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This is part of an occasional series by the Sanpete County Travel and Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance on the people and places along U.S. Highway 89.

Candy Bomber Will Highlight Mt Pleasant Fly-In.

Gail Halverson, renowned as the Berlin Candy Bomber, will be the guest speaker at the Mt. Pleasant Fly-In. He will speak at the Mt. Pleasant Airport at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 22nd.

Col. Halverson was an Air Force Lieutenant in 1948-49 when he was touched by the friendliness and excitement of the children of Berlin. He decided to do something special for them and dubbed his effort "Operation Little Vittles". He gathered all of the candy he could find and attached it to miniature parachutes. His pilot buddies joined the effort with candy, gum and handkerchiefs, and the candy bombing began. The American Confectioners Association came aboard and sent tons of candy and gum to Westover AFB for processing. Lt. Halverson received additional troop support when 22 schools in Chicopee, MA converted an old fire station into a Little Vittles Headquarters. They made parachutes and tied on candy and gum. The final product was shipped to Halverson at Rhine Main AFB.

By January, 1949, more than 250,000 parachutes loaded with candy had been dropped on Berlin by Lt. Halverson and his fellow pilots to reach over 100,000 children who were in Berlin during the Russian Blockade. Col. Halverson received the Cheney Award in 1948 "for an act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest."

Col. Halverson's appearance at the Fly-In is part of a two day event that will feature morning and evening RC Aerobatic Shows on Friday, June 22nd. A fund raising breakfast for a Haitian orphanage will be held on Saturday morning, June 23rd, at 7:30 a.m. from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., on Saturday, children (8-17) will be given free airplane rides (as recourses allow).

Helicopter rides (\$25 per person) will be open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, along with activities for children, including the candy parachute drop at noon.

The Fly-In is part of an on-going effort by David Fullmer, the volunteer manager of Mt. Pleasant's airport. Fullmer is a recreational pilot who has big plans for Mt. Pleasant's little airport. The Fly-In is part of a ten year effort by Fullmer to cater to those who fly for pleasure. His goal is to entice pilots to visit Sanpete County for an afternoon, a day or even longer.

"Mt. Pleasant's Airport is unique among rural airports because it's so close to town, " says Fullmer. Most rural airports are miles away from the nearest town, making it difficult for pilots to access services such as restaurants or motels. "But our airport is only about a half a mile from the edge of town. It gives us a lot of options." He adds that there are countless other attractions in the area that add to the appeal factor: fishing, miles of high mountain trails for 4-wheeling, mountain biking and hiking, rock climbing at Maple Canyon and snowmobiling and snow kiting in the winter.

"Once the airport becomes known in the pilot community in Utah and the Intermountain West as a place that caters to recreational pilots and as a center point for a great place to visit, all kinds of things can happen".

For more information about the Fly-In or the Mt. Pleasant Airport, contact Fullmer at 435-427-9131. Information about the Fly-In is available online at www.sanpeteflyin.org. Fullmer may be reached via email at tpjr@cut.net.

Contact: Monte Bona
Sanpete County Travel and Heritage Council
(435) 462-2502