

CalPilots



ADVOCATES FOR CALIFORNIA'S GENERAL AVIATION COMMUNITY AND AIRPORTS

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Sacramento Executive Airport
CalPilots Association Home Base

Photo Courtesy of Paul Veisze

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2017

Happy New Year

www.CalPilots.org



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of CalPilots magazine. This change to the printed face of the California Pilots Association reflects the organization balancing its purposes, bringing a more visible component of "pilot protection" to complement its long-standing extensive capabilities as "airport defenders."

Over the years, the official publication of the California Pilots Association has worn many names and shown different looks. In the pre-CalPilots day it was a 5" x 8" piece known by the moniker "Flight Line." By the late 1990s "California Pilot" graced the title space. Then, in 2004, "Airport Advocate" represented a nod to the organization's shift to claiming 100% efforts to airport defense.

The publication you hold in your hands today (or are viewing in a pdf file) is the beginning of an effort to ensure the aviators of California understand that they are a critical component in the preservation, protection, and promotion of General Aviation. Under the leadership of Phil Corman CalPilots will evolve the content by establishing consistent columns on topics that educate and entertain not only aviators but members of the public who may not be familiar with the beneficial uses of general aviation. With more than 100 local airport organizations and over 230 public use airports in California, the Association's handful of volunteers - dedicated as they are - cannot see everything. We're encouraging you to submit news about what's going on at your location. Whether it's a lurking problem or a celebration, send it to us! Photos are especially welcome!



I'm personally excited about the future of the California Pilots Association. With many projects benefiting the General Aviation community in work, and many others on the horizon, no matter where you are in the broad geography of California there are roles for whomever wants to join in this exciting activity. Give me a call or send me a message and we'll get you involved!

Aeronautically,

Corl Leach
Corl.Leach@CalPilots.org

CalPilots



Tidbit

One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar





FAA STOPS EVICTIONS OF FBOS AT SANTA MONICA AIRPORT

by Edward Story, VP Region 5

On December 13th, the FAA ordered the City of Santa Monica to cease the eviction process of Atlantic Aviation and American Flyers at Santa Monica Airport (KSMO). After numerous legal moves by the City and the FAA, over especially the period since September 15th when the initial eviction notices were posted, the FAA forcefully stopped the evictions to finish its investigation. The two facilities are the only providers of fuel on the field and also provide flight instruction, hangars, tie downs and services for charter operators.

The City's inferred and declared strategy has been to reduce aircraft flights, force out aviation tenants, and gradually shut down SMO, which is the oldest continuously operating airport in Los Angeles County. On August 23rd, the City passed a resolution to close SMO by July 2018 or before if legally possible.

The City contends that it can replace Atlantic and American Flyers with its own City-owned and operated facilities and thereby sell bio-fuel for jets and unleaded gas for propeller planes to reduce aircraft emissions. On the surface, such moves have a degree of political attractiveness to some Santa Monica residents and particularly to those actively involved in promoting a shutdown.

Federal law does allow municipal governments that operate airports to provide such services directly instead of relying on privately owned FBOs as are usually found at airports. However, if this is to be done, the City must use City employees to provide the services.

As yet, the City has not provided the FAA with sufficient evidence that it has the resident expertise or the sufficiently experienced City employees to provide these services. Further, given all that has transpired historically at SMO and particularly in the past few years, it seems unlikely that the City will purchase or lease aircraft and hire Certified Flight Instructors to provide instruction. How and under what procedures and prices the City would provide fueling and maintenance services remains an open question.

Meanwhile, the FAA contends that the City must be prepared to provide fuel, instruction, and all other normal services at reasonable prices to located and transient aircraft and aircraft owners and operators and that to transition effectively from current FBOs and the services that these FBOs provide, there must be a plan and evidence – detailed evidence – that such transition can take place effectively and seamlessly.

It appears to airport observers that the City has not yet provided much if any at all of that evidence.

The Interim Cease & Desist Order (C&D) is ten (10) pages long and available to any CalPilots member who requests it from the Editor or from this writer (see below). Some of the quotes from the C&D follow:

Considering the City's unrelenting efforts to evict from SMO critical aeronautical service providers and its hostility to the sale of leaded aviation fuel necessary for flight of today's aircraft in clear contravention of law, the FAA is issuing this order to maintain the status quo at SMO until a final agency decision is reached...

The transition from privately- to sponsor-proffered aeronautical services should be amicably coordinated to ensure no break in aeronautical services and the City's preemptive efforts to remove an aeronautical service provider from the premises of SMO before the City is fully ready to assume such services is per se unreasonable.

The affected FBOs - and all the other aeronautical users at SMO - are operating without leases or even holdover agreements and have been doing so since June 2015. Notably, such irregularities regarding property relations at the airport have existed before the council first directed the establishment of the proprietary exclusive in August 2016.

