

**MY  
MEMOIRS**

*by*

***Betty Andresen Vanden Heuvel***

## A SYNOPSIS

### A RACE PILOT – FIVE STOPS

Born and raised on a chicken ranch; who thought I would become a pilot. Five stops, five relationships, fifty-three years of "touch and goes".

Surviving a twenty year marriage to Dr. Bob Foster, a Podiatrist, produced two wonderful children; Bruce, 1953 and Brenda, 1955. Later years, Bob became an alcoholic and non communicative. Divorced.

Airplanes always fascinated me. In 1964 I achieved my private license and in 1966 I became a commercial pilot and raced in five Powder Puff Derby's, an all women's transcontinental race, and two small races. I was hired to fly for a lawyer and his family.

1968 - I took off racing to marry Richard Worstell, a fixed base operator and aircraft mechanic from Salinas, Ca. His new job with Electro Coatings took us to Moraga. A company transfer landed us in Texas – 3 years for me. He became an abuser, a user, an embezzler and a liar. It was a nine year mistake; a marriage completely demolished. This ended in divorce, too; a good thing. I no longer feared for my life. I did a 180 degree turn to Moraga to get out of this turbulent relationship.

In 1977 another stop was to be on my own, struggling with finances. Many "up and down drafts." No job skills. Educated to become a successful realtor in Moraga. Soon I was financially able to purchase a condo in Moraga. Up, up and away!

In 1978, I was introduced to "Van" Leon Vanden Heuvel, a retired District Manager of the used truck division for International Harvester. This took off to a third marriage; a smooth flying marriage which came to a crash after seven years. A heart attack was the cause – 1986. I'm grounded again.

In 1987 I stopped off to be a travel agent. Opportunities to visit many countries (familiarization trips) created a first hand education to help me plan my client's travels effectively. I planned group travel. A couple of trips to Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico. A cruise, round trip New York to Montreal, Canada. I was flying high. My life in place again.

1994 – Then it happened; an author, a lover of the history of Indians and immigrants, a soaring adventure with a professional; Dr. Robert Amesbury, an oral surgeon to, only last nine years. Turbulence began. A hard stroke. Me, a care giver for almost eight years. A labor of love, but always watchful as skys became dark. He could see no more. Alone again; hangered.



2004 - Lucky me, I landed a perfectly beautiful relationship. Louis Moncher, a retired senior accountant for Shell Oil in Martinez. He and I are "soul mates". Meggie, his black, Tabby cat, a bonus!

This is where I am hangered, in pretty Alhambra Valley bordering on Martinez, Ca. and I love it. My last stop forever.

Sophie went to work as a house keeper for a medical doctor and guess what? My father was born. His older sisters helped raise my father. My Father's siblings were:

Konrad Bernhard	b. May 22, 1893	d. not known
Anna Magaretha	b. July 28, 1895	d. August 1976
Frieda Johanna	b. Nov. 8, 1888	d. June 1983
Olga	b. June 10, 1892	d. 1972
Therese Sophie	b. Nov. 18, 1895	d. Dec. 1974
Ada (Andrea) Johana	b. April 19, 1897	d. March 1987

All born on the island of Fähr, Oldsum area, Germany. My Father's sisters sailed to the U.S. and settled in Sonoma County in and around Petaluma and Sebastopol. When finances permitted, the Fähringers purchased ranches to raise laying hens (chickens). My Father came to the U.S. with his mother. He was quite young, a teenager. I'm not sure if he attended school here. Nor do I know when or where he learned to speak English. These were hard times, approximately 1914 or 1915. Daddy worked for a chicken rancher in the Petaluma area, name not known. He was introduced to my mother in the early 1920s. They promptly married around 1923 or 1924.

I feel so sorry I neglected to question my parents regarding their background. Dates, places, names, how, where and why, also of my aunts and uncles. Was I in my own little world?

My parents rented a ranch on Sawyer Road. It was during the great depression. Not only did they raise laying hens, they also planted and harvested potatoes to sell to the local markets. They saved money, purchased a ranch on nearby Liberty Road, Petaluma. These ranches were back to back only on different sides. He lived here until his death in 1984. Eighteen years on this ranch.

Daddy was handsome, blue-eyed, blonde, kind and caring, an easy going man. Perhaps he was too easy at times. I never heard him say an off color word about anybody, a true gentleman. A hard working man on our chicken ranch.

## MY FATHER – JULIUS THEODORE ANDRESEN

Born 1902 on Isle of Foehr or Föhr a tiny island in the North Sea to Sophie Früden Andresen; father unknown. Though I was told by my cousin, Gertie Philipp of Petaluma my Father's father was a medical doctor on Föhr. I wasn't told until I was in my 50's. Those days of having a baby out of wedlock was hush, hush. Oh my how times have changed. Sophie was born September 16, 1862 Süderende, Island of Föhr. She became a single person after the sixth child was born. Her husband, Töge Andresen, left her and the family; details not known.

Sophie went to work as a house keeper for a medical doctor and guess what? My father was born. His older sisters helped raise my father. My Father's siblings were:

Knudt Bernard	b. May 22, 1883	d. not known
Anna Magaretha	b. July 28, 1885	d. August 1976
Frieda Johanna	b. Nov. 6, 1888	d. June 1983
Clara	b. June 16, 1892	d. 1972
Theresa Sophie	b. Nov. 18, 1895	d. Dec. 1974
Ada (Andrea) Josiena	b. April 19, 1893	d. March 1987

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from morning till night; feeding chickens; thousands of them, gathering eggs, cleaning chicken houses, plowing fields, harrowing fields, planting kale, planting and harvesting potatoes, planting corn, planting pumpkins seeds, repairing chicken fences, building chicken houses, repairing buildings, feeding the horse, cows, pigs, sheep, culling the sick chickens, which no longer could lay eggs, grinding grain for chicken feed, watering fields of kale, hay, the vegetable gardens and milking the cow, sometimes two. There were hundreds of baby chicks to care for. Mama helped a lot; all the family helped with many chores. There was always too much to do.

He and my brother, Clarence built a tractor from scratch. My younger brother, Ted also became involved building a feed mill in the large barn and a chicken house or two. Daddy could do almost anything.

I could do no wrong in his eyes. He would often call me "girly girl". He never spanked me; Mama did. I enjoyed working with him; fetching tools for him when he repaired or built something. I helped him plant kale, corn, build chicken houses, small jobs, and harvest potatoes. Obviously, I was close to my father.

