

FAMFAM UPDATE

Friday AM Friends of Airport Manatee

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October 18, 2024 • ISSUE 61

Milton... The Aftermath

Most of you have heard by now that Manatee Airport suffered catastrophic damage from hurricane Milton. Two-thirds of the hangars, both covered and open, were damaged along with the aircraft within. Some were completely destroyed. It appears that the horrific straight line winds switching around as the eye of the storm passed uprooted hangars and aircraft as well. Very few aircraft were left undamaged and those that appear to have escaped Milton's wrath need to be closely inspected for hidden problems. The majority of aircraft damaged were high-wing airplanes. Low-wing aircraft seemed to weather the storm much better.

What the future holds for the airport at this time remains unclear. Of course, there is wide speculation but it is clear that the aging shade hangars were stressed far beyond their capacity to withstand hurricane winds. Many of the hangars were uprooted at the foundation. Others that appear to have withstood the onslaught, upon closer inspection had their concrete footings partially lifted out of the ground.

One thing is clear, this has been a devastating blow to the airport and its aircraft owners. Almost everything remains the way Milton left it until the insurance adjusters can do their jobs. Aircraft owners are responsible for their aircraft since the hangar rental agreement releases the airport from any liability. The hangars themselves were not insured due to their age and the untenable cost of insure them.

The following pictures tell only part of the story. There is far more damage than they show. Airport manager, Tom Reeder's home is in an evacuation zone so he and his sister chose to ride out the storm in the Manatee Airport pilot lounge. One can only image how terrifying that night must have been with metal being ripped from the buildings and flung around smashing into hangar doors.





Milton... Life Goes On

Rather than drive friends apart, adversity often brings friends together... and so it is with the FAMFAM (Friday AM Friends of Airport Manatee) group. A week after Milton huffed and puffed and blew the house down, FAMFAM resumed our weekly morning gathering to share tales of weathering the storm, the cleanup, and the airplanes. Spirits were high with the usual banter and laughter despite being surrounded by the devastation. There was the usual supply of donuts, muffins, and cookies aplenty. Af-

ter touring the wreckage, we gathered in groups and discussed our hopes and fears for the future of our local aviation community, how to deal with the present challenges, and generally support each other in whatever state each was in from owners of destroyed aircraft to those lucky few who's aircraft survived apparently untouched. Mother nature is a fickle mistress.

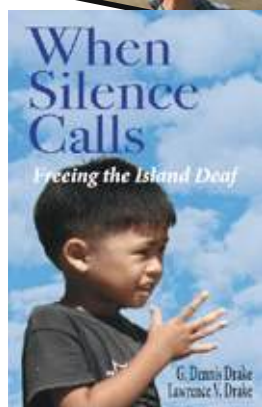
Milton may have changed the face of Manatee Airport but not the camaraderie that is unique among the pilots and friends that gather there.



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If you have any announcements or news you would like to share with the group, please Email it to me and I will include in the next update (whenever that may be.) ldrake@drakeip.com or phone 970 593-2711