

January 2026

Condor AEROGRAM

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Photo Credit: Chris Vermilya (...not much GA flying lately!)

General Aviation in 2026: Tech, Training & Industry Momentum

As we kick off 2026, general aviation continues to show momentum in technology, training, and industry growth, with developments that matter to pilots, flight schools, and aviation businesses alike. Here's a wrap-up of key stories shaping the GA world right now:

New Maintenance Training Program Launching in Colorado

A major boost for the technician pipeline is coming: a new aviation maintenance technician training program at Pueblo Community College in Colorado is set to start in fall 2026. The initiative aims to address ongoing workforce shortages and expand hands-on training capacity for students interested in GA maintenance careers, a welcome development for an industry that depends on skilled AMTs to keep our aircraft flying safely.

Can GA Make the Move to Unleaded Avgas by 2030?

Fuel sustainability remains front and center. Recent industry analysis is exploring whether general aviation can fully transition to unleaded avgas by 2030, a goal with major environmental and operational implications. Aviation organizations and manufacturers are evaluating progress from 2025 and what it will take to meet this ambitious timeline.

FAA-Approved Absolute AoA System Introduced

Tech upgrades for GA pilots keep coming: the new Absolute AoA (Angle of Attack) System has received FAA approval. This kind of enhanced flight-data tool helps pilots better understand stall margins and energy management, especially in slow-flight and approach phases, and represents the growing availability of performance-enhancing avionics in light aircraft.

Strong Year for Kit Aircraft - Van's Delivers Big in 2025

Amateur-built aircraft remain a vibrant part of the GA community. Van's Aircraft reported a strong 2025, with around 1,200 kits delivered worldwide and continued expansion of production lines, helping fuel both the sport and builder side of aviation.

What This Means for Our GA Community

There are always lots of things happening and it's fun to see where it can shape General Aviation. Things look to continue to move forward in many areas this year, look for better things to come!



Leadership Corner

by Keith McPherson

Happy New Year! We've sure had a wide range of weather this month with temperatures as high as 65F to single-digit lows, and our share of both sunny days and heavy snowstorms. Our FBO, PJC – Private Jet Center, who has the contract for snow removal, has been doing a great job keeping the runway and taxiways clear. Let's all do our part by avoiding driving on newly-fallen snow as once its packed down, it is difficult to plow and will freeze into ice.

The cold weather also presents engine starting challenges. A good refresher is to review the cold weather starting procedures in the Winter Seminar presentation which is on our website. There is also a one-page cheat sheet on the Clubhouse wall near the key locker, or you can always ask an instructor. Remember to follow the recommendations for priming (don't over prime!) and avoid cranking the starter for more than five seconds. If the engine doesn't catch on the first couple of blades, continued cranking will overheat the starter, drain the battery, or both.

Once in the air, winter flying offers spectacular views and great aircraft performance. Enjoy and please stay warm!

Fly Safely, Fly Often, Fly Condor!

Earning Their Wings!



That first solo... the first checkride... adding ratings... and more, these pilots are celebrating, and we share in their excitement. CONGRATULATIONS!!!

- None this month but many are working towards big milestones!

General Club Meeting

The Condor Aero Club will meet on **Tuesday February 3rd at 7:30pm at KPJC**. Please plan to attend for information on club business, introductions to new members, along with maintenance and financial updates. Come early to catch up with old friends, make some new ones, and enjoy some delicious eats provided by our own Cindy and JP! Our social kicks off at **7:00pm**, don't miss it!

Sky Manager Tips

Please be considerate of other club members! Only schedule a plane for the time you plan to fly. Reserving a plane for 4+ hours then only flying for 1 blocks others from being able to plan a flight. Also, if your plans change, update your reservation! Condor does not charge a cancellation fee so what's stopping you from cancelling your hold if you can't fly? Please plan accordingly to allow others to fly!

Currency – Condor requires a base level of currency to check out aircraft. You must have logged (1) hour of flight and (3) landings in the previous (90) days to be able to check out an airplane. Schedule time with an instructor if you are not current.

