

Ely Air Lines -

Air As An Engine

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Here's a name for you: Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Sounds fictional, doesn't it? The man's unusual name reflects both family heritage and his parents' patriotic flair.

"Isambard" was a family name; his father was

Marc Isambard Brunel, born in France from a family with Norman roots. It's a very old Norman-Germanic name, derived from elements meaning, roughly, iron (Isam) and bright or strong (bard).

"Kingdom" was most likely given as a tribute to Marc's adopted country, Great Britain. He had fled revolutionary France and built his career in Britain, where he became a respected engineer. Naming his son "Kingdom" was a way of expressing gratitude and loyalty to the United Kingdom, the nation that had given him refuge and opportunity. At any rate, it turned out the name fit.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel became one of the greatest engineers of the Industrial Revolution, responsible for projects that reshaped Britain's infrastructure, including the Clifton Suspension Bridge, the Great Western Railway, and revolutionary steam-ships such as the SS Great Britain and SS Great Eastern. But his contribution that stands out for us is his atmospheric railway. The science it explored sits right inside the intellectual foundation that eventually made aviation possible.

In the 1840's, instead of locomotives pulling trains, Isambard experimented with stationary pumping stations that removed air from a pipe laid between the rails. A piston inside the pipe was pulled forward by air pressure pushing from behind. Essentially, a giant



vacuum-powered system.

The key scientific principle was motion created by pressure differences in air. At the time, this was cutting-edge applied physics. Airplanes also exist because of pressure differences - just expressed differently.

Brunel used pressure differences along a tube to create forward motion. Airplanes use pressure differences over a wing to create lift. Both rely on growing 19th-century understanding of fluid dynamics (air behaves like a fluid), pressure gradients, airflow behavior, resistance and drag. These ideas helped move the common way of thinking from viewing air as "empty space" toward understanding it as a physical medium that could do work.

Brunel influenced later aviation pioneers to think of air as an engineering medium. The same solutions he worked with to measure leakage, understand friction with moving air, calculate pressure losses, and design seals and valves were the same problems aeronautical pioneers faced understanding wind tunnels, propeller theory, and aircraft drag calculations (drag, the opposing force to lift).

Likewise, his experiments fed directly into later vacuum and pressure research, Bernoulli's principle, and aerodynamic theory.

His work was an early iteration of transportation systems powered by distributed energy, separating propulsion from vehicle. This influenced later thinking about propellers versus

engines, airflow management, powered flight efficiency.

Brunel's atmospheric railway ultimately failed because leather seals rotted (rats ate them), and maintenance costs were too high. But failure didn't erase the lessons learned about airflow, sealing, pressure loss, and mechanical efficiency - topics aeronautical engineers later wrestled with.

So, while Brunel didn't help invent airplanes, his intellectual groundwork fed into the environment from which aviation grew.

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Lots of Eggcellent adventures coming to Liberty library

LIBERTY - Beginning April 6 and continuing through April 30, the Liberty Municipal Library will host a fun, hands-on after-school experience. All ages are invited to will learn how eggs develop into chicks and see the incubation process from start to hatch day. Participants will learn about the lifecycle of a chicken, how incubators work, egg candling, the excitement of hatch day and so much more. Programs will be held Monday through Thursday, each week, from 4:30-5:30 p.m.

The program will be overseen by Katie Clark, Prairie View Texas A&M 4-H extension agent serving Liberty County. The extension service provides research-based education and services to county communities that support youth development and improve quality of life.

To register or for information, contact the library at 936-336-8901. Library hours are Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday, 1-5 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The library is located inside the Geraldine D. Humphreys Cultural Center at 1710 Sam Houston Street.

History & Then Some

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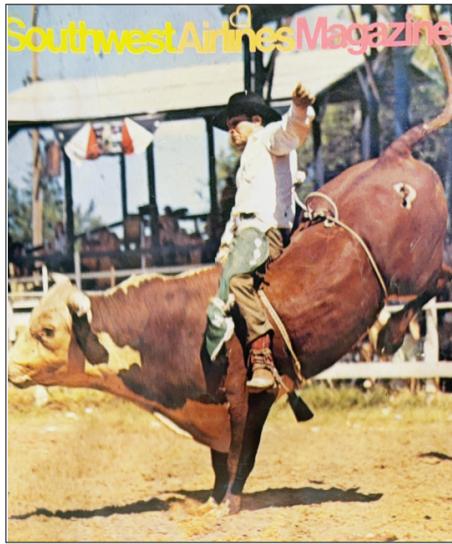
tory. He organized and led the team that produced his documentary, which not only earned five Emmys but was recognized by concurrent resolutions on the floor to the Texas House and Senate for excellence.

