

TAILWINDS

Desert Flying Club's Quarterly Newsletter

Spring Edition
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Desert Flying Club
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President's Message

By Nathan Whittacre



In May, DFC held its first in-person safety seminar (along with our online Zoom meeting too). It was a great success with about 15 people attending in person and 63 on-line. I really enjoyed being with fellow club members and talking about aviation. Gary, our chief flight instructor, gave a great presentation about safely flying in the summertime with high density altitude and high temperatures. Afterwards, I spent over an hour talking to current and future members of the club. The community of being part of a club is why I love this organization.

Recently, I have had a few conversations with other members of the club about the community of the club. It is one of the pillars that DFC was founded on. Our mission statement is "create an aviation community where people can make lasting friendships, fly more economically, & become safer pilots." The essence of building a pilot community leads to the other two parts of the mission. As we build friendships through flying, we start flying together, learn from each other and become safer pilots. I enjoy each story – even the scary ones – from other pilots. Those stories and the experiences that come with them help build me into a better pilot.

Now that the restrictions on us are easing, we will start having more club activities. Not specifically a club activity, but we have 6 members participating in the Air Race Classic Derby in June 2021. You can follow their adventures on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vegasderbydivas>. Watch out for announcements on flyouts soon!

With nearly 200 members, we each have plenty of opportunity to build greater pilot community. One of the best ways to meet other members is by using social media. Desert Flying Club has a page where you see what is going on with the club and general announcements: <https://www.facebook.com/desertflyingclub>. We also have a private group to allow members to communicate with each other. This is a great place to post opportunities to share flight time, get a safety pilot, or plan a flying adventure: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DesertFlyingClub>.

Thank you for making DFC a great place to belong. It takes a bunch of individual efforts to make the group strong. We are strong because of the effort of many of the members of the club. Thank you and, as always, happy skies!

-Nathan Whittacre

A Word About Safety

By Alan Zwick, CFI/CFII/MEI/ATP



Greetings from the DFC Safety Committee,

Here is some helpful information if you have a maintenance issue while on a cross country flight, have an incident in a club airplane or get that dreaded radio call, "Please call this number when you land." First, if you have passengers make sure they are safe and cared for. Secure the plane and take a deep breath. Then contact the DFC Incident/Safety hotline at: (702) 990-7653 and start formulating a plan to get the airplane fixed and alternate transportation for you and your passengers if needed. The DFC Incident team can also be contacted at incident@desertflyingclub.com.

Once that coordination is done, our club is going to want more information. The best way to communicate that information is to use the Desert Flying Club Accident/Incident/Safety Reporting Form. These are located in the magazine rack at the club house. Please fill out the form to the best of your ability and email a copy to safety@DesertFlyingClub.com

If you think your incident might have violated a CFR or upset the FAA, you should consider filling out a "NASA Report." It needs to be filled out within 10 days of when you knew or believed that you violated a CFR. If you do this and meet other criteria, sole source report, and the violation was not intentional the report becomes a "get out of jail free card". The report will help prevent certificate action if it is determined that you truly violated a CFR. This report is confidential and cannot be used as evidence in FAA Certification action. It can be filled out online and submitted electronically or mailed. This report goes to the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) which captures confidential reports, analyzes the resulting aviation safety data, and disseminates vital information to the aviation community. Here is an article with more information about NASA Reports:

<https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/all-news/2012/october/16/nasa-report-your-get-out-of-jail-free-card>

A link for the NASA Report: <https://asrs.arc.nasa.gov/report/caveat.html?formType=general>

Hopefully you'll file this information away and never need to use it. If you have any further questions in this topic, please send an email to the Safety Committee, safety@DesertFlyingClub.com

Clear Skies, smooth rides and tailwinds,
DFC Safety Committee – Lauren, Fernando, Alan

New Club Aircraft

Since the last newsletter several aircraft have been added to the club. Here are some aircraft that have joined DFC's growing fleet recently:



N8151P – Piper Comanche PA-24-
250 (\$250/hr. wet)



N55028 – Piper Archer
(\$150/hr. wet)



N555ET – Beechcraft Barron 55
(\$325/hr. wet)



Member Spotlight

Desert Flying Club, meet Joe Forti! As a member on the club's board of directors you're probably familiar with his name, but if you've ever navigated through McCarran's Class Bravo you may also already be familiar with his voice. That's because in addition to being an instrument rated private pilot, Joe is also a certified FAA air traffic controller.



