

The Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

June 2004

Father's Day Fly-In

June 19th & 20th

The big event is just over a week away and preparations have been underway for quite some time. This year, as in the past, we look to our airport community and aviation organizations to volunteer their time to help make the Fly-In safe and fun for all. We still need volunteers to park aircraft and cars, judge display aircraft, staff the registration booth, help with our hospitality program, and of course, set-up and take-down. The final and mandatory volunteers meeting will be held at 5:30 PM Thursday June 17th at the Wallace hangar at Columbia Airport. Please come and help us make the Fly-In a big success. For additional information about volunteering or on the Fly-In please call my office and either Liz or I will answer your questions.

Friday evening at 5:30 PM we will have a "Burger-Burn" for the early arrivals and the volunteers that help set-up. If you like free food, come to the airport at noon and help us get the ramp ready for the event.

In preparation for the Fly-In we are asking those aircraft owners that have tiedowns 14 to 53 to move their planes to accommodate the show planes. We will be blocking off the transient ramp Thursday so arriving transient aircraft can't park in the display area.

For those of you that plan to fly somewhere during the Fly-In, be aware that we will have a temporary tower operating on Saturday from 8 AM to 4 PM and on Sunday from 9 AM to 4 PM. The temporary tower frequency will be 126.400 and the ground frequency will be 121.050. Additionally, the airport will be closed from

12 noon to 3 PM for flight demonstrations. The grass runway will be closed starting Thursday extending through Monday.

We will be emphasizing safety throughout the Fly-In by asking all pilots to not run their engines anywhere in the east hangar area. Please push your aircraft out to the ramp to an area identified by one of the volunteers parking aircraft. We do not want any turning propellers anywhere outside of designated areas.

Another big safety item is that we will not allow anyone to cross 17-35 on foot during the Fly-In. All crossings will be strictly limited to vehicles and the people mover trailers we have built for the event. There will be only one designated crossing point and that will be at the taxiway that crosses at the threshold of runway 29. The temporary tower will control all vehicle crossings and there will be crossing monitors on both sides of 17-35 that will hold all traffic until given the "ok to cross" signal from the tower. I received a phone call from the Fresno FSDO and they will be at the Fly-In monitoring our safety procedures, so everyone must be diligent and follow all safety rules we have in place during the Fly-In

This year's flight demonstrations will include P-51 Mustangs, T-28s, a Twin Beech, a Pilatus Porter and more. The traditional flour bombing and spot-landing contest will be held on Sunday morning.

TCAA will serve a Pancake Breakfast both Saturday and Sunday mornings. Saturday night we will have an Awards Dinner and Dance at the Mountain Aire hangar. The Tri-Tip dinner will be served by TCAA and the band will be the High and the Mighty. Tickets for the dinner and dance are \$15 in advance and \$17 at the door.

Historical Aircraft Display Certificates will be available at the aircraft registration booth courtesy of our local EAA Chapter 1337. I encourage all of our historical aircraft owners to display their planes to the visiting public.

Lastly, we are finally catching up with the modern age. The Father's Day Fly-In now has a web page that contains most of the needed information about the Fly-In. Check it out at www.fathersdayflyin.com.

Proper Pattern Altitude

Every month I receive some sort of complaint from people living near Columbia Airport. Recently the complaints have been about low flying aircraft in the traffic pattern. We need to be good neighbors if we want to keep a positive image with the public, so please fly your patterns at the published 1,000' AGL or 3,100' at Columbia and 3,960' at PML. Also, when departing 29 at Columbia please avoid flying over the houses off the end of 29 and on the crosswind leg. Departing aircraft should also delay their turn to the crosswind leg until past the houses on the hill. Happy neighbors make for a happy airport.

Stupid Pilot Tricks

We had an award winner last month. One that should go down in the record books; stupid beyond belief. A student pilot followed all his training and taxied out onto the runway after announcing his intentions and looking for aircraft in the pattern. Once in position, he heard the radio transmission "aircraft on 17 don't move there is a plane on short final". The student held his position then received a heart stopping surprise. The landing aircraft flashed past him within a few feet of his right wing then executed a go-around by making a left hand turn-out over the hangars. Once he regained his wits the student pilot took off and did one circuit then parked his plane and came to my office visibly shaken.

Upon hearing the student's story I had no choice but to go confront the accused pilot. When confronted, much to my surprise, the pilot told me he intentionally dove at the plane on the ground just to scare the crap out of the pilot that pulled out on the runway in front of him. He honestly felt he was in the right because he "had the right-of-way" being the aircraft in the air.

When I pointed out that he flew a left hand pattern for 17 instead of the published right hand pattern and that he was only listening on 122.8 (the wrong frequency) and not listening and broadcasting on 123.05, he still insisted he had the right-of-way. I then pointed out that his aircraft was painted primer gray, the same color as our military aircraft, a color that is very difficult to see most of the time.

Everyone flying an aircraft should know that it is the responsibility of each and every pilot to familiarize himself with the current and pertinent information for the destination airport. It is also the pilot's responsibility to operate his aircraft such that he does not endanger the lives or property of others.

Needless to say this pilot may be talking with the FAA soon and Columbia Airport is trying to nurse a student pilot back into the flock. It amazes me often how the actions of a few can affect the lives of so many.

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

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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