



## PUC WELCOMES NEW AVIATION MAJORS

PUC's aviation program is bursting at the seams! With the record-breaking number of freshman arriving on campus, aviation majors in our program has more than doubled! We praise God for an enthusiastic group of new and returning pilots to work with.

In the Fall Quarter of 2024, two students achieved their first solo flights; one completed the private pilot check ride, two earned instrument ratings, and one earned the commercial pilot and flight instructor licenses. All our students are working hard, and we look forward to many more milestones in the Winter Quarter.

## A GLARING PROBLEM —AND A SHINING SOLUTION

PUC's faithful Piper Cherokee, N15824, received a special gift recently. While flying with one of our instructors over the Napa Valley, Louis Robichaux, from Texas, noticed that the plane's glare shield had seen better days. The Cherokee's new paint and interior made, the glare-shield look especially out of place. Mr. Robichaux enjoyed his flight so much that he decided to help, and made inquiries about how we could get the glare shield replaced. His initiative, tenacity, and generous donation enabled us to have the glare shield replaced promptly. Now, all our pilots

benefit from the newly installed glare shield, and the instruments are much easier to see. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Robichaux!





# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

## Karen Ong

Paging through PUC's bulletin, freshman pre-med student Karen Ong happened upon an unusual class: AVIA101 - Intro to Flight. It was just one credit, and it involved going on several flights and learning about aerodynamics and aviation history. Karen was intrigued and signed up for the class. After only one flight, Karen was hooked! She didn't know how or why, but she felt compelled to learn to fly.

A few years later, Karen was preparing to start her M.D./Ph. D. program at New York University. She had fulfilled her dream of learning to fly, completing her private pilot license at PUC in 2008. The day before her graduate program started, she completed her Instrument Rating check-ride at PUC, hopped on a red-eye flight to New York, and arrived just in time for classes to start the next day! She still didn't know how aviation fit into her Ph.D. in Computational Biology, but somehow, she knew it was important.

While writing her thesis, Karen won a scholarship to an Aerospace Conference. It sounded intriguing, so she attended. After completing her studies in New York, she applied to the Aerospace Medicine program at the University of Texas. Karen was accepted into the program—and loved it from the start. At last, she knew why she had studied aviation and medicine!

In her new role, Karen completed rotations at NASA and spent some time in Antarctica. She also completed some commercial space medicine rotations, serving as a flight surgeon for seven space missions. Currently, she provides medical advice to engineers designing the next generation of spacecraft. She also participates in strategic planning for future space travel, inventing new ways to screen and train the people who will go to space.

Karen credits PUC with giving her the foundation she needed for her career in

aerospace medicine. She appreciated the kind professors who mentored her. "At PUC, I learned that people are intrinsically valuable and that resting is even more important than working," she says. These ideas were a stark contrast to the competitive environments she later experienced.

Karen also credits PUC with instilling in her an ethic of service.

"Being motivated to serve others is a much more robust way of getting through the bad times," she explains. "If your motivation is just to be the best—that becomes discouraging when

times are hard." Today, she seeks to pass on this commitment to service to her trainees.

As it turned out, Karen's training in aviation proved invaluable - as well as unique. Many of her colleagues who trained at Ivy League schools did not have this opportunity because their universities didn't offer aviation. Karen is glad she pursued aviation at PUC, and she's even glad she learned at 2O3—a "hard" airport. She's not afraid of cross-wind landings due to her training here!

Karen advises those considering their future: "Don't be afraid to try something non-traditional. The world is so much wider than you think." A search through the PUC catalog started Karen on the journey of a lifetime, and she has no regrets. "Learning to fly was the best investment I ever made in my education," she says.

## Gary Wareham

On October 22, 2024, a California Highway Patrol Airvan equipped with a Webcam MX-15 camera system entered the pattern at Angwin Airport. A familiar voice came on the radio. "Angwin traffic, CHP 21, five miles east, inbound for landing." It was Gary Wareham, a 2002 graduate of PUC's aviation program, and some colleagues from the CHP. They had come to speak to PUC's current aviation

majors, sharing with them how aviation is essential to their work in law enforcement.

Gary's journey to becoming the Chief Airplane Pilot for the California Highway Patrol began at PUC. Favorite memories of his PUC days included working at the College Market, playing paintball at the Helmers' at night, and going to Lake Berryessa on the weekends. He also enjoyed flying PUC's Eagle 150B.

