Airplanes arrive in droves for Antique Airplane Association fly-in

1

September 9, 2015 | By Jill W. Tallman

A Spartan Executive gleams in the sun at the Antique Airplane Association fly-in at Blakesburg, Iowa.

Hundreds of airplanes descended on Blakesburg, Iowa, Sept. 2 through 7 for the sixty-second annual Antique Airplane Association/Airpower Museum fly-in.

After a sopping wet 2014 that nearly flooded the Antique Airfield and kept attendance low, this year's event was "a little bit more typical," said Brent Taylor, fly-in chairman. He said more than 300 airplanes had arrived as of Sept. 4, with more expected to arrive throughout the weekend.

This year's event paid tribute to Curtiss Robin and Stinson 108 aircraft.

The fly-in is "by the members, for the members," Taylor said. It is an invitational members-only event, though visitors can join the association on site. Anyone with an interest in antique or classic airplanes is welcome.

"It's like nothing else," Taylor said, noting that there's "no concrete and no radios." Airplanes take off and land on Antique Airfield's 2,350-foot main turf runway. There's no unicom or common traffic advisory frequency—and many airplanes that make their way to Blakesburg don't have radios anyway. Volunteer flaggers monitor the flow of traffic and use red or green flags to signal aircraft to go around or land.

One of the highlights of the show is to watch Curtiss Robins, Stinsons, Fairchilds, Wacos, Howards, and many more take off and land. As temperatures soared into the 90s on Sept. 4, fly-in visitors pulled out lawn chairs and retreated to the shade under airplane wings to enjoy the procession of aircraft and indulge in some airplane appreciation. A tractor pulled a hay wagon full of visitors up and down the expansive flight line.

Thomas Barnes, of Pittsboro, North Carolina, was a first-time visitor to the show. Barnes flew his 2001 Wittman Tailwind from Eagles Landing, and said the destination was "everything and more" than what he'd anticipated. With a tent set up alongside his airplane, Barnes said he'd spent his time meeting and greeting other pilots, hearing their stories, and seeing "the cream of the crop" of antique airplanes.

Mark and Mary White flew their Wittman Tailwind from Vero Beach, Florida, for similar reasons. The Whites are restoring another airplane and said they appreciated the opportunity to talk to airplane owners and see airplanes "you normally don't run into anyplace else."

One such airplane was Rob and Laura Bach's 1961 Bentzen Sport, an airplane that was designed by a pair of brothers. "One wanted to do aerobatics, the other wanted a trainer," Rob said of the low-wing airplane that began its life as a Piper Cub the brothers cut up and rebuilt.

The resulting airplane does both things well, he said. It flies on a 65-horsepower Continental

engine, weighs 500 pounds, and is “a tough little airplane,” he said. It features an inverted oil system and an “ingenious” fuel recovery system, he said. He said he gets so many inquiries about the unusual airplane that he had “It’s a Bentzen” painted on the side.

The airplane is easy to fly, he said, adding that Laura is learning to fly it. The Bachs, who live in Burlington, Wisconsin, were attending their forty-seventh Antique Airplane Association/Airpower Museum fly-in.

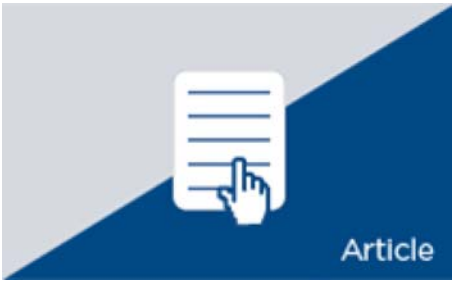
Rob and Laura Bach sit under the wing of their Bentzen Sport at the Antique Airplane Association fly-in.

Jill W. Tallman | **AOPA Technical Editor, AOPA**

AOPA Technical Editor Jill W. Tallman is an instrument-rated private pilot who owns a Piper Cherokee 140.

1

Topics Events, Fly in, Taildragger, Aircraft Types, Vintage



California A&P program adds night classes

California’s North Valley Occupational Center has added night classes for students in the aviation t...

Garmin debuts new touchscreens

Garmin revealed that it has developed a new touchscreen control system—the GTC 580—designed for use ...

From soda cans into airplanes

Wayne Mathis can make airplanes from soda cans or just about anything, and has done it all his life.

0 Comments