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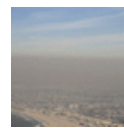
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Something old, something new

Air show offers attendees chance to see state-of-the-art and historic airplanes.

By CHRISTINIA CRIPPES
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Bob Coon is an ardent bird watcher.

But the 81-year-old Morning Sun resident doesn't need binoculars to spy his favorites, which go by some unusual names, like Sweet Revenge and Big Beautiful Doll.

Coon was one of more than 2,500 people craning his neck toward the big blue sky at Saturday's Southeast Iowa Air Show 2012.

"I'm just an airplane nut," said Coon.

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Coon said.

The planes include the B-17, P-51 and F4U Corsair, which were made and manufactured in the 1940s and fought in World War II. But Coon worries the historic planes won't be flying much longer.

Since Coon graduated high school after World War II ended, he did not enlist, but he said lacking sight in one eye kept him from getting involved in the Korean War.

Steve Crowley, who along with his wife, Terri, sponsored the VIP tent on the southern airport grounds, is also kind of an airplane nut.

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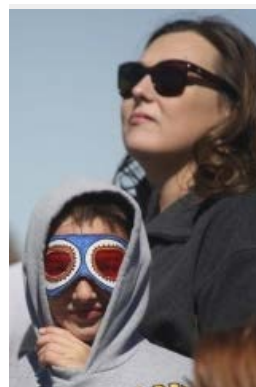


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The Burlington attorney has been flying for more than 25 years and said it's a wonderful addiction.

He said the evening show was a treat for Burlington, but like Coon, he became animated talking about the historic airplanes.

"People love to see the airplanes, but these are pieces of history that won us a war," Crowley said. "Anybody who loves aviation can stand with his back to a runway and tell you if a P-51 or an F4U Corsair makes a pass behind them. The sounds are unique and magnificent."

He added an enemy of the allied nations in World War II did not like the sounds nearly as much as Crowley does now.

David Camp, an organizer of the event as president of the Southeast Iowa Aviation Promotion Organization, was pleased with the turnout and the performances.

He estimated about 2,500 to 3,000 people attended the event each day.

The air was a little chilly, as the temperature just barely reached 60 degrees before the show's end. But it did not stop people from coming and staying on the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport grounds for the day's events. They just bundled up with fleece blankets, hooded sweatshirts, and even some mittens and woolen hats.

The 15-mile-per hour winds, with gusts of 20 to 25 miles per hour, did not just impact the attendees, but it also stopped some of the performances, though Camp said it's not likely attendees noticed.

He said there were plans for the planes to release balls of fire, which Camp hyperbolically said would have created a string of fire from south Burlington to Fort Madison, but the wind scrapped that plan. He said some planes flew higher due to the wind and some parachute demonstrations were canceled as well.

"I said, 'Guys, we do not want to take any chances.' Safety is our No. 1 concern," said Camp.

Cindy Wachholz, public affairs officer for the Iowa wing of the Civil Air Patrol, said there were more than 20 volunteers from Civil Air Patrol squadrons across the state on hand Saturday to ensure safety. While they were there, they also practiced drills to prepare for emergency scenarios.

Camp said after safety, the most important part of the air show is to entertain and educate children. He said in planning the air show, all those involved said they were attracted to aviation after seeing an air show as a child.

There was a Kid Zone for youth at the south end of the grounds, where kids of all ages could learn about and have fun with aviation. Western Illinois University had people on hand to educate kids about severe weather. Iowa City's Children's Museum had a booth where kids could make a paper rocket or put together aviation goggles. There was a flight simulator, as well.

The area drew kids from the age of 3 to 17 and had steady visitors.

Joe Nuebel, who lives in rural Henry County, manned a station where kids could learn about making a career in aviation. He said there are careers in everything ranging from air traffic control to mechanics to the Air Force to agriculture to the commercial or corporate flight industry.

Nuebel himself got his start in the Air Force, before turning to a career as a flight instructor and charter pilot.

Though he calls himself "kind of retired," he agrees with Crowley that flying is an addiction. He notes, "I go for a flight whenever I have a chance."

Nuebel has been to several air shows over the years and likes anything and everything on display but finds himself drawn to warbirds or older civilian planes. He took a break from his station to peek out the door and catch some of the show, including the jet glider.



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"We're all kids at heart. We all like things that fly and make a lot of noise," Crowley said, summing up the day's entertainment.



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

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