

Eyes to the skies

As you can tell from the pictures, flying things have caught my eyes lately. The pelican picture is mine, the jet courtesy of my friend Marty Cox. Let's begin with that.

EXPO — On September 4, 5 and 6, Midwest Aviation Expo returned to the Mt. Vernon Airport. I had been looking forward to it based on all the fun I have had in past years. Although it showcases a variety of flight platforms for sale by the vendors, admission is free and you can circulate and check out the flight line. The

IT CAUGHT MY EYE

weather was perfect on Thursday and my wife and I stayed for a long time. I know some fail to realize what the airport has become under the recent leadership of the board and management; a fun place with a variety of activities for education and enjoyment. You don't have to fly!

In the picture from Marty, you see an L-39 Albatross jet departing and putting on a show. The L-39 Albatros is a high-performance jet trainer designed and produced by Aero in the Czech Republic. In addition to performing basic and advanced pilot training, it has also flown combat missions in a light-attack role. Do yourself a favor, keep track of and enjoy the many activities at the airport today!

BONNIE SUB IMPOUNDMENT — While crossing over from Bonnie to Nason the other day, several items "Caught My Eye." The first were many cars pulled over. I assumed the eagles must be putting on a show again. This time however it was a "white out." Both of us, but my wife in particular, have always enjoyed the pelicans. But as you can see, this was out of the norm. They were everywhere, and more were arriving. Some were taking to flight, and their wings hit the water with a "popping sound." They seemed to be enjoying the low water level and

exposed lake bed. We assumed some kind of food smorgasbord?

PURPOSE — Now, I have heard more than once, "What is the purpose of the sub impoundment system." That is a good question. I was told by my friend Paul Hurst years ago that because the Big Muddy was in fact muddy, that silting into the lake would be a problem. So, where the water flowed in so called sub impoundment dams were built to slow the water, let the silt fall out and then let the relatively clean water continue the journey. Of course, a wetlands hunter area was also thus created. I have seen now and then portable pumps used to actually pump water back from the lake to the wetlands to get a certain water level for hunting season. That hunting is big business. The first day of the season starts with a bang, or many of them.

Now you have noticed that the silting in those areas is getting more noticeable. It has been going on now for 2/3 of a century. Rend Lake has a 100 year life, I have been told. I am assuming that after that some kind of dredging will be needed to keep the system working?

Now a Rend Lake expert/friend of mine noted that it is important to remember the Corps of Engineers does flood control and not necessarily water



BOB FRAKES

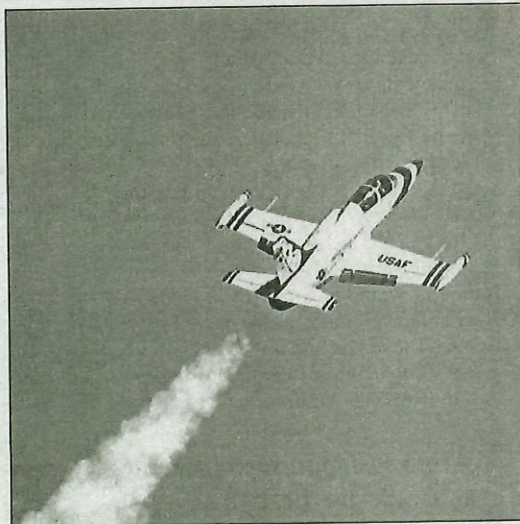
supply. In fact, millions of dollars in damage has been averted by that flood control provided by the system. Convincing the Corps that the plan fit the standards was a political tale involving President Kennedy, Representative Ken Gray and others.

Has Rend Lake or I-57/I-64 been a bigger boost to the area? Good question.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY — Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn used to school new members of Congress, "You don't have to take back what you don't say." The nice thing about coffee with friends is you can say what you want and seldom will anybody get up and walk away. But, with so called "social media" you have to realize that you are throwing it out there for the world. That being the case you may well NOT be able to take back what you say. Before you decide to go down the "I will say what I want" road on social media — be careful. It may not fly as well as something said when having coffee with friends :)

Questions, comments or answers?

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Submitted Photo