

Early-day Woman Flyer Tours Country In Interest of Project

Viola Gentry is a woman with a cause. So dedicated is she to this cause — that of bringing honor and continuing recognition to men and women who made their mark in early-day aviation — that she is touring the United States on her vacation from her job — and using her own money, to further the project.

Viola Gentry is herself one who made aviation news back in the mid-twenties. She was the first woman in this country to set an endurance flying record, she flew with famous aviators, was a friend of Amelia Earhart, Clyde Pangborn, Jimmy Doolittle, and other well known aviation personalities, is a charter member of the Ninety-Nines, Inc., international organization of women pilots, has flown — and plans to fly again next year — in the annual Powder Puff derby.

Because Viola Gentry has long-time friends living in Medford, she put this country on her round-the-country itinerary and recently spent four days here as a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry R. Smith, 1033 Reddy avenue. She was also a guest in the home of the T. E. Knackstedt, Renault avenue. When the Smiths were living near Roosevelt field on Long Island, New York, as a newly-married couple, Viola Gentry was one of their close friends. In those days, Roosevelt field was the most important airport in the area and the flyers, barnstormers and stunt men all gathered there; many history-making flights originated at Roosevelt field.

Jerry Smith and T. E. Knackstedt, both touched with the flying fever as were so many others, were a part of the aviation crowd. The two men "barnstormed" around the country doing parachute jumps, wing-walking and other stunt flying at fairs and other events where crowds would assemble to be thrilled.

Came West

As time went by and many of the young people left aviation to earn a living in more established and possibly safer pursuits, the Smiths and Knackstedts became separated from their flying friends and both couples settled in Medford. Mrs. Smith and Viola continued to correspond, but it took "the cause" to bring the two women together a few days ago.

Miss Gentry's tour around the nation this winter is to spread the news of The Medal of the Month club, founded by her friend, Felicity Buranelli, of New York City. Described as an "educational hobby," the Medal of the Month club operates in this fashion: Plaques, designed by well known sculptors, are made to honor an outstanding man or woman. The originals go to public institutions, such as the Smithsonian and other museums, and a duplicate to families, cities or firms. From the plaques small medals are made and these are used as gifts or awards and make up collections. With each medal goes a booklet with material about the honored individual.

Since Miss Buranelli's brother, Vincent, is credited with designing the first airplane that carried a payload in its airfoil section, and since she was interested in aviation, Miss Buranelli devoted the first series of plaques and medals to aviation. The six plaques honored the Wright Brothers, Captain Edwin C. Musick, Amelia Earhart, Capt. Frank Hawks, Glenn Curtiss and Gen. William Mitchell.

On her month-long trip around the nation Miss Gentry is making arrangements for the placement of additional plaques to honor other notable in aviation. She began

in Roxbury, Mass., the home of Prof. Thomas H. Langley, who made a plane in 1908. In Boston she contacted persons regarding Errol Boyd, known for his early-day non-stop flight from New York to Bermuda in his Bellanca, "Miss Columbia."

Honor Sikorsky

Going to Stratford, Conn., Miss Gentry visited the firm of Igor Sikorsky, manufacturer of helicopters and maker of the first flying boat, concerning the plaque in his honor. At Mansfield, Ohio, Miss Gentry made contacts concerning Gen. Frank P. Lahm, now 92 years old, who holds Balloon License No. 2 in the United States. When in Medford the traveler said she had an appointment with the general in Tucson, Ariz., where he is spending the winter.

Her stop in Dayton, Ohio, concerned the Wright Brothers, and in Chicago it was in the interest of Cmdr. Reed of Naval aviation fame. Walter Hinton, his co-pilot, and Lincoln Ellsworth, who was pilot for Roald Amundsen, the polar explorer. She stopped in Marshall town, Iowa, concerning Frank Hawks, who established many trans-continental records in his Beechcraft, "Mystery Ship."

Her stop in Wichita, Kan.,

concerned Walter Beech, maker of the plane which bears his name, and there she had an interview with Mrs. Beech.

In Wenatchee, Wash., Miss Gentry arranged for the city to receive a plaque honoring Clyde Pangborn, Wenatchee man who put the small city in the limelight when he ended his round-the-world flight there one night in the early 30's. Mr. Knackstedt and Pangborn were close friends, and the Medford man presented some of the aviator's personal possessions which he has kept through the years, to Miss Gentry. These will be placed in a museum at Suffolk Air Force base, Westhampton, L.I., which is being established by the Long Island Early Flyers club.

One of Viola Gentry's most exciting visits, during the early part of her trip, was in Seattle where she visited the famous Boeing plant. She felt privileged to have a first-hand look at Boeing's new plane, the 727, which was officially off the assembly line on Tuesday, November 27.

One of the Medal of the Month plaques will honor William Boeing, founder of the firm.

