

Cochise Airmail

WELCOME TO THE **FLY COCHISE** NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

Many thanks for your positive and encouraging response to our first newsletter! It's wonderfully gratifying for our publications team members, the best reward for their hard work.

It's been great fun to hear from many alumni, sharing stories, connections and photos. We are scanning and adding to the digital archive daily, so keep those pictures and memories coming. You'll find a new feature in the newsletter, asking you to help identify people, events and dates in some of the photos. Let us know if that smiling face is you or a flying buddy.

The Cochise College Aviation Department is a unique place, one that we all share whether we came to simply finish a license or completed a longer training program. We are all alumni, and our impact on the aviation, aerospace and other industries is beyond measure. Our school may be small, but our accomplishments are BIG! We are Fly Cochise - and darn proud of it.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Alumni dinner in Mesa on May 3rd!

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Director's Desk

with Belinda Burnett

I am very excited to report that the first edition of Cochise Airmail has received enthusiastic and outstanding reviews! The concept for this project has been in a holding pattern for several semesters and we are thrilled with the new product. I want to personally invite you, our alumni and friends, to share your feedback and ideas as we plan for upcoming editions.

In this April edition, I want to highlight an ongoing Fly Cochise initiative. We developed the Alumni Industry Mentoring (AIM) program a few semesters ago, and it has been a huge success for our students. Cochise alumni working throughout the aviation industry have volunteered their time to mentor, guide, and encourage our students as they progress in their flight training activities. These students come from many different backgrounds and aviation experience ranging from never touching an airplane to growing up with one in the barn. Some have family and friends for support, while others embark on this great adventure alone. AIM mentors provide professional direction and support to students by sharing their experiences and opportunities in aviation. We are always looking for new AIM mentors.

In conjunction with our mentorship program, we are launching a Fly Cochise scholarship giving campaign to offer deserving candidates the necessary resources to kickstart their aviation journey. Our scholarship



If you would like to invest in the future of aviation please scan here:



or visit

<https://www.cochise.edu/flycochise/>

program aims to support individuals who demonstrate enthusiasm, dedication and passion for aviation. By offering financial assistance for flight training, we can help empower our students to achieve their dreams of flight while having a positive impact on the aviation industry and continuing our Fly Cochise legacy far into the future.

Statistically, the single biggest obstacle to students is the ever-rising cost of flight training. We have all experienced this at some point in our journey. The total cost of flight training at Cochise College from zero time through the CFI and Commercial ASEL, AMEL, is less than \$90,000. This is 20% less, on average, than our competitors. Your contributions can make a significant difference in the lives of these young aviators, allowing them to access high-quality training and realize their dreams of becoming professional pilots.

Please consider sharing your passion for flight and inspiration with our students today. If you would like more information about donating or mentoring, I am happy to discuss how we can collaborate in helping today's aspiring aviators.

Chief's Corner

by Timothy Timmons, Chief Flight Instructor

Each aviator embodies a complex amalgamation of the many pilots they have encountered throughout their personal aviation journey. Among these influencers, flight instructors hold the paramount role in shaping individuals into the pilots they will ultimately become. You will fly with a number of different flight instructors in your pursuit of additional certificates, ratings and endorsements. Each flight instructor is unique, bringing different experiences to the table, providing you with new and useful tools to enhance your piloting skills and knowledge.



It can be very tempting to try to stick with a favorite instructor during your flight training here, just like trying to be assigned the same favorite plane for every lesson. My advice is to resist that temptation and fly with as many different instructors as you can. Since we learn new things from other pilots we fly and interact with, this serves to make you a better and more well-rounded pilot. When you observe techniques you like, steal the best ones and incorporate them into your own skillset. Once you leave the college and become a first officer, you will have a chance to observe many different captains at work. Make notes on the qualities you like and try to emulate them. When you find qualities you dislike, make a personal vow to avoid those traits. When you're the captain one day, your first officers will thank you and want to absorb your good qualities.

Remember, the journey to becoming a professional aviator is a collaborative effort that thrives on the collective wisdom of the aviation community. As you have heard me say before, it truly does take a village to create a skilled and competent pilot. Fly safe!

Cleared for Takeoff

Success Stories



Soaring Solos

In March, Beau Williams, Sarah Stroud, and Micah McClusky soloed for the first time! Here's to countless more exhilarating flights ahead!



