

Ely Air Lines –

Not Here for Second Place

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Linda: Competition is my game. Determination is my name. In 2012, we flew the Elyminator 1,500 miles from Houston to Ephrata, Washington, for the Great Northwest Air Race. We arrived undefeated in our Sport Air Racing League class. Naturally, someone wanted to fix that.

His name was Don Otis, a local pilot flying a Grumman AA-1 Yankee. Like our Cheetah, his airplane was factory-built, but – and this is an important but – it weighed about 400 pounds less. He had installed a bigger engine and made speed modifications we hadn’t yet made to the Elyminator. He would also fly this race solo, without the extra weight of a navigator.

I had Mike. Advantage: Don.

Except Don had never raced before. Advantage: us.

Except he had been practicing the course for weeks. Oh, this was going to be fun.

I insisted on polishing the Elyminator until those pesky little air molecules would have nothing to grab onto and sealing air-frame gaps with industrial 3M speed tape. I would fly the straightest lines possible, make tight turns and squeeze every fraction of a mile an hour out of our airplane.

At the starting signal, I shoved the throttle full in.



“Race 55, rolling,” I announced.

Don started about 25 seconds behind us. All I had to do was keep him there.

At Turn One, I snapped into a bank, pivoting the wingtip around the turn point, then quickly leveled out.

Mike made our turn call. We waited.

“Race 30, turn one.” Don hadn’t lost anything.

By Turn Two, he was closer.

“Can you see him?” I asked.

“No, but he’s not far.”

I was laser focused at every turn: bank hard, nose down slightly, hold altitude, don’t overshoot, level the wings, straight on course, go fast. We gained a couple of seconds.

Then another racer reported serious mechanical trouble. One competitor abandoned the race to help him find an airport. We listened, ready to quit if a Mayday was called. None came.

Throttle still full in. Race still full on.

At Turn Four, Mike looked over his shoulder. “He’s right there.”

One turn remaining. I

whipped the Elyminator around Turn Five and began a descending charge toward the finish. We crossed the line 20 seconds ahead of Don and shattered our own speed record from the week before.

Then came the results. Don had flown faster. By seven one-hundredths of a mile an hour.

I admired the guy enormously. He had shown up wearing a T-shirt proclaiming, “I didn’t come for second place.” Neither had I. But I knew that extra weight was significant. Had all things been equal on the airplanes, I’d have blown him away.

At the checkered flag, Mike was ready for our Pacific Northwest vacation. But I replayed every turn in my head. Where had I lost speed? Could we make the airplane faster?

Fortunately, the Grumman speed guru who had modified Don’s Yankee lived only an hour away. Determination had a plan: speed doctor, Monday morning.

ElyAirLines.substack.com

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GOSPEL SINGING AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL
HARDIN - It’s a community-wide gospel singing and ice cream social and you’re invited. Hardin Methodist Church welcomes everyone to enjoy an afternoon of gospel music and some refreshing ice cream beginning at 4 p.m. Saturday, September 12. The church is located at 1005 FM 834.

Faith-based security

Continued from Page A-1

perform each responsibility.

The program also addressed the presence of firearms in churches. Smith emphasized that anyone expected to respond to an armed threat must understand Texas law, church policy and the serious responsibility involved. Individuals carrying firearms as part of a church safety plan should be properly trained and capable of responding safely under stress.

Awareness can be one of the most effective tools available to a congregation. Smith discussed previous church attacks in which individuals displayed concerning behavior before violence began. He encouraged church members and safety teams to pay attention to unusual behavior and communicate concerns instead of dismissing them. The goal, he emphasized, is not to create fear but to develop preparedness and vigilance.

Smith also discussed additional training available through the Liberty County Sheriff’s Office, including active-threat response, de-escalation, mental health first aid and behavioral threat assessment.

Rotary Club of Dayton President Elizabeth Robertson thanked Sgt. Smith for sharing information that churches can immediately put into practice.

“Faith-based organizations are an important part of our community, and keeping people safe when they gather to worship is something we should take seriously,” Robertson said.

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“We appreciate Sgt. Smith and the Liberty County Sheriff’s Office for providing our churches with information and resources that can help them prepare.”

Following the presentation, guests introduced themselves and the Rotarians participated in a networking activity, introducing themselves to someone in the room they had not previously met. The meeting concluded

with the Rotary Four-Way Test, reflecting the club’s continued commitment to service, fellowship and community leadership.

The Rotary Club of Dayton meets Thursdays at noon at the Dayton Community Center and welcomes community members interested in learning more about Rotary and its service to Dayton and Liberty County.



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