The council resolution directing the establishment of the proprietary exclusive (among other resolutions addressing fuel) also contains illegal directives to restrict aviation fuel to unleaded products that many or most aircraft cannot use. Given these

CalPilots



Tidbit

*Experience is a hard teacher. First comes the test,
then the lesson*



circumstances, the FAA must act to protect the integrity of SMO and assure that aeronautical service providers are protected...

"The FAA hereby ORDERS the City to immediately CEASE AND DESIST from acting to remove Atlantic from SMO until the FAA issues a final agency decision on the NOI. The FAA hereby ORDERS the City to immediately CEASE AND DESIST from acting to remove American Flyers from SMO until the FAA issues a final agency decision on the NOI."

Although it may appear that this action by the FAA might end the fight over Santa Monica Airport, in fact, this is only one skirmish on the broader battlefield for SMO. That battlefield currently has multiple Part 16 actions being fought as well as multiple court actions in process and, in addition, a constant outreach and public relations effort by the SMAA to counter the fallacious and damaging propaganda advanced constantly by the anti-airport factions.

JETSUITEX INTRODUCES SCHEDULED SERVICE AT SMO

Board Members of California Pilots Association and Santa Monica Airport Association participated in a press conference at 5,000 feet over southern California on Wednesday, December 14th. Alex Wilcox, CEO of JetSuite and JetSuiteX, announced public charter service and the sale of seats for scheduled flights to and from Santa Monica Airport (KSMO). The flights will begin February 6th, 2017. Current destinations include Las Vegas, San Jose and San Diego County.



JetSuiteX, whose parent company, JetSuite, recently announced an investment from JetBlue (NASDAQ:JBLU), announced fares for the new routes start from \$29* each way and will be flown on some of the quietest aircraft in service today.

Starting February 6th, JetSuiteX will offer four weekly flights between San Diego County (Carlsbad) and the Bay Area (San Jose), with a stopover in Santa Monica. JetSuiteX will also connect Santa Monica Airport with Las Vegas McCarran

"We are excited to offer the people of Santa Monica an affordable service which they can use to get to San Jose, Las Vegas and Carlsbad," said JetSuite CEO Alex Wilcox. "Our public charter service now provides the Los Angeles area with two departure points, Burbank and Santa Monica, making those Vegas and Bay Area trips so much easier. And all residents of Santa Monica will receive 25% off all their JetSuiteX flights to and from Santa Monica after their first round trip!"

JetSuiteX arguably provides the speed and comfort associated with private jet travel but at "piece rates" ~ the price of only one traditional airline seat. This fact alone should undercut completely the already fallacious argument advanced against Santa Monica Airport, to wit that it is only for the one-percenters. This argument was never true in the first place as by far the vast majority of operations at SMO are by small private planes individually owned, leased or rented. However, the argument – one of many advanced by anti-airport individuals – has in the past provided some traction in the public relations and political battles over the airport.

Santa Monicans and their friends can enjoy much the same jet service within California and to certain other States with the substantially increased convenience of flying directly out of their own municipal airport. And they will be able to enjoy this service with very little delay in boarding, estimated at perhaps one-quarter to one-tenth the time needed to board at, for instance, LAX.

The example 30 seat Embraer 135 jet in which the press conference was held has legroom comparable or better than domestic airlines' business class service. There are free seat assignments; individual power outlets at each seat; free WiFi and inflight entertainment onboard streamed to passengers' personal devices. The cabin is spacious, sound-proofed and there are free drinks and snacks.

Unlike alternative offerings, JetSuiteX clients do not need to pay a monthly subscription fee. Santa Monica residents will receive 25% off all fares after their first full fare round trip and verification of residency. Flights may be purchased www.jetsuitex.com, or JetSuiteX app on iOS.

Or just come and watch the beautiful white and red-striped planes at SMO!





HOW TO SAVE YOUR ORGANIZATION \$800 A YEAR

Dave Williams, Chapter Administrator

As Chapter Administrator, almost everything I deal with is tedious, boring stuff, involving paperwork and submissions to government agencies. You may be excused for not finding it to be entertaining or even interesting, but unfortunately, not paying attention to the paperwork can cost your organization money. Even though CalPilots' Group Exemption is only for the IRS, and has nothing to do with the State of California, I have been trying to monitor the chapters' compliance with State agencies for the last year or so. It is with the State agencies that you might get in trouble that could end being expensive.



The starting point for an organization to become tax-exempt is to become a non-profit corporation. As a corporation, your organization is then liable for a minimum corporate tax of \$800 a year. If you obtain and keep a state tax-exempt status, you are not required to pay that \$800. A high percentage of the Chapters have issues with the one or more of the State agencies that could eventually catch up to them. Fortunately for us, these state agencies don't seem to talk to each other. There are websites for each of these state agencies that allow you to check on your organization's status. In this issue I would like to give a guide to navigating the Attorney General's Registry Search Tool.

