#### **COMBAT AIR MUSEUM**

### + + + Plane Talk + + +

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Topeka Regional Airport Topeka, Kansas

June / July 2017 • Vol. 33, No. 3



## Inclement weather doesn't dampen spirits at the 24th Annual Combat Air Museum Celebrity Pancake Feed

#### By Kevin Drewelow

As ingredients go, it seems wind, rain, lightning and poor visibility are just as important as batter, syrup and sausages for a successful pancake feed, and there was plenty of all that for volunteers and visitors alike at the 24th Annual Combat Air Museum Celebrity Pancake Feed on Saturday, April 29th.

One might think bad weather would discourage attendance, but our experience shows it actually improves turnout. Almost 600 people braved the elements to visit the Museum, get a great breakfast served by local celebrities, shop for bargains at the Fly-In Market, and enjoy a range of live entertainment, all for the regular price of admission.

Bob Carmichael, owner of the Perkins Restaurant and Bakery in Topeka, continued his superb work in setting up the kitchen and training local celebrities in the fine art of pancake production. His experience and equipment made it all look so easy.

Many notable people volunteered their time to assist the Museum and ensure a successful event. Representatives of state, county and city government; Washburn University; local media; and the 190th Air Refueling Wing, among others, took their turn behind the griddle.

"Pancake Feed," con't, on page 10



Left: Bob Carmichael grills sausages to start the day. Above: Celebrities who volunteered their time included (left to right) Bruce Steinbrock, Washburn Assistant Athletic Director; Major Joe Blubaugh, 190 ARW; Bob Carmichael; Robert Archer, Shawnee County Commissioner; Mike Kagay, Shawnee County District Attorney; and Shelly Buhler, Shawnee County Commissioner (photos by Klio Hobbs)

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#### Museum Hours

Mike Welch

January 2 - February 28/29
Mon. - Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.
Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.
March 1 - December 31
Mon. - Sat. 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.
Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.
Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.
Closed New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving, Christmas Day

#### Newsletter Layout & Design

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Plane Talk, the official newsletter of the Combat Air Museum of Topeka, Kansas, is published bi-monthly.

We welcome your comments.

#### From the Chairman's Desk

By Gene Howerter, Chairman, Board of Directors

There is never a dull moment here at the Combat Air Museum. The 2017 Celebrity Pancake Feed is now behind us and during the first weekend of May we displayed two of our aircraft at the 190th Air Refueling Wing's 50-60-70th anniversary open house celebration at the north end of Forbes Field at the Topeka Regional Airport. It is always a joyous occasion when we can show our planes outside of our hangars in a public setting. I remind people it does require quite an effort when we tug planes in and out of the hangars for whatever purpose. However, it does give us an opportunity to complete some deep cleaning in each of the hangars when we move aircraft. We managed to wash some of them and remove a lot of accumulated dust as we prepared to display some of our collection away from home. I want to share my sincere thanks to all who participated in this effort.

We are making plans to support three upcoming community events, two of which will take place before you read these words. The Heartland Park Topeka race track is a short distance south of our Museum. It will host this year's Menard's NHRA Heartland Nationals drag racing event May 19-21. The new owners of the track invited us to set up a display during this event. Recently, for the first time in many years, we licensed and insured our Museum's 1952 "Follow Me" Jeep and it, in all likelihood, will be a part of our display.

What can you do to help the Museum at similar public events? We always need volunteers to represent our organization. Please consider adding your name to our "willing-to-volunteer" list, a list that is not long enough! You will find this enjoyable, rewarding and worthwhile. We plan to drive our Jeep in other community events over the summer and fall months. So don't delay; let us hear from you soon.

The 2017 "Topeka Gives: A Fun

Day of Giving" will have concluded on June 6. Keep in mind it is never too late to donate to the Combat Air Museum and your donation is tax deductible. We always need volunteers to staff our booth at Fairlawn Plaza mall the first Tuesday of June each year.

Please mark this date on your calendar: September 30, the date of this year's Kansas Chocolate Festival in Topeka and the day of our 13th annual Winged Foot 5K/10K Run and 4K Walk. Once again, we'll need volunteers and sponsors. Tell all of your friends, family and neighbors to register for this event. It truly is the life blood of the Combat Air Museum.

I encourage each of you to check the Museum's web page for news and activities taking place at CAM. For example, we will soon add our fortieth airplane to the Museum's collection as our fortieth anniversary present to honor the Museum. Museum Deputy Chairman Dave Murray suggested we contact the Dawn Patrol members in Liberty, Missouri to see if they had another WWI aircraft that they wanted to retire. Dick Starks responded favorably with news of a replica Fokker Dr.1 triplane and now Dave's wish has come true! I thank Dave for all he does for this Museum as well as all of our other volunteers, too numerous to mention, who support our cause in many and various ways. I hope to see you all at the Museum soon.

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Become a member today

#### Seaman High School history students offer State/National History Day presentations

#### By Dennis Smirl

Following a covered-dish luncheon, Chairman Gene Howerter called the April Membership meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. After a short prayer and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, Gene mentioned some improvements that helped make CAM's 40th year in operation a real success. He shared photos of an 80% scale replica Lewis machine gun that Huw Thomas created on a 3-D printer for our 80% scale de Havilland DH-2 replica. Then he explained how Capital Federal and Westar Energy had combined efforts (and money) to help the Museum install new LED lights in both hangars.

After those announcements, Gene introduced Mrs. Susan Sittenauer, a member of the faculty at Seaman High School and coach of their history team. This is the fifteenth annual appearance by Mrs. Sittenauer and her students, and as usual the presentations were entertaining and informative.

She then introduced two of her students, beginning with Ms. Kim Wu, who placed first in the District Senior Individual Documentary competition with a presentation on the forgotten children of South Vietnam. Kim narrated a story that engaged everyone on the room, telling us about the sons and daughters of American servicemen and Vietnamese women. No one knows how many children were born of these affairs, but Vietnamese tradition and culture caused them to endure scorn and prejudicial treatment. Sadly, most of these children had no chance at opportunity and the Department of Defense was unwilling, or unable, to take any responsibility for their existence. Ms. Wu included interviews with individuals who had managed to make their way to the United States, and added that at least one Congressman had been willing to help with this unfortunate and demoralizing situation.

Following Ms. Wu's offering, Mrs. Sittenauer introduced Ms. Natalie Ford who shared with us her presentation (second place in the District Senior Individual Documentary competition) about Dr. Wes Jackson of Topeka, an expert in grasslands and food production possibilities and practices. Her opening video made comparisons between annual plants and perennial plants, focusing on the resistance of perennials to drought and other inclement weather in contrast to annual plants. There were several slides that illustrated the difference in root systems between the two types of plants, particularly in that perennials put roots deep into the soil, while annual root systems are shallow



Chairman Gene Howerter presents certificates of appreciation to (left to right) Natalie Ford, Susan Sittenauer and Kim Wu (photo by Dave Murray)

and temporary. One of the points that Dr. Jackson made clear in the video presentation was that agriculture based more on perennial plants (which could include hybrids of perennials and annuals) would be a sustainable agriculture in which crop yield from year to year was less dependent on good or bad weather. Other considerations included the development of plant strains that were insect- and disease-resistant, which would result in agriculture far less dependent on pesticides.

The audience enjoyed both presentations and asked a number of questions which allowed the presenters to expand upon the information they presented in the time-limited video presentations. Following the questions, we learned that both presenters were scheduled to compete in the statewide contest on April 29, the same day as CAM's annual Pancake Feed.

The top two state winners in each category go to the National History Day competition in mid-June at the University of Maryland in College Park. Kim Wu's presentation took first place in the Senior Individual Documentary competition and so Kim will go on to the national competition. Natalie Ford took 3rd place at the April 29th state competition.

Chairman Howerter presented certificates of appreciation to Mrs. Sittenauer, Ms. Wu and Ms. Ford and then adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

#### New LED lights in hangar 604 bring aircraft to life

By Kevin Drewelow

The last issue of Plane Talk described how a contribution from the Westar Energy Foundation made the new light emitting diode (LED) lights in hangar 602 possible and the amazing difference the lights made. The article also stated the Capitol Federal Foundation's donation would soon replace the lights in hangar 604. Technicians from Lesser Electric began replacing the original and mostly inoperative 1953-vintage light fixtures in 604 on April 11 and completed the task by the end of the next day. The difference in lighting was astounding.

None of our longest-serving volunteers could remember the two eastern rows of lights in hangar 604 ever working, and many of the remaining light fixtures were not working. 604 was a dark and disappointing place for visitors to see and photograph our collection. Museum volunteers Danny San Romani and Huw Thomas, curator emeritus and University of Kansas associate professor for industrial design respectively, devoted quite a bit of time and effort to determine where best to locate the new light fixtures to maximize the lighting footprint as we replaced 62 original lighting fixtures with 38 LED lights. Plenty of Museum volunteers turned out both days to help tow aircraft out of the hangar so the electricians could reach the old fixtures. Lesser's skilled team used a mobile work platform with a long boom which minimized the number of aircraft and artifacts we had to move; our tow team worked two long days and after seeing the new lights in action, all agreed it was time well spent.

The Lesser Electric team installed the lights in accordance with the map Danny and Huw produced and it is difficult to find the words to adequately describe the difference between the new and old lighting. The old days of dark corners and dim lights are gone; photographers will enjoy taking pictures in 604 now. It immediately became obvious that we'll need to wash aircraft more frequently due to the improved lighting! Visit the Museum soon to see the difference for yourself!





Deputy Chairman Dave Murray watches as technicians from Lesser Electric prepare to install a new light fixture (photo by Klio Hobbs)

Your membership is important to us. Join the Combat Air Museum. Learn more at www.combatairmuseum.org

## CAM volunteers, aircraft help the 190th Air Refueling Wing celebrate 50-60-70 year anniversaries

#### By Kevin Drewelow

Combat Air Museum volunteers and aircraft helped the 190th Air Refueling Wing celebrate three anniversaries on Saturday, May 6 during the Wing's public open house at Forbes Field. The 190th observed its fiftieth year at Topeka's Forbes Field; the sixtieth anniversary of its establishment as a Kansas Air National Guard unit; and the seventieth anniversary of the beginning of the United States Air Force.

Over 2300 people attended the event which included flypasts by a Northrop B-2A Spirit bomber from the 509th

#### "190th," con't, on page 9



Above: CAM's C-47 enjoying a rare outing near a 190 ARW Boeing KC-135 (photo by Karen Waller)

Left: Danny San Romani explains operation of the RB-57A ejection

seat to a young visitor (photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Below: Volunteers tow the T-33 and C-47 back to CAM (photo by Kevin Drewelow)



#### **Projects Update**

#### By Kevin Drewelow

Our volunteers have been quite busy over the last two months; here's a summary of what they've been up to:

#### Lewis Machine Gun and Magazines for the Airco DH-2

Not content to stop after producing a 3D printed 80% scale Gnome Monosoupape 9 cylinder, air cooled rotary engine for the Museum's 80% scale Airco DH-2, Huw Thomas researched and produced an 80% scale Lewis machine gun and magazines for the aircraft. He spent 60 hours researching and computer modeling the Lewis; over 100 hours actually

printing the parts; and 20 hours gluing, assembling and lacquering the final products. Huw determined 5.56 mm bullets came closest to an 80% scale 30 caliber round and friends supplied him with enough 5.56 mm brass for the clips.

Don Dawson and Danny San Romani recently assembled the Museum's Tallescope, an innovative British stage ladder, and Huw found it was perfect for gaining access to the DH-2's cockpit. The Lewis really completes the DH-2 and gives visitors a sense of what aerial fighting was like at the dawn of aviation. Huw recently completed his teaching engagement at the University of Kansas and has returned to his home in St. Louis, but we haven't seen the last of him!

#### Martin RB-57A Navigator's Ejection Seat Demonstrator

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, CAM volunteers publicly unveiled our just-restored Martin RB-57A navigator's ejection seat demonstrator at the 190th's 50-60-70 event in early May. Aircraft Mechanics, Inc. of Colorado Springs built the seat, model number 506. Bob Crapser, Don Dawson and Danny San Romani spent the last few months cleaning, painting and restoring the demonstrator to working order.