Visits Yuba City

After leaving Medford early last week, Miss Gentry planned to stop next in Yuba City, Calif., home town of J. J. Montgomery, who made a successful glider flight way back in 1908. In Santa Clara, the traveler planned to visit Santa Clara university where an interview had been arranged with the Rev. Father Patrick A. Donahue, Miss Gentry will present him a medal from a plaque honoring Father Bernard J. Hubbard, known as The Glacier Priest, because he had arranged for a bronze statue of Christ to be placed at an Eskimo community where he had lived and carried on both religious and scientific work.

In San Francisco Miss Gentry interviewed persons interested in Lincoln Beachy, early-day fly-

Guests

Prospect — Recent guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Maurer were Mr. and Mrs. Budd Twombly and family of Klamath Falls. Mr. Twombly was the Union Creek ranger for a number of years and is now with the Klamath Falls district.

Prospect — An interesting evening "with Viola Gentry, and it turned out to be all of that. Modest and friendly, she enjoys talking about flying and the pilots and aviation personalities she has known. Miss Gentry first flew in Santa Monica, Calif., in 1924 with Bob Fowler. "After the first

time up, I knew I had to go on flying," she said, with great earnestness. She went east and took more instruction at Roosevelt and Curtiss fields. She holds Pilot's License 1822.

Before long even the men acknowledged that Viola was a good pilot, even though she was a woman in 1928 she broke the world's endurance flight record for women out of Roosevelt, remaining up for 8 hours, 6 minutes and 30 seconds. She teamed up with Jack Ashcraft in an attempt to set another endurance record, and it ended in disaster. Ashcraft was killed and Viola spent nine months in a hospital with both arms and the upper part of her body in a cast. After she had recovered, her license was renewed and she was allowed to fly again.

Viola Gentry recalled that when she first learned to fly, there were no paved runways, no lighted runway and no air maps. "We flew by road maps," she said, with a smile. For several years she earned a living by flying, working for the Breeze corporation and in public relations. Since flying wouldn't always support Viola, she supported her flying as a hobby, and regrets never having had money enough to own a plane.

Now Miss Gentry divides her time between Bellevue Hotel, Clearwater, Fla., where she is an assistant housekeeper during the winter resort season, and the Sea Spray Inn, Easthampton, Long Island. The hotel sponsors her as an entrant in the annual Powder Puff derby for women aviators, and last two years she flew with Shirley Marshall of Arizona, as co-pilot. The two women are entering the 1963 derby, and her Medford



Aviatrix Viola Gentry, who spent a four-day vacation in Medford recently with long-time friends, has been a flying enthusiast since she was 12 years old and in 1928 established the first endurance flight record for women, having taken off from old Roosevelt field near New York City. Miss Gentry, now touring the United States in the interest of the aviation series of the Medal of the Month club, is pictured here during dedication ceremonies at Holmes airport many years ago. At her left is the late E. J. Holmes, for whom the airport was named, and George Haldeman, flying partner of Ruth Elder, another woman who made aviation history. The heavy leather flying suit had been loaned to Miss Gentry by the famous Jimmy Doolittle. The picture came from a photo album kept by Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Smith, who in their early married days lived near Roosevelt field and were a part of the "flying crowd" that made the field its headquarters.



T. E. Knackstedt, Renault avenue, close friend of the late Clyde Pangborn, Wenatchee, Wash., who made aviation history by flying around the world in the early '30's, has kept a number of the pilot's possessions throughout the years as mementoes of their flying days together as young men. During the recent visit here of Miss Viola Gentry, woman pilot and another friend of Aviator Pangborn, Mr. Knackstedt presented a cap and other articles to Miss Gentry and they will be placed in a museum at Suffolk Air Force base established by the Long Island Early Flyers' club. (Knackstedt photo)

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'Christmas Carousel' Fashion Show Theme

Holiday gowns, winter vacation clothes and children's styles will be spotlighted at the "Christmas Carousel" fashion show luncheon Saturday, December 8, at 12:30 p.m. at the Rogue Valley Country club. It is sponsored by Medford branch, American Association of University Women, to finance their fellowship fund and operating expenses.

Added attractions will be a musical intermission provided by a singing group under the direction of Lynn Sjölund from Medford High school, a card party in the Top Flight room following the luncheon, and a surprise gift for one guest.

Modeling women's fashions from Jean Hart's will be Mrs. Kenneth L. Brown, Mrs. William S. Cobb, Mrs. Herbert

Security Benefit Club To Prepare Christmas Gifts

Security Benefit club members planned at their last week's meeting to prepare several baskets for delivery at Christmas and several of the women club members are refurbishing a doll dressing dolls for children's Christmas gifts.

Mrs. Maude Arnold is in charge of the doll project and other women of the group are asked to assist her.

Six club members whose birthdays were in November were honored at the last meeting. Honored were Mrs. Ada Coffman, Mrs. Essie Sikes and her sister, Mrs. Winifred Fair, Mrs. Ann Lowry, Mrs. Rose Crawford and Mrs. Laura Weber.

Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. Sadie Pence, Mrs. Mary Smith, Mrs. Nellie George, Mrs. Ann Lowry and Mrs. Mamie Bryant make up the December kitchen committee.

