

The Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

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There's A Buzz Around Columbia Airport

This spring has brought several sightings of rattlesnakes around Columbia Airport. So far we have seen them around the armory, the Air Med helicopter pad, the Airport Administration offices, the camp ground and, believe it or not, under an aircraft tire! A local snake expert has suggested that recent construction along Airport Road has forced snakes out of the boulder patch toward the airport.

Elwin Smith, one of our local pilots, was pre-flying his C-182RG and when he kicked out the wheel chock, he heard a buzz! There under his tire was a juvenile rattler all coiled and cozy. Elwin suggested that all pilots need to be careful when removing wheel chocks! Although startled, Elwin was relieved he used his shoe to remove the chock and not his hand! Keep in mind that Elwin's plane has small tires because it is a retractable. Can you imagine what size rattler could hide under my Cub's big tires?

I suggest everyone be especially cautious for snakes around the airport this spring and summer. If you do encounter a rattlesnake, please contact my office, Dennis or Fred. We will carefully remove the snake and relocate it to a more appropriate location. Snakes are a healthy part of our ecosystem and help keep the rodent population down. Please don't kill them.



Father's Day Fly-In Volunteers Needed

Once again we are preparing for our Annual Father's Day Fly-In. This event is certainly a whole lot of fun for both the pilots and the general public. Putting on a successful event requires a lot of planning and a large number of volunteers. Every year we have people who support aviation in Tuolumne County contribute one or more days of their time to help us make the Fly-In a great success. If you would like to help with this year's Fly-In please plan on attending the two volunteers meetings which will be held at 4:30 PM on Thursday, June 9th and Thursday, June 16th in Alan Wallace's hangar. The meeting on the 16th is a mandatory safety meeting for all volunteers.

Some of the areas where you can help out are constructing the temporary control tower, setting up the sound system, roping off the ramp, and setting up the shade tents all on Friday, June 17th. During the Fly-In we need help parking planes and cars, driving shuttles, taking money at the gates, and more. Volunteers will be provided with complimentary food and drinks during the Fly-In and those that help set up on Friday can enjoy a hamburger at our Early Bird Burger Burn.

All volunteers must fill out a Volunteer Form which can be obtained at the Columbia Airport office, Bald Eagle Aviation, Springfield Flying Service or on our website at www.fathersdayflyin.com. Staff T-shirts will be provided to the volunteers at cost (\$6 for S, M, L & XL; \$8 for XXL and \$10 for XXXL). The volunteer T-shirts will have a different logo and color than the ones sold to the public.

Please help us make this year's Fly-In a big success by contributing some of your time.

The poster features a biplane flying over a runway labeled "COLUMBIA AIRPORT". The text "2005 39th ANNUAL FATHER'S DAY FLY-IN" is prominently displayed, along with the date "JUNE 18 & 19". Below the date, it says "Experimental, Classic and Warbird Aircraft". A list of events includes: Aircraft Judging, Airplane & Biplane Rides, Aviation Vendor Booths, Fly-In Camping, CDF Aircraft Demonstrations, Food & Beverage Booths, Warbird Fly-Bys, and Free Parking. Another list of events includes: Friday Night Burger Burn 6:00 to 8:30 PM, Traditional Father's Day Pancake Breakfast Saturday and Sunday 7-11, Tri Tip Dinner and Entertainment by Chris Miller & Friends Saturday Night 5:30 PM at the TCAA Bldg., and Spot Landing & Flour Bombing Contest Sunday AM Sign Up by 9:00 AM Sunday, Contest Starts 10:00 AM. Contact information provided is "www.FathersDayFlyIn.com", "Columbia Airport Office (209) 533-5685", "Temporary Tower Freq. 126.4 Ground 121.05", and "Pilots Be Advised: Airport will be Notam Closed 12 to 3 PM Saturday & Sunday. Please Check Notam."

Stupid Pilot Tricks

Useless Runway (Continued)

My last month's article was well received by several local pilots and prompted some interesting responses. To refresh your memory, I wrote about watching a twin engine aircraft belonging to a Northern California Flight School do a mid field take-off from Columbia's Runway 17 into rising terrain, leaving it little margin for error and no margin for mechanical failure. With permission from the writer, I am printing an excerpt from an email sent to me following last months Manager's Approach.

"I liked the article in your newsletter on using all available runway. I always do, especially now. One day at PDX I had the unfortunate luck to have an engine fire on departure. Because I used all of the available runway (the longest runway in Oregon!) I was able to cut the throttle and land straight ahead, just like I was taught. I had become airborne, and I

used every bit of that runway to land and stop. The fire burned so hot that all of the accessories burned up and p-leads shorted to ground and the engine quit before I touched down. The cockpit filled with a dense black smoke, and I was worried that I would be overcome by smoke before I could get it back on the ground (which seemed to take forever!).

The tower sent out five fire trucks and two emergency vehicles, foamed the runway, and shut down PDX. It was really scary when I inspected the plane and found the carpet burned up around all of the holes in the firewall where the flames had entered the cockpit. I am convinced that the very small act of going to the end of the runway saved my life or at least saved me from potential serious injury (or possibly a deadly decision to try to go around). As you might guess, I made the six o'clock news. One of my friends happened to be watching and videotaped it for me. I still have a copy to remind me of why I use all the available runway on each take-off."

I really appreciate all feedback on my newsletter, especially information that reinforces aviation safety. All of us learn from the actions of others. Hopefully, we learn how to be more responsible pilots and to fly safely; not how to take chances, which tends to give aviation a bad reputation.

Stupid Pilot Tricks is a monthly article that attempts to raise awareness of safety and courtesy issues around our airports.

The Manager's Approach is a monthly publication from the Tuolumne County Airports Director for the purpose of keeping our community informed of local aviation and airport issues. You can contact me at:

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