

# ***2023 ANNUAL REPORT***



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Revised 1 January 2024



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## **1. A Message from our Founder**

As AvSport students and clients are most likely aware, my wife, Muriel Hykes, passed away last year after a prolonged illness. For those interested, her full obituary appears in Section 12 of this Report. Regrettably, the level of care necessitated by her medical condition resulted in cancelation and subsequent rescheduling of numerous flight lessons and maintenance activities at AvSport, resulting in operating essentially at break-even (as detailed elsewhere herein). I have thus been giving considerable thought to our continued operations at Lock Haven. The change in my personal situation has dictated that I now downsize, and my children have been urging me to relocate, in order to be closer to family.

In parallel with these developments, the City of Lock Haven (which owns AvSport's office and hangars) has been considering possible changes which may significantly alter flight operations at Piper Memorial Airport. And, though I started AvSport upon retiring from academia, it is clear that I have been a dismal failure at retirement. While I fully intend to continue flying (and instructing) for as long as my health and energy permit, it is getting to be time for me to scale back operations just a bit. So, as I approach my eighth decade, I realize that all of these circumstances are conspiring to propel me in a new direction.

After considerable thought (and two trips back to my native California, in October and December, to explore options), I have decided to move back West. So, sometime during 2024, AvSport of Lock Haven will cease operation. I am committed to staying long enough to get my four current primary students licensed, which means the Spring and Summer quarters will likely continue as scheduled – but I will no longer be taking on new students at Piper Memorial Airport. I will continue to serve my current maintenance clients for the next few months, after which I will endeavor to refer them to qualified shops elsewhere. Thus, although I am in the process of establishing AvSport LLC as a California corporation, its Pennsylvania counterpart will be gradually phased out.

Some of you may be aware that I was a founding member of the Frazier Lake Airpark (1C9) in Hollister CA, am still a part owner of that facility, and have a large hangar there, where AvSport will live on (at least for a while). Starting this Fall, you will be able to find me there, and will always be welcome, in Hangar B6. My bimonthly EAA Webinars will continue to be offered online, with a video archive continuing on my website, AvSport.org. I plan to continue as a traveling Designated Pilot Examiner, serving the larger community as demand dictates. And I expect still to make trips back to Lock Haven from time to time, to remain close to the many friends I have made here over the past three and a half decades.

I realize these changes will pose some inconvenience for my existing students and clients, which I will do whatever I can to mitigate. I remain grateful to all who have enriched both my business and my life during AvSport's past fifteen years. Your friendship and support will never be forgotten.

Safe Skies, Paul

## **2. Vision and Mission Statements**



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## **Our Vision:**

**AvSport envisions a General Aviation renaissance, facilitated by quality training of Sport Pilots and the availability of modern Light Sport Aircraft.**

## **Our Mission:**

**AvSport enhances aviation safety and enjoyment, by offering:**

-  a rigorous, though flexible, flight training curriculum
-  experienced, professional Certified Flight Instructors
-  well maintained advanced Light Sport Aircraft
-  modern and accessible instructional materials
-  individualized instruction
-  an affordable aviation experience

### **3. Facilities**





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The General Aviation Terminal, located in Hangar One at the Piper Memorial Airport (KLHV) in scenic Central PA, houses our flight school office, restrooms, conference room, weather briefing room, flight simulator, and pilot's lounge. Ideally suited to Sport Pilot training, Lock Haven is a non-towered general aviation airport with a 3800 by 75 foot paved runway, and a parallel 2200 by 100 foot turf strip. The paved runway is equipped with pilot controlled lighting for night operations, as well as runway end identifier lights and a two-light visual approach slope indicator at each end. Our aircraft storage and maintenance activities are housed in two separate T-hangars, directly across the parking lot from the Pilot's Lounge. A camping trailer on the field is available for the use of students from outside the

local area wishing to stay overnight. Several local hotels also offer pleasant



accommodations with flight school discounts.





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## 4. Aircraft

Available for both flight instruction and rental by qualified pilots, AvSport of Lock Haven provides modern, well equipped Light Sport aircraft, manufactured to exacting ASTM International standards. Our current primary trainer is an Evektor SportStar Max (our second of this make and model) purchased in July 2015.

Manufactured in the Czech Republic, our SportStar is categorized by the Federal Aviation Administration as both a Special Light Sport Aircraft (S-LSA) and a Technically Advanced Aircraft (TAA), and is equipped with the latest “dual glass cockpit” redundant electronic flight and engine instruments. Its advanced avionics package and fully coupled autopilot make this TAA suitable not just for Sport Pilot training, but for our more advanced students, including Private, Commercial, and Instrument Pilot candidates.

