

# The Manager's Approach



---

Vol. 4 Issue 7

Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

July 2005

---

## *Father's Day Fly-In*

The 2005 Father's Day Fly-In was a great success. I want to thank all those who volunteered their time to help, especially Alan Wallace and Paul Girard who worked with me as co-chairmen of the event. A big thanks also goes out to the local businesses that supported the fly-in and to the members of the TCAA and the EAA who really provided most of the workforce.

---

## *New Reserved Space Permit*

The new reserved space permit will be implemented over the next few months now that the public notice period has been satisfied. I will be sending a letter to each Permittee explaining the new Permit and how I plan to work with the Permittees to assure the requirements of the new Reserved Space Permit are met. Tiedown Permittees will not find any significant changes, but hangar Permittees will need to comply with new restrictions adopted to assure the hangars are being used for the storage of aircraft and to eliminate subleasing of the hangars. Listed below are the pertinent changes to the Reserved Space Permit.

- The Permittee must keep an airplane in the hangar and the Permittee must be the registered owner of the aircraft stored in the hangar or tiedown.
- No subleasing will be allowed.
- The airplane should be airworthy or near airworthy and only associated aircraft supplies, equipment and tools can be stored in the hangar.
- In addition to an aircraft, you may store one boat, car, motorcycle, snowmobile, or other operable motorized conveyance

if the size of the conveyance does not exceed the size of a passenger car. No motor homes or houseboats shall be stored in the hangars.

- Current individuals with more than one hangar will be allowed to keep their hangars provided that the Permittee owns the aircraft in each hangar.

Any person that is not in compliance with these requirements should begin taking action to correct their situation. It is my plan to give people reasonable time to correct their areas of non-compliance, but my goal is to have the new Reserved Space Permit fully implemented and everyone in compliance by the end of the year.

One specific issue that is being addressed by the Airports Committee is how to deal with current subleases. To express your opinion on how to resolve this issue, please contact me or an Airports Committee member.

---

## *Density Altitude Display Relocated to PML Airport*

We will be relocating the DAD (Density Altitude Display) to the Pine Mountain Lake Airport this summer. The reasoning is that density altitude information is broadcast on the AWOS at Columbia, so having the DAD at Columbia Airport is redundant. Pine Mountain Lake Airport does not have an AWOS so installing the DAD there makes more sense.

---

## *Stupid Pilot Tricks*

### *An Unfriendly Airport*

I just got back from a two week flying adventure to Alaska and had an opportunity

to visit several airports. All in all, it was a very pleasant experience with the exception of one airport. I won't name this airport except to mention that it is a well known airport in Alaska that has a lot of flightseeing operations.

We landed at 16 different airports during our trip that took 45 hours of flying time and only once did we encountered what I would consider an unfriendly airport. Although the town warmly welcomed us, the airport just had a "we don't want you here" tone to it. To me, airports are fun, and being an airport manager, I know the success of an airport partly depends on how you treat transient pilots. At this airport several people did what they could to make our visit less than enjoyable. It was a real lesson to me on how not to run an airport. I'll give you some examples of what happened.

First, upon our arrival we parked the plane in a paved tiedown that had signage indicating it was for transient aircraft. Wrong! An air taxi pilot came out and TOLD us that the spot we were in was for paid parking and we would have to move our aircraft over into the gravel. No help to push our aircraft was offered.

The next morning we observed a C-185 pushed to the edge of the ramp, tailed directly at us and loading sightseeing passengers. I politely walked over to the pilot and asked if I could help push the aircraft forward a bit so he wouldn't prop blast our plane and camp. He responded that this spot is where they always loaded and that we should move our plane! I kept my calm and we relocated our plane to our third transient tiedown.

Later that day we were walking across the ramp headed into town for some lunch. As we passed by another FBO we were confronted by an employee who firmly told us that "only pilots were allowed to walk on the ramp". When we responded that we were both pilots and that our plane was parked in the transient area we were told that we still couldn't walk on the ramp and that we must use the gravel road instead; also, if

we continued to walk on the ramp, the airport manager would write us a ticket!

Our next unpleasant experience was when we asked a third FBO where the public restrooms were located and the response was that there were none and only clients could use the FBO's facilities.

To top off our airport experience we went to the FSS on the field to check the weather. The person on duty acted as if we were interrupting his work when we asked for a weather briefing and wanted to file a flight plan. Sure he was busy, but we were in no hurry and our just standing around seemed to irritate him. He did have a black eye so there might have been something else that put him in such a bad mood!

I strongly believe that airports should be friendly and fun places for pilots. People want to return to places they enjoyed. Regular visitors to our airports are good for business and good for aviation. Just by having the right attitude you can make a tough situation much more bearable. One of our stops at a remote airport is a perfect example of this.

Heading south we were flying the "Trench" and got turned around by bad weather. We landed back at a lodge to spend a second night. We also needed to purchase 25 gallons of fuel at \$9.50 a gallon! The lodge owner was very apologetic for the price but took time to explain why it costs so much and he even calculated the savings we would realize if we flew back to Watson Lake to buy gas at a much more reasonable price. The service was excellent and he did everything to make the pain of the high price bearable. We will go back to this lodge again and maybe even buy some of his high priced fuel, just to be certain he stays in business. It is my kind of airport.

---

Tuolumne County Airports Department  
Jim Thomas, Airports Director  
10723 Airport Road, Columbia, CA 95310  
209-533-5685  
jthomas@co.tuolumne.ca.us