Mama passed October 1947. Daddy helped plan my wedding to Bob Foster, which occurred June 5, 1948. When I say planned, he financed all of it. The wedding dress the "going away" outfit; each about \$80, plus. Oh well, I was his only daughter.

Daddy paid for the minister, Rev. Horstman, flowers for the wedding party, two bridesmaids, maid of honor, bridegroom and three groomsmen. Flower girls were Judy Lichau and Carol Bourgeois. My brother, Ted Andresen, an usher. Anita Jacob Andresen Haberer, my Mother's sister's daughter from Germany, was my maid of honor.

Gertrude Philipp and Gretchen Lichau, my cousins were the candle lighters. There were many candles on and around the church alter and many arrangements of colorful, Spring flowers in white, wicker baskets.

Daddy walked me down the aisle with pride. Daddy and I heard the music begin, "Hear Comes the Bride". The horrible thought suddenly came to my mind; "Do I really and truly love Bob Foster?" Daddy tugged at my arm. "It's time to go". Too late; I must carry on. I took my first step and felt a rip. I stepped on the bottom lace of many tiers on the hoop. When I dressed in my white, satin and lace wedding gown I noticed it was quite loose fitting. Oh Dear! I must have lost weight. Now it was hanging too close to the floor. What did I do walking down the aisle with Daddy? I kicked the lace hooped skirt in front of me as I took each step. It worked! After the ceremony, the drooping piece of lace was pinned up by Mrs. Horstman, the minister's wife.



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My father took me to the photographer's studio for pictures with the bridal party, and afterwards to the reception.

The reception was held at Hermann Sons Lodge in Petaluma, a German lodge. Relations and friends decorated the church and Hermann Sons Lodge hall with flowers from their gardens. Ted built a gazebo. This is where a punch bowl was placed. Ted cut small trees, which were placed near and around the white gazebo. This gave the hall a garden effect.

The cold supper was catered by a friend, Mrs. Straub. Cold chicken, salads and homemade rolls were served to 127 guests. Cost only \$350, food and labor. No, the chickens did not come from Daddy's ranch.

My Aunt Tante Ada, Daddy's sister, made the three tiered wedding cake, beautifully decorated with white, petite flowers and leaves. It tasted as good as it looked, made with home churned butter, and eggs from her ranch.

White wine was served. I have a fond memory of Daddy when he made a toast happily saying, "May all your troubles be little ones." I rose from my chair and thanked him for providing a beautiful wedding for me.

We had a very loving father /daughter relationship. Did he spoil me? My brothers thought so. After all, I was his "Kleine Mädchen", German for "little girl".

In 1950 Daddy married my cousin, Anita Jacob, who was born in the U.S. and lived here for only two years. Her mother became homesick and mentally ill. They moved back to Germany. Daddy did ask me what I thought of him marrying Anita. "Okay, if you love her" was my answer. "But we won't have any Children" he quickly commented. Oops, they had one child, Doris, born 1951. She is a sweet lady.

Daddy died early 1954 at the age of 52. He died of complications from hernia surgery and prostate problems. It was a terrible shock to me, when my brother Clarence called this particular morning to tell me about Daddy's death, I was 7 months pregnant with Brenda. Brenda was born May 12, 1955.

It was most difficult to come to the realization he was gone forever. I hung on to the fond memories of him. So glad he was able to enjoy my son, his grandson, Bruce (almost two). Time was much too short.

Daddy was a loving father and grandfather. The best! Only gone too soon.



## MOTHER AND ME

I didn't know my Mother. There was not much communication between us. She could, at times, be critical of me, but some was constructive criticism. No Mother-daughter talks; few praises given. Why? Wish I knew. This was the way growing up.

"Betty, get up you lazy bum," commanded my Mother. "We have lots of applesauce to can today." She slammed my door; I looked at the clock on my night stand. It was Friday, only 7:00 o'clock. I wish my mother hadn't purchased that huge lug of Gravenstien apples yesterday. This happened once a year in July. Apples were purchased at an apple stand in Sebastopol on our way home from the Russian River where we picnicked and swam.

Yesterday, Mom and I canned tomatoes picked from our vegetable garden. Last week it was peaches and blackberries. We already canned over 300 quarts and pints of fruit, vegetables, jams and jellies. When will all this end? Work, work work; seven days a week. A lot of work for a 12 year old. I desired more of my own time.

Work on our chicken ranch was constant. Gather and pack eggs, feed baby chicks, thousands of chickens, plant kale, pick kale, cut kale and feed it to the chickens. Harvest vegetables, a field of pumpkins, feed six pigs, eight rabbits, many cats, five dogs, several ducks, two cows and a horse. I wish summer was over. I'd rather be in school.

School would begin early September. I attended a country school. A two classroom school, grades one through sixth, two teachers. Now I was in Junior High School in town, Petaluma. Here I had six teachers instead of one. I was afraid to attend a large school. Would I like my teachers? Would I like Math, English, Social Studies, History, Spanish and Physical Education? I felt anxious and overwhelmed.

Miss Griffin was my Spanish teacher, tall, with frizzy, mousey-colored hair, skinny except for her legs. The kids called her "piano legs". She had her favorites. I was not one of them. It was obvious in her voice when one day she asked me a question. I began to shudder. This was it. I gave her a wrong answer.

"Betty, I should flunk you," was her hurtful remark for all my classmates to hear. Embarrassed and teary eyed, I picked up my books and left the classroom.

History was a bore. Places, people's names, dates, historical statements to remember. The text book was so dry to read. I had no interest in history; which resulted in poor grades. Mom was very, very unhappy with me. "Why don't you be more like your brother, Clarence?" she admonished.

"Because I'm not Clarence. I hate you".

## MOTHER AND ME

She never uttered a word. I went to my room. I threw myself on the bed and cried. Why does Mom pick on me so often? I seldom pleased her. Today, I wonder what Mom thought when I told her "I hate you." Did she realize she made my life difficult at times? Perhaps, the "hate" remark shed a positive outcome. Mom became nicer to me, though she still seemed to favor my brothers over me.

My two brothers, Clarence, three years older and Junior (Ted) two years younger than me could do no wrong in her eyes. Why did she favor my brothers? She lost a baby boy 1 ½ years after my older brother was born. The baby was stillborn. A year and a half after his birth then I was born. Did she want a boy to replace my stillborn brother?

Now I'm much, much older; a mother and grandmother. I wish she had lived past 44. I can try to understand and forgive her actions towards me. Perhaps we could have been good friends, but I'll never know.