We also added this exotic new aircraft to our flight line in 2021. Our rare Bristell TDO Carbon Edition is perhaps the sleekest and most comfortable Light Sport Aircraft in the fleet. Unfortunately, since insurance costs preclude offering primary instruction in a tailwheel aircraft, the TDO is being used primarily as a demonstrator aircraft, as well as for providing personal and business transportation to AvSport staff.

## 5. Drone Pilot Training





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Commercial operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (commonly called Drones) has emerged just recently as a major growth segment of the aviation industry. In late June of 2016, the Federal Aviation Administration published rules for licensing of commercial drone pilots, a process which began on 29 August. AvSport immediately began developing curriculum, and the week the new rules went into effect, became the first flight school in the nation to train and graduate Remote Pilots with a Small Unmanned Aircraft System rating.

According to former FAA Administrator Michael Huerta, the new FAA rating is expected to generate more than \$82 Billion in economic activity, and generate over 100,000 new jobs, over the next ten years. "The early 20th Century ushered in the Air Age," notes AvSport Chief Flight Instructor Prof. H. Paul Shuch, the nation's third licensed commercial drone pilot. "The mid 20th Century represented the start of the Space Age, and the early 21st Century marks the beginning of the Drone Age. The unmanned aerial systems industry is currently in its infancy, with commercial interests just beginning to discover the wealth of applications which can be fulfilled with these small, inexpensive, and very capable remotely piloted vehicles."

To date, AvSport has graduated 21 commercial drone pilots, who have used their Unmanned Aircraft Systems for accident investigation, commercial photography, real estate appraisal, law enforcement, research and development, and site surveys in support of broadband wireless telecommunications.

"Drones are the fastest growing segment of transportation in our nation and it is vitally important that they are safely integrated into the national airspace," said former Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao. "As a pilot, my eye is always on safety first," said former FAA Administrator Steve Dickson. "Safety is a joint responsibility between government, pilots, the drone community, the general public and many others who make our nation so creative and innovative."

AvSport is proud to offer potential commercial drone operators an opportunity to get involved on the ground floor of what promises to be aviation's next Great Frontier. Three quarterly Remote Pilot courses are now scheduled through the end of the 2024 calendar year.



## 6. Curriculum

Developed by a retired college professor with 50 years of experience in higher education, AvSport's rigorous though flexible flight training curriculum allows students to obtain the new Sport Pilot license in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional Private Pilot















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rating, without compromising skills or safety. Students can choose between an accelerated six-week training program, and a less intensive program of conveniently scheduled lessons. We are an FAR Part 61 flight school and TSA-approved Alien Flight Student Program provider, nominated by our students for the AOPA Flight Training Excellence Award. Flight training and individualized ground instruction are integrated, and are supplemented by reading assignments, practice tests, assigned videos, and online PowerPoint lessons to allow each student to progress at his or her own pace. To date, more than 80% of AvSport's students accomplishing their first solo flight have gone on to become licensed pilots, more than half of our graduates are now aircraft owners, and a quarter of our licensed Sport Pilots have continued their studies, earning their Private Pilot ratings and above.

## **AvSport's dozen standard training packages now include:**

-  "Taste of Freedom," a half-hour Discovery Flight
-  "Gateway to the Sky" Introductory Lesson (1 hour of flight and 2 of ground training)
-  "Simulator Club," unlimited use of our Redbird Jay flight simulator for a flat annual fee
-  "Flight FUNdamentals," a four-lesson, minimal-commitment sport flying experience
-  "Six Weeks, Rain or Shine," zero hours to first solo flight, in an intensive pre-solo module
-  "Six More Weeks of Heaven," first solo flight to license, in an intensive post-solo module
-  "Airspace Ace." Earn all 3 Sport Pilot controlled airspace endorsements in just 4 days
-  "Out After Dark," a 2-day introduction to night flying
-  "Head in the Clouds," a 2-day introduction to instrument flying
-  "Pilot Downsizer," a 3-day Light Sport Aircraft transition for licensed Private Pilots
-  "The Next Step Up," a 6-week Private Pilot add-on module for licensed Sport Pilots
-  "Remote Pilot In Command," a 3-day Commercial Drone Operator certification course



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## 7. Students

Despite operating at reduced capacity, during 2023 three AvSport students accomplished their first solo flights, and two earned Private Pilot certificates. Our flight instructors conducted several Discovery Flights and Introductory Lessons, gave one licensed pilot his 24-month flight review, and provided recurrency ground instruction for one Private Pilot. In his capacity as an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner, our founder and Chief Flight Instructor conducted several Practical Tests, resulting in him licensing four new Sport Pilots. Our students, who range in age from 16 to 80, have come to Lock Haven for training from as far away as California, Canada, China, Connecticut, Denmark, England, Florida, France, Georgia, India, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Saudi Arabia, South Carolina, Spain, and Sweden. They represent a wide range of professional and educational backgrounds.

