

PMLAA NEWS



Volume 21, Issue 3, March 2006

A Monthly Publication of the Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association

Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association presents Flying Idaho with Bob Hoff and friends

This month is the first of this spring's theme of the great things ordinary people like us can do with our airplanes. The format for this month is a little different in that we will have our lead speaker, Bob Hoff, do a short presentation and then have a moderated panel discussion where we can field questions from the crowd. Bob is the guy smiling at you from the cover of Flying Magazine. The panel will include our local John Latta who has plenty of stories about his hunting parties to the Idaho backcountry. He bought a Staggerwing when Staggerwings weren't show pieces because he needed something that could land and carry a load out of backcountry strips while getting there in a hurry. Bob is from Idaho Falls and will discuss aviation in Idaho with stories from the past and present. This meeting is also designed to get you excited about our July fly-out to the backcountry strips in Idaho. More on that trip at the meeting.

I am very excited to have Bob come to speak. He is one of those guys who while very modest has accomplished much in his life. His family settled in Idaho Falls in 1903 on one of the first potato ranches in Idaho. Rainbow Ranch today is thriving under the direction of Bob and Jane's son James. Bob and the Rainbow Ranch have seen plenty of change as Idaho Falls expansion has encroached on many vistas but when Bob speaks of the ranch you know his love for the area is as strong as ever. Bob and Jane still help during certain



times of the year with the ranch, but Bob's main activity is now with Aero Mark, an FBO he started in 1984.

This puts Bob in the very elite group of those who have made a good business in aviation. Aero Mark pumps gas into everything from Cubs to C-5As and 747s. In addition it has full maintenance and avionics



Left: Husky turning final at Upper Loon Creek
Above: A Staggered Formation, John & Russ Latta lead, Bob Hoff #3
© George A. Kounis, www.pilotgetaways.com

facilities. So we little guys don't feel overwhelmed by the line boys'

servicing a C-5, he started Red Baron Aviation located in a log hangar circa 1935. In 1987 Aero Mark became the first dealer for Aviat's Husky line of aircraft and have been the "Top Dog" dealer ever since. Its territory includes Idaho, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Utah and Western Canada. I can't think of better areas to get full use out of a Husky. Bob has a beautiful Staggerwing Beech and a real pretty Twin Beech for

transportation in addition to the business' aircraft. Bob is also a member of the Aeronautics Advisory Board for the Idaho Department of Transportation.

Bob is not all low and slow however. He recently bought, and is returning to flight status, a Douglas A-4C Skyhawk. That's an attack jet that he recovered from the Davis Motham AFB in Arizona.

From that background you can imagine some great experiences and stories that Bob and his friends will share. We have to be certain to ask him about his first flight in a Staggerwing Beech as a teenager. It was an amazing flight and it was then that he knew he had to have one someday. I am looking forward to this program and am excited about the format that will involve the audience to a greater degree.

New venue!

We are privileged to have Jeff and Vicky Benzing sharing their beautiful hangar with us this month. It is an outstanding venue, immaculate with checkerboard floor. Our topic, speaker and venue this is sure to be a memorable meeting.



DIRECTIONS:

The Benzing's hangar is located on the taxiway north of the runway at the east end of the airport. There will be parkers to direct you so that we don't park in aircraft right of ways. Ask someone from the airport if you have any questions and please don't cross the runway to get there and observe all the normal airport rules.



I had a great time last Saturday at our Sweetheart Ball. The band, Homegrown, got everyone on the dance floor. There were some moves out there that I thought were not humanly possible, at minimum not seen this side of San Francisco. Hats off and sincere gratitude to Conni and Alan for providing the perfect backdrop. I can't think of anything more romantic than a home with a band, dance floor and a Ryan with red trim. Laurie and Conni did an exceptional job decorating with all the volunteers. Thank you McKinley and Andy for providing the keepsake photos. The Cub Scouts (River Buchner and our Reinhold) sold roses with all the proceeds going to local Cub Scout Pack 566. To top it all was the beautiful smell of the floral

centerpieces. They were truly grand. Thank you everyone who made this a special evening.