Your organization should be registered with the California Attorney general as a non-profit corporation. Use the following procedure to check your organization's status and perhaps save \$800:

Go to the Attorney General's (AG) site at: <https://oag.ca.gov/>. In the "Public Resources" column on the right of the page, click on "Charity Search". When using this search tool I have discovered it's best to enter only the minimum amount of info into the boxes because each number or name must perfectly match what is on file. Multiple entries mean multiple chances for an error. For example, I find frequently that names are not exactly what you think they are, and you will get no results. For this example, try entering only the Federal Employers Identification Number (FEIN). You probably have this on the checklist you sent us. Enter 9 numbers, no dash, then click search. With only that number it will take a little time for the search (30 sec to a minute). When the screen opens to the new page, note your registration status. The possibilities I have seen are *current*, *delinquent*, or *not registered*. *Current* means all is well. *Delinquent* probably means you have not filed some something that you should have. You can contact the AG by going to the link above, then click on Contact us, then Charities and you can send a message. *Not registered* probably means you are not a California non-profit corporation, and you should contact the Attorney General's office and get registered. Next, click on your organization's name. The screen that comes up gives you a lot of information about your organization. Your state Entity Number is here (upper right, below FEIN). Your Charity Registration number is on this page (the number starting with CT, upper left). Your yearly filings are listed, and at the bottom are related documents. Here you might find your founding documents and a record of communications from the AG.




Hopefully your organization will be active long after the current officers have moved on. It would be very helpful to future officers of your organization if they have a record of your FEIN, Entity Number, and Charity Registration Number, along with your founding documents. Most of the problems I am seeing with compliance issues are the result of previous officers not briefing newly elected officers on required filings, or by the failure to pass good records on to them.

In the next issue I will give a guide to checking your status with the IRS, the Franchise Tax Board and the Secretary of State.



Regional



Region 1	NPRM for the establishment of Class E Airspace above Weed, CA. The deadline for comments is January 20, 2017.
Region 2	The Sutter Buttes Regional Aviation Association (SBRAA) hosts a Display Day on the 1st Saturday of each month, from 10am until 2pm at the Sutter County airport (O52). Philly Cheesesteak sandwiches for \$5 are the standard fare for lunch. SBRAA also hosts a Display Day on the 4th Saturday of each month at Marysville (MYV) airport and they have a nice catered lunch available for \$5. SBRAA is a chapter of CalPilots.
Region 3	<p>Modesto Airport Pilots Association held its annual FAAST Safety Wings Seminar at Sky Trek Aviation, 825 Airport Way, Modesto City/County Airport on November 19, 2016 commencing at 10:00 AM. The speakers were Charlene L. Fulton, President of MAPA, introducing the mission of MAPA, Modesto Tower Chief, Pete Echevarria, discussing current traffic control issues. The featured speaker was safety counselor, Jose Salazar. Topic: OWNER/OPERATOR MAINTENANCE AND RELATED ISSUES.</p> 
Region 4	<p>Phil Corman, VP Region 4, made an award to Olivier Leclercq, Owner of ACI Jet on December 20. Mr. Leclercq has made 1) Significant investments in General Aviation on California's central coast, 2) Is donating a 172 to a charity in Santa Barbara (A Different Point of View) to be upgraded and improved at ACI Jet's cost, 3) is passionate about creating an aviation company that serves its team, the local community, and general aviation in a positive way. (Not just catering to high margin turbine business and forgetting about everyone else.)</p> 
Region 5	<p>The Redlands Airport Association flew 27 Planes to Twentynine Palms (KTNP) loaded with Toys for Tots, plus a \$1000 check. That's impressive General Aviation spirit!</p> 
Region 6	CalPilots has been actively involved in assisting local pilots at Bermuda Dunes Airport regarding a commercial building that is proposed to be built near the airport. CalPilots Region 6 VP was interviewed in-person by the local NBC news in San Diego regarding whether aircraft owners carried insurance and what the industry standard was. The interview went well and the conclusion that was advocated was that the flying community is a responsible group of people that believe in safety and believe in flying neighborly.





CALIFORNIA PINES

by Paula Jessup, VP Region 1

As the name suggests, it is a place in California that needs to make your list. Why you might ask? There are so many reasons, I am not sure what to list first. Let's start with

Nancy. Nancy Quigley is this amazing woman at the California Pines Lodge that goes above and beyond to ensure the guests have what they need. Under her leadership, the lodge has flourished. There is a beautiful pool that is handicapped accessible. The restaurant, well, let's just say that man can cook! His prime rib is to die for! And the way he sautés his vegetables? You will not be able to get enough of them! There is a bar with a pool table as well. Want to watch football or your favorite sport? It might be playing on the television. All of the windows face the lake allowing you to sip your evening beverage while watching the sun set in exploding colors of orange, deep blue, purple, and bright pink. You won't find a more magnificent sunset anywhere.



