

# The Manager's Approach



Vol. 6 Issue 4

Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

April, 2007

## *Emergency Preparedness Exercise Planned*

Last month I wrote an article about the mass dispensing exercise that Public Health will be conducting at Columbia Airport on Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM. This exercise will test the ability of our Public Health services to vaccinate/immunize our residents over a short period of time.

For those pilots that will be flying at Columbia Airport on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, I'm asking that you be particularly alert for vehicles and pedestrians on and around the main ramp and southern taxiways. We will have traffic coordinators that will have handheld VHF radios holding vehicle traffic so it does not conflict with aircraft operations.

A NOTAM will be issued and a voice comment will be broadcast on the AWOS to inform arriving and departing pilots that there is a Public Health exercise going on.

It was suggested that we consider closing the airport during this exercise, however, if a real event were to occur, we would want the airport to remain open to accommodate emergency services, fly-in patients, and the delivery of medication and other needed supplies. Therefore, I think the exercise should represent the real world conditions as much as practical. Safety will be our primary concern and we will have the participation of the Sheriff's Department, the CHP, and several local pilots to coordinate and control both aircraft and vehicle movements.

For more information on this exercise or to volunteer to help, please contact my office at 209-533-5685.

## *Surveillance Cameras Installed at Pine Mountain Lake Airport*

Many pilots are aware that there has been a problem with vandalism and the theft of gasoline from vehicles parked at Pine Mountain Lake Airport. We have also received a few reports of avgas being stolen from parked aircraft. Despite increased patrol by both the Sheriff's Department and Pine Mountain Lake Security, the problem has continued. Now, thanks to a generous contribution from a local pilot, the assistance of the Northern Yosemite EAA, and equipment provided by the Airports Department we have installed video surveillance equipment.

The recorded images are currently monitored by airport staff, however we are looking for local PML residents that want to volunteer their time to monitor the recordings. Please contact me if you would like to contribute some of your time toward keeping the Pine Mountain Lake Airport secure.



## *Calendar of Events*

I thought it would be informative to provide a schedule of the events that are planned at both airports this summer. Here are the events currently on our schedule.

### Columbia Airport

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| May 3   | Public Health Mass Dispensing Exercise |
| May 5-6 | Western States Canards Fly-In          |

May 12-13 Taylorcraft Fly-In  
May 12-13 Cessna 180/185 Fly-In  
May 19-20 Continental Luscombes Fly-In  
May 26 Light Sport Aircraft Seminar  
June 9-10 Bellanca Fly-In  
June 16-17 Father's Day Fly-In  
June 23-24 Stinson Fly-In  
August 19 Sacramento Valley Pilots  
Sept 8-9 Alameda Sheriff's Air Squadron

Pine Mountain Lake Airport

June 2 PMLAA Airport Day

As you can see there are quite a few events going on, particularly at Columbia Airport. As a reminder to all pilots, the campground is available on a first-come-first-serve basis and we do not "reserve" the campground or parking for anyone. However, we do inform all fly-in organizers if there is a potential that more than one group may be using Columbia Airport the same weekend.

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## *Stupid Pilot Tricks*

### *Being Distracted*

I had just returned to the office from a meeting that went all morning and well into the afternoon. All day meetings really put me behind and I was looking forward to getting some much needed office work out of the way before I flew back to Pine Mountain Lake. As it turned out, I needed to fly a deep cycle battery to Pine Mountain Lake Airport where Dennis was fixing the security gate. The existing battery had expired violently and the gate was inoperative without the new battery. It was close to four o'clock so there was some urgency to the delivery. I quickly gathered up my personal items which amounted to more than an arm load and the new battery. Francesca helped carry the stuff to my plane and while we were walking across the ramp she brought me up to speed on things that happened while I was in my meeting.

Arriving at my plane, I loaded the battery and secured all the baggage because the

AWOS was reporting winds at 12 knots gusting to 23 knots and I was anticipating a bumpy ride. After all was secure, I jumped into the plane and started the engine. With good oil pressure, lights on and the radio turned to the AWOS I released the brakes and began to taxi. What happened next was very unexpected! The plane rolled forward about two feet and jerked to a halt. I knew instantly that in my rush I hadn't done a walk around and that I still had the tiedown chains hooked to the wings. Worse yet, there were a couple of local aircraft mechanics laughing at me and giving me the thumbs up sign!

I shut down my plane and unbuckled my harness, then got out and did a quick walk around, unhooking the chains in the process. I was also thinking what a stupid move I had made just because I was in a hurry and distracted, causing me to omit an important preflight task. I reminded myself that such inattention could have led to me leaving the pitot tube cover on, leaving a fuel cap off or not seeing a flat tail wheel tire, all of which could have impacted my safety of flight.

We have all been in a hurry to get in the air and pilots that fly more frequently tend to be more casual about their preflight because they fly often and are more in tune with the condition of their aircraft. It is important to recognize when you are in a hurry, distracted or cutting corners prior to a flight. When you come to this realization, make a conscientious effort to slow down and focus even more on the preflight procedures.

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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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