

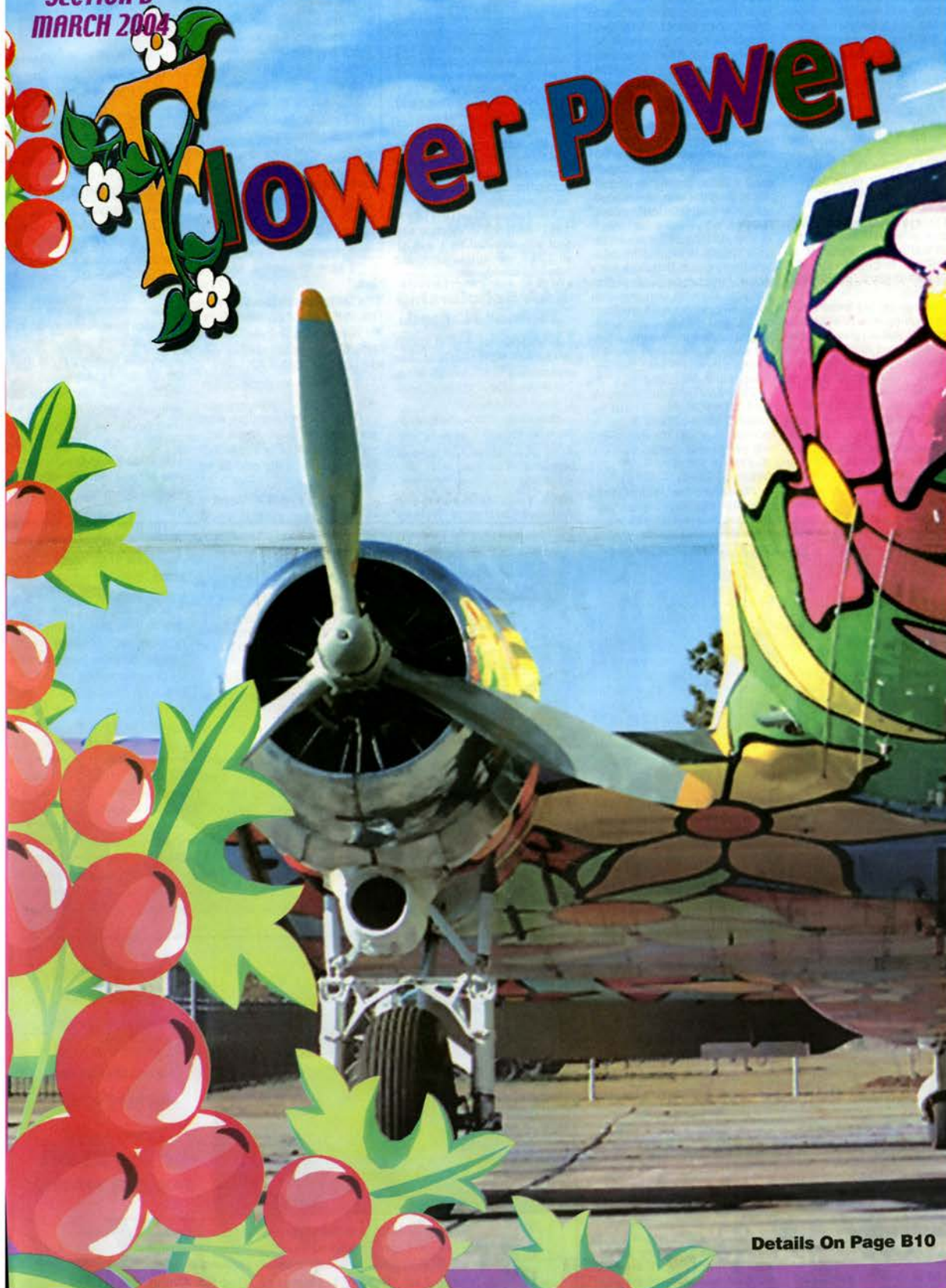
PACIFIC *Flyer*

SECTION B
MARCH 2004

AVIATION

NEWS

**Special: A Day In The Life
Of A CFI At A Busy Field**



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Flower Power? Kids Decorate DC-3

Portraits of Hope has created what is perhaps the most colorful DC-3 ever flown.

Wearing a hard-to-miss flower livery, the DC-3 made its debut at the Centennial of Flight celebration in Kitty Hawk, N.C. last December. It flew over the Wright Brothers National Memorial daily the week of the event.