My experiences with Mother taught me to be more involved with my children. This was a sincere priority in my life; to enjoy and to be involved with them during their growing years. Unfortunately, Mother didn't have time for me. Sad and some how I feel cheated. This was not going to happen to me. Bruce and Brenda are especially close to me. They are so caring and loving. I'm truly blessed. I feel sad Mother didn't experience the joy of grandchildren. This could have been a special time for her as well as me. Gone too soon.

## Betty's Education

1934 -1940 – grades 1 – 6 – Liberty School located on Liberty Road approximately one mile from our house (five miles West of the town of Petaluma) and close to Sprauer Road and Pepper Road.

1 – 3 teacher – Mrs. Burecker  
4 – 6 teacher – Mrs. McKinstry

1940 -1943 – grades 7 – 9 Petaluma Junior High School  
1943 -1946 – grades 10 – 12 – Petaluma High School  
Member of Girls Athletic Association (GAA)

I enjoyed sports, sewing, and biology. I missed the Honor Society by one grade point.

1946 – 1947 – San Francisco Junior College – 6 months  
Santa Rosa Junior College – 6 months

I worked part time for the Emporium on Market Street in San Francisco as a sales girl while attending San Francisco Junior College. My father asked me to come home to help care for my dying mother. She was dying of colon cancer. I finished my first year of college at Santa Rosa Junior College. I was eighteen.

1963 – Private Pilot license  
1966 – Commercial Pilot license  
1977 – Realtor license  
1986 – Travel Agent certificate

## Betty's Family

Born: Sophie Elizabeth Andresen

November 26, 1928 at 10:40 p.m. at Petaluma General Hospital, Ca.  
My mother nicknamed me Betty. I was named after both grandmothers;  
Sophie, Father's mother and Elizabeth, Mother's mother.

Father: Julius Theodore Andresen (age 26 upon Betty's birth)  
Born: 1902 on Isle of Fohr, Germany to Sophie Fruden (unmarried),  
father - unknown  
Died: 1954 from complications of a hernia surgery. Buried in Liberty  
Cemetery, Petaluma, Ca.

Occupation: chicken farmer in Liberty District, Petaluma, Ca.

Mother: Theodora Witzig Andresen (age 25 upon Betty's birth)  
Born: 1903 in Lürnach, Germany to Elizabeth Witzig  
Died: 1947 of colon cancer. Buried Liberty Cemetery, Petaluma, Ca.

Occupation: mother and wife of a chicken farmer, Julius Andresen

Brother: Clarence Henry Andresen  
Born: November 2, 1925 – Petaluma, Ca.

Occupation: School Psychologist for the Walnut Creek School District

Brother: unnamed – Stillborn  
Born: 1926 – Buried in Cypress Cemetery in Petaluma, Ca.

Brother: Julius Theodore Andresen, Jr. (Ted)  
Born: October 15, 1930 – Petaluma, Ca.

Occupation: Chicken Rancher in Petaluma until 1969. Managed Oliver Kulberg's  
Screen Door Manufacturing Co. – Reno, Nv.  
1971 – Owner/operator of Apex Saw – Reno Nv.

Half Sister: Doris Andresen Andre  
Born: 1951, Santa Rosa, Ca.

Occupation: Massage Therapist – Federal Way, Wa. USA  
Mother: Anita Jacob, married Julius Andresen, Betty's Father, 1949.



## Betty Andresen's Life Growing Up on the Family Ranch

Early childhood life began in a large rented farm house on Sprauer Road. A white house surrounded with beautiful flowers on a chicken ranch in the country. The house was located five miles west of town and 17 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Weather wise, we had fog from the ocean in the summer, wind and rain in the winter. Eucalyptus trees could be seen all over the countryside. They were planted in rows for wind breaks. Eucalyptus trees were imported from Australia.

My parents raised laying hens and sold their eggs for their livelihood. They also grew potatoes to sell in order to make ends meet. This was during the Depression in the 1930's.

In 1936, my parents purchased a 7 ½ acre chicken ranch on Liberty Road (where Rainsville Road ends) for \$6,500. The buildings on this ranch consisted of two large brooder houses (where baby chicks were raised), six or more chicken houses, and a granary, a large, wooden, water storage tank on top of the tank house, a one car garage, and a barn. Water was drawn from the nearby well. Under the tank house was an egg packing room, storage for milk and potatoes, and a place for the electric, "Easy" washing machine.

Mondays were "wash days", all day, rain or shine. Laundered clothes were hung on a wash line near the house. On rainy days, clothes were hung on a rack over the floor heater located in the living room and draped over chairs near the wood stove in the kitchen. Summers, on Tuesdays I ironed. I liked to iron. Maybe it was because I got to listen to the soaps; As the World Turns, Stella Dallas and My Gal Sal.

Once I was so involved in a crucial event of a "soap", that I scorched one of Daddy's white shirts. Pillow cases weren't so bad. The iron was electric, but there was no heat control, so if the iron was too hot, it was unplugged to cool. Sometimes not soon enough.

The house had only cold running water – no toilet and no bathroom. There was a flush toilet in the "pump house" which was attached to the tank house across from the main house only a few steps away, thank goodness.

Before a bathtub was installed on the back porch, Clarence, Ted and I took turns bathing in a galvanized tub filled with warm water. The water was heated in pots on the kitchen wood stove. I got the first bath; perhaps I was not as dirty as my brothers. Baths were taken on Saturday nights; must be clean for church on Sunday. Finally, a gas, hot water heater was installed. What luxury to have a hot water faucet in the kitchen!



My parents planted vegetable gardens for summer and late summer harvest. String beans, corn, tomatoes, onions, beets, carrots, radishes, lettuce, squash, spinach, and Swiss chard were grown for family meals. We always had too much. Veggies were given to City folks when visiting. I think they knew when to come. Fields of kale and pumpkins were for the animals. Who weeded? My brothers and I; mostly Ted and I. Not a chore we enjoyed. Picking veggies for dinner was my job.

We had two cows, rabbits, ducks, pigs, sheep and of course, 7,500 chickens. We also had one old, sway-backed horse, which was used for pulling the plow, sled, wagon, harrow and other farm equipment. The cows provided lots of rich milk all year round. The milk was kept in pans stored in a cooler closet in the pump house. After two or three days cream formed on the top and it was skimmed off and put into a round wooden butter churn. Junior (Ted) my "little brother" and I took turns cranking the paddles until butter formed. Also, cream was used to make whipped cream; delicious on strawberry shortcake. Four or five turns on a hand beater and it was done; so thick and yummy. Later a cream separator was purchased. There were two spouts, one poured out cream and the other skim milk. This made less work for Mother, I think. The cleaning of the separator was time consuming, but eliminated the washing of the large milk pans and skimming the cream off the milk.

