

From

Balloons



To

Ballistics

**Flown West:**

**Bea Wilhite Page 4**

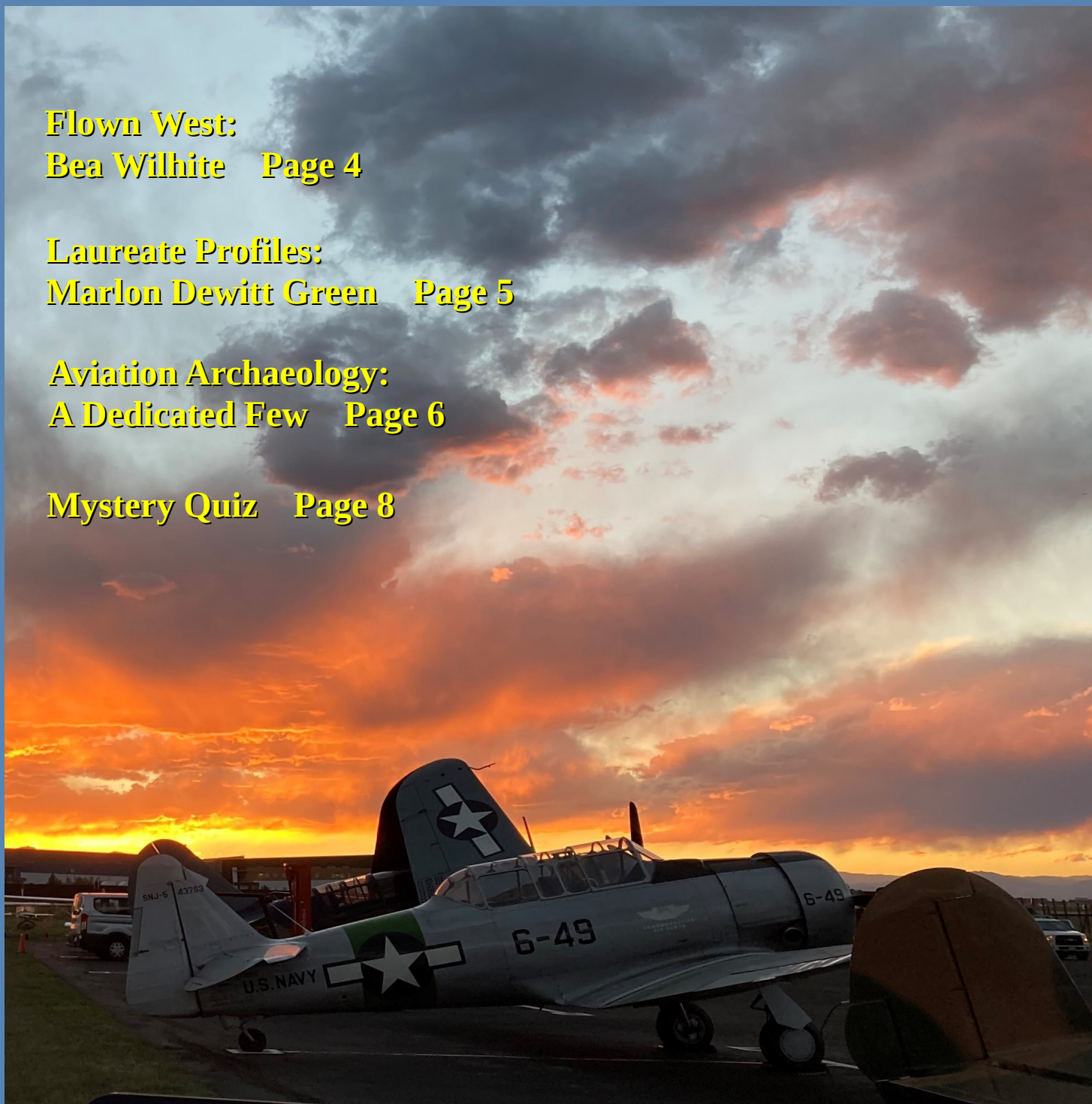
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Important Note: The CAHS Annual Meeting and election of Directors will occur on April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. The location is the Exploration of Flight at Centennial Airport. Information and map on page 10.

Cover Photo: Warbirds on the ramp at “Exploraton of Flight” Centennial Airport (Cover photo Steve Kelly)

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## **Your article in Balloons to Ballistics**

The Colorado Aviation Historical Society is soliciting articles that relate to Colorado and aviation from interested contributors. We're looking for submissions that speak to any subject that you would like to see in print (i.e. aeronautical memorabilia, airports, aviators, aviation businesses, astronauts, etc.). If you have something to offer please forward it at your earliest convenience.

