Our Mission

The Oregon Aviation Historical Society was incorporated in June 1983 through the efforts of a group of aviation enthusiasts who recognized the need to preserve Oregon’s rich aviation heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Its purposes are to collect, preserve, restore and exhibit aviation artifacts; to develop facilities for the restoration and preservation of artifacts, public viewing and exhibition of the collection; to establish and maintain an Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame; establish a resource center for Oregon aviation historical research and to disseminate information about Oregon aviation history.

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ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 16, 2011

This year’s annual meeting will again be held at the Village Green Hotel and Resort’s Cascade Room, 725 Row Road, Cottage Grove, on April 16th. Attendees will gather at 11:30 with a no-host luncheon at 12 noon. A short business meeting will precede the 2011 Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame induction of two Oregon aviation pioneers. Please join us to be eligible for special door prizes!

The cost of the luncheon is $18 including coffee, dessert and gratuity. Pre-registration is required. Please send your check payable to OAHS c/o Annette Whittington, 555 West A Ave., Creswell, OR 97426 by Friday April 8th. If you do not send it in time to be received by the 8th, please call Annette at 541-895-3910.

2011 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Elrey Borge Jeppesen grew up in Hood River, Oregon and made his first solo flight in 1923 at the age of 16. He was the 27th licensed pilot in Oregon where he instructed at the Rankin School of Aviation in Portland. During the winters of 1930 and 1931 while first flying for Varney Airlines in Portland and then Boeing Air Transport, both precursors to United Airlines, Jepp experienced the unfortunate loss of many of his fellow pilots due partly to the lack of published aeronautical information. He wanted to change that, so he began making notes in a black, loose-leaf, 10 cent notebook. In it he recorded field lengths, slopes, drainage patterns, and information on lights and obstructions. He also included drawings which profiled terrain and airport layouts, and noted phone numbers of local farmers who could provide weather reports. On his days off, Jepp climbed hills, smokestacks and water towers,

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RANDOM FLIGHT
By Roger Starr

As the saying goes, you never know how much you miss someone until they are gone. That realization became painfully clear on the afternoon of February 10th when we lost long-time board member Rex Hume of Grants Pass to a courageous battle with cancer.

I clearly remember the June 1994 meeting when Rex and his wife visited our board meeting to ask if he could start working on the Society’s 1935 Stinson SR-5E project. His wife made it very clear that she was in full agreement with this request since Rex “needs a project”! At the time, Rex lived way out in Williams, Oregon. So it took some coordination to get all the parts and pieces to him. As they came, Rex would begin his magic. My thoughts were no matter how much he was able to complete, it would be a great addition to the airplane. Frankly, I could not imagine that one person could complete such an undertaking. Well, 15 years later I became a believer as Rex copiloted the first flight from Grants Pass to Scappoose for the installation of the interior. Thank you Rex!

During the same time as the Stinson restoration project, Rex performed another feat few men would tackle. Starting in 1999, Society volunteers were building out the interior of the History Center. From January through July of that year Rex logged 435 hours on the project. Remember that he was living in Williams, a far poke from Cottage Grove! Just how far is reflected in the number of miles driven or flown during those seven months, 8,730 miles! There were many many more hours and miles dedicated to the project. His travel trailer was a permanent addition to the parking lot for many months. Thank you Rex.

Rex was a somewhat quiet and unassuming man with unbelievable drive and determination. An appropriate tribute is being prepared on a wall in the History Center where that beautiful Stinson resides. Many have responded to the family’s suggestion that memorial donations be made to the Society.

Thanks to all who responded to my plea for financial support in my last column. Without you, we could not do so much.
using an altimeter to record accurate elevations.

Other pilots learned of Jepp’s “little black book” and were constantly asking him for his navigational information. Seeing a business opportunity, Mr. Jeppesen began selling copies of his notebook for $10 and had so many takers that by 1933 he has a thriving sideline.

Elrey continued flying for United until 1954 when the manual and chart business became too time consuming and lucrative to ignore. What made Jepp a part of aviation history was not the thrill he derived from flying, but the ingenious care he took in making sure he arrived safely and at the right place.

**Rex Theodore Barber** was born in Culver, Oregon in 1917. After graduating from Oregon State College in 1940, Rex enlisted in the Army Air Corps where he won his pilot wings and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. After graduation from flight training, he checked out in the P-40 and was halfway to Hawaii aboard ship when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. His unit was eventually moved to Guadalcanal in December 1942 where they flew P-38 Lightnings.

On April 18, 1943 he participated as one of the four designated “killer flight” pilots in a 16-plane mission to intercept and shoot down aircraft carrying Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander in Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, and most of his key staff. For his heroism in destroying Yamamoto’s bomber that day, Barber was awarded the Navy Cross.

Rex was shot down over enemy territory near the Yangtze River in April 1944. Despite extremely serious injuries that plagued him the rest of his life, he evaded capture for two months with the aid of Chinese guerrillas and returned to friendly territory in June. His impressive wartime combat record of 138 combat missions includes five confirmed Japanese kills and three “probables”, elevating him to “Ace” status.

After convalescing for many months in the United States, Barber began testing the new P-80 Shooting Star jet fighter. He flew one of the first jet aircraft to participate in the famous Bendix Trophy Race. Colonel Barber also piloted one of the new jet aircraft under the old Crooked River Bridge and the railroad bridge near his home town. Retiring from the Air Force in 1961, Rex returned to Culver where he enjoyed a successful insurance career and served as justice of the peace and mayor.

On April 18, 2003, the 60th anniversary of the Yamamoto shootdown, Oregon Governor Kulongoski proclaimed that day as “Rex T. Barber Day”. The previous week saw the Oregon legislature rename the new bridge over the Crooked River on US Highway 97 the “Rex T. Barber Veterans Memorial Bridge”. The bridge joins Jefferson and Deschutes counties where Rex Barber lived before and after his distinguished military career.
Editor’s Note: The following article appeared in the February 1945 copy of the TRIPLE A FLYER letter and is presented as it appeared at that time.

LES LONG

The death of Les Long, the “Sage of Cornelius” is a great loss to the world of amateur aircrafters.

Leslie LeRoy Long died Jan. 18, 1945 quite peacefully at his farm just out of Cornelius, Oregon. Although Les was very zealous in keeping the secret of his age from other people, he was thought to be between 52 and 56 years old. Les leaves his wife, daughter, son and step-daughter. Also his mother, a sister and three brothers.

His parents came from the early Swedish & English settlers of this country. In the 1860s, his grandfather walked across the continent to Placerville, Calif. And, a few years later he moved on to Oregon where he settled on a land grant at Cornelius.

As a boy Les liked to hunt and fish and he was a keen student of nature. Unlike his school chums, he was rarely seen in town. He was either in the woods or studying at home.

He wrote his first “how-to-build” article for Popular Mechanics in 1908 and about 1910 Les built his first airplane. Shortly thereafter he was tragically overcome by an illness that was probably brain fever. This resulted in a heightened nervous condition and agrophobia, a fear of leaving his home. This confined him within several hundred feet of his house for the last 30 or 35 years of his life.

About this same time, Les constructed the first transmitting radio set in the state of Oregon. He and his brother Geo. designed and built custom-built radios until the early 1930s. At one time the two brothers received offers from well-known radio manufacturers in the East to design radio circuits for them.

In 1925 his interest in airplanes was again revived. Two years later, he built his second airplane, and the following year built the wing for George Yates first geodetic airplane. This plane is still flying to this day with over 4600 hours on it.

In 1929 the well-known Anzani Longster was built and he followed that two years later with the high wing Longster. Hundreds of prints were sold for this latter ship and dozens were built, including two models in England and one in Germany.

Until 1936 Les Long was responsible for seven airplane designs and the building of 11 planes. His eighth design was started in 1942. This would have been a low-wing cantilever, 40 hp and of similar design to the English “Tipsy”.

His best-known design was his low-wing “Wimpy”. This plane was capable of flying satisfactorily on 20 hp. Over 300 sets of blueprints were sent out and a dozen or more models were constructed in this country.

In the early 1930s Les started to build propellers for lightplanes and for blowers such as those used in large fruit drying plants. He had the only approved prop. shop west of the Mississippi and north of Los Angeles,

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and his output here ran well into the thousands. Les’s designs even today out-perform well-known makes of props from the East.

In addition to all this he made his own blueprints, did his own photo-processing and was a student of astronomy. At one time he gave music lessons.

Les was only proud of two of his capabilities, his eye for symmetry and a flair for writing. In 1933 he was chairman of the Light Plane League of America and in 1934 was chairman of the Amateur Aircraft League. He wrote articles in the interest of these leagues in both the Popular Aviation and Sportsman Aviation magazines. It looked like big things were going to happen for the Amateur thru Sportsman Aviation, but because of mismanagement on the part of the editor, Les and the amateur subscribers were left holding the bag, and another chance for the amateur was shot.

In 1931, because of the lack of good lightplane engines, Les conceived the Harlequin. This little engine used most of the parts of a JD Harley Davidson. It weighed 90 pounds and put out 35 hp. About a dozen were built in his shop and between 40 and 50 were built throughout the world.