Newly Licensed Private Pilots

Nicole Duncan, Donovan Baptiste, and Kolby Gilbreth earned their Private Pilot Certificates this March. They are now planning to build upon their recent success to strive for their next goal. Congratulations on the achievements!

Multi-Engine Mastery

Breanna Postels, Naia DeCanto, Remington Meyers, and CFI Alexia Jimenez all added Multi-Engine Ratings to their list of credentials! They kindly thank Huemac Badilla for the excellent training. Well done!



Advice to Aspiring Aviators:

"During training, it's important to have the grit to continue and the ability to laugh at yourself." - Beau Williams

"Adapt a proactive approach by tracking the areas needing improvement and remain steadfast in your progression." - Donovan Baptiste

"Ask your 'dumb' questions and learn." - Breanna Postels

"FBGM - Fly Beyond the Grand Mountain - You have to make sacrifices in order to reach your dreams." - Naia DeCanto

"Take your training seriously; it is the most important part of your aviation journey." - Remington Meyers

Alumni Spotlight

Dee Waldron

April's Alumni Spotlight shines on Dee Waldron, an Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic with Inspection Authorization, who is an important member of our Aviation Department and one half of our maintenance team. Here are some highlights from our recent talk:

Born in Monterey, California, Dee moved around a lot growing up, settling in Sierra Vista during his final years of high school. The proximity of Cochise College tugged at him, as he recalls always being fascinated with airplanes, knowing for certain they'd one day be part of his life.

Dee started flight lessons at age 16, earning his Private Pilot License on his 18th birthday. Surprisingly, he found flying a bit boring during training, as it wasn't... hands-on enough. He craved something more, and found exactly what he wanted in the Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) course at Cochise College, attending from 1974 to 1975. The program was set up in five stages: General (math and science), Basic Structure (sheet metal work and metals shop), Advanced Airframe (hydraulics and electronics), Basic Powerplant (reciprocating engines) and finally Advanced Powerplant (turbines and jets). His favorite courses were Basic Structure and Basic Powerplant, strengths that would serve him well in the future. In addition to the superior education he received, Dee appreciates the numerous long-term relationships with friends and professionals, along with meaningful connections with his Maintenance Instructors who helped him find positions in the workforce.

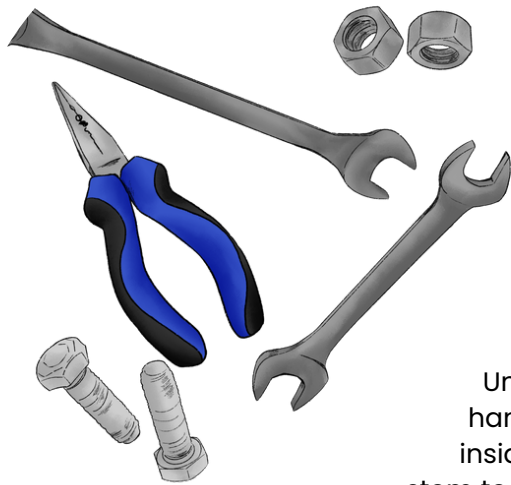
When Dee graduated, the aviation industry was oversaturated with both pilots and mechanics, so he enlisted in the United States Army to gain real-world experience. For the next three years, he performed maintenance on Boeing CH-47 Chinooks. After the military, Dee worked on one of his favorite airplanes, the Convair-580, at Sierra Pacific in California from 1978 to 1980. Later that year, he spent a short time in Montana working on Convair PB4Y's, old military bombers retrofitted for fire fighting. The airplanes were very high maintenance, so he soon returned to southern Arizona for a position with Cochise Airlines. From there, Dee went to Santa Maria, California, performing maintenance for several different FBOs, including his own. He rapidly learned that the FBO took more maintenance and more money than actual airplanes, so he didn't linger as a business owner.