The seat has a very interesting history. The 190th Tactical Reconnaissance Group operated Martin RB-57A Canberras from the Hutchinson Air National Guard Base, formerly a naval air station. On August 20, 1963, pilot Captain Charles Simmonds and navigator



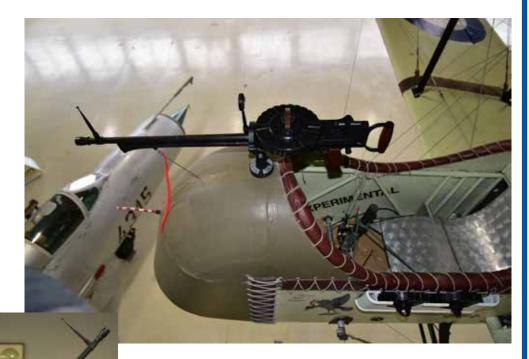
The restored RB-57A navigator's seat (photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Captain Glenn Biberstein were returning to base near the conclusion of a routine training flight.

Fifteen miles southwest of Hutchinson, the flight suddenly became anything but routine - the pilot's canopy suddenly departed the aircraft. When it left the aircraft, it also took Captain Simmonds's helmet with it. Simmonds passed a note to Biberstein: "No elevator trims...get out!" Biberstein gave Simmonds his helmet and then ejected from the Canberra in the very seat our Museum has today. The stricken Canberra crashed three miles south of the base, killing Simmonds. The Air Guard investigated the mishap but never publicly released the findings. Former unit members speculate a tab on the cuff of Simmonds's flight suit caught on the right upper handle of his ejection seat, initiating the first two steps of the ejection sequence. No one knows why Simmonds did not eject from the aircraft.

After the conclusion of the investigation, 190th members fitted the seat to a wooden base and attached a panel with three lights. They used four dry cell batteries for power and used the seat in their recruiting booth across town at the Kansas State Fair.

Visitors sat in the seat and moved the three handles which illuminated lights and rang the buzzer as they went through the three-step ejection sequence: 1) Pulling up on the right upper handle jettisons the canopy



Above: The Lewis and its magazines installed on the Airco DH-2 Left: Huw Thomas displays his 3D-printed Lewis machine gun (photos by Klio Hobbs)

and locks the control column forward-it also severs the controls for the elevator and elevator trim 2) Raising the left handle locks the shoulder harness inertia reel 3) Squeezing the right lower trigger handle ignites the charge that sends the seat out of the aircraft, represented by the alarm bell. The 190th brought the seat with them when the unit moved to Topeka in 1967. Ten years later the 190th traded its Canberras for Boeings and had no further use for the seat. They donated it to the new Yesterday's Air Force-Kansas Wing air museum at Forbes, which later became the Combat Air Museum. The seat is now on display in front of the Beech RU-8D in hangar 604.

#### **Lockheed EC-121 Warning Star**

Stu Entz has been hard at work inside our Lockheed. He removed the odd bits of carpet and treated the floors with zinc chromate primer. He sealed a leak at the astrodome and even cajoled Tom Gorrell into assisting him with working on the 121's radar operator seats.

While Stu was working, a gentleman boarded the Lockheed and spoke with Stu. The fellow had been an EC-121 radio operator in a squadron that operated our aircraft and actually flew quite a few missions aboard our Warning Star. And to top it off, he was an avid

"Projects Update," con't, on page 8

#### "Projects Update," con't. from page 7

photographer and has promised to share his photos with Stu to aid the restoration!

#### Hiller OH-23 Raven and North American F-86H Sabre

Bob Crapser has fitted a pair of stretchers to the helicopter, which really make it look like an aeromedical chopper! Danny San Romani continues to work on the Sabre's vertical fin, painstakingly removing numerous broken screws and bad nutplates. Just like the corrosion work he accomplished last summer in the aft fuselage, this is work no one will see or know about once the restoration is complete, but it is essential to preserve the life of the aircraft and to do the job right.