Winter Seminar – To fly from November 1st to March 31st, each member must attend a Winter Seminar or obtain a sign-off from a club instructor. Please meet with an instructor if you do not have signoff on the winter seminar.

Dues and Insurance – 2026 dues and insurance have been billed and were due by 12/31/25. Please true up your account to reinstate flight privileges for 2026.

Flight Medical – Don't let your medical expire! Condor maintains copies of your medical certificate and when it expires, flight privileges are revoked. Send a copy of your new medical to Dorothy to have your records updated.

Flight Review – FR dates are also maintained by the club. If your review date passes, flight privileges will be revoked until you complete your FR and provide an update to Dorothy.

Contact Us

Have a question for the club?
Interested on joining?
Have something to share?
Reach out anytime!

accounts@condoraero.com
<http://www.condoraero.com>



[Join us on Facebook!](#)

Feel free to contact any board member below if you have a specific question

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From the Right Seat



The aircraft stalled just past the runway's end and struck brush, resulting in structural damage.

A thin layer of frost might look harmless, but the aerodynamic effects are significant:

- Frost disrupts smooth airflow over the wing, reducing lift, even tiny particles can make your wing unable to generate enough lift to climb cleanly.
- It can also reduce your wing's critical angle of attack and increase drag, demanding more runway and higher takeoff speeds.
- NTSB and FAA guidance stresses that simply "polishing" frost isn't good enough, complete removal is the only way to ensure your lift surfaces are ready to fly.

In fact, frost alone, especially on the upper surface of the wing, has been shown to destroy enough lift to prevent a safe takeoff.

In this Alaska accident, frost was not the only factor, but it was the one that directly degraded performance:

- A short, uphill runway increases required takeoff distance.
- Rough surface (gravel) increases drag versus smooth pavement.
- Incomplete frost removal degraded lift just when full performance was needed most.

Take any one of these factors away, longer runway, smooth surface, or fully clean wings, and that flight **might** have exited ground effect safely.

As temperatures dip, frost can form quickly, often overnight or after sitting in clear, calm conditions. It's not always obvious at a glance. Take the extra time to:

- Inspect all wing and control surfaces carefully for frost or ice before flight.
- Remove frost completely, not just brush or "polish" it, use approved de-icing methods.
- Factor in runway slope and surface condition when calculating takeoff performance, especially when cold.

Remember: A few extra minutes on the ground clearing frost can mean the difference between a normal climb and a stall off the departure end.

Read the full article here: <https://www.boldmethod.com/learn-to-fly/weather/how-frost-contributed-to-takeoff-accident-in-a-cessna-172/>



Member Spotlight – Meet Joseph Crowe!

What certificates/ratings do you hold?

Private Pilot / Instrument

How many hours do you have?

349

How long have you been flying?

I've been flying since June 2020

When did you join Condor?

I joined Condor in May 2021

What prompted you to look skyward?

My older brother took me flying when I was a kid and ever since then I've had the desire to fly.

What is your favorite part of flying?

My favorite part of flying is to take up people who haven't flown in a small plane before and see it spark the love of flying just like it did when I was taken flying for the first time. I also love popping up through a cloud layer on a grey day and seeing the sun and blue sky on top.

What is your next aviation goal?

I would like to go for my commercial rating and possibly CFI.

What is your favorite aircraft?

My favorite airplane to fly is the Dakota, and my favorite airplane to watch others fly is the F4U Corsair.

Any words of wisdom to share?

Make the most of the journey. Have your instructor take you to an airport and show you how marshalling and FBOs work, so you'll be confident to actually do fun things with your certificate when you have it. Go up with an instructor on those gusty crosswind days and figure out your personal minimums. Finally, go somewhere fun and take great pictures! It's easy to forget that flying is fun when your thoughts are beating up the pattern and wondering if you'll ever get a smooth landing.



Fleet Info

Club aircraft details can be found at

<http://www.condoraero.com>

Rental and off field reimbursement rates are below for reference. Rates are wet and apply per hour.