In this quarter's Member Spotlight, we asked Joe about his career, his motivations for joining the aviation industry, and how his professional background has made him a better pilot.

How do you describe in your own words what you do for a living and what the job entails? I currently work as an Air Traffic Controller with the Federal Aviation Administration at McCarran International Airport. I have been with the agency for 6 years and spent two of those years at Falcon Field in Mesa, AZ. The job entails keeping track of several aircraft at once while maintaining separation standards set forth by the FAA. It is an extremely high stress, fast paced environment with work that occurs 24/7, 365 days a year. It requires a person to maintain their composure while making decisions in situations where lives are at stake. Training usually takes anywhere between 6 months and 3 years depending on your location. We are forced to retire at age 56 due to studies showing that mental capacity declines rapidly after this age in making decisions that relate to the job.

Why did you want to pursue a career in aviation? I have always been interested in aviation since I was in middle school. I originally wanted to be a pilot but ran into some medical issues which delayed my FAA medical almost a decade. I still wanted to do something in aviation so while I waited, I attended the University of North Dakota CTI program for ATC as I figured waiting around to potentially fly was not a viable option.

As a pilot yourself, how has your training and experience as a controller aided you in the cockpit?

Conversely, how has your experience as a pilot aided you in the tower? I never really imagined just how much being a controller helps in the cockpit. The first benefit would be radio communications. It was one thing I didn't have to learn when I entered the cockpit since I didn't start flying until after I was a certified controller. The other major benefit is having the ability to listen to the radio and quickly develop a mental picture of what other traffic in the area are doing. Being a pilot was also a game changer in my career. It has given me the ability to put myself in a pilot's shoes. I feel it has led me to being a little more forgiving and understanding than my other coworkers who do not have any flying experience.

What was the biggest obstacle in flight training that you had to overcome? I feel that my biggest obstacle in flight training was finding the time to study. A controller normally works 6 days a week due to short staffing, so finding time to study was difficult. We work several varying shifts throughout the week which can lead to a very exhausting schedule. But my love for flying kept me in the game and kept me dedicated to my studies.

What is your next aviation goal? My next goal is my commercial and CFI ratings. My ultimate long-term goal is to fly a medevac PC12 after I retire from the FAA.

What advice would you give someone pursuing their certificate or an add-on? I have two pieces of advice to give someone pursuing their rating. The first is to stay dedicated. I know it can be hard at times, but it will be worth it in the end. Don't give up because it is hard. The second piece of advice is that Air Traffic Controllers are human. We can and DO make mistakes (albeit most of the time are caught before anyone notices). Being pilot in command means taking charge of your own life and thinking for yourself, not just blindly following instructions. We are all responsible for safety out there, so if something doesn't seem right you should question the controller regardless of how mad you think they may get. You may just save a life or two one day...

From the Chief Flight Instructor

By Chief Flight Instructor Gary Kauffman, CFI/CFII/MEI/ATP



Hello everyone,

Welcome to Summer! Now that the heat is here, a few items deserve mention:

Engine leaning – in case you missed the last safety meeting, engine leaning and density altitude were covered. At 90 degrees and above, our KHND's Density Altitude is 5000' or more. Please lean aircraft engines after start and before takeoff. After start and verifying oil pressure, bring the mixture back halfway. This prevents excess fuel from forming deposits in the cylinders and spark plugs. Before takeoff, after the runup is complete set power to 2000 rpm and lean the mixture just until the engine gets rough, then enrichen for max rpm and a smooth engine. If you're flying a plane with an engine monitor, follow the steps above but enrichen to 100 degrees rich of peak. This applies to before takeoff and in cruise. Keep runups as short as possible, usually no more than 5 sec should do it. Very Important - if CHT is >400 or oil temp > 220 take immediate steps to reduce temps such as reduce pitch, shallow your climb, reduce power, and/or enrichen the mixture. These steps are critical to prevent engine damage. At 400 degrees the aluminum cylinder heads retain only about half of their original strength and at 450 degrees they've lost nearly 75% original strength. Consistently running at high temps will lead to engine failure. Best practices include avoiding the hottest part of the day and making all departures to the southwest toward Jean where shallower climb rates can be made without the rising terrain of a southeast or northeast departure. Our mechanics are downloading engine monitor data and tracking compliance.