Around the same time in 1985, Dee acquired his own project plane - a 1947 Beech Bonanza Model 35. He had it up and running smoothly in no time, flying it locally for fun and to quickly obtain parts for other aircraft he was repairing. In 1986, Dee qualified for Inspector Authorization (IA) on his maintenance certificate. A few years later, he sold the Bonanza and found a Navion, which took a year of work to become airworthy, and used it in the same manner, although at slower speeds. The Navion was sold in 1992, as Dee and his wife moved to Tokyo, Japan, to run a consulting firm for GA aircraft over the next 25 years. Their company assisted owners and businesses with GA aircraft find reasonably priced parts with acceptable delivery times, an issue that was non-existent stateside at the time. Helping Japanese maintenance professionals understand English-language aircraft manuals was another important service they provided. True to form, Dee found living in Japan rather dull, unlike the United States where there's always something happening, developing, and catching his attention.



The Waldrons returned to the States in 2016, where Dee continued his maintenance career in Arkansas. Six years later, they moved to Sierra Vista to care for Dee's mother, which left him pondering retirement. But a hardworking attitude is hard to shake, and he soon decided he needed to get out of the house and continue working. Fortunately for us, Dee saw this position on the Cochise website, and was soon back at his alma mater, where he met so many terrific people, including his good friend and current coworker, alumni Dudley Smith. Dee really appreciates that Cochise management doesn't hover over him, and allows him to make the necessary decisions to ensure the safety of our aircraft. "I like working with my hands, taking aircraft apart and putting them back together and it all works like it should," he says. "This makes a hot shower at the end of each day something I love." And that, in turn, helps with the physical maneuvering required to crawl in, around, and under every part of the small aircraft. Dee has never felt particularly afraid of any challenges he had faced in his long maintenance career, but admits he sometimes gets quite frustrated when he is limited by the ability of the shop to perform a task. Perhaps not a surprising comment from a maintenance professional with almost 50 years of experience!

Towards the end of our conversation, I asked Dee a favorite question: "What advice do you have for upcoming pilots and mechanics?" His response was simple and wise: "The demand for aviation professionals is high right now and the pay is good, so have a flexible attitude about your career in aviation, because what you end up doing might be far better than your original plan." *By Morgan Olson*



 **From the Shop**
by Dee Waldron (A&P/IA)

Now that warmer (and soon even hotter!) weather is coming, let's talk about tire inflation pressure in our Cochise College Aviation fleet of airplanes. After motor oil, tires and inner tubes are the biggest consumable expenditure. Why? The chief culprit is low inflation pressure. Keep in mind it's natural for tires to lose pressure over time, so keeping the tires properly inflated is a natural necessity.

Underinflated tires experience accelerated tread and sidewall wear, poor ground handling, and more dangerously - inner tube rotation. When an inner tube rotates inside the tire carcass, it puts undue stress on the valve stem, which can cause the stem to crack or even break off. In turn, this can lead to rapid deflation and can quickly become a dangerous and damaging situation at high speeds on the runway.

Now that you know more about tire inflation, let's all take a good look at those tires during your preflight inspections. If the sidewalls are bulging too much at the bottom of a tire, point it out to your flight instructor, or come into the shop and ask Dudley or myself to take a look. We're happy to do so, and we'll get the tire properly aired up. After all, we are here for YOU! Have a great flight!

Departing the Fix

This month, Cochise College Aviation bids a fond farewell to Abraham Contreras, a popular and skilled flight instructor. Over the past three years, he has trained and mentored students from Private Pilot to Multi-Engine Rating. Always curious about aircraft, Abraham's interest in flying machines peaked while working at Raytheon Missiles, watching airplanes shoot test missiles. Like so many prospective flight students, he struggled to find financial resources for training. After a friend referred him to Cochise, Abraham soon learned that our collegiate Part 141 program not only provided excellent training, but allowed him to access financial aid, thus he was able to begin flight training sooner than he had initially hoped.



Abraham quickly understood that flight training is a full-time job, becoming a dedicated student and making good use of the proximity of the airport and aviation classrooms to campus housing and food. "Our slogan is 'Eat, Sleep, Fly Cochise' for good reason," he notes. "You could easily eat dinner, study, sleep, fly and repeat." That time efficiency made him more attentive to his studies, more involved in the Aviation Department, and very active as president of the student Flight Club, coordinating trips to air shows, museums, and other fun activities.

