



Volume 26: Issue 2 • March 2011
A Publication of the Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association

**"Racing at Reno"
Lee Behel and Kevin Eldredge**

March 5th, 6:00pm at the Benzing Hangar
(located mid-field, across from the fuel tank)

Not one, but two, exciting speakers headline our next PMLAA meeting, March 5, at Vicky and Jeff Benzing" hangar. Experienced Reno Air Racers **Kevin Eldredge and Lee Behel** will share their experiences preparing for the race and living through it.

Kevin Eldredge has been air racing in the Sport Class since 2001 starting in an RV3, then a Glasair III, and finally his NXT "Relentless" which took three years to build.



He placed second in the Silver Class in 2003 in his Glasair III, and in 2005 finished third in his new NXT "Relentless." Nemesis NXT (Neoteric eXperimental Technology) is a two-place, retractable gear, single engine, kit airplane of very sleek aerodynamic molded carbon fiber construction. Kevin's Nemesis NXT is powered by a Lycoming TIO-540-NXT engine and a special racing Hartzell 3-Blade Propeller.

He is currently building his second NXT, and is creating a builder assistant center to support the NXT program.

Kevin has been flying since serving in the Air Force as a flight mechanic on Huey helicopters at Edwards Air Force Base from 1985-1989.

Kevin will discuss the 2010 season and his hair-raising experience bringing his racer down safely after blowing the engine and watching his propeller fly off at over 400mph.

Lee Behel received his private pilot's license while attending the University of Nevada, Reno in 1970.

During 25 years in the Nevada Air Guard, Lee flew the reconnaissance version of the F-101 Voodoo and the F-4 Phantom. He volunteered for numerous Inter-service Photo Reconnaissance Competitions which led to three Worldwide Reconnaissance Air Meets where he flew against the US Air Force, Navy, Marines, the RAF, The Royal Australian Air Force, and German Luftwaffe. Lee and his partner won the Worldwide Competition twice.

Lee began volunteering in Race Control for the Reno Air Races and learned there was still fun flying to be had once the government took his Phantom away. He just had to get out of the tower and onto the racecourse!

In 1998 Lee bought a Questair Venture and convinced RARA (Reno Air Race Association) to allow a new class of racing: amateur-built "kit" airplanes, such as Glasair, Lancair and Questair. The Sport Class is now one of the most popular events at Reno. Lee has competed in the Sport Class every year since 1998.



He transitioned from his Questair to a Lancair Legacy in 2002 and won the Gold Championship in 2008. Lee has finished "on the podium" seven other times making him one of the most successful Sport Class competitors.

Lee will explain how the race is conducted, and how he squeezes every bit of speed out of his Lancair Legacy. ♦

President's Message
- Wayne Handley

My primary objective this year is to provide as much fun as I can for our flying community. I'm happy to say that we got off to a flying start with our outing to Furnace Creek. We flew fifteen airplanes with 43 folks for a weekend of golf, partying and a great brunch.

Our February fifth meeting set a pretty high standard for the year. Alan and Connie Buchner hosted the event in their beautiful hangar and Col. Rob Rowe presented a very educational and entertaining talk about his experiences while flying the U-2 high altitude reconnaissance aircraft. Rob dropped by the Boz Club Sunday morning and further entertained with another hour of war stories. I had the privilege of taking Rob, his wife Diane and their four fourteen-year olds up for aerobatic rides. The youngest girl is pure fighter pilot material. She did more maneuvers than the rest, immediately threw-up when she got out, exclaimed about how awesome the aerobatic experience was, and wanted to go right back up. That's my kind of youngster!

In fact she reminded me of my favorite oldster: Rose Heuer. One day I gave Rose an aerobatic ride and just before landing I demonstrated a Lomcevak (Czech for "headache!") maneuver in which the airplane tumbles tail over nose. Very few people have ever experienced this wild ride and even fewer have asked to repeat it. A few days later Rose told me that she couldn't figure out what the airplane had actually done during the execution of the maneuver and wanted to go back up and do it again, so we did. The Lomcevak is very disorienting and uncomfortable due to the negative-Gs, but after about four more times through the tumbles she had it figured out and was satisfied. I loved it! The youngest and toughest aerobatic students couldn't have handled that second flight and it didn't faze Rose at eighty-something.