N341FC (C172N) - \$145
N96573 (C172P) - \$150
N62104 (C172P) - \$150
N684SP (C172S) - \$155
N2806M (P28A) - \$155
N1963T (P28R) - \$170
N4335M (P28B) - \$180

Off field fuel reimbursement:
\$6.05/gal

Member Checklist

Remember the following items!

Shutdown:

Avionics Master.....Off
Lights.....All off except beacon
Mixture.....Cutoff
Magnetics.....Off
Master.....Off

Postflight:

Lights....Confirm off except beacon
Leading Edges.....Cleaned*
Windscreen.....Cleaned*
Fuel Quantity.....Full**
Aircraft Interior.....Clean Up

*White cloths and wax cleaner for leading edges, Yellow microfiber cloth and glass cleaner for windscreen

Off Field Fuel:

Do not use club fuel cards

Use personal credit card

Submit receipts for reimbursement

Prepayment Incentive:

\$1,000.00-\$1,999.99 – 4% bonus

\$2,000.00-\$3,999.99 – 5% bonus

\$4,000.00 and greater – 6% bonus

Restrictions apply, contact a board member for more details

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to the Condor Aero Club! The following new members joined our group in the last month and we're excited to have them on board. Looking forward to seeing you around the airport!

- Paul Patterson
- W. George Samo
- Trenton Seik

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for these upcoming aviation events!

- The weather is not the best... look for more events next spring

Looking for a fun place to fly? Check out the Recommended Airport list along with other great information at the link below. Pay special attention to the recently added slide deck containing many options. Please share your pictures as well!

[Condor Google Drive](#)

[General Aviation Accessible Aviation Museums](#)

Jan 2026

Chip Vignolini – (412)215-1225
chipvig@gmail.com

Maintenance Corner

Reminders!

DO NOT take the aircraft checklists or fuel credit cards with you

TURN-OFF Hangar lights and lock the door when you leave.

DO NOT start the engine above 1000 RPM, and **ALWAYS** reduce to 700-800 RPM and Lean the mixture immediately after engine start and before taxing.

You should be able to release the toe brakes without the aircraft moving!

ALWAYS Taxi with proper elevator and aileron deflection. I observe so many people taxiing and the elevator is in the nose down position. This creates stress on the nose gear and shimmy damper.

NEVER push any aircraft from the Nose Cone/Spinner

DO NOT Move the nose wheel curb, and ensure the aircraft is between the lines/marks.

Oil Reminder:

When do you add OIL?

Answer: At or below 5qts, and always in full quarts!

Exception: N4335M, which is at or below 9qts, and always in full quarts.

Please send any maintenance questions you have. I am always looking for newsletter material.



Dec Completed Maintenance:

GPS Databases on all Aircraft:

Completed successfully

N341FC:

N96573:

100hr/Annual completed; cyl#2 intake gasket replaced w/new, LH & RH brake linings replaced w/new, replaced (2) lower engine cowling mounts w/new

N62104:

100hr/Annual completed; replaced RH lower center cowl mount, installed (3) new cowl mount fasteners, replaced fwd prop spinner bulkhead, replaced RH MLG tire/tube, replaced CO2 detector. Also ordered new LH MLG fairing, being painted and will be replaced during next scheduled maintenance.

N684SP:

N2806M:

Replaced main ship battery

N4335M:

N1963T:



This issue

Maintenance Update **P.1**

Flight Times and Oil Usage **P.2**

Maintenance Summary **P.3**

Jan Planned Maintenance:

GPS Databases on all Aircraft:

N341FC:

50hr oil change/inspection

N96573:

N62104:

N684SP:

N2806M:

50hr oil change/inspection

N4335M:

N1963T:

50hr oil change/inspection

Time Remaining on 100hr/Annual: (As of 01/23)

N96573 = 88.7

N62104 = 77.3

N341FC = 57.0

N684SP = 84.0

N2806M = 66.1

N4335M = 80.3

N1963T = 65.9

EYE ON IT

Reminders:

Keep the 'chute' clear for returning aircraft.

