

Wright Has The Spirit



By DAVID MANNWEILER

Ron Wright has a definite problem with his image. Considering what he does, he should swagger with a super-macho gait, chew nails, carry a big knife, wrestle snakes, smoke cigars and talk like a character in an Ernest Hemingway novel.

He should not wear a coat and tie or look like a preacher's son. But that's what Wright looked like, and what he wore, yesterday when the 29-year-old bush pilot showed up at a hangar at Weir Cook International Airport to take command of "The Spirit of Indianapolis," a new Cessna 185 Skywagon that soon will bring hope and a hint of civilization to the remotest jungle areas of Paraguay, in South America.

In fairness, Wright was obviously uncomfortable in a coat and tie. Back home in Surinam, on the north coast of South America, he never wears such "civilized" garb. He wore it yesterday because he thought he was going to be prominently featured in a formal dedication ceremony for the plane, but the ceremony was scrubbed by the weather.

The blue and white plane was purchased with a \$75,000 grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., which suggested the name for the aircraft. Dr. W. Brooks Fortune, a retired group vice president for Eli Lilly & Co. and a longtime Indianapolis aviator, came up with the idea of approaching the foundation for funds to buy the plane for Wings of Hope, a St. Louis-based organization that has acquired 32 planes in 14 years for humanitarian groups in hidden corners of the world.

"I painted 'The Spirit of Indianapolis' on the engine cowling and I was scared to death I would misspell it," Wright said. "I must have looked it up three times. Even when I was a kid, I wanted to be a bush pilot. Lots of people laughed at me. They said there was no such thing as bush pilots."

The fraternity of bush pilots — people who fly in and out of remarkably small clearings under extraordinary conditions — remains small, he said, because "you have to be a pilot, a mechanic and an electronics expert. You operate on your own and you have to fix everything that goes wrong all by yourself."

Wright joined Wings of Hope 1 1/2 years ago, after piloting corporation planes for several East Coast companies.

"Wings is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, nonsectarian organization that is supported by people involved in aviation. We assist missionary, charitable and relief groups in South and Central America, Africa, New Guinea, Alaska and Canada," he said. "We set up a mini-airline for the groups and after a year or so, when we've trained them to operate and maintain the plane, we give it to them."

Wright normally flies 600 to 800 hours a year ferrying missionaries, medical personnel, educators and agricultural specialists in and out of remote jungle villages. "That's quite a bit, and these planes take quite a beating. This airplane can lift a good 2,000-lbs. more than it weighs. The planes takes awful abuse in the dirt, the extreme climate, the heavy loads and the rough landing fields."

When you fly as a bush pilot, Wright added, "you have to do it right every time. When you commit yourself to land in a small open jungle patch that ends at a mountain, you are committed 100 percent. You don't get a chance to fly away and try another landing."

Wright's boss, William Edwards, was grounded by the weather yesterday and couldn't make it to Indianapolis, but he said by phone that finding bush pilots for Wings of Hope is difficult.

"They have to be experienced pilots and mechanics but they also have to be motivated in the heart. You really can't hire a person to do what we want done. He has to be humanitarian, to want to help people. It requires a human input that a lot of people don't have."

"We don't go lolly-gagging around the world into areas that can be reached other ways. If you can get there by truck or boat or Land Rover, we won't be there. It's hard for most Americans to believe but there are millions of people who live in places that are inaccessible except by airplane," Edwards said.

Name In The News

ED SIMCOX, secretary to the Indiana Republican State Committee and a candidate for Indiana secretary of state, will speak tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. to the Wayne Township GOP Club, at the Krannert Community Center.



Curious Thing At Airport

By FREMONT POWER

An eyebrow-lifting thing happened at Weir Cook International Airport parking lots Jan. 15, 1976.

Daily receipts totaled about \$5,000. The next day they hit \$6,000. They had been running \$1,600-\$2,400 a day.

The parking concessionaire, APCOA Inc. of Cleveland, had changed several personnel on Jan. 14.

