

THE HOLD SHORT

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31JAN - 06FEB



DREAMS, ROOTS, AND AFTERBURNERS

Last week's visit from Connor Mannix in the F-18 wasn't just a cool ramp moment, it was a full-circle reminder that aviation dreams are real, reachable, and worth protecting.

Connor's story starts where so many of our stories do. Early lessons. First nerves. First solo at KCXP. Long days working the line at Atlantic, soaking up everything aviation had to offer. Watching, listening, asking questions, staying late, showing up early. The grind that doesn't always feel glamorous in the moment, but quietly builds the foundation.

Fast-forward to today and Connor is serving his country, flying F-18s, landing on aircraft carriers in the middle of absolutely nowhere. The kind of flying most people only see in movies. The kind of responsibility that demands precision, humility, and discipline every single day.

But here's the part that matters most to us.

He came back.

He took the time to walk the ramp, talk to students, answer questions, and connect with people who are exactly where he once was. Because he remembers. He remembers what it felt like to be standing on the edge of something big, wondering if the dream was realistic, or just a dream.

That matters.

As Great Basin Aviation celebrates 8 years, moments like this are everything. We're proud not just of where our pilots go, but how they go. Staying grounded. Staying connected. Seeing aviation as a lifestyle, not just a job. And understanding the responsibility that comes with opening doors for those coming up behind you.

To Connor, and to all of our former students who give back, encourage, and inspire, thank you.

You prove that this industry is built on mentorship, community, and shared passion.

And to our current students: they really were once in your shoes.

Dreams don't just happen.

They're built, one flight, one lesson, one office harassment, one long day at a time.

Thank you to everyone who has made GBA part of their journey over the last eight years. And thank you to the students and alumni who continue to lift others as they climb.

REMINDERS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK

- In the event of cancellation, call the office or email us asap. Messages and emails are monitored even after hours.
- Please check for wing covers before you start your pre-flight. Do not lower flaps with covers on. Flaps can bind and crack under the fabric, and any damage will be passed on.
- Monday night study groups are back! Private Pilot is the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, 6pm-8pm. Advanced rating/certificate study groups will be the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, same time.



**Austin Cannon -
Solo**

FIRST SOLO!! Patient Now Authorized to Self-Operate!

Recent transplant to Reno (not from CA, don't worry, folks), Dr. Austin Cannon officially added a new credential to the résumé today with a successful first solo on Runway 08 at KRTS, flying N752DW. After extensive training, stable vitals, and a strict zero-tolerance policy for nonsense, the patient reviewed his own chart and determined: yes, I am good to go. His instructor concurred.

Originally from North Carolina (Go Tar Heels!), Austin brought that quiet, composed, don't-panic-unless-it's-actually-time-to-panic energy to the cockpit. The kind of flying that doesn't need theatrics, just clean execution, solid judgment, and a landing that says, "We're done here." Exactly what you want from both a doctor and a pilot. Also worth noting: rumors persist that he's a very good golfer. We can neither confirm nor deny, but the hand-eye coordination checks out. And when he's not in the clinic or the cockpit, he's fully leaned into Reno life as a snow bunny on the slopes.

We give him a hard time (or he gives it to us), but in all seriousness, for everything he's juggling between medicine, flying, and life in general, this milestone is seriously impressive.

Huge credit to instructors Cory Kleidosty and Andrew Spanier for knowing when to teach, when to challenge, and when to hop out and let the doctor do what he does best, handle business calmly and correctly.

Diagnosis: Solo Pilot, Prognosis: excellent

Treatment plan: more flying, continued proficiency, and frequent runway exposure until further notice.

Elizabeth Francis is officially a Private Pilot.

This incredible woman somehow balances serving in the Nevada Air National Guard, going to school, and working to earn her certificate, all while keeping her eyes on the bigger goal: becoming a military pilot. We can definitely see her in the cockpit of an amazing Herc. 🇺🇸

No shortcuts. No excuses. Just grit, discipline, and showing up ready to fly.

Elizabeth is an absolute joy at GBA, always smiling, always confident, always calm and professional in the airplane. Truly one of those people you want around.

Now... her one and only flaw:

She has never watched a Star Wars movie from start to finish. So no Kessel Run jokes for her (yet). But despite this tragic gap in cinematic education, we still like her. A lot.

Huge congratulations, Elizabeth. You earned every bit of this. And a big shoutout to her CFI, Andy Glenn, for guiding her through the journey.

Private Pilot today. Military pilot goals tomorrow.

We'll forgive the Star Wars thing... for now.



**Elizabeth Francis -
PPL**



**Keira Fong -
Solo**

Keira Fong SOLOED!! KRTS, Runway 08, N752DW!

Some people talk about “not having time.” Keira Fong went out and made it.

High school student. Reno Air Race Scholarship participant. Future USAF pilot in the making. 🇺🇸 Youth lead for our 4-H Aviation group. Young Aviator Boot Camp alum. FFA. Girl Scouts. Sports. Pet lover. Gardening aficionado. Overachiever in the most disciplined, purpose-driven way possible. When does she have the time?

