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.

As is the case with most stories, we must begin at the beginning.
Here, we start with Curtis Pitts. The famed designer of the aerobatic Pitts Special, as well as the lesser known Samson. The latter designed and built in 1948, powered by a 450hp Pratt & Whitney 985 engine. The body of Samson was a larger version of his Pitts Special. This biplane was also built to be the smallest air frame you could fly safely with a 985 engine. Flown first by aerobatic pilot Jess Bristow, the plane was later lost in a mid air collision in 1950.

Thirty five years later aircraft builder Steve Wolf designed and built a replica of Samson at Hobby Field in Creswell, OR. Completed in 1985, Wolf flew this aircraft on the air show circuit for 8 years prior to selling. With its standout red and white paint scheme it was a regular favorite at shows across the country. According to Steve it was his favorite air show machine. It was powered by the same model Pratt & Whitney 985 “Wasp Junior” as its predecessor, which gave it a 50% higher power to weight ratio than a P51! The P&W 985 was used in civilian twin engine craft such as the Grumman Goose and the Beechcraft Model 18, it also inspired the design of larger single engine aircraft such as the de Havilland Beaver and the Sikorsky H-5 helicopter.

In the years following the sale of that first Samson replica to air show pilot Bobby Younkin, Wolf found himself with a busy aero shop, Wolf Aircraft, at Hobby field. During that time he hired local engineer Tony Horvath. Horvath though, was no stranger to Wolf Aviation. He had spent many an afternoon as a kid sweeping the hangar and doing odd jobs before heading off to OIT and eventually returning to work for Steve full time.

Steve Wolf’s 1985 Samson Replica

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In 2005 the pair finished another Pitts replica, aptly named Samson 2. Also powered by the Pratt & Whitney 985. Directly after completion Samson 2 found its new home in Germany, and is gracing the skies over Europe to this day.

Another occurrence in 2005 would continue to spur the creative minds of Wolf and Horvath. Rotec rolled out the big brother to their 7 cylinder R2800, a 9 cylinder R3600. Shortly thereafter the guys started kicking around the idea of building a plane around the 9 cylinder. Eventually talk turned to building a smaller Samson, more specifically a ¾ scale version.

Wolf relocated to Florida in 2009, partially with the idea of retirement. True to fashion though, Steve has continued to teach and build. Horvath has remained in Creswell, started his own business Specialty Aero, and has been working on specialty Pitts and experimental air show aircraft ever since.

Over the past few years, the idea of two small scale Samsons has become history in the making. Plans were drawn, engines were purchased, and the race was on. One to be built in Florida, the other right here in Oregon. Though both planes are directly related to the original 1948 Pitts Samson, both have their own modifications based on the preferences of the builders. Because most Pitts are a kit build, and Samson in particular is a homebuilt from plans, they are within the experimental class of aircraft. This allows for modifications without worry of non-compliance as would be with a type certified aircraft. Both builders have made great strides in their progress, Steve working on his Samson-Mite, and Tony working on his Samsonite.

Wolf recently test flew, and debuted his striking red and white Samson Mite at the Rotec radial display during Sun N’ Fun last month in Florida. Wolf’s aircraft was built off the design of his original Samson replica. It features 110 sq ft of wing with ailerons on bottom wings only, as well as a wing rib design that lends itself to a lighter aircraft. The Mite has rigid landing gear, a basic instrument panel, with aluminum and Dacron covering. Wolf is currently running an 86” Whirlwind propeller. There are no kits available as of yet, but that’s not to say Wolf isn’t working on it.
Meanwhile here on the west coast, Tony is working steadily and is planning to have his Samsonite up and going for the 2018 flying season. He will soon be working on the application of Dacron fabric, finished with a Nitrate process. The cowling and front portion of the fuselage will be completed in aluminum, along with carbon fiber wheel pants. There is a wood framed turtle deck to provide a bit more stability to the structure, which also provides a small luggage compartment.

The Samsonite, based more on the design of Samson 2, will have roughly the same wing area as its twin but will boast 4 ailerons, bungee gear for a smoother landing, and feature the dashing red and black paint scheme of Samson 2. The R3600 will burn roughly 7.5 gallons per hour, with a 23 gallon gas tank. This craft will also have an electric wobble pump. Tony is currently planning on a steam gauge dash, potentially with a GPS panel.

We are excited to see Tony’s work continue, and we will keep you updated as more work is completed. These two aircraft are truly history in the making. We are thrilled to be able to share this story and others like it to show that the experimental class of aviation is alive and well. Steve Wolf and Tony Horvath are true inspirations for builders and designers of the aviation world. As long as men and women continue to dream and build as these two have, the future of aviation will shine bright for years to come.

