

NEWSLETTER

July - August 2026



Alameda member handles EMERGENCY call



By Robert Tucknott

I received an urgent call from Angel Flight. They needed a pilot to transport human corneas harvested at Stanford from an accident case to a recipient in San Louis Obispo -- STAT!

9:45 am -- I accepted the mission and headed right to KHWD. It was IFR and the critical nature of the flight meant that I should arrange for a safety pilot to assist me. I am glad I did.

My first stop was at KSJC, where a medical technician still wearing scrubs met us at the San Jose Jet Center. We were handed a small cardboard box, clearly marked with bright orange labels indicating "human tissue, fragile."

Since the flight was a Life Flight, we requested priority handling from the SJC tower, and we were placed ahead of commercial airliners who were lining up for IFR departures.

10:00 am – We were airborne at KSJC. The recipient's surgery was schedule for noon at a San Luis Obispo hospital. We touched down at 11:30 am and the precious box was transferred to a waiting car which departed the FBO with lights flashing, sirens on. No signatures were required!

The box arrived on time. At 12:30 pm while we were having lunch, we received news that the surgery was successful. The patient had received the gift of sight.

Our quick response and the fact that everything came together at just the right moment gave us a feeling of quiet satisfaction.



In this issue:



Angel Flight saves patient eyesight – Page 1

Douglas County Heli Flights– Page 2

Alameda Fly-in – Pages 3 & 4

McMinnville, OR – Page 5

Fresno Search & Rescue – Pages 6 & 7

Douglas County, NV Squadron Flies ISR Missions



Squadron Commander Ken Ambrose reports the Douglas County Unit has been busy flying Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions supporting Sheriff SWAT work.

In addition, The Squadron uses a Bell 206 helicopter to locate marijuana grow sites in support of the Dept. of Interior and the FBI. Ambrose says "Often, under-age Chinese kids are found at these sites – basically they are human trafficking victims."

Ken's son, Jon, is at the controls in the photo above.

What happened to the May-June Newsletter?



Your WSASAS Newsletter Editor, Dale Terry, took some time off recently – to do some interesting out-of-state flying and picking up stories that will be used in upcoming editions.

Late last year I purchased a 2019 Cirrus SR 22T airplane and it has been a major change from my 1978 Cessna 182Q. Avionics on the Cirrus requires a major commitment – this is a truly an autopilot airplane and requires "managing" the aircraft.

It has been a joy to fly faster, further and higher.

It's nice to back and I look forward to publishing upcoming Newsletter issues.

Dale Terry, Editor

**We are
looking for
news articles
and event
dates**

Is your squadron involved in an upcoming event? Is your group holding a meeting with a great speaker? Are members flying to interesting locations? We would love to put your upcoming dates on our calendar. Let us know when and where – we'll send out information to our squadrons.



Pass on suggestions for articles and upcoming event dates to:
Dale Terry, Newsletter Editor, Dale.Terry@sacairsquadron.com.

Livermore Fly-in is a success



**By Kevin McDonnell,
Alameda Squadron**

Western States members gathered at Livermore Airport for a June 5-7 fun weekend filled with fellowship, friendly competition, and a healthy dose of aviation fun.

Events kicked off Friday evening with a social BBQ where members, spouses, and guests enjoyed good food, great conversation and the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and welcoming new faces.



Saturday brought a full schedule of activities, beginning with the shooting competition. Next was a series of flying events designed to test precision teamwork and aviation knowledge. The day concluded with an Awards Banquet at Cattleman's Restaurant, where competitors were recognized and the weekend's champions celebrated.

As always, the stories seemed to get better with each retelling, and more than a few flying adventures grew slightly more impressive as the evening progressed.



Photos this page: top – Howard Ratzlaff and John Krikorian (FAT) deal with paperwork; left – Steve Elefant and Cynthia Adams (SFO) enjoy the event; above – Adam Bertsch flies his Cessna in spot landing contest; lower left – Chris Lea (SFO) prepares his flight plan.



Photos this page: Top left – Award winners Greg Presnell and Leo Brodeur join Alameda Commander Pete Sandhu at awards banquet; Top right – Pete Sandhu, Alameda County hosted the event; Middle – All airplane types participated in spot landing contest, including Pete Sandhu's Air Cam; Lower left – James Herb from Alameda Squadron enjoys the event.

See all event pictures at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/h7VnffqCSr928oF66>

“Spruce Goose” and More at Evergreen Air and Space Museum



By Dale Terry, Sacramento Squadron

Have you visited the HK-1 Hercules Flying Boat at the Evergreen Air and Space Museum in McMinnville, Oregon? If not, this museum is a wonderful treasure of aviation aircraft.

The “Spruce Goose” is just one of a vast array of aviation and space exhibits distributed among three facilities. The “Goose” is displayed for easy viewing and access.

HK-1’s cockpit is extra-roomy with great legroom for a tall pilot reaching the rudder pedals – and Hughes was tall – 6’4” , just about my height.

I had always wanted to sit in the same seat that Howard Hughes used in his brief one-time flight off the Southern California coast. The aircraft’s wing is huge -- I was able to stand up inside the wing interior while passing four huge engines as I walked toward the wingtip.

The HK-1 was displayed in Long Beach for a number of years before acquisition by Evergreen. The current display along with replicas of the Wright Flyer and Spirit of St. Louis make a great aviation centerpiece.

