



Volume 36: Issue 9  
September 2021  
A Publication of the  
Pine Mountain Lake  
Aviation Association

## *Pine Mountain Lake Aviation*

### *Next Meeting:*

Saturday October 2, 2021

### *Airport Day*

*Time: Noon to 3pm*

*Place: E45 ramp*

### *Airport Dinner*

*Time: 6pm*

*Place: Kay Meerman's hangar*

Who else is ready to get outside and commit some aviation? The E45 Airport Day is coming up on Oct 2 and we have been working to create an exciting and **safe** event for our community. I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to help on the ground and in the air as well as the awesome planning group who started months ago to arrange advertising, food, trash, displays and of course to line up the entertainment. I do have 2 more slots available for the flour bombing/spot landing contest. Please contact me if you would like to participate.

In order to make sure this is a **safe** event please keep a few things in mind. If you've invited friends to fly up for the day, please arrange for them to arrive before 11:30 am, leave after 3:00 pm and be aware there will not be room on the ramp for visitor airplane parking. In past years the biggest **safety** risk hasn't been the airplanes; it has been people on golf carts crossing the runway so do not plan to cross the runway mid-field on foot, bikes or golf carts between 11:45 and 3:15. Watch the taxiways for cars and airplanes being staged so we can stay **safe** and on schedule. Pay careful attention to the PMLAA volunteers with radios who will arrange for people to cross only when it is **safe** but be aware you may have a long wait.

Thank you! -Airboss Bonnie

### *From the desk of Gabe Coelho, VP Social Affairs*

Hello fellow PMLAA members. Community Airport Day is here once again, Saturday October 2, 2021. Along with all the fun aviation activities going on that day PMLAA will be serving BBQ Hot Dogs and Hamburgers for sale during the event. Volunteers needed to help run the Food Booth. To volunteer contact:

Gabe Coelho 209-617-4384 or Nancy Mora 209-777-5558

There will be a catered dinner by Anthony Freitas that evening for the PMLAA members and their guest located at Kay Meerman's hangar on the South taxiway midway between runway 9 and the intersection. Thank you Kay.

Social Hour is at 6pm and dinner will be served at 7pm

On the menu for dinner is chicken, pork ribs, potato, green beans, salad & roll. Ice cream for dessert. **Tickets are \$25 per person and must be purchased in advance by September 25th.** Mail your payment to: PMLAA, P O Box 131, Groveland, CA 95321

We are operating under Tuolumne County Health guidelines. If things should change, take out will be made available for dinner.

Thanks in advance to the volunteers.

## E45 HISTORIC AIRCRAFT DISPLAY DAY:

Display Day is back on the ramp the first weekend of each month, Saturday AND Sunday. Sign-offs will occur at noon on the ramp each display day. Email [airport@pmlaa.org](mailto:airport@pmlaa.org) if you have a mechanical issue preventing you from moving your aircraft to the ramp.

Kurt Howerton  
916-282-9231  
<http://www.dragon-squadron.com>

**In Memoriam:  
Jim Thomas  
Kent Blankenburg  
Bruce "Red" Rossio**

*PMLAA lost three very special friends in 2021.*

Long-time Pine Mountain Aviation community member, **Jim "JT" Thomas** passed away last week after a long struggle with a Parkinson's-like disease. He was just 71 years old.

An engineering graduate of CalPoly, JT initially worked for Boeing before his love of aviation spirited him away to Alaska to fly bush planes on the North Slope of Alaska and out of Anchorage for twenty years.

At Pine Mountain Lake Airport, JT was a smiling fixture around the airport and a friend to all. He frequently flew his beloved Super Cub and was also the proud builder of a beautiful Lancair Legacy which he campaigned at the Reno Air Races for three years with his friend Colleen Keller as pilot.



Jim Thomas was the Airport Manager of Columbia and PML Airports for twelve years. As Airport Manager, JT did more than fly a desk. He was often found using his own tools to fix runway lights or clear weeds. During his tenure as Airport Manager he developed the PML Airport Master Plan. He also mitigated concerns over trees growing near the runway by installing hazard lights so that pilots could safely conduct night operations and the heritage oaks that beautify our airport environment could be preserved.

JT is missed by all who knew him.

Only a few days after Jim Thomas' passing, Pine Mountain Lake Aviation friend and aviation legend, **Kent Blankenburg** passed away at his home in Wickenburg, AZ. Kent was 82 years old.

