]



[Ballooning: Continued from Page 6]

...crews in the darkness organizing and getting their envelopes and gondolas ready for the morning mass ascension. The balloon crews are busy but generally you can talk for a minute or two. Visitors can mingle among the balloons while they're being inflated.

The show opens at 5:45 with a well-choreographed and designed drone light show to music. At 6:00 am it is still dark on the field and the dawn patrol balloons prepare to lift off. 10-12 balloons lift off in darkness, and the flames illuminate the envelopes against the dark sky. At 6:30 it is the beginning of Morning Glow and the first wave of the mass ascension. About 20 balloons per wave are fully

inflated and poised for launching. Teams of controllers in black and white striped uniforms provide launch control. Think NFL refs with zebra variations. Balloons launch until 10:30-11am. Field activity dwindles until an hour prior to sunset. Then the evening activities begin.

On Thursday, we arrived early again and got our Rainbow balloon assignment. Mike, our pilot, escorted us in the darkness to our ride. The gondola held 12 passengers plus pilot. The ground crew fired up the fans and Mike fired up the gas burners to complete the filling and make the craft buoyant. The northern breeze was tugging at the tiedown ropes as we hopped aboard. By now it was light and the "Zebras" whistled and we lifted off. Our flight took us south into Albuquerque over suburban neighborhoods. To the east were the Sandia Mountains, dead ahead was the city skyline and to the west was the meandering Rio Grande. Our pilot took us to 2000 feet AGL and then down to treetop level. After 45 minutes, we landed in a school sports field, a solid double BUMP and slide landing. Our chase crew was not far behind us. We cracked open Champagne by 8:45AM.

[Blimp: Continued from Page 5]



Female Pilot!

The ocean sparkled, the beaches looked postcard-perfect, and the world felt peaceful from up there.

After about an hour, we returned to the field to a line of eager passengers. They begin the day with the Blimp filled with water and as the weight and balance gets heavier, the day gets hotter, they release the water – who knew?

It was truly unforgettable—worth every penny, every weather delay, every gust of wind, and yes, even every bid from those two determined auction warriors. If they're reading this... gentlemen, better luck next time!



Airship N3A



Rarely seen shadow

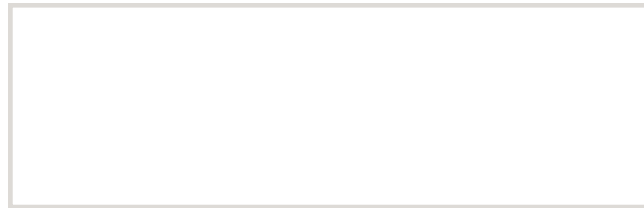


Organized December 17, 1909
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1399 Narcissa Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422

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AVIATION CALENDAR

Aero Club

June 18 Annual Aero Club Scholarship Dinner
June 19-21 Chester County Balloon Festival (Willowdale)
July 11 Philadelphia Seaplane Base Splash-In
Aug 13 Board of Directors Meeting
Sep 5 Aero Club Cape May Fly-in

Local

May 23-24 Harrisburg Air Show (Blue Angels)
May 29-31 STEMfest, American Helicopter Museum (KOQN)
May 29-31 Atlantic City Air Show
June 5-7 MAAM Reading WWII Weekend (RDG)
June 20-21 Greenwood Lake Air Show
June 13-14 Ocean City Maryland Air Show (KOBX)
June 20 Antique Airplane Fly In, Massey (MD1)
July 6-10 Future Aviator Camp, New Garden Airport
Aug 3-7 Future Aviator Camp, New Garden Airport
Aug 8-9 New Garden Air & Car Show (N57)
Sept 19 Angel Flight East, wings & wheels (KLOM)
Sept 26 Chester County wheels & wings (KMQS)
Oct 7-9 PA Aviation Conference (Reading, PA)

National

June 23-26 Women's Air Race Classic
July 8-12 Ninety-Nines Intl Conference (San Diego)
July 20-26 AirVenture Oshkosh
Sept 21-27 Triple Tree Aerodrome Fly-In, Woodruff, SC
Sept 10-13 International Seaplane Fly-In Greenville, ME
Oct 3-11 Albuquerque Intl Balloon Fiesta

Board of Directors Report

Board Meeting, April 30

The Aero Club Board of Directors met on April 30 at Wings Field. President Michael Dunleavy presided over the meeting that included reports on finances, scholarships, membership, communications, and special events. Some board members attended via Zoom.

Treasurer John O'Toole provided an update on Aero Club and the Scholarship fund financials. The board approved a \$250 increase in the price of a Lifetime Membership, with the increase going to help pay for club expenses, while \$1000 continues to be a tax-deductible donation to the scholarship fund.

Rob Morrow reported on our recent membership renewal period. A number of members did not renew. An effort will take place to encourage members to renew. The board spoke about planned Aero Club participation in numerous summer events. The group also discussed planning for the upcoming 2026 Scholarship Dinner.

The next board meeting is planned for August 13.