

The Reno Air Races Crash

The scene at the Reno Air Races back on Sept. 16, 2011, was nothing less than tragic. That was the day a modified 1944 P-51D Mustang aircraft came crashing into the stands, killing 11 people (including the pilot) and seriously injuring many others.



One year later, the thousands of fans and some of the families who experienced the events of that day returned to the airfield to remember.

Famed pilot and flight correspondent Lane Wallace recalled covering the crash and shared some of the lessons she learned from some of the victims who gathered for the one-year anniversary on Sept. 16, 2012 – lessons not just of loss, but of tremendous gratitude. She wrote:

There was the family who'd sustained a breathtaking amount of loss from the crash. The mother had been killed. The father had lost a leg. Two of the sons had each lost a leg, and one of their wives had lost a leg. And yet, one of the sons told me, "We just want to thank everyone here for everything they did for our family. We feel a special bond with everyone here. They helped save my family's lives." He paused. Emotions still ran high. But after a minute, he continued, "We lost our mom that day. But we also lost any cynicism we ever had."

"In the end," Wallace said, "the reason so many of the survivors had returned to a place that surely must have held bad memories for them seemed to be that the good memories – of just how powerful community can be when it bonds together and how powerful love can be when it is poured out in need – so clearly outweighed the bad. Already, they have learned that. And that truth is, indeed, a rare, powerful and comforting gift to hold in your hands."

Wallace, a nationally known columnist and pilot, is correct. We've seen the power of love and self-sacrifice to aid others demonstrated over and over again in response to hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, mass shootings and highway accidents.

We can be grateful that people have caring hearts and that they show it by their response to those in need. The Bible instructs us:

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter