



**SGHS Boys Basketball
Tops Valle Again ■ 1B**



**Elks Club Donates To
Shop With A Cop ■ 8A**

Ste. Genevieve Herald.

THE WEEK OF
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INSIDE THIS EDITION

Births, 9A
Church Directory, 9B
Classified Ads, 10B-12B
Community, 8A-10A, 12A
Community Calendar, 9A
Forum, 2A
Gallery, 6A-7A
History, 7B
Law & Order, 4A
Nutrition Center Menu, 9A
Obituary Notices, 11A
Puzzles, 6B
Schools, 8B
Sports, 1B-5B



**Local Family Wins Airplane
In Wings Of Hope's Raffle, 8A**

**Bova Reflects On
First Months, 3A**



**Myers Among
Those Honored
At Foundation's
Annual Gala, 12A**

**Park Hills Man Dies After Suffering
Medical Emergency, Crashing, 5A**



**Ste. Gen. Middle School Leads
Way In St. Jude Fundraiser, 8B**

HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

Busy Holiday Weekend

CITY OF STE. GENEVIEVE

Lone Meeting Of

COMMUNITY

AVIATION



Pilot Don Hoerstkamp [left] presented the title to the raffled Piper Cherokee 180 to Mike and Scott Uding after landing at Perryville Regional Airport last Friday. (Photo by MARK EVANS/Herald staff)

Wing And A Prayer

Udings Win Wings Of Hope Raffle For Refurbished Airplane

BY MARK EVANS
STE. GENEVIEVE HERALD

Mike Uding knew that just getting a ticket for the annual Wings of Hope raffle for an airplane would require almost as much luck as actually winning it.

"Some years he tries to get a ticket and is unsuccessful," his son, Scott Uding, said.

"If you don't get on the phone or the internet right away [you don't get a ticket]," Mike Uding agreed. "We got lucky."

"Scott had a good feeling about it when they bought the ticket," Mike's wife, Jodie

said.

The first part went smoothly when Mike Uding purchased a \$75 raffle ticket on September 17.

The second part went even better. Mike Uding was notified later that day he and his son Scott, who had gone together on the ticket, had won the donated Piper Cherokee 180.

Wings of Hope, a St. Louis-based aviation nonprofit organization, conducts the raffle every several months. Pilot Don Hoerstkamp flew the plane from Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield to the Perryville Regional Air-

port last Friday morning and presented it to the Udings.

"I've been doing it for I don't know how many years," Mike Uding said. "It used to be you could buy a ticket and it might take months for them to sell all the raffle tickets. Now, if you aren't watching for the raffle and looking for it [you miss it], because I got my ticket at 6 o'clock in the morning because they start selling at 6 o'clock and by 10 o'clock all the tickets are sold."

➤ See WINGS, Page 10A

Wings: Udings Win International Charity's Raffle For Refurbished Plane

Continued from Page 8A

"In about three hours, they sell out. It's a good organization so everybody wants to give money to them. They make a good amount of money off the raffles."

Mike and Scott Uding both are pilots, as is Mike's dad, Clarence, who was also present when his family accepted the airplane.

"My dad and his brother had an old airplane on the old grass strip in Ste. Genevieve," Mike Uding said. "So I used to spend weekends down there, and Louis [Sexauer] was down there. When I got a little older and had some money I could spend, about 1979, I went down and started taking lessons from Louie."

Scott Uding followed a similar path.

"That's where we hung out as children," Scott Uding said, "chasing airplanes out of the corn fields and rebuilding them and flying them. My father and grandfather and I have made a trip several times for Wings of Hope to help with the maintenance and tinker around with the airplanes that were donated."

Scott Uding started flying at age 15. He did a solo flight the morning of his 16th birthday.

"I just got into flying when I was a kid," Mike Uding said. "I loved it. I've bought five airplanes and restored a couple."

"Right out of college, you helped me build one," Scott Uding said.

Clarence Uding, 92, started flying about 1955. He served in the 13th Airborne and 82nd Airborne.

"The first flight I ever had, I jumped out," he said.

The prize is a four-passenger 1972 Piper Cherokee 180 with a brand new engine and new navigation equipment.

Hoerstkamp said it runs and flies extremely well and is very fast. He had to fly several laps around the airport to allow the accompanying plane to catch up.

"It flies good. It just walked away from that 172 [the other plane]," he said. "I was right at 20 knots faster, which would be 25 or 30 miles per hour."

"It's a 1972 airplane, but a lot of brand new stuff in it," Mike Uding said.

"It's sort of the plane we learned to fly in," Scott Uding added.

The father and son both had



Pilot Don Hoerstkamp landed the Piper 180 won by Mike and Scott Uding at Perryville Regional Airport last week. **(Photo by MARK EVANS/Herald staff)**

their first solo flights in the same plane after taking lessons from Sexauer, who was a legend among area aviators.

The Udings agreed that technology has changed over the years.

"Nowadays, pilots fly with iPads," Scott Uding said. "The flight bags are getting smaller because everybody carries an iPad. It's right there, all your maps, your charts, your books, your calculator, your ETA [estimated time] of arrival. The most important thing is weather. It's safer with the new technology, but it's definitely more macro."

"Having this new plane will allow Scott the opportunity to advance with learning to fly in weather systems," Jodie Uding said.

Wings of Hope runs two airplane raffles annually to raise funds to support its programming.

On September 17, all 4,000 tickets to the raffle sold out in four hours and generated more than \$260,000 — all of which will go directly to supporting the charity's medical air transport services. The next raffle is scheduled for April 2019.

"Not only does the Wings of Hope do stuff here in the United States, helping families get to hospitals, providing air support that way, but internationally is where they got started," Scott Uding said. "They do a lot of good."

Jodie Uding offered some history of the organization.

"It was started by a nun who was also a pilot, who was a missionary in Africa," she said. "She would fly from village to village. At night sometimes the animals would gnaw on the fabric of her aircraft, so she petitioned to some



Clarence Uding, 92, the first in the Uding family to be a pilot, checked out the newly-arrived Piper Cherokee 180, along with Mike, Jodie and Scott Uding. **(Photo by MARK EVANS/Herald staff)**

individuals in the United States to help her get a metal airplane. And that's how it got started."

In the U.S., the nonprofit provides medical air transport services — free of charge — to individuals who need access to specialized medical care. The organization also works in 10 countries outside of the U.S., working with in-country partners to fly people in remote areas to emergency medical care and fly doctors into communities with no local health care. Wings of Hope has been twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and has a four-star rating on Charity Navigator. In 2017, Wings of Hope directly served 45,858 people around the world.

The organization is based in St. Louis, but the Udings were told

that they were the first Missouri residents to ever win the plane raffle. This led a St. Louis television news crew to also cover the airport arrival.

(Information from interviewing the Uding family and Don Hoerstkamp and from a press release from Wings of Life.)

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