

## The AB-DAR Scholarship Program

The EAA Amateur Built Designated Airworthiness Representative (ABDAR) initiative was inspired by the need to provide access for amateur aircraft builders to qualified individuals who could provide FAA certification of their newly constructed aircraft.

The FAA / DAR program is not new. DAR authorized individuals have performed many of the inspections conducted here in the northeast for a number of years. Only occasionally, do actual FAA inspectors perform the inspection and complete the certification paperwork. In many areas of the country, because of reductions in FAA Staff, individuals have to wait weeks and months to schedule an FAA employee to perform the required inspections. This process is aimed at alleviating that deficiency.

One of the key elements used in the recruitment of qualified individuals to enter this program has been the provision to minimize legal liability by staffing these positions with qualified volunteers. Several years ago, Congress passed legislation, called the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, to encourage citizens to volunteer their services to others in the performance of activities that are customarily carried out by government employees. Typical examples of that are the folks, who voluntarily prepare tax returns for seniors, Red Cross workers, volunteer fire fighters, emergency medical technicians that staff the many ambulances we see daily in our communities.

Because there is a possibility that some individuals will receive consideration for their services beyond actual true costs, the volunteer act that congress passed includes a provision that the individuals do not loose their volunteer status providing they do not exceed a limit of \$500 in any calendar year in reimbursements that are not directly attributable to the DAR Process.

The EAA and their programs afford the second element providing protection for these volunteers and insurance that covers the multitude of individuals who give of their time providing all the services that have become the core of EAA activities and accomplishment. The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides the liability protection for the AB-DAR EAA volunteers.

EAA becomes the sponsoring organization supporting the individuals they recommend for the AB-DAR positions. The requirements and qualifications for the DAR appointment are available on the EAA website and there is no need to spell that out here. A component of the EAA endorsement included the agreement to perform the volunteer services for a minimum of two years. Providing then, that the appointees conduct their activities within the guidelines prepared by EAA, these select volunteers are protected from liability to the maximum extent possible. There is no reasonably priced insurance or bonding available for these individuals so this is the only way most of us would even consider the program.

There are costs associated with applying for, training and other travel necessary in obtaining the DAR Certification. It is EAA's intent that those costs should not come out of the pockets of the individuals volunteering for the program. The initial costs for travel,

training and lodging can range from \$800 to \$1,200. EAA Education Funding Grants that were made available covered much of that expense for the initial group of appointees of about 60 volunteers.

Subsequent recurrent training, required at 18 and 24-month intervals will be funded, in some areas of the country, by the AB-DAR EAA Chapter Scholarship process.

Volunteer DARs do not charge a specific fee. They can recover actual expenses for their effort in providing certification services to individual aircraft builders. Mileage, printing and mailing, meals and lodging costs can be recovered when desired.

In order to encourage individuals to continue participation and to continue the process, some EAA chapters are establishing a Scholarship fund that will be available for AB-DARs to the extent necessary to maintain their appointments by attending training etc. The funding for this scholarship will be from donations that are made by individuals who have benefited from the services of the sponsored AB-DAR. There is not set amount for the donation, simply an amount appropriate for the services received. An individual might consider the amount that would have been paid to a DAR for hire, and subtract the amount of actual costs specified by the volunteer AB DAR and donate the difference to the Chapter Scholarship Fund for the future expenses of that AB DAR.

It is likely that individuals, not EAA members or EAA Chapter members will avail themselves of the services of the AB-DAR Volunteer program. They too are encouraged to provide the support to the Scholarship Program to the extent they feel appropriate.

Members helping members has long been the theme overlying many of the accomplishments of EAA and it's membership.

Your Greater Hartford EAA Chapter 166 Board of Directors has discussed this and agreed to establish such a fund.

Joe Gauthier, AB-DAR