

Daredevil: The Daring Life of Betty Skelton

AUTHOR: Meghan McCarthy

PUBLISHER: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers

COPYRIGHT DATE: 2013

GENRE: Biography

LEXILE: 640L

SUMMARY:

Betty June Skelton, born in 1926, wanted to go fast. She learned to fly as a child, received a pilot's license at 16, but wasn't able to be a commercial pilot or to join the Navy and fly - so she became a stunt pilot instead! She raced cars, became "the first female boat jumper", and even trained for NASA in 1959. She set several records and is in several Halls of Fame - Women in Aviation Pioneer, NASCAR International Motorsports Hall of Fame, and even the Corvette Hall of Fame (she drove a shiny red one!).

BOOKTALK:

Betty Skelton always wanted to go really, really fast. She wanted to fly - and flew a plane at 12, and was a stunt pilot in her twenties. Then she wanted to drive really fast - and was the first woman to drive an Indy Car. She wanted to go fast on the water - and became the first female boat jumper. Then she looked up into the sky, and thought, I wonder how fast I could go in space? Read *Daredevil: The Daring Life of Betty Skelton* to find out about this amazing REALLY FAST woman!

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Author's Name: Meghan McCarthy

Author's Website: <http://www.meghan-mccarthy.com>

Other books written by the author:

Pop! The Invention of Bubble Gum

City Hawk

Seabiscuit the Wonder Horse

CHALLENGING WORDS

daring - in the title, cover and title page; adj; bold; courageous; adventurous

Ensign - p.4; noun; the lowest commissioned officer in the Navy or Coast Guard

yearned - p. 5; verb; really wanted; longed for

legal - p. 6; adjective; allowed by law

commercial - p. 11; adjective; "civilian and public, as distinguished from military and private"

stunt - p. 13; adjective; showing off your skill and dexterity

inverted - p. 14; adjective; upside down

half-pint - p. 18; noun; originally, a cup (8 oz); in slang terms, a very short person

altitude - p. 19; noun; height
airborne - p. 24; adjective; in the air
conquered - p. 26; verb; overcome

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Betty Skelton's father let her fly a solo mission at age 12?
2. Betty Skelton did a lot of different fast things during her life - she flew airplanes, drove racecars, was a boat jumper and trained to be an astronaut. Which would you really like to do, and why?
3. Why would NASA be interested in Betty Skelton becoming an astronaut? What personal qualities had she displayed that they thought matched their profile of an ideal astronaut?
4. Betty Skelton said, "I just like to go fast," but she proved something to people too. What did she prove and why did that matter?

ACTIVITIES with COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Language Arts

- There are lots of websites with information about Betty Skelton to look through and find additional information about her. Pick two websites and read through their information about Ms. Skelton. Use that information, along with *Daredevil: The Daring Life of Betty Skelton*, to dream up a new Hall of Fame for Betty Skelton to be in. What else could she be celebrated for? Write a speech nominating her for your brand-new Hall of Fame! It should be three paragraphs and should give at least three reasons why she deserves to be in your Hall of Fame.

4.RN.4.2 - Combine information from two texts on the same topic in order to demonstrate knowledge about the subject.

4.W.3.1 - Write persuasive compositions in a variety of forms that – In an introductory statement, clearly state an opinion to a particular audience.

Support the opinion with facts and details from various sources, including texts.

Use an organizational structure to group related ideas that support the purpose.

Connect opinion and reasons using words and phrases.

Provide a concluding statement or section related to the position presented.

- *Daredevil : The Daring Life of Betty Skelton* claims that Betty Skelton's exploits opened doors for Sally Ride to go to space. How were Betty Skelton and Sally Ride similar? How were they different? Think about their backgrounds, their training, and the times they lived in. What world events might have had

significant impacts upon them? Create a Venn diagram with Sally Ride on one side, and Betty Skelton on the other. List differences and similarities in the appropriate places on the diagram. Then summarize your thinking in a five paragraph essay which tells how they were similar, how they were different, and your conclusions about whether Betty Skelton's deeds led to Sally Ride's opportunities.

5.RN.2.3 - Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

LIFE SKILLS

Courage
Adventurousness
Perseverance
Flexibility
trying new things
determination

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

<http://meghan-mccarthy.com/daredevil.html> - Author's site about the book, with videos, pictures of Ms. Skelton, and more. Some of the links are not active yet - may be active in the future - but there's enough here that's fun for the kids to get started!

<http://www.nationalaviation.org/frankman-betty/> - Brief bio of Betty Skelton (whose married name was Betty Skelton Frankman). Includes links to other websites.

<http://airandspace.si.edu/explore-and-learn/topics/women-in-aviation/Skelton.cfm> - Brief bio, with link to photo of her plane, which was donated to the Smithsonian (<http://airandspace.si.edu/collections/artifact.cfm?id=A19850806000>).

<http://www.mshf.com/hall-of-fame/inductees/betty-skelton.html> - Motorsports Hall of Fame bio. A tab is supposed to link to her induction speech - I couldn't get it to download, but it might be fixed by the time you read this.

<http://www.women-in-aviation.com/> - the tab "Featured Women" includes two links to more info about Betty Skelton, but lots of other women are covered here as well, and there are links to lists of books, museums, organizations, and even a link to eight history quizzes!

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY:

Name: Elizabeth Finney

Position/Location: Instructional Assistant, Carmel Elementary School, Carmel, IN