



Volume 52 Issue 11
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Mountain Lake Aviation
Association, Inc.

Pine Mountain Lake Aviation Association

PMLAA Christmas Party

Camp Tuolumne Trails

22988 Ferretti Road

6 pm to 10 pm

Please bring a dessert



Remembering Alan Buchner

(1934 – 2025)

Alan Leslie Buchner took his final flight on Thursday, October 30th, 2025. He was at his home in Groveland, CA, surrounded by family.

Aviation was born into Alan in Bakersfield, California, on June 18th, 1934. His father, Les, was a flight instructor and mechanic who ran the Civilian Pilot Training Program at Bakersfield Airport (BFL). Alan grew up at the airport helping, working, and listening to tall tales. His dad joined the Army Air Corps during WWII as an aviation investigator, so the family moved around a lot, settling back in Bakersfield after the war.

Alan purchased his first airplane, a 1936 Rearwin Sportster, at age 16. After only a year of flying, he rebuilt it. This was his first restoration, launching a lifelong passion.

Rather than being drafted, Alan joined the Army and finished first in his class at both helicopter mechanics and aircraft engine school. In the infinite wisdom of the military, Alan never worked on helicopters or airplanes, but he got to hang out at the airport.

Introduced on a blind date, something clicked between this quiet, hard-working man and a cute, sassy little blue-eyed blond named Conni. Alan proposed, and before the year was out, they married, launching a 62-year marriage, love affair, and partnership. They have three children.

Alan's career was entirely in aviation. He worked for aircraft dealers and flew both scheduled and corporate routes. To fill the time between flights, he started Buchner Aero Specialties in the back of a Fresno hangar. Thus began his lifelong business. He has refurbished, repaired, maintained, and restored thousands of airplanes over the years.

Bring Alan anything with a propeller, and he could fly and maintain it. He was clear about what he could and could not do. He didn't fly or work on jets. He didn't work on avionics either, "you can't see electricity," so he leaves that to someone else. Alan has received the FAA Charles Taylor Master Mechanic and Wright Brothers Master Pilot Awards. He has also won over 52 awards for his airplanes. He holds almost every license and certification for flying, instructing, and maintaining fixed-wing, piston-powered aircraft. Alan also dazzled airshow crowds for 17 years, performing in his 1942 Ryan PT-22.

Buchner Aero Specialties was busy, doing about 90 annuals yearly. Aircraft maintenance paid the bills, but Alan's passion was aircraft restoration, "taking a piece of junk and making it look like new." There was never a plan to establish a museum; it just happened, one beautifully restored airplane at a time. The Buchner Museum was listed in the 1993 "Aircraft Museums and Collections of the World." The book detailed thirteen aircraft on display, and Alan entertained visitors from around the world. Today, the "museum" resides in Alan and Conni's PML hangar. Visitors enjoy aircraft, automobiles, and memorabilia. Alan's restorations have won numerous awards, been featured in print and on television, and are on display in museums in Germany and England.

Alan was an artisan, of sorts. The restoration process was personal, connecting him with the skills and technical abilities of the past. Alan's most prized restoration, a Waco-QDC, was found trashed in a barn. In the 15-year restoration process, Alan discovered that his father, Les, once owned the airplane. His Waco was awarded EAA Grand Champion and is one of only two still flying. At the time of his passing, Alan was restoring a 1936 Porterfield that had been owned by his father.

Alan and Conni purchased their Pine Mountain Lake property in 1999 and built a home/hangar combination. When it was finished, Conni moved in immediately to escape the Fresno fog, and Alan commuted to Fresno. In 2015, Alan chose to permanently move his "museum" to PML.

Alan is survived by his wife, Conni, their two children, Tana and Michael, four grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, Tony. Alan left his mark on every person he met and every airplane he had flown or worked on. Many friends and aviators will miss him very much.