Above: Bob Crapser installed stretchers on the Hiller OH-23A (photo by Kevin Drewelow)

#### **CAM Sign Returns to South Highway 75**

You may recall a sign with a windsock advertising the Museum on south Highway 75 near the southwest corner of the Montara subdivision west of Forbes. Time had not been kind to it and a storm last year blew down part of the sign. On May 12, Stu Entz, Klio Hobbs, Ted Nolde and Dick Trupp met with two gentlemen from B&B Signs to install the new sign. As you can see, the sign looks great and the next step will be to replace the windsock with one easier to maintain. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this possible!





Above: Dick Trupp and Stu Entz assist B&B Signs workers as they install the new sign on south Highway 75 Left: All in a day's work! (photos by Klio Hobbs)

#### **Upcoming Events**

June

Monday-Thursday, 5-8 Young Aviators Class

Bob Dole Education Center 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

#### Monday, June 12 Membership Luncheon

Bob Dole Education Center 11:30 am

The skies over North Vietnam in 1972 saw the American bombing offensive renewed after a three year pause.

The North Vietnamese Air Force, rested, re-equipped and ready, was inflicting terrible losses upon the USAF.

Mike Hankins, an associate professor at Kansas State University, will tell us how the "Teaball Solution" reversed the trend and saved American lives.

Learn more at http://www.airforcemag. com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2008/ July%202008/0708teaball.aspx

July

Monday-Thursday, 10-13 Young Aviators Class

9:00 am - 12:30 pm Bob Dole Education Center

Monday-Thursday, July 31-Aug 3 Young Aviators Class

> 9:00 am - 12:30 pm Bob Dole Education Center

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Join the Combat Air Museum!

#### "190th," con't. from page 5

Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB and a Boeing KC-135R Stratotanker refueling aircraft from Topeka's own 190th Air Refueling Wing. Visitors toured several aircraft on static display including a Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II, better known as the Warthog; Boeing C-17 Globemaster III; Lockheed HC-130J Combat King II; and a Boeing KC-135R Stratotanker. Combat Air Museum volunteers brought the Museum's Douglas C-47D Skytrain "Kilroy" and our Lockheed T-33A Shooting Star, examples of aircraft the 190th operated early in its history.

The Kansas Air National Guard unit began at Hutchinson Naval Air Station as the 117th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in January 1957. They received their first Lockheed F-80 Shooting Stars a year later, accompanied by a couple of T-33s, the two seat trainer version of the F-80. The unit operated a C-47 as a squadron transport during the 'Sixties, often used to fly a finance officer to the pay center in Denver twice a month to collect paychecks to issue back at Hutchinson. Accustomed to direct deposit, some currently serving 190th members found that use of the aircraft hard to believe!

We also unveiled our recently restored ejection seat from a former 190th Tactical Reconnaissance Group Martin RB-57A Canberra. This seat saved the life of navigator Captain Glenn Biberstein on August 20, 1963 when his routine training flight went awry; see the "Projects Update" section of this issue for the full story. Visitors enjoyed strapping in, pulling the handles and watching the lights illuminate and the bell ring as they progressed through the ejection sequence.

It was a long but busy and rewarding day in which CAM volunteers got to tell 190th members a bit about their unit's history and share some of our aircraft with the public.

The Combat Air Museum wishes to thank Million Air Topeka for making our participation possible. The Air Force required special event insurance as our insurance applies only to the Museum's premises. The cost of the insurance would have prevented CAM from taking part in the event. Just days before the celebration, Million Air made a generous donation which provided the special event insurance for CAM. Million Air provides fuel and ground support services for civilian and military aircraft at Topeka Regional Airport.

Thanks to all the Museum volunteers who helped tow our aircraft to and from the event and those who staffed our display; to Million Air at Forbes for providing a tow tractor and operator; and to the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority for safely escorting our towing party from the Museum to the 190th and back again. We enjoyed seeing Kilroy and our T-33 outside on a cross-country trip!

Right: Bob Carmichael assists
State Senator Laura Kelly (photo
by Klio Hobbs)
Far right: Cub Scout Pack 11
visited CAM on that very rainy
day (photo by Pack 11)





#### "Pancake Feed," con't. from page 1

Museum volunteers kept busy replenishing syrup, butter and drinks while others cleared tables and assisted Bob and his crew. Other volunteers looked after the Fly-In Market, and a couple of our volunteers participated in the live entertainment: Dan Pulliam and the Rock Bottom Band began our morning with live rock and country music, closely followed by the Countryside United Methodist Church Soul-full Singers, featuring Ted Nolde on drums. Students from the Beverly Bernardi Post Conservatory of Dance closed out the show with their performances.