Evergreen museum is located in McMinnville, OR – about 550 miles from Sacramento and depending on your aircraft is a reasonable morning or afternoon flight. It’s location in the Willamette Valley wine country offers multiple side trip opportunities. Potcake Aviation is the FBO at McMinnville.



Fresno Squadron locates man missing for 6 days near Pine Flat Lake



By Howard Ratzlaff, FCSAS

A Fresno man missing since June 28th was located by members of the Fresno County Sheriff's Air Squadron (FCSAS). Rony Packard, Jr. left his North Fresno home on a fishing trip and had not been heard from until July 4th when the Squadron searchers located his pickup truck parked under trees in an area between Pine Flat Lake and Shaver Lake.

FCSAS's search area included mountainous terrain with high ridges and deep valleys. Spotting ground targets was difficult while remaining clear of "cumulus granite".

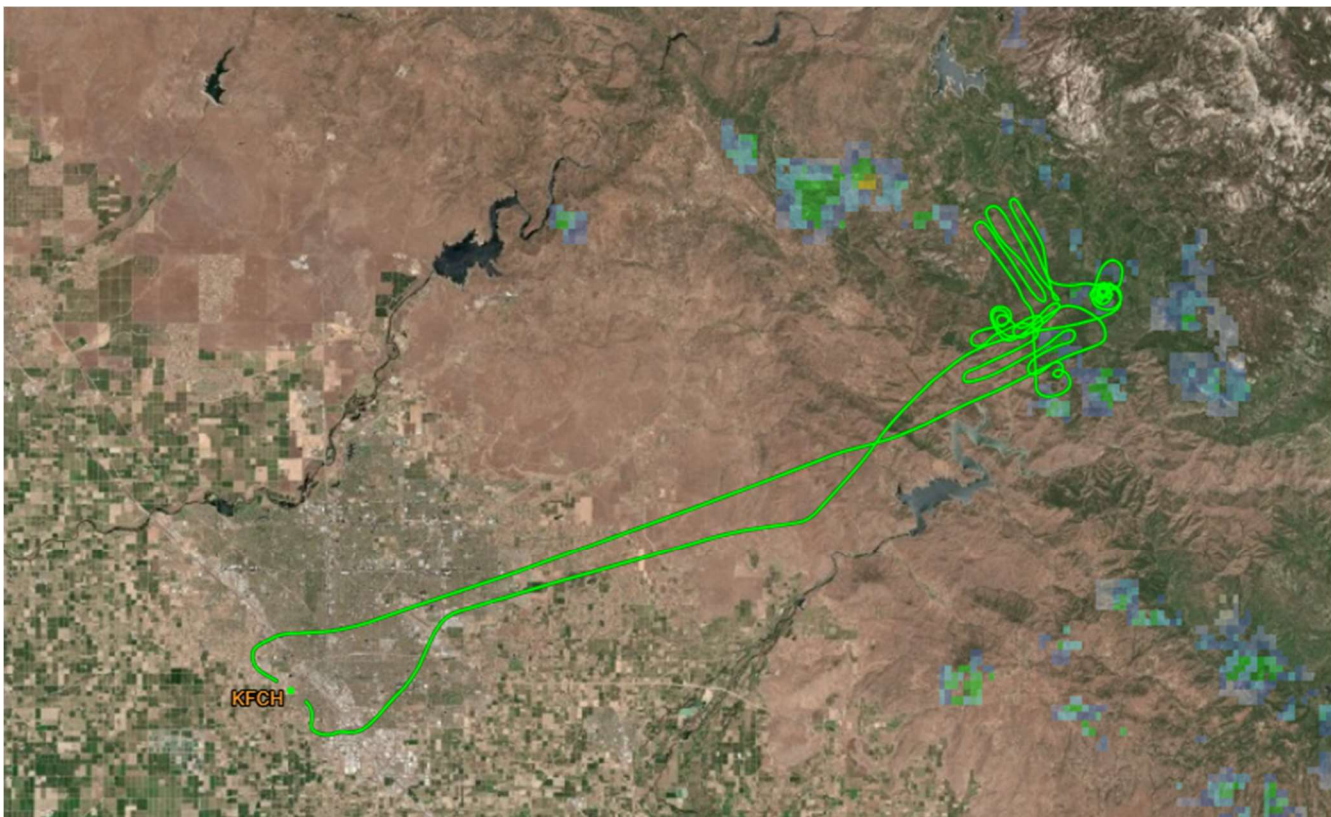
Squadron's search continued for the Missing Person in coordination with the Fresno Sheriff's helicopter. The search ended successfully with the Missing Person found and reunited with his family.

As WSASAS members learned at the 2025 Hotter 'N Hell fly-in, locating a ground target is difficult and requires careful planning and familiarity with search procedures – all skills required by the pilot and TFO.

Four FCSAS aircraft participated in the search. See the Flight track of one FCSAS aircraft in the photo below.

Want to train with FCSAS on similar search scenarios? Hotter 'N Hell is now scheduled for April 9-11, 2027! Save the date.

The search tack begins at Fresno Chandler Executive (KFCH) and then progresses west to the search area. Searchers fly a grid pattern.





How good are you in spotting items on the ground from altitude?

Can you find the parked pickup truck in the terrain above? After making several circuits, FCSAS' luck prevailed and a solar glint from the truck's windshield was spotted for an instant by the search airplane's TSO. After a few more passes to obtain a good enough angle to take a telephoto picture, the MP's vehicle was confirmed.