

# PMLAA NEWS



Volume 21, Issue 6, June 2006  
A Monthly Publication of the Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association

## About Our June 3, 2006 Aerial Fun Day

Don't miss our June 3rd event. We are planning a full day of fun at the Pine Mountain Lake Airport, followed by a barbeque at the Benzing Hangar and a presentation by International Aerobatic Club President, Vicki Cruse. The aerobatics community will come out in full force to make this day a special event. The aerobatic club will be doing some fund raising to help send local pilot and US Advanced National Champion, Todd Whitmer to the Advanced World Aerobatic Championships in Radom Poland this summer. All participation in the fund raising is voluntary. No fees are required to enjoy the day's activities.

The format for June is a bit different from our typical evening dinner and speaker. We will invite the public from noon to 5pm, keeping them on the south ramp and windsock hill area. Our schedule includes biplane rides and static displays from noon to 3pm. At 3pm, the airport will close for parachute demonstration jumps, aerobatic performances, fly-bys, and a demonstration of short-field techniques by the one and only Clay Lacy in his Pilatus Porter. In the airshow line-up are Jacquie Warda of "Jacquie B Airshows" in her Pitts S1C, Bill Stein of Red Baron Squadron and now ACAP fame in Vicky Benzing's red Stearman, 21-year-old Melissa Andrzejewski in her racy Edge 540, and, the wild and crazy Rocky Hill (who some of you might remember from last year's Extra fly-in) in his colorful Extra 300S. US National Champions Howard Kircher in his Great Lakes (Sportsman category) and Todd Whitmer in his Edge 540T (Advanced category) will dazzle us with a competition aerobatics demonstration. Airshow legend Wayne Handley will be our "air boss" and Jim Meide will announce for us. At the conclusion of the airshow, our own PMLAA pilots will show off their beautiful airplanes in a series of fly-bys. The field will reopen at 5pm.

After the flying fun is over and the public leaves, our members and guests will adjourn to the Benzing Hangar and ramp for a wild-west barbeque dinner. All of the chuck wagon fare has been donated, with the Diestel family generously supplying their fabulous barbequed turkey. Dinner is complete and free of charge, but there will be a donation bucket for those who wish to support Todd and the Advanced Team. There will also be

numerous fun items (airplane rides, one of Linda's neon airplanes, etc.) to bid on in a silent auction that will close at 9pm. Our PMLAA no-host bar will be open as usual.



Our speaker for the evening is Vicki Cruse, two-time United States Unlimited Team member and President of the International Aerobatic Club. Vicki was bitten

with aerobatic bug in 1998 after taking an Emergency Maneuver Training Class with Rich Stowell in Santa Paula, where she currently lives. In 2002, she earned a spot on the US Aerobatic Team and was the second highest placing US female and the 8th placing female overall at the World Championships. In 2004, she made the US Aerobatic Team once again, where she finished 8th in the World Championships held in Burgos Spain. She is currently the 2005 US Women's National Champion.

Vicki is also the only female currently qualified to race in the Sports Class at the Reno Air Races. In 2003, she raced her Glasair III to a 1st place finish on Saturday and a third place finish on Sunday in the Silver race at 260 mph. Due to the timing of US Aerobatic Team selection, she was unable to race at Reno in 2004 or 2005.

Vicki is an aviation author and writes numerous columns, including the Technical Advisor column for Sport Aerobatics magazine. In her presentation to us, Vicki will talk about the sport of competition aerobatics and share stories of her experiences participating in the World Championships.

Every year, a team is selected at the US National Championships to represent the US at the World Championships (Advanced Team in odd years, Unlimited Team in even years). Each team member is expected to raise his or her own funds to compete. This can be very costly as it is about \$20,000 to ship an airplane over to Europe to compete. Add to that the expenses of training, travel, and lodging, and it can be as much as \$30,000 to participate. Any donations to the International Aerobatic Club for Todd and the US Advanced Team are fully tax deductible and will be very much appreciated. See the flyer for more details, elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope to see you all there.

