

# Safety Net

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Reprint



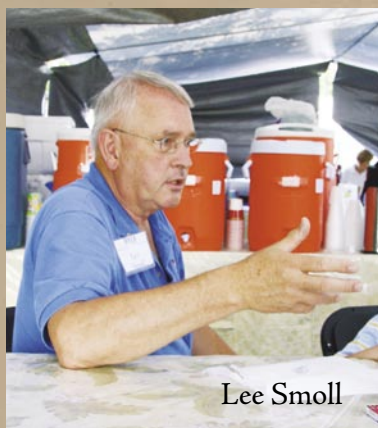
## MASA... Servant of Servants at AirVenture

The old adage 'great oaks from little acorns grow' certainly holds true in the case of the Mission Aviation Support Association (MASA). While not a 'great oak,' the down-to-earth services currently performed by this small group—little known outside mission aviation circles—play a small but significant part in the up-in-the-air ministry of God's servants promoting God's redeeming grace throughout the world. Here's the story as told by Lee Smoll, Founder and Director of MASA.

Lee had always been interested in Mission Aviation. After graduating from college and serving in the Air Force, he applied to Moody Aviation for training. That door closed, however,

and he went into teaching. His opportunity to work with the mission aviation community came in a different way.

It all started in the late '70s when Bob and Louise Griffin, representing JAARS, first came to the EAA Oshkosh event—now called AirVenture. Lee met the Griffins at the airport and assisted in their orientation to Oshkosh. He camped alongside them in 1982 after the JAARS crew had increased to 6 or 8 men. He observed Louise cooking all the meals for the men and realized that was a ministry local Christians could be involved with. He contacted Randy and Marlene McMullin, who lived outside of Oshkosh. Marlene sensed an opportunity and they began providing noon and evening meals during the week with help from their church and other friends in the Oshkosh area. They served in that way from 1983-1989. During these years MAF began having a presence at EAA under the leadership of Dave Voetmann. By the late '80s, not only was Marlene arranging food and housing, she was also arranging limited speaking



Lee Smoll

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*Safety... A Way of Life!*

Continued on Page 2

## MASA...

engagements for the pilots in local churches. It had become an overwhelming task for one person.

In 1990, Lee began to seek more churches and volunteers to serve the additional personnel. It was an intentional effort to seek and involve churches who were sensitive to and demonstrated a desire to assist faith-based mission agencies. During the decade of the '90s, JAARS and MAF were the primary participating agencies.



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At the end of that decade, there was much thought given to the cost of having a presence at EAA. Did the high cost of bringing personnel, airplanes, and supplies to Oshkosh each year—not to mention the cost of participating as exhibitors—truly benefit the organizations?

In 1999, in consultation with Glen Ferguson of JAARS, a strategic decision was made to refine the vision of the services and cooperation of both the emerging MASA and participating agencies. Up to this time, the focus of the volunteer effort had been to assist the mission representatives by providing



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food and lodging to facilitate their involvement at the EAA site. The fresh thought was to expand the concept of mission agency involvement by focusing on the local Christian community, rather than solely on those who show up at the displays on the EAA exposition grounds.



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This refocusing of vision resulted in several outcomes. One significant positive outcome was that additional mission agencies began to exhibit at Oshkosh under the aegis of the International Association of Mission Aviation (IAMA), which has its own display tent on the EAA grounds. As more agencies expressed an interest in attending EAA, MASA enlarged their tent space on the flight line. This enabled the number to increase from 11 to 19 in a few years.

Thus the ministry of JAARS, MAF and other agencies began to be shared around Oshkosh and not only at the EAA site. MSI became involved and former President Joe Hopkins had a hand in early orchestration of this concept and expansion of ministry. Local churches and groups invited mission representatives to meetings to share their visions for aviation ministry. These opportunities continue. The counter-point of this was increased workload on mission representatives. It was no longer show and tell only during expo hours and the informal networking enjoyed by IAMA member participants at AirVenture. Ministry expansion meant work!



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Anita Holdridge, the "go to" heart of MASA

The EAA Hospitality ministry started by the McMullins grew to an informal committee in the '90s with representatives

from several local churches. When the significant redefining of Lee's vision begun in 1999-2000, it became evident that a more formal organization was required. MASA became an official corporation in 2001 and soon after obtained its 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.