Continue Using:

Cowl plugs! We have several birds and insects in the hangars, and it's good practice especially when you're off-field.

Maintenance Updates in Skymanager:

Everyone can see the 'Known' or 'Reported' squawks when you 'check-out' the aircraft in Skymanager.

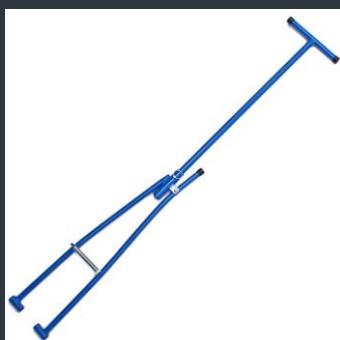
They are found at the very top of your dispatch page under 'unresolved' and 'resolved' discrepancies.

Please be sure to look at them prior to 'pre-fighting' the aircraft. If the problem is already reported there is no need to report again, but if you find something 'new' or the 'known' problem has worsened, please be sure to reach out to me (Chip).

Like always 'when in doubt' always report or reach out to me.

Thank you!

New Spring-Loaded Fork Towbars: fits all aircraft except N1963T.



What is required prior to Preflight and Departure?

Always 'check-out' the aircraft in Skymanager and have a destination in the 'Comments' section.



Flight Time:

MONTH	89549		N341FC		684SP		62104		96573		1963T		4335M		2806M		TOTAL	
	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr
	DEC	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.7	13.0	19.2	6.7	19.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.8	8.3	124.9	55.2
TOTAL	275.4	52.1	0.0	0.0	158.7	38.7	165.8	59.2	844.1	450.2	312.6	47.7	0.0	0.0	522.4	176.0	2725.6	1343.8

MONTH	89549		N341FC		684SP		62104		96573		1963T		4335M		2806M		TOTAL	
	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr	Total	Instr
	JAN	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.7	9.6	10.3	3.1	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	6.3	91.6	22.7
FEB	11.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.0	14.2	32.0	17.9	16.7	2.0	0.0	0.0	19.2	8.9	111.3	44.5
MAR	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.5	17.6	46.4	16.8	22.0	6.9	0.0	0.0	41.1	10.1	161.0	51.4
APR	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.4	6.1	47.3	15.7	19.9	8.9	0.0	0.0	32.6	10.5	126.2	41.2
MAY	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.0	12.9	53.8	32.6	27.9	9.3	0.0	0.0	36.3	23.1	149.0	77.9
JUN	11.1	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.4	4.9	69.3	27.2	40.9	9.5	0.0	0.0	46.4	7.9	181.1	53.2
JUL	10.4	5.1	22.0	6.5	34.0	6.3	51.4	30.6	64.8	24.0	20.5	3.7	5.4	0.0	32.3	12.7	240.8	88.9
AUG	6.5	1.6	29.4	23.9	25.7	12.0	35.6	7.5	62.3	24.8	16.0	1.2	60.2	29.5	57.9	12.6	293.6	113.1
SEP	13.9	0.9	33.1	26.5	25.4	4.6	53.6	25.8	34.9	19.9	8.3	0.0	29.6	9.4	26.4	9.6	225.2	96.7
OCT	17.5	1.4	26.5	15.6	19.2	6.4	44.4	25.4	46.4	23.4	25.2	13.3	20.3	2.3	42.0	8.2	215.0	80.4
NOV	0.0	0.0	20.9	13.5	15.6	2.8	31.6	21.1	23.7	16.6	14.2	4.9	8.0	1.6	22.0	1.3	115.1	48.3
DEC	0.0	0.0	9.6	7.0	12.1	5.8	14.5	7.0	7.9	4.7	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	4.0	1.4	44.5	18.9
TOTAL	89.0	14.2	141.5	93.0	132.0	37.9	402.1	182.7	499.1	228.7	224.9	59.7	129.5	42.8	377.6	112.6	1954.4	737.2

Yellow shading indicates the highest flight time for the month/year.