Our calendar has filled out nicely with a strong line-up of speakers, and Ken Helling is working on interesting places for our fly-outs. Call him if you have ideas. One word of caution: be careful when landing here at dusk. I recommend landing on runway Nine if possible, because of the long legged varmints that tend to migrate across the runway at this time of day. Most of the problems have occurred with deer crossing between the East end of the new hangars on the South side of the runway and Benzings' property on the North.

Speaking of Benzings, they will host our next meeting on March 5th, featuring "Racing at Reno". Our speakers are two highly experienced race pilots, Kevin Eldredge and Lee Behel. This program will have some thrills and chills.

Last chance: don't forget to send in your dues now!

Fly smart and have fun!

Wayne

February Meeting Re-cap

USAF Colonel and Lockheed test pilot Rob (Skid) Rowe entertained PMLAA members at our February meeting with stories of his adventures as a U-2 pilot. Wayne Handley took Rob, his wife Diane, and their four kids flying upside-down during the afternoon.

Many thanks to the Buchners for hosting the event, and congratulations to Ron Maguire who won the 50-50 raffle. ♦

Welcome New Members

PMLAA is delighted to welcome several new members, some new to the neighborhood and some long-time residents with a new interest in our organization. Please welcome them!

Jim and Jan Knudson

962-4100

iamjank@aol.com

Jim served in the Army Reserves from 1968-74 and has a keen interest in military aviation.

Cheryl Hernandez

moxiecah@aol.com

962-4475

Micky Okamura

962-5067

Dan and Nikki Grimes

510-545-7969

nikkilee@sonnet.com

Dan and Nikki own a Zenair 701 SP. Dan is a light sport repairman and has been a pilot since 1985. He also has a seaplane rating.

Ed and Janet Gregory

janet.gregory@sbcglobal.net

510-693-7546

Ed and Janet built a beautiful new home and hangar at the end of runway 9. They are new full time residents. There is still some commuting to the Bay Area as Ed is a corporate pilot flying a Hawker 800 for Current Aviation Group and



Janet is doing consulting work with KickStart Alliance. Ed is a USAF trained pilot. He flew the F86, Convair and earned his DFC flying in an O2A as a FAC in Vietnam. Ed is also an A&P mechanic. He is now getting to enjoy general aviation flying his home-built Swearingen SX300 and his 1950 B35 Bonanza. Janet is a student pilot and will be joining

the PML flying club to finish her license. ♦

Safety Corner
- Mike Gustafson, CFII

Winter Night Flights

Putty the poor folks who live back east and want to go flying. First put on the snow tires and chains, shovel the snow in front of the garage, then in front of the hangar, and then hope the battery still has some power to start the engine. I am in constant amazement as to why they stay there after one winter! But we lucky folks out here just have to decide where we are going to fly today and whether our batteries have the required poop to do the job.

There is one other "weather" phenomenon that both coasts deal with during winter and that is early nightfall. We get used to planning trips to take advantage of the full day; if we are not careful we may find ourselves on the last leg of the flight after the sun has set. After dark you not only deal with a diminished horizon but also the potential weather changes that occur due to the lack of the sun's heating energy. If you have done your preflight planning with a night flight in mind then you are way ahead of the game.

First a few depressing statistics: over half of all fatal accidents in winter night flying occur in complex singles or twins, so could we settle for flying our Piper Cubs only on IFR night flights to reduce our risks? Didn't think so. Night IFR brings a whole new look to your instrument work. Switches that in daytime are easy to find are lurking behind the shadows. Burned out post lighting bulbs leave some gauges in the dark, and charts and approach plates tend to change font size before our eyes.

The last thing you can afford now is to be distracted from your scan scratching around the flight deck looking for dropped charts, pens, or flashlights. Sure, a good autopilot will take the load off your scan, but how many of us are really comfortable taking our eyes off the panel for a couple of minutes while we dig through our flight bag?