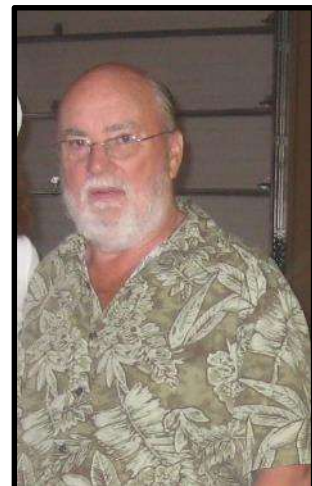
Kent and Sandy built the two large hangars at the West end of the airport. Their hangars served as museums, filled with airplanes, cars, scooters, and vintage aviation memorabilia that Kent and Sandy collected during their travels around the country (their hangar homes are now owned by Jay Behel and the Johansons).

Kent spent most of his career as a newspaper publisher in San Luis Obispo. He had a great interest in aviation and acquired an admirable "fleet," including a 1939 Lockheed Electra, a Spartan Executive, two rare Luscombe Phantoms, and a Republic SeaBee. An excellent pilot, Kent would land the SeaBee on Pine Mountain Lake to kick off the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities. Kent and Sandy won major awards at both Reno and Oshkosh.

When failing eyesight forced him to give up flying, Kent turned to collecting cars, including an impressive number of Metropolitans.

To the Pine Mountain Aviation community, Kent and Sandy were consummate and generous hosts. Kent and Sandy could host an event for 300 people with any theme; and many meetings, parties, weddings, memorials, and fundraisers were held at their beautifully decorated hangar. The years of Kent and Sandy's many themed parties are affectionately known to many as "the Camelot Years" at PML Airport. In addition to the local events, their annual Luscombe Luau's brought pilots from far and wide.

Blue skies and fond memories, Kent - you are missed.





PMLAA also lost a great friend and former neighbor this year. Bruce (Red) Rossio died at home in Surprise, AZ the morning of February 11, 2021.

Bruce was a Bonanza pilot, an active PMLAA member and past president, and a generous member of the community. He flew doctors to Mexico and organized Rotary medical teams.

After a successful career owning a trucking company in Modesto, Bruce had an equally successful second career selling real estate in PML. He loved people and enjoyed life.

## President's Message:

Hello PMLAA Friends & Members.

I'd like to thank Ken Orloff for speaking at our September aviation meeting, his wife Lynne for providing snacks, as well as the Howerton's for having the meeting at their hangar.

Next month is Airport Day: Saturday, October 2. As always we need volunteers so please contact Kurt Howerton if you would like to help. Tickets are on sale for the evening catered dinner. Please look at the VP Social column in this newsletter. An email has also been sent out to each of you to get your dinner tickets.

I look forward to seeing many of you out on the ramp October 2nd.

Happy Landings,  
Danielle Coelho  
PMLAA, President

Get Ready for PML Community Airport Day: Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>  
- Virginia Richmond

PMLAA is again inviting the greater Groveland community to Community Airport Day on **October 2nd from 12:00 – 3:00pm**. This fun and free event is key to ensuring support from the local community for our airport.

Air boss Bonnie Ritchey has developed a great line-up including radio-controlled model airplane demos, flying demonstrations, skydiving, high speed antics and formation flying teams. The Merced County Sheriff is sending their giant Huey helicopter. There will also be skills contests for local pilots featuring flour bombing and spot landing.

*This is an all-hands event for PMLAA members. Get involved. Everyone can do something! You can cook hotdogs, participate in the flying contests, help with set-up and traffic control, and much more.*

- To help with set-up, traffic control, airplane movements, and displays, contact Mike Gustafson, 962-6336 or [MLGpilot@yahoo.com](mailto:MLGpilot@yahoo.com).
- To compete in the bombing or spot landing contests, contact Bonnie Ritchey at 650-996-6274 or [bonnie.ritchey@gmail.com](mailto:bonnie.ritchey@gmail.com). Note there are limited spots. Sign-up now!
- To help for a two-hour shift at the food booth, contact Nancy Mora, [nancykmora@yahoo.com](mailto:nancykmora@yahoo.com) or call/text 209-777-5558. Helpers also needed for condiment prep on Oct. 1. Call Nancy!