The group meets each Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Pythian hall. A luncheon is served and the afternoon is spent in dancing.

Phoenix-Talent PTA Meeting Is Announced

Talent — The program for the Phoenix - Talent Parent Teacher association Thursday, December 6 at 8 p.m., will cover a talk on home work policy of the schools, a report on the first meeting of the rural school board regarding consolidation and a panel discussion by the science teachers.

The session will be held in the Talent Grade school gymnasium and the panel discussion is a continuation of informative programs to be given this year to acquaint the parents with latest developments in teaching skills. A question and answer period will be conducted.

Child care for younger children will be provided in the lunch room. Refreshments will be served by mothers of pupils in the fourth grade.

Calendar

Calendar notices and news for the society section of The Mail Tribune must be submitted in writing and deadline for the Sunday edition is 1 p.m. Friday. Deadline for the weekly calendar is 9 a.m. of the day of publication and for week day news is 5 p.m. the day before publication.

Monday

7 p.m. — Rogue Valley Landlords association, Room 35, Medford High school.

7:15 p.m. — Warren assembly, International Order of Rainbow for Girls, Jacksonville Masonic temple.

7:30 p.m. — Reames Past Matrons club, Mrs. John W. Esp, 889 Olympic ave.

8 to 10 p.m. — Beginner square dance class, Country Square hall, one mile west of Talent.

8 p.m. — Olive Rebekah lodge, IOOF hall.

Tuesday

10 a.m. — Eastwood Baptist Women's Mission society, at church.

10 a.m. — Women's Fellowship of Central Point church.

12 noon — Medford Gold Star Mothers, Mrs. Barbara Stone, 325 Havana st.

12 noon — Women's guild, Zion Lutheran church, Social hall.

12:30 p.m. — Women's association of Central Point Presbyterian church.

1 p.m. — Ladies of Elks, Elks club downstairs lounge.

1 p.m. — Central Point R.N.A., Mrs. Emma Collins, 2685 Connel ave., Medford.

Indians Topic For Program At DAR Meeting

A program on American Indians was given by Miss Helen Crumpton at a recent meeting of Crater Lake chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution at Rogue Valley Manor.

Miss Crumpton pointed out that she felt our first duty in helping the underprivileged was to our own Indian citizens, who had shown their patriotism in war and many other ways. She spoke of two Indian schools, St. Mary's high school, Springfield, S.D., which is an accredited high school and the only four-year high school for Indian girls; and Bacone college, Muskogee, Okla., whose graduates hold excellent positions, she explained. Interested DAR chapters contribute to the two schools.

An annual collection for Oregon Indians at Chemawa and Celilo was taken. The president general's message of patriotism and Thanksgiving was given by Mrs. Paul G. Weidner.

Mrs. Cora Maxfield was announced as a new chapter member. Guests were Mrs. Mary D. McCullough of Eastbrook chapter, Rockville, Ind., and Mrs. John B. Lynch, Ind. Don S. Stevens, magazine chairman, described the DAR magazine.

Mrs. Judd Greenman, regent, presided. Dessert luncheon preceded the meeting.

Mrs. Ray K. Bailey, national defense chairman, spoke on that subject.

Next chapter meeting will be a Christmas party at the Girls Community club on December 15. Members are requested to take a Christmas gift for an Indian child at Chemawa instead of the usual gift exchange.

Kerby Parents Invited to Hear Hospital Head

Illinois Valley — Kerby Parent Teacher association members have received an invitation to attend a lecture on the reorganization of the state mental hospital to be given Tuesday, December 4 at 8 p.m., in Room 100 in the Josephine county courthouse, Grants Pass.

Dr. Dean K. Brooks, superintendent of the state mental hospital at Salem, will be the speaker. He is to report on the progress being made in the care and treatment of patients.

J. A. Rennebohn psychiatrist in charge of treating patients from Josephine county will discuss the role of the community in the treatment of mental illness.

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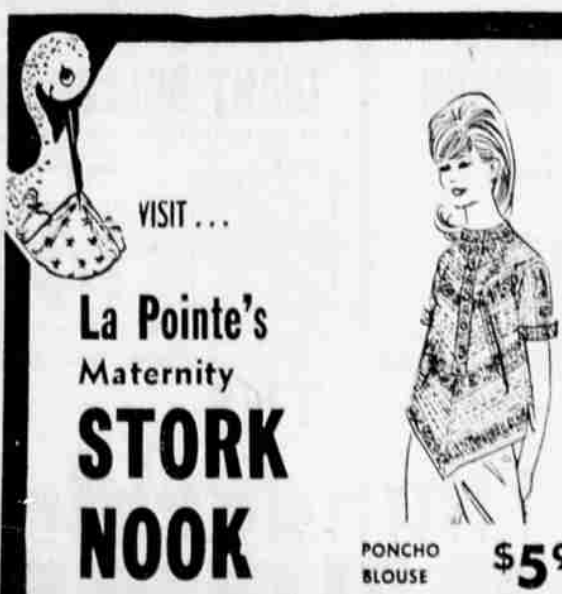
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