Praised by former Texas Governors Rick Perry and Ann Richards, Florian's deep dive into General Houston's life is endorsed by the Sons of the Republic of Texas, the Texas Ranger organization and many others.

Why is Sam Houston relevant today? Learn about his relationships with Native Americans, the women in his life and his enduring code of ethics. Questions are welcomed.

Admission is free but seating is limited. Make your reservation today. Call the museum at 409-389-2252.

The year's series is sponsored by a donation from Occidental Petroleum Corporation.



Ken Speck passes from this life

Kendal "Ken" James Speck, 78, of Spring Branch, Texas, passed away surrounded by the love of his family. Ken was born and raised in Seymour, Texas, where he developed his passion for rodeo at an early age. His talent and determination led him to compete on the professional circuit in bull riding, saddle bronc, and bareback riding. It was during his time at Texas Tech University that he crossed paths with his forever soulmate, Debbie. The two fell instantly in love, married, and began building a life together, welcoming their first child, William "Ryan" Speck. Ken's rodeo career came to a turning point after a saddle bronc ride left him with two broken legs. With Debbie's lov-

ing encouragement, he decided it was time to hang up his spurs and begin a new chapter.

The family moved to Dayton, Texas, where they welcomed their daughter, Kenda Jo Speck. In Dayton, Ken became a respected community leader. He served as General Manager of Peoples Building Center and was an active member of both the Liberty and Dayton Chambers of Commerce as well as Citizen of the Year. He also dedicated his time to the Dayton School Board, always investing in the growth and success of his community.

In 2022, Ken and Debbie moved to the Texas Hill Country, settling in Spring Branch. There, he spent his final years surrounded by his wife, children, grandchildren,

and great-grandchildren - the pride and joy of his life.

Ken is survived by his beloved wife of over 51 years, Debbie Speck; his son Ryan Speck and wife Misti of Spring Branch, Texas; his daughter Kenda and husband Clay Davenport of Austin, Texas; his granddaughter Meagan Speck Clark; grandsons Austin Speck and Hudson Davenport; and his great-grandchildren Cannon Clark and Bridget Speck as well as many more relatives. A celebration of life will be scheduled in the near future at Pace-Stancil Funeral Home in Dayton, Texas.

Ken will be remembered for his contagious smile, his devotion to his family, and the lasting impact he made on every community he called home.

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EGG-STRAVAGANZA EGG HUNT

LIBERTY - Grab your Easter baskets and get ready for a really egg-citing time as the Liberty Elks Lodge hosts its Egg-stravaganza Egg Hunt. The fun takes place Sat., April 4, at 10:30 a.m. at the Liberty Municipal Park for age groups 0-3 years, 4-7 years and 8-12 years, with prize eggs for all age groups. Elroy the Elk will join the Easter Bunny for photos. This free community event is compliments of Liberty Elks Lodge #2019, Community Activities Committee. For information, call 936-336-3739.

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HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE

LIBERTY - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints invites the community to join them on Friday, March 27, at their chapel, 331 Vera Lane, from 6-8 p.m. for the following activities: an immersive Holy Week experience featuring thoughtfully designed room displays highlighting each day of Holy Week; and a hanging Easter egg hunt for all ages, intentionally designed to be accessible for individuals with special needs and those who use wheelchairs.

TVCC Awards Banquet

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purchase tickets. Additional information, registration and sponsorships can be found by using the QR code below.



Nick Dennis' sneakers must have lot of mileage on them from all his various responsibilities. Nick takes care of IT for Liberty County, serves as a Liberty city councilman, is on the board of the LISD Education Foundation, and in his "spare time" takes photos for his photography business. Here, he's at work at the LISD Education Foundation Casino Night, Sat., Feb. 28.



Stuart Marcus was sampling just a few of the tasty snacks at the Liberty ISD Education Foundation's Casino Night Sat., Feb. 28. Stuart is retired from many years as refuge manager at the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you!



I just wanted to take a minute and express my appreciation and gratitude to all Precinct 2 citizens who supported me in the Tuesday, March 3rd election. I am very grateful for everyone's help. We are proud to continue our service and commitment to the people of Precinct 2 with integrity, fairness and honesty.

If there are any concerns or questions, our door is always open. You may contact me at 936-536-4091.

From Justice Court #2, the staff and myself, it is with honor and sincerity we continue to serve as "The People's Court."