After completing his own training, Abraham became a Cochise flight instructor because he firmly believes teaching is the best way to thoroughly learn something, along with building confidence in his own flying abilities. His goal is to become an airline pilot, and eventually fly his own aircraft for business and family. Last fall he got the call from Skywest Airlines to join their team and will be departing soon to begin training for the new job and new airplane. "I'm very excited," he exclaims, "and yes, a bit nervous. The planes will be bigger and faster, but the fundamentals don't change."

As Abraham says goodbye to P03, he offers a thought on training: "Be overprepared for your pilot checkrides, because half your brain leaves you in the moment, so make sure the other half retains what you need for success." Thanks, Abraham and good luck!
By Nadine Oros

Help Dreams Take Flight

Cochise College Aviation Scholarship Fund



YOU can empower OUR future aviators by contributing to the Cochise College Aviation Scholarship Fund

Why

- Break the Cost Barrier: Your contributions help overcome rising training costs
- Quality Training: Cochise College offers top-notch flight training at a competitive price
- Invest in the Future: Our pilots will help fill the shortage and shape the future of aviation

How

- Scan this QR code or go to the website: <https://www.cochise.edu/flycochise/> and donate



FROM THE ARCHIVES

In our efforts to preserve the Fly Cochise history, we have been adding to our digital archive. Currently we are organizing the *Early Years*, the 70s! Check out our new hangar and original runway in 1969!

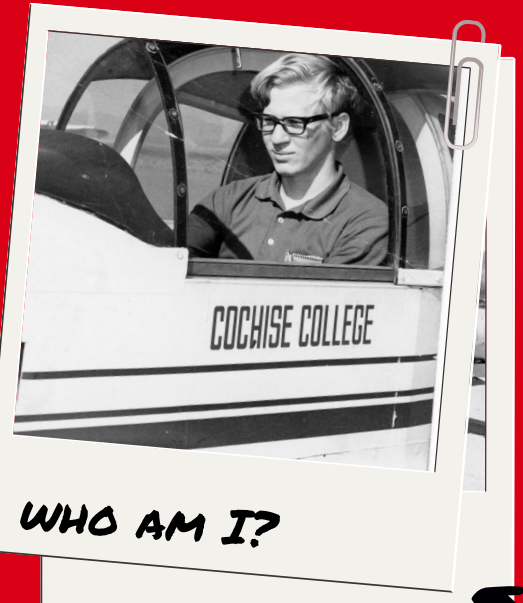


DO YOU KNOW US?

DID YOU KNOW THE FIRST STUDENTS WERE BUSED TO BDI TO FLY?

WHO ARE WE?

ARE WE PILOTS OR MECHANICS?



WHO AM I?

WHEN WAS THIS?



WHAT YEAR IS THIS FROM?

If you have any information on these photos (who are they, when were they taken, fun memories), please share them with us at aviation@cochise.edu



On our Radar

Upcoming Events for Alumni & Public

Fly in & Pancake Breakfast



April 12, 9am - 11am
Fly in to join us for pancakes, pilot stories, and an opportunity to inspire our current students!
ALL ARE WELCOME

Aviation Open House



April 12, 9:30am - 2pm
After pancakes, airplanes line the ramp and the hangar is open. You are invited to explore everything aviation at Cochise. Introductory flights and simulator time available by calling 520-417-4114.

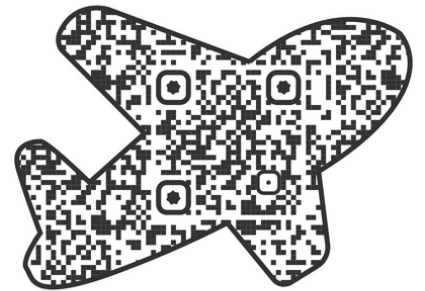
Alumni Dinner



May 3, 5pm - 9pm
Join us for an Alumni Dinner at Barrio Brewing Company at Mesa Gateway! Please [RSVP](#) for an enjoyable evening of memories and laughs.



Enjoying our monthly newsletter? Scan the QR code to join our mailing list or email your info to aviation@cochise.edu.



Flight Club Events

on campus student events

Spring Fling

April 4, 11am - 12pm

All students are invited to join us for our spring fling where we will promote our program and flight club in the student union.



Cochise College Expo

April 19, 4:30pm - 6:30pm

Students, visit the aviation department at the college expo to learn more about our programs.