**PML COMMUNITY AIRPORT DAY**  
**OCTOBER 2, 2021**

**FREE ADMISSION!**

**PML AIRPORT**  
**NOON – 3:00 PM**

**SKY DIVERS • FORMATION FLIGHTS • PLANES VS. CARS**  
**FLYING SKILLS CONTESTS • SPECIAL AERO SURPRISES!**  
**AIRPLANES & CARS DISPLAY • MODEL AIRPLANES DEMO**  
**REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE**

**Bring a chair and enjoy the entertainment!**  
**At the PML Airport – Our Community Resource!**  
*Organized by Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association*

**Note: Community Airport Day is operating within Covid protocols. We**

**encourage masks, social distancing and vaccinations. If we need to cancel due to last minute health concerns, we'll send emails and post on social media.**

## SAFETY CORNER

PMLAA Newsletter Safety Corner – September 2021

By Joe Sobczak

“Rules of Thumb”

Safety, you say? What do Rules of Thumb have to do with safety?

At least two things:

- 1) Having a few handy Rules of Thumb reduces your “head down” time in the cockpit and helps mitigate the distraction of using your iPad, POH, or E-6B (remember those?). And,
- 2) You are more likely to come up with critical data, such as landing or takeoff distance than you would be if you had to go to your POH, especially if you are feeling rushed.

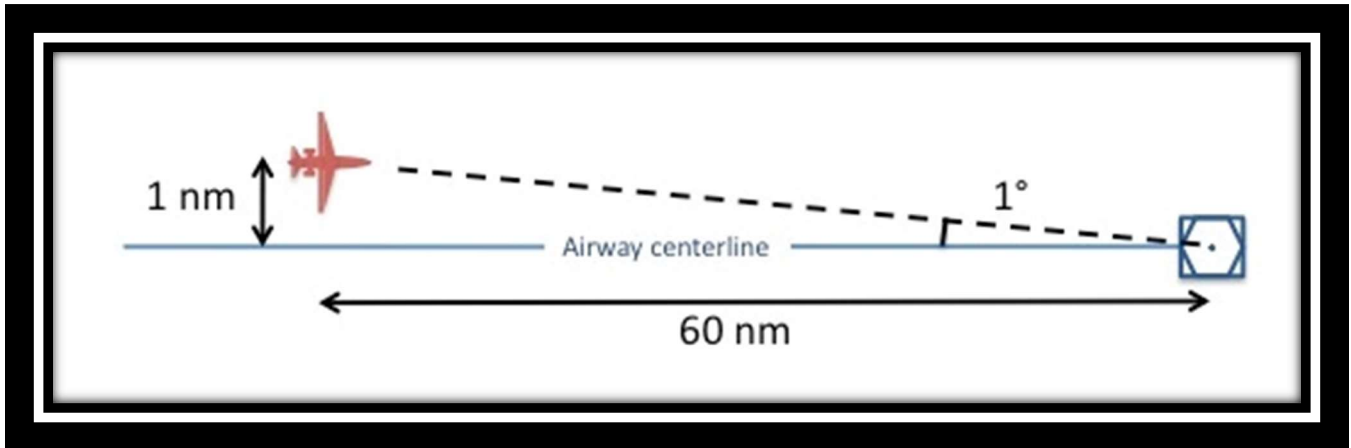
So, what are Rules of Thumb, anyway? A rule of thumb is a heuristic guideline that provides simplified advice or some basic rule-set regarding a particular subject or course of action. It is a general principle that gives practical instructions for accomplishing or approaching a certain task. Perhaps a simpler “pilot friendly” definition would be a mental shortcut used to approximate the results of a calculation or lookup value used to save time effort.

There are lots of rules of thumb in aviation. You can find them on line in lots of places (including past issues of the PMLAA Newsletter), but I will highlight a few handy ones that I use regularly.

- 1) When to abort a takeoff – The 50/70 Rule. We operate at an airport with modest runway length and often high density altitudes. This rule says that you should have reached 70% of your takeoff speed before you have used 50% of the runway. At E45, when you pass Struck’s hangar (or Aldrich’s, if you’re looking South) you are about halfway down the runway. If you have not reached 70% of your takeoff speed at that point, you may not have the performance needed to safely complete the takeoff.
- 2) Calculating your descent rate on final. Divide groundspeed (knots) by 2, then add a 0 at the end. For example, if your groundspeed on final is 80 knots,  $80/2=40$ , so 400 FPM is the nominal descent rate. If you find yourself descending significantly faster as you approach your aimpoint on the runway, you are high, and vice versa. In that case, you are flying an unstabilized approach and should go around (see a previous PMLAA Newsletter safety article on that topic.)
- 3) Another descent calculation – for a 1 degree descent angle, you will descend about 100 feet per nautical mile. From Top of Descent, I like to use a 2 degree angle with power on, so approaching E45 at 7500 MSL (about 3600 feet above pattern altitude), it would take 36 miles to descend at one degree, or 18 miles at 2 degrees (half the distance at twice the descent angle). Add about 5 NM to be at pattern altitude and slow to gear/flap speed, and I’ll start a descent 23 NM from the field. I then use (2), above, and come up with a required descent rate based on my groundspeed as I approach the field.

