



Willie Flight 82
Daedalians

MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

Greetings Fellow Daedalians,

Our next gathering will be on Thursday, March 12th at the Phoenix/Mesa DoubleTree Hotel. The address is 1011 W. Holmes Ave., Mesa, AZ 85210. The social hour starts at 1700 and the meeting will be called to order at 1800. Dinner will be served after the opening remarks and toasts. The menu will be barbeque pulled pork, rolls, macaroni and cheese, corn on the cob, Cole slaw, dill and egg potato salad, and red velvet mini cakes. Our after-dinner speaker will be Kurt Gearhart. The topic will be employment of the F-16.

We are in desperate need of volunteers to step up and fill leadership vacancies. We currently need a vice flight captain. We also need a flight scholarship chairman to lead a committee of flight members to screen and select deserving candidates for scholarships as well as participating in presenting awards at JROTC programs at local schools.

Important Dues Notice: To belong to a local Daedalian flight, you must be a current national member in good standing. Remember, national dues are separate from local dues. We currently have 69 members on our local roster. Of that number, 28 have paid their 2026 dues. Of the 41 who have not paid their 2026 dues, none have paid their 2025 dues and some have not paid dues as far back as 2023. We are not interested in collecting past dues. However, if you wish to stay on the roster, you must pay your 2026 dues. The Willie Flight 82 local dues for 2026 is \$50.00. If you have not paid your 2026 dues by March 31st, you will be dropped from the roster. If you haven't paid and plan to attend the March meeting, you may pay by cash or check. If you wish to remain on the roster and can't attend the March meeting, you can pay your 2026 dues by check made out to Willie Flight 82 and mailed to Willie Flight 82, P.O. Box 11261, Chandler, AZ 85248.

Attendance at our recent gatherings has averaged about 20 members. As a result, we have streamlined the RSVP system. When the monthly newsletter is published, every member will get an e-mail. The e-mail allows the member to click onto the Willie Flight 82 website with all the information about coming events as well as pictures from the last meeting, speakers' bios, and other information of interest. Instead of having members respond to element leaders, and then having element leaders respond to me (Rick Drown), it is easier for me to keep a running list of attendees as they respond. For the upcoming March 12th gathering, I need a response NLT Sunday, March 8th. You can send me an e-mail at rickdrown@msn.com or a text to 480-518-7665. If you have any questions, feel free to call me.

Stay safe and be well,

Rick Drown Cell #: 480-518-7665 Email: rickdrown@msn.com



Captain's Corner

Flight 82 members. This will be a short first corner. We talked about membership at our January meeting and discussed it even more at our staff meeting. One of the things we focused on was dues. So, we decided that if you haven't paid your local dues by the 31st of March, 2026 you will be dropped from our local membership roster. We want to see you at our meetings, so please pay your dues. See you in February.

Dave



HOW TO PAY YOUR 2026 DUES:

The Willie Flight local dues for 2026 is \$50.00. If you haven't paid and will be attending the February 12th meeting or the March 12th meeting and wish to pay your dues in person at either of those times, you may pay with cash or a check. If you wish to pay by mail, please send a check made out to Willie Flight 82. The mailing address is Willie Flight 82, P.O. Box 11261, Chandler, AZ 85248.

To help us make sure our roster is up to date, please include your rank and name, your spouse or significant other's name, your address, e-mail, and telephone number (cell and/or home). You can include a note with the information, or you can go to the "Willie Flight 82" website and download a dues form. It will say 2025 dues. Disregard. We are asking for 2026 dues. If you wish to add an additional contribution to the scholarship fund, your donation would be greatly appreciated.

Once again, please make sure you pay your dues not later than March 31st 2026 to remain on the roster.

Thank you,
Willie Flight 82 Staff

Check out the February Newsletter below for additional information.

Volabamus Volamus
Ron Perkins, Col USAF (Ret)
Immediate Past President



Photos from February Meeting.



March 2026 Speaker

Kurt A. Gearhart, Maj. USAF (Separated)

Kurt Gearhart graduated from the US Air Force Academy in 1978 and worked as an Air Force engineer until entering pilot training in 1979. Following a training command tour as a T-37 instructor, he was assigned F-16s at Nellis AFB. Kurt had three assignments in the F-16 which took him to all parts of the world including, Korea, the Philippines, and Italy, as well as the two stateside training bases of Luke AFB and McDill AFB, FL. He flew in many Red Flag and Cope Thunder (Clark AB, the Philippines) exercises, often as a mission or package commander. He never flew an F-16 with GPS and was never involved in any military conflicts although students he trained flew in Desert Storm and later conflicts. Kurt acquired over 2500 hours in the T-37 and F-16 and separated from the Air Force in 1992 at Langley AFB, VA where he was a staff officer in the F-16 training department of Tactical Air Command (changed to Air Combat Command while he was there).



He then began his career at Southwest Airlines where he flew for over 26 years retiring in December of 2020. He currently resides in and helps manage Stellar Airpark in Chandler Arizona. He is an avid photographer and videographer and enjoys flying his Boeing Stearman and Glasair II. He also helps manage his local EAA Chapter and organizes the monthly meetings and a Stellar Airpark annual Young Eagles event every December (a program established by the Experimental Aircraft Association to provide free rides to kids 8-17 years of age). Kurt is partners in a 1943 Stearman aircraft that he keeps in his hangar at the airpark. Kurt flies the Stearman with several other Stearman pilots in East Phoenix area. They are FAST (Formation and Safety Team) trained and perform formation flybys every year for, Phoenix, Mesa, Maricopa, Laveen, and Casa Grande local parades, and missing man flights for veteran holidays and funerals.