It certainly doesn't seem like winter here right now, but there may very well be a foot of snow on the ground as you read this. I enjoy winter here in California. Besides the change in season and the beauty it is the time of year that I really feel on the top of my flying game. I get practice shooting approaches actually in clouds, often with wind and turbulence. Preflight planning offers some challenges regarding temperature, freezing levels, low ceilings, etc. This is a great place to operate an aircraft all winter long. I have also been flying with Larry Roessler in his beautiful "new" 1952 Cessna 170. What fun that has been. Clyde's crew hit a winner in that one as evidenced by all of the fine Cessna aircraft built since. It all reminds me what a great freedom we have to fly like we do and how you have to make every take off, every landing, every flight count. Both to hone your skills and to enjoy.

To keep help keep our summer skills sharp and to have a great time your association will be flying to Idaho this July and utilizing some of the wonderful backcountry airstrips. They vary from beautifully groomed long grass strips into which you can land anything to postage stamps that I wonder how anyone lands on. The trip should be great and wonderful experiences will be in store for all skill levels and all types of aircraft. I will be flying the Pacer, but many strips will accommodate Bonanzas, F-90s, 182RGs, Navions, etc. We will have a videographer and the film of our adventure should be fun for all. This month's speaker(s) will whet our appetite. They have a great store of knowledge to help our flying no matter where we fly, and better yet hear those stories that are just not to be missed. I am certain you will enjoy and be entertained by March's program.

March kicks off our spring theme of putting us back into flying with the great things anyone can do with airplanes. April we are looking forward to a pair of pilots who have built a business around flying to great places, taking pictures and writing about them. Our speaker, John Kounis has made Pilot Getaways magazine into a great resource and will deliver quite an interesting talk. In May we welcome Michael Maya Charles a celebrated author and pilot whose book "Artful Flying" is about much more than airplanes. It is unique in that it is not about how to fly, but rather how pilots approach and enjoy flying has a strong effect on how we fly. June we will put all that in practice with a total focus on flying starting with a fly-out to Merced Fly-in. Then it's back to E45 for aerobatics and fun antics by Vicky Benzing and her IAC friends. That evening we will have a speaker and barbeque at the Benzing's and on Sunday even more flying fun and fellowship around the airport. The culmination to this spring's keep us flying theme.

I am very excited to be a part of what we are doing this year and believe we'll have loads of fun doing it. We couldn't do it without a whole bunch of wonderful volunteers. Thank you all.

Happy skies, Rand Siegfried

Happenings: Social times

The Sweetheart Ball was fabulous! From what we've heard everyone had an excellent time. The band got everyone dancing. The mood set by all the volunteers decorating was romantic with the aroma of beautiful fresh flowers adding so much. Andy and McKinley took take away photos for all who came. I especially have to thank Alan and Connie for once again opening up their hangar.

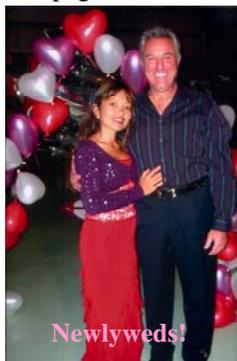


This month we have a new venue. The Benzing's will be opening their hangar to our March 4th meeting. Their hangar is beautiful and will be a great back drop for the presentation on Idaho Flying. Directions are on the second page of this letter.

Assuming that we will be having a winter by then we thought a warm soup would taste good. So we are doing a soup, salad and dessert pot luck.

To recap the details:

Time: 6PM
Place: Benzing Hangar
Food: Soup, salad and dessert pot luck



Cheers, Laurie McGlashan

Be There: March 4th @ the Benzing Hangar



Airport Gate Operation

By Jim Thomas

After a few months of difficulties I think we have the PML airport gate almost dialed in. My plan to have a gate controller that would be compatible with the Pine Mountain Lake Association's gate cards seemed like a good idea and one that would solve several problems. In reality, the installation was riddled with difficulties which resulted in inconvenience and frustration for both the County Airports staff and the airport tenants. For those of you that had trouble with the gate, I sincerely apologize.

I would like the airport users to understand some of the problems we were having, so you will know that the Airports Department was doing everything we could do to get the gate to work. First off the system is set up so that we can program it from our office at Columbia Airport. This has a big advantage in that we don't have to travel to PML to provide or remove access privileges. However, it added some complexity to the project that we did not anticipate. We purchased the new controller from a company out of the Bay Area whose technician was not very responsive to our calls and problems. Right off the bat, we had problems with programming the controller. The vendor recommended several fixes, none of which worked. Then someone stole the modem that was installed on the gate controller so we had no programming capability at all. We installed a lockable box for the controller, which was vandalized once again.