First visitors of the season!
Last Saturday we were honored to host an impromptu tour for our first visitors of the 2017 flying season! Pilots from the Mulino OPA, Portland EAA, and Mt Hood EAA flew down to see the headway taking place on the new Welcome Center. While ground has been moved we are still waiting for things to dry out a bit so construction can begin.

The group took a short walk to a local restaurant and ended their visit with a tour of the museum. We were happy to see everyone and hope this was the first of many visits to Cottage Grove!

We still have $25 Buster’s Gift Certificates available for only $12, all funds go directly to the Welcome center and Buster’s has great food—something for everyone! Send a SASE with check to: CG Welcome Center 2475 Jim Wright Way Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Restoration Update!

Work is moving at a steady pace on the Springfield Cadet (AKA The Baby Fleet) down in the restoration hangar. The finishing tape has been laid down and the final coats of poly brush will soon be applied to the bottom wings and ailerons. Following that the wings will be sanded and the first coats of silver will be applied. We are excited to add this as a static display here at the museum and we are hoping to have it ready for viewing in time for Wings & Wheels in June!

Along with our restoration work, EAA chapter 31 in Creswell has been busy restoring a Vans RV3. The club has completed the fabric work and dash installation and they are looking forward to paint and graphics application in the coming weeks. OAHS will be the recipient of this aircraft and we are proud to house such a piece of Oregon history.

Upcoming Events:

June 24th: Wings & Wheels at the Cottage Grove Airport
July 4th: Creswell 4th of July Parade
July 13-16th: Bohemia Days
July 15th: Bohemia Days Parade
July 22nd: Rock, Roll ‘n Rumble / Chili Cook off
Aug 5th: Stearman Fly-in

OAHS will be hosting both Wings & Wheels and the Stearman fly-in here at the Cottage Grove airport. This year we are hoping to have more participants in both events as well as more visitors than ever before. Events will feature food trucks and biplane rides from nostalgic war bird rides pilot Major Mike Carpenter. Our parade float will be a 1938 International Freight truck hauling either the Mini Coupe or a Pietenpol on its deck.

During Bohemia days and the Chili cook off we will be partnering a booth with the Cottage Grove Partners in history. As always we encourage our members to take an active role in our organization, it is with your support that we are able to continue to share Oregon’s rich aviation history with our communities. If you would like to volunteer or participate in any of these activities, or know of any events we may want to participate in, please contact us today!

You may email our office at any time: oregonaviation.org@gmail.com
Or give us a call: 541-767-0244, Tues-Fri 10-3. Messages will be answered as soon as we are able.
RANDOM FLIGHT
It’s beginning to look a lot like summer! The museum has been bustling as of late with preparations under way for the Fourth Annual Wings N’ Wheels, June 24th here at the Cottage Grove Airport. We are still rounding up registrations for cars, aircraft and hopefully some motorcycle additions.

This year will include biplane rides from Major Mike Carpentiero, and food from Big Bites. There will be raffles held all day with prizes ranging from coffee card gift certificates to a one night stay at the Village Green Resort. There will also be trophies for people’s choice in Aircraft an Automobile categories. We are always looking for more volunteers and participants—contact us today to get involved!

May Sixth will be the start of the new season of open Saturdays. If you would be interested in being a docent from 10 AM to 4 PM contact Cassie and we can gladly get you scheduled.

Until next time, Blue skies and good tail winds.

Doug Kindred, President

There’s a plane in the Library!
OAHS was proud to present a history of Oregon Daredevils as well as the Mini-Coupe in the Cottage Grove Library during the month of April.
Children visiting were able to interact and climb in the Mini-Coupe, some experiencing their first up close encounter with an aircraft!
On display were stories of Tex Rankin and his famous flying schools, Dorothy Hester and her daredevil antics of paying for lessons by parachuting in the Rogue valley as well as pioneering the involvement of women in aerobatic flying. There was Danny Grecco and the tales of wing walking, Silas Christofferson flying from the Multnomah hotel as well as “bombing” Seattle with small flour sacks after the start of WWI, as well as George Bogardus and how his cross country flights in “Little GB” forever changed the face of experimental aviation.
These stories and the Mini Coupe are now on display in the main hangar at the museum. Bring the family and let them experience aviation hands on! We are open Tues-Fri 10am-3pm and now on Saturdays 10-4. Hope to see you soon!
4th Annual Wings & Wheels
June 24th 11-4

Come join us for family fun on the runway!!
Vintage aircraft, cars, and motorcycles, Biplane rides
and a FREE pass to the Cottage Grove Speedway with
paid admission!!

If you or anyone you know would like to participate or
volunteer for this event please contact us today!
Oregonaviation.org@gmail.com
541-767-0244
Admission is $5 for adults 16 and older, under 16 free!!