

President's Message



Two of the three Porterfields that made the trip from California to Blakesburg, Iowa. NC37895 is on the left, NC25590 on the right. (Photo from Jerri Bergen's collection)

Our first trip to the Antique Aircraft Association (AAA) fly-in, held over Labor Day weekend at Antique Aircraft Field, Blakesburg, Iowa, was a visible reminder that there are others that have similar objectives as the AAHS. The AAA was formed three years before AAHS, in 1953, by Robert Taylor (AAHS member #58) who felt that there should be a community of like minded folks who wanted to preserve the aircraft that helped develop so much of today's aviation industry. The AAA Labor Day Invitational Fly-in this year was themed 'Back to Basics' (or for true AAA fans 'Back to Blakesburg'!), to showcase the aircraft of our past, in the airframes of early aviation innovators such as the Luscombes, Stinsons, Taylorcrafts, Wacos, Aeroncas, Ercoupes, Pipers and Cessnas to name a few of the variety early aircraft manufacturers, many of whom have been documented in some fashion in AAHS publications over the years.

AAA and AAHS share similarities beyond a common interest. The membership count is much the same between the two, as is the spread of members across the United States and internationally. Both AAA and AAHS are a 'by the members, for the members' organizations, managed by member-voted boards, and financially supported through member donations and annual dues. AAA gets a percentage of its annual income through the Labor Day fly-in, while AAHS works to break even with its Annual Meeting. The AAA has 20 chapters spread across the U.S., in various levels of activity, while AAHS has significantly fewer local groups. Both AAA and AAHS provide regular publications as part of their membership service. Both AAHS and AAA (via their affiliation with the Air Power Museum) have significant library collections, now currently available only to their respective members.

It should come as no surprise then that we (AAHS) have taken steps to begin the conversation with AAA regarding a partnership between our two organizations. We don't yet know what the partnership may look like financially or organizationally, but AAA and AAHS Directors agree that the partnership would develop as a benefit to both organizations.

What could this partnership look like? We are exploring the possibility of a dual membership that provides members with access and benefits to both organizations. We can share archival/photo and library material, increasing both the resources and use of our individual knowledge base. We might share publication materials, published articles or references, such as drawings, photos, etc., to support member needs. We'd also be able to put more people with like interests together. In comparing the membership databases between the two organizations, we found less than 50 individuals that were part of both.

This partnership would have another significant benefit to us as a group: We can combine some resources and each be a more viable entity.

It will be exciting to share our passion and interests with other like-minded organizations. In fact, we have also recently reached out to the American Society of Aviation Artists (ASAA) with the similar objective, and have received a positive response. The ASAA management team views a partnership with AAHS as a benefit to both groups.

We have much to do to realize these partnerships, and your feedback is necessary to ensure we build organization ties that help, not hinder, these groups. Do let us know what you think, and your suggestions for improvement.

Jerri Bergen
President