In the summer of 1936, Mom and Junior, who was five years old, went to Lórrach, Germany for a couple of months. Upon their departure I threw myself on the bed and cried and cried. Our Aunt, Tante Hannah, and Uncle Otto Hoffman accompanied them. Tante Hannah, who was older, and Mama were sisters. They visited family, Mama's parents, Heinrich and Elizabeth Witzig, and their siblings and cousins. Our cousin, Gertie Stonitsch took care of Clarence and me. Gertie was 17 years of age. She and her family lived a couple of miles away on Skillman Lane, Petaluma. I was only seven and I missed my mother terribly.

In the summer of 1940, we all went to Treasure Island, an island between San Francisco and Oakland, to visit the World's Fair. We attended the Western Cavalcade of America, a historic play of life in the west when families immigrated to the West. We also saw Esther Williams, the professional swimmer and diver perform with others in synchronized swimming. I remember eating fresh buttered corn on the cob held by a stick into one end. Oh, so yummy.

Thursdays, during the summer, we went to the Russian River for swimming and picnicking, but always home in time to do chores. When Gravenstien apples were in season, we would stop on our way home at the fruit stand near Sebastopol and purchase a large box for \$1.75.

Once a year a church picnic was held at Oddfellows Park on the Russian River. First church service, then games for all ages. We shared delicious food

for noon picnic lunch. Southern fried chicken, potato and macaroni salads, cookies, cakes, pies and watermelon. After lunch we swam in the river.

Summer time was canning time. All kinds of veggies and fruit, especially apple sauce from Gravenstein apples. The good old apple peeler could peel, core and slice all at once; a real time saver.

The shopping spree with Tante Hannah was delightful. Pretty dresses and hats to match, for me and fancy dresses for her. To get them in her bedroom closet and tuck them behind her clothes was tricky. My Uncle Otto, her husband, was not to know what we were up to. Upon our arrival to her house from shopping most of the day she would say, "Betty, just wait to bring in the bags until I check the house." I knew she was checking on the whereabouts of Uncle Otto. "Okay Betty, bring them in now", she commanded hurriedly. Into the back of the closet the many shopping bags were hidden. Whew, we did it way before Uncle Otto came into the house from doing chores.

I enjoyed my stays at their house when I was a young kid, although I didn't like the sometimes yelling at each other. Tante Hannah was rather hyper. Uncle Otto would always say "Ach Wass" which meant "Oh well".

When I was about ten years old Mother thought it would be nice if my blonde, straight hair were curly. To the beauty shop I went. Daddy took me, Mom didn't learn to drive. My hair was wound tightly around rollers; metal clamps with wires were attached to the curlers. Electric heat was turned on. It got very hot and my scalp seemed to be on fire. I began to cry. A blower blew at my head to cool it. I still cried. The beauty operator went down stairs, to the ice cream parlor and bought me an ice cream cone. This pacified me for awhile. I never had another permanent while I was a kid. This experience was torture.

Diseases. Yes I did have childhood diseases. I had measles, chicken pox, whooping cough, many colds. Ear aches were the worse. I also, had eczema on my hands and arms; a skin rash which itched like crazy. No cure; just grew out of it in mid-teenage years. Fleas from our cats and dogs, lice from chickens were horrible, and oh, yes, boils on my butt and impetigo on my legs. Bathing only on Saturdays was not often enough; and therefore some of the health issues.

Vaccinations? No. Mother didn't believe in it and thought to be vaccinated wasn't safe. She seemed skeptical. My brothers and I were the only ones in grammar school who weren't vaccinated.

The time was terrifying. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7, 1941. War did not take place in vacant fields as I had once thought when a child.

My family and I were enjoying a noon time dinner at my Aunt and Uncle's house, the Hofmanns; close friends Otto and Anna Ziegler, were also in attendance. Music was playing on the radio and suddenly the announcement came, "The Japs bombed Pearl Harbor". Anna Ziegler went wild, throwing up her arms and wailing loudly "Otto, our 19 year old son is on a Merchant Marine ship in or near Peal Harbor!" She was so upset, as were we. Dinner did not taste good anymore. A few days later we were told Otto was safe.

World War II was over in 1946. During those five years care packages were sent often to our relatives in Germany. They consisted mostly of sugar, flour, coffee, soap and canned goods. The packages were wrapped in sturdy paper and then enclosed in sacks sown closed. I did the sewing. Our family didn't always get all we sent. All packages were inspected and some of the goods were removed; stolen. Adolf Jacob, our cousin, was a German soldier; fighting against U.S. soldiers. A sad situation; worrisome.

My brother, Clarence, was deferred from entering the service. The reason was our father was operating two chicken ranches; his own and our neighbor's, the Otanis. They were American Japanese. Born here, American citizens. Very gracious people. My brother, Ted was a classmate of one of their daughters. It wasn't fair that they were sent away during WWII. They were Americans, and thus, my father needed my brother's help.

During the war, in the 1940s, the price for a dozen eggs was high, twenty-six cents a dozen. There was money to be made in the egg business. There were usually 12 cases a day; 30 dozen in each case. This afforded my parents to have three bedrooms and a full bath added on to the house. Finally, my very own bedroom with new furniture. This was my haven.

Today life is easier in many ways. Our appliances are mostly automatic. Frozen and canned foods of all kinds are readily available in super markets. No more weeding, except in the flower garden, much more time to do what I truly enjoy. All in all living on the ranch was a good, healthy life; too much work though. I now appreciate the wholesome life and all the experiences to which I was exposed. There were some serious mishaps, lots of hard work, most days, but the fun and happy times over shadowed those times, mostly. My parents took care of our every need. Strict and yet not too strict, they loved us and taught us well.

## Things we did and Games We Played

My brother, Clarence, built a tree house high in an Oak tree. Boards were nailed on to the tree trunk in order to get into the tree house. Old wood, fruit boxes were used for chairs, and we used a small bench for a table. We pretended to have a party. We made cakes out of mud, decorated with rocks, leaves and twigs.

In March, we flew our homemade kites which were made from wooden laths and newspaper. Glue was made of white flour and water. This held the newspaper on the string attached to the laths. Our Mother gave us rags for the tail. Kite string was wound on an empty gallon tomato can which was set onto a wooden stand to hold and roll with a crank. Clarence invented this. Our kites almost always crashed into a tree or hung up on electrical wires. We called it quits.

