



Valley Flyers

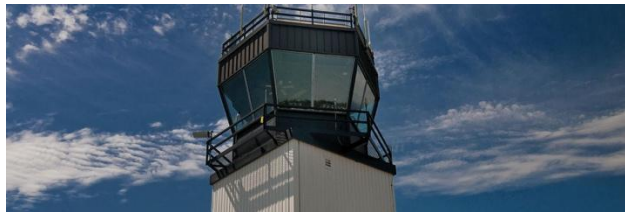
"Just Plane Fun!"

885 Lancaster Dr SE
Salem, OR 97317

April 2026



Dinner with the Tower



On March 18th we had dinner with Don from Salem Tower, at Miller's BBQ Café. Don shared some great perspective and information, including thoughts from his ATC colleagues. Members had a lot of interesting questions too.

Many of Don's comments were about improving communication between ATC and pilots, to ensure safety and keep operations moving smoothly:

- "Don't keep secrets." Tell ATC clearly what you need, using the standard "who, where, what" formula. That reduces the need for follow-up questions.
- If you're instructed to hold short of a runway, ATC is required to get a readback from you. Make sure to repeat the key words "hold short".
- "Report two mile final" means two miles from the runway threshold, not the GPS distance to the airport.
- For students, adding "student pilot" to your calls means that ATC tries to keep a closer eye on you (in a good way!).
- IFR training flights operating under VFR shouldn't hang out at IFR waypoints - like practicing holds at LOTKE - without talking to the appropriate ATC approach facility.
- If you're holding short of the runway with an aircraft on short final, it's fine to call Tower to tell them "ready for departure". It

doesn't do any harm and can help ATC with sequencing landing and departing traffic.

Don also had some useful general information to share:

- Remember that the Tower has no radar and they control aircraft purely visually. They start looking for you at whatever reporting point they gave you, e.g. "report three mile final". Having your landing light on is helpful but not required.
- From ATC's point of view, there's no such thing as a "short approach". You can turn base whenever you want, unless instructed otherwise.
- ATC expects and prefers you to enter downwind on a 45 degree angle.
- You're welcome to ask for light gun signals any time, day or night.
- The cutouts in the Salem class D airspace are there to allow room for helicopter operations. Without them, helicopters would need to operate under Special VFR in some conditions, which would create issues for IFR operations in and out of Salem.

Many thanks to Don and his colleagues for all the pointers and information, and to Don personally for taking the time to join us in person!

Fuel surcharge now in effect

Unfortunately, fuel prices have risen suddenly and steeply across most of the country, and the Willamette Valley is no exception. Avgas at Salem is now \$6.90/gallon, above the \$6.78/gallon mark at which the club applies a fuel surcharge.

We first adopted a fuel surcharge plan in June 2022 and we've had to activate it several times

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since then. The surcharge is necessary to keep the club within its planned budget when avgas prices spike unexpectedly. The Board periodically reviews the surcharge level, discusses it in member meetings, and publishes it with other [club rates](#).

The fuel surcharge is now in effect as of April 6th. The surcharge will be 12c per gallon per hour (\$6.90 minus \$6.78), based on a standard fuel burn:

Aircraft	Fuel burn	Surcharge/hr
C182	13gph	\$1.56
C172, PA28	8.5gph	\$1.02

The club will continue to reimburse fuel expenses fully as usual. The surcharge is a completely separate item and you'll see it show up in Flight Circle as part of your regular billing.

We appreciate members filling up at other airports if avgas is cheaper there, however safety and required fuel reserves always come first. Please don't try to stretch a flight simply to save a few dollars!

Volunteers needed - April 11th

On April 11th there will be a work party to break down and remove the old hangar doors, which are lying in the grass beside the hangars. Any and all help is welcome, and if you're able to join the work please contact Ryan Hari for more information. Thank you in advance!