As students graduate from our Sport Pilot training program, some have chosen to become renter pilots, who continue to enjoy the recreational use of our aircraft (while allowing active students first scheduling priority). Others have continued on to earn higher ratings, and exercise additional pilot privileges. AvSport promotes a sense of community among our students, instructors, prospects, and graduates, by sponsoring Safety Seminars, graduation parties, and (sadly) memorial gatherings, as well as hosting movie nights complete with popcorn and aviation films, and monthly Hangar Flying sessions featuring coffee, donuts, education, singing, conversation, and fellowship. Recovering from a few years of COVID-19 restrictions, in 2023 we continued these in-person gatherings. AvSport endeavors to foster an old-time flying club atmosphere (much to the chagrin of our accountant!).

## 8. Events





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The premiere aviation event at Piper Memorial Airport is the annual Sentimental Journey to Cub Haven fly-in. Each summer, AvSport participates by providing Discovery Flights, safety seminars, and aircraft for static display. Here, our first SportStar trainer attracts the attention of some of our Amish neighbors. Our Chief Flight Instructor has also offered free safety seminars at Sentimental Journey “every year since before I can remember.”

Fostering a sense of community, our students, graduates, renter pilots, instructors, and friends gather once again in the pilot's lounge or hangars at the Piper Memorial Airport, on the first Saturday morning of each month for free coffee, donuts, and hangar flying. We were pleased that we resumed this activity in 2023, following a few years of pandemic restrictions.



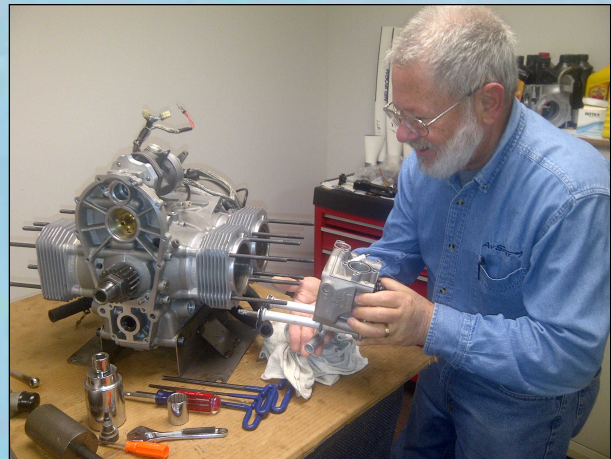


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## 9. Maintenance

AvSport's two leased T-hangars at Piper Memorial Airport are conveniently located directly across the parking lot from the Pilot's Lounge and our flight school office in Hangar One. There, in addition to storing our trainer and demo aircraft, we perform condition inspections, preventive maintenance, prebuy examinations, major and minor repairs, and alterations to our own fleet, as well as customers' Special and Experimental Light Sport Aircraft. We are one of only two Rotax Engines designated Independent Repair Centres in Pennsylvania. Our Director of Maintenance is a recipient of the FAA's Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award, honoring over fifty years of contributions to aviation safety. He remains rated by the FAA to inspect and repair Light Sport Airplanes, Gyroplanes, Powered Parachutes, Gliders, and Weight Shift Control Aircraft.





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## **10. Financials**

Sport flying being primarily a recreational activity, AvSport's financial position is both highly seasonal, and quite variable, depending as it does upon the local community's aggregate discretionary income. This past year, AvSport's operations have been somewhat curtailed, with our 2023 revenues thus reduced from previous years.

Our fixed and variable operating expenses have remained stable throughout 2023, despite rising fuel costs, and a significant jump in aircraft insurance premiums. Although in post-pandemic 2022 we returned to operating in the black, we did finish 2023 slightly below break-even. AvSport can still boast having earned a profit in eleven out of our fourteen full years of operation. The charts below detail our operating revenues and expenses for the year just ended, exclusive of amortization of capital investment.

Unfortunately, supply chain issues continue to impact availability of parts and supplies, which last year forced AvSport reluctantly to increase its course tuition, pay-as-you-go instructor fees, and aircraft rental rates. It is our hope to hold these rates steady throughout 2024.

The Pie charts and Bar Graphs on the following pages provide a breakdown of our Training Revenues, Service Revenues, Fixed Expenses, and Variable Expenses for calendar year 2023.



