

# NEWS LETTER



VOLUME 7 NO. 3&4 MARCH, APRIL 1985 EDITOR: MARCIA SULLIVAN

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: There will be no Newsletter printed in April due to the last and desperate attempt of the Editor to graduate from the University of Houston Clear Lake City. You will, however, be receiving a Mailout on our FlyIn, May 11th and 12th.)

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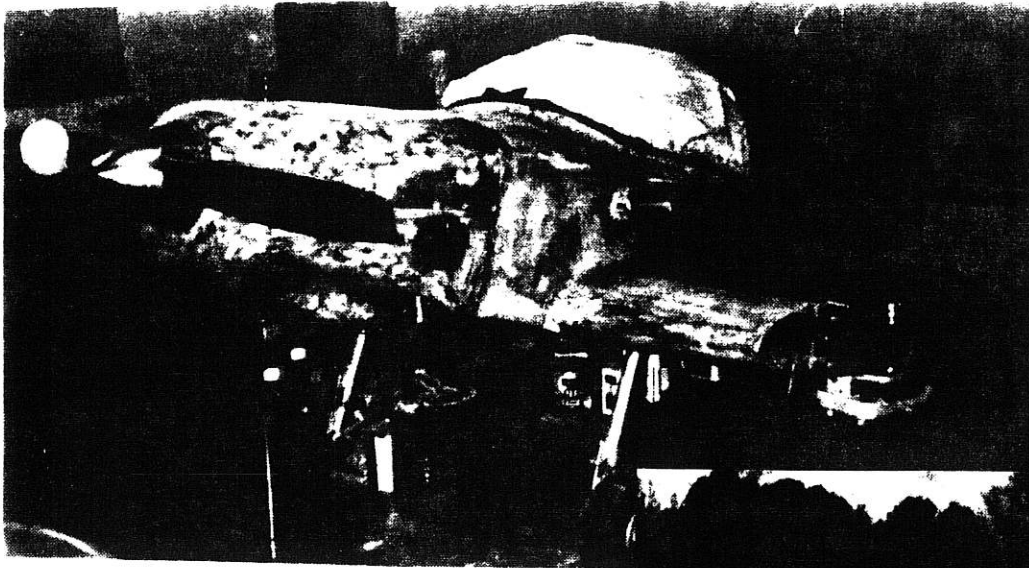
MEETING: Saturday, March 9th 10AM ConServAir Office  
REFRESHMENTS: Dick & Ginger Criss & Wally Tuttle  
PROGRAM: Pray for bad weather. If we get it, the program will be Al Muir, local Commercial Balloonist, who, the grapevine tells me, gives an excellent presentation. If we don't, the Oshkosh '84 video tape will be waiting in the wings.

## NOTES FROM EL PRESIDENTE

Well, the countdown's underway for our May Fly-In, and all kinds of things are beginning to happen. At the Fly-In committee's executive board meeting two weeks ago, someone commented to me "You're really getting into the thick of things, now," and boy was he right! I never would've guessed at the magnitude of preparations needed so far in advance to pull off something resembling a successful Fly-In....it really gives me renewed respect for those who came before me and set the patterns that I need only mimic! We've got chairpersons for most of the individual task forces now (that same hard-core volunteer group I spoke of last month); maybe we can shame some others into signing up for the remaining chairmanships.

As I write this, I'm thinking about my upcoming Cessna 140 cross-country from Montgomery County Airport to Lancaster, California (adjacent to Edwards A.F.B.). This 1500 mile-each-way trip is the longest I've ever flown and it's chocked full of new experiences for me, including desert flying and mountain flying so it should be doubly fun. I should have all kinds of hanger-flying stories to tell you at the meeting...See you there!

