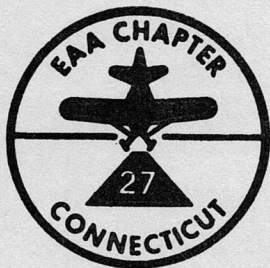


NEXT MEETING OF EAA CHAPTER 27 WILL BE ON OCTOBER 8, 1989



CHAPTER 27 NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 1989

Meetings Held on the Second Sunday of the Month at Meriden-Markham Airport, Meriden, CT

RENO AIR RACES 1989

By **DEBBIE RAYMOND**

The Reno Air Races were everything I had hoped for and more. To start with, the airline lost our luggage to and from Reno. Everything I won at the Black Jack tables Chuck lost on the one-arm bandits. On the first day of the races we wore shorts and short sleeve shirts. And we drank lots of lemonade. Also, we started to sunburn. The last day of the races we wore heavy clothing and watched the races with a borrowed heavy blanket wrapped around us while snow flurries fluttered down.

On the first day of the races we bought pit passes (this is a must) and gawked with open mouths at what was happening around us. Blown \$60,000 Merlins and damaged \$30,000 props were being feverishly exchanged. Engines were being tuned up or repaired. The pit crews think nothing of working 16 hour days and sleep under a wing when exhausted. If, by chance, they finish up early, they help another crew. Also, they lend one another props and engines or whatever. And may I note that a lot of these crews include women.

The races and airshow start at around 9:00 A.M. The races start with the 150 h.p. biplane class followed by the T-6's, Formula 1's and then the thundering unlimiteds. In between the races, aerobatic flyers perform and put on one of the most exciting airshows that I have ever watched. This includes shows put on by U.S. Air Force jets with over 600 m.p.h. low passes.

Chuck wanted to go over to the huge Formula 1 hangar to get a close up view of the racers. As we walked along I almost bumped into this tall lanky fellow. I looked up and screamed "It's Bob Hoover!" I nearly scared the devil out of him and apologized. He chuckled and said "Well, hello back."

Chuck spotted Tom Poberezny and the two of them chatted about Chuck Carothers' modified S1S Pitts that my Chuck now flies. I also noted what a good looking Tom is.

During one of the Formula 1 races the announcer called attention to a dust devil at Pylon 5. Almost in the same breath he announced a downed plane. After the race it was learned that a pilot witnessed one racer avoiding the twister and another pilot flying into it and disintegrating. The pilot was killed instantly. Chuck thinks the plane was a Miller pusher.

Bob Hoover uses his P-51 "Big Yeller" to air start the unlimited racers and he also chases them when they get into trouble. I believe it was late Friday afternoon when Bob was "S" taxiing into the

sun and collided into a parked black pickup truck. Bob's prop made the truck look like someone dropped it into a huge blender. The next day the officials showed their sympathy by Scotch-taping a huge "Bulls Eye" onto the front of their truck. Bob plays an important part in these races. At times these unlimiteds go over 500 m.p.h. and at manifold pressures exceeding 120 inches. Also, they fly very low with wing or prop only a foot or so above the ground at times. And when something lets go they have seconds to put their act together to prepare for a safe landing. The procedure is to zoom up and report a May Day. At those speeds they can attain at least a few thousand feet of altitude. Bob pounces in and looks over the crippled aircraft for smoke or fire or structural damage. It must be reassuring to hear Bob's calm voice talking you down to a safe landing. I think the sweetest words a pilot can hear is when Bob says, "I see no fire." They did lose one unlimited. A Yak made a forced landing and totaled.

The unlimiteds are spectacular to watch. We both had goose bumps watching them. They begin the race with a flying start and they come flying over your right shoulder at speeds over a hundred miles per hour. They fly around the pylons and come up a straightaway in front of the stands. The speed, the loud roar of the engines with moaning superchargers and thunderous props—the screams of the race fans, the daring and the glory are all part of this thrilling event.

Sunday is the day of the race for the Gold for all of the classes. This is the day they let it all hang out. Their motto is to win or blow the engine. This year it was a duel between a Bearcat "Rare Bear" and a P-51 "Strega." On every lap one would catch and pass the other. The fans would scream out and cheer on. With only 1½ laps to go Strega zoomed up trailing smoke. It turned out to be a blown coolant gasket.

After the final race Chuck and I went to a banquet dinner and trophy presentation. After dinner a huge food fight started and I got hit on the head with a loaf of bread. Chuck had a loaf of bread land in his dish and ice cream splattered all over his head. The trophies are huge and beautiful.

Here is a list of expenses for 4 days of racing:

- \$350.00 air fare
- 35.00 race tickets
- 10.00 Thursday pit pass
- 15.00 Friday pit pass
- 20.00 Saturday & Sunday pit passes
- 1.00 bus fare each way
- .99 Casino breakfast

About \$600 for the week. Also, they have camp grounds at the field.

DEBBIE