- Vicky Benzing



# USA

Advanced World Aerobatic Team

# 2006



## TODD WHITMER

It's a tremendous honor and privilege to be representing the United States as a member of the 2006 US Advanced World Aerobatic Team. I am fully committed to working with my fellow team members to mold a winning team in this sport we all love so much.



My aviation spark was lit at an early age with the help and encouragement of my father, who was a military pilot. He and I built and flew model airplanes together, and in the process, my father passed

on to me not only the basics of aviation, but also his love of flying. After earning a degree in Computer Science at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and beginning a career in the computer industry in Silicon Valley, I finally decided it was time to take to the air myself. I started as a hang glider pilot, but I soon moved up to powered flight, earning my Private Pilot's certificate in 1991 and an Instrument Rating in 1998. As my interest in flying grew, I also invested the time and effort needed to earn my Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic Certificate, which I received in 2001.

In early 2001, I attended an aviation-related fundraising event and won a raffle prize donated by Curtis Hawks. The prize entitled me to a ride in Curtis's Christian Eagle, and during that ride, Curtis demonstrated for me a number of aerobatic maneuvers. The ride was very exciting and I was hooked.

During the summer of 2001, I took the Aerobatics Proficiency Training series at the Sean D. Tucker School of Aerobatic Flight, flying Pitts aircraft with the school's chief pilot and instructor, Ken Erickson. My first lesson there was all it took to prove to me that aerobatics is indeed very addictive, and I found myself spending more and more time training with Ken. In late August of that year, Ken suggested that I might like to try my hand at competing in an upcoming IAC contest at Delano, CA, and my fate was sealed when I won the Highest Scoring First-Time Sportsman Award at that contest. Ken continued to impart his advice and insights



on flying competition aerobatics as he served as my trainer and safety pilot through the 2002 season – training that helped me win the California Points Series Championship in the Sportsman Category that year.

In late 2002, my commitment to aerobatics moved to the next level when I decided to purchase a Zivko Edge 540T. In 2003, I spent a considerable amount of time at the Zivko Factory in Guthrie, Oklahoma, helping to build my Edge. I also began training with Wayne Handley, learning to fly competition aerobatics in a high-performance mono-wing aircraft, and benefiting greatly from Wayne's willingness to share what he clearly has mastered.

For me, one of the best things about the sport of aerobatics is being a member of the aerobatic community. I particularly value the friendship, critiquing and encouragement of Norm DeWitt, Vicki Cruse, Melissa Andrzejewski, and Vicky Benzing, with whom I have shared great times as we traveled around the country from contest to contest. I would also like to thank my wife, Judy, who not only supports my "pursuit of excellence" in the sport of aerobatics, but who has served as a tireless volunteer at many of the contests in which I have competed.

Over my four years competing in aerobatics I have often reflected on something Lance Armstrong once wrote: "Everyone has the will to win – a Champion has the will to prepare to win". I believe that all of the members of the 2006 US Advanced World Aerobatics Team have that will to prepare to win, and I know we are all committed to devoting the time and energy required to develop the skills we need to compete successfully at a world-class level. But we need your support. Please consider making a financial contribution to the Team. Such support will help us to focus on the task at hand – the preparation that will allow us to successfully represent the USA at the 2006 Advanced World Aerobatics Championship in Poland.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



There has been more flying going on as the weather has improved. I've done a bit recently highlighted by trips east to Oshkosh, Tullahoma and Wichita with PMLAA members Linda Monahan and Larry Struck. All three of those destinations ooze aviation.

I am really excited about our June event. Vicky is doing an outstanding job organizing what I think will be the best aviation immersion I've known since I've arrived in PML, if not longer. The way the event is shaping up it is a real win-win; the aerobatic community is bringing great resources to the party (Flying, Food and Aviators-what more is there!) while Todd's representation of the US in world competition will become a little easier for him. No funds are being forwarded from the PMLAA accounts for all of this fun including the BBQ dinner.

