

St. Hubert air show ready for takeoff

Tough safety regulations even tighter after European tragedies

By **MIKE KING**
of The Gazette

Organizers of Expo Air 88 will be looking past the stunt planes to the heavens this weekend in the hope the event won't be affected by the change of venue or marred by a tragic accident.

St. Hubert, not Mirabel, will be the site of the 10th annual Montreal International Air Show — dubbed Expo Air 88 by the Wings of Hope.

The Wings of Hope, a charitable group that flies supply and rescue missions in western South America, is organizing the show as part of its 1988 fund-raising campaign, which kicked off last Saturday.

Pierre Thérout, Wings of Hope president, told reporters Friday that his group never considered cancelling Expo Air 88 despite a rash of accidents at international air shows in Europe this summer that claimed the lives of more than 50 people and injured nearly 600 others.

The worst and most recent occurred Aug. 28 when Italian pilots crashed during a military air show at

the Ramstein Air Force Base in West Germany. Fifty people were killed and another 500 were injured.

Four other people have died and about 50 others have suffered injuries in similar tragedies in Belgium and France.

Those overseas calamities "made us reaffirm our tough rules and regulations," said Thérout. "We want to assure the participants and spectators of safety."

Strict regulations

When the public gathers for Expo Air 88 on Saturday and Sunday, "they will be in secure areas away from the flights," he said.

Robert St. Pierre, Wings of Hope secretary treasurer and assistant director of Expo Air 88, said Canada has strict regulations for air shows.

Unlike many European shows, high-speed military precision teams performing here must fly at least 450 metres away from the crowd and no less than 900 metres above the spectators when surpassing speeds of 483 kilometres an hour. The distance above the crowd is

halved when pilots are flying slower than 483 km/h.

Military teams are also restricted from flying lower than 90 metres from the runways. Crowds are held back 300 metres from the runways.

Civilian aerobatics teams must fly at least 150 metres above the spectators at speeds of more than 241 km/h and 90 metres high when travelling slower than 241 km/h.

François Chénier, Wings of Hope vice-president and Expo Air 88 director, said overall security has been strengthened and emergency procedures improved.

Officers from the St. Hubert police force, Sûreté du Québec, the Nicolet police academy and the National Defence Department will be on hand, along with ambulance attendants, personnel from the nearby armed forces base, Transport Canada and about 300 volunteers.

Besides the famous Canadian Snowbirds, some other aircraft will include the Canadian Forces' Skyhawks parachuting team, CF-18s and KC-135 Strato Tankers, as well as Second World War-vintage A-10

Thunderbolts, Hawker Hurricanes and Supermarine Spitfires.

Ground exhibitions will feature displays from the Canadian War Plane Heritage and the American and Soviet space programs.

Admission is \$6 for adults Saturday and Sunday. Children under 12 will be admitted free on Saturday but will have to pay \$3 on Sunday.

Thérout noted that the air show has been the largest annual fund-raising event since 1985 for the Wings of Hope.

Changes name

That's the year Wings of Hope took over the Montreal International Air Show from Transport Canada and changed the name to Expo Air.

Last year's event raised \$225,000 for Wings of Hope, up from \$65,000 in 1986 and \$25,000 the first year.

Thérout admitted that the change of airports this year may have an effect on attendance. Mirabel has hosted the event for nine years but has become so busy, management couldn't ensure sufficient time for this year's show, Thérout explained.

Red tape stalling plans for bike link, councillor says

South Shore cyclists will not have a link to Ile Notre Dame before next year, Montreal city councillor Raymond Blain says.

Red tape has prevented all parties involved — the city of Montreal, the provincial government, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the Société de Gestion de l'Ile Notre Dame — from agreeing on plans and financing, Blain said last week.

Plans for one link are ready, but financing from the provincial government is the major stumbling block, Blain said.

The lobby group Le Monde à bicyclette has, for four years, demanded links between the island and a bicycle path on a dike owned by the St.

Lawrence Seaway Authority.

This path is reachable thanks to a bridge built off Rivermere Ave. in St. Lambert which leads cyclists to Côte Ste. Catherine.

Claire Morissette of Le monde à bicyclette said, in an interview she wants Montreal to open a narrow path on the west side of Ile Notre Dame for cyclists' benefit.

The path is closed and guarded because it leads to a dangerous seaway dock linked to a dike. Some cyclists bypass the guard and use a hole in a fence to go through. Morissette wants fences erected on each side of the docks to prevent cyclists from falling into the river or to have guards escort them across the dock.

But Blain, assistant to Léa Cousineau, the Montreal executive committee member responsible for bicycle paths, said the Seaway Authority refuses to let cyclists use the dock.

Cables from moored ships are like giant whips when they occasionally break, he said.

The second option is the one the city favors.

Blain said plans have been drawn up to build a bicycle bridge linking the north side of Ile Notre Dame and the seaway dike. The city estimates it would cost about \$300,000.

Blain said the city is waiting for provincial financing.

St. Lambert city councillor Richard Bélisle said the Quebec Recre-

ation, Hunting and Fishing Department paid \$270,000 of the \$360,000 cost of the St. Lambert link. St. Hubert contributed the rest.

On Aug. 29, St. Lambert city council adopted a motion urging Montreal to complete the bicycle link with the South Shore.

Morissette said it would solve the Jacques Cartier Bridge problem, in which cyclists are defying an order to walk their bikes across the span.

Blain said Cousineau will meet with the non-profit Société de Gestion de l'Ile Notre Dame soon to iron out details of the plan.

He said he hopes the link will be built for next summer.

— André Fautoux

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Send your item, including date, time and exact address of the event, as well as your own telephone number, to: The Gazette, c/o South Shore Calendar, 250 St. Antoine St. W., Montreal, H2Y 3R7.

ARTS

The city of Longueuil in co-operation with Croc magazine presents an exhibition at the Jacques Ferron Cultural

Centre, 100 St. Laurent St. W. in Longueuil, today through Sept. 28. Centre hours are Monday to Friday 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Claudette Lévesque at 646-8618. The centre is

holding its fall registration today and tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. On Saturday, registration will be held at Centre Olympia, 2950 Dumont St., from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. About 40 different activities are offered to children and adults. For information, call 646-8610 or 646-8618.

The South Shore Quilters' Guild begins its fall season at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14 and will hold regular meeting thereafter on the second Wednesday of every month. The evening group will

(See CALENDAR, Page G-4)

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