

# BEHIND THE HANGAR DOORS

Imagine being one of the roughly 0.007% of people who have a pilot's license worldwide. Now imagine being one of the even rarer: those that can fly in formation. For this KPWT pilot, boasting is the last thing he wants to do - and yet, he has plenty to boast about!

## MEET JIM POSNER



*Jim in front of his plane.*

Jim Posner began his journey in Napa, California, setting out to conquer the challenge of flying, the efficiency of moving quickly, and the feat of precision flying. Jim shares that he's never been afraid of flying, which seems to be a common thread for many pilots. With the rigorous training and hours under their belts, even having an engine-out emergency didn't stop Jim. Instead, he fell back on his knowledge, and when asked if that made it to the top of his 'scariest moments' list, he said no. He points to a night flight in Santa Barbara for this moment. The dark, cloud-filled sky made for a disorienting experience, yet he simply stressed the importance of always being prepared. It's important to note that he has amassed over 4,000 hours of accident-free pilot in command time... As

they say, the proof is in the work.

In his time, Jim has owned four airplanes, beginning with two Cessnas and finishing with two Bonanzas. He views the changing of planes as progression. Fittingly, the last plane he sold was his favorite: a 1992 Bonanza F33A, 'tricked out' with turbo normalizing and anti-icing systems. While he has sold that aircraft and now flies only with his West Sound Pilots Association, he looks fondly on the adventures that those aircraft have taken him on.

From shore to shore, Jim has explored beloved places in the aviation community. Notably, he's flown himself to the Air Force Museum in Ohio, the Smithsonian in DC, the Wright Brothers Museum in North Carolina, and beyond. One of his favorite memories? Visiting the Sun n Fun event in Florida, complete with a fly-in stay. Here, he was able to take off and land directly amidst the show—an example of organized chaos to be conquered.

## A WELL-RESPECTED MAN

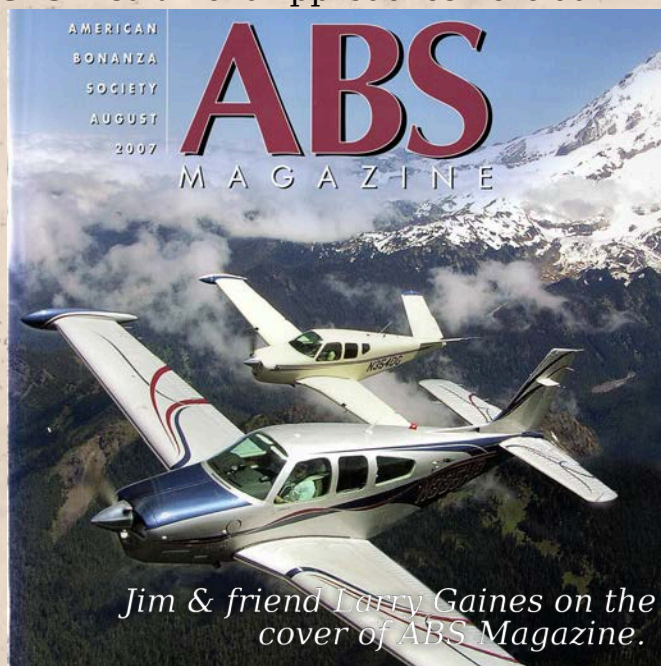
With roughly 58 years of licensed pilot experience under his belt, it may be a given that Jim has accomplished some impressive feats. Nonetheless, it takes a particular person to be as

dedicated to the industry as he is. Jim's motto is the classic "you don't get what you don't ask for," and he has proven this point time and time again.

Professionally, Jim worked as a partner in a telecommunications and information technology consulting firm, specifically dealing with electronics for aircraft. This gave him a sturdy background to meet people and find one of his passions in life: seeing something that needs to be fixed and fixing it. He went on to lobby the FAA for GPS Instrument Approaches here at

KPWT, work with the Port of Bremerton for a variety of improvements at KPWT, help convince the AOPA to have their 2016 fly-in with us (which contributed a staggering \$750,000 to the local economy and has maintained its spot as being the most well-attended AOPA fly-in!), and more. Regarding organizations, Jim followed one of Doug Haughton's Bremerton Pilots Association presidencies, during which he grew the group from 25 to 140 members. Once his reign ended, he went on to president the Washington Pilots Association and established their scholarship program, citing that as one of the things he felt the organization was in great need of. He now sits as the current president for the West Sound Pilots

Association, a group that he founded in the spirit of building meaningful connections with those in a set geographic area. This group currently has over 145 members across 24 of the 30 largest public-use airports West of the Puget Sound (hence the name of 'West Sound Pilots Association').