Don't forget to head to Merced Friday evening. There are always plenty of PLMAA neighbors and wonderful aircraft there. We will also be looking to be out in force Sunday after the meeting for informal flying, tire kicking and hangar stories.

Our Idaho Fly Out is coming together. Look elsewhere in this issue for the list of participants. Please let me know if you are not on the list and want to come. I do suggest that everyone is able attend the Mountain Flying Seminar put on by Larry Jobe and Linda Monahan May 20<sup>th</sup>. Following the Idaho trip is a fly-in that is truly not to be missed at Seeley Lake Montana. My friends, the Lindmer's, put on a fantastic spread with the best food (their restaurant, Lindey's Prime Steak House has what many believe is the best steak in the country) and the most wonderful people. I usually camp with my kids, but there are plenty of accommodations in Seeley Lake.

EAA's Airventure Oshkosh is around the corner. We would like to get the PMLAA members together during the event. I will be giving rides in the Ford Trimotor for the EAA this year and one thought is to go on a 100% PMLAA flight. We are thinking in the earlier part of the week. Let me know if there is interest.

So many great things to do and so little time. I am looking forward to the little flights; bouncing around the hills at sunrise, the perfect power-off approach, watching our members enjoying flight. There is nothing like a yellow Cub early in the morning.

*Keep flying, keep safe and have fun, Rand Siegfried*



## Happenings: Social times

### *Git 'r Done At our BBQ*

We, after what seems like an eternity, finally have good weather. Yea!

I want to thank Norm & Patty Peebles for letting us use their hangar for our PMLAA monthly meeting again this month of May. I am sorry that they could not be here to participate in our PMLAA meeting with the thought-provoking Michael Maya Charles as our speaker. We have all learned something from his presentation.

Our **June 3<sup>rd</sup>** meeting will be an **Aviation Fun Day here at Pine Mountain Lake from Noon to 5PM**. Vicky & Jeff Benzing have planned an exciting day with **Static Displays, Biplane Rides, Aerobatic Performers, Parachutists, Fly-by's, Food and Drinks**. This will all take place on the south side of the airport around the transient ramp on and the windsock hill. Lunch and drinks will be handled by another organization.

Our Monthly meeting will start at **6PM** featurin' a Bar-B-Q at **Jeff & Vicky Benzing's** hangar. The menu will be a rip-roarin' western BBQ, highlighting Diestel Turkey with bronc bustin' beans, outlaw slaw, and all the fixin's. Don't miss the Ice Cream Bars after. All this and you don't have to buy or cook a thing!

The food has been 100% donated by Diestel and other organizations. There will be a donation bucket on the chow line with the proceeds going to Todd Whitmer's World Aerobatic Competition effort.

The usual beverages will be available with the **Marguerita Machine** up and running. I hope to see all of you there. It will be a once in a lifetime experience to be able to see and converse with some of the talent that Vicky has lined up to perform.

Here is a schedule of events:

Noon to 5PM	Public invited to South side
3PM to 5PM	Airport closed for PMLAA Fly-bys and Airshow
5PM to 6PM	Public leaves and we get ready
6PM to ???	BBQ, PMLAA speaker and fun

**Be prepared to have a good time!**

*Bring your appetite! Conni Buchner*



## Safety During Aviation Events

By Jim Thomas

With the Aerial Fun Day coming up on June 3<sup>rd</sup> I wanted to give everyone a heads-up on some special safety controls that will be implemented at the airport to help assure that the event remains safe. There are two areas that are of concern; one is keeping the general public away from the aircraft movement areas and the second is preventing runway incursions. Because our June 3<sup>rd</sup> event will include a temporary aerobatic box and aerobatic demonstrations, the FAA will be present at the airport. This makes it especially important to control all runway crossings by pedestrians, bicycles, golf carts and cars.

The ramp area will be laid out with delineators and rope to keep the viewing public away from the turning propellers. There will be airplanes arriving and departing throughout the day and parking will be limited. By separating the viewers from the participants we can increase the safety of the event. I would appreciate everyone's help by staying outside the roped off areas unless you are specifically involved with aircraft operations.