Oil Usage:

MONTH	2024 Oil Used									
	89549		684SP		62104		96573			
	DEC	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	8.0
TOTAL	24.0	6.8	5.5	28.8	38.0	28.5	0.0	49.5	181.1	

MONTH	2025 Oil Used								
	89549		N341FC		684SP		62104		
	JAN	2.2	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	5.2
FEB	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	3.0
MAR	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	4.0	0.0	5.0	12.5
APR	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	10.0
MAY	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	3.0	0.0	4.0	8.5
JUN	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	2.0	6.0	0.0	6.0	14.5
JUL	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	5.0	0.0	3.0	17.0
AUG	0.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	4.0	7.0	20.0
SEP	0.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	14.0
OCT	2.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	6.0	19.0
NOV	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	3.0	12.0
DEC	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
TOTAL	6.2	8.0	6.0	17.0	17.5	33.0	8.0	41.0	136.7

Please update Skymanager when adding oil to any aircraft, this data is critical in determining engine performance. **Only add in FULL QUARTS!**

Maintenance Summary:

Summary:

December was another slow month for flying. We only had 44.5 hours, down from 124.9 hours last Dec. Needless to say, it was another quiet month for maintenance.

High Runner Aircraft for the year:

N96573 – 499.1 hours

N62104 – 402.1 hours

N2806M – 377.6 hours

We're in great shape on the 100hr/annual front, and expect to complete a couple 50hr oil changes this month.

General reminders:

Clearing the Chute After Start-up

Please be sure to clear the chute immediately after startup. You can park at the end of the hangar and finish getting ready if you need to.

And if you're on the other side, coming back from the fuel farm. Slow down and check the chute prior to turning in. If you see someone sitting there, don't be afraid to get on the radio and let them know you're waiting.

Fuel Gauge Straws.

Cessna fuel gauge straws have been placed in every aircraft. Please note, N62104 has long range tanks, do NOT use the fuel straw from N62104 on other Cessna aircraft.

Cessna historically has had issues with the in-cockpit fuel gauges, the fuel straws are an excellent way to confirm the amount of fuel you have in each tank before every departure.

Pushing and Pulling on the aircraft.

Pretty serious topic, please NEVER push on the nose cone/spinner, and only push/pull from the base/hub area of the propellor, never the tips.

Likewise, on Cessna aircraft, if you push/pull on the elevator to maneuver the plane, please be sure it's at the root. You should NEVER push down on the elevator tips.

Glareshield/Windscreen Care.

Please never set your headsets or any other items on the glareshield. The windshields are made of plexiglass, and scratch very easily. Unfortunately, we already have scratches on the co-pilots side of N4335M. It's important to give your passengers a briefing prior to the flight so they understand what they can and can't do, and ultimately have a more enjoyable experience.

Winter operations started on 11/01/2025.

Please be sure to plug in the engine heaters and install cowl plugs. Please remember, the strap should be on the outside to the cowl, so within the first rotation of the prop, the cowl plugs would be ripped out. And the **zippers should all face inward** (engine side, you should NEVER see the zippers), and if installed cowl plug flag point straight up.

N341FC:

As previously reported, N341FC is now on the south side of the hangar building, next to N684SP which was previously N98887's hangar (#612).

N96573:

100hr/Annual completed; cyl#2 intake gasket replaced w/new, LH & RH brake linings replaced w/new, replaced (2) lower engine cowling mounts w/new

N62104:

100hr/Annual completed; replaced RH lower center cowl mount, installed (3) new cowl mount fasteners, replaced fwd prop spinner bulkhead, replaced RH MLG tire/tube, replaced CO2 detector. Also ordered new LH MLG fairing, being painted and will be replaced during next scheduled maintenance.

N684SP:

nothing new to report

N2806M:

Replaced main ship battery

N1963T:

Nothing to report

N4335M:

nothing new to report

Hangars:

I adjusted the down limit switches on two hangars (#612 and #608), however with the recent cold snap, it appears I need to adjust a couple more.