After breakfast, visitors shopped at the Fly-In Market where they put quite a dent in the inventory; items that didn't sell that day will be available in the Museum's gift shop. They also visited displays staffed by the Civil Air Patrol and Greg Inkmann's Foundation for Aeronautical Education, who flew featherweight electric-powered radio control airplanes inside hangar 602. Students from the Washburn University School of Nursing checked blood pressure and cholesterol levels for visitors.

By early afternoon, the weather improved to the point that the Museum tow team began to move aircraft back into hangar 602. After the first aircraft was chocked in place, the wind rose and the rain returned with a vengeance, but the tow team volunteers stayed with the job and safely put all aircraft back on their original parking spots. Thanks to each of you for making the best of a very adverse situation!

This was my first pancake feed as director of the Museum, and I was extremely impressed by the way Museum volunteers showed up at the right time over several days and just went to work, knowing exactly what to do and when. I've been a part of many volunteer organizations over the years and this was easily the best-organized volunteer event I've ever seen, a testament to the dedication and experience of our volunteers. But for our volunteers, there would be no Combat Air Museum - keep up the good work!

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#### **Volunteers help CAM's Fly-In Market soar!**

By Marlene Urban

Thanks to all who contributed to another successful Fly-In Market. I would especially like to thank Betty Frantz and Judy Murray for their great help in setting up and handling sales. As of May 8th, we sold close to \$2000 worth of items with several more donated articles left to sell, such as a great bicycle and snow blower. The remaining items are now on display and available for purchase in the gift shop. We're looking forward to another successful Fly-In Market in 2018!

#### 2017 Calendar of Events

#### June

5-8 Young Aviators Class 12-Membership Luncheon

#### July

10-13 Young Aviators Class 31-Aug 3 Young Aviators Class

#### August

14-Membership Luncheon

#### September

30-Kansas Chocolate Festival Winged Foot Run

#### October

TBA-Girls in Aviation Day (likely Oct 7) 9-Membership Luncheon

#### November

5-Daylight Savings time ends 23-Thanksgiving, Museum closed

#### December

11-Membership Luncheon 25-Christmas, Museum closed

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ntroduce a freind to the Ccombat Air Museum

# at www.combataírmuseum.org

Vísít our websíte

#### **Visitors**

949 people from 32 states and Australia, Costa Rica, Germany, Ireland, Japan and Spain visited the Combat Air Museum in March.

In April, 668 visitors from 38 states and Australia, China, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain and Mexico toured your Museum.

#### **Supporters**

#### New

Allen Corzine Donald & Shirley Crenshaw Steff Cunningham **Charles Eberhart** Travis Gould Orvin Grondahl Sr. Al Holloway

Jason & Alesha Horsley & family Matthew & Janet Ishkanian Jamie & Brett Morris & family **Darrell Schmitz** 

Mark & Eliane Washburn & family Joe Wulfkuhle

#### Renewing

**Bruce Baker** James & Mary Francis Braun

Marty & Terry Braun & family Shelly Buhler

**Hector Camacho** 

Anderson Chandler

**Bill Davis** 

Michael & Tammie DeBernardin

Donald Fluke

Tom & Diane Gorrell

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Michael Madden

John & Rita Moyer

MSgt. Gary & Susan Naylor & family

Donald Nisbett Bill & Toni Newman

Ted Nolde

John Plumb Joe Pullen

Dan Pulliam

Chris & Nicole Richmond

Thomas & Carole Rost

Chris & Clarris Rundel & family

Dennis & Marise Smirl

Danny San Romani

William & Janice Stumpff **Terry Wages** 

Eric & Lyn Walther & family

Chuck Watson William Welch James & Anita Young

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## Inclement weather doesn't dampen spirits at the 24th Annual Combat Air Museum Celebrity Pancake Feed

Read more about it on page 1

Topeka City Council member Karen Hiller and State Senator Vicki Schmidt take their turns at the griddle (photo by Klio Hobbs)