Many residents are accustomed to using the airport for walking and access to neighbors homes. During the Aerial Fun Day it will be important that pedestrian traffic be kept to a minimum and people should only cross the runway at the far west end. DO NOT cross at the mid field crossing adjacent to the parking ramp. A shuttle will be available to move people from the ramp to various areas around the airport.

Minimizing vehicle movement on the airport is very important. There will be no parking for cars at the ramp because we need to maximize the space for aircraft. Only those people directly involved with the event should drive on the airport. Everyone else should park on Elderberry, Woodside or Jimmersall and walk to the airport. Elderberry offers the best access to the airport ramp. For the dinner at the Benzing Hangar, we will allow parking on the north east side of the field, but once again, remember that vehicle crossings are only allowed at the west end of the runway. As a reminder, always stop and look "for aircraft" both directions twice before crossing the runway.

As mentioned earlier, the FAA will be present at our Aerial Fun Day. With everyone's cooperation we can have a safe event with no runway incursions and no close calls on the ramp. If either of these become a problem there is a good chance that the FAA will not be so cooperative next time we want to host such a fun aviation event.

In closing, I want to mention just one other important item which is that Castle Airport changed their CTAF to 123.075 MHz. If you are headed there to visit the Air Museum or for another reason, please check for NOTAMs and note the frequency change on your charts.

*Keep it safe, JT*



## Summer Weather Considerations

By Linda Monahan, DPE

As I was flying home this afternoon after having the pleasure of issuing a gentleman his Private Pilot ticket, I was marveling at the power of the atmosphere as I watched thunderstorms build westward off the Sierra crest.

Sunday, Larry and I took my newest addition to the plane stable, a souped up- go fast Twin Comanche, on a little business trip to Missoula, MT. On the way home yesterday, I saw something I'd never seen in real life. On the weather radar on my handy cell phone, pilotmycast.com, I noticed thunderstorms brewing over the middle of Nevada. No worries, I've certainly dealt with these things before.

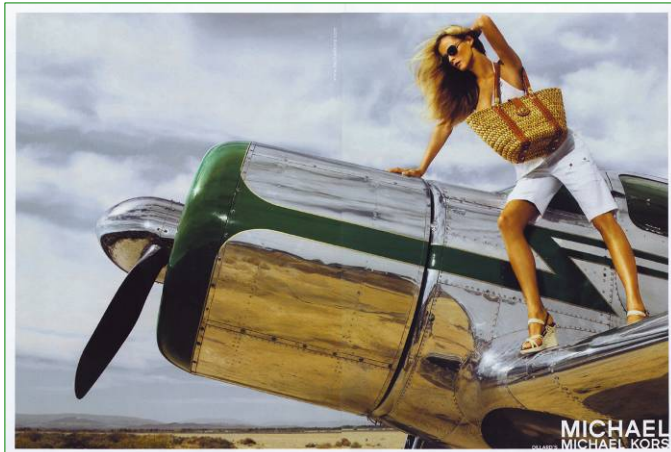
As we got closer, Larry was sound asleep in the co-pilot's seat and I was driving along at 200mph on the autopilot, when I started seeing these cells out in front of me. Virga was coming down from the one right in front of me. For those of you who may have forgotten Weather 101, virga is rain that is evaporating before it hits the Earth's surface. Hum, rain falling=down drafts... Think I'd better either go around by a good distance or slow down. I wanted to test my theory of the possibility of turbulence, so I chose to slow a bit and get closer. Sure enough, it got rough and Larry was awake, looking around. I needed some company anyway. We began picking our way around these scattered cells but tried to not deviate too far from the course for home.

