

# Spectators were flying high at Vero Beach Municipal Airport's Aviation Day

By [Janet Begley](#)

Sunday, February 8, 2009

Sam Wolfe Correspondent



Samantha Galego, 3, rests on the shoulders of her father, Tim, as he looks over a 1942 Havilland Tiger Moth airplane while attending Aviation Day at the Vero Beach Municipal Airport Saturday afternoon.



Four aircraft fly in formation for spectators attending Aviation Day at the Vero Beach Municipal Airport Saturday afternoon.

VERO BEACH — Ten year-old Zack Betancourt sat behind the controls of a Cessna 172, checking his instruments as he guided the plane in for a safe landing.

Zack, who hopes to become an air traffic controller some day, was practicing his landing in a flight simulator set up Saturday during the seventh annual Aviation Day at the Vero Beach Municipal Airport.

The event was sponsored by Chapter 99 of the Experimental Aircraft Association.

“It’s harder than doing this on my video games at home,” admitted Zack, as his father, Chris Betancourt, of Sebastian watched as his son maneuver some turns. “You just have to turn the wheel very slightly and it responds.”

More than 50 civilian and military aircrafts were open for public inspection on Saturday during the show. Pilots showcased their airplanes, anxious to answer questions from the hundreds of flight enthusiasts who walked the airport tarmac.

Lieutenant Kent Reinhold piloted his U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue helicopter nicknamed ‘The Dolphin’ from his home base in Miami for the exhibition. “We have numerous helicopters in the fleet similar to this one,” said Reinhold. “It’s called a mid-range helicopter because we don’t go as far offshore as some, but we get there a lot faster.”

Reinhold recalled a recent rescue in a bay near the Florida Everglades where he and his three crewmates rescued a family of three whose boat was stranded for 22 hours. “It’s a great job,” said Reinhold, who has flown helicopters for the Coast Guard for the past two years. “You get to help people and develop a real sense of purpose.”

Todd Scher, assistant airport director, said Aviation Day gives the public an opportunity to come out to the airport, get right out on the tarmac and see the planes and helicopters close-up.

“It’s a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere,” said Scher, as he guided people around the tarmac. “Pilots like to share their enthusiasm for flying with others and Aviation Day is a great way to do that.”

And what is it about airplanes that capture so many people’s fancy? Scher said he can’t really explain the fascination.

“I’ve been an airplane guy all my life and I’m still not sure,” Scher said. “Some people have a passion for boats or muscle cars; mine is for anything that flies. I guess it’s just a personal thing.”