

LIFE & COMMUNITY

HEART AND SOUL

HISTORIC AIRPLANES OVER PAINE FIELD

Fast flying, fantastic food and summer fun. *Article and photos by Michael McAuliffe*



THE EXCITEMENT IN THE CROWD builds as two dark distant dots grow rapidly in the sky. Then comes the noise. The deep throaty growl of powerful 2,000 horsepower Pratt and Whitney aircraft engines reverberates across the airfield. Two flying pieces of history – a dark blue Grumman F6F Hellcat and an even darker blue Grumman F8F Bearcat – scream over the runway centerline, seemingly just a few feet apart, their rapidly spinning propellers slicing through the air. The planes fly so low that the crowd can see the pilots in their cockpits as they pull back their control sticks, sending the historic fighter planes into a steep rapid climb toward the clouds. It's easy to imagine that you have stepped back in time, and the airplanes are leaping from the deck of an aircraft carrier in the Pacific 70 years ago.

Airplane lovers in Edmonds and the greater Seattle area can experience heart-pounding aerial action like this throughout the summer at Paine

Field in nearby Everett. Vintage airplane enthusiasts Paul Allen, owner of the Seattle Seahawks, and John T. Sessions, each operate a world-class aviation museum at Paine Field, where they share with the public their immaculately restored rare airplanes from the 1930s and 1940s. Allen's Flying Heritage Collection (FHC) is on the southeast side of the field in a renovated 1940s-era Alaska Airlines maintenance hangar, and Sessions' Historic Flight Foundation (HFF) is just across the runway.

Both museums host visitors year-round, but really take off during the summer flying season, when their multinational squadron of storied warplanes, Mustangs, Mitchells, Messerschmitts, Spitfires, and a Hellcat, Bearcat, Tigercat, Thunderbolt, Tomahawk and Texan, to name a few, take to the sky.

Flying demonstrations by these historic airplanes are the centerpiece of aviation-themed summer block parties, like the Flying Heritage



Collection's "Fly Day" last June, described above, where their Hellcat and Historic Flight's Bearcat put on an amazing airshow. Besides fast flying by historic airplanes, these fun community events include fantastic food, aviation history and education, tours, activities for kids, and even opportunities to fly in a World War II bomber.

Paine Field Aviation Day

The first chance this year to watch the historic aircraft take to the air over Paine Field is Aviation Day on Saturday, May 21. The all-day family-friendly aviation celebration takes flight at 8:30am with a 5K run/walk at Historic Flight, on a unique course that parallels one of the airport's operational runways, followed by a charity pancake breakfast at the firehouse to get everyone fueled up for the day.

Then it's time for fast airplanes and the roar of piston engines from 12 to 1:30pm. At both museums, the airshow experience begins with a front row seat to watch the pilots fire up the planes and taxi them to the runway – so close that you can smell aviation gas from the smoke belching from the engines as they roar to life. There's also an unobstructed view of the planes as they take off, depart the field, and return for high-speed flying over the field.

Among the iconic fighter planes scheduled to fly are Flying Heritage Collection's P-51D Mustang and P-40C Tomahawk, and Historic Flight's P-51B Mustang, F8F Bearcat and F7F Tigercat.



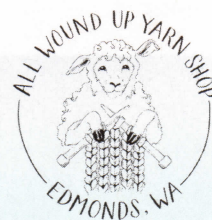
HFF's B-25D Mitchell bomber, and vintage planes from the Cascade Warbirds, will also be in the air.

FHC's distinctive shark-mouthed green and brown camouflaged Curtiss P-40C Tomahawk, sporting the orange winged tiger insignia of the famous World War II Flying Tigers squadron, will evoke memories of Paine Field's early days as a World War II U.S. Army Air Corps field, when P-40s from the base flew wartime patrols over the Seattle area.

Grumpy, HFF's North American B-25D Mitchell, is a spectacular dark olive green twin-engine bomber, with distinctive nose art depicting its namesake, a famous dwarf from Walt Disney's Snow White. A low loud pass by Grumpy over the field is a memorable sight, but if you aren't content to just watch the historic bomber, think about going for a ride. Flights in Grumpy and many of Historic Flight's other airplanes are available for purchase at events like Aviation Day.