Squawks – remember it is your responsibility to check squawks before accepting the airplane. The listed squawks appear after clicking “check out” on the schedule one click before checking out. This is part of complying with 91.103 “preflight action”. An example is taking an airplane with inop position lights and returning after sunset. Another is taking a plane with inop ADS-B or mode C, squawked by the previous pilot. Just because the plane wasn't grounded by the previous pilot doesn't mean it's airworthy or legal to fly. Also, if you find a discrepancy, please squawk it when you check in and be as descriptive as possible in the write up. The squawks on Flight Schedule Pro are the primary means of communicating with our exemplary maintenance team. They cannot fix something if they don't know it's broken.

Lastly – please remember to install the sunshades or attach the cover after every flight. The intense UV rays this time of year are very damaging to aircraft interiors. Covers and sunshades also keep the interior much cooler for the next pilot. Excess heat also shortens the life of expensive avionics.

Keep cool out there,
-Gary

Swag Available for Purchase!

Want to show your support for Desert Flying Club and let everyone know you're a member of the aviation community? Check out our in-stock merchandise! T-shirts are available for \$20 and magnets for \$5.

T-shirt Front:



T-shirt Back:



Magnet:



Club Updates

- DFC has three teams competing in this year's Air Race Classic Air Derby:
 - o Lauren & Glynis "Vegas Derby Divas" #24 in 84GX
 - o Gabrielle & Louise "Sin City Sisters" #82 in 72GX
 - o Jennifer & Joanna "LV Skyblazers" #91 in 52286
 - o Anna Scott, who is flying the competition on a team for Embry-Riddle, ARC Angels #53 in a C172, N655ER

The Air Race Classic is the premier women's cross-country race, dating back to 1977. This year's competition is a one-day, day VFR, precision 5-leg derby flown at pilots' discretion between June 12 – 26th. Teams preselect their waypoints at least 65nm apart, with one waypoint being at an airport with a flight in the traffic pattern, estimate and submit the time for each leg on the morning of flight, and fly the route as closely to the estimate as possible. Routes must be flown in a straight line within 1/2 mile of the waypoints, and no S-turns or 360s are allowed. Speed/time must be controlled only with RPM changes and altitude changes.

When you see these ladies around the club, please say hello and wish them luck! They'll be watching the weather and trying to complete the Derby the week of June 13th.

- We're hiring! DFC is looking to hire a full-time Aircraft Mechanic as well as a Club Administrator. Interested parties should send their resume to board@desertflyingclub.com
- DFC is looking for a new member to join its board of directors. If you are interested in volunteering for a board position, please e-mail board@desertflyingclub.com a brief video about yourself and why you'd like to serve on the board. If you have any questions about the position, please e-mail us.
- Have you heard about DFC's new Redbird LD flight simulator? Members can log 2.5 hours toward a private pilot license, 20 hours toward an instrument rating and 50 hours toward a commercial license! All these hours must have a CFI working with you in the simulator to log the hours. The simulator is setup as a 172 model with GNS 430/530 GPS and auto-pilot. It offers 200-degree wrap around screens and very realistic graphics. DFC is offering the simulator at \$60 per hour as well as several block hour and unlimited options:
 - o Unlimited Plans:
 - \$999/year (*only offered until June 15th*)
 - Unlimited plans cannot be shared
 - o Private/Procedures Special:
 - 10 hours for \$399
 - o IFR Currency Hours:
 - 3 hours for \$149
 - o Instrument/Commercial Training Specials:
 - 20 hours for \$699
 - 25 hours for \$799



For a simulator checkout, please contact Leslee at (928) 486-3881, or LesErin600@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

- Saturday, June 5th: Air Derby Send Off Party at the DFC clubhouse from 2pm – 5pm. Members and non-members are welcome to stop by and show their support for the Air Race Classic participants.
- Saturday, June 26th: Breakfast flyout to Mesquite (67L). Details and registration are located here: <https://bit.ly/3vJNiCj>



Member Accomplishments



Solo Status

Chad Overton (Jen J., CFI)
Brett Whittacre (Lauren S., CFI)
Chuck Nichols (Jake L., CFI)
Joe Magarelli (Adam H., CFI)
Eliji Mondesir (Josh H., CFI)

New Certificates & Ratings

Adam Challand, Private Pilot (Troy M. & Adam H., CFI's)
Jordan Brickman, Private Pilot (Lauren S. & Matt E., CFI's)



About the Editor

Nick Lynch is a private pilot and has been a member of Desert Flying Club since 2018. Nick serves as the club's Membership Officer where he pursues his passion of interacting with future and existing club members to learn about their aviation goals, achievements, and getting them excited about DFC.

Have an idea for a future newsletter topic? Please send an email to nick@desertflyingclub.com

