

The Swift National Convention & Fly-In 2012 -- Creve Coeur Airport, St. Louis, Mo.

I feel like I have just returned from going to my first three ring circus when I was ten years old. There was something going on all the time and in most cases two or three activities. This has to be rated as one of the greatest fly-ins I have ever attended. Bill and Izzie Kientz have dedicated a full year to planning this event and it really was apparent.



Izzie and Bill



The Man

I did not arrive until Thurs. and found myself parked about 45 airplanes from the end of the parking area. The Swifts apparently came early and enjoyed the great activities that the Kientz's had planned. There was always a group going on a tour, a group going formation flying, a forum in progress, and some really neat vintage/antique airplanes being flown by the Creve Coeur locals. This has to be one of the greatest general aviation airports of all time.

Friday morning found us in a briefing room while Paul Mercandetti and Michael Kennedy briefed the 22 ship Gateway Arch flight. Paul had a great plan and he pulled it off flawlessly.



Paul and Michael Briefing



22 Airplanes - This will be fun.

I needed a little ballast for my right seat and Steve Whittenberger was drooling and looking for a ride so I gained some help. Steve did the flying while I took pictures.



Steve doing the aviating



I did the gawking



The Gateway Arch



We were not allowed to fly through it

The forums were well attended and the facilities were outstanding. I only managed to attend a couple due to conflicts with time but I found Brad and an insurance forum to be quite interesting.



Brad with the insurance forum



Ed Lloyd with his friend "George"

The evening meals at the airport were a treat. The Creve Coeur airport owners cooked for us on Thursday night and Paul Mercandetti cooked some fantastic steaks on Friday. Saturday's evening meal was in a banquet hall at the Double Tree and was another outstanding event.



Great Facilities at the airport



More fellowship

The Memorial Tribute flight on Friday afternoon was a little extra special this year since Jim Montague passed away at his home while the fly-in was in progress. This was not unexpected but his loss is tremendous to the Swift organization. Dave Anderson played amazing grace on the bag pipes while Bill Shepherd did the missing man pull and headed West, a symbol of passing.

Saturday's activities included a formation contest where the "Burrito Brothers" from the Diamond point area carried off the gold. Great flying and great people.



The "Burrito Brothers" ----Nate, Ernie, Gerry, and Bill
Or was it Jose`, Carlos, Manny, and Pablo?

The RRSW group won the three ship event. They started off with four but Flea had an injector plug up and wisely pulled out of the event while taxiing for takeoff. The members of this group were Stan Price, Todd Bengtson, and Dave Anderson.

Saturday evening was a well planned and well attended awards ceremony and banquet. Again the food was great and Bill and Izzie had rounded up a ton of door prizes.



Flea Carpenter – Best Panel



Perry Sisson – Best Interior



Steve Roth - Best Paint



Bill Shepherd - Longest Distance by a few feet

Many other awards were given but I was primarily keeping up with the RRSW crowd and did not get pics of most of the winners. Sorry.



One each “Bo”



One proud Grandfather with Candice

I was there for only three full days and wished now that I had gone two days earlier. This fly-in was a real special treat and we owe a great deal of thanks to Bill and Izzie. Well done.

Stan Price