How do you get there, you ask? Fly! California Pines also has an airport just down the street. Knowing Nancy, she will probably send Larry, her husband, down to the airport to get you if you don't feel like walking around the corner. The airport identifier is A24. It is unattended and without fuel, but that is ok, Alturas (KAAT) has a 24 hour cardlock about 5 minutes away. The runway 5/23 is 4250' x 45' for the first 750' and then 50' wide for the remainder. The asphalt is in pretty good condition too. The runway is not fenced so overfly once to make sure there are no deer on the runway. The airport is managed and maintained by the CalPines Community Service District.

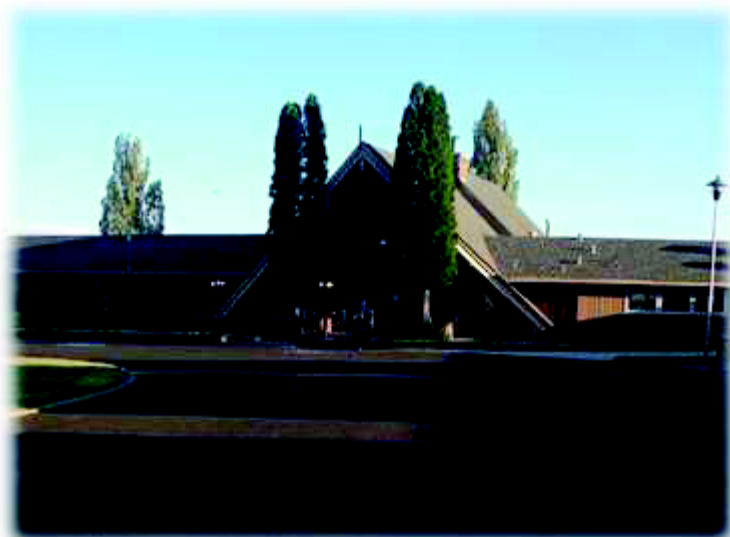
Have a look around the airport as you fly in. Do you see the hangars right off the runway? That's right! There are several pilots who live right on the airport with hangars. That could be you, you know. Just saying.

California Pines has that peaceful, worry free environment that needs to be a must see on your list of places to get away to. No matter what part of the year you go, there is always a wonder to see. Personally, sitting on the back deck or down by the dock, sipping a glass of wine is the perfect end of the day in my book!

Here's some websites you might need before you book your next trip:

CalPines Lodge website: www.californiapineslodge.com

Airnav.com: <http://www.airnav.com/airport/A24>





CALIFORNIA TURBULENCE

by Delia Colvin

In California we have some of the best flying weather in the country. But we also have some of the greatest hazards. Turbulence accounts for nearly 50% of the accidents I've investigated. Unfortunately, it often goes unforecast in California. So being able to recognize and identify potential turbulence is vital to your health. Fortunately there are some great tools at hand that make conditions easily recognizable. Here we'll talk about California turbulence and how to recognize it.

Santa Ana Winds

In southern California, especially in the winter time, we get a high pressure system that develops over the great basin. When you see this, watch for the circulation in Palm Springs area. If the wind is about twenty knots and from the east, you can expect winds of 80-100 knots in the eastern Los Angeles basin. This is because the wind eddies through the mountain pass, warming and increasing in speed until it reaches the Los Angeles Basin.

There are rarely any aviation forecasts for the Santa Ana winds until we receive the first urgent pilot report of severe turbulence. Typically that report comes from near San Bernardino and spreads west. Watch for high pressure over the great basin in the winter time and winds at Palm Springs current or forecast at 20 knots from the east.