The extreme cold is preventing the cables and drum from 'coasting', which requires an adjustment to the 'down limit' switch. Unfortunately, when it warms up again, the cables may be to lose, requiring another adjustment. Quite the cycle until the cables wears in.

As previously reported, N341FC is now on the south side of the hangar building, next to N684SP which was previously N98887's hangar #609.

Lettering will be updated in the spring when everything warms up.

Clubhouse:

nothing new to report

REMINDERS:

OIL:

N684SP, N341FC, N62104,

N96573, N2806M, and

N1963T:

Use **Aeroshell 15w-50**, only add when at or below **5qts**, and only add full quarts.

N4335M:

Use **Aeroshell 15w-50**, only add when at or below **9qts**, and only add full quarts.

Report all Oil Consumption in SkyManager

Please let me know if any hangar is running low on oil.

Oil Heaters:

Starting 11/1, please plug in the engine block heaters and refer to the winter starting procedures.

Please report all concerns, questions, or problems to Chip Vignolini.

Call, Text, or Email

(412)215-1225

chipvig@gmail.com

Supporting Links:

CONDOR AERO CLUB REGULAR MEETING

Meeting Minutes

January 6th, 2026

Please note, meeting minutes will no longer be read at general meetings. Please review the minutes from the prior meeting in this newsletter and be prepared to ask any questions at the next meeting.

Meeting minute approval will be requested at the next meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

President Keith McPherson called the January Condor Aero Club Regular Meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

President Keith requested everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Keith asked those visitors and guests to stand and introduce themselves. He thanked those visiting and thanked Cindy and JP for the delicious food they supplied for the social hour!

MINUTES

Bob Belsterling moved and Mike Bruce seconded, "The November 2025 Condor Aero Club Regular Meeting Minutes are approved." - Motion carried.

READINGS:	1 st Reading:	Nicholas Schzure
		Donald Zuch
	2 nd Reading:	Paul Patterson
		William G. Samo
		Trenton Seik

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Bob Miladinovich reported the following Account Balances as of 1/1/2026:

Accounts Receivable:	-	- \$74,636.94
----------------------	---	---------------

Total cash checking accounts:

Beginning Balance	-	\$59,151.83
Inflows	-	\$20,138.05
Outflows	-	\$31,804.91
Net	-	\$11,666.85
Balance as or 1/1/2026	-	- \$47,484.98

First Commonwealth Line of Credit:

Rate	-	8.50%
Line of Credit	- Line: \$25,000.00	- Balance \$0.00

Notes:

N341FC Loan Payment:	\$1,999.28	Balance: \$124,057.47
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Off Field Fuel Reimbursement as of 11/14/2025:	\$6.30
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October Outflow Highlights:

Phillips 66 Fuel Reimbursement	-	\$5,070.60
Maintenance	-	\$13,141.61
AJ Gallagher Insurance	-	\$2,660.00
First Flight Party	-	\$46,375.00
FCB Sweep account interest	-	\$121.93 YTD \$3,134.59

Larry Schaefer moved and Ed Sattely seconded, "The January 1, 2025 Condor Aero Club Treasurer's Report is approved as read." - Motion carried.

MAINTENANCE

Director of Maintenance Chip Vignolini reported all maintenance completed in December 2025 and the maintenance planned for January 2026. The complete Maintenance Report is in the January Condor Aero Club Newsletter, published by Chris Vermilya. The Newsletter is very informative regarding Condor Aero Club's activities, and information about flying in general.

MEMBERSHIP – Membership Officer Robert Beck gave a report of the membership. He reported the number of new members and those waiting. New members must have an instructor before receiving the membership application. Keith commended Robert for his excellent handling of the membership.

PROGRAM

The program was an AOPA Training Program regarding the consequences of running out of fuel on a flight and accidentally getting into clouds on a VFR flight. The training films were excellent scenarios of problems that can happen and how to handle them.

ADJOURNMENT

Bob Belsterling moved and Fred Gropp seconded, "The January 2026 Regular Meeting of the Condor Aero Club is adjourned." -Motion carried.