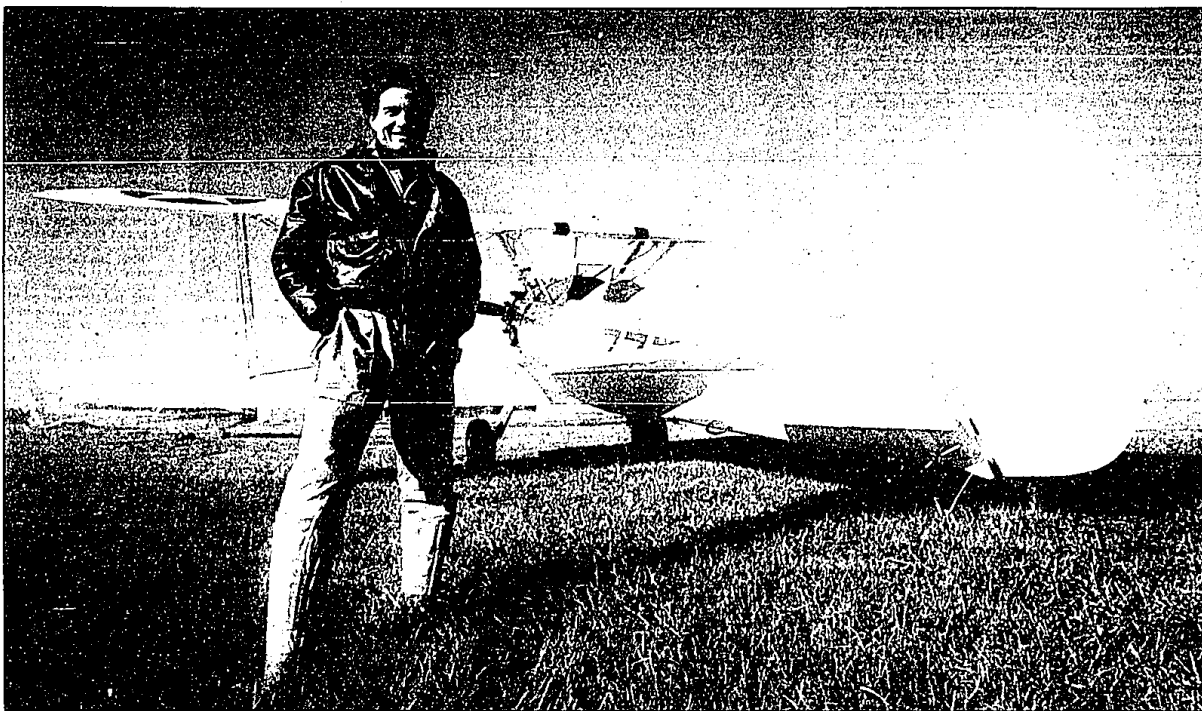


Book of Love is one book you won't find on a library shelf. The four-member rock group out of New York appears to be hatching the banality of dance floor music with its own brand of thoughtful songs. Street Beats introduces you to the group on Page 3D.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

★ 10



Philip Handelman not only photographs Stearmans, he flies them.

JEAN LANNEN

By Rich Perlberg
staff writer

Fifty years ago, Philip Handelman's mother used to climb fences as a child in order to marvel at the derring-do of the world's greatest stunt pilots. Today, Philip climbs into the clouds for an even closer look.

Handelman, 37, is an independent filmmaker from Birmingham who has produced a short movie and published a book about the swashbuckling world of stunt pilots.

Waldo Pepper's barnstorming spirit is embodied in Handelman's 128 pages of color photographs that chronicle the loops, barrel rolls, twists and dives in 30 air shows across the country, culminating with the granddaddy of them all in Oshkosh, Wis.

Handelman, himself a patron of the skies with perpetually windswept black hair, followed the air show circuit for a year to produce the book.

"After years of patronizing air shows, even flying in some, I decided the time had come to compile a permanent record of an American airshow season," Handelman writes in the introduction to "Airshow USA" (\$14.95 from Motorbooks In-

ternational, P.O. Box 2-Rev, 729 Prospect Avenue, Oshkosh, Wis.)

Handelman's effort was a high-flying labor of love. He didn't have a publisher when he began shooting in early 1987. But as the owner and pilot of a fabbed Stearman biplane, which was the plane of choice for training World War II pilots, Handelman was eager to get closer to the men and women who fly.

"PILOTS, at least good pilots, understand that when they pilot a ship in the sky, there is no fooling around. There is no bluffing Mother Nature," said Handelman from his apartment, a collection of books and photos 13 floors above Woodward Avenue.

"What I think that means is that you have to be honest."

