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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTIC ASSOCIATION

THROUGHOUT its existence, the National Aeronautic Association has been the link between public interest and the various aviation activities which together make up America's air leadership.

The NAA is unique in this field because it includes within its sphere of influence both the large national aviation organizations and local chapters of air enthusiasts at the "grass roots" level. Thus it is the only association today which provides a common meeting ground for the public and non-aviation business interests with the private flyer, local airport operator, model builder, educator, commercial airline operator and the aircraft manufacturer.

The public is represented by thousands of individuals from all walks of life who find in the NAA chapter a direct means by which they can register their interest in aviation and take part in its activities. The local NAA chapter is the average citizen's link with his nation's air industry. It enables him to understand the meaning of air power, why it is important and provides him with the means to participate in its support.

The NAA is the means by which these local and individual enthusiasts can be activated into constructive effort. For many years past, NAA has advised and assisted local chapters in staging aviation shows and contests, model airplane meets, airport safety inspection, public forums and discussions. Through enlarged support for NAA these local programs can be intensified and spread out to a much larger area.

Such continuing concentration of public thought and attention on aviation is vital for the maintenance and an understanding support for air power, in the Air Age.

Chapters and Affiliated Clubs

The NAA draws its strength from thousands of active members and many affiliated chapters throughout the nation. These "grass roots" of NAA can and should be extended until they include hundreds of thousands of individual members in hundreds of new chapters.

The NAA now includes as affiliates and draws help from members of large national trade organizations in aviation. The work, activities and programs of these associations and their individual members can be implemented and dramatized through local chapter activities which have been inspired and assisted by NAA. Typical local projects include:

The organization and servicing of local aviation community planning committees.

The organization of Air Age youth educational activities and the sponsoring and conduct of air youth modeling activities, as well as adult aviation educational programs.

The organization and management of commemorative events such as Wright Brothers Day, Air Force Day and Navy Day.

The promotion of airport development, air marking and civilian flying activities generally in the community.

Development of local Aviation Clinics to resolve local community aviation problems.

The development of aviation outings, social events and flying club activities.

The stimulation of chapter extension activities for increased membership, and the development of chapter idea exchanges.

The organization and programming of current events clubs, aviation courses for members and the development of local talent for speaker bureau activity with local civic organizations on aviation subjects.

The maintenance of close relations with the press, the preparation of news releases, club bulletins and the development of publicity and public relations activities generally.

The unique demands in specific communities for public guidance and counsel in the development of aviation facilities in those communities makes the potential list of NAA affiliated clubs' activities practically limitless.

Broad industry support will make possible a vast expansion in this field of local chapter activity to the end that every day, somewhere in the United States an activity will take place designed to arouse and increase interest in the whole field of aviation.

And meanwhile there is a continuing flow of information between NAA headquarters and its local chapters exchanging experience on chapter management, financial operation and organization, providing program material and advice and all the other types of counsel which a strong national association can offer to its members. Local chapter members gain the opportunity to participate in Air Age activities at the national level. They find that their own interests and programs are assisted through the relationship with other individuals and with other groups who are working toward the same end—the continued growth and progress of aviation.

The effective cultivation of these grass roots is the service which NAA is uniquely fitted to offer to aviation. It demonstrates that NAA not only links the general public to aviation but provides the tools and equipment for their personal participation in its activities. It is a principal part of NAA's historic mission to "Keep America First in the Air."

Contest Activity

One hundred thousand people jam the stands at a National Air Race watching a dozen pilots and airplanes race around a closed course in 400 mile-an-hour competition.

On the lonely desert sands of Muroc Air Force Base, a single pilot in a new high speed airplane streaks alone over a measured course to set a new world's speed record of 670 miles an hour.

One event is public and the other closely guarded in military secrecy. Yet in each there is one common factor which lends point and significance to the whole activity. While the crowds cheer the winner; while his fellow officers congratulate the single pilot, the NAA takes over.

It is the job of a small group of NAA specialists to determine within one-thousandth of a second what speeds were flown. Days before, they have moved in with their amazingly precise equipment.

