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Aviation Education & Recreation from EAA Chapter 393
P.O. Box 6524 Concord California 94524-1524

February 2026

<http://www.eaa.393.org>

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EAA Chapter 393 Upcoming Events

February 2026

4 Board of Directors Regular Meeting

25 Dinner & General Meeting

March 2026

4 Board of Directors Regular Meeting

25 Dinner & General Meeting

April 2026

1 Board of Directors Regular Meeting

18 Young Eagles Rally

22 Dinner & General Meeting

Renew Your Chapter Dues & Celebrate Big News!

As we move into February and settle into the new year, this is a friendly reminder that **EAA Chapter 393 membership dues renew annually on January 1st**. If you haven't yet renewed, now is the perfect time to do so and continue being part of our vibrant aviation community.

Renewing your dues helps support our chapter activities, events, youth programs, and scholarships.

- **Individual Membership – \$30.00**

For current EAA members.

- **Family Membership – \$40.00**

Just \$10 more than an individual membership and a fantastic value. Includes the primary EAA member, spouse or significant other, and children — **up to five members total**.

Each family member must also have an EAA membership.

The family membership is a wonderful way to involve your loved ones in aviation and share in everything our chapter has to offer—from meetings and fly-ins to educational opportunities and community events.

Exciting Scholarship News for 2026!

We're also thrilled to share some outstanding news: EAA Chapter 393 has been approved to administer two matching EAA Ray Aviation Scholarships for 2026!

Thanks to our chapter's commitment to matching funds, the scholarships will be funded as follows:

- EAA Chapter 393 contribution: \$6,000 (\$3,000 per scholarship)
- Ray Foundation contribution: \$18,000 (\$9,000 per scholarship)
- Total scholarship funding: \$24,000

That's \$12,000 per student toward flight training!

As a pre-qualified chapter, EAA Chapter 393 is now officially approved to nominate two scholars for the 2026 Ray Aviation Scholarship. We will be receiving an updated Ray Aviation Scholarship Chapter Handbook along with informational handouts to distribute to parents of prospective scholars.

This is a huge opportunity to help the next generation of aviators get off the ground, and it's made possible by the continued support and involvement of our members.

Young Eagles: Kids Fly Free!

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Young Eagles flights hosted by EAA Chapter 393. These events give young people the chance to experience the joy of flight—completely free of charge.

Scheduled Young Eagles Dates for 2026:

- ✓ April 18, 2026
- ✓ May 16, 2026
- ✓ June 20, 2026
- ✓ August 15, 2026
- ✓ September 19, 2026

The safety and well-being of our young flyers is our top priority. All staff and volunteers involved in Young Eagles flights—including pilots, chapter coordinators, field representatives, and those participating in chapter youth activities—are required to complete EAA Youth Protection training and a background check.

- Online training takes approximately 10–15 minutes
- Background check verification typically takes no more than 10 business days
- Both are valid for three years

To complete the required training and background check, please visit the EAA Youth Protection Policy and Program page.

For more information about the Young Eagles Program visit EAA National's Young Eagles website or email Kids-Fly-Free@EAA393.org to contact our Young Eagles Coordinator.

We look forward to welcoming young aviators aboard and sharing the magic of flight with the next generation.

Thank you for renewing your membership, supporting our scholarship efforts, and volunteering your time. Together, EAA Chapter 393 continues to build a strong future for aviation—one flight at a time.

January 2026 EAA Chapter 393 Dinner

Our January Monthly Dinner was a wonderful way to kick off the year—and a perfect reminder of what makes EAA Chapter 393 such a special community. The event was free and open to everyone, and the hangar was filled with members, guests, and friends all coming together to celebrate the people who keep our chapter flying.

Program Highlight: Volunteer Recognition Night

The evening was dedicated to recognizing the many volunteers who generously give their time and energy throughout the year to organize events, support programs, and make our activities possible. A free dinner was served as a small token of our big appreciation.

Italian was on the menu this month, featuring:

- ✓ Spaghetti
- ✓ Fresh salad
- ✓ Garlic bread
- ✓ Dessert

And yes—everything was free for adults and children under 13 alike.



2025 Member of the Year 🏆

One of the highlights of the evening was the announcement of EAA Chapter 393's 2025 Member of the Year.

We are proud to recognize **Gates Clark** for his outstanding dedication and leadership. Gates was presented with a commemorative plaque in appreciation of



the vital role he has played in Chapter 393's success. His achievements as **Young Eagles Coordinator**—including expanding youth participation, organizing rallies, and inspiring the next generation of aviators—have made a lasting impact on our chapter.

Congratulations, Gates, and thank you for everything you do for EAA 393!

