The long awaited, much anticipated Whiffle Hen has arrived in Oregon! Brought home October 15th by Tim Talen. We are proud to have this piece of Lee Eyerly history with us at last.

After being homed near Beaverton after the second world war, the Whiffle hen was purchased by an avid aviation collector who retired to Oklahoma. After his death, the Whiffle Hen was sold to a gentleman in Wisconsin, which is where OAHS was able to track it down.

Prior to it’s time in Oklahoma and Beaverton the plane spent several years in the ranch lands of Wyoming. Phil Leckenby Jr. recalls the days when his father owned it in the mid 1930’s:

“In 1927 we lived on a large ranch in Natrona county, Wyoming. On some occasions when we would drive the 60 miles into Rawlins for supplies, dad would stop and take a lesson at the local airport. Having had 4 or 5 lessons in all. In the summer of 1934 dad purchased a plane called the Whiffle Hen in Hillsboro, Or. for $300 (which at the time he had to borrow). In order to bring her home, he put car wheels on the landing gear, placed the wings along the fuselage, and made the tail skid into a hitch. This made for quite a road trip! The engine for some reason, was shipped to him later that year.

By fall the plane was reassembled and ready to fly. In order to move it to the landing-strip he had built with a drag horse, his first take off had to be in a hay field, as there was an irrigation ditch between the plane and the strip. It took three or four tries to make that first landing, and dad still had to build a bridge across the ditch in order to get it to the T hangar he had built.

The engine was a three cylinder, 45 hp Szekely. The panel had an altimeter, oil pressure gauge, compass, an eight day clock, and a Model A Ford fuel gauge. The odd thing about this plane was that the Hen’s stick came down from the ceiling. It had a T bar with two uprights on the end topped by gear shift knobs.
Whiffle Hen, Part II

“The engine also had exposed push rods with caps on the valves that would on occasion, fall out. He would usually land in the sagebrush. He commonly carried caps, pliers, and a screwdriver. He would simply replace the caps, and continue on his flight. The Whiffle Hen did not come equipped with a speed air indicator when dad bought it. As a remedy he took a speedometer out of an old car, fashioned a propeller out of an apple box board, then drove his car out on the air strip back and forth—continuously whittling the prop until it was the same speed as the car. He then mounted it on the strut so that he could see it. It worked fine until the milk cow got in the hangar, rubbed against it and it broke. He said he didn't need it anyway. So he took it off.

I was small enough at the time that I was able to ride with him a few times. I was with him on one of his many forced landings, touching down on the highway about 5 miles form home. Thankfully we were close enough to a neighbor's house. Dad took off after an inspection and the neighbor took me home. Dad never got his pilot's license, as by then the new federal rule was that your time had to be in a licensed plane. In 1937 he sold it to a man in John Day, Or. It was towed away by the tail skid, just as it had arrived.

Years later I ended up working in Salem, OR. In the 1980's I had the opportunity to call on a business by the name 'Frank Hrubetz and Co.' In talking with Hrubetz I learned that he had at one time been in business with Lee Eyerly. I had always thought that my father named it the 'Whiffle Hen' but upon showing Frank a picture I had brought along he exclaimed, 'My God that's the Whiffle Hen! I did the engineering on that plane.'

Several years after that encounter I tried to track it down. Getting as far as Oklahoma only to see a bare fuselage and 3 cylinder Szekely that had a cable around the cylinder because it had a tendency to blow jugs. Never could say if it really was the Whiffle Hen. I do hope though, that it finds it's way home.”

Raffle Winner over the Moon

On all Hallows’ eve, OAHS participated in the Cottage Grove ‘Trick-or-Treat on Main Street.” Director Annette Whittington and administrative assistant Cassandra Barrong spent 2 hours handing out over 900 pieces of candy, and over 400 free raffle tickets for a chance to win an RC Flyer. Braxton Robinson of Cottage Grove was the lucky winner! He, his sisters, and his mom stopped by the office to pick up his prize. His excitement was audible from the time they opened the front door. Braxton and his family also had an opportunity to tour our facility and he and his sisters are very excited to return for some of our summer events. Both the candy and the RC Aeronca Champ for this event were graciously donated by OAHS members. Raffle tickets were also sold to increase odds of winning, we raised $50 in the two hours of this event.
RANDOM FLIGHT,

The year is winding down. 2016 has been a good year. The weather was good during the events this past summer. Probably the only low spot for us was the ending of an era when DJ left us. She is credited with bringing this organization alive and into the 21st century. Not to say that we haven’t found a good replacement. Cassandra is proving to be a great asset. One plus is the museum is open now Tuesday through Friday, from 10 to 3.

The society has recently acquired some Oregon historical aircraft that are currently getting ready for restoration. Looks like 2017 is going to be a busy year. Tex Rankin’s Great Lakes should be flying, and the Baby Fleet should be finished for static display.

I had a great time at the Northwest Museum Directors Conference last month in Seattle. The best part was tours through the Flying Heritage Museum and The Museum of Flight on Boeing Field. The new Pavilion with 90 thousand plus square feet of display space was incredible. They didn’t have all the aircraft on display at the time but it was still a sight to see. I was especially impressed with the size difference of the 747 to the Dreamliner. Absolutely breath taking.