In 1937 Les gave up operating his flying school off of his little airport on his farm and invented a type of electric fence controller. These controllers are manufactured up to the present day and they still are the best design on the market according to a report from Oregon State College.

Because of his 25 articles in Popular Aviation and numerous articles in Modern Mechanix and other magazines, he was probably the best propaganda minister the amateurs ever had or ever will have.

Because his mind bordered upon that of a genius, and because of his curiosity of the sciences, Les was responsible for amateur designs that always flew well on small horsepower. His contribution to the science of aeronautics is readily recognized by every amateur. The past twenty years of amateur aviation and Les’s activity in connection with it will always be revered in the memories of thousands of amateurs through-out the world.

Footnote: A replica of Long’s Anzani Longster, complete with a 1919 Anzani engine, a George Yates designed and built geodetic fuselage, and the “Wimpy” reside at the Oregon Aviation History Center in Cottage Grove, OR

Director Elections

Gretchen Bencene and Wil Heath have been directors for several years and agreed to again be nominated. Please mark the enclosed ballot and send it to Tom Bedell, Secretary, before the April 16, 2011 annual meeting.
As sweet a “baby” as ever turned a prop! The “Harlequin” sets neatly on its mount, and because of the balance and symmetry of its design, presents little difficulty in cowling to a perfect streamline. It has proved itself in service.

Weighing 90 pounds and delivering 30 horsepower, this powerful air-cooled motor, built up out of stock parts at a cost way below a hundred dollars, is the answer to the light plane builder’s prayer for a thoroughly tested power plant. Harley Davidson cylinders are used.

Ever since this flying game started amateur builders have been confronted with the problem of a power plant. Light engines have always been scarce and high price. Right today there is a very limited choice for the man who isn’t free from the worry of expense.

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For some reason there have been very few good light airplane motors built. The famous Bristol “Cherub” has probably been the best in this class, but it, like the others, has been handicapped by the high price. For years determined efforts have been made to convert various automobile and motorcycle engines for use in flying. Some of these, notably the Ford and Henderson, have worked out fairly well, but they had serious limitations. At that, they have done a lot for the amateur game.

Here’s how the “Harlequin” hauls high on three of the light planes whose plans have previously been published in Modern Mechanix and Inventions! The Pietenpol, Gere and the latest Longster trail toot sweet behind this tiny tornado.

When we began building experimental light planes a few years ago, we at once ran into this engine problem. The kind we wanted were too expensive and the kind we could afford were not what we wanted. So, it was that while building our fourth light ship we decided to build an engine to go with it. From the start we were determined that the engine must have certain features to be practical. It must have only two cylinders. It must weigh under 100 pounds. It must be of the 4-cycle type, be free from vibration and overheating and must develop 30 horsepower or more. Finally, it must have both a low first cost and a low maintenance cost. It looked like quite a task, but it turned out differently.
The first problem was the cylinders. To have them made up was out of the question. It didn’t take long to decide that our only chance was the 74-inch Harley cylinder. They are noted for long life and are low priced and available. The valves are large and the valve chamber allows the best cooling possible to obtain in any design.

With this settled thing went ahead rapidly. Crankcase and shaft were designed and made up. Rods, pistons, pump and oil accessories were chosen from standard stock parts. This is one of the features of the engine.

A nifty shot of the “Harlequin,” showing off the front half of the cast aluminum crank-to a sweet advantage

With the exception of the case and shaft every part in it is available anywhere in the world. Four weeks after the sketches were started, the engine was running on the stand, and a week later it was flying. This ought to be some kind of a record.

Slight changes were made as the next three motors were built, since then not a change has been made. It is as near perfection as we believe it can be. It doesn't miss, vibrate, heat nor smoke. It starts easily and we have never had a fouled plug since we started, nine months ago. There has never been a single breakage nor noticeable sign of wear. Best of all, it swings a 5'2" prop for hours.

If you need help don't hesitate to write us about anything, but whatever you do, don't forget that stamp. This 3-cent rate on several hundred letters counts up. The address is Les Long, Cornelius, Oregon.

(The full article goes on for several more pages with very detailed and technical drawings and explanations. If anyone is interested in a full copy of this article, please let us know. Ed).
The 1935 Stinson SR5-E with Restorer Rex Hume
Join the OAHS!
If you’re not a member, we invite you to join the Society in its efforts to preserve and celebrate Oregon Aviation History. Fill in the blanks and return to:
Oregon Aviation Historical Society, PO Box 553, Cottage Grove, OR 97424

Contributor-$100 Sustaining-$50 Family-$35 Associate-$25

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