



Volume 25, Number 45 Thursday, November 19, 2009



A-37 Dragonfly

## Off They Go! Into the Wild Blue Yonder! The Sky is Their Highway

by Rick A. Richards

Most boys have a model airplane or two. So does Jim Read, but his collection is a bit different. It fills an entire hangar at Porter County Municipal Airport – and every one of them flies.

Read, a Marine Corps aviator in the 1950s, developed such a love of flying that he didn't see why it shouldn't continue after he left the service. That love of flying is now being passed along to the public through the Indiana Aviation Museum that Read, a former Chesterton banker, incorporated on Sept. 28, 2000.

Although closed for the season now, Read said he's looking forward to the museum's 10th year in the spring. But after that, Read said the future of the museum is up in the air.

He said he's getting old and doesn't know how much longer he can keep at it, even though his love of planes and flying haven't diminished in more than half a century of flying.

"I have a long love of aviation," said Read. "I took lessons at Urschel Field when I was 16." Urschel Field was located just west of where Kmart now sits on the north side of Valparaiso.

In 1953, after two years at Indiana University, Read enlisted in the Navy.

"I saw a poster in the Post Office of a Cutlass landing on an aircraft carrier and I thought that was one of the neatest things. I wanted to do that."



1957 Beechcraft T-34B Mentor. Pilot - Cathy Read



Cathy and Jim Read with their T34B Trojan, a two-seat Navy trainer.  
(Photo by Rick A. Richards)