

WORLD AIRSHOW NEWS

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FROM OUR READERS

Diversity or Boredom?

Dear Dave:

Some pilot friends of mine and I were asking ourselves why we left this year's Oshkosh EAA Convention early before the end of the airshow. The three of us (and one man's teenage son), realized that it was because we were bored!

Bored, you ask? How can that be with world-class aerobatic performances? Yes, bored. Sorry, but there it is. One more plane doing a world-class performance of high-G, hair-raising aerobatics with lots of smoke and noise.

Frankly, we need to *increase the diversity* of airshow acts. Most importantly, we need some performers to bring back beauty and quiet precision and wonderment for performances that do not depend on smoke, noise, high-G forces and risk.

For the three of us, the most

enjoyable performance at Oshkosh was that of *Manfred Radius* – pure quiet beauty. Regretfully, I have to add that the ribbon cutting at the end of Manfred's performance detracted rather than added to the enjoyment of it. It is not necessary for every act to contain the element of danger. How we all wish – and wished while watching them – that the "French Connection" had stayed just a bit further apart. We would have worried less, enjoyed their act more, and we could still watch those wonderful people. We don't need to have danger to enjoy something.

I realize that our performers are graded on competition rules, but it is not always the technical perfection that brings crowds to their feet with tears in their eyes. Perhaps an analogy can be made to figure skating competitions which, while judged on technical criteria, are watched by the masses because of the sheer beauty of the performance.

Excitement is great! Noise and smoke are great! Even risk is great! But we need more diversity in our airshows.

Let's hope that some airshow professionals decide to bring back the beauty and the quiet enjoyment of precision work done wonderfully well.

Where is the next Duane Cole...the next French Connection? Who will bring us the wonderful quiet precision of Duane's vintage monoplane? Who will bring us the wonderful teamwork and synergism of the French Connection's act? Let's bring them on! I'll be there to watch. And I'll bring my friends.

John Beasley
GA Pilot
Brooklyn, Wis.

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter. "Variety" is very important in keeping airshow audiences entertained, and many airshows fall short in this regard.

I'm sure Manfred Radius will appreciate your comments in favor of the beauty of his sailplane routine, but I hope you appreciate the skill involved in a sailplane executing an inverted ribbon cut without the advantage of an engine. A talented airshow announcer can really build the excitement of the crowd when Manfred features this maneuver, and hence, increase the entertainment value of the show.

If you are longing for the days of Duane Cole's deadstick ballet, look no further than to performer Randy Henderson and his performance in his 1946 Clipped-Wing Taylorcraft BC-12D – the "Texas T-Cart!" For a list of Randy's airshow dates, call toll free 1-877-383-7255 or 972-377-9143, or email him at TexasT_Cart@CompuServe.com. □