

The Manager's Approach



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Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

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Father's Day Fly-In Volunteers' Meeting 5 PM Thursday, June 15th

Columbia Airport's Father's Day Fly-In is only a week and a half away and it is shaping up to be a great event. Last year we had about 80 volunteers and this year my goal is to have at least 100 volunteers. Helping out with the Fly-In is a lot of fun especially if you enjoy aviation. We have many jobs that need to be done so everyone should have something they can do. Those that like to be in control can park planes and those that need to work in the shade sitting down can collect the entry fee. Work assignments will be made at our mandatory volunteers' safety briefing which will be held on Thursday, June 15th at 5 PM at Alan Wallace's hangar. We will also distribute the volunteer tee shirts which are really great this year. The tee shirts will be sold to the volunteers at our cost which is \$8.



One of the biggest volunteer efforts is the ramp set-up on Friday and we can use all available help. Setting up the ramp includes setting out the delineators, constructing the temporary tower and announcer's stand, setting up the PA system, and more. After

the set-up on Friday there is the Early Bird Barbeque for the volunteers and the early Fly-In arrivals. The Fly-In is a two day event and we really appreciate those that help out both Saturday and Sunday. If you can only commit to one day, that's great. Please help us achieve our goal of 100 volunteers.

Airports Department Accepting Credit Cards

We are slowly moving out of the dark ages! Believe it or not, the Airports Department is now able to take transient, tiedown and hangar payments with MasterCard and Visa. Tenants can now phone in their payment by giving Francesca their credit card information. Having credit card capability allows us to take payments from pilots with corporate credit cards and our tenants who need to make last minute payments over the phone to avoid our late fee.

AWOS Out Of Service

Pilots that have been exercising their pilot's license recently have noticed that the Columbia AWOS has been out of service for a couple of weeks now. We experienced a failure of the main computer in the system and had to remove the entire unit and send it off for repair. Unfortunately, the manufacturer of our system is no longer in business, making spare parts unavailable. Please bear with us as we anxiously await the repair of our system. In the meantime, listen to the CTAF to see what runway is being used by other pilots or over-fly the field and look at the windsock and tetrahedron to determine the surface wind direction and approximate speed.

Some Columbia Tiedown Tenants Need to Relocate Their Aircraft

Those Columbia Airport tenants that lease tiedowns #14 through #53 must relocate their aircraft or vehicle so we can set up our warbird ramp for the Father's Day Fly-In. It seems that every year in the past we have had to move a couple of aircraft and vehicles because the owners didn't respond to our letters and phone calls. There is a level of risk when we move your aircraft which we would prefer not to take. Additionally, most vehicles are locked with the transmission in park, making them very difficult to move. At times we have had to call a towing service to move vehicles, which adds unneeded effort and expense to the Fly-In. Please do your part and cooperate with our request to relocate your aircraft and vehicle.

Lost ELT

An ELT was found at the wash rack a couple of weeks ago. If this happens to be your unit, you can come by our office and pick it up. Flying around without an ELT qualifies as a Stupid Pilot Trick!

Stupid Pilot Tricks

Last month I talked about situational awareness which is a topic that encompasses all aspects of flying. This month I want to talk about situational awareness during the taxi phase of aircraft operation. Some pilots take this portion of operating an aircraft as an incidental activity that is necessary to flight. I emphatically disagree. The taxi phase is one of the most important for a safe and successful flight.

I believe that every pilot would agree that there are a lot more things to hit with your aircraft on the ground than in the air. While airborne you could hit a bird or heaven forbid another aircraft. On the ground you could hit another aircraft, a pole, a hangar, a car, a sign, a runway or taxiway light. Many pilots, myself included, take care of several preflight tasks while they taxi. Examples of

this would be adjusting radios, programming your GPS, checking your charts or airport directory, calling the FAA for a clearance, fiddling with your mixture, and the list goes on.... These are distracting and keep your attention away from steering your airplane.

I once sat in the copilot seat of a plane that had just been buttoned up after its annual inspection and we were taking it on its test hop. During the annual the rudder pedals had been removed, brake lines replaced and the wheel bearings repacked. Also, the nose wheel steering damper was serviced and the steering scissor replaced. The pilot began taxiing the plane as he always did which was way too fast for my liking considering all the work that had just been completed on the brakes and steering. I was concerned and a little frightened as we approached a 90 degree turn with a drop off right next to the taxiway. This was not the time, nor the place, to test the mechanics work!

It amazes me how often I see someone taxi their aircraft off the edge of the pavement, sometimes with very expensive results. Pilots of tail wheel aircraft and those flying at night need to be especially alert. The wheel drag of dirt and gravel is much greater than pavement and can turn a taxiing plane off the pavement quickly. Also, remember that not all obstacles around the airport are lighted. Pay attention while taxiing. If you don't you may make a stupid mistake!

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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