Young flight enthusiasts can also go flying at Aviation Day. Private pilots from the Young Eagles program will take kids between the ages of 8 and 17 on 20-minute flights, and some lucky kids will get to fly a plane. Registration is first come, first served at the Young Eagles' tent near the fire station.

Fun activities, airplane viewing, educational displays and food will be available at both museums from 10am to 5pm. This includes clowns and activities for kids at FHC, and an afternoon vintage



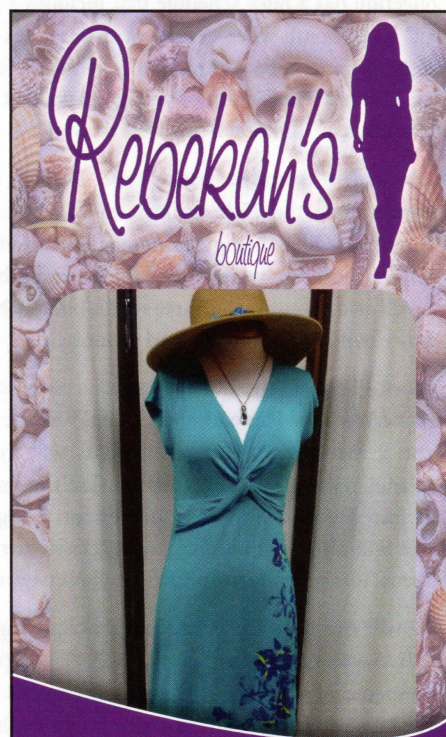
A NEW GATHERING
PLACE FOR FIBER
ENTHUSIASTS!

We carry a wide array of beautiful, high quality yarn and host fun and informative classes!

We also offer free social knitting and crochet times. Bring a project and join us!



NONA DAVENPORT AND LESLIE GREENQUIST, OWNERS
425-245-5104
18521 - 76TH AVE. W, STE 109 • EDMONDS, WA
WWW.ALLWOUNDUPYARNSHOP.COM



Mon-Tues 11am-6pm Wed-Sat 10am-6pm
Sun 11am-4pm

404 Main St., Edmonds, WA

425.775.2058

f Rebekahs Boutique



vehicle parade at HFF. The \$10 event fee includes admission to both museums, so it's a perfect chance to ride an event shuttle bus between the museums to see both collections and visit the local food trucks serving up tasty Mexican, Japanese and African foods, pizza, burgers, hot dogs, sandwiches, and a variety of sweets.

More Historic Flying Action

Don't despair if you miss Aviation Day, as Paine Field will host aviation events throughout the summer. The Flying Heritage Collection has a busy schedule that includes a free Saturday "Fly Day" each month when several of their planes will fly. Watching the flying is free, but admission is required for museum entry. FHC also has a collection of vintage tanks that will be the center of attention at TankFest Northwest on May 30.

Their biggest summer bash, FHC SkyFair on July 30, will commemorate the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, and will feature incredible flying demonstrations from FHC and HFF airplanes, and rare warplanes visiting from other museums. The fun will also include a kid's area with a bouncy house, PC gaming, a dance band, food, exhibits and vendors.

Historic Flight has two notable weekend events on their calendar – Biplane Weekend (June 11 and 12) and Vintage Aircraft Weekend (Sept. 2 through 4). Dozens of pilots will fly in with historic airplanes that will be displayed outside the museum, give rides and join Historic Flight's airplanes for flying demonstrations. There will also be food, live music, classic cars and World War II reenactors in realistic uniforms with vintage military vehicles.

HFF will also host Challenge Air, a unique flight experience for children with special needs, on July 23. Private pilots will take kids with special needs between the ages of 7 and 21 up for flights, and some kids will get to take the controls and fly the plane. As James McGauhey, the chief pilot for the Challenge Air event, explains, "All their lives the handicapped have been told what they can't do. This time they get to do what most consider difficult – fly a plane."



Step back in time with historic airplanes, vintage tanks and vehicles, World War II reenactors, fast flying, food and fun at Paine Field's summertime community block parties.

Find additional details about Aviation Day and the other historic aircraft events at Paine Field this summer at: www.paineairport.com/198/Paine-Field-Aviation-Day, www.historicflight.org and www.flyingheritage.com.

Michael McAuliffe is a freelance writer and photographer living in Edmonds. He can be contacted via his website at www.mcmikephoto.com.