Our Mission

The Oregon Aviation Historical Society was incorporated in June 1983 through the efforts of a group of aviation enthusiasts who recognized the need to preserve Oregon's rich aviation heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Its purposes are to collect, preserve, restore and exhibit aviation artifacts; to develop facilities for the restoration and preservation of artifacts, public viewing and exhibition of the collection; to establish and maintain an Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame; establish a resource center for Oregon aviation historical research and to disseminate information about Oregon aviation history.

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Annual Meeting and Hall of Fame Ceremony

We are pleased to inform you that the Annual Meeting of the Membership and the 2015 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held on Saturday, April 11 at the Village Green in Cottage Grove. There is a regular meeting of the Board of Directors at 10 AM at the History Center, which all members in good standing are invited to attend, after which we will descend upon the good folks at the Village Green for our annual meeting.

This year we are inducting James Carle “Jimmy” Rinehart into the Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame. He was born in Portland in 1909 and in 1926 he built his own plane and learned to fly. By 1928 he was an endurance flight record holder, OX-5 class, made in an American Eagle at Seaside, Oregon. He was also the youngest licensed transport pilot in the country, having received that license at the age of 18. He started his own company, Columbia Gorge Air Service, Inc., with sea planes and land planes, with hangars at Hayden Island and Jantzen Beach park, all of which he built himself. He gave sightseeing tours and flying lessons at these locations, and established the first passenger route from Portland to the ocean beaches in 1927. In that same year he entered the national air races, flying from San Francisco to Spokane.

After graduating from Oregon State, he became a flight instructor for Tex Rankin’s Flying School in Portland. In 1934 he moved to Alaska to fly as a bush pilot with Alaska Air Transport Inc. In World War II, James worked as a flight instructor for the Army Air Corps and taught at Ryan Airfield in Hemet, CA.

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After the war he opened an aircraft repair shop in San Jacinto, and in 1948 he and his wife returned to Alaska where he accepted a position as the resident pilot for Alaska Coastal Airlines. Both Rinehart and his wife, Elsie, served as aviators in Alaska and ran a charter air service. Outside of his regular business flights, James performed numerous rescues, mercy flights, and dangerous landings to serve his community. He was killed in 1954 when his Grumman G-44 Widgeon crashed in bad weather near Pelican, Alaska.

We invite all of our members to join us at the Village Green on April 11th to welcome James Rinehart into the Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame. The Rinehart family will be represented by his granddaughter, Cindy Boeing, and several other family members.

The lunch menu is grilled chicken with a Boursin herb and garlic cream sauce, rice pilaf, sautéed vegetable, garden salad, and a deluxe chocolate brownie. The cost for lunch is $22 per person. If you plan to attend, please clip the blue RSVP form on the back page of this newsletter and return it to the OAHS by April 8. We hope to see you there!

Board of Director Elections

This year we have two directors for your consideration. Please return your ballot to the OAHS no later than April 11. Members receiving the e-version of the newsletter will get their ballots and RSVP forms in the mail.

Tom Cunningham was appointed to the board in late spring of last year. This is his first year on the open ballot. He has many years of management experience and a deep interest in aviation. In his time with the OAHS Tom has acted as docent six times, has helped out with group tours, and is currently helping with the 2nd Annual Cottage Grove Wings & Wheels even committee.

Wilbur Heath has been with the OAHS since the beginning. He has been an invaluable resource to the society, is a Lifetime member, and has served as both Vice President and President of the Board of Directors. He is currently the “go-to” guy here in Cottage Grove, assists at every event and around the History Center on grounds maintenance, and sits on the event committee.

Random Flight,
by President Doug Kindred

It’s really strange to be writing this on Valentines Day with absolutely beautiful weather (I should be out at the airport). Be that as it may, I just wanted to give a heads up to you all to mark your calendars for Saturday April 11th to attend our Annual Meeting and Oregon Aviation Historical Society Hall of Fame induction of James C. Rinehart. His granddaughter, Cindy Boeing, has prepared and will give the presentation. Mr. Rinehart was a true pioneer in Oregon’s aviation history. We’ll be at the Village Green again this year and expect a large group of Rinehart family members (eleven so far!) to be in attendance. I suggest you reserve your ticket early. Full details will be on the web site and elsewhere in this newsletter.