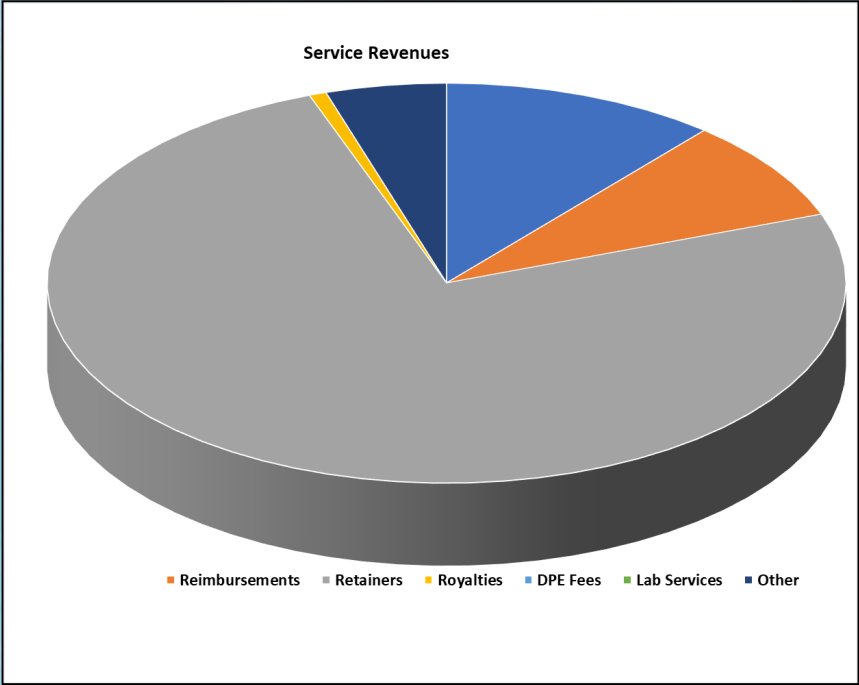
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## Training Revenues



