



Oregon Aviation Museum

N e w s l e t t e r

Vol. 4 Number 2

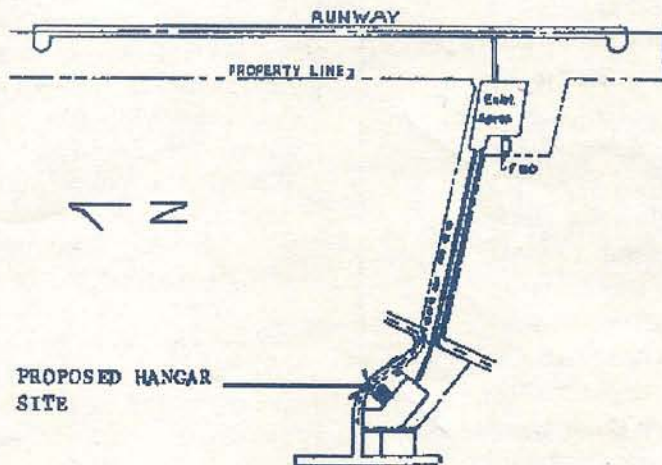
78833 Airport Road, Cottage Grove, OR 97424

July 1995

Hangar Project Gains Momentum

This diagram shows the approximate location at the Cottage Grove Airport where the museum hopes to erect the storage/restoration hangar.

Annexation of the site to the city of Cottage Grove and financing alternatives are currently in progress.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

OAM welcomes board members Annette Whittington, Doug Yarbrough, and Arthur Lumley.

AIR FAIR COMING

The Museum has been invited to participate in the Oregon Air Fair to be held in Portland December 9 and 10. This is an important opportunity to get the museum's message out to the public and membership participation in setting up and manning the display is encouraged. Please contact a board member if you can help.

EDITH FOLTZ STEARNS - II

The Edith Foltz Stearns biography appeared in the last newsletter and continues on the back page of this issue.

OAM AT OACAC FLY-IN

The Oregon Aviation Museum will participate in the Oregon Antique and Classic Aircraft Club's biennial fly-in on July 21-23. We will join the club at the Cottage Grove State Airport in helping them present to the public what promises to be the best fly-in to be held in the state this year. OAM will display the Super V aircraft along with other interesting artifacts. If you have not had the opportunity to view the Super V, this is your chance. There will be many interesting airplanes coming to Cottage Grove, as well as interesting displays and speakers. You are invited to help staff our display. We will be selling merchandise and soliciting new members. Saturday the 22nd will be especially busy and your assistance will be more than appreciated.

- 4496

Random Flight

By Roger Starr

Board of Directors

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Roger Starr ✓

Aurora 266-4282

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Myrtle Creek 863-3951

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Elwood Hedberg ✓

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Wilbur Heath ✓

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Annette Whittington

Creswell 895-3910

Lloyd Williams ✓

Cottage Grove 942-1268

Doug Yarbrough

Springfield 746-3426

746-3246

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As noted in the article covering the 1995 Annual meeting, your OAM Board made a change in its leadership by electing yours truly as President. Change is something we must all contend with. In this case there is no way I will pretend to fill the number 12 (or larger) shoes worn by your immediate past president Wil Heath. Wil has held that position since 1989. We all owe a heartfelt "thank you" to Wil for all of the years served. Some of the years have been better than others despite the best efforts of the President. Dreams were visualized, new directions were taken. Through it all, Wil stood out in front and helped guide the Museum like the beacon light that has come to be our symbol. Enough years of service and the requirements of his business led Wil to ask to be replaced. He remains on the Board. Thanks Wil.

The Board recognizes the difficulty in competing with other museums and attractions with our own public use facility. This would be a very time-consuming and a financially draining endeavor. Another way of presenting the story of Oregon aviation history is to take it out to the people - an outreach program, if you will. This is what the Museum did at such events as the gathering a few years ago at Beaverton Mall, the site of Bernard Field, and the display last November at the Oregon Air Fair in Portland. This is the direction we intend to pursue for the foreseeable future.

I think it is important for our members to understand this concept since it makes the importance of our hangar facility at Cottage Grove all the more significant. This will be the site where, finally, all of our artifacts can be brought together under one roof. They can be catalogued, properly stored and retrieved in a much more efficient manner than is now possible. From this storage hangar we can accumulate materials and artifacts into displays that will then be presented throughout the state. The location of these displays does not have to be limited to the traditional aviation-related locations such as airports, fly-ins and airshows. They can be taken to other museums, shopping malls, schools and community events. In short, almost anywhere where they will be appreciated.

It is therefore vital to ensure that the storage, restoration and construction hangar be completed - and without further delay. There are many artifacts and stories that need to be gathered and preserved. But, they need a home. Oregon aviation history is too valuable to lose. As far as I am aware, we are the only state-wide organization that is dedicated to this mission. When you are asked to contribute, financially or otherwise, please keep this in mind. Future generations are the ones who will say 'thank you' and will have more gratitude than we currently realize.

On the subject of aircraft restoration, I am most pleased to report that Museum life member Rex Hume is working on the tail feathers of our Stinson SR-5E in his Williams workshop. Rex has also asked for permission for the wings to be brought to his shop in order to assess the requirements for restoring them. The Board is very pleased with this progress. If you would like to work on a project, whether aircraft restoration or other, please let it be known by contacting a board member. There is no lack of work to be done!