Articles should be submitted in a Times New Roman (12 font) format, and have an unjustified right edge. Please do not insert photos into the article, but add them each as an additional jpg. attachment and include a caption for each.

Submit your article(s) or questions to:  
aviator\_b@msn.com

From “Balloons to Ballistics” is an official publication of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society. Our office and the Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame are located at the “Wings over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, located at 7711 East Academy Blvd, Denver, Colorado 80230.

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## President's Message: Historic Collections

Steve Kelly  
CAHS President



Over the past 57 years, CAHS has been acquiring artifacts related to the development of aviation in our state. The by-laws of the organization states that we have a mission to “acquire, restore, preserve and provide for public display, aircraft and other objects of historical interest in connection with the development and history of aviation in the state of Colorado. . .”

A number of our historic items are currently displayed at Denver’s Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, and the Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum. We are constantly seeking to add significant or unique items associated with Colorado’s aviation heritage to our collections, and hope that our members will help us uncover these artifacts.

As with many organizations that collect historic materials, we are faced with the continuing problem of artifact storage. With extremely limited space available in our Lowry archives we must begin to limit the volume of material that we collect. To insure that items added to our collections meet specific criteria, new guidelines have been designed to insure that objects significant to Colorado’s aviation history can continue to be accepted, while material that is not directly related to the mission of CAHS will be passed to other history organizations.

Archivist Jim Kelly, has produced a guide for potential donations of artifacts to the Society, along with a form to be completed by the donor, which will allow the Collections Committee to assess items for inclusion in our collection. These are found on the CAHS website: [coahs.org](http://coahs.org) by selecting the Artifacts and Research Gallery link on the home page.

## Mystery Quiz Fall 2022 Journal

Identify this unique Western Air Express aircraft type sitting on the ramp at Denver Municipal (Stapleton) Airport in 1932.



The General Aviation GA-43 was a single engine low-wing monoplane airliner produced in small numbers in the United States in the mid-1930s, also known as the Pilgrim 150, Fairchild 150, and sometimes but erroneously as the Clark GA-43 for the designer, Virginius E. Clark who was also responsible for the Clark Y airfoil section used.

The prototype was developed and built by Fairchild's American Pilgrim division, but the program was taken over by General Aviation when the firm purchased American Pilgrim shortly before the prototype had flown. Although this first flight took place in 1932, manufacture did not commence until 1934, by which time General Motors had, in turn, gained a controlling interest in North American Aviation and merged it with General Aviation, which they already owned. The result of this was that the GA-43 became the first aircraft produced by North American, the same firm that would go on to produce the P51 “Mustang” fighter of WWII fame.

Western Air Express purchased the third production model of only five General Aviation (Clark) GA-43 aircraft to be built. (Swissair had two, and Pan American, and Mitsui Bussan of Japan had one each). Western purchased it out more out of corporate loyalty than a real need. However, it was used for several years on the Cheyenne, Wyoming to Albuquerque, New Mexico route, until single engine airliners were frowned upon by the Commerce Department. The above image came from a Western Airlines publication, and shows the aircraft at Denver, just after delivery in 1932. (Photo Credit: CAHS Archive photo P59.001)

**Mystery Quiz Winner:** Joe Johnston, 12/4 @ 1544

Flown West

# Beatrice “Bea” Khan Wilhite

1932-2023



Photo: Dave Kempa

On Monday, January 30, 2023, the Colorado Aviation Historical Society lost a true champion when Bea Khan Wilhite passed away at age 90.

As one of its earliest members, Bea holds the distinction of being our society's first – and thus far only – female president, serving in that position from 2002 to 2008.

Bea participated in a number of special workgroups during her fifty years with the society. She was not only instrumental in the design and development of our Heritage Hall at Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum, but also worked tirelessly with a handful of others to produce some of the best Hall of Fame banquets of the past few decades.

In 2005, in an effort to generate activities that might attract younger interests in the society, Bea authorized the formation of AvAr, the Colorado Aviation Historical Society Aviation Archaeology program. She was no bystander. She was among the eighteen candidates who attended the first training class in 2006 and completed the requisite field training exercise, scaling to an elevation of 10,200 above sea level, to the Stormy Peaks B-17 crash site. She was 74 years old, at that time.

Bea was well known in the international fashion industry. She was a highly sought-after industry consultant and produced numerous fashion show events around the world. Among her many professional achievements, she served as an award-winning president of the Fashion Group International (FGI), a non-profit association of professional executives worldwide, promoting the advancement of careers in the fashion and related lifestyle industries. Bea also spent a number of years on the board of The Emily Griffith Opportunity Schools fashion design program. While she dedicated much of her time to philanthropy, Bea was especially proud of her involvement with the Block Buster Race, an annual walk/run event she founded and presided over for more than 16 years, raising funds and awareness for hospice care. Among the many other organizations that she donated her time and resources to were the American Cancer Society, Rocky Mountain Airshows, Hospice of St. John's, Rocky Mountain Aviation Center, and Wings Over the Rockies Museum.

Bea Khan Wilhite's many contributions and unique flair will be reflected in the endeavors of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society for many years to come.

The family will be honoring Bea with a Celebration of Life on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup> 2023. This will be held at 12:00 p.m. at the Lakewood Country Club, 6800 West 10th Avenue, Lakewood, Colorado 80214. We will contact the membership with details of this event by email and phone message.

# Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame Laureate Marlon Green Opened Cockpits to Pilots of Color

by Flint Whitlock

It was 1957—just 66 years ago—and every airline in America was lily-white. The airlines were afraid that their white passengers would refuse to fly if they learned that any of the pilots or cabin crew were black.

Enter Arkansas-born Marlon Dewitt Green, a black pilot who had spent nine years in the recently desegregated U.S. Air Force and had logged more than 3,000 hours as a pilot, most of them in multi-engine aircraft.

When he learned that the airlines were planning to integrate their crews, he resigned his Air Force commission, returned from his overseas assignment (Japan), moved to Michigan, and began applying for a commercial pilot's job.

No pilot's job was opened to him, and his family was growing bigger. He did fly for the State of Michigan's Highway Department, but he dreamed of something bigger.

But when he submitted his applications with "Negro" checked in the "Race" box and a photo of himself attached, he was rejected. Even appearing in the

personnel offices of the various airlines got him nowhere. One personnel director even told him flat-out that his airline wouldn't hire him because "we aren't ready for integration."

He then applied to Denver based Continental Air Lines, without attaching a photo or checking the Race box. His qualifications got him a flight test, but despite being better qualified than the nearest white candidates, they were hired and he wasn't.



Marlon DeWitt Green during his time flying with the Michigan Highway Department (Photo: CAHS archive)

Long story short: It took a 1963 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that led to Continental hiring him. He flew for 14 years for the airline and retired in 1978. Marlon returned to Denver for the last few years of his life, passing away in 2009. He was posthumously inducted into the Colorado Aviation Historical Society's Hall of Fame in 2017—a true aviation pioneer.

*Flint Whitlock is the author of Marlon's award-winning biography, *Turbulence Before Takeoff* (Cable Publishing, 2009).*

## CAHS Annual Meeting and Elections

Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00PM

at Exploration of Flight Centennial Airport  
13005 Wings Way Englewood , CO 80112

## Aviation Archaeology Notes From the Field

### A Dedicated Few: The AvAr Program

By Brian Richardson

The concept of establishing an aviation archaeology program was first introduced to the Colorado Aviation Historical Society (CAHS) in 1993. Although the idea was well received at that time, no significant action was taken to enact this program until Bea Khan Wilhite's presidency. In December 2005, under Bea's administration, the green light to launch the CAHS, Aviation Archaeology Program - AvAr was given to interested CAHS members.

The AvAr project was intended to serve two very distinct purposes. First, it was designed to attract new member interest in CAHS; younger, energetic, outdoorsy types who were also seriously interested in collecting historic data. Second, and equally as important, AvAr's mission was to fill our archives with historically significant and accurate data using modern scientific methodology and apparatus.

In alignment with the society's mission statement, AvAr team members are tasked to collect and record data pertaining to all aeronautical properties, both in Colorado and elsewhere (although the primary focus is Colorado). In the past fifteen years the activities of the team have validated both of these goals.

AvAr has recruited, trained, and placed into the field more than forty team members. A few of these field agents were already CAHS members when they accepted the challenge, while others have been recruited from around the state, across the country, and even abroad. The one true bond amongst these team members is that they share a common desire to uncover and record the factual evidence of our aeronautical

heritage. Whether excavating artifacts from a crash site, uncovering the foundations of a long-forgotten airline terminal building, or recording the features of an early navigation facility, AvAr team members regularly contribute their talent, knowledge, time, energy and more often than not, their personal finances towards the capture of accurate data for the society.

