



Chrissy Bishop hand props Summer Martell's 1931 Student Prince before Summer takes 11-year-old Sophia Lucas for a flight.



Susan Theodorelos in her Waco RNF leads a formation with Summer Martell in her Student Prince.

## Ladies Love Taildraggers

An unconventional fly-in for conventional-gear pilots

**THE SECOND ANNUAL LADIES LOVE TAILDRAGGERS FLY-IN** August 12-14 was anything but conventional—unless you're referring to the landing gear. For three days the sky over Moraine Airpark in Dayton, Ohio, was buzzing with aircraft—Wacos, Citabrias, Cubs, Cessna taildraggers, and even a “nosedragger” or two were sighted—while the hangar was full of pilots sharing flying stories with anyone who would listen.

“Most fly-ins you go to people fly in, they tie their airplane down, and they never move. This place is completely different,” said event founder Judy Birchler, EAA 1041248. “These people love to fly, and they're all tailwheel airplanes. Everybody goes out every evening, and all the formation fly-bys, all the people zooming down the runway, people taking rides, everybody's so generous.”

The fly-in attracted nearly 50 aircraft and 300 people from as far as Alabama, Tennessee, and Washington, according to Andy Heins, EAA 380123, who hosted the event with his wife, Susan Theodorelos, EAA 1056895.

Allison Driver, 15, did all the flight planning and flying from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, with her granddad, Ernie Betancourt, EAA 145703, who is teaching her how to fly in his Citabria Explorer. Sisters Kaelin, 16, and Megan King, 15, drove an hour and half from Dublin, Ohio, just to

attend. Kaelin, EAA 636184, wants to be an aeronautical engineer and fighter pilot, while Megan, EAA 636185, wants a career in math and doesn't want to fly for a living even though she loves it. “It's what I do,” she said. “I fly.”

While she isn't sure what the total registration numbers in Ladies Love Taildraggers currently are, what Judy expected to be only a regional group now includes women from Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, South Africa, and several other countries.

The local Women in Aviation chapter held its meeting as part of the fly-in, and EAA Chapter 48 held a Young Eagles rally, led by the chapter's Young Eagles coordinator, Betty Darst, EAA 832505. Young Eagles Co-Chairman Jeff Skiles, EAA 336120, flew his Cabin Waco to the fly-in and spent some time talking to the aspiring pilots.

“It's about the flying and the fellowship,” said Donna Guerin, who came to the fly-in from Alabama in her Piper J-5. “It's been a great weekend.”



Judy Birchler, founder of Ladies Love Taildraggers, in her RANS S-7 with her husband, Boyd, in the back seat.