I hope your Holiday Season is happy and I wish you a Prosperous New Year.

Doug Kindred, President

Come Visit for the Holidays!
Our museum hangar is now staffed Tuesday–Friday, 10am—3pm
As always we have gifts for every member of the family, from Tex Rankin posters,
To ball caps and T-shirts. Come check us out!

New Beginnings and a Happy Hello!

I am Cassandra Barrong, the new Administrative Assistant for OAHS. I have lived in Oregon the past five years, but married a native Oregonian who was born and raised in Cottage Grove. My husband, I, and our two year old son, Hank, have attended most, if not all of the OAHS events over the last several years. We are very excited to now be so involved in this organization.

I do believe that a great foundation has been laid for me here, and I am ready and willing to build upon it. My goals for the upcoming year are really very simple: I would like to see an increase in attendance at all our functions, an increase in museum attendance, and an increase in memberships over-all for the museum. I believe that with a step up in our social media presence and our involvement in more community activities we can spread the word about our mission.

One of our first community events was the “Trick or Treat on Main St.” held here in Cottage Grove on Halloween. Due to the popularity of our RC giveaway, our website and Facebook activity have greatly increased already. I have also begun a weekly Facebook and website post called “Restoration Fridays,” to provide some updates on our projects, and to highlight some of the fun stuff going on at the museum. I do believe that making our communities aware of the wealth of history we have is the first step in getting them through our doors.
Eric Baldwin  
1955–October 16, 2016

We are sorry to announce the passing of one of our directors, Eric Baldwin. Eric passed away peacefully at his home in Florence, OR the morning of October 16th. He is survived by his wife Linda Linhorst of Florence, and a son who resides in California.

Eric graduated from Lowell High School in 1972 and immediately enlisted in the US Army. There he served three years, receiving an honorable discharge in 1975. Upon returning to Oregon he studied aviation technology at Lane Community College.

Throughout his life, Eric was very active in the aviation community. First as a pilot flying his Fairchild PT-23, then as a line mechanic and inspector for United Airlines at PDX and DEN airports, later owning his own aviation charter and maintenance business, EB Air LLC. He was conscientious pilot and mechanic who was the recipient of many awards. He was also involved with the CAF as one of their lead pilots and mechanic.

Eric began his work here at OAHS as the pilot and mechanic for the Stinson, followed by several years of service on our Board of Directors. He was one of a kind and will be greatly missed.

Leonard Tarantola  
1932–August 28, 2016

Leonard Tarantola was a dear friend to OAHS. Having given much of his time and many donations to this organization over the years. We are sorry to report his passing. Leonard was born in Brooklyn, NY and subsequently his family moved to Cupertino, CA where he grew up. One of his most enjoyable jobs there was working as an engineer for Arrow Development Co., which built rides for Disneyland.

In 1978 he and his wife Inge moved with his daughters to Eugene, OR.

Over the years Len became known for the many workshops and hangars he built around the area, as well as up and down the west coast.

He was an active private pilot for many years. Often flying out of Creswell and visiting us down here in Cottage Grove. Many of our members have wonderful memories of Leonard. Knowing him as a great, if not daring, pilot, sometimes pushing aviation limits.

Len was also a great fan and supporter of the performing arts and many other local organizations.

We offer our condolences to his wife Inge, his daughters and their families. He will be truly missed.

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In Memoriam...

I have come to these fields early,  
Too early perhaps,  
When the air is still and heavy and droplets of water gleam in the slanting light.

There is no one here, only my little plane that rests in the silence.  
I check the oil, and fuel, and filters, and follow ever follow, the purest discipline of my pre-flight check.

And then, finally, with everything now remembered, I bend to loose my tie downs,  
That I may be transformed.

I feel the small vibration as the wind begins to flow across my wings.  
My quiet little engine has begun to raise it’s voice.

The propeller is chewing up the center-line stripes on the runway and the tail is rising.  
And all together we race across what is left of this little earth,  
It gets lighter and lighter and louder and louder,  
And with one last jump,  
We are free.

We know the physics of flight. But it is always a wonder.  
The air must flow faster in some places than in others. Everything must be balanced. You must have a sense of direction.  
And good planning. Every component must be strong.  
Things cannot get too old.

We are lifted up on wings of cloth and wood and alloys so light they weigh almost nothing.  
We are risen into clouds, and with the tips of wings, I have tried to carve my name into every single one.

We climb until we can go no higher, and falling over backwards we spin down, pressed against the harness,  
Watching as the earth whirls around us. We turn into our spin and aim for the ground and pull up at the treetops  
And with all the speed we have left we fly low and level and fast, so fast.

We have, this machine and I, set off across great distances, with no more than a compass and a road map,  
And the ready assurance that we can land almost anywhere if we have to.  
But on the day, our compass only spins on the panel.  
There is no map for where we are going.

We may not have enough fuel.  
There may yet be one more off-field landing to do.

Maybe a long gliding drifting down when all the fuel is gone  
I will feather off the swirling propeller and level my wings  
And set myself onto whatever earth I find, in one final, untidy landing.

Plowing up some Elysian fields and maybe leaving a long deep furrow.  
Right up to the feet of those whom I have loved, and who have loved, and still love me.

We know the physics of flight, but it is always a wonder.

~Stephen Keating  
Friend of Leonard Tarantola