A Celebration of Life for Alan Buchner will be held on January 31st, 2026, at 4:00 pm, at the Buchner Museum, 20885 Hemlock St, Groveland, CA 95321.

President's Message

By Bob Mackey

Holiday Party

With the vacancy of the Social VP office, we were a little late settling all the details for the Holiday Party. It's coming together now, with the help of volunteers. We will have the Holiday Party at Camp Tuolumne Trails, December 6, from 6 to 10pm. Tangled Hearts will cater the main course, with desserts provided by all of you! Music will be provided by The Blue Oak Band, featuring our own Christian de Ryss on keyboards. The detailed invitation is attached to this newsletter, so find that page and sign up now for the dinner. Additional **volunteers** are **needed** for setup and decoration. **Set up is Friday December 5, at 1pm**. Bring your decorations to share. We could also use a couple of people to help with parking and assisting guests to the door. As usual, cleanup will be Sunday morning. In case of inclement weather (or drinking), we will try to arrange rides for anyone who needs transportation.

Proposed change to PMLAA Bylaws

Each year, we have a bit of a problem in managing PMLAA. The fiscal year, the membership year, and the officer year are all aligned. That makes sense at first glance, but results in confusion when all the membership forms arrive and half are processed by the new board, and half are processed by the old board. The fiscal and tax years are fixed by law for the type of corporation that we have formed. Changing the membership year would require some significant changes in notification and dues. The proposed change is to shift the officer cycle to April, allowing the new officers to learn the basics before being overwhelmed with membership renewals. While we are at it, we can trim some of the obsolete clauses from the bylaws. Before our next meeting, February 7, 2026, we will distribute the draft Bylaws for membership review. The membership will be asked to vote on the changes at that meeting. If anyone has input on the update of the bylaws, please contact me (president@pmlaa.org).

Airport

The County is following up on our suggestion to consider a frequency change for the Pine Mountain Lake Airport. The present frequency, 122.90 MHz, is shared by many other nearby airports and can be congested at times. A frequency survey has been done, and some candidate frequencies have been identified. Now the County will send this suggestion to the FAA for their review. Separately, but in parallel, there is a proposal to change the name to Groveland Yosemite Airport. If both proposals move forward in a timely manner, we can look forward to re-marking the taxiway or runway with the new information, possibly in 2026.

Meetings

The November 1 meeting was a grand success at Sabrina & Darren Garvis' hangar. Darren Pleasance, the new president of AOPA spoke about his history in aviation as well as the latest in AOPA's advocacy efforts, including the new MOSAIC regulations that recently went into effect.

For future meetings, we are looking for new speakers to inform and entertain our members. Please contact me with your suggestions.



Safety Corner **By Mike Gustafson**

Using Artificial Intelligence for Aviation Weather Analysis

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming many aspects of aviation, and one of the most promising areas of application is weather analysis. Weather has always been a major variable in flight operations, influencing route planning, fuel efficiency, safety, and scheduling. Traditional meteorological models rely on physics-based simulations that require vast computing resources and may struggle with localized or rapidly changing conditions. AI techniques—particularly machine learning (ML) and deep learning—are now supplementing and improving these methods, providing faster, more accurate, and more adaptable weather insights for pilots.

AI models excel at recognizing complex patterns in large datasets. In aviation meteorology, these datasets include satellite imagery, radar returns, numerical weather prediction outputs, aircraft sensor data, and surface observations. By analyzing historical and real-time information, machine learning algorithms can detect subtle correlations that traditional models might miss. For example, AI systems can identify precursors to convective activity or turbulence several minutes or even hours earlier than standard forecasts. This capability enables earlier and more precise warnings of thunderstorms, icing, and wind shear—conditions that directly affect flight safety.

Another major advantage of AI in weather analysis is nowcasting—the short-term prediction of weather conditions within the next few hours. Deep learning models trained on radar and satellite data can generate rapid, high-resolution updates that are especially valuable for terminal areas and low-level operations. For general aviation, they offer enhanced situational awareness for preflight planning and in-flight decision-making.

The FAA's NextGen programs and initiatives such as NASA's System-Wide Safety project are exploring how AI can blend these real-time observations with traditional meteorological models to create adaptive, self-improving forecast systems.

For pilots, AI can simplify complex weather information into actionable guidance that can summarize forecast trends, highlight developing hazards, and even tailor briefings to specific routes or aircraft performance profiles. AI-driven visualization tools can display probabilistic forecasts—showing not just where storms are, but how confident the model is about their development and movement. This helps pilots make better risk-based decisions rather than relying solely on deterministic forecasts.

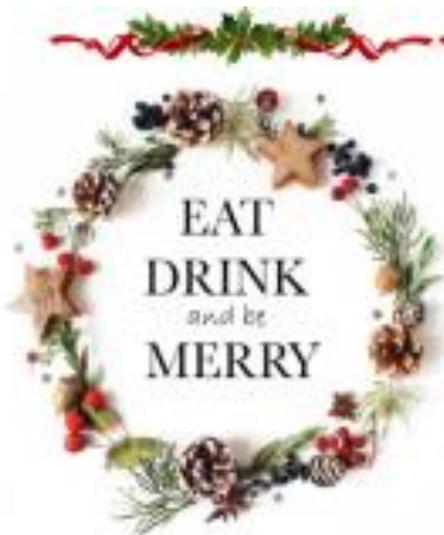
Despite these advances, challenges remain. AI models depend on high-quality data and can produce misleading results when exposed to incomplete or biased inputs. They also require validation against established meteorological standards to ensure reliability. Human meteorologists and flight planners remain essential for interpreting AI outputs and understanding their limitations.

In summary, AI offers powerful tools for enhancing aviation weather analysis. By combining the speed and pattern-recognition strengths of machine learning with human expertise, the aviation community can achieve more accurate forecasts, improved efficiency, and greater safety in the face of ever-changing atmospheric conditions.

I have been using ChatGPT for the past 6 months to help me analyze the weather for all my IFR flights. I have found it to be very accurate when used about 3 days or less from the flight. Download Chat GP and give it a try?

Some of this article was created by "Betty", my ChatGPT avatar.

Mike



PMLAA Holiday Party

Saturday, December 6, 2025

From 6 pm to 10 pm

Camp Tuolumne Trails

22988 Ferretti Road

Groveland, CA 95821

*Join us to celebrate the holidays with a Delicious Dinner
(Beef or Chicken) catered by Tangled Hearts Café*

Live Music performed by The Blue Oak

*Please bring your favorite dessert for sharing, as well
as an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots*

MARINE CORPS RESERVE



Dinner Tickets \$45 per person

IMPORTANT – LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS

- Mail Reservation & Check to arrive by November 20, 2025
- Or Email (or Call) Phil Boortz or Sally Smikahl by December 1, 2025. The payment will be due at the party.



Dinner Tickets \$45 per person
Limited Availability

- **By November 20, 2025:**
MAIL Reservation Form (below)
with Check
- **By December 1, 2025:**
Email (or Call) Phil or Sally
with reservation information.
The payment will be due at the
party.

PMLAA Holiday Party
Saturday, December 6, 2025

Name(s): _____

No. of Beef Dinner(s) _____ x \$45 each = \$ _____

No. of Chicken Dinner(s) _____ x \$45 each = \$ _____

Mail, to arrive by November 20, 2025

PMLAA
P.O. Box 131
Groveland, CA 95321

Or Email (or Call) to Reserve by December 1, 2025

- Phil Boortz: secretary@pmlaa.org • (805) 944-0148
- Sally Smikahl: ssmikahl@gmail.com • (650) 504-1604

Airport Manager

Coffee &



Conversation



**First Thursday
of the month**

10:00 am—11:00 am

**Yosemite Flights
Pine Mountain Lake
Airport**

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