

President's Message

It's nearing the nail-biting stage of our Saturday, February 13, 2016, Annual Meeting planning! We've been invited to share in the re-opening of the historic Glendale (Calif.) Grand Central Air Terminal (GCAT), currently under restoration by its current owner, the Disney Corporation. The nail-biting tendencies come in as the construction is not quite complete, and we still have not received confirmation on exactly where we're eating lunch!

Even if we have to eat "on the front lawn," it will be a very rare treat to see this historic building that Disney plans to use for corporate events and office space, and limited public access. AAHS will be the first group to see the completed restoration! Disney project manager Dan Beaumont, a veteran of many large scale construction projects for Disney (he oversaw the 'Ariel' water show development at California Adventures and built the performance venues at Disney Tokyo, just to name a few), assures us that Disney is working its 'magic' to ensure the architectural and historical details of the building are preserved wherever possible. Dan, who will present an overview of the restoration, will give exciting details of the amazing historic files found when they disassembled the interior of the tower (the tower attic was insulated/stuffed with pilot log pages, for example), and will present some interesting facts on the methods Disney used to retain as much of the original GCAT material as they could.

The GCAT was dedicated on February 22, 1929, and was the first official 'Air Terminal' for Los Angeles. GCAT hosted many air transport companies, such as Maddux Airlines, Transcontinental Air Transport, later Transcontinental & Western Airlines (TWA), and Gilpin Air Lines, as well as aircraft builders, such as Kinner Aircraft & Motors Co., Curtiss-Wright, Howard Hughes Corp. and Lockheed Corporation. For 30 years GCAT was the airport terminal 'to the stars' as the Hollywood crowd flew in and out of the Glendale Airport. Shirley Temple's famous 'Bright Eyes' movie and others were filmed at GCAT. Robert Kirk, an AAHS author, will give a multi-media presentation about the luxuries of commercial transportation from New York to GCAT, in the 1930s.

AAHS members had a small role in helping Disney research the history of GCAT. John Underwood, a respected author and historian for AAHS, wrote a book titled *Grand Central Air Terminal*, used by Disney, as well as many of his personal photos, for the restoration of the building. AAHS members also supported the search for additional photos and possible aircraft that Disney could restore to static display in front of the terminal. These efforts are still in work.

But we'll be sure to have an amazing day, regardless. See you there, with or without my fingernails!

Jerri Bergen
President