

They know 'Hoot loves EAA'

NORTHWESTERN STAFF

Tom Poberezny got some help from NBC's Katie Couric when he introduced Robert "Hoot" Gibson to the audience at EAA's Theater in the Woods Thursday evening.

"I just love to say the name 'Hoot,'" joked Couric, in a clip from the "Today Show" shown on an oversized movie screen. Then she asked him about his "I Love EAA" bumper sticker. Many in the

crowd stood and waved similar signs when Gibson stepped on the Oshkosh stage.

Poberezny thanked Gibson for the free advertising, but chided him for not going far enough. The EAA president presented Gibson with a hat that read, "Hoot loves EAA" and a blue jumpsuit with the embroidered message, "1-800-Join EAA."

After introducing three other members of the 10-member NASA crew, Gibson

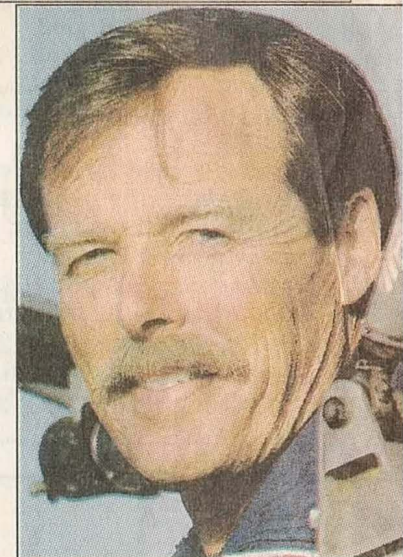
narrated breathtaking slides of the shuttle's recent docking with the Russian space station Mir.

"We had a docking window of two minutes, and we were two seconds late," he said.

Gibson, who has been coming to the EAA since 1985, pleased the crowd when he mentioned that everyone on the Atlantis crew was an EAA member.

If Wittman Regional Airport were a fly-in motel, accommodations for an overnight stay might be hard to come by.

An estimated 10,000 to 11,000 aircraft were parked Thursday during opening day of the 43rd Experimental Aircraft Association Fly-In Convention, according to Mark Ringham, a volunteer air traf-



Robert 'Hoot' Gibson

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Gates open at 8 a.m. every day except for Friday through Sunday when gates will open at 7 a.m.

Today

Air show starts at 3 p.m.

Bud Light Jet (Bill Beardsley), Delmar Benjamin, Julie Clark, Bob Davis, Eagles Aerobatic Team, Rick Fessenden, Jim Franklin, Marine Corps Harrier, Liberty Parachute Team, Gene and Cheryl Rae Littlefield, Dave Morss, Jim Mynning, Howard Pardue, Russian Sukhoi, Len Shattuck, Sean Tucker, and Bob and Pat Wagner.

Evening programs at Theater in the Woods include National Aeronautic Association Awards; Hints for Homebuilders Awards; EAA President's Award; EAA Freedom of Flight Award to Gen. Chuck Yeager; Recognition of General Aviation Manufacturers Association; Eagles Aerobatic Team looking back over 25 years of air show excellence and family entertainment by the Grand Ole Opry's Mike Snider.

Saturday

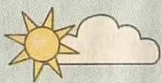
Air show starts at 3 p.m.

Warbirds of America (extended show), Bud Light Jet (Bill Beardsley), Ken Brock, Eagles Aerobatic Team, Jim Franklin, Wayne Handley, Marine Corps Harrier, Liberty Parachute Team, Sean Tucker, Patty Wagstaff and Homebuilt Review.

Evening programs at Theater in the Woods include Mass celebrated by the Rev. Donald Braun, sung by Yvonne Matt; Don "The Whistler" Conrad, the longest-running act at Theater in the Woods; EAA's Young Eagles Program; Recognition of NASA Administrator Dan Goldion; EAA/MSOE Award presented to Paul Poberezny; EAA's "Tribute to Valor," with host David Hartman.

Forecast:

Mostly sunny. Highs in the 90s.



A FRACTION OF the VariEzes that are on static display in the transient parking area draw the attention of a spectator on the opening day of the EAA Fly-In Convention.

DAVID BURTON/OF THE NORTHWESTERN

◀ Hoot

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fic controller at the Wittman tower.

"We're not quite full," said Ringham, of Fargo, N.D. "When we're full, we've got 12,000 planes."

Ringham said transient aircraft parking was filled to capacity, but spaces were available in the show plane area.

More than 1,500 of the parked aircraft are show planes, according to Golda Cox, chairman of the EAA press headquarters.

Ringham, however, said that because the transient parking area was full, pilots who wanted to land at Wittman were asked Thursday to use airports in Appleton and Fond du Lac.

Room in the transient aircraft area should open up Monday morning, he said.

Despite an inch of rain Thursday, Ringham reported no problems in landing aircraft.

"We haven't had any problems with field conditions through 8:30 (p.m.), but I don't

as the North and South Exhibit Hangars.

The \$1.4 million project is one of the biggest changes on the convention grounds in recent years. It is the first expansion of exhibit area on the grounds since 1985.

The new buildings will help meet the need for more exhibit space. The hangars will provide 608 indoor exhibit booths, compared to 289 last year.



One of the highlights of opening day was the arrival shortly before noon of more than 60 VariEze (pronounced "very easy") homebuilt airplanes.

This year is the 20th anniversary of the sleek white aircraft, designed by Burt Rutan. Rutan is best-known for designing the "Voyager", which circled the globe non-stop on one tank of fuel in December 1986.

The planes, from throughout the country, gathered in Racine for the 30-minute