

# You Need To Be Able To Do This

There are two kinds of entertainment at major airshows: planned and unplanned. Most of us will never have the opportunity to be part of the former, while we never want to be the latter. If you don't want the crowd's attention, you'll need to perform some basic tasks without hesitation.

## SLOW FLIGHT

Perhaps foremost among these tasks is stable, level slow flight. Many published arrivals look for aircraft to maintain straight-and-level flight at 90 KIAS, but the reality is the average speed close to the airport during heavy arrival periods can be more like 75 KIAS. If you're not comfortable doing that for, say, 15 minutes, get that way.

## TURNING DESCENTS

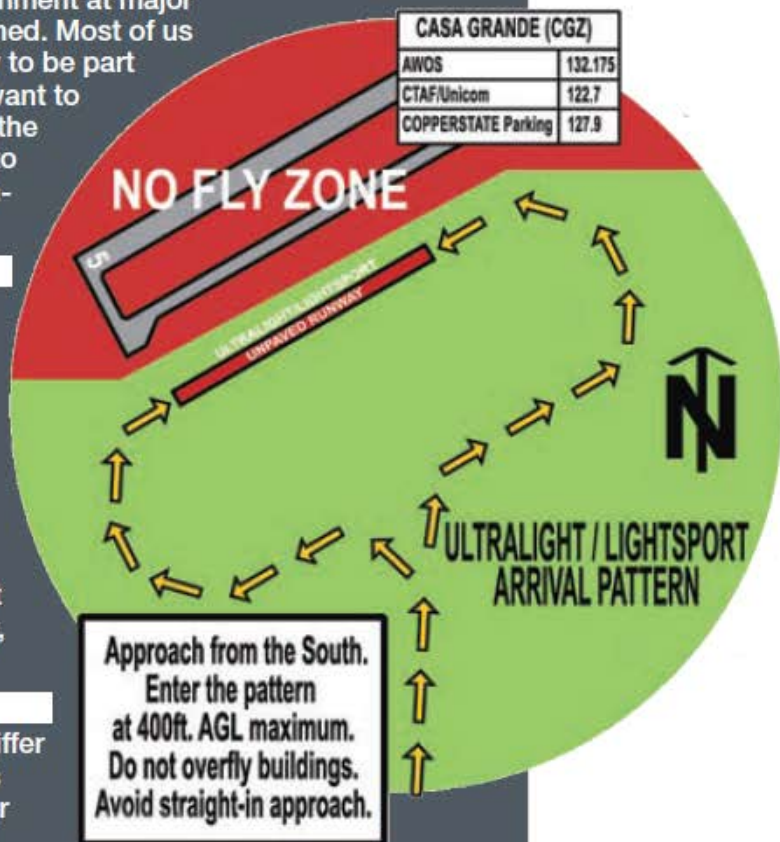
While the traffic pattern may differ from your home drome, there's no real magic here: You'll either be turning left or right, maybe both, to align your aircraft with the runway during the arrival. You'll be encouraged to keep things nice and tight—no extended downwind legs, please. The only real trick is simultaneous tight turns and descents.

## SPOT LANDINGS

Larger shows like Sun 'n Fun or AirVenture will have large colored dots painted on arrival runways. "Land on the green dot" means gauge your landing approach to touch down on the dot itself, not 500 yards in front of it at the speed of heat. A goal to shoot for would be to fly slowly down a runway at a constant altitude, then plant the airplane on the dot with a full-stall landing.

## MANAGE FUEL

It seems like each show features some tale about a hapless pilot who nearly ran out of gas while waiting his turn at the arrival, or ended up diverting and couldn't get in as planned. All kinds of problems can crop up at busy airshows, including airport closures after minor accidents or during aerobatic displays, plus bad weather. The prudent pilot plans to arrive at the marshalling point fat with fuel. There's usually no good reason to loiter, waiting for the desired runway to open up, so a final thing you need to be able to do is divert to a nearby airport, refresh, regroup and relaunch.



*The Ultralight/Light Sport arrival procedure at the 2013 Copperstate Fly-In put ultralight and light sport aircraft arrivals on a secondary runway. Major events can have multiple runways and landing areas for different classes and categories of aircraft.*