Perhaps unknown to the society's membership is the activity of other aviation archaeological groups and individuals around the globe. There are a multitude of websites that proffer the title of aviation archaeology/archaeologist, but very few practice what they preach. In the U.S. alone, there are perhaps 500 individuals actively practicing as either a professional or avocational aviation archaeologist at any one time. Internationally, that number reaches well into the thousands.



Prior to AvAr's first online postings, few others employed technical methods such as this to properly identify artifacts *in situ* showing size and orientation of artifacts (Photo: CAHS Archive)

Traditional archaeology requires the employment of scientific methodology, along with personal scruples, which forbids disturbing a site beyond exploration for the purpose of recording aviation history (the AvAr mission). The removal of artifacts for other than qualified museum preservation and display, is simply not tolerated by the professional community. Far too many websites espouse archaeological professionalism, while at the same time offering artifacts for sale – an obviously ethical contradiction!

(Continued next page)

(A Dedicated Few - Continued from page 6)



At 10,200 ft. **AvAr** field agents examine a 1943 crash site. **AvAr** findings eventually led the USAF to re-investigate this historic site. (Photo: CAHS Archives)

While AvAr has removed artifacts from select, privately owned sites, it has done so only with express permission from the private property owner, and for the purpose of educational exhibition on behalf of our society. While many of these items are widely sought by historic aircraft restorers and souvenir hunters, these artifacts remain the property of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society and cannot be disposed without an officially sanctioned board action. It is a federal offense to remove or disturb artifacts on U.S. Government land

such as parks, forests, monuments, etc. Stiff sanctions, such as imprisonment and fines, have been imposed for such actions.

The AvAr field season generally runs from April through October, although they do take advantage of mild winter conditions and explore sites out on the prairie throughout the entire year. In some cases, such as the La Junta B-52 crash site, the team waited until January to search in earnest due to the rather large rattlesnake population that inhabits the area during warmer weather.

The society's AvAr program is widely recognized as a leader in the field of aviation archaeology and has been instrumental in the effort to establish organizational, technical, and philosophical guidelines for this rapidly growing discipline. Since 2010, CAHS AvAr has hosted four annual International Aviation Archaeology Symposiums. Our AvAr program has been featured in syndicated magazine and newspaper articles, as well as on television and public radio broadcasts.

If you'd be interested in learning more or would like to join the CAHS AvAr team, please reach out to Brian Richardson at [aviator\\_b@msn.com](mailto:aviator_b@msn.com)



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## Emily Warner Documentary to air on KRMA



As part of the Great Colorado Women series, Rocky Mountain PBS will present a documentary titled "Emily Howell Warner: Pushing Frontiers in the Sky". The show will be aired at 7:30 on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

A 1983 Laureate of the Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame, Emily Warner was honored on March 8<sup>th</sup> at the State Capitol by the Colorado State Legislature for her pioneering efforts to bring women pilots into the commercial airline industry.

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## Mystery Quiz Winter 2023 Journal Question

In each issue of the Journal we will present a photograph from the Society archives and challenge you, the reader, to provide information about the subject. Anyone who responds with the correct answer will be mentioned in the following issue, and the first person to answer will win a CAHS commemorative challenge coin. Send your response to [aviator\\_b@msn.com](mailto:aviator_b@msn.com) at your earliest convenience to ensure your submittal is included in the next Journal. Please make sure to include a mailing address where you'd like to receive the coin.

The challenge for this issue: *Identify this Colorado native, record setting NASA astronaut and 2000 Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame inductee.*





## Summer Outings Planned to Historic Colorado Aviation Sites

### Christman Field Tour-June 10, 2023

CAHS members are invited to attend a guided tour of the old Christman Field (CO55), west of Fort Collins. Now owned by Colorado State University (CSU), this is the third oldest continuous-use airport in the state. The tour, conducted from 9:00 to 11:30 AM will include a historic component as well as a demonstration of unmanned aerial systems by CSU's drone program. Please register for this event no later than June 1, 2023 at [aviator\\_b@msn.com](mailto:aviator_b@msn.com) (Note: If you wish to fly into Christman Field for this event, we have secured several slots for personal aircraft. Contact Brian Richardson [aviator\\_b@msn.com](mailto:aviator_b@msn.com) for more information.



Fornaire Aircoupe at Christman Field 1950's. Fornaire test pilot Lloyd Lair. (Photo: Ft. Collins Coloradoan)

### Wichita State Crash Site Visit-August 5, 2023

On Friday, October 2, 1970, a Martin 404 aircraft carrying the Wichita State University (WSU) football team impacted Mt. Bethel, near the Eisenhower Tunnel,

killing 31 of the 40 souls on board. Join CAHS AvAr team members on a guided visit to this site and learn of the events leading up to, and resultant regulatory changes brought about by, this tragedy. (Note: Although not a great distance to hike, this is a moderately difficult trek over steep terrain at approximately 11,000 feet MSL. Participants are advised to carefully assess their own physical condition before attempting this adventure.)



