This year's annual meeting will not only christen the new historical center, it will feature an interesting project as well. The replica of the Hughes R-1 racer will be the focus of an informative presentation at 2 PM on March 27.

The replica is being constructed for Jim Wright of Cottage Grove and is based upon Howard Hughes' worldbeating design of the 1930's. (The original can be seen at the National Aviation and Space Museum in Washington, DC.)

Completed portions of the airplane will be on display. Delmar Benjamin, Ron England, Mike Mann, and Steve Wolf, the crew responsible for building the replica, will be on hand to describe the process of recreating aviation history.

The Hughes Racer presentation will be preceded by the meeting of the corporation board at 11 AM. Among the items on the agenda is the election of board members. Lloyd Williams, Wilbur Heath, Al Grell, and Allen Alsing are all on the ballot for potential re-election. All members are welcome to attend.

Refreshments and some food will be available, so it will be a good time for members and their guests to come to the airport and introduce themselves to the long-awaited restoration center. The general meeting of the membership will begin at 1 PM and the Hughes presentation will follow at 2 o'clock.

This building will allow for the proper accessioning and storage of the varied and significant items the organization has collected over the years.

Much remains to be done, including the finishing of the interior, but this is a significant step forward. Join in celebrating it!
RANDOM FLIGHT

By Roger Starr

Every time I think of our new storage and restoration hangar, the term "homeless" comes to mind. For too many years that is exactly what we had, a homeless organization. The new restoration center is certainly a dream come true and a testament to the fortitude of those who made it happen. Sort of a "habitat for artifacts!"

We must be reminded that with this new facility comes new challenges and opportunities: the challenge of funding the interior improvements and continuing operation; the opportunity to be better able to fulfill our goals of preserving and protecting some very valuable artifacts of Oregon's aviation history. We all need to help meet these challenges and share in the opportunities. Ask someone to become a member, commit your resources and talents to our efforts.

A big thanks to all of those who have worked very hard and those who have contributed financially to the hangar construction project. A great way to show your appreciation for a job well done is to join us on the 27th for the first annual meeting of the membership to be held in the hangar. We are having a very interesting program, historical displays and light refreshments.

It is always difficult to learn of the passing of one of our long-time supporters. Dolores (Dee) Grell, life member and wife of director Al Grell, passed away unexpectedly in December. We extend our condolences to Al and his family. At the family's suggestion, remembrances have been received by OAHS. These funds will be used to fulfill our landscaping requirements around and adjacent to the hangar. Thanks to all who have made contributions in Dee's memory.

GRANTS RECEIVED

The Oregon Aviation Historical Society was the recipient of two grants from the Oregon Community Foundation during 1998. These grants, totaling $7,000, are dedicated to further OAHS goals of collecting, preserving and restoring Oregon aviation history artifacts. The OAHS board determined that the grants would be used equally to help restore the Great Lakes biplane and assist in the building of the restoration and storage facility at Cottage Grove. The Oregon Community Foundation is a statewide foundation that administers private permanently endowed charitable funds on behalf of individuals, families and businesses to benefit Oregon. The Society looks forward to a continuing relationship with the Oregon Community Foundation.
New Name, New Building

It took a while, but all good things are worth waiting for. The Oregon Aviation Historical Society, a new name chosen by the board in January as more descriptive of the organization's mission, now has a restoration center, as these photos show. Wil Heath and Rex Hume have been instrumental in getting the building situated, and our hard hats are off to them.

2475 Thornton Lane - that's the new address. Here we will finally be able to organize, accession, preserve, and prepare to exhibit the treasure trove of memories that constitute the museum collection. Be sure to come to the annual meeting Saturday, March 27 and see the restoration center up close. (We are taking suggestions for a new name for the newsletter, so if you have any ideas, please send them in.)

(It will take some time to use up the existing stocks of materials with the printed "Oregon Aviation Museum" name, so please be patient and don't be confused during the transition.)

The new history center will allow the Society to develop more traveling interpretive displays, like this one at the Albany mall last summer. Look for us across the state!
Dear Mr. Alzing,

Thank you for honoring me as the 100th member of the I Saw Tex Fly Club.