The floral design on the 66-year-old DC-3 was painted by 2,000 seriously ill, disabled or traumatized children in 40 hospitals across the U.S. The

flowers, representing joy, beauty, inspiration and healing, are the symbol of Portraits of Hope.

The Plan Takes Shape

Portraits of Hope, a therapy program that combines the healing arts with public art to brighten the lives of sick children, has been putting children's art on public structures since 1995. One of its most visible projects is the Tower of Hope at 9865 Olympic Blvd. in Beverly Hills, Calif.

The 160-foot-tall abandoned oil rig sports a 15,000-square-foot flower mural and is seen by 25 million cars a year. Some 3,000 children helped

paint the tower from their beds in hospitals across California.

The idea for the DC-3, which was named "Garden in Transit-AIRborne," came from NASA, said artist Ed Massey, founder of the Santa Monica, Calif.-based Portraits of Hope. Someone at NASA had seen Massey on the Rosie O'Donnell Show and asked his group to take part in the first flight centennial.

NASA steered Massey to Steve Merritt, who was coordinating the participation of civilian aircraft in the event for the state of North Carolina's Dept. of

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Flower Power ...

of Transportation. It was Merritt who suggested a DC-3, because it was big enough to be an ideal flying billboard and slow enough that the "paint job" wouldn't peel off in flight.

Also, Merritt admitted, he always wanted to fly in a DC-3. So he turned to Dan Gryden of Griffin, Ga., who owned a DC-3 that was available for hire.

Gryden was skeptical about the idea until the FAA voiced its approval. Then he leased Portraits of Hope N143D, a DC-3A built by Douglas in Santa Monica, Calif. in 1937 and assembled in Holland in October '38.

N143D had passed through many owners in its 66 years and ended up with Gryden after a stint hauling cargo for Academy Airlines. After only a dozen flights at Kitty Hawk, the plane was stripped down to bare metal and returned home to Georgia.

Doing Their Homework

Once the plane was chosen, Massey's team went to Boeing for technical advice on the DC-3. Since Boeing couldn't supply the specs he needed, Massey bought a plastic model of a DC-3 and calculated the plane's surface area from that.

He then spent three months painting the model in a colorful floral scheme. In the meantime, Clay Lacy put his Van Nuys-based DC-3 at the group's disposal to test adhesive materials for the stick-on paint job.

The adhesive material, Avery Graphic A-8, was supplied by Avery Dennison Co., a leading vinyl manufacturer based in Pasadena, Calif. The design

ing in size from 5x5 feet to 14x14 feet.

Since the child artists were hospitalized and unable to paint the plane itself, Massey came up with the next best thing. The children applied the colors of their choice to flower patterns on the plastic decals.

For those who could not use their arms to paint, Massey provided shoes with paint brushes on the bottoms or brushes they could hold in their mouths. All who took part in the program received model gliders and a set of paints they could use to create their own flying artwork.

Once the flowers were painted and signed by the artists, the 10,000-square-foot roll of decal adhesive was laid out in donated warehouse space in downtown L.A. Each of the 100 flowers was then hand-varnished and cut out by volunteers at a rate of one flower per hour.

Each decal was then wrapped in special plastic to preserve it and shipped, courtesy of DHL, to Piedmont Triad Int'l. Airport in Greensboro, N.C. There, in a hangar donated by Timco Aviation Services, they were applied to the metal surfaces of the plane.

Motorsports Designs of High Point, N.C., which specializes in creating sponsor graphics for race cars, did the work. Massey used the DC-3 model to direct the application of the decals.

The installation took 400 man-hours over one week to complete. According to Portraits of Hope, the "paint job" added just under 400 pounds to the weight



KIDS SIGNED the various paint panels (inset) on the Portraits Douglas DC-3.

(The other Tuskegee T-6 is owned by Steve Cowell of Denver, Colo. His "Double" was featured in the August 2000 issue of *Pacific Flyer*.)

On Feb. 25th, in observance of Black History Month, the museum hosted an appearance by two original Tuskegee Airmen: Richard Macon and Robert Martin. Macon flew 16

made from composite materials and features "cutting-edge avionics" that simplify navigation, gentle yet sporty handling characteristics and a 150-mph cruise speed, Liberty said. It's the first all-new aircraft of its type fully certified by the FAA in the past 30 years.

The aircraft has a range with two passengers and baggage of 500 miles, burning the equivalent

Porsche-powered PFM airplane several years ago that also featured an automatic mixture control but it was considered to be underpowered compared to conventional aircraft and only 41 were sold.

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