The modem dropped off line every time there was a power outage and we would lose communication and programming ability. This required us to manually reset the controller. To solve this we installed an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), but the UPS would go into alarm mode when utility power was lost and would not reset itself, necessitating a manual reset. Now we have a DC to AC inverter that is powered from the gate battery that should provide continuous reliable power to the controller and modem. To top things off, with all the work we did on the gate, the switches and electric eye got out of adjustment. Then, someone broke out the electric eye reflector preventing the gate from closing. Now, someone is blocking the electric eye with rocks and paper towel which also prevents the gate from closing.

So as you can see, technical difficulties and vandalism have caused us a lot of problems. We never anticipated this much trouble but sincerely hope most of our troubles are behind us now. My commitment is to persistently maintain and repair the gate so that reliable controlled access to the airport is provided.

Sincerely, Jim Thomas



Stupid Pilot Tricks!

By Linda Monahan, CFI, CFII

Normally when I write my articles for the PMLAA, I try to write in such a way that our non-pilots will understand what I say. This month, however, I'm aiming right at our pilots of the group!

This winter we have had some totally avoidable weather-related fatalities in Northern California. As I'm sure you all know, the number one reason for fatalities in GA is continued VFR into IFR conditions. For whatever reason, we start out when the weather is marginal or we continue on when it becomes so. One of the first maneuvers I teach my students is the ever-enjoyable, 180 degree turn both as a visual and then as an instrument maneuver! Our reasons for continuing on into bad weather are pretty much universal. "I've never had to turn around before." "I know this route like the back of my hand." "Well, I can see light behind the ridge..." It's all a form of "get-there-it is" or just plain lousy ADM (aeronautical decision-making). Our egos get in the way of good safe judgment skills.

The FAA reg's make it very clear what our minimums should be. Below 10,000', 3 miles, 500 below, 1,000 above and 2,000 horizontal in Class E airspace. I teach the 3-152's so we can remember it. It also tell my students, "Just 'cause it's legal, doesn't mean it's safe..." Class E airspace over Groveland starts at what??? It's magenta shaded, so it's 700' agl, right?

The reason for the tone of my article this month is that one of our "local" pilots did the stupidest thing I've ever seen and in the process endangered at least 5 lives! Rand, his family and I were in his Baron coming back from PAO on Saturday. The weather was bad with a very low cloud deck lying right on the airport. Our weather reporting persons on the ground advised that they couldn't see across the runway it was so low. We had our alternate all planned out if it didn't lift. We circled around for a while and the ceiling did come up above minimums. We contacted NORAL and got cleared for the GPS Rwy 9 approach. We called the final approach fix inbound on a five-mile final when our ground crew called and said a Baron was taxiing out for take-off on Rwy 27. They called him but he never responded. He took off into IFR conditions right straight at us!!! If it hadn't been for Dick Collier and Larry Struck, I don't know what would have happened. We broke off the approach to the South and sure enough, he came boiling up out of the clouds headed right toward us!!!

When you see something like this after the initial anger wears off the natural reaction is to think that I'd never do

something that stupid. We have all done things with airplanes we wish we hadn't and I've seen very good pilots I respect do some dumb things. More constructive is to think what may have lead to a move like that and the situation which may lead any of us down that path.

Let's say this pilot was waiting for the weather to clear, just as we were on top. We both saw that the clouds were lightening and it would be open soon. He was switching between the CTAF and Norcal and heard our calls. At the end of the runway he saw a peak of blue. After listening on the CTAF he made the take-off announcement and launched. As is often the case that blue doesn't look so big hurtling towards it at 140 mph and staying VFR wasn't going to make it. Pick the lightest spot and he is on top in an instant, but immediately he has those cold sweaty hands and remorse- "how the hell did I allow myself to do that!" And to then see another airplane only brings that feeling home. During climb out he notices that he is on Norcal's freq. and that gives him a real sinking feeling in his stomach.

The big kicker is that 15 minutes later 50% of the sky was blue. Regulations are there for a reason. Flying is often forgiving, but when it is not it is very unforgiving. When doing a flight outside of normal operation is when to spend that extra time double checking the checklist and also the time to consider the options. A further delay of 10-15 minutes would have made it a simple VFR departure.