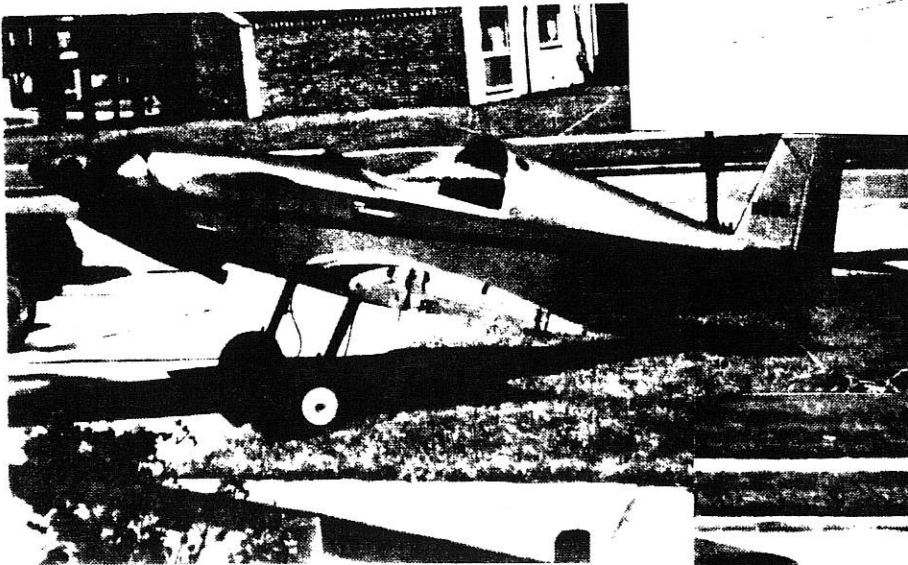
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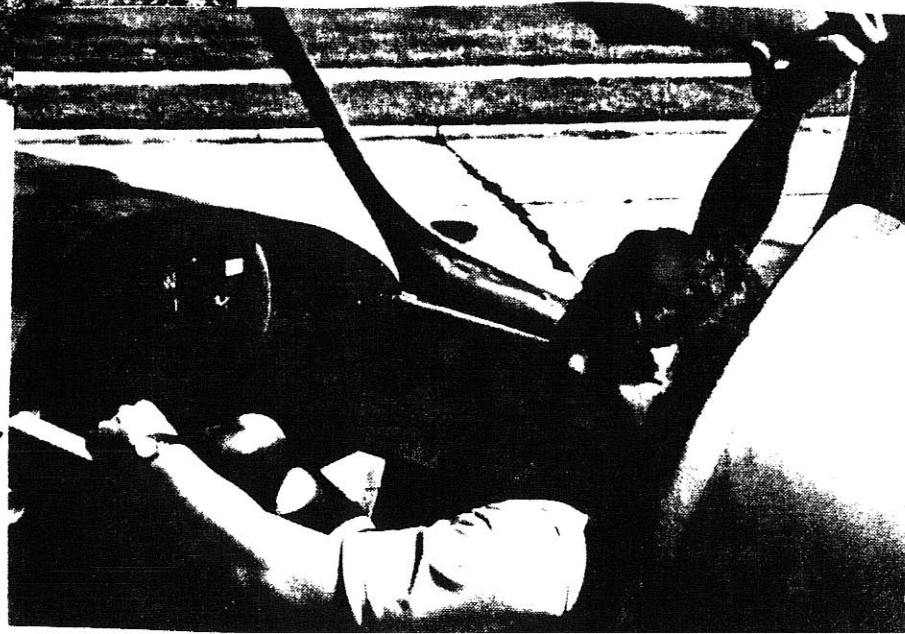
> I shouldn't be seen  
like this!



Which way is the airport? >



< I'm getting that incomplete  
feeling.



Eat your heart out, >  
folks!



# 75 years ago, Texas saw a man fly high Houstonian recalls feat

By JIM SIMMON  
Post Reporter

Frank Meador remembers the day Texas got its wings.

It was 75 years ago Monday that Louis Paulhan, a barnstorming French aviator who flew for the big bucks, was pulled skyward by a force equivalent to 50 horses, ushering in the Age of Flight to Texas and Harris County.

On Feb. 18, 1910, Meador, then a boy of 16, stood in a South Houston field and watched in wonder as Paulhan lifted off toward the southeast in his French-built Farman biplane and circled once above the crowd before bringing the machine back smoothly to the ground.

It was six years after the Wright Brothers made the first manned flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C., and almost a decade before the meager beginnings of commercial aviation in Houston.

According to The Houston Post, which sponsored the exhibition along with the Western Land Co., trouble in the Farman's 50-horsepower engine shortened the first flight and caused the "careful" pilot to attempt "no sensational work."

However, The Post reported that a few moments after the first landing, "the big propeller blade was twirled" again.

Although The Post said the crowd of thrill-seekers began to dwindle after the first flight, Paulhan made three more flights that day, the last a journey of 10 minutes, before darkness put a stop to his derring-do.

## 'A big bird'

"No mishaps attended any of the flights, the machine sailing like a big bird when the engine was shut down," said The Post.

