

Chief Operating Officer's Message

As we close the Huntington Beach office, a cost saving measure, and consolidate the Society's assets at Flabob, we have to take a serious look at our holdings. What material is useful? What is duplicated? And the tough question, what material will be of most value to our members? Addressing these issues will allow us to make better use of our resources and to find new homes for material we can't use.

With space limitations, what should AAHS be preserving, as part of our mission, and what can we pare away? We also need to consider how technology has changed the way we access information. Historically, our members have accumulated personal files of magazine clippings on subjects of interest. Today, much of this is now stored digitally on our personal computers, or is easily found through searches on the Internet. Should the Society keep and store multiple file cabinets of magazine clippings that we have accumulated over the years?

With due diligence, we've been taking a hard look at exactly what IS in our file cabinets, and realize that we need to be smarter about what we hang on to. For example, the AAHS periodical collection includes all the published *Air Trails* magazines (with its various titles) from 1937-1955. Similarly, we also have file folders with many clippings from Air Trails publications, sorted by a particular airplane manufacturer or model. It's a straightforward decision to keep the *Air Trails* magazine collection, and jettison the clippings. Using this approach, we can downsize a couple of bankers boxes of information. .

But how to tackle the other 90% of paper materials we have? Taking advantage of current technology, we've been sampling the kinds of materials we have on hand versus what could be found digitally, via Google, library database subscription services, CD collections, etc.

We've found much of the information in our paper files is available digitally, and more is becoming available all the time. Internet data is only as reliable as the owner of the website, however. And, digital information has its own storage issues. While we won't solve all our storage issues overnight, the AAHS will continue to retain older, original publications as we look to digitally store other material that is important to our collection. We are also committed to acquiring access to reputable online information services, to better assist members in researching aviation history topics.

Have some ideas or suggestions to support our mission of aviation history preservation? Let us know at prez@aahs-online.org!

Jerri Bergen
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