We played 'cops and robbers' with our handmade wooden pistols and rifles. Mother's wooden clothes pins were attached to the handle end of the wooden pistols and rifles. Rubber bands cut from car tire inner tubes were stretched over the barrel of the gun and clipped into the clothes pin. When pressing the clothes pin, the rubber band was released. It never went very far; perhaps 10 feet at the most. Never hit anyone. Imagination was the key.

Neighbor boys, my brothers and I played war in a vacant field by throwing mud balls and small, wooden blocks at each other. Luckily no one got hurt. We were good at dodging. As a child I asked Mama where wars were fought. I thought they were fought in a vacant field like we did. The truth, to me, was unbelievable when she explained. So shocking; I just couldn't understand war horrors.

Grammar school age, my brothers, neighbor boys (there was only one close neighbor girl my age and I didn't like her much) and I played hide and seek, andy andy over, marbles and kick the can. We were always in a hurry to do all our chores in order to have more play time. Mother knew how to get us to do our chores, quickly, and without belly aching.

'Hit the Bat', like baseball only with a very hard, small rubber ball; an Indian ball and was dangerous. One time this ball hit me in the eye and knocked me out for a moment or two. Someone yelled, "Get up Betty!" Feeling dazed, I asked, "What happened?" I recovered quickly and it was back to 'Hit the Bat'.

My brothers and I would swim, or I should say, dip, in our neighbor's pond (unbeknownst to our parents). This pond was about two miles away from our house. The water was not very clean, but we did not care. We went in our undies. It must have been a hot day and we wanted to cool off. This water was used for watering the Ghiradelli's vegetables. These were grown to sell to



markets. The Ghiradellis never knew we were in their pond; we think. Luckily we didn't drown.

When Clarence and I were quite small, 7 and 10, we took a couple of ducks up to the tank house (a tank where drinking water was stored). We climbed stairs about 20 feet high, to the top with two ducks in hand and put them in the tank to watch them swim. It was drinking water about six or more feet deep. Luckily we didn't fall in as we could have drowned. We caught 'holy hell!' Can't remember what happened to the ducks. Clarence always wanted to do something different and I went along with it.

Another fun thing we did was sail our boats in the small duck pond. Five or six feet across, two or three inches deep, the boats were made out of half hulled walnut shells. The sail cut from paper and glued to a tooth pick. The tooth pick was stuck into chewed gum, which was stuck to the bottom of the walnut. Then we got on our hands and knees and blew our boats across the small pond. We even had races. Can't remember who won most of the time. Probably me; lots of hot air, as I am still told to this day.

During rainy winter months, it was Monopoly, cards, pick up sticks, Checkers and Chinese Checkers. I don't recall my parents getting involved playing any games with us. Perhaps they were too tired from the days chores and stress.

My brothers, Clarence and Ted, and I had a tremendous amount of imagination in order to create our own fun times. No TV, no computer, no obesity. How lucky we were to grow up during the 1930's and 40's.



## School Days

Liberty School, a two room grammar school built in 1906 was directly across the street from the very old Liberty Cemetery. It had a belfry like a church. The school was wood, painted white. There was a social hall with a stage, a kitchen and a large dining room.

While playing hopscotch with the girls in pretty, school dresses on the school's dirt playground, a funeral procession appeared. Many cars were following a black hearse entering the cemetery's iron gates. The cemetery was directly across the road from the school. Old oak trees shaded some of the graves. Some head stones dated as far back as the mid eighteen hundreds. Some of the head stones were very large and engraved with long time family names and there were some wooden ones tilted to one side and the names weather beaten and faded. It was a tired looking and neglected cemetery. In fact, the cemetery looked rather spooky to me.

Suddenly, the shrill of a whistle was piercing my ears. I knew it was time to immediately return to the classroom. Kids were not allowed on the playground during funeral services.

My desk was nailed to the oiled wood floor. The potbelly stove kept us warm. George Washington's picture adorned the wall. He looked ugly and old to me. Our lessons for the day were neatly written on the huge blackboard facing the classroom. The perfectly printed and written alphabet was on the board for the kids to copy over and over again. Good penmanship was important.

Miss Kelly was my first, second and third grade teacher. She was tall, but then at 5 ½ years old, who wouldn't look tall? Her skin was quite freckled, her hair rather reddish and she was well liked by all the kids. She checked to see if all the kids were in class. No one was outside and we returned to our studies.

This service was held close to what is now my parent's grave. Mama died in 1947 and Daddy in 1954. Also buried in the same plot are Aunt Hannah and Uncle Otto Hoffman, Mama's sister and brother-in-law. Fourth, fifth and sixth grades were held in another room. Mrs. McKinstry was my 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. She was older; maybe mid-forties. She played the piano, taught us to play the harmonica and sing. She was rather strict, but well respected. She often ate avocados for lunch. This seemed strange to me and I wondered what they taste like.

Our grade school teachers were always dressed in dresses, nylons and mid-heeled shoes; always so neat and proper.

Another gal and I were the only girls on the baseball team. There were not enough boys and we were the best players.

## School Days

It was time to attend the "big" school in town. Hundreds of students attended Petaluma Junior High School, seventh, eighth and ninth grades. I was anxious and apprehensive. Will I like my five new teachers? To make new friends may be difficult for me. Living on a ranch, I led a sheltered life. The Physical Education Class is where I made many friends. I was athletic and enjoyed all the sports.

When I entered Petaluma High School, I was chosen to be a member of the Girls Athletic Association. Did I enjoy high school? You bet I did! Biology was one of my favorite classes. Assignments included dissecting frogs, collecting and naming local wild flowers. It was fascinating. I enjoyed singing in the Acappella choir. I loved clothes and my sewing class was the greatest. I made a light sky blue wool suit which was a huge success. My grades were quite good. Yes, I'm bragging.

Boys? Oh yes! I dated the football star and president of our class. Oh, I dated other nice guys as well. There were dances, football games and girls club; a fun time with many great girl friends.

San Francisco here I come! I was excited to get off the ranch and experience the big City. I attended San Francisco Junior College and worked part time for a large department store; The Emporium, on Market Street. After several months in San Francisco, my father called. He said, "Betty, you must come home. Mama has been diagnosed with colon cancer. We need your help." I was able to finish my first year of college at Santa Rose Junior College.

## Hobbies and Fun Things I Did

Flying – Seventeen years of flying to beautiful places. Competed in seven aircraft races.

President of Flying Realtors

Chairman of Mt. Diablo Chapter of the 99s.

