

Ely Air Lines –

Back in Print: The Remarkable Geneva Schow Oleson

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Linda: It all started when I was looking for the story behind a portrait of my mother at age 12. Somehow, I ended up virtually in a Cessna 182 racing from Canada to Louisiana with a North Dakota pilot named Geneva Schow Oleson. It's a fun story.

Years ago, my mother mentioned that the artist who painted her portrait when she was 12 belonged to the National League of American Pen Women, an organization of professional women in the arts founded in 1897. I'd never heard of it, so I looked it up, applied, and was accepted as a member. That's how I met fellow Pen Woman Laura Walth, and, how I learned about her aunt, Geneva.

Born near Regent, North Dakota, in 1924, Geneva grew up crawling through her father Martin Schow's airplanes. Martin built his first airplane, then taught himself to fly it. He eventually established an airfield and flying school, barnstormed around the region and taught high-school-aged Geneva to fly.

Geneva earned her pilot certificate in 1945. The next year, she helped manage her dad's private airport and assisted at the local public airport, Mott Airport. As I learned more about her, I discovered we have several things in common. Pilot is the first one. She also became an aviation writer. Ding! That's two!

At 21, Geneva founded The Dakota Flyer, North Dakota's first aviation publication. Within five months, it reportedly had 2,300 readers. In the first issue, she wrote that her purpose was



to promote aviation throughout the Dakotas. Mike and I started the column on the recommendation of the late Kevin Ladd with the goal to promote the Liberty Municipal Airport. Zing! I'll take that as three!

Geneva married fellow pilot Todd Oleson in 1948. Four! They had three daughters and eventually purchased Dickinson Air Service. In 1962, Todd was killed while crop spraying. Geneva later sold the business and established an aviation scholarship in his memory. At 47, she earned her own aerial-application certification. That's what I call getting back on the horse. Perhaps similar to my own story of coming to aviation after personal tragedy. I'll count that as five.

And guess what. She

raced airplanes. Six!

In 1971, Geneva and fellow Ninety-Nine Audrey Baird entered the 25th All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race, affectionately nicknamed the Powder Puff Derby, flying a Cessna 182 from Calgary, Alberta, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I'm a Ninety-Nine too. Yep, seven!

She raced the Powder Puff Derby; I've raced its successor, the Air Race Classic, four times. Eight things we have in common! I wish we'd met.

Geneva died in 1977. In 2013, she became the first woman inducted into the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame. The following year, her father Martin joined her there. He used to tell Geneva, "Always follow your dreams." Did she ever!

Nearly 80 years after Geneva started The Dakota Flyer, another woman pilot and aviation writer learned her story through another Pen Woman. And now Geneva is back in print. I think she'd like that.

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GENEVA SCHOW OLSEN



2026 SHC Great American Cowboy –

Cowboy historian at SHC

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the ancient roots of cowboys and their early days in the Gulf Coast region, along with sharing his personal experiences as a Texas ranch hand and horse trainer. As part of the event, Center staff will offer a special viewing of historic images, records and artifacts related to Gulf Coast cowboys.

This event is part of SHC's commemoration of America's 250th anniversary in 2026. Contact the Center at (936) 336-8821 or samhoustoncenter@tsl.texas.gov for more information. The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center is part of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC).

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HARDIN METHODIST ANNIVERSARY

HARDIN - Hardin Methodist Church will celebrate 150 years of Methodism in the community on Sunday, October 11. The event will begin with a worship service at 10:55 a.m., followed by a special ceremony. The entire community is invited to join the congregation for a fried catfish luncheon after the ceremony. Hardin Methodist Church is located at 1005 FM 834.

Free Estimates by Appointment Only!

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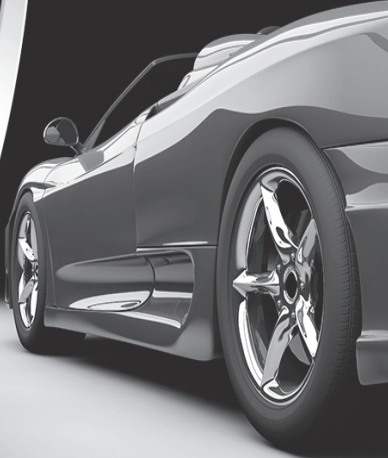
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Friends of Liberty Library looking forward to Fall Book Sale

LIBERTY - Big stories for small prices at the Friends of the Liberty Municipal Library Fall Book Sale on Saturday, October 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the second floor. Browse a variety of formats including hardbound and paperback books, magazines, DVDs, audio books and music. There are hundreds of new and used books ranging from science fiction and moving romance to engaging historical accounts and children's and youth books. There is also a small collection of

Spanish and Bilingual materials for sale. All proceeds support Friends of the Library sponsored library programs and events. Price ranges from \$0.25 to \$3. There is also a collection of older books for sale that you can make an offer on. Magazines are \$0.05 each.

Friends of the Library is a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer group dedicated to encouraging participation and interest in the library through contributions and personal service. Membership is open to individuals, families, stu-

dents, and organizations interested in promoting the materials, services, and programs of the Liberty Municipal Library. Funding raised through memberships, book sales, and the spring "Bakeless" Bake Sale provide resources for scavenger hunts, Summer Reading programming, holiday events, and more.

For more information, contact the library at 936-336-8901. Library hours are Monday-Thursday, 10-6 p.m., Friday, 1-5 p.m., and Saturday, 10-4 p.m.

Next SHC Book Club meeting coming up Oct. 27

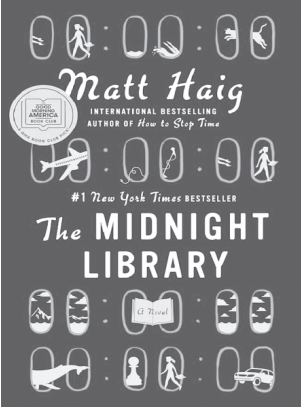
LIBERTY - The SHC Quarterly Book Club will meet Tuesday, Oct. 27, at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center (SHC) to discuss Matt Haig's "The Midnight Library." This popular book club novel centers around an unusual library filled with books of alternate lives one might lead. Join us for this fun, free and informal gathering of readers from 6-7 p.m. No membership or registration is required.

Featuring fictional works with a connection to the world of museums, archives and libraries, the SHC book club is open to all and meets in the Center's main building at 650 FM 1011 in Liberty. Home to extensive

archival holdings documenting Southeast Texas, a library collection and a museum, the Center offers an ideal setting for discussions about novels tied to these fields. Each meeting will be led by SHC staff. Interested participants may obtain a copy of the novels through their local library or favorite bookstore to prepare for the conversation. For more information, contact SHC staff at (936) 336-8821 or via email at SamHoustonCenter@tsl.texas.gov.

The Sam Houston Center is a component of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and serves as the official regional historical resource depository for the 10 Southeast Texas coun-

ties of Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto and Tyler. The Center's primary mission is to collect, preserve and provide access to historically significant state and local government records and publications of the designated region and secondarily to serve as a library of Texana and genealogical resources.



Seemingly oblivious to our scorching heat, Mutt Neuman (left) was joined by Truman Herndon while selling watermelons in Dayton recently. Hard to believe that Truman is 87 years old.



Joe and Barbara Smith attended the American Legion's Medicare Educational Event last week.