## Service Revenues

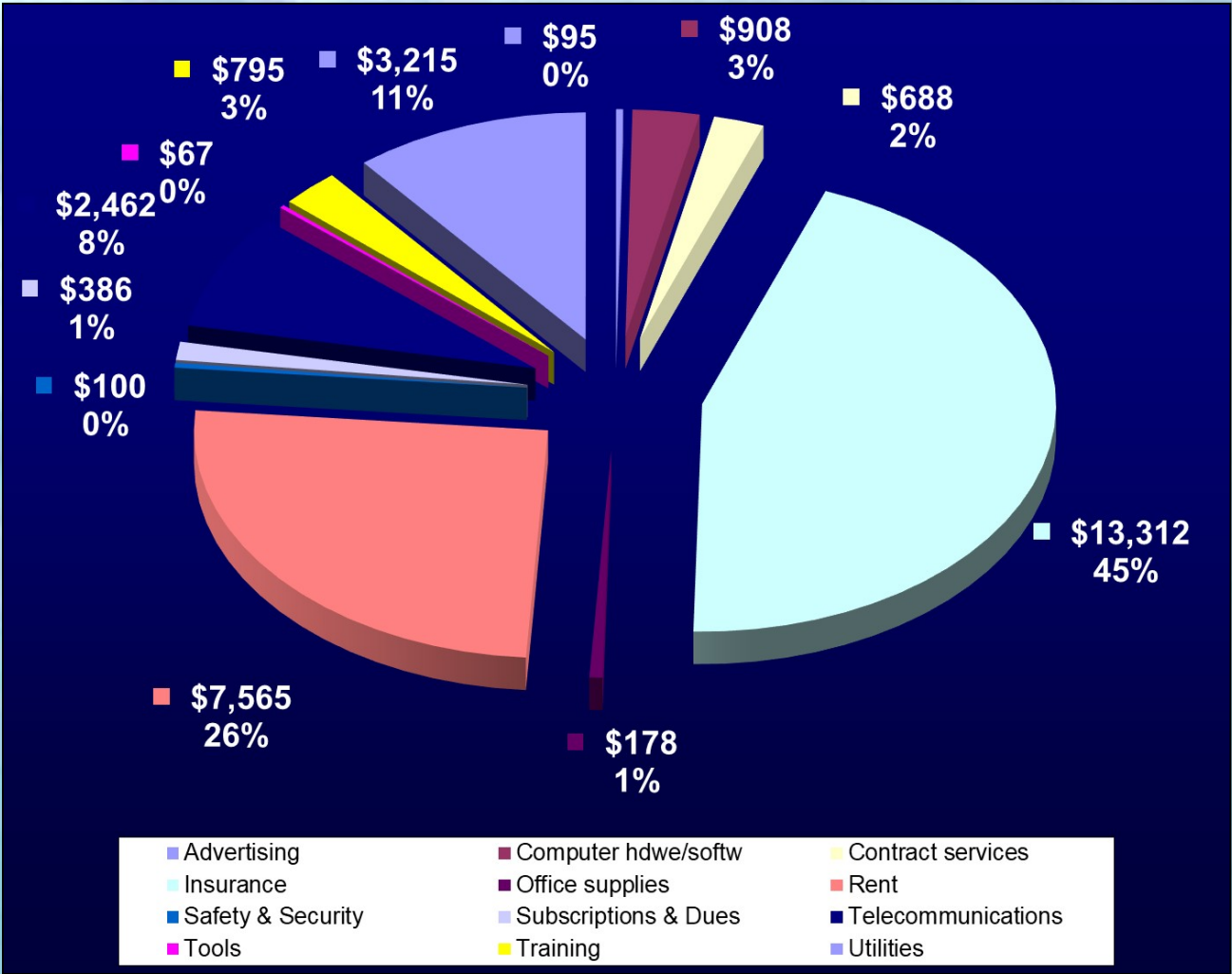




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## 2023 Fixed Expenses

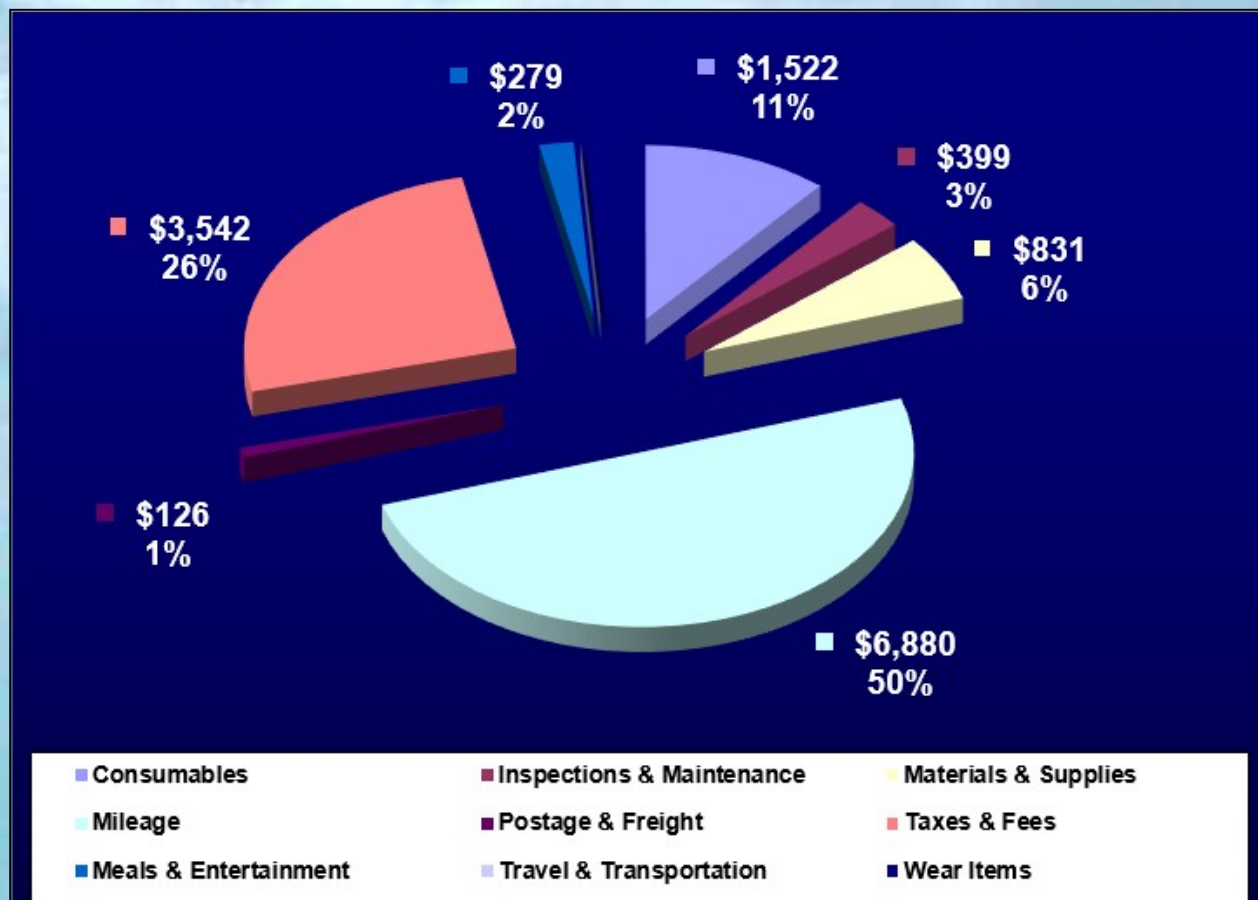




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## 2023 Variable Expenses

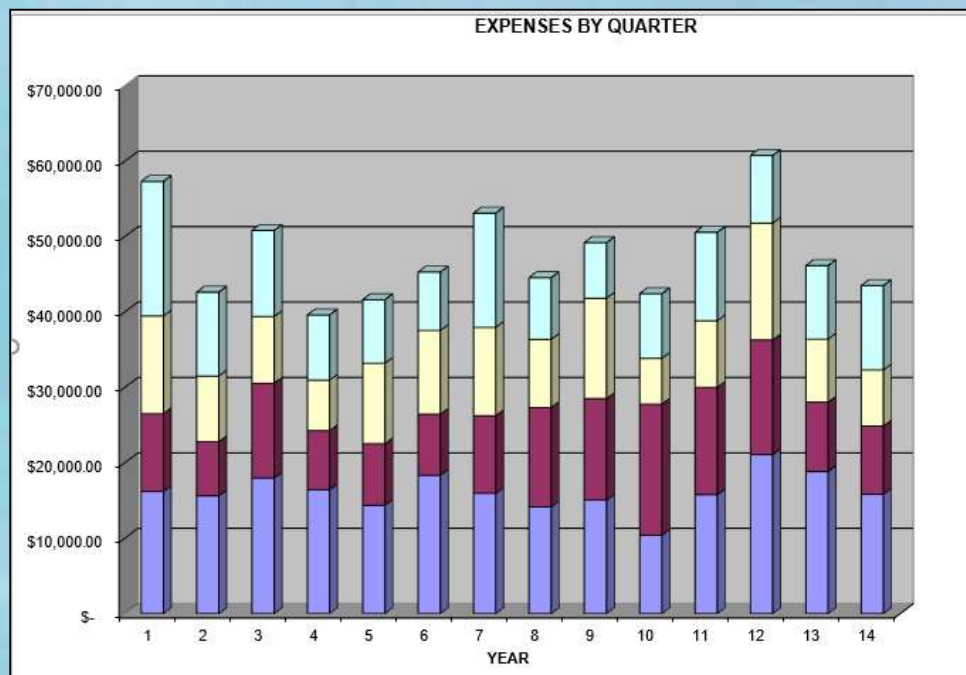
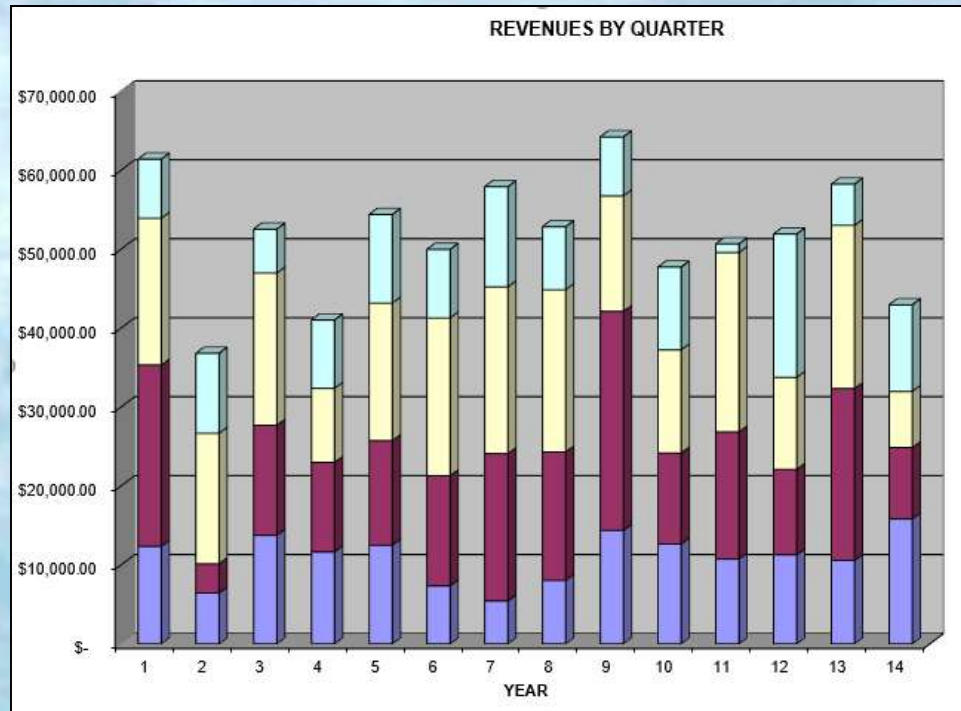




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## Cumulative Revenue and Expense History





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## Return on Investment (exclusive of capital acquisitions and amortization)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenues</u>			<u>Expenses</u>			<u>Profit(Loss)</u>
	<u>Training</u>	<u>Services</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Fixed</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Total</u>	
2010	45,871	17,843	63,714	27,379	30,087	57,466	6,248
2011	21,562	15,252	36,815	18,738	23,897	42,635	(5,820)
2012	29,687	22,863	52,551	20,835	29,985	50,820	1,730
2013	20,821	20,218	41,040	17,774	21,835	39,610	1,430
2014	26,646	27,759	54,405	15,871	25,768	41,639	12,766
2015	30,157	19,825	49,982	22,617	22,681	45,298	4,684
2016	34,438	23,483	57,921	28,630	24,489	53,119	4,802
2017	25,819	27,034	52,852	20,461	24,089	44,550	8,302
2018	42,458	21,771	64,230	20,973	28,226	49,198	15,032
2019	20,990	26,754	47,743	24,420	18,013	42,433	5,310
2020	41,828	14,849	56,677	25,908	25,617	51,525	5,152
2021	39,373	12,926	52,299	31,929	29,569	61,494	(9,198)
2022	37,475	20,775	58,250	27,005	19,154	46,158	12,092
2023	32,542	10,651	43,193	29,771	13,740	45,511	(318)



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## 11. Congratulations to our 2023 Graduates!