Club flyouts – April-June

Simon Hayes



Once again we had to cancel a flyout because of weather and we didn't make it to Prospect in March as planned. Also once again, we met for breakfast at the Flight Deck instead. The weather

did improve later in the day however it was too late for a flyout.

Here are the dates and destinations for the next three months, and see the next article for more information on our Sunriver plans:

Date	Destination	Airport
04/18/2026	Sunriver	S21
05/16/2026	Siletz Bay	S45
06/20/2026	Westport, WA	14S

If you have questions, suggestions, or comments about the flyouts please contact Simon Hayes or Jon Eggert.

Sunriver (S21) flyout - April 18th

Stuart J.

The April flyout is scheduled for Saturday, 18 April 2026 – Sunriver is the destination.... airport. This flyout will provide a personalized visit of the Jantze Aircraft Manufacturing Facility© (JAMF), a name that was coined by our own Ryan H. during his previous visit to the homebuilt airplane factory.

I am building a Van's Aircraft RV-10 with my father in Bend. The manufacturing facility is a detached shop that overlooks the Deschutes River, south of Bend. Currently we are working on wing construction, attaching wing ribs to the spars – as of writing this snippet for the club newsletter. And when folks visit, we will be working on.... you guessed it – wing construction.

We tried to arrange this flyout last year, but weather and scheduling were contributing factors to the no-go decisions. Hopefully the weather is favorable for this coming flyout! If not or there is no room to fly with another club member, drive over instead – it's a 2-hour and 38-minute drive from KSLE. I know of at least one member who will be making the drive regardless.

Transportation will be provided from the Sunriver Airport for those who are flying. For those driving, slide into my DM's for the JAMF address. Lunch will be provided too. Want to stay overnight and get hands-on experience in the build process? Bring your sleeping bag and a pad – we'll put you to work!

No aircraft available? Reach out to a member who has reserved an aircraft to see if a seat is available. Flying one of the legs of this flight is a great way to

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get your monthly club hour in, and to fly with other cool pilots too!



New member intro: Patrick Sieng

Patrick Sieng

Patrick Sieng, a Salem native, joined Valley Flyers as a student pilot in October 2025 and is currently taking lessons with Holly Benson in N12382. He started lessons in 2020 at the Independence Airport and accumulated about 20 hours before discontinuing lessons. Patrick looks forward to earning his certificate this year to be able to fly himself on work trips and his family on vacation.

During the day, he works as a lobbyist at the State Capitol for a state agency. He also owns a political affairs consulting business, a real estate business - Capitol Real Estate - with six brokers, and a private investigations company.

Patrick also officiates men's college basketball and girls/boys high school basketball in the Salem area. He previously was a reserve police officer from 2009 to 2021 for the Portland Police Bureau, Marion County Sheriff's Office, and Multnomah County

Sheriff's Office. Patrick has two kids - 16 and 14 - who attend Blanchet Catholic School and Whiteaker Middle School. He graduated from McNary High School and earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard University.



PIREP: Soaring by the Sea Foundation Open House October 2025

Mikel Wynn

During the weekend of October 18th and 19th, 2025, the [Soaring by the Sea Foundation](#) held a special open house event at their home hangar located at the Eugene Airport (KEUG/EUG), and I drove myself down for the Saturday schedule of events. I certainly appreciated having the opportunity to attend this event, considering that my 2025 air show season had come to a rather premature end and we were in the midst of the government shutdown at the time.

As a lot of us might recall, the Soaring by the Sea Foundation first came to prominence back in the 2018/2019 timeframe with their 1943 PB5A Catalina (N9767) known as "Princess of the Stars," which was brought over to the States from France. That same year, it was featured as the main attraction for the B-17 Alliance Museum's Warbirds Over the West fundraiser and open house event, which took place right here in Salem.