The Indianapolis Airport Authority rubbed its collective chin over this windfall and decided it was, indeed, curious. So curious, in fact, that it has taken APCOA to Federal Court, asking \$1.69 million in back alleged ripoffs. Also named was an International Telephone & Telegraph subsidiary that sold the parking concession to APCOA in 1975.

Previously, all revenues (or presumably all) had been turned in to the authority and then APCOA was paid its share.

When APCOA started withholding its share, the airport authority said "out!" The authority began running the lots itself although the 10-year APCOA contract would have run to the end of '76.

Despite the amount of money involved, only one criminal indictment has been returned by the Marion County grand jury, that of Jerry (sometimes listed as Joseph) Perdue, 30, 8206 Bountiful Place, Plainfield. He is charged with embezzlement in an alleged conspiracy with another APCOA employee who was not indicted.

Perdue was the assistant manager of the lots. Efforts by the airport authority to take depositions from Perdue's superior and four other APCOA employees are reported to have met with Fifth Amendment refusals.

'Unbelievable'

A pretrial conference in Perdue's case is scheduled for March 15 before Criminal Court Judge John Wilson Jr. With a comment that "it's unbelievable that could go on" over such a prolonged period in such amounts, Deputy Marion County Prosecutor David Rimstidt said, "The prosecutor is still examining all circumstances surrounding this case. It's an ongoing investigation."

Meantime, a parking lot expert, James Hunnicutt of Washington, D.C., has been laid on to tell the airport authority how to catch a thief, among other things.

Airport executive director Daniel Orcutt said things have been tightened up, with daily audits of tickets against cash.

One would hope so.

Unusual Takeoff Described

By HANK LOWENKRON

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (AP) — An aircraft mechanic with 31 years of experience testified he never had seen an aircraft take off like the DC-3 that crashed here Dec. 13, killing 24 members of the University of Evansville traveling party and five other persons.

Walter Waters said he was working at Dress Regional Airport and noticed the DC-3, a charter flight operated by National Jet Service Inc., Indianapolis, making a steep climb.

"I almost think it had to be a control problem. Even though he was in such a steep climb, I can't figure out as to why he'd make such a steep climb," said Waters as a public hearing into the crash opened yesterday.

"I remember thinking, 'I can't believe that airplane. It's beyond its limits. It has to stall.'"

He was one of 11 witnesses in the first day of a hearing conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The witnesses included James Alexander, air traffic controller in contact with the plane as it left Dress; Michael Egnew and Hugh Hazeltine, employees of Tri-State Aviation where the DC-3 loaded; Patrick Alvey, president of Metro Beechcraft, who said he was one of the first persons to arrive at the crash scene; Robert Wood, another employe at Dress; Dorothy Simon and Patrick Gorman, residents of a housing development near the crash scene, and Charles Daily, airport fire chief.

Most witnesses described unusually loud noises made by the plane before the crash. Some who observed the plane in flight testified its attitude was unusual for takeoff with the left wing lower than the right and the nose high.

"There was some abnormal noise," said Alexander. "I couldn't see the aircraft, but the noise of it was coming toward the tower when it should have been going away."

"I heard a loud noise. It sounded like a kid hot-rodding a car," Egnew said. He said the noise was loud enough to draw him to the window of his company's office.

"As the plane began a left bank, I heard a report," Alvey said. "It sounded like he backfired." Then the engine accelerated just prior to impact, he added.

"I heard the engine noise," Wood said. "Then I went outside my office and observed the plane. I've seen DC-3s take off hundreds of times while I was in the service. That was the weirdest position I've ever seen a DC-3 in on takeoff."

There was speculation the plane had gust locks on it when it took off. These are often put on planes while on the ground to prevent wind gusts from moving the aircraft.

Two of the locks were found at the crash scene. However, it was not determined whether they were applied, according to Rudolph Kapustin, NTSB employe in charge of the probe.

"We can't explain the surging described by witnesses," Kapustin said. "The presence of gust locks is a possibility, but I want to emphasize that we have not reached a conclusion about them."

Van Driver Killed In Train Crash

A California moving van driver was killed and his two passengers were injured yesterday when a 113-car Con-Rail freight train cut his van in half at a crossing at Massachusetts Avenue and Rural Street.

Police said NORBERT G. DEMERATH, 46, San Diego, Calif., died at 4:24 p.m. when his United Van Lines truck was struck by a westbound Con-Rail freight, traveling about 30 miles an hour.

Witnesses said Demerath waited for an eastbound freight to clear the crossing and was attempting to follow the curving roadway across the tracks when he was struck by the westbound engine.

Police said the impact sheared the trailer unit of the truck in half and flipped the cab back against the moving train, throwing Demerath through the windshield.

Two passengers, one riding in the passenger seat and the other asleep in the rear of the cab, were injured.

One passenger, LeRoy Barksdale, 41, Newport News, Va., was reported in satisfactory condition in Wishard Hospital where the other passenger, Joseph Vest, 38, 1806 N. Rural, was treated and released.

Police said the truck was en route from California to Carmel at the time of the accident.

In another accident, LYLE D. GORDON JR., 12, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Gordon, rural Danville, died Monday night in St. Vincent Hospital of injuries suffered when he was struck by a car while riding his bicycle along a Hendricks County road about 4 1/2 miles northwest of Danville.

The driver, Valeria M. DeLaughter, 36, rural North Manchester, was not charged.

Services for the boy, a sixth-grade pupil at Danville South Elementary School, will be at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow in the Church of the Nazarene at Danville.

The 1978 Indiana traffic toll stands at 58, compared with 62 fatalities reported by this date last year.

Clarksville Man Killed In Blaze

Special to The News

CLARKSVILLE, Ind. — John Greniger, 67, was killed in a fire at his home yesterday.

Authorities said Greniger was alone, apparently sleeping, when fire destroyed the 2-story house.



Riddle Time

Joe Sizemore has some fun with a fellow student as he asks a question out of one of the series of riddle books by Bennett Cerf available

in Mrs. Barbara Wiggins' classroom at the Sanders Elementary School. Joe, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Sizemore, is a second grader at the Wayne Township school.



Some shoppers park their grocery carts so others can't get to the meat counters? Have a "Why Do" question? If so, send it to The News.

Way Cleared For PSI Power Plant

Special to The News

MADISON, Ind. — The last block hindering the building of a \$1.8 billion nuclear-powered electric generating plant at Marble Hill was cleared yesterday when Federal loan guarantees were approved.

The Federal Rural Electrification Administration approved the \$360,684,000 loan to Wabash Valley Power Association Inc. of Indianapolis.

Wabash Valley Power will be a 17 percent owner of the Marble Hill works. Public Service Indiana will own the rest.

Preliminary construction permits allowing early phase construction have been granted. Part of this construction will include site preparation on a 987-acre bluff overlooking the Ohio River.

The Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission has indicated a full construction permit would be granted once loan guarantees for Wabash Valley Power are received by it.

Plant construction is behind

schedule, but PSI officials have said work should be completed by 1982 if no more delays are encountered.

Federal hearings on safety and the need for the plant have been conducted at Madison. Opponents attacked the financial ability of Wabash Valley Power to participate in the project.

A spokesman for the Federal Rural Electrification Administration said it has studied the power company several months and is completely satisfied it can repay the loan.

Wabash Valley Power is a wholesale electric power supplier to 24 rural electric membership cooperatives, including 22 in Central and Northeastern Indiana, one in Ohio and one in Michigan.

Groups opposing the nuclear power plant vow to continue their fight to prevent construction, however. They have indicated they are studying legal arguments for a Federal lawsuit.

PSI officials say the plant's construction will make the state less dependent on coal-produced electricity.

South Shore Has Less Cars

MICHIGAN CITY, Ind. (UPI) — The South Shore commuter line had 18 passenger cars instead of the normal 39 at hand yesterday, officials said.

Maintenance problems cut the number from 39 to 10 daily last week.

Yesterday, the president of the line formally known as the Chicago, South Shore and South Bend Railroad, Albert Dudley, led a group of commuter advocate officials on a tour of the Michigan City facilities.

A spokesman for Nick Angel, president of the Northern Indiana Commuter

Transportation District said he and other officials were satisfied the line was doing all it could to try to keep cars in service.