Special Moments & Announcements



The night included a very special celebration: one of our youngest members, Liv (Gates' daughter), turned 7 years old! The entire room joined in singing *Happy Birthday*, making it a moment she (and her proud parents) won't soon forget.

We also celebrated Ghoncheh, who has begun ATP flight school and is officially pursuing her airline career. An exciting milestone—congratulations on taking off toward your dreams!



AirVenture & Youth Programs

Bill O'Brian shared updates on AirVenture, our chapter's presence there, and the two kids we proudly send to AirVenture each year.

Gates spoke about the upcoming Young Eagles rallies, which will begin in April.

Slavik announced that Young Eagles workshops are currently in development. He



and Gates will be leading this project, with plans for approximately 10 kids to participate in hands-on workshops.

Guests & Special Visitors

Guests had the opportunity to introduce themselves, adding to the welcoming and inclusive spirit of the evening. We were honored to have **legendary Pete “Maverick” Mitchell** in attendance, along with a very special visitor—Manny



Kagan, a longtime mentor to Natasha in the mortgage business.

After attending the dinner, Manny shared a heartfelt reflection in his blog *Fridays with Manny*, titled **“The Love of Flying.”** In it, he recalled childhood dreams of becoming “a poet or a pilot,” his lifelong fascination with flight, and his admiration for the aviation community he experienced firsthand at our meeting.

Though life took him down a different runway, Manny beautifully captured the spirit of aviation—quoting Russian poet Vladimir Soloukhin:

“To live on the earth, with the soul to the sky.”

His words reminded us that even for those who never earn their wings, the dream of flight still inspires—and communities like EAA keep that dream alive.

Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, spoke, cooked, organized, and celebrated with us. January’s dinner was a perfect example of what EAA Chapter 393 is all about: **aviation, community, mentorship, and joy—on the ground and in the air.**

Guest Feature: The Love of Flying

By Manny Kagan – from “Fridays with Manny”

Following our January EAA Chapter 393 dinner, special guest Manny Kagan shared a heartfelt and entertaining reflection in his blog *Fridays with Manny*. Manny attended our meeting, experienced the passion of our aviation community firsthand, and was inspired to write a piece celebrating the timeless dream of flight.

We're delighted to share his story with our members as a special feature in this month's newsletter. *Enjoy!*

"The Love of Flying"

When I was a little boy, my parents asked me who I wanted to be when I grew up. My answer was always the same: **a poet or a pilot.**

Life chose its own flight path. I write poems and have published two books of poetry. And while I never became a pilot, for the past 42 years my wife and I have been the captains of Pacific Bay Financial Corporation, a mortgage company, guiding people through important financial journeys.

My love of flying comes with a special privilege: my assistant Natasha is a pilot. She's part of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), a worldwide community founded in 1951 for people who live and breathe aviation. I was invited to one of their meetings and was struck by the passion in the room—people who don't take flying for granted.

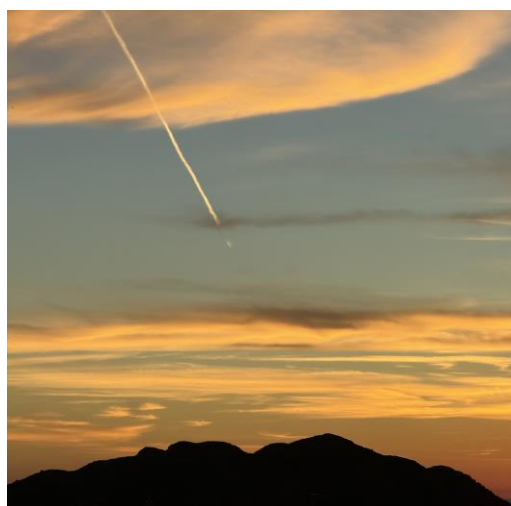


The dream of flight is ancient. From the myth of Icarus to the Wright brothers' first flight in 1903, humanity has always wanted to rise above the earth. That spirit is still alive. One of my clients, now 84, has renewed his pilot's license 27 times. My son-in-law began flying at six years old beside his father. I wanted to fly too—but I'm comfortable on earth, and my wife prefers it that way.

It was Russian poet Vladimir

Soloukhin who wrote, *"To live on the earth, with the soul to the sky."* So, I share the joy instead. If you love flying, or the dream of it, I'd be happy to point you toward a community that keeps that dream in the air.

Three images show how people on earth see the sky. Share them with friends.



Manny

Learn what it takes to be a **Pilot**

SkyReady offers aspiring young pilots, ages 13 to 18, hands-on, engaging training to explore aviation as both a hobby and a potential career.

To learn more, scan our QR code or visit:
get.skyready.org/course



Link to our EAA 393 Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ea393>

Send material to Bennett at BennettAshley925@gmail.com

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200 Buchanan Field Rd Concord CA 94520