As we approached the Rome VOR north of Lovelock, Larry was back snoozing again, listening to his new iPod. Way out in front of us, I saw something that got my attention. It looked like a rain squall along a ridgeline. As I got closer, this supposed rain squall grew and advanced down the West side of the ridge. Now I was sitting up on the front of my seat because I could see that it was building and heading toward my route of flight. What IS THAT??? As I got closer, I finally figured out what it was and made a 90 degree heading change away from it. It was an immense dust storm that was at least 100 miles long! What I thought were shafts of rain was actually the leading edge of this enormous wall of dirt. I thought we were safe at 6000 feet above it and edged a little back to my heading for E45. Then I could smell the dust and high-tailed it further westbound.

We're relatively sheltered at PML. However when we venture to the crest of the Sierra and beyond, we entire a whole new ball game. There is a high pressure out in Nevada, with its clockwise circulation, drawing up Gulf moisture to build these thunderstorms. So a word to the wise, keep an eye on the weather when you're headed Eastbound.

*Happy Flying, Linda*

## *Flying Fine Art Meets High Fashion*



This immaculate 1939 Spartan Executive, owned by long-time PMLAA members Kent and Sandy Blankenburg, is the perfect accompaniment to the Michael Kors Spring Collection with supermodel Carmen Kass. World-renowned photographer Mario Testino shot the ad campaign, which has been running in several national magazines, including Allure, Vanity Fair, Harpers Bazaar and Vogue.

PMLAA member Keith Zenobia booked Kent and Sandy's airplane through his Los Angeles based company, [www.AmazingAircraft.com](http://www.AmazingAircraft.com), a division of his [www.WingsWheelsWatercraft.com](http://www.WingsWheelsWatercraft.com), which represents nationwide owners of distinctive aircraft, ground vehicles and watercraft to the motion picture, advertising and publishing industries. Keith also enlisted PMLAA President Rand Siegfried as a location consultant on the project. The photo shoot took place at General Wm J Fox Airfield in Lancaster, California.

### **Encore Performance**

Look for the Blankenburgs' gleaming 1952 Cessna-195 (shown here in an



editorial story) in Michael Kors Fall collection ads running in several August and September 2006 magazines. Featuring

Carmen Kass again, this ad campaign was shot at a private airstrip nestled in beautiful green rolling hills near Santa Maria, California.

### **Join the Fun**

Owners of exceptional aircraft, ground vehicles and watercraft who are interested in making them available for advertising, editorial and film projects are encouraged to contact Keith at 888-639-6917 or [keith@zenobia.com](mailto:keith@zenobia.com).



If you are coming but are not on the list, please let me know. Letters will be going out with hotel info (McCall) and flight details, etc. so please be certain you are on the list.  
The following people have signed up:

- Clay Lacy and Donna Linn
- Dwaine Carver
- Paul and Kym Purfoy
- Larry Struck & Linda Monahan
- Larry Rosling
- Norm & Patty Peebles
- Rand & Reinhold Siegfried
- Diek & Judy Collier
- Roger & Kathy McConnell
- Jerry Baker
- Carol Simpson



## **Classifieds**

For Sale: Time-Life Leather-bound, 18 Volume Epic of Flight. Call: 209-962-6986



### **2006 PMLAA BOARD OF OFFICERS**

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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 Buchannan,  
Bob Cowley and Mike Millard.



### Mark your Calendar

- May 19-21 Luscombe Fly In, Columbia  
May 20 Mountain Flying Seminar, Larry Jobe's Hangar House  
May 26-29 42<sup>nd</sup> Watsonville Antique Fly-In & Airshow  
June 2-4 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Merced Antique Fly-In  
June 3 Full Day of Flying Fun hosted by Vicky and Jeff Benzing  
June 4 P-51 Mustang Aces @ Travis AFB, call 408 725 8095  
June 8-11 Yuba County Airport (MYV); Golden West Regional Fly-In  
June 17-18 Father's Day Fly In at Columbia Airport  
July 8-12 Fly-out to Idaho  
July 14-16 Seeley Lake, Montana

***Invite your local friends to June 3<sup>rd</sup> daytime  
Build good community relations!***

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

**Don't miss- all day  
June 3rd!**