Fast forward through the pandemic years and the rest of the early-2020s, the Soaring by the Sea Foundation acquired their second warbird, a Curtiss-Wright P-40N-1 Kittyhawk in 2024. This P-40 saw combat in New Guinea while in the hands of

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the Royal Australian Air Force's 75 Squadron against Japanese forces, flying low-altitude ground attack and air defense missions in the Pacific Theater. Following a string of landing and systems mishaps, this P-40 airframe became a parts donor. In 1973, the airframe was recovered and a company in New Zealand spent the 1990s restoring it airworthy condition, where it was converted into a two-seater with dual controls in order to be able provide flight training and flight experience programs before it was eventually imported back into the United States. Today, it is restored and painted in the original RAAF colors it originally bore and wears the nickname "Currawong."



A year later in 2025, the Soaring by the Sea Foundation acquired their third aircraft: a 1952 Douglas AD-4N Skyraider! The primary purpose of this mid-October open house was the first home display of the foundation's latest acquisition. This Skyraider (Bureau no. 125716) first saw combat during the Korean War in the hands of the Marine Corps. Following the Korean War, this airframe served with the French Air Force and later, the Chadian Air Force (staffed by French mercenaries) and participated in lesser-known regional conflicts during the Cold War. It was then recovered by a French warbird enthusiast and flew in private hands under the French civil aircraft register until the foundation re-imported it back into the States. The Skyraider spent a 7 month journey in a shipping container and arrived back into the United States for the first time since 1958 via Galveston, Texas before flying to Eugene in August 2025. The foundation wasted no time in stripping the Skyraider's French Air Force livery and reapplied the USMC marks it

wore during the Korean War. It then made its public debut at the 2025 MCAS Miramar Air Show as part of the 250 anniversary since the foundation of the United States Marine Corps.



Needless to say, the Soaring by the Sea Foundation has come a long way since they started out with the acquisition of their PBY Catalina! The foundation's open house featured a variety of displays from their own aircraft, visiting warbirds from private owners, artifacts, as well as a few flying displays and exhibitions. Of course, flying displays were limited because the Eugene Airport is an operational commercial airport. The day started out with a water cannon demo by the Eugene Airport ARFF crew. And throughout the day, there were a couple of guest speakers with Q&A sessions.

Flying demonstrations included the Eugene-based Weyerhaeuser Aviation firefighting helicopter demo with one of their UH-1 Huey equipped with a "bambi" bucket, as well as the foundation's newly acquired AD-4N Skyraider taking to the skies, which was a highlight of the day. On the ground, they even had local "strongman" John Walch (under the social media handle, "ox.strongman") do a strongman pull on the foundation's own Skyraider; he managed to pull a nearly 20,000 Lbs. Skyraider, an incredible feat of human strength!

But the event certainly ended on a high (and rather loud!) note. The foundation's P-40 Kittyhawk is unique because it holds the distinction of being the only flying example of a World War II era fighter in the world right now with working .50 caliber M2 Browning machine guns! That means we were treated to a live-fire demonstration with blank rounds, which was an absolute thrill to witness! I

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certainly never expected to see a live-fire demonstration from a flyable piece of history in my lifetime! I had to get video in addition to photos for this one, and I was extremely pleased to find out later that one of my photos from the live-fire demonstration caught a frame-perfect muzzle flash from one of the M2s fired that day!



Overall, this open house hosted by the Soaring by the Sea Foundation certainly exceeded expectations and it's been amazing to see how much they've grown the past eight years! And as it turns out, the foundation hosts a number of events at their Eugene hangar throughout each calendar year when their planes aren't actively participating at air shows, so it's certainly worth visiting their website and keeping an eye on their social media platforms to see what activities and events they have planned. It'll be exciting to see what the future holds for the foundation. And I'll always look forward to seeing their growing collection of warbirds at future air show events!



Have you had a memorable trip, flying experience, or words of wisdom that others in the club would benefit from, or that you would like to share? Please send your stories, tips, quotes, and pictures to **Simon Hayes** for inclusion in future newsletters.



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