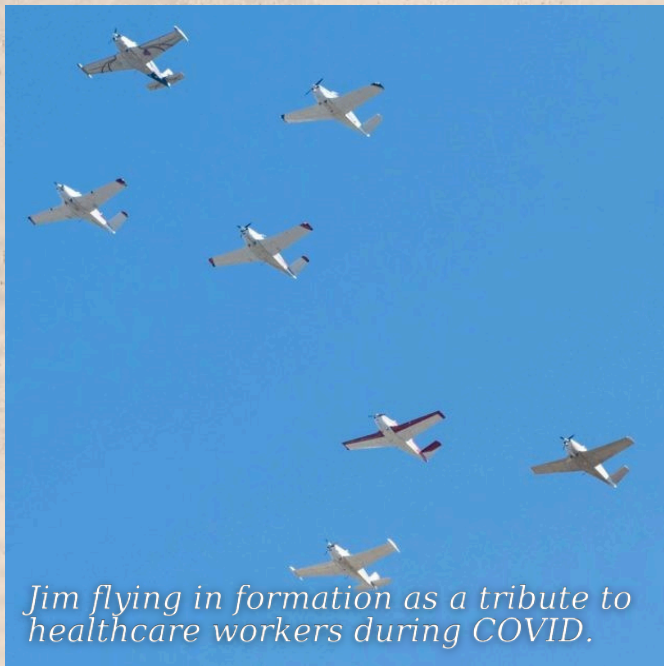
Even more special, Jim established the Northwest BeechBoys formation flying group. It was in part due to the elusiveness of formation flying that Jim wanted to dive into flight in the first place, and this group was the perfect outlet for a man of his nature. To cosmically highlight the group's name, the BeechBoys actually had the opportunity to see the Beach Boys perform at OshKosh one year, where they naturally gave the musical group a t-shirt for which they were named.

## LOOKING TO THE NEXT GENERATION

A community only offers as much as the members put in. While the aviation community in general (and KPWT's specifically) is a thriving environment, the importance of helping the upcoming generation of pilots never diminishes.

In discussion, there were two main things that seemed agreed upon to prevent people from entering aviation: money and fear. Jim urges all non-pilots to not let the prospect of costs stop them. He describes scholarship programs (such as from Washington Pilots Association and our very own Bremerton Pilots Association), joining a plane pool (sharing the costs of a plane), and starting small to be some of the easiest ways to get around this hurdle.

Jim notes that fear is best combatted with knowledge. It's a common saying that in earning you're pilot's license, you're truly "licensed to learn," but it's more than that. Jim believes in



*Jim flying in formation as a tribute to healthcare workers during COVID.*

discipline above all else. The purpose he views in flying can be summed up by four characteristics: challenge, precision, community, and efficiency. Jim also stresses that “if you take care of your plane, it’ll take care of you.” By staying disciplined and continuously learning, one can master the skill of flight and reap its benefits.

One of those benefits for Jim was a tale of love. One day, Jim’s friend asked him to go flying with him and his date, which Jim agreed to do as long as there was a date for him as well. Jim’s friend didn’t disappoint, and he met Elizabeth. Jim and Elizabeth have now been happily married for the last 56 years. You never know what following the aviation path will have in store for you!

The idea of fear surrounding flying is also something that Jim did have to combat in his personal life, even if the fear wasn’t his own. Although his father was a proud military man (and in the Air Force, no less), he was dead set against Jim flying. Luckily, Jim was just as dead set for flying. Jim snuck around and got his pilot’s license without his father’s knowledge or support, and eventually wore his father down in joining him for a flight. With the amusement of flying presented at his doorstep, Jim’s father fell so in love with the experience that he actually ended up getting his own private pilots license. If you’re still not sold on seeking out adventures in the sky, Jim suggests you try a Discovery Flight at Avian Flight Center, based here at Bremerton National Airport.



*Jim preparing paella to celebrate the flying season with local pilots.*

If there’s one thing to take away from Jim’s story, it’s to let nothing stop you. Jim has led a life full of passion, accomplishing capital projects for the airport, learning the joys of formation flying, and creating groups where everyone can belong, and yet he still looks for ways he can be helpful. In the meantime, we hope that you consider how you can help the community around you, whatever that may be, and do so fearlessly.

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Contact me for all things Port of Bremerton! If you would like to be featured in a future edition, I would love to hear from you.

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