

President's Message

You may be, like me, evaluating priorities, in realizing that our post-COVID world may be irrevocably altered. New restrictions for event gatherings, travel, expectations for remote learning and video-driven work programs that may become the norm could change what we love to do, or how we do it, while many businesses and organizations have been forced to close altogether. AAHS has been asked, "Is this the time for us to close our doors as well?"

Our membership numbers have been down, due largely to COVID upsets. We have many aging members. Many feel our product of aviation history articles, aviation images and other resources may not be relevant enough for this new world. We should address this question so you, our members understand our position regarding the anticipated longevity of AAHS.

AAHS was built by a group of aviation enthusiasts who worked to share their enthusiasm with others, and promote aviation history for the betterment of our country and future generations. This mission will continue to drive our service until we no longer have the resources or members to make it possible. With generous donations from members, we continue to be financially viable, and, are working to position ourselves so we can be more relevant in a mostly-digital age.

We are using our resources to get our images out of physical storage and onto the internet, where they can be shared more easily (our image digitization project). We are loading catalog information on our aviation library to an online book software program to make this a searchable resource. We are reaching out to classrooms and remote volunteers to participate in identifying our images through a native-built web application PLANESPOTTER (www.AAHSPlaneSpotter.com) that could conceivably have hundreds of people across the world tagging AAHS images. And finally, we are placing advertisements in three major aviation publications (a FIRST for AAHS!) to increase our visibility.

This last year has been turbulent, but there have been upsides too. We've met many wonderful new volunteers who are willing to share in our mission. We've begun to make partnerships with our neighbors at Flabob Airport who also share our aviation passion, and we're using the new 'remote-work' paradigm to accomplish AAHS objectives that we hadn't even considered five years ago.

I'm looking forward to the future of AAHS; to me, it looks a great place to be!

Jerri Bergen
AAHS President

PS: I will be remaining in President's role through this year, while so many new programs are begun.



AAHS Members and volunteers at a recent Yanks Air Museum event where we had a booth. **From left to right: Front row:** Board member Howard Butcher, and wife Ostrid, Board Member Bob Brockmeier, President Jerri Bergen, volunteer Robert Littlefield. *Not shown but also present is librarian Bob Palazzola and wife Mari.* **Back Row:** Volunteer Joe Irwin, PLANESPOTTER administrator, Steve Riter and wife Sandi, Flabob staff Charlie Shaw. (AAHS archives)