Mountain Flying

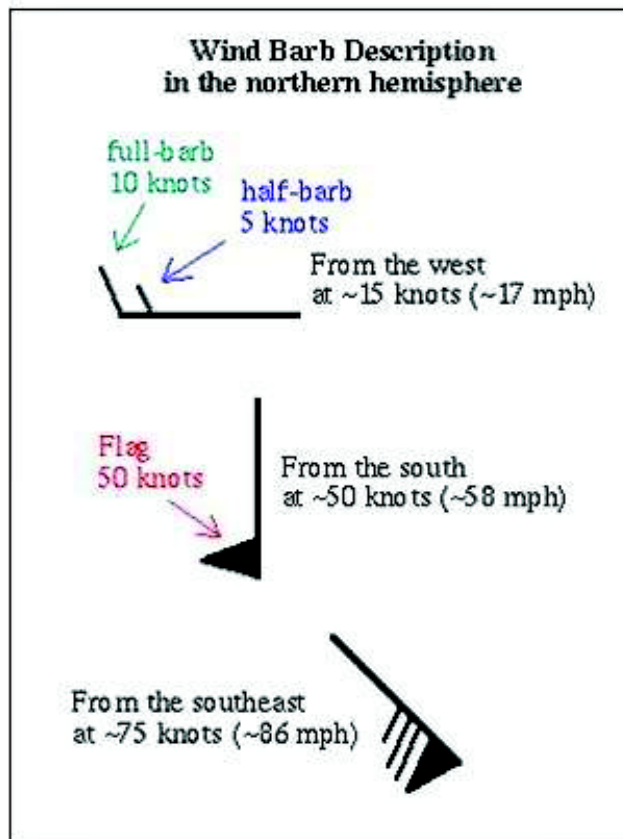
With elevations that climb from sea level to 14,000 feet and back down to near sea level, the potential for mountain wave, mechanical turbulence and strong updrafts/downdrafts are key to your safety. To identify this potential look at the wind forecast between 12,000 feet and 18,000. If the wind at those altitudes is coming from the northwest, west or southwest (which it almost always is) and at 25 knots or more, you have the potential for severe conditions in the mountains and on the eastern side of the mountains. In fact, one of the fatal accidents I investigated years ago involved a man with a tremendous number of safe hours flying. He flew through Tehachapi pass to Bishop. The wind was out of the west at nearly 40 knots at 12,000 feet. The mountains just west of Bishop are between 12,000-14,000 feet and then plunge nearly straight down 10,000 feet. The pilot had landed at Bishop an hour earlier without incident. However, when he departed, he encountered the downdrafts and eddies and crashed immediately with enough force that his ELT was destroyed.

Identifying potential turbulence is vital and one of the most difficult hazards to predict or identify. You can't see it on satellite and there are very few tools that measure turbulence. Enter the VAD winds and one of my favorite tools. It's available at <http://www.pilotsandweather.com/ssr.html>. Scroll to the bottom of the page and on the right side of the page you can select the location you prefer.

VAD

V=Velocity (speed)
A=Azimuth (horizontal)
D=Display

The VAD wind profiles are displayed at all Doppler Radar sites. It measures wind speed and direction with every sweep (7-10 minutes) and begins just above surface

