



THE VINTAGE AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION

Who we are . . . how fortunate we are . . . and all for so little!

BY CHARLES W. HARRIS



Hosting the finest restorations of vintage airplanes is an every year occurrence for the VAA. Glen Peck flew the Historic Aviation Museum's DH-4 mailplane from St. Louis on a multi-day odyssey that finally reached AirVenture. Like so many amazing airplanes on display during the annual convention, members and public alike flocked to the huge biplane.

JACK McCARTHY

The grassroots aviation community of the good old United States is a most fortunate and privileged group of airplane enthusiasts. We have become the current-day recipients of the brilliant aviation concept that Paul Poberezny and his small group of close flying friends created in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in January 1953 and what has since become a worldwide movement of people from every walk of life who have banded together in a common cause—the cause of sport aviation! Sport aviation now encompasses every phase of aviation and airplane interests;

antiques, classics, contemporaries, warbirds, experimentals, light sport, aerobatics, replicas, biplanes, ad infinitum, and all of these areas of our special interest are welcomed and encouraged under EAA and its huge 160,000-member umbrella.

In the Vintage Aircraft Association (VAA), while we embrace virtually every airplane we see, the older, more historic airplanes have a very special appeal and significance to us. From the days of Orville and Wilbur and their first ingenious and miraculous flying machine, from Capt. Eddie and his sturdy Spad,

from “Slim” Lindbergh and his Ryan NYP, from Jimmy Doolittle and his Gee Bee and Super Solution, from Howard Hughes and his simply fabulous world-speed-record-breaking *Racer*, and from Benny Howard and Ike, Mike, Pete, and Mulligan came our inspired and breathtaking background. Mr. Piper and his Cubs together with C.G. Taylor and his Taylorcrafts, Don Luscombe and his Monocoupes and later his even more successful and remarkable “8” Series Luscombes, and still later, Duane Wallace with his highly marketable 140s, 150s, 170s, 172s,

180s, 182s, and 195s together with Mr. Piper again and his Short Wings, Cherokees, and Comanches created the marketing successes that brought aviation down to a cost level that nearly everyone could afford. These aviation pioneers and their airplanes together with Walter Beech's engineering masterpiece Bonanzas brought us aviation as we know it today.

In addition to these legends there have been all the other greats and near greats who with their uncanny abilities have developed the airplanes for us individual pilots who love the sky, who love to fly, and love the indescribable magic of liftoff and flight through Mother Nature's heavens in what is still a never-ending miracle. Today thousands and thousands of these unbelievably fine airplanes are available to us with all of their proven capabilities at essentially bargain basement prices. We are the present-day beneficiaries of our glorious aviation past; additionally, we are the recipients of what EAA founder Paul Poberezny envisioned and created. It should be crystal clear to everyone what an exceptionally fortunate group we are.

This is who and what we are. Our love of airplanes is what we are, and the airplanes are our glue. But the who we are even tops the what we are. The people of EAA and VAA are the emotional heart and soul of all of this magic. When one steps onto the porch of the Red Barn or into the brand-new Vintage Hangar at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, even if it might be your very first time . . . and even if the place is busy as a bee—there is not a single stranger, not one.

Whether you pose a question in the information area of the Red Barn or sit down on the Red Barn's front porch next to someone you have never met before, you will be as much at home as you are at your hometown airport hangar. The conversations will center on airplanes, about aviation happenings and personalities, and the attachment and affection EAA



H.G. FRAUTSCHY

FAA Administrator Marion Blakey speaks to a group of Type Club officials during EAA AirVenture. In cooperation with EAA, the Vintage Aircraft Association has regular contact with many levels of the FAA as we work to represent our membership on maintenance and operational issues.



JACK MCCARTHY

The VAA volunteer kiosk is always a busy place. More than 500 members volunteer their time and expertise during the weeklong convention.

and vintage members have for their airplanes, their aviation friends, and their aviation organization.

This is who we are, this is what we are; we are the living counterparts of those who pioneered the development and sparked the fervor of self-taught surplus JN-4 drivers in the 1920s, the Taylor Cub and Piper Cub buyers and pilots of the 1930s, and who in the postwar years would buy and fly the Swifts, Bonanzas, Comanches, Mooneys, Skyhawks, and Skylanes. We have grown into a 600,000 certificated pilot group in

the United States and support the largest private aircraft industry in the world, but through it all, our hearts would always be in the pride and privilege of flying our own little airplanes from our own home airports, when we chose, to where we chose, and fly them with the safety and competence that has been gained by scores and scores of years and thousands of hours in the air. This is who we are, this is what we are.

This is our past, this is our heritage, this is who we are...and all of this is now part and parcel of EAA's



JACK MCCARTHY

Ken and Lorraine Morris explain the proper way to hand-prop an airplane, one of the educational events the VAA hosts in its area every year.



JACK MCCARTHY

Expert metal workers demonstrate metal-shaping techniques to members who can then give it a try themselves.



H.G. FRAUTSCHY

When the food service vendor for the convention decided to drop morning food service on the south end of the field, VAA stepped up to the challenge and created the VAA Tall Pines Café. Like the rest of VAA's programs and offerings during the week, the meals are cooked by volunteer staff.

VAA. We have been the leaders in our chosen field since our first days in 1972. We have moved consistently over the past 37 years to perpetuate our historic past and at the same time deliver the utmost to our VAA members in the way of, first and always foremost, our freedom to fly. Without EAA and our 160,000-plus members and our never-ending vigilance for our freedom to fly, it is almost certain private and sport flying in the United States, and perhaps over the entire world, would not exist. Secondly, VAA is never ending in its quest to provide its membership with the utmost in solid, meaningful, ever greater member benefits and value. Our members presently receive so much value for their affiliation within our special area of interest that we quite often lose sight of the forest for all the beautiful (airplane) trees. Virtually sight unseen, almost invisible, and taken for granted every day are the things that VAA has provided us through the years, and the ever more new things that further enhance our membership.

Are you aware or have you ever considered:

- The VAA has two full-time staff members: namely, an executive director/magazine editor and his very able assistant. EAA provides access to EAA staff in everything needed for the business of running an association, from membership cards to financial accounting. Additionally, VAA enjoys editorial assistance from the EAA editorial staff and constantly commissions outside professional writers to provide *Vintage Airplane* magazine readers the finest in articles about our most outstanding historic airplanes and sport aviation personalities.

- The VAA publishes and distributes 12 full-color monthly magazines to its members each year with 40 pages of content. There is hardly a monthly aviation magazine in the country today that can be obtained for \$36 per year, and certainly not one devoted exclusively to vintage airplanes.

- The VAA has 19 local chapters

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