

Ely Air Lines -

Beyond the Horizon

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Linda: The first part I want to tell you about Sammy Mason is that he was a highly respected flight instructor in Santa Paula, California. Also, that he flew aerobatics, which is precision flying. I suppose I want to include that part right off the bat because I love flying aerobatics. I have not nearly the experience he did, but love it I do. Another thing we have in common is authorship. He wrote a couple of books on aviation and life, "Stalls, Spins, and Safety" and "Faith & Flight." I like him. I wish I'd met him.



lessons.

But Sammy's schedule was full; he had no room for another student. Still, Steve called every day. When Sammy finally agreed to meet him at the airport, one look and he realized: this was the "King of Cool," Steve McQueen.

Sammy and his son Pete became McQueen's in-

structors, and the actor became the most popular tenant at Santa Paula Airport. I wonder, did this (or any) celebrity ever know the quality of the man teaching them to fly?

Sam Mason, airshow performer, joined the service to fight for his country during World War II. He had hoped to be selected as a fighter pilot, but they wanted him to teach. Many a pilot credited him for saving their lives because he taught them how to truly understand flight. After the war, he briefly returned to the airshow circuit, but as his faith grew, he no longer wanted Sundays spent away from church.

He earned a doctorate in aviation science and flew as a test pilot for Lockheed for 23 years. But what mattered most to him was his faith - and that is what Steve McQueen noticed. Curious about the peace he saw in Sammy, McQueen began attending church with him and encountered, perhaps for the first time, a different direction for his life.

Sammy Mason was a revered instructor. But the legacy he left reached further than safe landings or stall-spin recovery. By the way he lived, he pointed others toward a steadiness beyond the turbulence - a hope that doesn't depend on weather, skill, or circumstance, and a destination long after the flight is over.

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Linney-Acie Cemetery Association

Continued from Page A-1

your generous charitable donations are tax-deductible. There are two easy ways to donate:

• **Online via PayPal:** Visit www.linneyacie.com, click the menu in the top right corner, and select the Donate tab.

• **By check:** Please make checks payable to:

Linney-Acie Cemetery Association
399 N. Colbert St.
Dayton, TX 77535

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Headrick, president, at 936-334-6569.

Sammy's head was deep into the art and science of flight, and he earned a reputation as an excellent aviator and instructor. So much so that, living near Hollywood, it wasn't uncommon for someone with a highly recognizable name to hire Sammy to teach them to fly.

Such was the case with Gene Evans. The more seasoned of our readers may remember him as the actor who played Spencer's Pilots. He wanted to learn how to fly for real so he could play his part with greater authenticity.

One day, Sammy received a call from a guy named Steve who he thought sounded like he either pumped gas at the local service station or was a butcher. He had decided most likely a butcher, since a gas station attendant likely couldn't afford flying

Senior boxes at VFW, Fri., Feb. 27

LIBERTY - This month's Senior Box Food Distribution Program will take place Friday, February 27, from 8-10 a.m. at Liberty VFW Post 5621. The commodities from the USDA/TDA are distributed through the Houston Food Bank. No new applications are being accepted at this time.

To qualify, senior applicants must be age 60 or

above and will be subject to verifying their age, residence and household income. Those unable to make the distribution, can designate a person for pick up. This person must present a written letter (dated and signed) along with a form of the recipient's ID (copy/picture of your ID or apple/food bank card) giving permission for pick up. The designated person must also bring their ID for verification.

The Liberty VFW Post is located at 1520 N. Main Street. For more information, call or text Mike at 936-955-8250.

LIBERTY GAZETTE

936-336-6416

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- ★ Liberty HS ★
- ★ Tarkington HS ★

Join us **March 19th @ 6 PM** • Liberty

Church of Christ

RSVP (for hostesses to prepare) to Catherine at 936-689-0882
or Ann at annr@wt.net

Attendees to share a brief update since graduating from high school with senior photo, if possible.
(those unable to attend, please email a short update with senior photo and current photo to be shared with members and guests)



Pokémon: Since 1996

CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF POKÉMON AT THE LIBRARY

LIBERTY - Get Ready to Celebrate 30 Years of Pokémon at the Liberty Municipal Library. The library is hosting a two-day event, February 27-28, in honor of Pokémon Day and the 30th Anniversary of its creation. Visit the library any time during regular hours for a scavenger hunt, prizes, and more. There is no charge to participate in the program, and the event is open to all ages including teens and adults.

For more information, call 936-336-8901 or visit the library Facebook page or Instagram. The library hours are currently, Monday through Thursday 9 to 5 p.m., Friday 1 to 5 p.m., and Saturday 10 to 4 p.m.

CCA of Texas banquet set for Thurs., March 5, at Dayton Community Center

DAYTON - The 14th annual Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) of Texas banquet is set for Thurs., March 5, at the Dayton Community Center. Doors open at 6 p.m. It's an evening of good food, a shrimp and sausage boil by Cajun Country Cookers, along with drinks, auctions, raffles and good old fundraising fun.

Tickets are \$60/individual or \$100/couples or gather your friends and purchase a table for eight: Redfish Table (\$1,000), Trout Table (\$750) or Flounder Table (\$600). Reserved tables include CCA memberships, koozies or tumblers and more.

For more information contact John Hebert Jr. at 936-334-2528 or Larry

Hanson at 713-447-1918. Tickets are also available at ticketstripe.com/TrinityValley-CCA2026. The event is sponsored by Academy Sports & Outdoors.

The Coastal Conservation Association is a non-profit marine conservation organization. It is comprised of 17 coastal state chapters

spanning the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic seaboard and the Pacific Northwest dedicated to conservation and restoration of coastal marine resources. The Trinity Valley Chapter is composed of Crosby, Dayton, Sour Lake, Nome, Batson, Cleveland, Kountze, Hull, Raywood, Thicket, Hardin, Rye, and surrounding areas.

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