Water Ski – Double and single, Lake Tahoe, Lake Stampede, Ca. Lake Berryessa, Ca., Russian River, Petaluma River, (Yuck)

Snow Ski – Soda Springs, Ca. – Sierras

Watercolorist – Attended workshops and classes. Sold paintings at street fairs and other places of business. Began painting in 1974.

Sew – Clothes for Brenda and myself.

Cruel Work – Pictures made with yarn.

Sold Gold & Silver jewelry for fun and money, too.

## Betty's Occupations

1950's, Bob Foster, my husband in college, I worked for Hiram Walker, a liquor company located in San Francisco. My job, a PBX operator, teletype operator and a clerk in Accounts Payable.

1951 – Bob opened up his Podiatry practice in Petaluma. I was his receptionist and assistant for a short time.

1953, Bruce born, 1955 Brenda born. A full time home career woman. Loved it.

Since I was a commercial pilot and could fly for hire, I took a job flying for a lawyer and his family. This was short-lived. Too many hours away from home.

July of 1977, divorced from Richard Worstell. Now a single person, I moved back to Moraga. Kathy Sullivan O'Brien took me in. I had no job experiences for over 20 years. I thought I could do office work. Wrong. I wasn't hireable. This made me come to the realization, I'm outdated. I was told to get educated in some field. My dear sister-in-law, Dale Andresen, now deceased, encouraged me to study to be a realtor. I passed my State Board and began work with Grubb and Ellis in Moraga. Writing newsletters for my "farm" (500 houses in the Orchard Dell section of Moraga). This was designated my territory to obtain listings. These newsletters were delivered by Kathy Sullivan O'Brien's sons Gary and Greg to all 500 homes once a month. Now I must meet these people and get the word out. "I'm selling real estate". It was knocking at doors every week day between four and six p.m. I presented yellow fly swatters to the folks as I introduced myself. Did they think this was strange? Well, maybe. Though I did point out my name, residential and business phone numbers, and of course, the company with whom I was affiliated, Grubb and Ellis Real Estate; all imprinted on the fly swatter's handle. Only once was a door slammed in my face. After a year I became quite successful. So successful I was able to put 20% down to purchase my condo on Ascot Drive in Moraga; and I still have it.

After my marriage to Van in 1978, we both retired in 1980. To keep busy and make a few bucks we entered the antique business. An enjoyable and very interesting business. Also quite rewarding.

After "Van" passed in 1986, I again found myself in need of keeping busy. Since traveling with "Van" touring extensively in the U.S. and several trips to Europe, travel was in my blood. Big time!

School again. I became a travel agent with Coupe Travel and later with Antlett Cruises and Tours; both located in Moraga. I became a tour director and organized group travel to Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico, a cruise from Montréal, Canada to New York. Working with people, taking care of their every

request was at times demanding and stressful. All had to be done expeditiously, correctly and with a smile, of course.

The best part being of a travel agent was the familiarization trips offered by tour companies and cruise lines. My cost was always between \$600 to \$800. This included airfare, accommodations, tours and meals. These included; Hawaii, Tahiti, Fiji, New Zealand, Thailand, Netherlands, Zihantonajo, Mexico, Columbia River Cruise and Hell's Canyon, Mexican Riviera Cruise and the Oakland, Sacramento, Napa Cruise. While I was a travel agent I also sold 14Kt gold and sterling silver jewelry. Several times I booked honeymoon trips for couples. I took them to the Jewelry Mart in San Francisco to purchase their rings at a discount. A truly happy time.

1994 - now committed to Dr. Bob Amesbury – no more jobs. Unfortunately, after being together for 1 ½ years, he suffered a heavy stroke. I became a caregiver for 7 ½ years. Labor of love.



"All Women's Transcontinental Air Races"  
"The Powder Puff Derby"

- 1965 – First race – Gulespi Field, San Diego, Ca. to Chattanooga, TN.  
Flew co-pilot in Cherokee 180  
Phyllis Cantrell, Pilot 79 entries – placed 5<sup>th</sup>.
- 1966 – Second race – Seattle, WA to Clearwater, Florida. Flew as pilot in Aero  
Commander 200.  
2,894 statute miles with 11 designated stops  
3 ½ days to finish  
Louis Montero – my co-pilot – her first race  
101 entries, placed 54<sup>th</sup>
- 1967 – Third race – Atlantic City, N.J. to Torrance, Ca.  
Flew as pilot in Musketeer  
Louise Montero – my co-pilot  
Radio/navigation instruments malfunctioned and could not be repaired in  
time to finish on time; therefore disqualified.
- 1971 – Fourth race – Calgary, Canada to Baton Rouge, LA "25<sup>th</sup> Powder Puff  
Jubilee"  
Flew Cardinal 177 (180 horse power) – co-pilot, Louise Montero  
168 entries placed 81<sup>st</sup>.  
Zero Population Growth, sponsor – advocated couples having two children  
to replace themselves so as not to deplete natural resources and create  
gridlock on freeways. ZPG named the plane "The Sterile Stork". Race  
No: "0". Many interviews. Ran very low on fuel which necessitated an  
undesignated stop on a crop duster runway to refuel. Just 60 miles from  
Baton Rouge, the terminus. Cost me 30 minutes. I was 12<sup>th</sup> place  
previous to the terminus. Altitude 200' to avoid clouds – more gas.
- 1972 – Fifth race – San Carlos, Ca. to Toms River, N.J.  
Flew a Cessna Cardinal 177 – green  
Co-pilot – Louise Montero  
106 entries – placed 41<sup>st</sup>.  
2,616 statute miles  
Zero Population Growth sponsor again  
Interviewed by the New York Post and many other newspapers at the  
seven stops.

I also flew several small races in California and Nevada. I flew for a lawyer and his family. I delivered speeches covering the Powder Puff Derby to Rotary, Kiwanis and the Mt. Diablo Chapter of the 99s; an organization of licensed women pilots. In 1928 the organization was established and its roster contained 99 licensed women pilots; thus, the name "The 99's". Amelia Earhardt was our first president.

"All Women's Transcontinental Air Races"  
"The Powder Puff Derby"

In January, 1963 I began flying. The cost for an instructor and plane was \$15 an hour. The cost to rent and fly solo was \$12 an hour. Lessons were taken in a Piper Colt and Cherokee 140. I obtained my private license in 1963 and my commercial license in 1966. Costs for dual and solo flights were according to the type of aircraft flown.