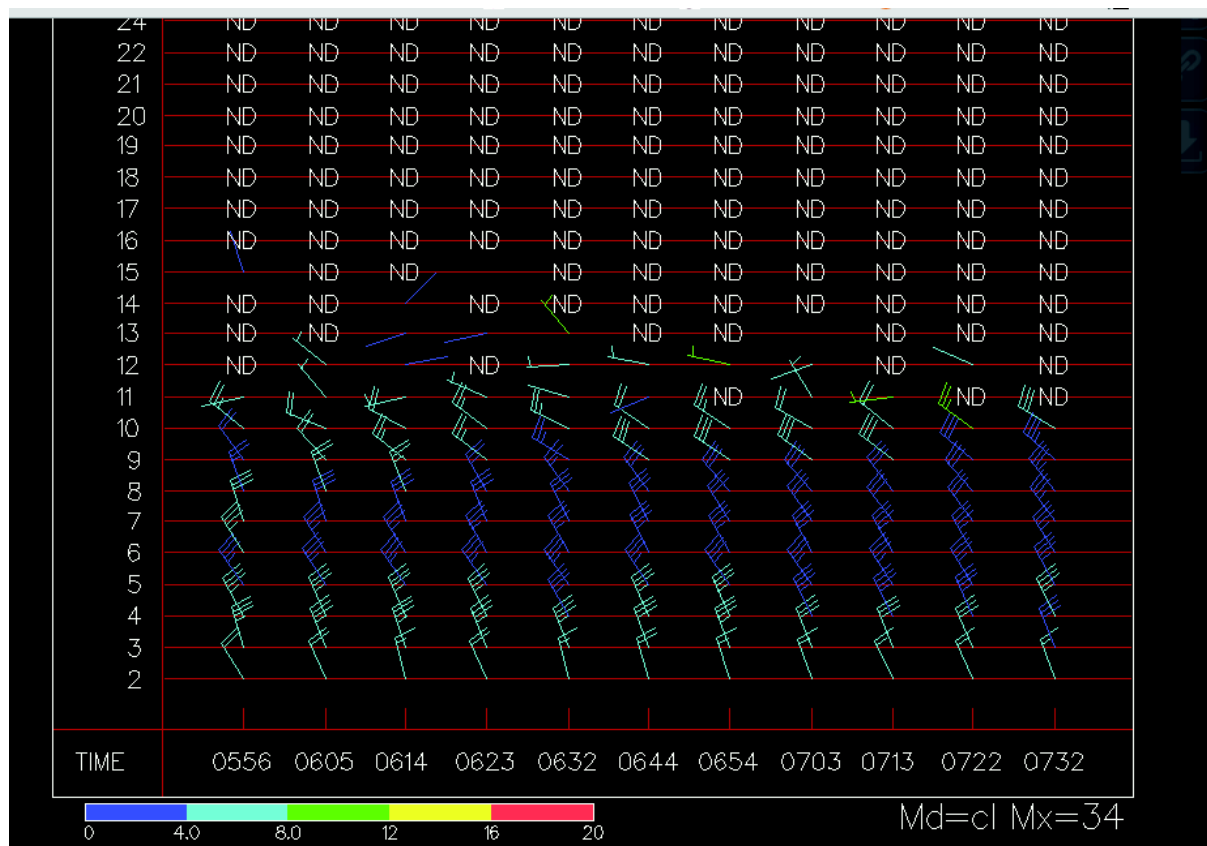


elevation all the way to 50,000 feet. You'll need to be able to read the wind barbs, but other than that, it is fairly straightforward. In the chart above, you'll notice that the winds are named for the characteristics they bring to the area. For instance, a southerly wind in the U.S. would bring a warm, moist air mass, while a northerly wind would bring a cold, dry air mass.

How to read the VADs Profile:


Across the bottom is the time. You'll notice a 5-10 min change. That's based on the 360° rotation of the radar dish. The far right would be the most recent wind. Along the left, the numbers represent thousands of feet. The numbers begin just above the surface elevation. Here they begin at 2,000 feet. BMG airport elevation is approximately 1,600 feet. ND indicates that no winds are detected. Any of the wind barbs blue to green indicates that the winds are reliable. Yellow is less reliable. Red is unreliable. You might see red if a leaf was picked up on radar. Swirls in the winds, or dramatic changes in direction or velocity would be cause for warning. Here at 3,000 feet the wind is consistently 35 knots and 20 knots at 2,000 feet. There is quite a change in direction when you get up to around 9,000 feet. You are probably going to experience turbulence there.


Often, a major change in wind direction on the VADs will indicate cloud bases and tops.



In California, I would look at several VAD winds on either side of the mountains to get a real feel for what's happening. But remember it is also important to look at the forecasts to see what is coming your way.

Delia Colvin is an FAA Safety Rep, a former air traffic controller and quality assurance evaluator for flight service. She is also an international bestselling author and teaches online courses in aviation weather. To learn more about her courses go to www.fly-rite.com.





You haven't seen a tree until you've seen its shadow from the sky – Amelia Earhart



GUSTINE ANNUAL FLY IN

On November 12th, we were excited to present our annual fly in, the first in many years. We would like to thank all the visitors who came, about 300 to 400, and the over 30 aircraft that flew in as well as our local pilots.

All the promotion we received from Cal Pilots, EAA, and many of our airport friends made this a very successful event.

We had help from many groups I would like to acknowledge them; City of Gustine staff with the public works, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Lemoore Naval Air Station ground crew, Lt Col Arthur King Composite Squadron 50 Modesto, Civil Air Patrol for safety and security, Club Med (a students' group), Recreation Department for the kids' play zone and all the members of our Airport Commission.



Tony Marchese & Charlene Fulton

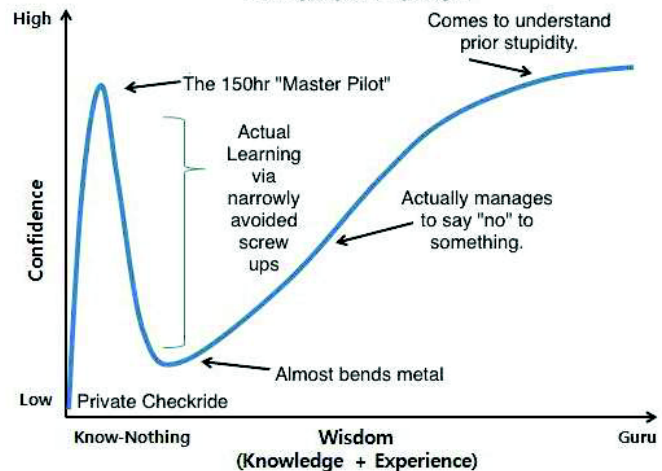
We really enjoyed meeting and getting to know so many new pilots. We would like to invite all of you back again next year and we are looking forward to an even better event.

Many thanks Tony Marchese, Gustine Airport Commissioner



Airport Manager Kathryn Reyes

Dunning-Kruger Effect Aviation Edition



CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE TRACKING



Keep yourself up-to-date on what the California Legislature is doing at this CalTrans Aeronautical link:

http://dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/documents/leg_reports/

CALLING ALL MEMBERS TO SUBMIT ARTICLES

If you have a story about your airport or your experiences as a pilot in California, please consider sending it to us. It will make our magazine richer!



Send your article to editor@calpilots.org. Send our pictures in JPG format.