After graduating in 2002, he worked in construction and was a flight instructor at Nut Tree Airport (KVCB). In 2005, he began working as a CHP officer in South Los Angeles, Marin, and the Napa Valley. In 2009, he was accepted into the Air Operations Program and served several years in the Golden Gate and Valley divisions. In 2022, he was promoted to Sergeant and transferred back to the road in the Quincy area before applying for



Gary Wareham (at right) with a colleague.

and accepting the position of Chief Airplane Pilot in 2023. In his new role, he oversees recurrent training for all CHP pilots, conducts initial and recurrent check rides statewide, researches new equipment and aircraft, and writes new policies. His favorite part of his job is transporting executives in the CHP's King Air 200 and 350.

The aviation program at PUC gave Gary the flight experience he needed to qualify as a pilot for the CHP. The four-year degree he earned here also boosted his resume for obtaining his current position. However, the greatest impact PUC had on Gary's life was meeting his wife in a jiu-jitsu class. Gary and his wife, Jenell, have been married for 23 years and have two daughters, ages 16 and 14, who attend Pine Hills Adventist Academy.

## A DREAM BECOMES REALITY

It started as a dream: Wouldn't it be amazing to have a flight training device very close to the "real thing" - the same instrument panel, the same controls, the same cockpit? In the realm of general aviation, flight training devices (commonly referred to as "simulators") tend to be generic, limiting their usefulness to more advanced training. How could we acquire a simulator that would help new pilots learn the basic visual flight maneuvers - and allow them access and control over the weather so that more students could progress efficiently with a smaller fleet size?

Flight Center Director Nathan Tasker shared his dream with Russell Laird, former chair of PUC's Department of Technology. Before long, a cockpit was taking shape—the same dimensions as PUC's Piper Cherokee cockpit. Using drawings created by Aviation major Micah Dwyer, Russell worked to create the



instrument panel. Parts began arriving from all over the world - a servo force-loaded control yoke from Hong Kong, a real aircraft seat from Sacramento, knobs from Germany, a switch panel

from Indonesia, and other parts from across the USA and Asia.

The simulator soon began to take shape. Russell designed and built the screens that wrap 270 degrees around the cockpit and a structure for mounting three projectors. Several students volunteered their time to help him assemble

the parts, and others have helped with aspects such as calibrating the controls.

The dream of having a type-specific simulator has become a reality, and it is now available on the flight line. More machines are in the works, and our ultimate goal is to explore virtual reality and motion cueing to increase training benefits further. We'd love to hear from you if you have expertise in this field.



## AIR EXPO! SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for our 2025 Air Expo  
at Angwin Airport

**MAY 4, 2025**

You don't want to miss this chance to reconnect with old friends and make new ones over food, scenic flights, local music, and fun. Bring your family and friends and have a good time!



## NEW WEATHER STATION AT 203

Any pilot who's ever flown into Angwin Airport knows that the weather in Angwin is unique and quickly changing. Just over 20 years ago, a generous community pilot helped us install an airport webcam to see live weather. However, real-time data such as winds, temperatures, density altitude, and trends have been much more difficult to quantify accurately.

Pilots will soon be able to get up-to-date weather information from a new SayWeather Station that is about to be installed. Led by long-term Angwin pilot Bob Edwards, local pilots and hangar owners quickly funded the campaign for the new weather station. When installed, it will give us real-time audio weather over the local CTAF radio frequency and on the Internet. A big thank you to Bob and each of you who contributed to making this possible!

## PUC HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL "FRIENDS OF AVIATION" CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 1 was a festive occasion as a small but enthusiastic group of alumni, local pilots, and PUC administration met on December 1 for PUC's first-ever "Friends of Aviation" Christmas Party. PUC President Ralph Trecartin shared about new initiatives at the college, Nathan Tasker shared about what's happening at the airport, and two aviation students shared their experiences in the program. It was a great opportunity to connect with other pilots and discover what's new at PUC. If you missed it, watch for it next year. We plan to make it an annual event.



## REMEMBER WHEN?



Reinhard Jarschke (left) receives the keys to N24932, a Cessna 152 donated to PUC by Dr. Emmett Tetz.



Dedication of N2216Y, PUC's Piper Seminole, 2003.

**WE WANT TO  
HEAR FROM YOU!**

- *What did you love most about your time at PUC?*
- *What are you up to now?*
- **Email us at: [flightcenter@puc.edu](mailto:flightcenter@puc.edu) or scan the QR code.**



## AVIATION NEWSLETTER



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