

Plane Crazy Saturday – August 18, 2012 After Action Report

Our yearly heat wave, lots of people still on vacations, and high aviation fuel prices kept some of our regulars away this month, but those who attended our August Plane Crazy Saturday sponsored by the Mojave Transportation Museum weren't disappointed in the slightest!

Lockheed-Marten U-2 Test Pilot, Greg "Coach" Nelson made a grand entrance into our August Plane Crazy Saturday with 'smoke on' as he made a pass overhead runway 08 in his beautiful F-1 Rocket homebuilt aircraft! I'm only sorry that I didn't have my camera in my hand at the exact moment.



It took Greg 2.5 years to build this quick little racer ten years ago and he has raced at the Reno Air Races in three different seasons. Powered with a 300 horsepower Lycoming IO-540 C4B5, Greg's F-1 is always ready for a speedy cross-country flight, a race or some aerobatics. If you always wondered what it would be like to fly a race at 50-feet off the deck at the world famous Reno Air Races, check out this video that Coach posted after Reno last year! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIR5YxzWNBM> Double Wow!



Greg gave a most interesting presentation about his experiences flying the super stealthy high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, Lockheed-Marten's U-2 "Dragon Lady."

First built in 1955 on Norris Road in Oildale, CA, the Kelly Johnson design was secretly placed into Douglas C-124 Globemaster's at Meadows Field in Bakersfield and flown to Groom Lake, also known as "The Ranch" for assembly and test flights.

A veteran of the United States Air Force with over 3,000 hours logged in the U-

2 Dragon Lady, the highest time active duty U-2 pilot on record, Greg delights in sharing his love of flight.

Archival film of the U-2 being loaded into the C-124s in 1955 was shared with a standing room only crowd in the EKAD Board Room last Saturday.

Greg also showed videos of U-2 pilots keeping current with their piloting skills in T-38 Talon's; flying formation and executing perfect rolls and other aerobatic maneuvers. I heard someone say, "I felt like I was right in the cockpit with him!" Every eye in the room was glued to the screen as the magnificent aircraft danced through the skies.

Greg also passed some "tube food"



around for folks to sample – peaches – yum! Didn't look great, but tasted fine. Pilots in the U-2 are in pressurized suits and during an 8 to 12-hour flight, they need nourishment. The "tube food" is in a toothpaste size container with a five-inch long plastic tube that is inserted into a quarter-inch hole in the helmet, then into the pilot's mouth. It has the consistency of baby food and is actually made by Gerber! The pilot can choose from a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and meat dishes such as beef stew.

After his talk, Greg handed out

beautiful photos of the U-2 over the Tehachapi Mountains. He was kind enough to autograph them for those who asked.

An extra treat was in store for U-2 lovers when the new USAF Test Pilot School Commandant, Colonel Lawrence 'Lars' Hoffman, his wife Jill and daughter Haley, arrived! Col. Hoffman came to Edwards from Beale AFB, Calif., where he served as the 9th Operations Group commander, where he was responsible for the training, planning, and worldwide employment of the Air Force's entire fleet of U-2S Dragon Lady and RQ-4B Global Hawk high altitude reconnaissance aircraft, and MC-12W Liberty medium altitude reconnaissance Aircraft. And, oh by the way, Jill is one of Dick Rutan's beautiful daughters.

Wen Painter was seated in Booth #1 at Voyager Restaurant signing forms for aircraft owners and telling stories.



Everyone loves to sit with Wen and relive the days of yesterday at NASA Dryden or talk about the memorable flight students they have taught to fly. Wen especially likes to tell how experienced fighter pilots react to the first tail-wheel training in a J-3 Cub!

What fun to see Heather Benes and Bill Deaver in the MTM booth having folks sign up to win our special duffle bag and showing off all of the t-shirts, posters and books on display. Thank you Heather and Bill for all your work! The winner of the duffle bag this month is from Lancaster – Dan Bullock!

We always have so many people visit Plane Crazy Saturday from other counties in California, but we are particularly happy to see the countless number of people from out of state and even out of country!

This month, we had visitors from Hollister, Irvine, Redondo Beach, Delhi, Santa Clarita CA; Madrid, Spain and Italy; along with guests from South Dakota, Florida and Georgia.

EAA Chapter #49 member, Doug Triplat flew into Plane Crazy with his powerful and reliable Bonanza A-36. Paul and Carol Reukauf, Chapter #49 member and Antelope Valley Ninety-Nines past president, respectively, attended Plane Crazy too.



Aviation Historian, Alan Radecki, gave narrated tram rides to the t-hangar area and this photo shows the last ride of the day. The thermometer was reaching its high point right after noon and the wilted people began to leave. These hardy souls didn't want to stop, so Alan (bless his heart) started the tug and drove off down the flightline telling how Mojave Air & Spaceport started life as an Auxiliary Marine Corps

Air Station in 1942.

Thank you Alan for always giving such a good tour of the airport! It's fun to ride the tram anytime.

Jim Balentine had his Bonanza on the flightline, along with Al Hansen's F-86 Sabre and T-28B Navy Trainer.





Always pleasing to the eyes of Korean War Veterans, are the beautiful lines of the F-86 Sabre, the premier jet fighter of the United States Air Force during the Korean Conflict.

Thank you to Erika Westawski, Mojave Air & Spaceport CFO for contributing the great flight bag and airport hat for our speaker Greg 'Coach' Nelson.

Also, much appreciation to Ron Langford and Jim Balentine for their help hauling tables and

chairs out for our various display booths.

Aviation artist, Doug Castleman and Maggie Geimke of Usborne Books at Home had tables set up and hopefully did well with sales.

Thank you to Doug Burdick and Sean Cooper for their stalwart assistance in setting up the MTM booth with canopy each month. Next month they promise to put the canopy up a notch for tall people!

See you next month – **Plane Crazy Saturday**, September 15, 2012, 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at **Mojave Air & Spaceport**

September 29, 2012, 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at **California City Airport** for **Plane Crazy TWO!** This month only!