Harlow Voorhees, Aviation Safety Inspector at FAT FSDO, has written an excellent article on just this subject. Let me know and I'll e-mail it to you. Thanks.

Happy Flying, Linda

A Chance to Help our Local High School

The PMLAA supports an ongoing ROP, (Regional Occupational Program) at Tioga High School. This is a hands-on, shop-oriented class titled, AIRCRAFT MECHANICS AND MACHINE TECHNOLOGY.

Tioga High School needs to find a replacement instructor for the 06-07 school year. The class is currently taught on Tuesdays and Thursdays from about one to three PM. The next school year will start in late August of 2006. This is an important effort and worthy of our support as there are no other high school shop classes offered in Southern Tuolumne County. Shop, or hands-on technology classes offer the student alternative, often well-paying career paths that can begin immediately after high school.

Qualifications for this task are not stringent; if you have an interest in teaching and some experience which includes aircraft, automobiles, motorcycles, boats, machinery, electronics, or any technical field for that matter, you might want to consider this. The curriculum is not set in stone, so

there is room to tailor it to the instructor's expertise and experience.

Currently, the class of six students is being taught by Paul Price. Paul would be glad to help his replacement get started and, for that matter, lend a hand from time to time during the year for that matter. The principal at Tioga High is Sandy Bradley and the Superintendent of Schools is Dr. John Triolo. Sandy and John are enthusiastic supporters of this program and would be happy to talk to you about it; or call Paul anytime for more details and with any questions. He can be reached at 209-962-7431 or ppmap@mlode.com

PAUL PRICE

Into The Archives....

I've re-organized my collection of PMLAA newsletters, which date back to 1986, or maybe even further. (I'm not sure when I began saving them for posterity.) It was fun pawing through them, and the most notable thing was the increased sophistication over the years, going from single-page, black-and-white, to our present full-color presentations.

At first we met in hangars for coffee and doughnuts, and there was no newsletter, just occasional notes from John Wilbur, our first president. Our tiny membership didn't require much formal communication. We grew, saw the need for a newsletter, and one was started. Then began PMLAA's tradition of public service: Flying Samaritans, "open house" events, updates on aircraft radio use and on a proposed Long Gulch Ranch development, "Airport Days" (which began in 1996), the "ditch" project... the list is endless.

Membership increased, and we reserved the Lake Lodge for our meetings, but soon even that wasn't big enough. From a group of about ten couples we have grown to our current list of over 300 families. Our monthly programs have become more sophisticated as men and women of national reputation share their flying experiences with us.

Over the years PMLAA has developed into one of the biggest and best of local organizations, one to be proud of.
MEK



Going on in the community

Groveland Park Dedication and New Music Program Benefit Luncheon – March 11

We've received a press release detailing two events. The dedication of the lower part of Mary Laveroni Park and a fund raiser for The Bettike Foundation. The foundation is raising money for the music programs at our local schools. These are both happening March 11th.

The dedication is 11am at the park. The fundraiser is a luncheon at the Iron Door Saloon at 2:30PM. The entire press release is on our web site or call 209 962 5432 for reservations.

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Leather-bound, 18 Volumes

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Editor	Mary Kelly	962-7057
Safety Editor	Linda Monahan	962-5181

Aviation Association meetings are normally held at 6:00pm on the first Saturday of every month. The location will be announced

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SET UP CREW:

Paul Sperry, Bob Bangs, Sean Brady, Buck Buchanan, Ron Dodson, Bob Cowley, Mike Millar



Mark your Calendar

March 4	Idaho Backcountry with Bob Hoff and friends	6:00pm	Benzing Hangar
March 11	Groveland Park Dedication and fundraiser (not a PMLAA event)		
April 1	Great flying destinations with John Kounis	6:00pm	location TBD
May 6	Author Michael Maya Charles	6:00pm	location TBD
June 3	Full Day Flying Fun hosted by Vicky and Jeff Benzing		
July 8-12	Fly-out to Idaho, exact dates to be finalized		

***To those who've paid their 2006 dues
We Thank You!***

Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association
PO Box 131
Groveland, CA 95321

Next meeting
March 4th