CalPilots DART Headline News:

- ✓ 8 DARTs on the way
- ✓ Statewide DART Contact Network goes live
- ✓ FEMA Honors SCAPA DART

- ✓ Santa Clara County Emergency Managers Honor Paul Marshall
- ✓ CalPilots DART Program needs YOU!

By Paul Marshall, DART Program Manager

8 DARTs on the way

6 DARTs have started forming this year to bring the total to 8 either operational or in formation.

The Half Moon Bay Airport Pilots Association (HMBAPA) DART has finished its DARP (Disaster Airlift Response Plan) after reviewing and further improving upon a first draft together with the San Mateo County Airport Management. The DART is also now plugged in to its Coastside Emergency Action Plan team comprised of many agencies and volunteer organizations. The first exercise will be a marshaling class to train its volunteers how to direct and park aircraft ranging anywhere from a Cessna 150 to large aircraft such as C-130s and possibly even larger aircraft in the event that a major event impacts SFO, OAK, or SJC.

The Lincoln Regional Airport is also working on its DARP and has scheduled its first meeting in March. They will use the Karl Harter Pavilion for their operations center.

EAA Chapter 1230 at the Nut Tree Airport in Vacaville recently named Cedric Hughes to head up its DART. Cedric is still in high school, building a KR2s experimental plane with his father, and may have his DART up and running before he earns his private pilot certificate. Kristen Gregory, president of the Napa County Sheriff's Air Squadron, is heading up the formation of a DART in her squadron at Napa airport and is assisting us statewide by looking into possibilities for fuel reimbursement with the FAA.

In SoCal, the Santa Monica Airport Association and Torrance Airport Association (TAA) are both forming DARTs. They are working on a small exercise involving pilots from 5 airports, food transport and donations to a local charity. DARTs are coming together for both groups. Thanks to Ed Story, Dave Hopkins, Jim Gates, and the many additional people in SoCal who are making this happen.

Statewide DART Contact Network goes live

26 people from 13 airports are listed in the first edition of the CalPilots Statewide DART Contact List. The list consists of key members of the various DARTs and other people at other airports who are not operating a DART.

All list members are willing to contact pilots at their airport to ask them to assist in a disaster response effort, and can contact other people and DARTs at other airports to come help them and their communities during a disaster. We hope to eventually have representatives from every GA airport in California on this list.

FEMA Honors SCAPA DART

In the picture (right), Rod Pharis, Co-Chair of SCAPA DART, is congratulated by Roy Shackel, the City of Gilroy Emergency Manager. Rod and Roy are holding the certificates FEMA awarded to SCAPA DART for the FEMA 2016 Individual and Community Preparedness Awards.

Santa Clara County Emergency Managers Association Honors Paul Marshall

Paul Marshall was honored by the Santa Clara County Emergency Managers



Association (SCCEMA) as the 2016 Mick McDonald Volunteer of the Year – Gilroy, given each year to

outstanding volunteers throughout the county who advance the county's emergency preparedness. Paul is shown being congratulated by SCCEMA president Vinicio Mata. Paul was honored for his work in the SCAPA DART and CalPilots DART network, for membership in the county and state emergency associations, and for coordinating the SCAPA DART operations through local emergency managers.





CHEAP SUITS FLYING CLUB

by Joe Borzelleri, VP Region 2

We are a bunch of guys and gals in Northern and Central California who fly high drag, low speed airplanes. Our mission statement: "We Fly for Pie!" We are known as the "Cheap Suit" Flying Club. This IS the most fun flying club in the history of ever.

This "flying club", which started out very much tongue in cheek, was meant to be fun from the get go. In the beginning it included my good J-3 Cub buddy, John "Cabi" Cabigas, and me. It was not meant to be a formal club and it still is not. There are no regular meetings, no by-laws, no board of directors, no dues and no rules. The name Cheap Suit came about when Cabi suggested the use of a VHF inter-plane frequency that approximated the price of an inexpensive suit.

Not long after, Cabi shared a logo to use, which we both really liked. I designed the front to have the look of a cheap brown leisure suit. Soon, both designs were on t-shirts and with that, we were a fully functioning club with a flight suit! Soon a Facebook "Cheap Suit" page was created. That's when things really took off. We began to post our fly outs and other shenanigans on Facebook. It didn't take long to have a large following. We were soon joined by Cubs, Colts, C-120s/140s and other fabric-covered fun performance airplanes. Cabi has taught most of us the finer points of flying safely in formation. We do our best to go to fly outs in formation and we look pretty good! We also have done several memorial missing man formations for other aviators who have gone West.