The next day, Paulhan went up again, this time making one flight into the teeth of a 25-mph gale, which The Post described as an extraordinary feat.

Paulhan pocketed a \$20,000 fee for buzzing about the skies over what is now near the intersection of Spencer Highway and Old Galveston Road. The Post and the Western Land Co., which developed South Houston and was promoting a forerunner of an industrial park in the area, each put up half the money.

"Everybody was kind of excited about it at the time to see one just take off and fly," recalls Meador, 91, who was mayor of South Houston from 1941-49.

Although The Post reported that about 3,500 people attended the first show, Meador says there were only about 300 or 400 on hand, most of them coming from Pasadena or Houston in cars.

At the time, South Houston was a recently incorporated hamlet of a couple hundred residents, and the city owned one implement — a grader Meador says was used to level off the field for Paulhan's plane.

Also in the crowd was W.W. Walker Sr., a machinist who was to become one of Houston's aviation pioneers, and probably the first native Houstonian to fly. Walker used his big Eastman 3-A folding camera to take one of the few photographs of Paulhan's flight.

## Texas' first flight?

His son, W.W. Walker Jr., an aviation buff and amateur historian, says it is almost certain Paulhan was the first man to fly in Texas, since no records of earlier flights exist.

"I have heard over the years mention of others. But I don't think so, I just don't think so," says Walker, 72, whose father founded an aircraft and marine propeller service business that the younger Walker continued until retiring in 1980.

Walker, who has chronicled the exploits of Paulhan and early Houston aviators in historical articles and speeches, says Paulhan reportedly won as much as \$25,000 participating in the first aerial meet in the United States, outside Los Angeles in early January 1910.

According to The Post, a week before his arrival here Paulhan dazzled crowds in New Orleans with "some spectacular stunts," darting his fragile plane "upward and downward like a large bird."

Paulhan — characterized by The Post as "a general good fellow, but contrary as can be" — apparently was a man who was in it for the money.

"The salary of the president is a mere bagatelle compared to the enormous amount of money received by Paulhan," The Post said.

Walker says: "So many good things in American life have resulted from commercial exploitation. Why would this man have come if it were not for the money?"

## Daring aviator risks his life,

*The Post is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. This column, which will appear daily through 1985, presents excerpts of Post articles exactly as they appeared on this date through the years.*

Reported in The Post on Feb. 20 ...

1910

In the teeth of a twenty-five-mile gale, Louis Paulhan in his Farman biplane at the Houston aviation meet this afternoon, made one of the most notable flights in his career before a crowd of 5000 people at South Houston. Only one flight was made by the plucky French aviator, who after waiting nearly two hours for the puffy wind to subside, mounted his plane against the advice of his friends and risked his life rather than to have



the public disappointed.

The flight is the first in the history of aviation to be made in a heavy gale, the wind sweeping in from the gulf in strong puffs that nearly caused the biplane to turn turtle while circling. Paulhan remained in the air seventeen minutes, covering a course of about ten miles, flying in the path of the wind.

takes to the skies

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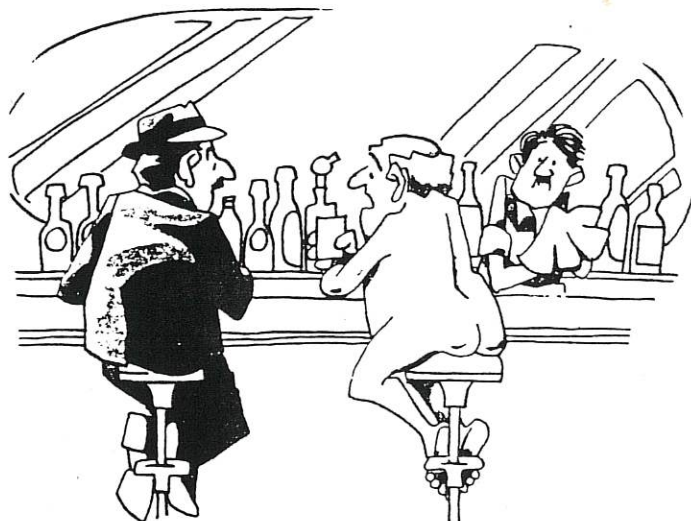
\$3000 or offer.

RV-4 PLANS, MFG. RIGHTS, TAIL KIT, Kit completely assembled except  
left elevator, good workmanship.

\$700 or offer.

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EAA 240583

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*"She had one helluva good lawyer."*

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