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Dear Sharon,

I received a letter from FlightExpo about the John Sandberg's nomination for induction into the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame. While I may not be qualified to speak to the specifics of John's contributions to MN aviation, as the announcer and voice of the Reno Air Races for many years, I knew John and admired his work with warbirds and air racing.

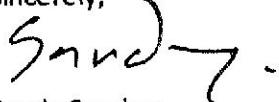
Back in the Cleveland era of air racing, surplus World War Two airplanes were readily available, modified and raced. This included Mustangs, Corsairs, Aerocobras, Kingcobras and others. The post-war years was a remarkable boom to general aviation, representing the birth of the "warbird" movement, due to the accessibility of these remarkable surplus airplanes. When Bill Stead jump started the modern era of air racing, many of these same airplanes returned to pylon and cross-country air racing. When John showed up at the races with his bright orange P-63 Kingcobra *Topsy Miss*, it seemed like an acknowledgement to the Cleveland era of air racing. It was a magnificent, sleek and beautifully prepared racer with a souped-up engine and an immaculate airframe.

John was an affable guy, intelligent, focused, a real gentleman. Interestingly, though he was an accomplished warbird pilot, to my recollection, he never raced the pylons in competition. He did not have a commercial pilot certificate. This was a requirement he elected not to meet, though he was certainly capable of doing so. Instead, he had another highly skilled gentleman fly *Topsy Miss*, Lefty Gardner. *Topsy* was fast, but was never a contender at the Gold level of air racing. Still, it was something to see that brilliant orange Kingcobra racing the pylons, low and tight.

John was a serious racer; and, he wanted a Gold contender. He got with the legendary designers Bruce Boland, Pete Law and Ray Poe with Steve Hinton of Fighter Rebuilders to create *Tsunami*, a custom-built, no excuses *Go Fast* air racer. Even though *Tsunami* never won at Reno, it was one of the fast movers you had to watch. Tragically, we lost John with *Tsunami* after the Reno Races in 1991.

I was not witness to John's work in the Minnesota aviation community, but I saw the results of his efforts that came out of his MN shop. What I saw was remarkable, leading-edge technology with an undeniable craftsmanship. I think John Sandberg is an appropriate inductee to the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



Sandy Sanders
Voice of the Reno Air Races
1964 to 1999