My own flying experiences started in the early 1930s when my dad sent me up for a passenger flight in, I think, an Eaglerock. At a penny a pound I went for 87 cents.

I was 18 in 1937 when an uncle showed up to say he'd just had his first dual instruction in a J-3 Cub. Working for 27 and 2/3 cents per hour, I was able to save enough for one half-hour lesson a week. My instructor was Nick Lentine, who had a J-2 or early J-3 Cub; it had a single mag, no airspeed indicator, and no brakes. I never saw the instrument panel until the day Nick, a big man, climbed out of the front seat. After 16 weeks of instruction, I soloed in a 20-minute flight.

In fall of 1939 I enrolled in the first class of the Civilian Pilot Training Program, and I was thrilled to be flying Fleet biplanes. By March 1940 I'd passed the Private Pilot check and received license no. 2000-40. There were six girls in the CPTP at the time, and one, Helen Richards, would occasionally sit in my Pontiac while waiting her turn to fly.

Helen and I enrolled in Secondary CPTP at Van Nuys in the summer of 1940. My instructor was Tex Rankin, and I flew a Travel Air D-4000 Speedwing. Helen joined the WASPS (later WASPS) as the youngest of the original group of 35. Her career was very distinguished and she flew advanced aircraft such as the P-38, P-81, SBD, B-25, A-26, etc.

Upon completing my final CPT course in a Porterfield, my uncle Morrell Austin again showed up, this time with a telegram from Arizona. They needed instructors for their RAF and USAAF programs. (By the way, Morrell later flew for the Rankin Academy in Visalia.) I ended up instructing at Thunderbird and Falcon Fields until V-J Day.

The WASPS were disbanded in 1944, and Helen and I married that Christmas. The presents came later: son Gary was born in 1947 and Dean followed in 1950. Gary is now a DC-10 captain for UAL, and Dean is a commercial/instructor pilot in Hawaii.

From 1963-60 I operated Prosser Flying Service at Pearce Field, with instruction, rentals, charter and storage. However, the loss of my medical in 1974 and my wife Helen in an airplane accident in 1976 made operating a flying business impossible.

Tex Rankin truly taught me a love of flying and aerobatics that has been with me all these years. As I've told my students, "find something you really enjoy doing so well you'd do it for free, and your living is assured." Through Tex, flying did it for me.

Very Truly Yours,

Don Prosser
ISTF News

Membership in the club has now grown to 100, as can be seen in the letter appearing on the facing page. We have also received several donations plus interesting photos and letters about early-day airshows, Tex, and the 1939 Oregon Air Tour. Thanks to all who have contributed!

Restoration of the Great Lakes is underway. The badly-damaged top left wing has been assembled, and various fittings are being prepared for plating. Wing capstrips and plywood have been acquired to duplicate the extra wing ribs and compression struts that Tex had installed by Wally Timm in 1938.

- Ron Bartley

Walt Bohrer

Walt Bohrer, longtime Tex Rankin publicist and later biographer, sadly passed away recently. Bohrer was an expert and generous Rankin resource and supporter of the ISTF mission. He will be missed.

One Visit to Cow Creek that Wasn't a Winning Proposition

Here's one Grasshopper that didn't hop too well. F/O Stanley Fina of the 5th Ferrying Group pranged this Taylorcraft L-2M, s/n 43-26654, at the Cow Creek landing strip on September 9, 1944. From the description in the accident report, it appears the tie string for the engine cover wound around the aileron control pulley, causing a major ouch! Can anyone add anything further? (USAF photos)
Way back in the July issue, we featured this mystery photo and dared the membership to identify the unusual item. Unfortunately, the correct response was not forthcoming.

It is now possible to reveal that this mysterious artifact is in fact a fuel tank for the society's Stinson SR-5. Rex Hume continues his diligent work to restore the 30's classic, and who knows - we may see it at a gathering sometime in the future (the whole airplane - not just the fuel tank!)

So now you know!

Oregon Aviation Historical Society
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED