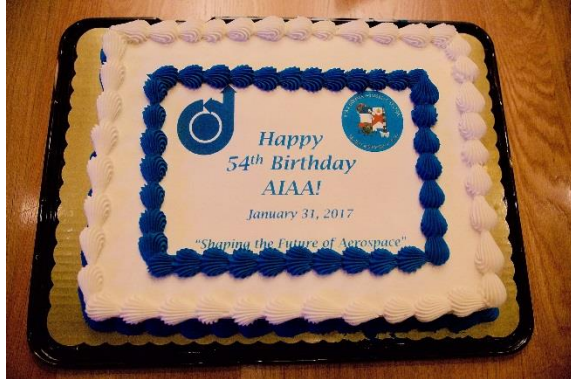# AIAA Birthday Celebration

By Ken Philippart
Images by Alan Lowrey

The Greater Huntsville Section celebrated the 54th anniversary of the founding of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) at a birthday social on January 31. AIAA was created on January 31, 1963 through the merger of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences and the American Rocket Society.

Thirty AIAA members and guests met at BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse in Huntsville to raise a glass and toast the world's largest (and greatest) technical society dedicated to the global aerospace profession.

While making the reservations for the evening, Lisa Philippart discovered that the University of Alabama—Huntsville (UAH) Chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWOB) was the sponsored non-profit for the evening and would receive a percentage of the bill through BJ's fundraising program for non-profit organizations. The catch was that AIAA members would have to present the flyer. But the restaurant was not allowed to provide the flyer or contact information for the sponsored group.

The section's Liaison to Student Branches, Brittani Searcy, quickly tracked down the contact information for the UAH chapter of EWOB who immediately forwarded the required flyer. The section distributed the flyer to section members prior to the social.

After dinner, Section Chair Brandon Stiltner led the group in a toast to AIAA followed by a ceremonial cutting of the birthday cake. Adopting a custom from the military services, the oldest and youngest section members in attendance were asked to cut the cake. Emeritus Member and Associate Fellow Otha "Skeet" Vaughn and student member Brittani Searcy jointly cut the cake, representing the passing of AIAA's legacy from the oldest to the youngest generation.

The section invited members of the EWOB chapter who were in attendance to join AIAA for the cake and discussions on how the two organizations could collaborate in the future.

The evening was a great opportunity for section members to relax after work and network while celebrating the founding of the world's greatest aerospace professional society. The chance to help a fellow engineering society at the same time was 'icing on the cake.' Happy Birthday AIAA!