**Solo Student Wayne**



**Solo Student Ken**



**Solo Student Curtis**



**Private Pilot Jennifer**



**Private Pilot Brad**



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## 12. In Memoriam – Muriel Hykes

Piper Memorial Airport pilots, flight students, and aircraft owners who have attended social gatherings at AvSport of Lock Haven over the past fourteen years will probably have met Muriel Hykes, the wife of AvSport's founder and Chief Flight Instructor. We are saddened to report that she passed away early in the morning of 28 July 2023, following a lengthy battle with congestive heart failure.

Although from a prominent General Aviation family, Muriel was not a pilot. She grew up (quite literally) on the Bloomsburg airport, spending part of her childhood living in an apartment above the Columbia Aviation maintenance hangar. Her uncle, Fred Vedic, operated Columbia and served as airport manager. Her father, Robert Hykes, was chief pilot. Her mother, Joyce Kramer Hykes, and aunt, Janet Kramer Vedic, were the airport secretaries. Her cousins did all the maintenance, and her grandmother, Leerah Kramer, did the rib stitching on the company's Piper Cubs. Yet, despite this rich pedigree, Muriel was the only member of her family never to pursue an aviation career. Rather, she became a biochemist, with degrees in biology and psychology, as well as teaching credentials and a strong research interest in neuropharmacology.

Muriel was forced by illness to drop out of medical school at LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. Despite this, thanks to the advent of the Internet, she managed to establish herself as an independent science consultant, educational advocate, and practitioner of the alternative healing arts. She often said that if she had been healthier, she would probably have ended up "just another asshole MD-PhD researcher working for Big Pharma."

When Muriel's husband, Prof. H. Paul Shuch, retired from a distinguished academic career in 2007, he combined his lifetime of flying with his longtime commitment to education, and founded AvSport, the sport aviation training center in Lock Haven. Although she considered General Aviation primarily a convenient means of transportation between distant points, Muriel spent a good deal of time on the airport, making students and visitors feel comfortable and welcome.

In December of 2021, Muriel was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. She had always been immunocompromised, ever since she had to drop out of med school. But she always toughed it out, always pushed forward, always found a way. This time, her medical needs exceeded her resilience. She spent months in a succession of hospitals and nursing homes, dying just blocks from the airport, at UPMC Lock Haven hospital, at 5:18 AM on 28 July 2023. Paul was sitting by her side, holding her hand, when she breathed her last breaths.





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## 13. Resources

For additional information about AvSport of Lock Haven, its aircraft, instructors, training materials, curriculum, and the new Sport Pilot license, please see the following pages of the AvSport web site:

 Main Page	<a href="http://AvSport.org">http://AvSport.org</a>
 Main Menu	<a href="http://AvSport.org/menu.htm">http://AvSport.org/menu.htm</a>
 General Information	<a href="http://AvSport.org/about">http://AvSport.org/about</a>
 Press Kit	<a href="http://AvSport.org/press">http://AvSport.org/press</a>
 Photo Gallery	<a href="http://AvSport.org/photos">http://AvSport.org/photos</a>
 Video Gallery	<a href="http://AvSport.org/press/video.htm">http://AvSport.org/press/video.htm</a>
 Flight Instruction	<a href="http://AvSport.org/cfi">http://AvSport.org/cfi</a>
 Webinar Videos	<a href="http://AvSport.org/webinars">http://AvSport.org/webinars</a>
 Light Sport Aircraft	<a href="http://AvSport.org/acft">http://AvSport.org/acft</a>
 Simulator Club	<a href="http://AvSport.org/simulator">http://AvSport.org/simulator</a>
 Maintenance Services	<a href="http://AvSport.org/maint">http://AvSport.org/maint</a>
 Remote Pilot Instruction	<a href="http://drone-training.org">http://drone-training.org</a>
 Pilot Examiner Services	<a href="http://SportPilotExaminer.US">http://SportPilotExaminer.US</a>
 Upcoming Events	<a href="http://AvSport.org/events">http://AvSport.org/events</a>
 Contact Information	<a href="http://AvSport.org/contact">http://AvSport.org/contact</a>
 Search Engine	<a href="http://AvSport.org/search">http://AvSport.org/search</a>

or, stop by Hangar One at the Piper Memorial Airport, and pay us a visit.



