

# The Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

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## *Father's Day Fly-In A Big Success*

The 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Father's Day Fly-In was a great success. Our attendance was up over last year on both Saturday and Sunday. Without a doubt, the highlights were the CDF aerial demonstration complete with a live air control broadcast and the Hawker Seafury demonstration with colored smoke on his wingtips. I want to thank everyone that helped put on the event especially the volunteers and co-chairmen. The Fly-In is always a lot of work, but having superb volunteers made my job much easier.

## *Aero Splash*

I have made a point to mention when there is a new business on the field as an introduction and to make pilots aware of the services they provide. Well, we have a new endeavor at Columbia Airport, at least for this summer. The business is Aero Splash and they provide airplane washing and detailing services. These kids work hard and do an excellent job. They are reliable and professional. If your plane looks a little dirty and needs a good wash and wax, give Aero Splash a call at 352-2938. I'm sure you will be pleased with their service and performance.

## *Solar Powered DAD*

We are well into summer and the season when pilots feel the lack of performance of their aircraft due to density altitude effects. The FARs require pilots to know the performance capabilities of their aircraft in high density conditions. Do you know how to calculate the density altitude based on

field elevation, barometric pressure, relative humidity and temperature? Probably not! You depend on tables in your Pilot Operating Handbook, your altimeter and your OAT gauge to get an estimate of the density altitude, then extrapolate your aircraft's performance. Now you can visually see the density altitude at the run-up area for Columbia's Runway 17 thanks to Aero Info, Inc. testing their new solar powered Density Altitude Display commonly referred to as a DAD. This unit is easy to read in bright daylight and has the advantage that it can be located in an optimum position without the need for electrical power. Aero Info is a local Sonora company which manufactures the DAD and they are using Columbia Airport as a test location for their solar powered unit. Check it out the next time you fly, and check your plane's expected performance at that density altitude. Please fly safe.



## *DF&G Flying Fish*

Many non-pilots sometimes wonder what the value of an airport is to the community. We had another example of the usefulness of Columbia Airport last week when the Department of Fish & Game arrived with their KingAir to pick up a load of fish! Well if you call little one inch long wiggly things

fish, then that is what they did. The DF&G was planting rainbow trout in the high country lakes by releasing the little fish during low speed, low altitude passes over selected lakes. The fish were raised at the Moccasin Hatchery which made the Columbia Airport the logical location for loading the fish on the aircraft. I guess people that fish trout should now appreciate the usefulness of our airports!



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### *Stupid Pilot Tricks*

All pilots know that we are suppose to check for NOTAMs before we fly anywhere, especially these days where there could be a fire fighting TFR for aircraft working a wildfire or at worst a Presidential TFR. No one wants to get busted for flying into a TFR along your route of flight. Also, no one wants to get caught landing at a closed airport. Well that is what happened twice during our Father's Day Fly-In. The closure of Columbia Airport during our flight demonstrations was published in a NOTAM. But, there were a few pilots that just didn't check the NOTAMS before flying to Columbia. We know this because we had the FAA controllers monitoring both 122.975 and 123.05 (the old CTAF) during the airport closure and they told several pilots the airport was closed.

On Saturday a plane arrived not talking on the radio at all. The FAA controllers tried to contact the pilot on several frequencies without success. Fortunately, the Air Boss saw him coming and kept the demonstration aircraft away from the intruding aircraft. The warbird ramp crew signaled the aircraft

to a corner of the ramp where the FAA had a talk with the pilot.

On Sunday we had another aircraft come in and land during the airport closure. Once again there was no radio broadcast nor could the controllers contact the pilot. As on Saturday, the FAA went and had a "talk" with the pilot who confessed that he was using 126.4 which was "LAST YEAR's" temporary tower frequency; one we didn't think to monitor. Here is an example of a pilot that halfway tried to do the right thing, but his decision to use a 12 month old NOTAM endangered himself, his passengers and our demonstration aircraft. Fortunately we had several professional controllers in the temporary tower who were keeping an eye out for stupid pilots. I'm glad we only found two this year, however we should have not found any.

Don't embarrass yourself by landing in the middle of an air show and then find yourself sitting in your plane being buzzed by warbirds, not being able to talk to anyone. Even more important, don't be in a position where you are distracted by an F16 or Blackhawk helicopter off your wing flashing its landing lights, pointing for you to turn a specific direction. Check NOTAMs, phone the airport office at your destination, read the calendar of events in the aviation publications. Be diligent in your preflight duties for your safety, the safety of others and the preservation of your pilot's license.

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

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*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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