Wreckage of a Martin 404 on Mt. Bethel (Photo: Bing.com)



Eleanor Roosevelt visits Christman Field on the occasion of CSU graduation exercises 1958 (Photo: Ft. Collins Coloradoan)

## Museum Updates

### Friends of the Wyoming Veterans Memorial Museum Honoring our Fallen Heroes in 2023

Machala crew folded flag event, May 12, 2023. A ceremony will be held to transfer stewardship of the Machala crew Folded Flag to Jenna Thorburn of the Camp Douglas Officers' Club State Historic Site in Douglas, WY. All veterans and those interested in WWII and Converse County history are welcome to attend.

In July 2022, the flag was folded and presented by the Wyoming Army National Guard in respect for the ten-man combat training crew of 2nd Lt. Louis Machala. The entire Machala crew perished in the crash of B-17F 42-5102 northwest of Douglas on the night of February 25, 1943. The plane and crew were stationed at Casper Army Air Base. Researchers from the Friends discovered the site in 2022.

The flag ceremony will be conducted at 11:30 AM at the facilities of Converse County Roads and Bridges located at 44 Twin Bridges Road, Douglas, WY. Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Mark Milliken by Monday, May 8, 2023.

Taraba crew memorial, July 22, 2023. Plans are underway for a memorial service for the nine man combat training crew of 2nd Lt. Andrew Taraba. The entire Taraba crew perished in the crash of B-24J 42-73411 in Mills, WY on September 24, 1944. The plane and crew were stationed at Casper Army Air Base. Among the crew was copilot Jerome Goodman, brother of musician Benny Goodman.

A memorial service will be conducted at 10 AM at the Mills crash site. All veterans and those interested in WWII and Casper Army Air Base history are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Mark Milliken by Monday, July 17, 2023. Directions to the site will be provided to attendees.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Mark Milliken at [millikenmark99@gmail.com](mailto:millikenmark99@gmail.com).

## Colorado Aviation Historical Society Annual Meeting

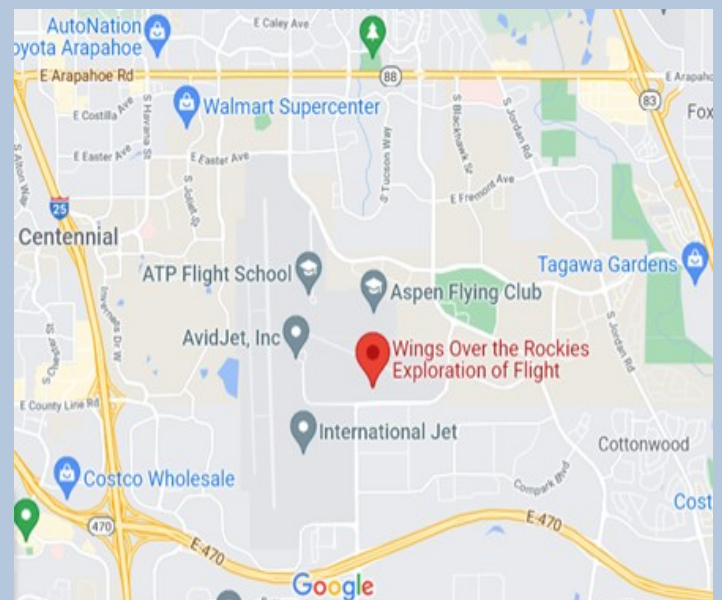
The Colorado Aviation Historical Society will be hosting its annual meeting on April 13, 2023 at Exploration of Flight-Centennial Airport. This meeting is held annually to inform our membership about the current state of the Society, and to elect three directors to the governing board.

Members in good standing are encouraged to run for these board positions. A brief statement on the candidate's qualifications and short bio must be sent to the Secretary of the Society, Ernie LeRoy (email: [ejl@mymountain.com](mailto:ejl@mymountain.com)) by April 7, 2023.

The meeting will begin at 7:00pm at the Exploration of Flight hangar at Centennial Airport, 13005 Wings Way, Englewood, CO 80112. We plan to offer a Zoom video connection for those who are not able to attend in person.

Use this Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89638899102?pwd=V3pwelpmL0tEL2dvaWMvanJRb1RxUT09>



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