ANNUAL MEETING 1995

By Royce Beatty

The annual meeting of the membership of the Oregon Aviation Museum was held March 19, 1995 at the Village Green in Cottage Grove. 24 members and guests were in attendance, including eight board members. Participants were guided to the room by the course light and beacon that had been on display at the Air Fair in Portland last November. In addition, there were several historic wooden propellers on display and a number of period airways maps that indicated positions of the beacons. Cookies, soft drinks and coffee were also made available to the group.

During the course of the business meeting, Treasurer Allen Alsing reported a checking account balance of \$5,266. Secretary Elwood Hedberg reported that 28 of 43 eligible voters had cast ballots for the proposed director candidates. Accordingly, Allen Alsing, Al Grell, Wilbur Heath, and Lloyd Williams were elected to four-year terms.

Outgoing president Wil Heath reviewed the events of the past year and the progress that had been made toward the goal of acquiring a hangar to store the museum collection and to provide a place for the preparation of displays that could then be used in other museums and public events. A great deal has been accomplished in evaluating a site on the Cottage Grove Airport. Further commitment to the project is dependent upon the level of support that can be generated from the current and previous members of the museum. As a means to evaluate and foster support, consideration is being given to forming groups of members in local areas across the state.

Patrick Harris, Director of the Old Aurora County Museum, presented a program based on his masters thesis "The Coming of the Birdman: The Aviator's Image in Oregon 1905-1915" which was published in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* in 1984. As is the case with this type of project, extensive research in the magazines and newspapers of the period was involved covering subject matter of prime interest to museum members. In attempting to identify the person who made the first flight in Oregon, he concluded that it was Lincoln Beachey who flew a lighter-than-air ship in 1905.

Harris covered, in some detail, efforts of several Oregonians to make the first flight of an airplane in the state and the preparations for the event when it took place. Charles Hamilton and John Burkhart were prominent in this activity, Hamilton taking the honors in the Portland area. The presentation, laced with anecdotes, was entertaining, informative, and well-received. The author took questions at the end of his presentation. The Museum wishes to thank Mr. Harris for his participation in this very successful event.

Following the lecture a director's organizational meeting took place where the Board elected officers for the new year. They are Roger Starr, President; Royce Beatty, Vice President; Allen Alsing, Treasurer; and Elwood Hedberg, Secretary. In addition, an Executive Council was selected including officers Malcolm Buffum, Al Grell, Wil Heath, Annette Whittington, and Doug Yarbrough.

Edith Foltz Stearns

(Part II)

By William Villani

This article is continued from the last issue of the newsletter. The concluding installment will be included in the next issue and will feature a full list of references.

As Edith Foltz prepared to leave Santa Monica in August 1929 on the first leg of the Women's Air Derby to Cleveland, she had reason to be confident in the potential outcome of the race. Her mount, Race 109, was one of the fastest ships in the field: the low-winged Alexander Bullet R705H, c/n 2005. Some commentators thought such a machine too much for a woman, but Foltz was to prove those doubters wrong.

The racers set off across the US, time being measured across separate legs of the transcontinental course. Foltz was flying competitively but controversy awaited her at the Cincinnati checkpoint. Not feeling well, she was having difficulty locating that city's airport. Spotting a small field, she swooped low but decided it was too tiny to be the one in question and continued on.

As she later related to a reporter for the *Portland Telegram*, she flew for another half hour before finally alighting in a farmer's field. Taxiing to the man's front door, she proved to be quite a surprise for the gentleman who owned the place. "You can't imagine how surprised that man was," the aviatrix recalled. "You'd have thought he had never seen a plane before. Maybe he hadn't had one in his front yard."

"He said it was Cincinnati I had passed,"

she went on. "I should have gone back but the farmer said dinner was just ready and there was fried chicken. I stayed and went on to Cleveland."

Foltz's detour caused some consternation among race officials, but they checked her story and finally awarded her second place in her class behind Phoebe Omie. After collecting \$700 in prize money, Foltz spent some time recuperating on the East coast but soon was back in Oregon pursuing new adventures.

Prior to leaving on the transcontinental derby she had won commercial license #5600, the first woman in the Northwest and only the fifth in the nation to win the coveted ticket. Now she put that credential to work, clocking some 100 hours as a co-pilot on West Coast Air Transport's big Bach trimotors.

Not content with those laurels, Foltz spent her spare time (there could not have been much of it) lecturing Portland showgirls on the new industry of aviation. Along with 98 other pioneer female fliers, she also was a charter member of a group that remains important to this day - the Ninety-Nines.

Another highlight would come in July of 1931, when she was selected to succeed Russell Lawson as Oregon Governor for the National Aeronautics Association. She was

the first woman to hold such a prestigious post in that organization.

Foltz also gained notoriety for designing and patenting the 'Folzup', a special flying garment for women. This addition to the aviator's wardrobe could quickly be converted from flying togs to a skirt and dress for streetwear. "I like to get into my plane and go places," she explained to a reporter for the *Oregonian*, "but I don't like to clamber around planes in dresses and I don't like to stride down the street in trousers." The Folzup was her innovative solution to the problem.

The Portland flier continued her involvement in air racing, participating in the 1930, '31, and '32 derbies. She placed fourth in the '31 event, despite catching a wheel on takeoff from Redding, CA and damaging a wing upon landing at Fresno. That year she also placed second in the Amelia Earhart closed-course race, leading that contest until the last lap when she was passed by Florence Klingensmith. The next year she would place second in the women's derby while flying Kinner Bird NC10672.

Racing days would soon be over, however, for war clouds were gathering. Foltz would play her part in the conflict to come.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