Type of aircraft I flew:

1. Piper Colt
2. Cessna 150
3. Cessna 172
4. Cessna 182
5. Cessna 310
6. Cessna Cardinal 177
7. Cherokee 140
8. Cherokee 180
9. Cherokee "6"
10. Musketeer
11. Aero Commander 200
12. Bonanzas

After having the experience and the joy of flying to many places in the United States for almost 20 years I decided to hang it up. Travel took me overseas to visit far away places and I no longer could keep my flying current. I decided I must quit. This was a very difficult decision, though I still have my fond memories.

## Solo Flight

I did wish I could fly like a bird. Airplanes always fascinated me.

It was a beautiful day; a clear day; a good day to fly. The year was 1963. "Stop right here, I will get out", commanded George. I knew what was coming. This was the day. My heart was racing like a runaway truck going down a steep hill. My hands were sweaty on the controls. George got out and slammed the cabin door. Now it was up to me. I felt so alone. George walked toward the hangar door. There he stood, his eyes fixed on me. He was a very good instructor, a perfectionist and a WWII pilot. As he waved, I slowly pushed in the throttle of the little two seater plane, a Piper Colt, and taxied to the threshold of the runway to prepare for takeoff.

Petaluma Sky Ranch was a small airport owned and operated by George and his wife. The runway was short, too short for large aircraft to land. At the east end of the runway there was a high barbed wire fence and the west end had electric wires supported by tall poles. Pilots beware.

Before take off I must check the magnetos to be sure the engine runs smoothly. All instruments set properly, the altimeter, trim tab, flaps, oil level on full, and radio on appropriate frequency. Oil in an aircraft engine is crucial. Without it the engine would quit. It compares to like blood in our body. The engine is running smoothly and everything has checked out perfectly. No other aircraft in sight. Now I'm all set for take off. I called on the radio, "Colt 39er ready for take off on runway 19er". I pushed in the throttle fully and in seconds I was airborne. I cleared the electric wires and climbed to reach 700 ft. altitude where I now throttled back to cruise speed, keeping the runway in sight. It is time to plan for my safe and smooth landing. Check the instruments, check for any planes in the area. I must, at this time lose altitude to the approach of the runway. Keep air speed just right in order not to stall and crash.

Safely over the barbed wire and keeping the left wing lower in order to compensate for the 90 degree cross wind; my wheels touch down smoothly. I did it!

I taxied to the hangar where George was standing and shut down the engine. George ran to the plane opened the door and with a big smile on his face said, "Good job Betty, but you are not done yet." I want you to take the plane up two more times and fly two touch and goes." Oh my gosh; tension set in once more. I must go around again, land the plane momentarily only to touch the wheels on the runway then quickly give it the gas to take off, clear the electric wires and do it twice more. I taxied to the runway, took off, went around the pattern to land. I was in deep concentration at this point. Oh I'm too low, I've got to clear the barbed wire fence, now I'm too slow, push in the throttle just a little more, the wheels touched the runway, but now I've got to give it the gas to take off again. Climb you little bird; I must clear the electric wires. It was too close for

## Solo Flight

comfort, but I did it. And I did it the second time with ease. I no longer felt alone. To become "pilot in command" was truly gratifying.

What's to come next? This was just the beginning; ground school and plenty of it. Subjects consisted of Meteorology, navigation charts, rules and regulations regarding all aspects of flying; learn to compute magnetic headings and the mechanics of an aircraft. I was constantly in the air practicing many maneuvers for proficiency and life saving maneuvers, to recover from a deadly spin. My brain was in high gear for several months. The fun part was yet to come. It was time to learn to fly cross country. George again was my instructor. "Okay, Betty, plan a magnetic heading to Ukiah and back again."

It was a sunny, clear day with just a few puffy clouds to the West and a 15 mile hour wind. Once in the sky, the views of the apple green Sonoma Mountains, chicken ranches, dairy farms, cows grazing and many vineyards, all a sight to behold. This was like flying like a bird.

The flight was somewhat turbulent. A storm had passed the day before. Landing on the Ukiah Airport runway was not too good. I bumped along like a yo yo. "Sorry, George, I hope to do better next time." "Air is always unsettled after a storm", remarked George.

This flight prompted me to stretch my wings and fly like a bird to more distant destinations.



## LOST?

"Betty, we're lost! We've been flying for almost three and one half hours and I don't see the airport yet. Too many clouds; I can't see the ground to navigate and I don't know where we are", Louise, my co-pilot, anxiously yelled above the drone of the aircraft engine. "Turn back, Betty! Turn back," she screamed.

"No, Louise, I've been flying a near perfect heading. Just calm down and besides we're low on gas", I responded sternly.

The cloud coverage below us became broken; green could be seen. All of a sudden there it was; the airport, a designated stop for Powder Puff Derby racers. A beautiful sight to see; a big sigh of relief. After landing, I taxied the Aero-Commander aircraft to the administration building, shut down the engine, and the gas truck approached and filled the tank. Guess what? Only seven gallons left in the right tank (the left one was empty), with only 15 minutes of flying time left. Lost? No, right on course. A happy landing and two happy pilots.