As the sun is setting, review the rest of the flight. Do you have all the required flight stuff in close formation with your lapboard? Is the destination weather well in mind and if a bit iffy, what is plan B? Wind tends to die down after dark but it also changes direction. If the best/lowest approach is to the downwind runway, are you prepared to circle to land? If not, *don't take the risk*. Go land somewhere else, take on some gas and think about the next best plan, which may be to wait until daylight. Night flight is one thing, but *night IFR is the highest risk flying* anyone can do, be prepared for the worst and have all your ducks in a row. ♦



Happy Valentine's!

Member News

Great Fly-Out to Furnace Creek

On February 23, over 40 PMLAA members and friends flew 15 airplanes to Furnace Creek Resort in Death Valley for a wonderful buffet and fun social time. A few die-hard golfers went the day before to try their luck on the Furnace Creek course. Fly-out chair Ken Helling did a great



job coordinating everything. We met up with the Comanche Southwest Tribe for a total of 85 people enjoying the fabulous brunch. The Inn did a great job accommodating such a large group. The

weather could not have been better - not a bump in the road or a cloud in the sky.



Some of the PMLAA group at Furnace Creek

On February 10, on very short notice, almost 20 folks flew to Harris Ranch for a fun flight and a delicious lunch, proving once again the allure of the \$100 hamburger. ♦

EAA Chapter 1337 News

Our local EAA chapter is pleased to announce upcoming events:

- March 26 - Visit To Sacramento Mather Tracon
- April 16 - Young Eagles in Columbia
- June 17-19 - Father's Day Fly-in
- August 20 - Poker Run

Please mark your calendars and come join us. Contact Silvano Gai for more information on any of these programs or check the website: www.eaa1337.org. ♦

*From The Deputy Director
- Jim Thomas*

Mid-Year Budget Review

Each year the County analyzes each department's budget at the mid-year to see if the income and expenditures are on track after six months. This mid-year effort has been going on for a long time and is a normal part of keeping tabs on the County's finances. In these tough financial times the mid-year budget review is not showing any surprises, but it is confirming that the Airport's budget has been hit by several factors.

The Caltrans Division of Aeronautics has in the past always provided us with an Annual Credit Grant in the amount of \$10,000 per airport. This grant is funded through the California tax on aviation fuel. Last year, the State Legislature suspended the payment of the grant to airports but did not suspend the tax. This year, the state did not legally suspend the payment; however we have yet to receive our Annual Credit Grant. At this time, *it is uncertain* if the State will fund the Annual Credit Grant this year!

A significant amount of revenue comes from the landing fees received from Cal Fire for the operation of their Air Tankers. Of course the number of landings is directly proportional to the number and size of the fires during the fire season. Last year was either a good or a bad fire season, depending on your perspective. It was a good fire season in that there were few fires overall, but it was a bad fire season if you are in the fire fighting business. Our income from the air tanker landings from July 2010 through October 2010 was below average resulting in a lower than anticipated landing fees. This alone wouldn't be too bad, but unfortunately the State has not yet paid us for the landing fees we have billed. As a result we are about \$8,000 short for this budget line item.

In these tough times many pilots are selling their aircraft. For many people aviation is a discretionary expense and when financial times are tough their flying activity is one of the first items to be cut back. At the airports we see this in a reduction of the number of tie-downs we rent and the number of transient aircraft that visit our airports. In the last year we have seen about a 10% reduction in the number of our tie-down tenants resulting in a similar drop in tie-down revenue.

Although not a big source of income to the airports, the fuel flowage fee we receive on both the 100LL and Jet-A has been down. A portion of this is due to last year's slow fire season which resulted in a reduction in Jet-A sales to Cal Fire. But also, overall the fuel sales are down because people are flying less.

On the bright side, we are now receiving income from the new hangars that were constructed at both Pine Mountain Lake and Columbia Airports. Gold Country Hangars has a long term ground lease at each airport which will provide each airport with long term reliable income that didn't previously exist.