About two years into the "Cheap Suits" flying club's tenure, I began to pursue the idea of taking over the day-to-day management of our home airport, Sutter County (O52). I was inspired by Jolie Lucas and Mitch Latting of Oceano Airport (L52,) to get out there to do something to keep my airport open and affordable. The group of pilots involved in the organization are very passionate and love their home airport. I was thinking that if we could organize a bunch of guys

to go get a \$100 burger nearly every weekend, we might be able to form a legitimate organization and come up with a plan to run our airport. By utilizing social media, email and posters, we could organize a large group of local pilots and aircraft owners to form a non-profit organization. With the help of the California Pilot's Association we did just that. It has been a little over 4 years since that first meeting, and our organization, Sutter Buttes Regional Aviation Association, has been managing the Sutter County Airport (O52) for 2 ½ years! It was a road paved with red tape, and we couldn't have not done it without the help of Stephen Whitmarsh of SBRAA, Cal Pilot's Jay White, Bill Dunn and John Pfeifer of AOPA, along with Corl Leach of CalPilots and Bill Turpie of the Lincoln Regional Pilot's Association, Harrison Gibbs of the Turlock Regional Aviation Association and Geoff Logan of Business Aviation Insurance Services, Inc.

The Cheap Suits Flying Club has been around for 5 years now. During this time, we have flown to over 100 fly outs and airshows, and have flown thousands of miles, in close formation. We've eaten a million dollars' worth of burgers and pie, formed a non-profit airport management group and created many close friendships with other airplane people. What we do isn't so much about airplanes, though. It's about fun times, flying memories, shredded toilet paper, river runs, making lifetime friendships and hanging out with people who love life.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AIRPORT SAFETY COLLIDES WITH CASH-REGISTER POLITICS?

by Jim Gates

An automobile dealer wants to expand his sales lot into the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ), at the end of the airport's only instrument approach runway. The project would obstruct ILS landings, reducing usefulness and safety of the airport. In emergency landings, a collision with hundreds of 4,000-lb cars in the lot would likely prove fatal to aircraft occupants. The location would also be a hazard to dealer's employees and customers. The FAA does not recommend placing parking lots in the RPZ when other alternatives exist.

How, then, does a city government, in the face of strong official warnings and opposition by the aviation community, publicly justify a decision to increase private profits and city revenues at the expense of airport safety and taxpayer liability? Originally, they planned to slip it quietly through the city commissions with the false claim that a Part 77 study gave it "full FAA approval" and that it needed no further scrutiny. The aviation community was not advised.

Extensive opposition to this plan was present at every step: CalTrans Aeronautics Division warned the city against this project 3 times; Over 50 people signed a petition against the proposal; More than 80 people signed a letter and 50 people sent e-mails to the City Council urging them not to proceed. Many opponents testified against the project at hearings before the Airport Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. If the City proceeded with the project despite these warnings and objections, the would be exposed to huge liability in case of such an accident.

The Airport Commission unanimously rejected the plan, but the Planning Commission, with no experience in airport matters and based on false statements made by city staff and the auto dealer, approved the plan. The city continued to claim that the state-mandated review by the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) was not needed.

But the Torrance Airport Association and California Pilots Association appealed the decision--setting off an unbelievable series of questionable twists and turns by the city to accomplish the dealer's goal. (Learn the details and read the actual documents at TAAinfo.org/Lexus.) This forced review by the ALUC and mandated significant changes to the plan.

At the city council's appeal hearing 18 months later, TAA reiterated the dangers of placing vehicles in the RPZ and presented several alternatives in which the dealer could obtain the needed storage without encroaching on the RPZ safety zone. The city, however, was unable to truthfully respond to the safety and liability issues raised in the appeal and at the hearing. Instead, after the hearing closed, they chose to ignore those issues and to concoct a specious excuse as to why the "new" issue (the dangers of placing vehicles in the RPZ) was inadmissible because it was not in the appeal document! They then voted to deny the appeal because all other issues had been "resolved."

The TAA appeal was then killed by the 7-member City Council on a 3 to 2 vote with 2 council members recusing themselves, two members voting to uphold the appeal, and two members (using the specious "new issue" excuse, above) voting to deny the appeal. The path was clear for the city council to approve the project--and it did so within a few minutes. But the public record now contains proof of the city's actions and wide opposition to them.

The safety of our airport has been diminished and our taxpayers are saddled forever with a huge liability. Airport users face the real possibility that an emergency landing that should be survivable will, instead, likely be fatal for them or at least result in more serious injuries.

Lessons:

1. Members of the aviation community must support those organizations at the local, state, and national level.
2. You must be vigilant so you will know when your city tries to "slip one past you." You must read every agenda of Airport Commissions, City Councils, and any other official body that can damage to your airport.
3. You must act against threats to your airport. Even better, organize BEFORE those threats appear.
4. Reach out for help from organizations and government bodies that champion airport safety.
5. It will be difficult to prevail in every fight against politicians when financial interests take precedence--particularly when they choose to ignore facts, won't listen to subject experts, and tell outright falsehoods to accomplish their goals. But you need to keep those politicians' feet to the fire.
6. You may not win every fight, but you will certainly lose them all if you do not take action





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