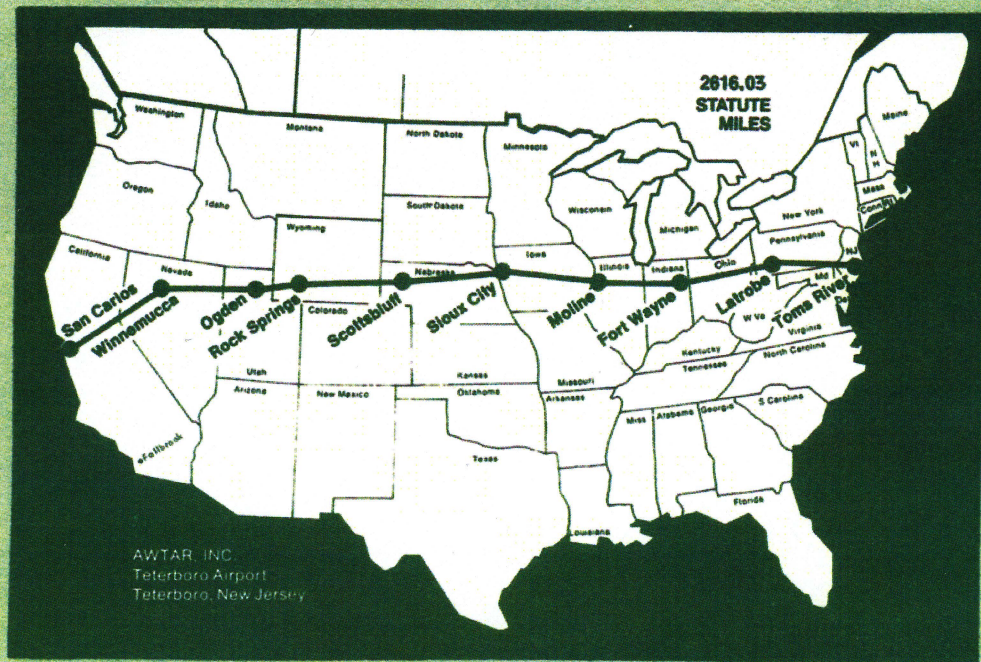


## My Fifth and Final Race – 1972

# 26th POWDER PUFF DERBY

All-Woman  
Transcontinental  
Air Race

**JULY 7-10, 1972**



**Betty, Pilot – Louise, Co-Pilot**



**Flew Cessna Cardinal 177, 180 H.P. – Named the “Sterile Stork” There were 106 entries and we placed 41<sup>st</sup>. We flew 2,616 Statute miles: My flying time was 15 hours 12 minutes**

**Fuel stops at Winnemucca, NV, Rock Springs, WY, Souix City, IA, Moline, IL, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Latrobe, PN. Remained over night at Rock Springs, WY and Fort Wayne, IN, Tom’s River, NJ.**

**Sponsor: Zero Population Growth – This group advocates that couples have no more than two children to replace themselves.**

**Interview: New York Post – Took a two hour train ride from Tom’s River, NJ to New York for a two hour interview. Returned to Tom’s River for the awards banquet.**



**Powder Puff Derby – All Women's Transcontinental Race**



My first race – 7/1965 from San Diego to Chattanooga, TN.  
Pilot and instructor – Phillis Cantrell  
Co-Pilot – Betty  
Fifth Place – 75 entries  
Cherokee 180



1971 – Calgary, Canada to Baton Rouge, LA – 4<sup>th</sup> Race  
Betty – Pilot, Louise Montero, Co-Pilot  
Cardinal 177, Sponsor – Zero Population Growth  
Placed 81 – 168 entries



1966

**Second Powder Puff Derby – 2,500 statute miles**



**Louise Montero, Co-Pilot**

**Betty, Pilot**

**Ready for take off from Petaluma, Ca.  
Second PPD Race from Seattle to Clearwater, Fl.  
Aero Commander 200  
A new airplane!**





**1966 Reno to San Diego Fun Race – Race No. 24 over Lake Tahoe  
Aero Commander 200 – home bound after the race**



99 • NUP



1966 Reno, NV. To Fallon, NV.  
Fun air race  
Louise – Co-Pilot  
Betty – Pilot

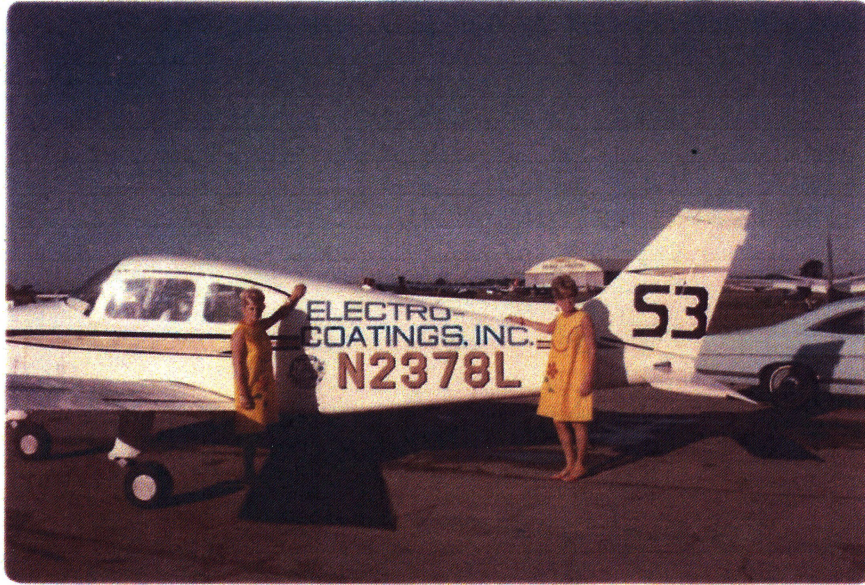
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AUG • 70

1970 "99's Fun Race" San Carlos, Ca. to Elko, NV.  
Betty, Pilot      Louise, Co-Pilot





**Electro Coatings, Sponsor – Third Race  
Atlantic City, N.J. to Torrance, Ca.  
Disqualified – radio problems**



**1972 Fifth PPD Race,  
and last**

**Zero Population Growth, Sponsor  
Placed 41<sup>st</sup> out of 106 entries**

**Louise                      Betty  
1972 San Carlos, Ca. to Toms River, N.J.**



# Sterile Stork Flies Again

The "Sterile Stork" will be trying its wings for the second year in a row when the Powder Puff Derby air race begins in San Carlos, California on July 7th. Thanks to financial support from a special grant, ZPG will again be sponsoring the plane as airborne publicity. Ours is the only entry in the race sponsored by an other-than-commercial interest, and promises to attract a good deal of attention from the press.

The Powder Puff Derby is the largest national women's private airplane race in the country. Sponsored by the "99's", an international organization of women pilots, the races began 26 years ago, and have been flying different routes ever since. This year's route is cross-country from San Carlos to Toms River, New Jersey, and the slogan for the race is, appropriately, "From Sea to Shining Sea".

Betty Worstell, pilot of the "Sterile Stork", will be competing in her fifth

Powder Puff Derby; the second under the ZPG banner. Betty took up flying in 1963 and in three months had obtained her private pilot's license; within the year she had a commercial license. Betty's co-pilot, Louise Montero, will be in charge of navigation and flight plans, duties that will keep her busy for the greater part of the three day trip.

The "Sterile Stork" will take to the air displaying the ZPG logo and a large No. O on its tail. The plane has a short fuel range so that it will have to make many stops. At the stopovers the pilots will be able to distribute ZPG material, as well as participate in interviews with the local press, radio and TV. Chapters along the way will be setting up publicity for number "O", and members will be at the various airports to greet the plane and help the pilots get ZPG's message to the public.



Photo courtesy of Trav-An Graphixs

The Sterile Stork ready to fly again for ZPG with pilots Betty Worstell (on right) and Louise Montero.

1972 – Betty Andresen Worstell's Fifth Powder Puff Derby Race  
Sponsor: Zero Population Growth