

New Exhibit To Open May 5th

by Lynne Belluscio

Final preparations are being made for the new exhibit about the Woodward Airport, Amelia Earhart and the *Friendship*. It will open Wednesday evening, May 5 at 7:30 at the annual meeting of the LeRoy Historical Society. The event is open to the public and light refreshments will be served.

There will be a short meeting of the Historical Society to elect trustees. June Dusen, Helen Headley and Mike Perry have agreed to continue on the Board for another 3 year term and Joanne Graham and Cheryl Fernaays have accepted the nomination for a first 3-year term. A special thank you to Ellen Harris and Tony Gugino for their six years of service. Through the years, it's dedication and perseverance by people like Ellen and Tony that have made it possible to keep our doors open.

The new exhibit will give visitors a glimpse of the excitement and importance of the Woodward Airport, which was declared one of the best private airports in the United States. It was equipped with heated hangar space, state of the art equipment and some of the best pilots available at that time.

Donald Woodward was not to be outdone. He owned not one or two airplanes, but a fleet of seventeen which included a Fairchild FC-2 monoplane (the first plane that he bought in Florida from Russ Holderman's



wife, Dorothy for \$12,500 - cash), a Curtiss "Robin" monoplane, two Consolidated Fleet biplanes, four WACO 10 biplanes, a Curtiss Wright "Junior" monoplane, a Aeronca C-3 monoplane, a Loening Amphibian biplane, a Curtiss "Seagull" flying boat, a Stearman biplane, a Challenger biplane, a Franklin Glider and a Pitcairn PCA-2 "Autogiro." The flagship of the fleet was Amelia Earhart's tri-motor Fokker, which had flown across the Atlantic on June 17, 1928.

Right now I am looking for airplane models for the exhibit, but I have plenty of photographs. Don Woodward must have had a photographer on his staff, because we have boxes of photos.

We also have his desk pen set of marble with the airport runways and hangar in silver. Probably the most rare item in the exhibit is a pair of tiny pilot's wings of blue enamel that were worn by the Woodward pilots. Brian Duddy is loaning us his "Friendship" chair and we will exhibit both chairs - the one donated to the Historical Society by Don Woodward's daughter and Brian's, which he bought last year.

A few other items in the exhibit include two green benches that were used for spectator seating on the roof of the hangar for the air shows. We will also display the autographed photo of Amelia Earhart that we have in the collection.

On opening night, we will show the 13 minute segment of the movie "Amelia" which shows the replica of the *Friendship* that was built in Canada for the movie. The plane is now part of the exhibit at the Canadian

Bushplane Museum in Sault Ste. Marie, Canada. The museum also acquired the interior mock-ups of the "Friendship" that were used in the film. Those have been installed in the plane. The "Friendship" when it flew across the Atlantic was fitted with pontoons for a landing in the ocean, but when the plane came to LeRoy, the pontoons had been removed and replaced with standard landing gear. All of the photographs and postcards from 1928 are in black and white, so its amazing to see the bright orange plane in the photographs from the movie. Plan to join us of May 5th.

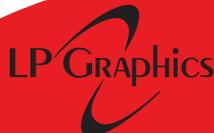
The exhibit will continue through the summer. LeRoy House is open June through September on Sundays 1 to 4. It is also open during the week beginning in June, but you need to call ahead of time to learn of the hours.

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