The same place all driven pilots find it, between commitment, grit, and refusing to quit.

Today, all that work paid off in the best way: she kicked her CFI out of the plane, lined up on Runway 08 at KRTS, and proved that preparation + persistence = freedom. Calm hands. Sharp judgment. No drama. Just solid flying.

Huge congratulations to Keira on an unforgettable first solo, and a big shoutout to her instructor Andrew Spanier for guiding her there. The sky didn't change today, but Keira did. And this is only the beginning.

This is exactly why we do what we do at GBA. We don't just train pilots, we help build confidence, discipline, and belief in what's possible. Watching young aviators like Keira step into that moment never gets old. ✈️

It seems like another celebration is in order! Today Rey Arango earned his Private Pilot Certificate in his favorite blue-striped bird, N495SP (blue is his favorite color, btw). Rey is another of the Reno Air Racing Association scholarship recipients that have completed their training with us here at Great Basin Aviation. We have loved seeing Rey grow as a pilot, develop his true grit, and maintain his sense of sibling rivalry with his brother (also a GBA pilot). Rey does claim to be the better brother but we'll let those two decide that. We love seeing Rey's cheer here in the office and out on the flight line. He has taken this first step toward being a professional pilot with style! Don't look or you'll be flying yourself for fresh Sushi in Japan before you know it! Huge shout out to his dedicated instructor, Lucas. Nice work, Rey!



**Reymond Arango -
PPL**

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GBA STUDENTS TAKING FLIGHT



**Tyler Ashburn -
Solo**

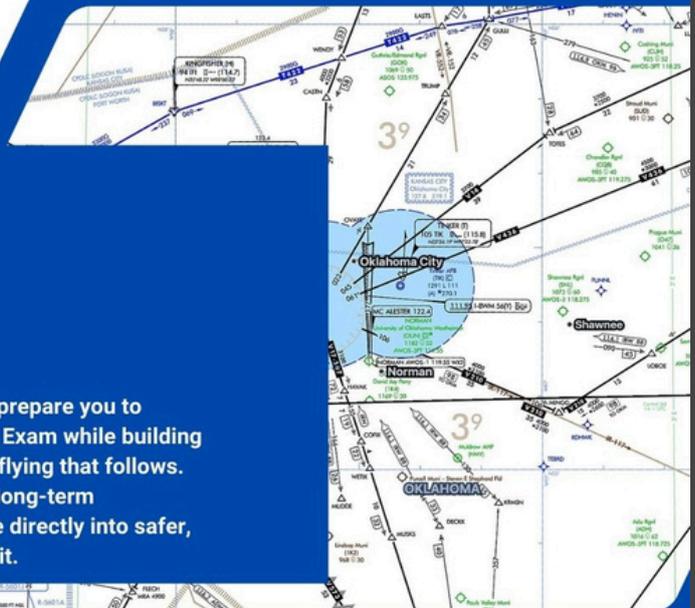
Let's keep the good news rolling! Today this purple pasta loving scuba diver decided to take to the skies on his own as he kicked his instructor out for a first solo at Silver Springs on Runway 6 in N752DW! Okay, so we don't know if Tyler likes purple pasta but those are two of his favorite things and, yes, he scuba dives, too. Tyler took his skill at fixing stuff and fixed up those landings to make his instructor, Greg, confident enough to turn him loose on his own! Nice job, Tyler! We love your constant sense of humor. Next step - PPL!

It's Back!! Our in-person Instrument Ground School taught by the incomparable Bob Bennett. Reserve your seat now!



INSTRUMENT GROUND SCHOOL

This in-person Instrument Ground School is designed to prepare you to successfully pass the FAA Instrument Rating Knowledge Exam while building a strong foundation for the oral exam and real-world IFR flying that follows. The course emphasizes understanding, application, and long-term proficiency, not rote memorization, so concepts translate directly into safer, more confident instrument decision-making in the cockpit.



DETAILS



WHEN AND WHERE

- Monday & Wednesday evenings
- 6:00–9:00 PM
- February 16-March 25
- Atlantic Aviation



COURSE MATERIALS

- Jeppesen Text Book and ASA Test Prep (included in price)
- Basic Foreflight Subscription for electronic charts



EXPECTATIONS

- Willingness to actively participate
- Commitment to completing assigned homework
- Consistent attendance and engagement during class sessions



COST

- \$500 (includes books)



SIGN UP

- Email - GoFlying@GreatBasinAviation.com
- Call/Text - 775-856-3655



Why Choose GBA?

Well, #1, Bob is teaching the class, but also, training for your Instrument Rating at GBA means learning in a structured, professional environment led by experienced instructors who emphasize long-term proficiency. Our focus goes beyond passing a test to developing sound aeronautical judgment, strong IFR fundamentals, and disciplined habits that translate into safe, confident decision-making in real-world instrument flying.