

## District III

Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia

**Happy 2023!** As a student of model aviation history, I read model magazines from the 1940s, '50s, '60s, etc., and this question that has loomed for decades: "How do we attract new blood in our hobby?"

With this in mind, I saw on Facebook a listing for a full-scale air show titled, West Virginia's Greatest Airshow 2023 held at the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport in Martinsburg, West Virginia. I called the event organizer to see if I could set up an AMA booth to promote model aviation and they were happy to accommodate me. The next question was, "Will there be model airplane activity?"

I was told to contact Collin Clohan. Collin said they had an air show team that would be doing RC demonstrations, so we agreed that I would set up the AMA display next to the air show team's display. On the day of the air show I set up my display which consisted of a 10 x 10 E-Z Up, an 8-foot table with a tablecloth, AMA literature such as magazines, and a flight simulator. I had a lot of youth and adult interaction utilizing the flight simulator. Many wanted to know how and where to learn to fly so I introduced them to the air show team next to me and they guided them to the area clubs.



Mike Hornbacker thrilled the crowd with 3D aerobatics.



Huge crowds watched Thomas (L) and Collin (R) perform at the Martinsburg Air Show.

The RC air show team did great demonstrations with a warbird, turbine jet, and 3D aerobatics. The crowds were massive, and our hobby was exposed to thousands of people young and old.

**For many years,** the United Methodist Men of West Virginia, have hosted a Boy Scout camp weekend at historic Jackson's Mill in West Virginia. The event was canceled in 2020 because of the pandemic and was revived in 2023. Members of the Flying Hilbillies, the Mountaineer RC Club, and the Flying Wing Nutz of West Virginia, all pitched in to buddy-box the Scouts for a day.




Boy Scout buddy-box pilots (L-R) Adam Ketchem, Barry Doss, Mark Radcliff, Mike Eden, Bryan Poling, and Michael Backus.



Buddy-box instructor Barry Doss prepares a Boy Scout for a flight.

Instructors organized the Scouts in groups and gave a quick ground school on what the controls do and then they were off into the air with an instructor. After a day of buddy-boxing, everyone came away with a sense of satisfaction of doing something meaningful and fun for our hobby.

**Urge your club** to set up displays at air shows, EAA Young Eagles, Wings & Wheels, etc. Although you might not see an immediate reward, you have planted a seed that could grow in the future. 



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