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## 14. Four Quadrant Briefing Charts:



URL: <http://www.AvSport.org>

### Sport Pilot Flight Training Curriculum Development

Chief Flight Instructor: Professor H. Paul Shuch, CFII



**The Problem:**  
The completion rate of persons pursuing flight training in the US is below 20%, an all-time low. This is generally attributed to the increasing complexity of airspace, the introduction of advanced aircraft and avionics systems, and the high cost of aircraft ownership, rental, and operation. However, despite significant advances in both aeronautical technology and educational methodology, pilot training curricula have remained virtually unchanged since prior to the Second World War.

**The Proposal:**  
The introduction by ASTM of the Light Sport Aircraft certification category, along with the establishment by FAA of the Sport Pilot License, presents an opportunity for a significant modernization of the flight training curriculum.

**Vision Statement:**  
AvSport envisions a General Aviation renaissance, facilitated by quality training of Sport Pilots and the availability of modern Light Sport Aircraft.

**Mission Statement:**  
AvSport enhances aviation safety and enjoyment, by offering:

- a rigorous flight training curriculum
- experienced, professional Certified Flight Instructors
- well maintained advanced Light Sport Aircraft
- modern and accessible instructional materials
- individualized instruction
- an affordable aviation experience

**Schedule Milestone and Accomplishments:**

September 2009	(Technology Readiness Level 1)
• Establish AvSport as an FAR Part 61 flight school; activate website	(Technology Readiness Level 2)
December 2009	• Purchase of Evektor SportStar Light Sport Aircraft trainer
January 2010	• Present business plan to Look Haven City Council, lease facilities
February 2010	(Technology Readiness Level 4)
• Introduce "Three Weeks, Rain or Shine" Pre-Solo intensive course	(Technology Readiness Level 5)
April 2010	• Solo first primary student
May 2010	(Technology Readiness Level 6)
• Introduce "Three More Weeks of Heaven" Post-Solo intensive course	(Technology Readiness Level 7)
June 2010	• Graduate first licensed Sport Pilot
November 2010	(Technology Readiness Level 8)
• Complete FAA mechanics training; establish maintenance shop	(Technology Readiness Level 9)
March 2011	• Introduce "Pilot Downsize" LSA transition course curriculum

Rev. 16 November 2011

TRL = 9

**Keywords:** Flight Instruction, General Aviation, Flight School, Sport Pilot, Light Sport Aircraft, LSA, ASTM, FAA



URL: <http://www.Drone-Training.org>

### Remote Pilot Training Curriculum Development

Chief Flight Instructor: Professor H. Paul Shuch, CFII



**The Opportunity:**  
Commercial unmanned aircraft systems (commonly known as drones) represent the next major growth area for General Aviation. Whereas the early 20th Century ushered in the Air Age, and the mid 20th Century represented the start of the Space Age, one could call the early 21st Century the beginning of the Drone Age. The unmanned aircraft system industry is currently in its infancy, with commercial interests just beginning to discover the wealth of applications which can be fulfilled with these small, inexpensive, and very capable remotely piloted vehicles.

**The Proposal:**  
Building on its success as an FAA Part 61 Flight School, AvSport seeks to develop a comprehensive drone training program, whereby our students can be among the first in the nation to earn an FAA Remote Pilot certificate with a small UAS rating.

**Vision Statement:**  
AvSport envisions a renaissance in commercial Unmanned Aircraft System (drone) operation, supporting a variety of industries, facilitated by quality training of Remote Pilots that emphasizes airmanship, awareness, and crew resource management.

**Mission Statement:**  
AvSport enhances commercial drone safety, by offering:

- a rigorous ground and flight training curriculum
- experienced, professional Certified Flight Instructors
- well maintained advanced Unmanned Aircraft Systems
- modern, computerized instructional materials
- small classes emphasizing hands-on instruction
- an affordable and accessible Remote Pilot training program

**Schedule Milestone and Accomplishments:**

December 2015	(Technology Readiness Level 1)
• FAA first requires registration of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems	(Technology Readiness Level 2)
January 2016	• AvSport creates Drone-Training.org website, begins curriculum development
June 2016	(Technology Readiness Level 3)
• FAA publishes FAR Part 107 rules for commercial drone operation, licensing	(Technology Readiness Level 4)
June 2016	• AvSport purchases its first quad-copter trainer, publishes curriculum
July 2016	• AvSport chief flight instructor completes online FAASTeam drone course
August 2016	(Technology Readiness Level 6)
• FAA implements FAR Part 107 rules for commercial drone operation	(Technology Readiness Level 7)
August 2016	• AvSport chief flight instructor becomes first Remote Pilot licensed in US
September 2016	(Technology Readiness Level 8)
• AvSport conducts its first Remote Pilot course	(Technology Readiness Level 9)
September 2016	• FAA issues Remote Pilot certificates to first AvSport graduates

Rev. 1 January 2017

TRL = 9

**Keywords:** Remote Pilot, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Remotely Piloted Vehicles, Flight Training, Drone Safety