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Ely Air Lines -

Air Venturers: Ray's First Trip

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Ray Hankamer hit the big time as a commercial real estate developer in the Houston area, but back in the day, when he was not long out of college, he took up an offer for adventurous weekends. Over the next few weeks, we'll share some of Ray's stories from his stint with Air Venturers, an air travel club based at Hobby Airport, 1967-1968.



Ray: The phone rang at the desk in my little travel office in the back of Rodney's Men's Store on Post Oak Boulevard. "Ray, this is Della Henderson. Remember me from UT?"

stay aircraft of Howard Hughes' TWA. We went aboard for a brief look-see in the Houston heat. This was the sum total of training I had for the upcoming flights.

Of course I did. I was 22 and just starting in business. Della was working for Air Venturers, a weekend travel club with a leased Lockheed Constellation airplane, and they needed someone to make their hotel reservations and other transportation arrangements. I would also be able to travel free on the trips as flight attendant/bartender. If a flight wasn't full, I could bring a date.

Soon it was time for the first trip: Jamaica. The two pilots and the flight engineer were experienced fliers. They went along with the plane, wherever it was leased, and for the moment, they worked for Air Venturers. The plane filled with 88 passengers, and the drinks flowed. We landed at Montego Bay, and Bob handed me a wad of cash and said, "Make arrangements to have box lunches catered for our return to Houston."

I met her and Bob Goodwin, the club owner, at Hobby. I saw the plane, which was getting painted with the club logo along the side. The vintage three-tailed airliner had been, in its prime, the main-

friendly, which made me uneasy. Back at the airport after a fun weekend on the beach, and boarding for our return, I verified that the lunches were there - the compartments were full of white boxes. After takeoff and lots of drinks, we started handing out the boxes. After 44 had been passed out, we realized that there were no more. Our hearts sank. We asked those with lunches to stop where they were and share their food with those who didn't get any. We'd been shorted 44 lunches. My uneasiness about the caterer had been appropriate. The passengers cheerfully shared, but my first flight as travel manager was tarnished.

friendly, which made me uneasy.

The following week, one of the pilots called. He had boarded the airplane in the closed-up sweltering Houston heat only to be struck with a powerful stench. Investigating, he found 44 box lunches with their chicken sandwiches and potato salad moldering away, neatly stored in the galley compartments, which were twice as deep as they had appeared to us novice "flight attendants."

ElyAirLines.substack.com



Photo courtesy Ray Hankamer, Club Travel Agent and Flying Bartender

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Children's Museum Business Fair

Sat., April 27

MONT BELVIEU - On April 27, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., the Chambers County Children's Museum will host its inaugural Children's Business Fair. This outdoor event is free and open to the public.

Children ages 6-14 will showcase their businesses, selling products such as jewelry, baked goods, salsa, dog treats, play dough, art, and more. Cash prizes of \$50 will be awarded in each of the four age groups (6-7, 8-10, 11-12, and 13-14) for "Most Business Potential," "Most Creative Idea," and "Most Impressive Presentation."

Early voting continues

Continued from Page A-1

2024. Position 6 Trustee candidates are Gradee Davis (incumbent) and Frankie Moeller. The Position 7 Trustee Matt Horelica is running unopposed.

Hull Fresh Water Supply District has three Director positions opening up. Choices are (choose one, two or three) DeeAnn Ard, Marvin Fregia, Bill Long, and Jim Parker.

Harbour named to Wall of Fame

Continued from Page A-1

lessons, in which she would take her classes on walks around Dayton and visit the community's businesses. The students had to learn to read and follow a map along and do the math problems that were embedded into the walk.

Cathy Harbour spent many a Saturday on field trips to Washington-on-the-Brazos, the San Jacinto Monument, or sampling Blue Bell ice cream with students in Brenham. She established the Dayton Trippers and took students on amazing trips to places like Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. giving students a glimpse into a world they would never have experienced without her.

In 1998, her peers selected her as the Secondary Teacher of the Year. She became the Woodrow Wilson librarian and served 13 years in that role. After 35 years in education and 32 years in Dayton ISD, Cathy Harbour retired in 2013.

—o—

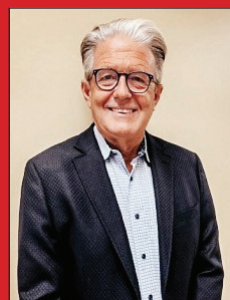
SENIOR ACTIVITIES

DAYTON - The Dayton Senior Center offers activities for area seniors to participate in each week. For those who like bingo, you can enjoy games on Monday from 11 a.m. until noon, and Wednesdays and Fridays after lunch. There is always a rousing game of dominoes at 8 a.m. on Tuesdays. A senior arts and crafts day is held the second Thursday of each month at 10 a.m. The fun is free. For more information, call 936-258-6630. The senior center is located inside the Dayton Community Center, 801 S. Cleveland.

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Whittaker honored, *Continued from Page A-1*

showed her who was boss by stomping that umbrella to smithereens. "Get an umbrella" is now a running joke in the family for any tricky situation.

A few years later Barry and JoAnn took over the complete operation from JoAnn's dad. JoAnn said she would do it under one condition - there will be no more gap gates - there hasn't been one on the ranch in over 25 years.

Along with cattle ranching, the TVE Fair and Rodeo has a special place in her heart. JoAnn and Barry started volunteering at the TVE back in the 1980s and Barry eventually served as president of the board. Alongside Barry, JoAnn has chaired several different committees throughout the years, sponsored the art show and wine tasting fundraising event and worked the hospitality room to name a few.

JoAnn remembers coming to the fair and rodeo as a little girl and has passed that tradition along to her daughters and grandchildren. From baby parades, baking contests, quilt shows, tractor races, mutton busting and showing cattle, her family cherishes the traditions and memories that have been

made on the TVE fairgrounds. Still to this day, JoAnn keeps a picture of her riding in the board member's wagon during the TVE parade and a picture in the office with a diaper-clad monkey that bit her.

JoAnn is not your average grandmother. By herself she continues to increase the boundaries of the ranch and is not afraid of any kind of work. Over the years she has pulled the hay trailer with the truck door open because there was a snake as copilot, used a hot shot to move cows along, cooked food for hungry cattle workers, plowed and planted fields before the rains came, moved equipment to higher ground to get ready for a flood and fed hay to livestock in freezing temperatures. She has passed on a love of nature, appreciation of the weather, the power of animals and the importance of being stewards of the land, an important tradition to be continued for many years to come.

She has dedicated herself to her family, friends and her community, all who are blessed to be part of the special heritage she has created.



JONES LIBRARY DONATION

The Jones Public Library would like to acknowledge with sincere appreciation the JLA Realty team for their generous donation of new books to the Jones Public Library. These new and popular titles will be processed and available to the public as soon as possible.