The mid-year budget exercise has shown that this year's finances are going to be very tight. Efforts are being made to collect the Cal Fire landing fees and the Annual Credit Grants. Also, the Airports Division is closely watching expenses in an effort to stay within our approved budget. ♦



2011 Meeting Calendar (subject to change)

Date	Program Location
March 5	Racing at Reno: Lee Behel and Kevin Eldredge <i>Benzing hangar</i>
April 2	Lauran Paine: EAA Sport Aviation Columnist and author: <i>The Flying Life</i> <i>Peeble hangar</i>
May 7	Peter Garrison, Flying Magazine <i>Meermans hangar</i>
June 4	Ramona Cox: Back Country Flying <i>Simpson hangar</i>
July 9	Dick Van Grunsven: Van's Aircraft RV Day at PML <i>McGowan hangar</i>
August 6	Dr. Michael Higgins, Flying Adventures Magazine <i>Block party at Barbers and Margraves</i>
September 3	Janice Brown, Solar-powered Aircraft <i>McGowan hangar</i>
October 1	AIRPORT DAY! <i>PML Airport</i>
November 5	Stan Stokes, Aviation Artist <i>Location: TBA</i>
December 3	PMLAA Holiday Party <i>Buchner hangar</i>

Next Meeting: March 5 at 6:00pm at Benzings' hangar.

Final Notice: Please pay 2011 dues NOW!
Dues are still only \$20 per household.
If you have any questions about your payments,
contact Carol Simpson.



Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association

2011 Membership Application for New Members, Renewals & Updates

PMLAA Mission: to promote aviation interests and ensure the welfare and safety of its members, Pine Mountain Lake Airport, and the general community, through aviation-oriented recreational and educational activities.

- Annual membership dues are **\$20.00** per household, payable Jan 30, 2011.
- PMLAA Name badges are **\$8.00** each.
- Please send your membership check to PMLAA, P.O. Box 131, Groveland, CA 95321.
- Monthly Meetings: normally held the first Saturday of each month. Please refer to the latest issue of *The PMLAA News* or visit pmlaa.org for more details.
- The membership roster (with information from this form) is typically distributed with the April newsletter.
- NOTE: Renewing members: Please only mark information changes on this form.

Which information, if any, do you want published in the roster (the roster is mailed only to members and NOT published on the internet)? Check the info you agree to have published:

Street Address _____ Phone _____ email address (es) _____

Would you like to receive your newsletter by mail? _____ or by email only? _____

Date: _____ Circle one: New Member / Renewal No Changes / Renewal with Changes Below

Name(s): _____ & _____
(Please print name(s) as you want them on your badges)

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: ___ Zip _____

Local Phone: 209-962- _____ Alternate phone: _____

Email Address(es): _____ & _____

Aircraft Make & Model _____ N# _____

Certificated pilot since (year) _____ FAA Cert/Ratings _____

Circle any aviation jobs you have held: Airline Pilot / Crew, Flight Attendant, CFI, Corporate Pilot, Military pilot/crew, FAA, A&P Mechanic, IA, Lineman, Engineer, Air Traffic Control, Other: _____

Details: _____

Other Aviation Interests: _____

Military Experience: _____

2011 Annual Dues

\$20.00 per family \$ _____ + _____ badges @ \$8.00 each = \$ _____ enclosed

Mail this form and your check to PMLAA, PO Box 131, Groveland, CA 95321. Thank you!



PMLAA OFFICERS – 2011

OFFICERS

President: Wayne Handley 962-7868
VP: Airport Affairs: Marle Hewett 962-0701
VP: Social Affairs: Kathy McConnell 962-5854
Secretary: Charleen Beam 768-6151
Treasurer: Kay Smith 962-6986

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Speaker Coordinator: Allen Craig 962-6757
Fly-Out Coordinator: Ken Helling 962-7597
Safety: Norm Peebles 962-1990

COMMITTEE CHAIRS - CONTINUED

Property: Ed Peters 962-6267
Multimedia: Ken Codeglia 962-6270
Phil Hickerson 962-6714
Membership: Kay Smith 962-6986
Roster: Carol Simpson 962-0943
Legal Counsel: Renie Leakakos 532-1958
Webmaster: Silvano Gai 962-6378
Newsletter Editor: Virginia Gustafson 962-6336
Newsletter Publisher: Frank Perry 962-0728
Airport Director: Jim Thomas 533-5685

PML Aviation Association
PO Box 131
Groveland, CA 95321

Next meeting is March 5

Please send in your dues *now!*