Handelman comes upon his passion for aviation honestly. His mother, Marion, fascinated him with stories of Eddie Rickenbacker, Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart and other legendary pilots who performed at the Cleveland Air Races.

"This was all so new to the world," said Handelman. "Can you imagine little kids watching airplanes at 200 mph? Today we take it all for granted."

As a child in the late '50s and '60s, his heroes had names like Shepard and Glenn. To this day he can recite

Flight of fancy goes sky high



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

An artist's version of flight fittingly fills a wall in the 13th-floor Birmingham apartment where filmmaker Philip Handelman gets a pilot's view of his adopted hometown.

the names of the original seven astronauts. His impressive personal library has more than 200 autographed books, many from historic aviation figures.

He had his pilot's license at age 20. The film interest came later, but Handelman thinks he prepared for it all his life.

"When someone is interested in a film career and asks me what to do, I tell them to accumulate a diverse life," he said. "That's been my life experience. I'm sensitive for what would be a good topic."

"I've never gotten a bad review from a critic. The worst is 'lukewarm. I think that's due to my selection of subject.'"

ONE OF HIS topics is the Holocaust, a subject he fears is trivialized by commercial television specials that capitalize on the public's "macabre interest in the horror. In the middle of their sex and violence, they will put on a Holocaust story."

There's more than just the violence and the ugliness.

Handelman hopes to better cover the topic in "Remembering the Holocaust" which will start airing on PBS stations in April. He's not sure when and if it will be telecast locally.

"I haven't had much luck with Channel 56," he said.

Handelman said that even though his films are distributed nationally through the Central Educational Network, he can't get his foot in the door at the Detroit's PBS outlet.

"I won't be bitter," he said. "If I allow myself to be bitter, then those clowns will have succeeded. If they open their door, I'll welcome it."

He will not, he said, become one of those people who "fritters away their lives consumed in their embitteredness."

Perhaps that explains why Handelman still makes his home in Birmingham, even though he feels he was cruelly taunted by prejudiced classmates when he went to high school there as one of the school's few Jewish students.

"I like to look at the times in my life that haven't been happy and think they have made me a stronger person," he said.

Today, he described himself as "one of the world's luckiest people." He has his health, and he has plenty of time to pursue his passions including airplanes, reading and filmmaking.

HE ALSO has time to contribute back to the community. Among many civic involvements is his membership on the board of trustees of the Friends of the Detroit Library. He co-chaired its recent, successful millage drive.

Warp Factor

Karlos Barney



The long tongue of the law.

Lure of South Padre: Sun, surf and Mexico

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

Q: A group of us would like to go south this spring, but we don't want to go to Florida. What about South Padre Island on the Texas Gulf Coast? Is it too late for this year? Should we start booking ahead for next year? Why do people go to South Padre Island?

A: Why do people go to South Padre? To lay on a deck chair on a sand beach and let the sun beat a tattoo on their face, to walk the beach at dawn and sunset, collecting shells, to carry yellow surfboards into the sea, to walk the jetty that protrudes into the Atlantic or to watch the shrimp boats come in to Fort Isabel, across the causeway that connects South Padre Island to the mainland and the Rio Grande Valley.

They go because they are within 20 miles of the Mexican border and because they want to eat, drink and play with all the other people who eat, drink and play there.

The month of March is pretty heavily booked on South Padre because of spring break, although the people who run the hotels

and condominium rentals all say the same thing: There are always a few rooms because of cancellations, so call before you give up on them.

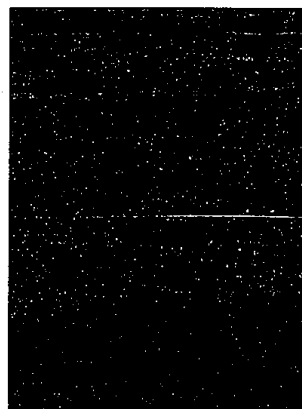
(If you're not a college student, you may be able to find a room during spring break because there are more than 1,000 rooms that facilities won't rent to college students.)

April is a beautiful month in south Texas.

Padre Island is one of the long, narrow barrier islands that line the Gulf Coast from the Mexican border all the way around the curve to Florida. North Padre Island, which includes the Padre Island National Seashore, has its "gateway" at Corpus Christi. The closest city to South Padre is Brownsville, right on the Texas/Mexican border.

Padre Island is separated from the mainland by a strip of water called the Laguna Madre — local people call it "the bay." Scientists say that barrier islands are always shifting, so this one will eventually become part of the mainland, but for the moment it is connected by a long causeway.

Please turn to Page 4



MICKY JONES

Casting for fish along the surf line is one way to pass the time on South Padre Island.