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# Chippewa Valley Airshow... For The Scouts, For The Community!

by Geoff Sobering



**EAU CLAIRE, WIS. –** The Chippewa Valley Airshow, which ran the second weekend in September, had a great lineup of performers and a very nice venue. It was a particularly good event for the “Converting-Jet-Fuel-Into-Noise” crowd. Headlining were the Navy’s Blue Angels. Also from the Navy was the F-18 Super-Hornet demo team.

Vapor explodes from the tail of the F-15 Eagle at the Chippewa Valley Airshow in Eau Claire, Wis.

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*(Photo by Geoff Sobering)*

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### CHIPPEWA VALLEY AIRSHOW FROM PAGE 28

The Air Force was well represented with their "Viper East" F-16 demo team. Rounding out the "jet toys" was Paul Stender and his "Speed For Hire" collection of jet-powered vehicles, including a jet-powered school bus and a jet-powered outhouse. But it wasn't all jet engines and ear-plugs. The Army's Golden Knights parachute team was also there, and high-energy aerobatics were well represented by Mike Wiskus with his Lucas Oil Pitts, and Paul Lopez in his MX-2.

Nikolay Timofeev demonstrated his extraordinary aerobatic skill and the capabilities of the Sukhoi Su-26M. A bit slower, but no less exciting, was Gary Rower and his 450 horsepower Stearman. Rounding out the bill, Kent Pietsch brought his newly restored Jelly-Belly Interstate Cadet and the "world's smallest airstrip" motor-home to present his off-beat performance, which includes having an aileron fall off in mid-show, dragging a wingtip along the runway, performing a "dead stick" aerobatic routine, and (of course) landing on top of the motor-home.

The Friday "practice" show was a great bonus for the weekend. In the morning, two F-15s did a number of fly-bys before landing for their static display. Just after 12:00 noon, the show started with the two Blue Angels solo planes taking off for a long practice session. The Blues' C-130 transport, "Fat Albert," did some practice passes, too. Then there was not one, but two Super-Hornet demo team performances, along with the F-16 demo. Lots of jet-noise! Mike Wiskus, Gary Rower, and Nikolay Timofeev flew, and the Golden Knights all landed right on target at show center! Kent Pietsch flew a "composite show" with parts

of his comedy routine, aerobatics, and the motor-home landing. The already difficult RV landing was made just a bit harder by the missing aileron from the comedy portion of the act. The Blue Angels topped off the afternoon with their full performance.

Unfortunately, the high clouds that slowly moved in during Friday's show were the leading edge of a weather system that dropped the ceiling overnight to about 300 feet, and brought intermittent rain all day Saturday. Sunday dawned with high enough ceilings for most of the show to go on. Despite the weather, 65,000 people made the show a financial success!

The flying portion of the Chippewa Valley Airshow was great fun, but the show's organization was also very interesting. Uniquely, this show was presented by the Chippewa Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Over 1,000 scouts helped with setting up chairs and tables, clean up, and assorted tasks throughout the

weekend. Julie Pangallo, the show's press secretary, summed it up nicely: "Even though it wasn't exactly the air show as we planned it, it was a terrific show, and the scouts learned a lot about responsibility, as well as how to adapt, improvise and overcome (challenges)!" Topping off the scouts' experience, Saturday evening Lt. Frank Weisser, Blue Angel #7, addressed them at their camp on the airshow grounds. He spoke to about 750 scouts and adult leaders about how his Eagle Scout experience taught him things that helped him become a combat pilot and Blue Angel. In addition to the Boy Scouts, the show could not have happened without sponsors like locally headquartered Menards, Mega! Foods, Pepsi, and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, along with the many businesses that sponsored chalets. Xcel Energy sponsored admission for kids 12 and under. Julie Pangallo thought that sponsorship helped many make the show a real family event. □

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