This important service to aviation can be offered in the U. S. only by the National Aeronautic Association. To be official, every contest result and every aviation record must be certificated by the National Aeronautic Association. As the sole U. S. representative of the *Federation Aeronautique Internationale*, the governing body of the new world for sporting aviation competitions and records, the NAA is the means by which this nation's aviation achievements receive world-wide recognition. Indisputable is the fact that without the contest board of the NAA-FAI there would be no yardstick by which these achievements could be measured and given the world-wide recognition they deserve.

Shaping American Aviation Policy

In aviation there are many useful industry conventions. But there is one annual meeting which is not typical, and which does not find its counterpart anywhere else in America. That is the *National Aviation Clinic* — sponsored for the past six years by the NAA. The Clinic does not represent ONE trade interest — it brings together ALL interests allied with aviation *and* the public.

The Clinic in operation is not a convention body — it is, in fact more a forum and in five of its six years has been dignified by being conducted in the legislative halls of a State Capitol building. The Clinic represents the opportunity for all phases of aviation to get together with the public and adopt policies for the good of ALL aviation — not just one part of it. A typical Clinic discussion will bring out viewpoints from flyers, builders and users of airplanes, airport operators, public officials, name figures in aviation and John Q. Public himself. All have a voice and hand in shaping and defining aviation policies which will be accepted as representing the comprehensive thinking for the Air Age.

This public service function can be offered only by an organization in which public and industry participate on equal terms. NAA meets that requirement and feels that it is both patriotic and democratic to provide the vehicle for the average citizen to cast his weight for air power. He is finally the one who has most to gain — or to lose.

Air Youth and Adult Education

If aviation and air power are to be maintained at the level which we in aviation feel to be indispensable, an entire new generation must be inspired to a firm belief in that principle. We are faced today with the necessity for bringing about changes in the field of education which will better prepare not only the next but succeeding generations for peaceful and prosperous life in the Air Age.

First tangible expression of a youth's interest in aviation undoubtedly is the urge to build a model airplane. From this first experience in building and flying models, is likely to come the interest which will

bind his thinking to the Air Age for the rest of his life. Many of our finest flyers today trace their beginning in aviation to airplane modeling.

Official governing body of the science of aero modeling is the *Academy of Model Aeronautics* — a division of the National Aeronautic Association. In 1948, the AMA sanctioned 600 contests in various parts of the country and recorded more than 200 new national records.

However, other and broader educational activities must be carried on, as well, to underscore, not only the youth of our country, but for adults of our country the significance of maintaining U. S. leadership in the skies. Educators in our schools and universities must be impressed with the meaning of air power and its importance. And, most important of all, today's community and civic leaders must be made sympathetically aware of Air Power and the Air Age with all its implications.

National Trophies and Awards

In the White House, the President of the United States annually presents an aviation trophy on behalf of the NAA, custodian of that trophy, which recognizes an outstanding achievement in aviation during that year.

Honor and recognition for individual accomplishment is as much a part of the American scene as the right to accomplishment itself. While some governments bestow titles and grants to those who merit them *in the judgment of the state*, we Americans honor accomplishment with cups and trophies — determining the awards *in the light of contributions to human progress*.

To the NAA belong custodianship and responsibility for such important annual awards as the Collier Trophy, Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy, Haire Airport Awards, Brewer Award and honorary life Memberships in the Association itself. Through this means there is perpetuated in history the right of American individuals to such significant "firsts" as piloted supersonic flight.

If the establishment of endowment funds and of the creation of aviation scholarships as well as the bestowal of private awards and recognition are one of our rights as free individuals in a free America, then this activity of NAA is not only one of the operations in its mission, "Keep America First in the Air," but it is a practical working demonstration of our type of government and economy.

Your Part of the Mission

NAA does not seek your *contribution*; it seeks your active support as a *member*. Most particularly does it seek the membership of corporations. NAA, as a vital instrument dedicated to the accomplishment of the mission "Keep America First in the Air," can serve you and the best interests of your country. *Your* help is needed. Aid in the accomplishment of this mission by becoming a member of NAA today.

E. C. S.*

* This editorial is a condensed version of a brochure prepared by a special committee of which the editor, as First Vice President of NAA, was a member.