The MASA staff currently consists of approximately 25 people. All volunteer their services, including the three current MASA office-holders: Chairman Lee Smoll, Vice-Chairman/Treasurer Dan Holdridge, and Secretary Donn Wright. Staff members volunteer more than their time and talent—which in itself is no little contribution. They provide the entire campsite which includes the 20x60 dining room/lecture hall and a well equipped 20x20 kitchen. Their contact with the churches and friends in the area make it possible for the missionary aviators to stay in free bedrooms and drive vehicles donated for their use.



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On behalf of the mission agencies, MASA provides astounding service on a minuscule budget. For example, MASA interfaces with the EAA for display space, which requires a cash deposit in December prior to the next year's EAA Air Adventure. To secure this space, MASA makes the deposit, requesting corresponding payment from participating mission agencies—solidifying agency commitment to the next year's event. Another major expense item is the cost of renting campground space for the large MASA tent just outside one of the entrances to the EAA exhibit area.

Income to MASA from contributions received from local churches and individuals who see the significance of the MASA ministry make it all possible. Many of the volunteers themselves sacrificially share in meeting the financial needs of MASA.

In serving nineteen mission agencies at AirVenture 2007, the following data attest to this ministry's current extent of service:

- 90 missionary guests in attendance.
- 40 local families provided 595 bed/nights of hospitality.
- 12 vehicles loaned for the week.
- 21 groups of people and/or churches prepared and served 2400 meals on the grounds.
- 10 groups meeting during the week invited a missionary or missionaries to speak.
- 24 area churches provided time in one or more services to share the work of mission aviation.



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Additional information about this ministry may be obtained at the MASA web site: [www.oshkoshmasa.org](http://www.oshkoshmasa.org).

When asked about the future of MASA, Lee suggests that will be up to the Lord as the hearts of mission agencies continue to see their ministry effective at the EAA AirVenture site, in Oshkosh area churches and in individual contacts. It also depends on continued heart motivation of the many local volunteers who provide such significant practical service to mission personnel. And finally it depends on sufficient funds for it to continue. Without fanfare or publicity and on an amazingly low budget, MASA is providing salutary service to God's servants in Oshkosh that may reach out to the front lines of mission aviation.

Moses was the great prophet of old chosen by God to accomplish marvelous things and be the conveyor of God's revelation to his people. Yet when Moses was finished with the work to which he had been called and Joshua was advised of his passing, it was sufficient for God to simply but profoundly say "Moses, my servant. . ." To be called a servant of the Most High is the highest accolade anyone or any organization can receive. Is not to be a servant of servants worthy of double honor? The Lord is to be praised for each servant volunteer involved in the MASA ministry. May this ministry continue to be adequately supported by the prayers and gifts of God's people who share this unique vision.

## Quest Kodiak Certified and in Production



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**M**ay 30, 2007, marked the FAA certification of the Quest Kodiak. With this huge benchmark reached, efforts now turn to production. Several have been delivered by mid-2008, and many more are in the pipeline. Facing critical AvGas supply and cost issues, mission agencies can hardly wait to received their Kodiaks. Kudos to all involved. Well done! May this new tool be used safely for His glory.

## Spokane Turbine Center Ground-breaking

**O**n October 5, 2007, Spokane Turbine Center (STC) broke ground on the construction of their new hangar and facilities at Felts Field in Spokane, Washington. STC's vision is to provide turbine training specifically designed to meet the needs of missions around the world. They hope to have the facilities complete in time to host the IAMA conference in May, 2008. They have placed orders for a Quest Kodiak as well as a simulator, and will be providing maintenance training in addition to flight training. For more information contact Jeff Turcotte at [www.spokaneturbinecenter.net](http://www.spokaneturbinecenter.net).



Bill Kilgore Photo

## Spokane Turbine Center's "New" Home

**I**n the spring of 2008 the acquisition of the Air National Guard headquarters building and huge hangar at Spokane's Felts Field eliminated the need for STC to build its own facility from the ground up. This development saves much time and money for STC to "get up to speed" in mission pilot turbine training. The excitement was sensed at the May 2008 Conference of the International Association of Mission Aviation (IAMA).



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