Don’t forget we are also in busy preparation for the 2nd Annual Wings N Wheels in June. We’ve had very good response and commitment from some very interesting cars and aircraft. It should be a great way to spend a Saturday. Again, check the web site for more details. Here’s hoping your winter/spring is going the way you like.
The History Center is Built

As we continue our look back at where we’ve been, our gaze falls upon the construction of the Oregon Aviation History Center. After a long search for the perfect location, it was finally decided to lease space at the Cottage Grove Airport. Other locations in Cottage Grove had been considered, even optioned, but in the end it was the airport location that was settled upon.

After meeting with staff from the Department of Aeronautics and fine-tuning the foreseeable needs for a restoration hangar, the board decided it would be best to lease space at the Cottage Grove airport provided they could access city water and sewer. In March 1996 the parcel upon which the museum currently stands was annexed to the City of Cottage Grove with the approval of the Oregon Department of Aeronautics for that purpose, and in 1998 the museum entered into an agreement with the Oregon Department of Aeronautics to lease space at the Cottage Grove airport. We broke ground on the History Center on March 14, 1998. On the left you see Rex Hume and Doug Yarbrough; on the right are Walt Dunden, Wilbur Heath, Rex Hume, and Royce Beatty. These are just a few of the many volunteers who helped to build the hangar.

The dedication for the finished structure was held on April 22, 2000. The contributions made in time and dollars made all the difference in the world in helping us to achieve this milestone in our own history, and it seems appropriate to list as many of those names here as possible. Deep gratitude goes out to the following:

Al Alsing
Royce Beatty
Tom Bedell
Gretchen Bencene
Boyce & Son
Blanche Bross
Malcom Buffum
Robert & Margaret Carey
Ray Costello
D Stake Mill
Davidson Industries
James Dittmer
Walt Dunden
E & S Hardware & Supply
William & Erlene Elam
Verda Giustina
Al Grell

Wilbur Heath
Betty & Elwood Hedberg
Jan Hedberg
Margaret Hennan
Rex Hume
Jerry’s Home Improvement Ct.
Elizabeth Johnson
Douglas Kindred
Mark Ladendorff
Edwin Lamb
Art Lumley
Mtn West Resource Mgmt, Inc.
Newberg Chamber of Commerce
Oregon Community Foundation,
Robert & Jeannette Hofer Fund
Richard Redlin
Bill Robinet
Shamrock Lumber Co.

Siuslaw Bank
Hal & Carol Skinner
Roger Starr
James Stearns
Swanson Bros Lumber
Tim Talen
Terry Weather
Larry Well
Annette Whittington
Willamette Industries
Doug Williams
Lloyd Williams
Witts Building Supply
Wright Machine Tool, Inc.
Doug & Joy Yarbrough
Harold Yarbrough
Walter & Elaine Rankin Zolezzi

Shamrock Lumber Co.
It is very exciting to see the progress being made on the Wimpy restoration. It provides a special connection to my dad, Buz Buswell, who passed away in 2005. While growing up, I heard many stories about his adventures flying at Beaverton, modifying the Les Long design and his last flight while on leave in 1944. It was obvious that his first airplane held a special place in his heart. He purchased the airplane from Swede Ralston and Ed Ball in 1938 and I want to thank Swede’s daughter, Dana Ralston McCullough, for her financial support and interest in the project, as I know it provides special memories for her as well. Fortunately there are many who recognize the significance of the Wimpy to early Oregon aviation history and have contributed either financially or through their time and effort on the project. The Oregon Antique and Classic Aircraft Club is one of those contributors and Jon Husser wrote a very informative article in the April 2013 OACAC newsletter detailing the history of the Wimpy and the Beaverton Outlaws at Bernard Field. Bill Austin spent many hours making wing ribs for the Wimpy before his passing in 2007. Last but not least, Tim Talen located the Wimpy in southern California and arranged for the generous donation by Roy Olsen and transport of the fuselage to the History Center in late 2005. He and his crew have been diligently working to make the necessary pieces fit together with little or no plans to go on. Thanks everyone for making this project a reality and stay tuned for further exciting developments.

Annette Buswell Whittington