- 4) When will it get dark? As the days grow shorter, you may want to plan to arrive before dark. At our latitude, a rule of thumb is that civil twilight ends about 25 minutes after sunset. Remember that position lights are still required at sunset, though.
- 5) Finally, the 1 in 60 rule. This is useful if you navigate using a VOR (PS, the 60's called – they want your NavCom back!) For every 60 NM from the VOR, one degree equals one NM.

Hope you can use some of these Rules of Thumb to help you maintain situation awareness, fly stabilized approaches, and plan efficient descents. Meanwhile, there are dozens more you can find on line – find one or two that work for you!



## EAA Flight Deck

By Ed Gregory

**Young Eagles cancelled.** Our local EAA Chapter 1337 has decided to cancel the Young Eagles Rally scheduled for October 9<sup>th</sup> at PML Airport. Due to the current rise in County Covid infections due to the Delta variant, the requirement to sanitize the Aircraft after each flight, small enclosed cockpits, and no vaccinations available for children under 12, the decision to cancel was made. Cancellation doesn't make me happy but, in light of the challenges, makes sense. Sorry to disappoint. Hopefully spring will allow us to renew this wonderful event.

**Flying Poker Run.** We also discussed the smoked-out poker run and look forward to rescheduling it for a clear Saturday in October or November. We have lots of great prizes and it can be a lot of fun. Stay tuned.

## E45 Rental Car

Hyundai Sonata 4-door automatic. Rental rate is \$70 a day, out-the-door, no hidden fees! To make rental car reservations call Air Galore at 707-972-4498 or email at [c3458j@gmail.com](mailto:c3458j@gmail.com). There is only one rental car, so get your reservations in early!

Some car renter perks... If a renter joins the Air Galore Club, they receive a daily discount on car rental.

Big thanks go to PMLAA members Mary and Mike Wich for bringing the rental car to E45. This car rental information is also available on Air Nav and Foreflight.

## Officer of the Day

By Norm Peebles

Vietnam 1969. As a 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant stationed in Vietnam, I was subject to miscellaneous types of extra jobs and duties. One duty was "Officer of the Day", or OD. It wasn't really during the day, but at night. The Squadron TOC, tactical operations center, would empty out at night, with the Brass going back to their hooch's. They wanted someone to be in charge, so why not order a Lieutenant to stay up all night and do it. There were night staff members who were very capable of running the place, but this was a thing the Army did at all their bases, overseas as well as state side.

The TOC was very active during the night. They would monitor any units out on night missions. They received tomorrow's missions from headquarters and sent them down to each of the Troops. They were also there for any emergency that might come up.

Me, being in charge, would make the decision of what to do or who to notify when the shit hit the fan. There was a standard operating procedure or SOP book that covered a lot of contingencies. What you didn't want to do was wake up the Colonel, if at all possible!

Being OD had some perks. I had a jeep and driver assigned to me, and he could make food runs to the mess hall. The building had a lot of radios, and it had air-conditioning, but it was not very effective. If everything was quiet, I could nap on my own cot.

The big requirement for this duty was I had to inspect the Base perimeter twice before and twice after midnight, with the help of the jeep driver. I was to make sure the guards were focusing on the job at hand. A year before, during the 1968 Tet offensive, the Base and the city were hit with ground attacks! I went out on the first inspection and everything was fine. On the second one, the guards on the front, north side of the perimeter fence, wanted me to listen to sounds coming from some old abandoned houses about 200-yards from our wire. They said they were not supposed to be there. I agreed, "You're correct. In the morning, we will take a look." It sounded like a family who had moved in for shelter. It was around 12:30AM when I went out on my third patrol. Driving along in the jeep with the blackout markers on, during a nice summer night. We got around to the southern perimeter and all of a sudden there was a flash of light, followed by the loudest BANG you have ever heard. It was off to our right, out about 40-yards in the middle of our wire. Mortar Attack!!



