

Ely Air Lines –

Flying Powder

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Mike: The drizzle outside has that gray, early-winter look – the kind of weather that calls some Texans to begin their annual pilgrimage to the snow-covered slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

I learned to ski in Idaho in the early '80s. Each time winter arrives, I feel a small tug from those years, as if the past is calling me back up the mountain for another run.

An old friend had moved his family to Idaho, dividing time between a home near Boise and a ranch in Challis. He invited me to visit, and I remember how simple the decision felt. At that age, everything seemed possible with a little fuel and an airplane. I left Fullerton in a Turbo Centurion I rented from Air South flying club and made the 750-mile trip in four hours, undisturbed stretches of the Great Basin rolling along beneath me.

With powder snow, there is depth and silence, where falling didn't hurt the way it did on the slush-and-ice concoction they called "winter" in the mountains outside Los Angeles. Good powder is only half the battle. Staying dry and warm is the rest. I arrived armed with new ski bibs and



properly fitted boots. Skis I rented on arrival.

With little idea what I was doing, I approached lessons the way I approached flying, one-on-one with an instructor who ushered me straight to the top of the mountain. She made me ski without poles so I could "learn to balance." I felt foolish at first but eventually got past it. Except when I tumbled and a four-year-old zipped past me as though born with planks strapped to his feet. Such is the humility to learn something new as an adult. Children don't have that fear.

I kept returning to Idaho, to the Sierras, even to a little-known jewel, Mount Charleston, outside Las Vegas. Each mountain has its own character. To learn more, I skied with people who were more skilled than I, following their

lines, trying not to be left behind.

One of my best and most memorable trips was in Idaho, chasing my friend's brother-in-law down the mountain and spending more time impersonating an airborne snowball than an actual skier.

Near the bottom of one run, I was flying under the chairlift, snow splatter coating my goggles. I lifted them away from my eyes to shake them clear. In the flat winter watercolor-gray light, sky and snow merged into a featureless canvas. Suddenly the ground vanished beneath me; then I felt a jolt as I landed, knees bent instinctively to brace for impact. A split second later, I had a brief sensation of floating and somersaulting. I landed as if weightless as a feather, flat on my back in soft powder, my goggles still in my hands.

When I sat up, applause drifted from the lift above. Hunting my detached skis, I found them pronged like javelins into a snowbank twenty feet up my backtrail. Falling in deep powder rarely hurts other than one's pride.

ElyAirLines.substack.com

Liberty City Manager Kendrick updates council on projects

LIBERTY - The Liberty City Council met Monday, December 8, and heard City Manager Bryan Kendrick report on a number of items in the agenda to update council members and public regarding ongoing and upcoming city projects and activities.

Kendrick stated that the Director of Maintenance for the Texas Department of Transportation approved the request for the angled parking exemption on Main Street (Loop 227).

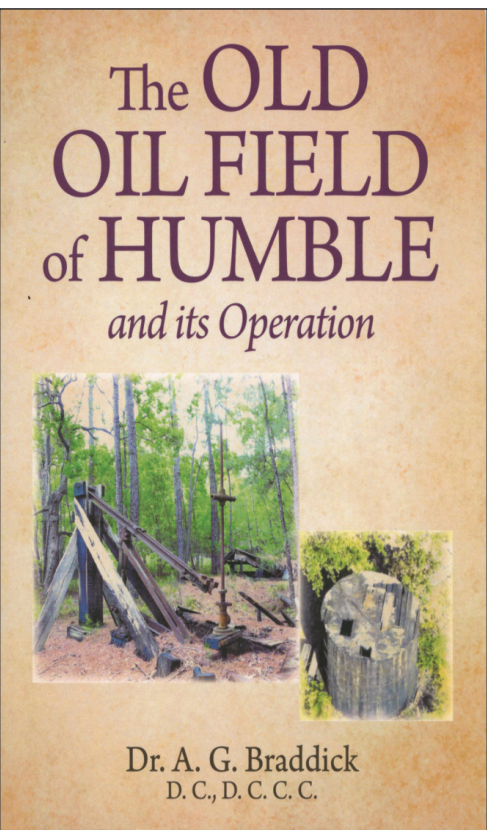
City crews continue to address water leaks on a maintenance-response basis, resolving issues as they arise. As of last week, there were four active leaks throughout the city. Should the volume exceed the city's internal capacity to re-

spond in a timely manner, outside contractors will be brought in to assist as needed.

The LiDAR drones have completed their flights. EMPACT is processing the data and moving forward with developing the base mapping, and from there they will begin the analysis. They anticipate completing this phase and having preliminary results available in the coming weeks.

The pilot data is being reviewed, which is anticipated to last through early next month. Analysis of the data using RAS' BOSS software to create budget scenarios is expected to begin in mid-January and last about six weeks. At this point, the city anticipates project completion not later than March 2026.

Liberty Municipal Park splash pad has been delayed by the recent rains, but is still ahead of schedule currently with staff working on a drainage solution to an issue that came up recently. The pond fountains have been ordered and the monthly maintenance has begun. Bid documents for the bathrooms and concession stands are being finalized.



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R.A.Smith Gifts

The Old Oil Field of Humble and Its Operation is a pictorial history of the oil field in Humble, Texas, which was active from 1905 to the 1940s. With photos, narratives and drawings, Dr. Braddick describes the equipment and how it was used, how wells were drilled and oil field operations. Readers interested in Texas history, engineering and oil field equipment will have a glimpse into the past that made Humble the city it is today.



Dr. A.G. Braddick

LCSO welcomes special guest Stormy Bennett

LIBERTY COUNTY - The Liberty County Sheriff's Office welcomed a special guest at its monthly meeting December 2. Stormy Bennett, a 9th-grade student at Splendora High School, completed her student service project by providing breakfast for the staff, which included bacon and egg tacos, donuts, and drinks for everyone in attendance. Stormy raised the funds for this project on her own, with support from her mother, Noel Bennett, and Joe Motlock.

Stormy is a legacy member of Education in Action, a statewide leadership program. She completed the full trilogy of summer leadership camps in San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston, and now volunteers her summers as youth counselor teaching leadership skills to students across Texas.

During the meeting, Stormy shared a message with the team, "I want to strive to be a leader that inspires other people to lead, too. I believe leadership is

a contagious act. When you do the right thing and lead with integrity, others want to follow that example."

Stormy's service project is sponsored by Natalie Gillespie, 8th-grade science teacher and Student Council sponsor at

Splendora Junior High.

On behalf of Sheriff Rader, the LCSO would like to thank Stormy for her dedication to this project and for supporting the Liberty County Sheriff's Office. We appreciate you, Stormy!

Get ready for Boots and Bullets

DAYTON - Get ready for a night out at the annual Boots and Bullets event benefiting the Dayton Volunteer Fire Department. This premier Dayton event will take place January 17, from 6 p.m. to midnight at the Dayton Community Center. The evening will feature live music, along with dancing, and silent and live auctions. Tables for 10 are \$600, which includes a steak dinner, so gather your friends together for this worthwhile event. All proceeds go to the

Dayton Volunteer Fire Department, an all-volunteer organization.

Please consider supporting the Dayton Volunteer Fire Department by donating items for the live or silent auction at this year's fundraiser. For more information, to donate an item for the auctions or reserve a table, contact Chad Glatfelter at 936-402-3280, Amanda Wilson at 936-258-6630, and Alvin Burress at 936-402-5875.

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