Today's Bible Verse

Many facets pertain to God's Son's office. He accomplished perfectly all of them. Is our aim parallel to His? To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn. — Isaiah 61:2.

In Praise Of Older Women

PEOPLE

By L. T. BROWN

When selecting a mistress, choose the older over the younger: She will be more discreet and as physically attractive as the younger one.

One of America's foremost aphorists — BEN FRANKLIN, author of "Poor Richard's Almanack," signer of the Declaration of Independence and lifelong admirer of beautiful women, formed that advice and apparently lived by it.

Concerning a spicy letter written in 1745, WALTER JOHNSON, curator at Rosenbach Museum, Philadelphia, said it is unclear to whom Franklin wrote the letter because it is addressed only to "My Dear Friend." Johnson said because of its indelicate contents, the letter was not put on public display until this century.

Older mistresses are more desirable than younger ones, Franklin wrote, "because the sin is less — the debauching of a virgin may be her ruin, and make her for life unhappy." Franklin also noted: "And as in the dark all cats are grey, the pleasure of corporal enjoyment with an old woman is at least equal, and frequently superior, every knack being by practice, capable of improvement."

A shipboard marriage would have been nice, but the captain said he couldn't, so actress JOAN BENNETT and retired writer DAVID WILD settled for Valentine's Day vows instead.

Miss Bennett, star of such films as "Little Women," "Moby Dick" and "Father of the Bride," and Wild said they planned to marry three weeks ago on a Norwegian-American cruise in the Caribbean, but the captain said he could only marry Norwegians. They were married at the Westchester County Courthouse in White Plains, N.Y., with eight friends watching. It was Miss Bennett's fourth marriage. Her last ended in divorce in 1962.



Miss Anderson: I do, I do!

It was packed last night at Manhattan's Studio 54, where the New York State Department of Commerce was host to a Valentine Day bash to begin its "I Love New York" ad campaign promoting the Big Apple and the Great White Way as a weekend magnet for Easterners.

The hostesses with the mostest for the disco delight were MARGAUX

HEMINGWAY, GILDA RADNER and CARRIE FISHER. Among those dancing the night away were Margaux's grandmother, MARY HEMINGWAY, Gilda's TV cohorts JANE CURTIN and JOHN BELUSHI, Rolling Stone publisher JANN WENNER and a big group of Broadway stars.

Country singer LYNN ANDERSON was married yesterday to HAROLD "Spook" STREAM, a wealthy Lake Charles, La., oilman, in a private ceremony at Stream's home.

It was the second marriage for both. Miss Anderson's 7-year-old daughter, LISA, was a bridesmaid.

Wednesday winners: Author SID SHELDON sold movie rights to his best seller, "Bloodline," to Paramount for \$2.5 million. JOHN FRANKENHEIMER will direct the film with a \$10 million budget. Among actors being considered for roles are DIANE KEATON, LAURENCE OLIVIER, MARCELLO MASTROIANNI and MAXIMILIAN SCHELL. . . . film producer ZEV BRAUN has signed LEVAR BURTON to portray MUHAMMAD ALI's son in "Freedom Road."

Rock singer RONALD BIGGS is forming a new rock band with PAUL COOK and STEVE JONES, recently of the SEX PISTOLS, and actor JIM JETTER. . . . The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation yesterday honored former New York Jets Coach and former Hoosier WEEB EW BANK — who suffers from the muscular affliction himself — at its annual Valentine Love Roast. . . . Supreme Court Justice WILLIAM BRENNAN, 71, plans to return to the bench next week after completing cobalt radiation treatments for cancer of the left vocal cord.

Did You Notice?

Electric utility meter reader wearing snowshoes on his rounds as he tackled snowdrifts in yards to get to the meters.

Man sweeping snow from the roof of his Carmel home.

Reindeer and Santa still on roof of a house at Woodlawn and Leonard.

Lincoln Continental with license plate State Senator 2 traveling north on Illinois with only a "peep hole" scraped in the snow-covered



windshield. The other windows also were snow covered.