We stopped the jeep. Got out and ran to the closest bunker with a roof of sand bags on it. As we were in mid stride, another mortar came in. BANG! We dove for the shelter. There were two soldiers inside. They were already firing their M-16s out into the night. "Do you see enemy soldiers?" "NO sir. But they could be out there." "It's ok, let's stop firing and see what develops." The perimeter is lit up by lights shining outward towards the wire; you could see about 50-yards out. No enemy in the wire and the Mortars stopped.

When a Mortar goes off, it is not like Hollywood. There is no great fire ball with flames that go up into the air with a great deal of smoke. It is a quick flash of light and that is it. The sound and shock wave hit you right away. Then it's over. But let me tell you, it gets your attention.

We dusted ourselves off, got back into the jeep, and continue up the road.

What or who is that standing in the middle of the road?

As we get closer, I tell the driver to stop. What we see is this six-foot-five image of a man with a combat helmet on. No shirt. A combat gun holster with gun over his boxer shorts and combat boots on. Oh no, it's the Colonel!!!

I get out and report to him. I ask if he is OK and if there is anything he needs or wants -- SIR. "I heard firing, was there enemy in the wire?" "No sir, just the men firing, in an automatic type of response."

"That's good, carry on." That ended the third patrol.

The last patrol of the night had no action.

There are certain images that stick with you during your life. The Colonel is one of them!

## Radio Rumors "Say Again"

- **Airport Tenant Meeting – August 31<sup>st</sup> 9:00am**
  - Conducted by: Airport Manager Benny Stuth, Director Dept of Public Works Kim MacFarlane, District 4 Supervisor Kathleen Haff, Airport Administrative Assistant Trisha Harless
  - Attended by 20 PML Airport tenants, residents, and pilots
  - The majority of the time was spent discussing the tree obstruction survey. Trees in question have been submitted to the FAA for ruling, owners will be notified if mitigation is required. Obstructions could result in the airport shut down for night operations which is a concern for commuters, air ambulance services, search and rescue, and emergency landings.
  - Lots of other important topics: Process for submitting hangar repair requests, need for additional hangars, need to repair/replace airport signs, sealing transient parking area, grass cutting, bathroom cleaning, generator for PML to maintain operations in the event of a power outage.
  - Lots of financial discussion: PML Airport budget, need for the airport to be financially self-sufficient, other sources for airport income, potential of privatizing the airport.

## 2021 Meeting Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Time &amp; Location</u>
Oct 2, 2021	Airport Day	E45 Ramp
Nov 6, 2021	TBD	TBD
Dec 4, 2021	Holiday Party	Johanson's hangar

## 2021 Aviation Calendar

<b>September</b>	11 – <b>Alan Buchner</b> first solo, Fairchild PT 23 at BFL, Meadows Field, CA (1953) 11 – <b>Ira Chapman</b> first solo, Piper J3 Cub at CBE, Cumberland, MD (1960) 11-19 – National Championship Air Races at RTS, Reno, NV 11-19 – Vicky Benzing @ National Championship Air Races, RTS, NV 22 – <i>Autumnal Equinox</i>
<b>October</b>	2 – <b>PMLAA Airport Appreciation Day</b> , 11:30-3:00 – <b>Stay tuned ...</b> 2 – <b>PMLAA Meeting – Stay tuned ...</b> 2-3 – <b>E45 Airport Display Day</b> , 8:00-4:00, sign off at 12:00 9 – <b>Marle Hewett</b> first solo, Beechcraft &34 Mentor at NPA, NAS Pensacola, FL (1959) US Navy 11 – <i>Columbus Day</i> 18 – <b>Bob Hornauer</b> first solo, Piper Cherokee PA28 at Westwego, LA (1969) 30-31 – Vicky Benzing @ Salinas International Airshow, SNS, CA 31 - <i>Halloween</i>
<b>November</b>	6 – <b>PMLAA Meeting – Stay tuned ...</b> 6-7 – <b>E45 Airport Display Day</b> , 8:00-4:00, sign off at 12:00 7 – <i>Daylight Savings Time Ends (Set clocks back one hour)</i> 11 – <i>Veterans Day</i> 18-19 – <i>Partial Eclipse of the Moon (visible from Americas, northern Europe, eastern Asia, Australia, Pacific)</i> 20 – <b>Larry Jobe</b> first solo, Piper PA28 at Van Nuys, CA (1965) 25 – <i>Thanksgiving Day</i> 30-31 – Vicky Benzing @ Thunder & Lightning over Arizona, DMA, Tucson, AZ

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