

2003 Vintage Hall of Fame

H.G. FRAUTSCHY

Alfred Kelch

Born in 1918, Alfred Kelch became enamored with airplanes and aviators at age 6 when his uncle Percy Bricker bought a war surplus Curtiss Jenny and flew it to Al's hometown of Lake View, Iowa. Even uncle Percy's crash landing of the Jenny didn't dampen his enthusiasm, although little Al was perturbed with his uncle for wrecking "his" Jenny.

He followed every report of Lindbergh's Atlantic crossing, listening with headphones to the family radio. While Al was in junior high school, his uncle returned to town with a Curtiss Robin, and Al was given his first flight lesson.

A lifelong love affair with all things mechanical has kept Al Kelch involved in automobile restoration, antique boats, and, of course, airplanes. A career mixing his talents in art and mechanical

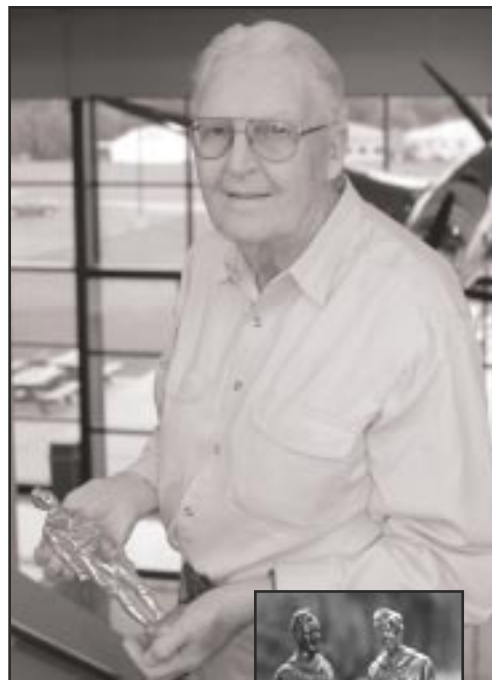
engineering resulted in the founding of Kelch Manufacturing, a company that pioneered a number of plastic innovations, including the first plastic steering wheel for the automotive trade.

During that time, Al met and, when he could finally afford it, married the lady who would be his partner in all his endeavors, Lois.

As his business grew, Al was able to squeeze a few dollars out of the budget and begin his collection of antique airplanes. He purchased a Piper Cub for \$250, and has since restored more than a dozen airplanes, most of which he flew from his rural home and airstrip in Mequon, Wisconsin, where he and Lois hosted many years of antique airplane fly-ins.

Al's interest in Lindbergh led him to collect memorabilia, and one of the pieces he collected was a small bronze statuette of the famed pilot. Its resemblance to the Oscar statues given in the film industry inspired Al to create the

A constant in his life, Al's Piper Cub. He also owns the "Number One Cub," powered by a Salmson radial engine.



Al Kelch designed the original Lindbergh trophy used by EAA for the top awards at EAA AirVenture. On the left is the bronze statue from the 1920s that served as the basis for the first prototype Lindy shown here on the right. That first Lindy was cast using dense armor bronze, and the finished product was very heavy.

EAA Lindy trophy we all recognize today as one of aviation's most prestigious awards for aircraft construction or restoration.

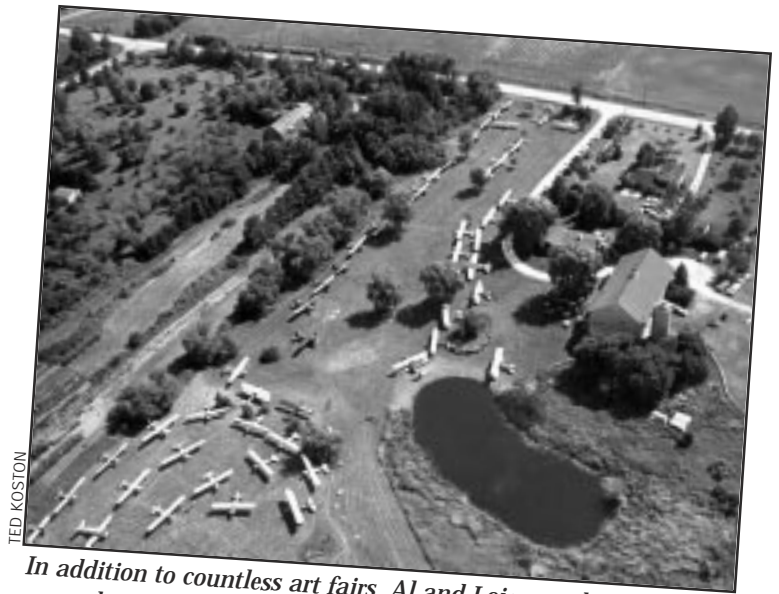
Al was one of the earliest members of the Antique/Classic division, and became lifetime member number 6. In the mid-1970s,



The other constant in his life, Al and his vivacious wife, Lois.



Al's uncle Percy brought a Jenny to town, but managed to crash it on Main Street. Little Al (far right, in coat and hat) was annoyed with his uncle for crashing "his" Jenny!



TED KOSTON

In addition to countless art fairs, Al and Lois were hosts to an annual antique fly-in for many years.

he and Lois edited the division's magazine, *Vintage Airplane*, and he also served as the chairman of the Judging Committee.

He and chief judge Claude Gray created the core rules for judging vintage airplanes, a set of rules that we continue to use to this day. He also founded the "Grand Champion Circle" in a successful effort to invite top award winners to the EAA convention.

While serving as the president of the Travel Air club, a visit to the Parish's in Tullahoma, Tennessee, inspired Al to add a porch to the convention headquarters of the division, the Red Barn. With the design help of Pat Packard and the carpentry skills of Bob Lumley and other volunteers, the porch was added and continues to serve as a resting and gathering spot for members during EAA AirVenture.

Al serves on a number of boards with aviation interests, including the Sun 'n Fun board, and is affiliated with the Curtiss Museum in Hammondsport, New York, and the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome museum. He continues to actively work on his collection of aircraft kept at the Brodhead, Wisconsin, airport. His most recent restoration project is a Travel Air 4000 formerly owned by Robertson Aircraft and flown by Charles Lindbergh.



Al loves rare, unusual airplanes. Here's his Welch OW8M.



Al at work restoring his rare Curtiss-Wright Travel Air 12Q.



TED KOSTON

One of Al's many aviation friends, Ted Koston took this pretty shot of Al in his Curtiss-Wright Travel Air 12Q next to the pond at Al's airstrip and home.